



Lieutenant-Colonel F. M. Bailey

Arthur Swinson

BEYOND
THE
FRONTIERS

*the biography of
Colonel F. M. Bailey
explorer and special agent*

with a preface by
Sir Fitzroy Maclean



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Preface *by Sir Fitzroy Maclean*

When I first met Eric Bailey twenty years or so ago, travel in the remoter parts of Central Asia was not yet as easy or as commonplace as it has since become. The fact that both of us knew such places as Bokhara, Tashkent and Katmandu was an immediate link and we soon became friends. It was to be a lasting friendship which I shall always recall with pleasure and gratitude.

Since the days of Marco Polo and before, Central Asia has always attracted great travellers, and Eric, to my mind, was one of the greatest of these. He had all the necessary qualities: courage and endurance, resourcefulness and imperturbability, expertise in all kinds of unusual fields, and, most important of all, that sudden startling streak of sheer enterprise and originality that helps a man penetrate to strange places and, by one means or another, surmount obstacles and difficulties which to most people would seem insuperable.

Eric was an invincibly modest man and his unusual talents were concealed beneath the gentlest of exteriors. Meeting him casually in later life, one would at first sight never have supposed that this mild-mannered retired colonel, with the quiet, scholarly way of talking, had marched to Lhasa with Young-husband; had explored single-handed the borderlands of India and Tibet and the sources of the Brahmaputra; had done battle with strange tribesmen and negotiated with weird native dignitaries; had given his name to *Meconopsis Baileyi*, the celebrated Himalayan blue poppy, as well as to a whole bevy of exotic

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beasts, butterflies and birds; had, with a price on his head, completely outwitted and out-manœuvred the Soviet Security Police in and around the Emirate of Bokhara; and finally ended his official career as British Minister at the Court of Nepal. But then, as the conversation developed, one fascinating reminiscence would follow another and soon you would be transported to the halcyon days of the British Raj, of Kipling and the Great Game, when such extraordinary things could and still did happen to enterprising officers in the Indian Service.

Eric's generation, which was my father's, had great opportunities for adventure and knew how to make the most of them. They were often very eccentric in outlook and behaviour, but rarely neurotic. They met good fortune or bad with equal unconcern. Wherever the opportunity offered, they filled in time with the sporting activities which were one of the main attractions of service in India, shooting a tiger or whatever else came their way, or, like Bailey, improvising a hunt, a game of polo, or a race-meeting on the borders of Tibet. They accepted life as it was (which was sometimes excessively tough) and, by comparison with subsequent generations, did not find much to complain of or protest against. Even the 1914 War they encountered with reasonable good humour in the trenches of Flanders and on the beaches of Gallipoli. Above all, they had confidence in themselves and in the institutions they served and almost unlimited enthusiasm for whatever they were trying to do.

Few men, even of his generation, had greater opportunities for adventure or made better use of them than Eric Bailey. In this book Mr. Swinson does justice to his astonishing story, setting it against its proper historical and geographical background. He tells it, too, with sympathy and skill and, telling it, enables us, sixty or seventy years later, to share the excitement and suspense of the soldier, the explorer or the fugitive in alien territory with a price on his head.

Jimmy Maclean.

Author's Foreword

In 1955 I was a features producer for the B.B.C. in Manchester, and amongst my output was a dramatised series called *Stories of Courage and Adventure*. This was introduced by Lieutenant-Colonel F. Spencer Chapman, who also advised me on possible subjects, and in one of our discussions he suddenly asked, 'What about Colonel F. M. Bailey's *Mission to Tashkent*?' Having read the book, I was enthusiastic, but at the same time doubtful whether the B.B.C. could acquire the rights without a great deal of negotiation. Spencer Chapman, however, seemed quite confident, remarking, 'Don't let's start tangling with agents. Why not ring him up and ask him how he feels?' At this I paused in amazement. To me Bailey was a legend, a hero from another age, a combination of John Speke, Alexander Burnes, and Richard Hannay, with a dash of the plant hunters, such as Kingdon Ward or William Micholitz, thrown in. Mentally I saw him against a background of mountains and jungle, battling against great odds in remote and unexplored territories, and the idea that one could pick up a telephone and speak to him seemed very improbable. However, that is what we did. Soon a voice from Norfolk was informing us that he would be delighted to have his book dramatised, once terms had been agreed with his agent, and would meet me to discuss the programme next time he was in London.

So a fortnight later when I walked into the United Service Club he rose from the chair to greet me. At this time, seventy-

three years of age, he still looked powerful and fit; his back was straight, and his mind moved swiftly. He was tall—well over six foot, I judged—and had powerful shoulders; and to begin with, at least, there was a stern look about him. I don't think he had met many B.B.C. producers and was slightly apprehensive; but finding I could talk of India and Assam and Burma at first hand, and moreover wanted to tell his story as accurately as I could, granted the limitations of time and the medium, he relaxed. I could then see that beneath the stern exterior there was gentleness and a puckish sense of humour. Obviously, too, he was delighted that his story would reach a wider public, though unlike so many other people I had dealt with, from tycoons to bishops, he remained completely unimpressed by 'showbiz'. In our meetings later on and in correspondence his sole concern was for accuracy. In due course the programme was broadcast, and like the vast majority of programmes soon forgotten. I never saw Bailey again, and the only news of him that reached me was via occasional mentions in the *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, to which society some years later I was elected.

By the time of his death in 1967 I had learned a great deal more about Central and South-East Asia and the background to his achievement, and had read his last book *No Passport to Tibet*. It seemed to me that here was a remarkable Scotsman whose story should be told not only for its own sake but as a splendid example of initiative and achievement in an epoch now passed. Happily through the kind offices of Colonel C. H. Ellis, an old friend of Bailey, I was able to meet his widow, the Hon. Mrs. Bailey, and the project was launched. As is generally recognised, Bailey was a man of many parts, and it is possible that at some future date another hand may assess his achievements in botany, zoology, entomology, geography, and other specialised fields. The aim of the present work, however, is completely untechnical, being simply to portray Bailey as he was and tell his story for the general reader.

Many people have helped me in my task and I wish to thank the Hon. Mrs. Bailey for making available her late husband's papers, for making many suggestions for research, and for checking the draft MS.; Colonel C. H. Ellis, C.M.G., C.B.E., T.D.,

for his help and advice; Mrs. H. E. Morshead, Sir Evelyn Howell, Mr. John Hanbury-Tracy, and Professor N. E. Odell for their memories of Bailey; Mr. Frank Ludlow and Mr. Hugh Richardson, C.I.E., O.B.E., for checking the draft MS.; Sir Olaf Caroe, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., Mr. T. S. Blakeney of the Mount Everest Foundation, Mr. M. I. Moir of the India Office Library, Mr. D. W. King, Chief Librarian at the Ministry of Defence, Miss E. Kirby, the Royal Central Asian Society, and Miss Murial Wilson, Chief Librarian, and Mr. Alan Threadgill, Reference Librarian, St. Albans City Libraries.

Finally I would add that unless otherwise stated all opinions expressed in the book are my own and should not be attributed to those who assisted me.

1 Early days

'I consider that I came from a Sapper family', Bailey once wrote, and this was true, his father, grandfather, and an uncle having served in the Royal Engineers. It was while surveying in Northern Ireland that his grandfather met and then married a Miss Irvine of Rockfield and Castle Irvine in County Fermanagh. His father, while on a tour of duty in India, married Miss Florence Marshman. The Marshmans had old links with India, Miss Marshman's father, John Clark Marshman, having landed there with his parents (who were joining the Baptist Mission in Serampore) as early as 1799, and he recalled 'kneeling on the Strand, as my parents thanked God for having landed them safely on the soil of India'. John's father, Joshua (1768–1837), had many talents, apart from being a missionary, and founded Serampore College, before helping to launch a periodical called *The Friend of India*, a forerunner of the *Statesman*. John, however, had a taste for authorship rather than journalism, and published a *Guide to the Civil Law*, which became the civil code for India until being superseded by Macaulay's work. He also completed a *History of India* and for some years was *The Times* correspondent in Calcutta. One of his sisters married Sir Henry Havelock, hero of the Indian Mutiny, and another Sir Deitrich Brandis, a German who organised the Indian Forestry Department. This family tie was to have important consequences, for it was through the influence of Sir Deitrich that Bailey's father (Colonel Frederick Bailey) secured an

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appointment as head of the Forest Survey Department. After a few years, however, the Colonel was advised to leave India because of frequent bouts of malaria and he found himself the job of instructing forestry students at Nancy in France. Here the family stayed for three years, after which the Colonel and his wife returned to India. In 1890 he retired from the Army and became lecturer in forestry at Edinburgh University. F. M. Bailey, the subject of the present work, was at this time eight years of age, having been born at Lahore on the 3rd February 1882. He was named Frederick after his father and Marshman after Joshua Marshman, but from childhood he was called Eric to distinguish him in conversation from his father, and the name stuck.

In 1891 Eric was sent to Edinburgh Academy—‘the best school in Scotland’ as he later described it—but to his disappointment was allowed to remain only three years. Destined for the Army, his parents thought he should go to Wellington, a public school in Berkshire where boys were groomed for Sandhurst. It was a somewhat bleak establishment and the regime, not to mention the food, was austere. Many boys in later years were to condemn the place in violent terms; Sir Harold Nicolson, who arrived a year or so before Bailey left, once wrote: ‘One ceased so completely to be an individual . . . to have any but a corporate identity . . . one was deprived of all initiative of action or occupation. We had no privacy and no leisure. . . .’ Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck, almost an exact contemporary of Bailey and a fellow member of Beresford dormitory, has expressed himself as being happy there ‘on the whole’,* and this probably went for Bailey also. What he missed most was the camaraderie between boys and masters that he had known in Edinburgh, though with his knack of making himself at home wherever he might find himself there was no fear of becoming unduly depressed or introverted.

Whether Colonel Bailey and his wife were very enlightened parents for their day, only a historian could say with authority, but certainly relationships between them and their sons were full of love and sympathy and understanding. From the time he

*He also records that Bailey was nicknamed ‘Hatter’, ‘because we said he was “mad as a hatter” . . . very original in his ways and full of pranks’.

could hold a pen, Eric Bailey wrote with complete freedom, knowing that he would be understood, and that there was absolutely nothing his parents would not do in their love for him. In many ways it was the hours he spent with his father during the holidays, especially on tours on afforestation work in the Scottish Highlands, which provided his real education.

Also in the school holidays, Colonel Bailey arranged visits to Belgium and later on to East Prussia. Having learned to speak and write French fluently, Eric began to tackle German, so laying a foundation to the linguistic expertise which was to play such an important part in his later career.

In 1899 Bailey's schooldays came to an end, and he sat the entrance examination for the Royal Military College, Sandhurst. So far as one can gather, he showed no enthusiasm for a military career, but knew that he was expected to follow his father and grandfather into the Service, and made no complaint. However, as his father had already explained to him, there would have to be a break with the Sappers, for (as he put it) 'it was essential for financial reasons to go to the Indian Army'. So he sat for Sandhurst instead of Woolwich, and passed in high enough to be awarded what was called officially 'a cadetship with a view to a commission in the Indian Staff Corps'. In other words, if his course at Sandhurst went well he would be earmarked for an Indian regiment.

But, in fact, the times were abnormal, and no sooner had Bailey arrived at Sandhurst on the 24th January 1900 than he discovered that public schoolboys who had failed to pass the entrance examination were now being granted immediate commissions and sent off to the Boer War in South Africa. Feeling that he was 'losing time' by remaining at Sandhurst, Bailey wrote home to his father, asking him to approach Field Marshal Lord Roberts (a close friend) begging for a commission in the Royal Engineers. Though Roberts did his best, no commission was forthcoming, and when his first term in June ended Bailey went off to Norway for some salmon fishing.

It was an interesting trip, but unfortunately before it was over Bailey heard from the War Office that his period at Sandhurst had been terminated, and he must be prepared to sail for India before the end of September. Somewhat disappointed at

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losing several weeks' fishing, he wrote to his father, who advised him to send a letter to the War Office explaining the situation. He did so, and in due course a letter arrived from a Colonel Ward, 'asking me if I could manage to get off by the 20th October without interfering too much with my fishing and wishing me the best of luck'. Today such indulgence towards a young officer may seem almost incredible, but officers of the British Army—when not actually grappling with the enemy—have always taken their pleasures, especially field sports, almost as seriously as the business of soldiering. Commenting on the above incident, Bailey wrote:

'My father told me that when he was Adjutant of Royal Engineers at Aldershot about 1862 officers were expected either to come on parade or hunt. Once the only officers on parade were his Colonel [later Field Marshal Sir Linton Simonds] and himself. The Colonel said it was not much use carrying on, so they both rode off parade and joined the glad throng.'

No doubt in 1862 the Army was still relaxing after the rigours of the Crimea, but when Bailey wrote his letter the Boers were exposing its lack of professionalism on the veldt, and one might have reasonably expected some sense of urgency to have seeped through to the War Office. It certainly had not reached the Military Secretary's department.

However, having reached Edinburgh, Bailey began active preparations for his period of service in India, getting together uniforms and equipment, and taking riding classes at the depot of the Royal Scots Greys. By the end of September he was aboard the P. & O. boat s.s. *China* and next month reached India, where he reported to the Middlesex Regiment, which was stationed at Wellington in the Nilgiri Hills. These lie inland from Calicut, towards the southern tip of India, and Bailey was very fortunate in his first Indian station, so far as climate and terrain were concerned. What struck him immediately, however, were the disadvantages, for, as he wrote later:

'The Madras Army [in which the Middlesex were serving] saw very little service. Chances of active service were largely

confined to the north of India and especially to the Punjab Frontier Force. All my father's friends and influence were in the north. I felt I was being sent to a distant and unfriendly foreign country.'

Bailey again wrote his father, who in turn approached Lord Roberts, but without immediate success. The rules were quite strict, Bailey was told: to check the constant clamour of young officers anxious to see active service, a rule had been passed that no application for a transfer would be entertained until an officer had served his preliminary year with a British regiment and a year with the Indian regiment to which he had been posted. So it seemed that Bailey would have to stay where he was. Then came a letter from Lord Roberts's Military Secretary telling him that once his year with the Middlesex was up, he could apply to go anywhere he wanted, quoting the letter as authority. Whether family influence is still as strong in the British Army today one rather doubts, though it still counts for a great deal, but before 1914, and indeed 1939, it was paramount.

Perhaps it would be worth while pausing here to explain why Bailey should have found himself in the Nilgiri Hills, and why he so urgently wanted to get north. It was army policy at this time to send young officers to the hills for their first year to give them a chance to become acclimatised to India and learn the official Indian Army language, Urdu, which they must master before commanding native troops. It also initiated them into the routine of soldiering and gave them some much-needed practical experience of drill, inspections, and mounting guards. Even subalterns who had completed the Sandhurst course were somewhat green, and Bailey, of course, had received a mere six months' instruction. With the Middlesex he found himself one of twenty subalterns, all completing their year's attachment, which, as he noted with satisfaction, meant that his day as orderly officer came round only once a month. Also, to his delight, he found that there was a good deal of time available for shooting and fishing. The truth was that the Middlesex, like all the other regiments in central and southern India, had virtually nothing to do.

The situation was as follows. The Indian Army—or perhaps

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one should now call it the British Indian Army—had been in existence some forty-three years when Bailey joined it. Formed when the Crown took over India from the East India Company after the Indian Mutiny, it drew most of its men from the fighting tribes of the north: Sikhs, Punjabis, Rajputs, Dogras, Jats, and Pathans. There were also the Gurkhas who served under an agreement with the ruler of Nepal; and the Mahrattas, a race of Hindu warriors from the area around Belgaum, in Bombay Province. Serving alongside these Indian and Gurkha regiments were British infantry and gunner regiments, completing their Indian tour. All these forces on Indian soil were administered by the Army Headquarters in Delhi, which was also responsible for mounting any active operations decided upon. It cannot be pretended that the Army at this time was in a happy or efficient state, and what saved it from utter decay was the constant threat of active service on the North-West Frontier.

Geographically speaking, India is the country lying south of the Himalayas and south-east of the Indus. This great river, which rises in Tibet, 17,000 feet up among the glaciers to the north of Kailas Parbat, flows for 1,800 miles before it reaches the Arabian Sea near Karachi. For a thousand years the influence of Hinduism has stopped on its banks, and beyond lies Central Asia. Since the dawn of history the Indus has posed insoluble problems to the rulers of India, for—unlike the Himalayas to the east—it forms no considerable military barrier, and invader after invader has swept across its banks. The true barrier between Central and South-East Asia is the Hindu Kush, a great mountain range running from the barren uplands of the Pamirs towards the borders of Persia. Some 600 miles long, and with its main ridges reaching 15,000 and even 20,000 feet, it has fascinated generations of travellers, and Colonel Algernon Durand, who saw it in 1888 from a spur on Nanga Parbat, recorded that ‘The Hindu Kush once seen in its most majestic aspects crushes all comparison’. Between the Hindu Kush, which forms the spine of Afghanistan, and the river Indus lies another chain of mountains, the Safed Koh and Sulaiman Range. Through this chain run the famous passes, the Khyber, the Kurram, and the Bolan—names which occur again and again in Indian history. Every stone in the Khyber, so it has been

said, is soaked by the blood of battle. Briefly, the dilemma in which any ruler of India finds himself is that if he forms his defensive line on the Hindu Kush he has the Khyber behind him; and if he falls back to the Indus plain his positions are dominated by the Sulaiman Range. The British first struck this problem when they took over the Frontier from the Sikh rulers of the Punjab in 1847, and had never come near solving it. Also, as they rapidly discovered, the Frontier tribes—Afridis, Mohmands, Shinwaris, Orakzais, Waziris, Dawaris, Mahsuds, and others—were the most ferocious opponents on earth. War was their first and only profession and they waged it unceasingly, raiding villages, ambushing supply columns, and massacring any force which momentarily lowered its guard.

Even so, the tribes were a minor frontier problem, for beyond lay Afghanistan, whose rulers were traditionally hostile to British interference or influence. And further north beyond the Oxus river lay the arid plains and deserts of Central Asia. Here since the 1840s the Russians had been advancing, gobbling up the rotting khanates one after the other. In June 1865 they annexed Tashkent, in 1868 Samarkand, and the following year Bokhara. Many Englishmen feared that they would not stop until they reached the Hindu Kush, which meant that the Indian Army must push forward also. Other prophets cried that Russia would not be content until she had seized India. So the North-West Frontier assumed increasing importance, and indeed governments at Westminster were to stand or fall by their Frontier policy. Relations with Afghanistan assumed major importance, too, and twice during the nineteenth century British viceroys of India were lured—some say by the mysterious pull of the frontier itself—to send armies north through the passes to occupy the Afghan capital, Kabul. These incursions led to the conflicts known as the First and Second Afghan Wars, the first launched by Lord Auckland in 1839, which led to a disastrous retreat and the loss of an entire army; and the next perpetrated by the poet Lord Lytton in 1878, in which the army was saved by the skill of Lord Roberts. Both viceroys had cause to regret their folly, finding that the cost of keeping open the passes to supply an army stationed north of the Hindu Kush led almost to national bankruptcy. It may be needless to add that

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the Russians ignored any such gestures and went on advancing; they only stopped on the line of the Oxus river after Britain had threatened to declare war. This curious episode which followed, known as the Panjdeh affair, took place in 1884, and though patient negotiation removed the immediate danger of war, it did not remove the threat to India.

No man was more conscious of this threat than Lord Curzon, who had been installed as Viceroy about a year before Bailey's arrival. 'The Great Game', as the conflict with Russia in the Far East was usually known, had obsessed him since his school-days at Eton, where as early as 1877 he had spoken in a debate on the motion 'Are we justified in regarding with equanimity the advance of Russia towards our Indian frontier?'. Since then he had travelled widely and published his celebrated work *Russia in Central Asia* in which he elaborated the theory that Russia's aim was 'To keep England quiet in Europe by keeping her employed in Asia. . . .' History has certainly confirmed this judgment, even though on occasion Curzon tended to forget it himself. Affairs in India as he found them in January 1899 were in complete confusion, and all his demoniac energy and intellectual grasp were required to put the State in order. Government was still reeling from the Pathan Revolt of 1897, in which the Frontier had exploded into flames, and 50,000 troops had been needed to restore order and mete out punishment. To supply this large force, the whole trans-Indus plain and the Punjab itself had to be scoured for bullocks, mules, ponies, and camels to form a Mogul-type baggage train, for the Indian Army still possessed no supply columns. It seemed likely at times that the troops would starve. Apart from such military discomfitures, the Revolt had shown the flimsiness and inadequacy of the civil administration, and there was a loud outcry against the system of paying tribal chiefs allowances to keep the peace, and the corruption of *arbabs* or middlemen. In the political debate at Westminster Lord Roberts called for a renewal of 'the Forward Policy'—that is that British administration and military occupation should push north-west into the tribal territories and towards the frontier with Afghanistan. His opponents, who pointed out with justice that in the last fifty years every renewal of this policy had led to vast expense, failure, and military

disaster, were worsted. However, by the time Curzon arrived the pendulum was swinging back again, and before long Roberts' policy disappeared in the tumult caused by his major reforms.

The largest of these was the creation of the North-West Frontier Province, which in his words was to include 'the whole of the Trans-Indus Districts of the Punjab as far south and including Dera Ismail Khan'. Its head would be a Chief Commissioner, appointed by the Government of India and resident at Peshawar, the Pathan city lying roughly midway between the Indus and the mouth of the Khyber. This province came into being just as Bailey stepped off the boat. But more immediately of importance to him was Curzon's decision to bring out Kitchener as Commander-in-Chief. The hero of Khartoum arrived in November 1902 and his impressions were hardly favourable. A few weeks later he was writing to Lady Salisbury: 'The idea that pervades everyone in India is that the Army is intended to hold India against the Indians . . . I think this is a wrong policy.' All officers and men, he argued, should look to the North-West and hold it their highest duty to prevent external aggression. Regiments in southern India, he discovered, were in a state of decay and held in such contempt by most British officers 'that they would do almost anything to avoid serving in them'. The bulk of the Army, he wrote, was 'scattered and higgledy-piggledy all over the country, without any system whatever'. His immediate remedy was to reorganise the Army into corps and divisions, disband the Punjab Frontier Force (to the fury of most officers), and evolve a system whereby each unit should spend a period on the Frontier under active service conditions. With garrisons reduced to a minimum, he found it was possible to deploy no less than nine divisions to cover the Frontier. Curzon, however, despite his romantic view of 'the Great Game', knew the enormous risks involved in any adventure beyond the Afghan borders and no major expedition in this area was to mark his tenure of the viceroyalty. His chances were taken elsewhere.

But to return to Bailey, still with the Middlesex Regiment in the Nilgiri Hills: his picture of life at this time gives a remarkable confirmation of Kitchener's strictures. The main task of a young officer, it appears, was to learn pages of the drill book by

heart, and later he recorded: 'I can still recite portions about "the exact squareness of the body and shoulders to the front" or "the hands partially clenched . . . the backs of the fingers touching the seams of the trousers lightly". Of what possible use this was to an officer I could never make out.' He also remembered that 'One of my first duties was to stand at attention for what seemed an interminable time while 101 guns were fired for Queen Victoria's funeral. Another military duty was the care of two very old Boer prisoners of war who had been sent up to the hills on account of their health. We used to hear the sentry given his orders which were "not to let the prisoners escape without proper escort".'

In such an atmosphere it is not surprising that Bailey took all the leave that was offered him, to fish for giant *mahseer* in the Bhawani river, shoot bison in Mysore, or hunt tiger with his friend Dick Meinertzhagen. Though exciting enough, his adventures on these trips were very much like those recorded by thousands of officers before or since; the exceptional development was his interest in nature. This extended over a wide field, including birds and insects as well as animals, and, for example, he noted:

'Those who have only seen the few and small butterflies of the English countryside must be thrilled by the numbers, beauty, and size of these insects in the tropics. . . . The natural history of the Nilgiri hills is very interesting. They have certain Himalayan species which must have been cut off countless centuries ago. Conspicuous are a wild goat, a clouded yellow butterfly, and a rhododendron.'

After a few months the Middlesex Regiment was replaced by the Durham Light Infantry, and Bailey, with all the Indian Army subalterns completing their first year, was transferred. From now on there was less time for hunting trips, not because work intervened, but because the Durhams had a passion for polo. Trained by Colonel (later General Sir Beauvoir) De Lisle, this infantry unit had recently caused some astonishment by winning the Indian Polo Championship, traditionally the preserve of the crack cavalry regiments. Bailey therefore soon

found himself paying 400 rupees for an old pony, and learning the rudiments of a game which later on he was to play with varying success in Tibet, Gilgit, Persia, and Chinese Turkestan. When not on the polo field, the pony 'was marched up to Ootacomund for a day's hunting', after which there would be more polo.

When his year's attachment was over, this hard practice in the saddle stood Bailey in good stead, for now he found himself posted (through the influence of Lord Roberts) to the 17th Bengal Lancers* which were stationed at Rawalpindi, at that time the largest military establishment in India, which lies in the northern Punjab, on the railway line to Peshawar. Of this period Bailey writes very little, only mentioning that there was a good deal of polo played and that the regiment owned a farm some twenty miles away in the hills, where he used to shoot *gooral*, the small wild goat. From books, not to mention films, one might imagine that life for a young officer in the Bengal Lancers was romantic, exciting, and full of action, but Bailey does not appear to have found it so. He detested his colonel and thought him very inefficient, and also became bored with the riding classes, and 'standing around watching horses being groomed'. The gorgeous uniforms made little appeal to him, and on the 31st December 1902, by which time he had become somewhat restless, he wrote his father:

'I don't think that because the cavalry wear fine clothes it is any reason whatever for being in it. I would rather be in a regiment that was not kept solely to look at, which is apparently all what the cavalry is. This regiment has never been on service since it was raised. . . .'

The truth was that Bailey was itching to get up to the Frontier and see some action, and he had decided that his best course lay in transferring to a Pioneer regiment. In 1903 he got his way and received a posting to the 32nd Sikh Pioneers, a unit with relatively little glamour whose service included such menial tasks as making roads and tracks. There were three regiments of

*This is the title used by Bailey. In the Indian Army List the title is given as 17th Regiment of Bengal Cavalry.

Sikh Pioneers in the Indian Army, the 23rd and 34th, as well as the 32nd, and what attracted Bailey was that 'besides being first-class fighting men these troops were workers. Each man carried a pick or shovel, and the N.C.O.s axes and saws. . . . They were always on service. . . .'

The Sikh Pioneers had in fact a fine record in action. They sprang from the Indian Mutiny of 1857 in which the Sappers and Miners of the Bengal Army of the East India Company had mutinied, and replacements were needed for the siege of Delhi. The 32nd was the first unit to be raised under the title of the 24th Regiment of Punjab Infantry, Punjab Irregular Force. Later the number and title were changed. Since the Mutiny, the regiment had served in the Second Afghan War, the Chitral Campaign, and at Ambela.

Had he known it Bailey made a wise decision, and indeed there was to follow swiftly the turning point in his career, for a mere ten days after he had reported to his commanding officer, Colonel Brander, a telegram arrived from the Political Officer at Gangtok asking when the unit might be expected. The adjutant and junior officers were somewhat mystified, not knowing where Gangtok might be, but Brander, who had been there in 1888, explained that it lay in Sikkim, the small state at the eastern end of the Himalayas, between Nepal and Bhutan. Why the regiment should be going to Sikkim, except to make roads, no one could guess, but a few days later detailed orders came, and Bailey found himself aboard a train and travelling right across India from Jhelim to Siliguri, at the foot of the Himalayas below Darjeeling. Here the regiment was met by Major Bretherton, of the Supply and Transport Corps, from whom the officers gathered that something more than road making was involved, though no details were available. However, the immediate task was to march up the Teesta Valley (which had no railway in those days), and Bailey soon noted that 'it was full of the most amazing butterflies of which I soon started a collection'. At Rangpo on the Sikkim frontier he was left with his men to cut a road through a steep cliff, later joining the rest of the unit which had marched further up into the hills, at a place called Sham-dong. Still without orders or any notion of what he was to do in Sikkim, apart from road making, Colonel Brander made a

clearing in the bamboo forest, and ordered his men to construct a bandstand. Here the regimental band gave daily concerts and (Bailey records) 'people in high villages round about dropped down to see this wonderful performance'.

Meanwhile there were signs that some major operation was under way:

'Large numbers of mules loaded with army rations and supplies passed us on the way up towards Tibet, as we worked. Moreover we had orders that these convoys were to be delayed as little as possible and that when we knocked off work in the evening we were to leave the road in a condition for them to pass.'

Still Bailey and his brother officers were told nothing, and the first inkling as to what was afoot was gained from a London newspaper which warned its readers 'to keep an eye on the Sikkim-Tibetan frontier'. This item Bailey read and re-read, pondering as to exactly what might be happening and whether it would further his plans. 'I had realised', he said, 'that in those days nothing important happened in India itself. To get on one must learn about the bordering countries.'

But it should be mentioned here that he was not content to wait on events. Having sat his examinations in Urdu—the language of northern India adopted throughout the Indian Army—he had made a start on Persian, aided by a young Afghan who spoke the Kabuli dialect. Later on, when he became convinced that the unit was heading for Tibet, Bailey sent the Afghan away, and engaged a Lepcha, an aboriginal of Sikkim who spoke Tibetan. Events soon showed that he had made a good decision, for as he explained:

'One day as I was superintending the work, a fine looking man riding a beautiful Tibetan pony rode up in his shirt sleeves and passed the time of day with me. He introduced himself as Captain O'Connor, and this began a close friendship which lasted until his death in 1943.* We knew a good

*A few years later O'Connor and Bailey were asked by the Indian Government to standardise the spelling of Tibetan place names.

deal about him. He was one of the only three officers in the Army who had passed the examination on the Tibetan language and the only one, in fact, who could carry on a conversation in Tibetan or act as an interpreter. The plot thickened.'

A few days later Bailey's company were ordered to make preparations for marching to Tibet, and warm clothing and special equipment were issued. Apart from Bailey himself, the only other British officer was Captain Bethune, the company commander, and Bailey writes: 'My excitement was intense. Here was a possibility of active service . . . a prospect of fighting. I was twenty-one.'

While he was still making preparations for the move, there rode past 'a short, stocky man with a heavy dark moustache, rather like Kitchener's, a square jaw, thick bushy eyebrows and a sharp steely gaze that looked you straight in the eye'. This was Colonel Francis Younghusband, to whom Bailey took an immediate liking. At this time just forty years of age, Young-husband had made a unique reputation as a soldier, explorer, geographer, and diplomat. At the age of twenty-three he had embarked on a seven-month expedition to Manchuria, then little known, and climbed mountains not seen by European eyes for two centuries. To rejoin his regiment in India he then decided to travel overland from Peking, a feat not yet accomplished by any man, and having crossed the Gobi desert, went on to Yarkand, by the unknown Aghil and Karakoram ranges. Having made a perilous crossing of the Muztagh Pass—a feature seen by no white man before—he reached Baltistan and then Kashmir. It was an astonishing feat for a young officer, and Younghusband awoke in Simla to find himself famous. In 1889 he returned to explore the passes between Yarkand and Hunza, making a series of incredible journeys into unknown territory, on one occasion meeting a Russian officer, Captain Grombchevski, who charmingly announced that he was exploring the northern approaches to India. In 1889 Younghusband transferred from the Army to the Political Department—virtually the Indian Government's foreign department—and with George Macartney crossed the Little and Great Pamirs. Two years later

he reached the Pamirs via the Gez defile, meeting a Cossack patrol under Colonel Yonoff from whom he learned that Russia proposed to annex territory between China, Afghanistan, and her own frontier, which had not yet been delimited. This encounter sparked off an international incident when Younghusband returned with his report, Lord Salisbury eventually extracting an apology from the Russian Government. Later agreement on the boundaries was reached.

Unlike many explorers, Younghusband was an excellent writer, and *The Heart of a Continent*, published in 1896, won him an enormous reputation as an explorer and authority on Central Asia. He also had the gift of keeping in the news, and in 1895 accompanied the Chitral Relief Force as *The Times* correspondent. During a long leave from 1895 to 1897 he worked for *The Times* in the Transvaal and Rhodesia, and happened to be in Johannesburg when the story of the Jameson raid broke. By the end of the century he was Political Agent of Haraoti and Tonk, and in 1901 was awarded the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal. In 1903 Lord Curzon appointed him Resident (that is the senior Government representative) in Indore. Though short in height, and with no obvious signs of the thruster, Younghusband made an enormous impression on most people meeting him. There was something secret, mystic, about him, and the impression that he wielded unknown forces. Amongst officers of the Indian Army, of course, his fame was immense, and those who were not jealous of him admired him inordinately. To Bailey Younghusband was both a legend and a man who had graphically demonstrated his own theory—that success in the Indian Army lay in action beyond the frontier. To meet him, and under such circumstances, was an experience he could barely have dreamed of.

But what was Younghusband doing on the road to Tibet, that remote and secret kingdom up in the snows of the Himalayas? As Bailey soon learned, he was leading a mission, but why and with what object was still a matter of strict secrecy. Bailey knew better than to press his enquiries, and in any case the important thing was that whatever happened he would be there to see it.

After three years in India his career would get started at last.

2 With Younghusband to Tibet

Geography has legislated that Tibet should remain through the centuries and until modern times the most remote and inaccessible country on earth. Bounded by the Himalayas on the south and the Kun Lun Mountains on the north, its plains lie at over 12,000 feet, and anyone attempting to cross its borders must prepare himself for a long mountain journey across rough tracks and over snow-filled passes. The land area is huge—470,000 square miles, or over twice the area of France; but the population has never been more than 6,000,000, most of the people living in isolation and poverty. Perhaps alone of the nations in the modern world, Tibet has remained a theocracy, with the Dalai Lama—a divine being—as its ruler. Few of the ancient or medieval trade routes went through Tibet; and the successive tides of Central Asian emigration, the Aryans, the Skyths, the Mongols, passed by way of Badakshan and the Hindu Kush. The Tibetans were left alone, as they desired, to develop their own religion, their own culture and language, and their own quiet, changeless form of life. Even by the end of the nineteenth century, knowledge of Tibet in the West was fragmentary.

The first contact was made in 1627, when a Jesuit mission visited Shigatse, a trade centre on the upper reaches of the Tsangpo river, some 150 miles to the north-west of Lhasa, the capital. In 1661 another band of Jesuits reached Lhasa, to be ousted in 1707 by the Capuchins, who held on until 1745. By this time the country had come under the sway of the Chinese,

who gradually tightened their grip. Internally, the course of events led to the gradual consolidation of the power of the Tibetan Church, of which the Dalai Lama was head, over the political affairs of the country. It may be explained here that each Dalai Lama was believed to be the reincarnation of his predecessor, and until he attained majority at the age of eighteen, his authority devolved on a Regent.* Not surprisingly many Lamas failed to live till eighteen, and the Regents—like politicians of any other nation—had a marked tendency to cling to power. Though a Dutchman, van der Putte, had lived in Tibet for several years in the early eighteenth century, it was 1774 before the first Englishman arrived. He was a young man called George Bogle, despatched by Warren Hastings, who hoped to start up trade with China via Tibet. He was to be disappointed. In 1792 the Nepalese attacked the country, to be driven out by the Chinese, and one result of this conflict was that all relations with India were severed. It was 1811 before any further contact was made—by an eccentric friend of Charles Lamb, the essayist, called Thomas Manning. Disguised as a Chinese he reached Lhasa where he was received in public audience by the ninth Dalai Lama, at this time a boy of seven, and got back to Calcutta, still in remarkably good health, if pettish and quarrelsome and more eccentric than ever. His journals were not published until long after his death.

In 1900 Manning was the last Englishman to have reached Lhasa, which by now had become known in the West as ‘the Forbidden City’.

This situation did not exist for want of trying. Traveller after traveller and expedition after expedition hurled themselves against the great mountain barriers. Bower, Carey, the Littledales, Deasy, Rawling and countless others from England; Grenard, de Rhins, and Prince Henry of Orleans, from France; Sven Hedin from Sweden; Prejvalsky, not to mention a series of military men with their Cossack escorts, from Russia. None of these got to within 200 miles of Lhasa before giving up. The first real success was gained by the Japanese, Ekai Kawaguchi, who reached Lhasa in 1901, disguised as a Chinese, but soon had to

*The Tashi (or Panchen) Lama who resided at Shigatse was considered more holy by most Tibetans.

make a hasty retreat. From the 1860s onwards, however, the Survey of India were sending native agents to Tibet, making topographical surveys, or at least bringing back data for them. These men were known only by code names, and naturally had to travel in disguise; their courage and resource were great, and they covered thousands of miles of difficult and mountainous territory. Through their efforts the main geographical features of Tibet gradually became recorded. It was one of these agents, Sarat Chandra Das, whom Kipling used for the character of Hurree Chunder Mookerjee in *Kim*.

The interest of the Indian Government was not, of course, principally geographical; what it feared was that Russia would establish her influence in Lhasa, that Tibet would be drawn into 'the Great Game'. Many of these fears were bred through ignorance, but they were real nevertheless, and in time they were to lead to one of the most fantastic episodes in the history of the British Raj.

The train of events ran as follows. In 1886 a Tibetan force suddenly appeared in the Chumbi Valley, a strip of cultivated land between Sikkim and Bhutan, and occupied a stretch of Sikkimese territory some twenty miles in depth. Two years later a British expedition pushed the invaders back beyond the Tibetan frontier, and as a result of this incident a Sikkim-Tibet Convention was agreed with China, whose suzerainty over Tibet was recognised by the British. In 1893 the convention was strengthened by a set of trade regulations. The main purpose of these agreements, so far as Britain was concerned, was to secure formal recognition by the Chinese of her rights in Sikkim. In 1894 came the Sino-Japanese war, which weakened the Chinese hold over Tibet considerably, and not unexpectedly the Tibetans took the opportunity to obstruct trade and overthrow boundary cairns, declaring that they had not been party to the Convention. Though the quarrel was remote and local, the Indian Government eventually decided that something must be done, though as the Tibetans refused to attend meetings, and the Chinese usually excused themselves because of lack of transport, it was difficult to decide what it might be. When Curzon arrived in India he found that no clear policy towards Tibet had been drawn up, although the terms of the Convention of 1890 were

now being openly violated, and an illegal tariff was being put on all goods entering the country from India. Some of his advisers, Curzon learned, were disposed to leave well alone, pointing out that while Sinkiang remained under China, India's North-West Frontier was protected from Russia by two buffer-states, one beyond the other. Others pointed out, however, that should Russia take over Sinkiang, then the position would change dramatically. In 1898 Sir John Ardagh, Director of Military Intelligence, went so far as to declare: 'Unless we secure the reversion of Lhasa, we may find the Russians there before us.'

By the following year evidence had arrived which seemed to indicate that Ardagh was not exaggerating, for on the 30th April the Political Officer in Sikkim wrote, quoting a Chinese official as remarking: '. . . if the Indian Government insisted on the Convention boundary, as understood by us, the Tibetans would fall back on the support of Russia, who had already offered them assistance.' About the time he read this report Curzon heard that a party of Russians had visited Lhasa during the previous winter, and wrote to Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India: 'There seems little doubt that Russian agents, and possibly even someone of Russian origin, have been at Lhasa, and I believe that the Tibetan Government is coming to the conclusion that it will have to make friends with one or the other of the two Great Powers.' How much credence Hamilton placed on Curzon's letter it is hard to say, but in the October of the following year he received clear confirmation that something was definitely going on. This came in a report from the Chargé d'Affaires in St. Petersburg who revealed that on the 30th September a Mongolian called Aharamba-Agyan-Dorjief, described as 'first Tsanit Hamba to the Dalai Lama', had been received in audience by the Czar in the Livadia Palace at Yalta. In June 1901—having travelled through India in disguise—Dorjief was back again with eight envoys, and a Russian newspaper went so far as to speculate: 'Under the circumstances, a *rapprochement* with Russia must seem to the Dalai Lama the most natural step, as Russia is the only power able to counteract the intrigues of Great Britain, who has so long been trying to obtain admission to Tibet.'

This episode had no parallel in Tibetan history and the

consternation in Delhi and Westminster was considerable. Though Count Lamsdorff, the Russian Foreign Minister, tried to assure the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg that the Tibetan mission was of a religious rather than political nature and 'of the same character as those sent by the pope to the faithful in foreign lands' this did little to ease the situation. The Ambassador was instructed to inform Lamsdorff that 'His Majesty's Government could not regard with indifference any proceedings which might have a tendency to disturb or alter the existing status of Tibet'. Though the Russians gave further assurances, the situation still deteriorated and on the 2nd August 1902 the British Minister in Peking, Sir Ernest Satow, reported rumours of a secret agreement concerning Tibet between Russia and China. More detailed reports flowed in from other sources, and the Chinese Government received a stiff warning that Britain would take any steps necessary to protect her interests. Though China and then Russia strenuously denied the existence of any such agreement, few were convinced; and from agents and spies and frontier posts reports kept pouring in, not only of agreements, but of Russian agents and engineers and even armed forces heading for Tibet. It is not surprising that Curzon, whose letters to the Dalai Lama had been returned unopened, became convinced that only one course lay open to him: to send a mission to Lhasa.

The British Government, however, did not wish to be rushed, especially as Russia had now delivered a note disclaiming any interest in Tibet, but warning that *she* 'could not remain indifferent to any serious disturbances of the *status quo*'. After several weeks of indeterminate correspondence the plan was modified, Curzon announcing that he proposed to open negotiations with Tibet and China at Khamba Dzong, the nearest Tibetan village across the border from Giaogong in Tibet. The mission would be escorted by a force of 200 troops, and a reserve would be held in Sikkim, ready to push forward as required. If the Chinese and Tibetans failed to arrive at the venue the mission would move forward to Shigatse or Gyantse, on the road to Lhasa. On the 29th April 1904 the British Government cabled their agreement, subject to the proviso that no advance was to be made from Kamba Dzong without further reference. A week

later Major Younghusband was appointed to lead the mission, being given the temporary rank of colonel.

Younghusband was delighted with the news, having wanted to reach Lhasa for many years. As far back as 1889 he had tried to persuade his commanding officer to let him go on a lone journey in disguise. Receiving Curzon's cable he wrote to his father: 'This is a really magnificent business I have dropped in for . . .' He was utterly convinced that he was the right man for the job; that he and no one else could bring it off. Also he was delighted to learn that Kitchener—though slightly more cautious than Curzon—was 'thoroughly in earnest about the business'. So, after briefings and discussions, he took the road for Sikkim, and came across Bailey's company at Gangtok.

By mid-June all was ready and the mission and its escort began climbing the precarious track to Khamba Dzong. Bailey has left no description of this section of the march, though it must have seemed as spectacular as it was energetic. On the 26th June the column reached Tangu, which lay at 12,000 feet, a pleasant place surrounded by flowery meadows. Here it paused, and the following week Colonel Brander came up with the remainder of the 32nd Pioneers. On the 4th July Younghusband sent forward O'Connor and White, two members of the mission, with orders to make contact with the Tibetans at Giaogong. Captain Bethune's company was detailed as escort, and so Bailey found himself witnessing the first scene of the drama. There was a wall at Giaogong which the Tibetans claimed as their boundary, and he records:

'We heard that it was guarded by Tibetan troops and after settling the camp Bethune and I rode towards it. We saw many men moving about but they appeared to be unarmed.

The next morning was an exciting one. Would the Tibetans at the wall fight or not? As we approached I was sent on with our advanced line of skirmishers. These men I extended to five paces. Our orders were to move up to the wall and over it, taking no notice of any Tibetans who might try to stop us. If fired on we were to lie down behind what cover we could find and wait for orders. It was important that if

hostilities broke out it should be the Tibetans and not we who began them.

It was an unpleasant feeling, riding up to the wall not knowing whether, at any moment, fire might be opened.'

Spotting a gap in the wall, Bailey rode straight through to be surrounded by a dozen or so men who all began shouting at him. Finally he realised that one of the men was speaking Urdu, and making a request that he should go into a tent and drink milk. Bailey agreed and began riding forward to the tents, but then he saw that Bethune and Claude White (Political Officer, Sikkim) had followed him and were surrounded by more Tibetans, who were trying to stop them going further. As things settled down O'Connor explained that White would be glad to talk to Tibetan officers, but that serious discussion must be postponed until Colonel Younghusband arrived at Khamba Dzong. Bailey continues:

'The next day we marched eight miles to Giri, a small Chinese fort garrisoned by 25 soldiers. O'Connor and I rode up to the gate and were met by an English-speaking Chinese who said that Mr. Ho Kuang-hai was inside and would like to talk to Mr. White. O'Connor said he would be welcome at our camp when it was pitched. Later he came with the usual request that we should go back to Giaogong and discuss matters on the actual frontier, as claimed by the Tibetans. I attended this meeting and it was the first of many such discussions carried on with the Tibetans which I was privileged to attend. These experiences were useful to me in many ways and taught me to understand good and high class Tibetan.'

A curious incident happened while the party was at Giri. Major Bretherton suggested to Bailey that they should catch some small fish in a nearby stream with a butterfly net and cook them like whitebait. When they arrived, however, it was to find that all the fish were dead and lying belly upwards. Hurrying back to camp, the officers warned the doctor, suspecting that the river had been poisoned deliberately by the Tibetans. When some of the fish were sent to Calcutta, however, no trace of poison

could be found, and the fish seemed to have died suddenly of natural causes. The mystery has never been explained, though anyone who has campaigned in the East must suspect that some of the troops had gone 'fishing with explosives'.

On the 7th July the column reached Khamba Dzong, where, so Bailey records, they made an entrenched camp 'of which several Everest expeditions in recent years have seen the traces'. He adds:

'I think we all enjoyed our time here. We were all busy. Colonel Younghusband, who arrived a few days after us, was trying to get the Tibetans to discuss things. This they resolutely refused to do unless we went back to Yatung or to the frontier at Giaogong. The chief Tibetan argument in any negotiation was "You may be right but if I agreed to that I should be punished and probably lose my head".'

What Bailey did not mention was that Younghusband blamed the Tibetan intransigence to White's high-handedness, probably without justification. It was also found that Mr. Ho, the Chinese delegate, was of a rank inferior to that required by a plenipotentiary. A letter from Curzon secured his recall, but his replacement, Colonel Chao, proved to be of an even lower grade in the Imperial hierarchy. So the Tibet Frontier Commission, as the party was now designated, remained at Khamba Dzong for five months having achieved nothing whatsoever. Both for soldiers and politicians, it was a time of great and increasing frustration.

Bailey, however, managed to keep himself busy, having been given orders to train some of the Pioneers as Mounted Infantry. The job was far from easy for, apart from the heavy load of tools each man carried, the short stature of the Gurkhas allocated him, and their hillmen's legs, made riding almost an impossibility. However, he bought twenty ponies, and having scrounged saddlery off everyone 'from Younghusband down to the junior clerks' he made a start.

'We drilled on the large plain, extending, wheeling, closing, dismounting to fire, etc. The moment we started a hare the formation was immediately broken up and all rode in the

hunt. If the hare was killed the man who had ridden best was given it. Line was then formed and we continued our drill. This made the men keen and quick; with them I enjoyed our parades and there was great competition to enlist in the M.I.’

The reason behind Bailey’s new task was this: In September 1903 Colonel J. R. L. Macdonald of the Royal Engineers had been appointed Commandant R.E. on the road from Siliguri onwards. A highly rank-conscious, stiff, and cautious officer whom many thought incompetent, he was appointed for the simple reason that he happened to be the senior Sapper officer on the spot. Later on, to Younghusband’s increasing horror, he became military commander of the troops accompanying the mission, having been promoted brigadier-general. The friction between the two men was constant and at times almost disastrous. However, it was Macdonald who decided that as no Mounted Infantry had been allotted to him, a hundred Sikhs and Gurkhas would have to be trained for the purpose. Originally it was suggested that they should be mounted on yaks, but later ponies were supplied.

But to return to Bailey: once his men were well ahead with their training, he led patrols into the mountains, reconnoitring and sending back reports of any parties of Tibetans observed. Often information would come in that their forces had occupied villages fifteen or twenty miles away and he would ride off to obtain confirmation. Each time he entered a village, however, the people would rush forward and seize his bridle, volubly trying to persuade him to go back. If his arrival became known to the authorities, they would tell him, ‘we shall lose our heads’.

The military experience apart, these were important days for Bailey; in travelling and meeting people and talking to them, he was laying the foundations of his knowledge of Tibet, the country on which he was to become one of the leading authorities. Out of the saddle he was busy with his books:

‘I spent some time each day learning colloquial Tibetan. I evolved a system of my own. I would take a small sentence such as “Where are you going?” and have it put into Tibetan. Then I would find out which part of the sentence meant

“where”, which “you” etc. and then shoot it off at the first Tibetan I met on the road. It was surprising how bright the ordinary yak herd would be, and he would frequently burst out into a long rigmarole, thinking I must know the language perfectly.’

Bailey also learned sentences useful to him during patrolling, such as ‘Where does this road lead to? If you lie to me, I’ll shoot you’, or ‘Let go of my bridle or I’ll shoot you dead’. In time he worked on more colourful threats until ‘the man who was teaching me went to O’Connor to ask that such a fierce man was not let loose on the country’.

Inevitably as the months went by with no sign of any talks with the Tibetans, time began to hang heavily, and various sporting events were organised. An area was cleared for a football pitch, and the officers ordered up polo sticks from India. Bailey found himself playing soccer every day and indulging ‘in a little mild polo’. He still managed, however, to ‘swan about the country’ as he puts it, collecting natural history and geological specimens, to the annoyance of the Tibetans who suspected his motives. He also commanded the escort accompanying O’Connor and White when they explored the country east of Khamba Dzong, and reconnoitred a route to Kala Tso (i.e. lake) on the road to Gyantse.

Such reconnaissances were becoming of vital importance, for by now it was quite clear that unless the mission were to be abandoned, something drastic would have to be done. As Bailey put it:

‘It was slowly brought home to the authorities both in Simla and London that no settlement would be possible at Kamba Dzong and that a further move would eventually be necessary. So it was proposed that the main line of communications should be through the Chumbi Valley and that our small force already north of the Himalayas should move over the open Tibetan plateau and join the main force somewhere north of Chumbi Yatung or Kala Tso.’

A glance at the map will make Bailey’s meaning clear. Obviously the most effective way of exerting pressure was to

move the expedition along the route towards Lhasa, the capital, and this ran from Siliguri (south of Darjeeling) and through Kalimpong, Chumbi, over the Jelep La, Guru, and into the Kala Tso to Gyantse. Here it left the valley of the Nyang Ghu to strike east across the mountains for the last two hundred miles to Lhasa. Struggling up the precipitous Jelep La, one of the Tommies remarked, 'They say Tibet is a table land—this must be the bloody leg!'

All the signs were that the Tibetans would fight with every weapon at their command.

At this stage, it must be mentioned, the British Government did not envisage an advance on Lhasa, and Lord George Hamilton's cable of the 1st October sanctioned only the occupation of the Chumbi Valley and an advance as far as Gyantse. Here, it was laid down, 'the force would not attack the place, but . . . establish a fortified post, and invite Tibetans and Chinese to resume negotiations'. What with tangled diplomatic negotiations and Macdonald's obsessive caution, it was the 4th January 1904 before the advance began. As was now recognised, the supply problems were enormous, and it may be doubted if any expedition in the history of warfare has employed such a wide range of pack animals. There were 7,000 mules, over 5,000 bullocks, 6 camels, 138 buffaloes, 185 riding ponies, 1,372 pack ponies, 2,953 Nepalese yaks, 1,513 Tibetan yaks, and 1,111 ekka ponies. The whole force had to pass through the Tista Valley, where anthrax, foot-and-mouth disease, and other diseases were endemic, and many of the animals died through eating aconite on the passes, the plant usually known in England as wolfsbane. As grazing became scarce the problem of keeping this great menagerie alive must have been enormous, and one can imagine the tortured staff officers, working on the traditional and nightmare sums whereby yaks were allocated to carry hay for yaks who were carrying hay to feed yaks who were carrying hay to feed yaks . . . and so on *ad infinitum*. Eventually the problem was only solved by cold and disease, added to starvation; virtually all the camels and buffaloes and Nepalese yaks died, three-quarters of the Tibetan yaks, and two-thirds of the pack ponies. Only the mules showed any considerable resources of character and stamina.

It was the 1st January when Bailey and his twenty-five Mounted Infantry reached the main force at Chumbi, having come via Tangu and the Donkya La Pass. This was a formidable test of endurance over unknown territory, the Donkya La lying at over 18,000 feet and no point on the route being at less than 14,500 feet. He now came under Major W. J. Ottley, commander of Mounted Infantry, who considerately gave him two days' complete rest before the march north-east began. Apart from the Pioneers, the force now included a company of Bengal Sappers and Miners, a section from No. 7 British Mountain Battery, and a Maxim Gun detachment from the Norfolk Regiment. The total was 1,000 rifles, two guns, and four Maxims.

The first day's march was a mere six miles to the foot of the Tang La, where an attack from the Tibetans was expected. Nothing happened, however, and on the 8th the force reached a point beyond the village of Tuna which stood at 15,000 feet on a bare plain. Major Ottley described it as 'one of the most miserable and uninviting spots on the face of the globe'. Despite the special clothing, the sepoy's were feeling the cold, and the coolies were finding the altitude very trying. At night there were fifty-seven degrees of frost. On the 9th Bailey led a patrol to search for Tibetan troops, but only came across four armed men who bolted at the sight of him. Giving chase, he captured the men, one of whom proved to be cook to the Tibetan general. Having been interrogated at headquarters, the men were released.

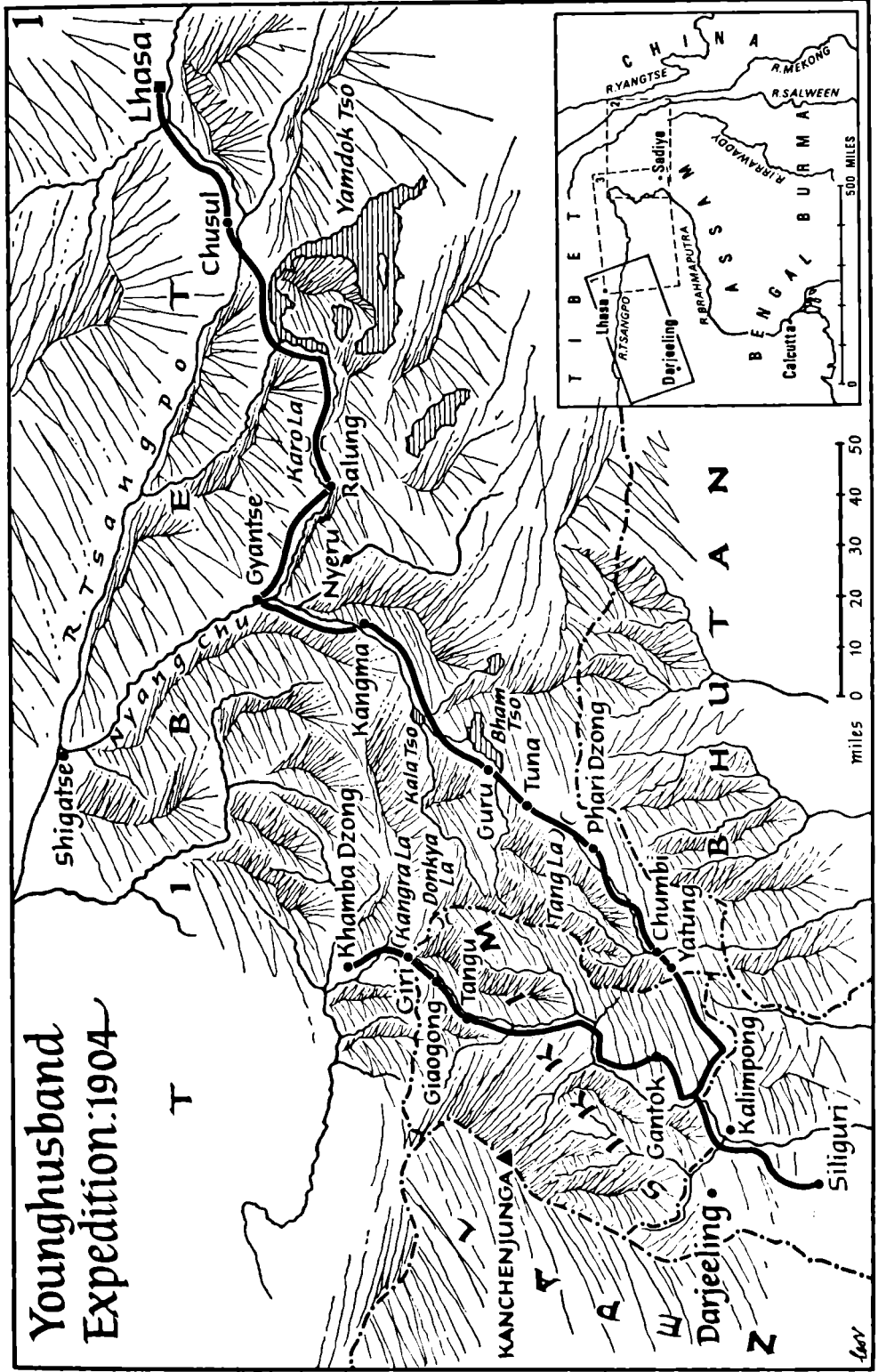
Ottley heard firing and rode towards it. Breasting a hill, he looked down on 'the Tibetan army we had heard so much about, between 2,000 and 3,000 of them in two camps, about 500 feet below us, and only 1,100 yards off'. Immediately Ottley heliographed a report, which was handed to Macdonald a few minutes later.

With minor incidents the advance continued, Younghusband and his mission moving up behind the leading troops. From the 11th to 18th there was a halt at Phari Dzong, where excellent relations were established with the local yak drivers. Later the force returned to winter quarters at Chumbi, while Younghusband and an escort remained at Tuna. Nothing more

happened of any consequence until the 13th January when Younghusband rode forward the ten miles to Guru, accompanied only by O'Connor and a subaltern called Sawyer, from the 23rd Pioneers.

Guru was a small, poverty-stricken village, and as the trio approached they could see Tibetan soldiers moving around, collecting yak-dung for their camp-fires. Asking to be taken to the general, Younghusband was led to a building, where, he says: 'I was received at the head of the stairs by a polite, well-dressed, and well-mannered man who was . . . most cordial in his greeting. Other Generals stood behind him . . .' When the two parties had shaken hands, Younghusband with O'Connor and Sawyer were taken into a room where were waiting what he describes as 'three Lhasa monks' but who in fact must have been senior Tibetan officials. After preliminary courtesies Younghusband explained that he had ridden forward unaccompanied by a military escort in the hope of reaching an amicable settlement. To this the general retorted that the Tibetan people 'had a covenant that no Europeans were ever to be allowed to enter their country, and the reason was that they wished to preserve their religion'. If the British wanted a settlement, he added, then they must go back to Yatung. Unwisely Younghusband raised the Russia bogey, asking why the Dalai Lama was corresponding with St. Petersburg and sending Dorjief on missions there. In rebuttal the Tibetans explained that Dorjief was not a Tibetan but a Mongol; and in any case Tibet had no truck with the Russians. The discussions continued on a fairly civilised level until Younghusband rose to leave, when the general and the monks began threatening him and cursing him for having dared to set foot on their territory. Keeping his head, Younghusband smiled pleasantly, and asked O'Connor to explain that the talk would be reported to his government, and he hoped that the Tibetans would report to Lhasa. Eventually the atmosphere relaxed, and the visitors were allowed to leave unmolested. It had been a narrow shave, however; and when Younghusband informed Curzon what had happened he received a sharp rebuke. 'Remember that in the eyes of His Majesty's Government', Curzon wrote, 'we are advancing not because of Dorjief . . . or the Russian spies in Lhasa, but because of our Convention

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shamelessly violated, our frontiers trespassed upon, our subjects arrested, our representatives ignored. In your recent talk with the Tibetan General and the monks you seem to have forgotten this . . .’

For the next two months, the yaks, the mules, and the camels, scaled the treacherous mountain paths and the forward dumps were gradually built up. There was not only the cold to contend with but snow blizzards, and on one occasion the sepoy went without food for thirty-six hours. Drivers arrived at Tuna frozen to the waist; there were fifty cases of frostbite; and seventy Gurkhas went down with snow-blindness. By the 6th March Younghusband was cursing Macdonald for his pusillanimity and inertia, to be told that everything would be ready ‘for an advance early in April’.

It was a few days before then that Bailey came into the picture. On the 28th March he was sent forward to reconnoitre Guru, and wrote soon afterwards:

‘About two miles on the Tuna side there is a spur from which a river comes out of the ground. When I got there I found the Tibetans had built a wall and also sangared* the spur for some way along it. I left the wall and rode round it over very broken ground, and got round to Guru . . . I thought the Tibetans would try and cut me off from Tuna, so I left two men at a place where I could see the wall, and told them to let me know if the Tibetans lined across our rear.’

In fact, having taken some photographs, Bailey got back without much trouble.

On the 30th Macdonald rode into camp, with four companies of Pioneers, two companies of Gurkhas, and two guns of the Mountain Battery. The following morning he ordered that bedding and kits were to be bundled up and hidden, and all transports sent back, to make the Tibetans imagine that a relief had taken place and the size of the force remained the same as before. Then at 8 a.m. on the 31st March the troops fell in and the advance began in earnest, Bailey and his Mounted Infantry being on the left of the front line of troops.

*A sangar is a low protective wall made of stones.

‘When we got near to the wall, some Tibetans came out to meet us and ask us to go back. They were sent back and then the Depon (General) himself came out, and he with some officials and Macdonald and Younghusband sat on the ground and talked for some time (I took some photos of this) and we halted. Then the Depon and officials went back and we moved on.’

Bailey now received orders to take the pass with the sangars to the left of the wall. As he moved forward the Tibetans rushed to occupy the sangars, but did not fire on him, and he managed to get round behind them.

‘We then told the Tibetans to lay down their arms. They refused, and we had a bit of a scuffle in which a man threw a stone and hit Peterson on the head. A Pathan immediately bayoneted him, and they all ran down the hill. We all followed these men . . . Then we heard two or three shots fired on our right, and Peterson sent me up the hill to see what was going on. I saw the Tibetans running towards Guru from the wall, but there was no firing, and I then sent a man down to tell Peterson so. Then I saw the Pioneer M.I. ride out on the right flank of the running Tibetans and fire. The Tibetans then fired on Peterson, the first shot hitting his pony. They continued firing . . . I crossed the stream near Guru and fired at the men going into the village. I got up to a wall about 300 yards from the village, and was firing whenever a man left it. They were firing out of the windows, so we could never see the men who were firing at us.’

Bailey had not sufficient men to rush the village, but when the Gurkhas came up they all rushed together. When the fighting was over they found about a hundred men in the houses, most of them wounded. It was fortunate, Bailey adds, that the Tibetans stopped firing once they saw the charge coming in, for otherwise his party would have suffered a good many casualties.

Like anyone in an engagement, Bailey had only seen a fraction of what happened. Macdonald’s main force was facing the wall while some Mounted Infantry and the Maxim guns curved

round to the right flank. With Bailey on the left, the Tibetans were virtually surrounded, and their general still lingering *in front of the wall*, looked somewhat bewildered. After some discussion Younghusband and Macdonald decided that the Tibetans must be disarmed, but the job was harder than it seemed. Never having experienced the power of machine-guns, the Tibetans were under the impression that their own numbers gave them superiority, and soon a series of wrestling matches began, while Sikhs and Gurkhas tried to part swords and matchlocks from their owners. Soon there was confusion and tempers grew frayed, and oaths were exchanged in a variety of languages. Realising at last that he must do something positive, the Tibetan general mounted his pony and galloped round the wall, to take charge of the *mêlée*. When a Sikh grabbed his bridle the general shot him through the jaw, and at once firing broke out. From the left flank volley after volley hit the swirling mass of Tibetans, the Gurkhas taking aim at point-blank range. On the right the Maxims opened up. The Sikhs began firing frontally across the wall, and then shrapnel began bursting along the escape route. Finally the Tibetans had enough and began to retreat; but even now they did not run—merely walked slowly through the murderous curtain of fire till gaining the shelter of a spur some 800 yards back. Seven hundred men lay dead on the field, among them the general. The slaughter was so great and the battle so one-sided that many officers and men were sickened by it. But given the necessity to clear the road to Gyantse, and the Tibetans' refusal to disarm, Younghusband felt there was no alternative to stern action. He hoped that in future the official in Lhasa would not be quite so stubborn; and, possibly to his relief, his men found three Russian rifles among the arms captured.

The advance went on, but from Bailey's letters it would seem that the men were now becoming somewhat uneasy about the restrictions placed on them when encountering opposition.

'They still call this a peaceful mission, and so we are never allowed to fire until fired on . . . I think this stupid order will be changed. Our men say they will not wait to be fired on again, but will fire on every village they see.'

What may have helped to induce this mood was a strong rumour running through the ranks that the Tibetan Army planned to stand 'in a narrow gorge' just beyond Khangmar. Macdonald took the rumour seriously too, for on the 8th April Bailey and Peterson were sent forward to reconnoitre as far as the village, and if possible, beyond it.

'At one village we got a man who said he had been to Kangma and that the Tibetans had built a wall there, and they had received a large supply of powder and bullets from Gyantse. . . . When we got near Khangmar, we saw all the hills on the right of the valley lined with sangars. The left was very steep. Peterson thought the general might want to turn them out, so sent me to get above the sangars. It was an awful climb and took me six hours.'

Nearing the sangars, Bailey sent two scouts ahead, and soon one of these began signalling 'Enemy in Sight'. Then firing broke out, and hurrying forward he saw parties of men leaving the wall they had built across the valley. Next day when Macdonald and the main body came up, opinion was that the Tibetans would make a stand, for the position looked almost impregnable. On either side of the wall the sides of the gorge rose up to 3,000 feet, and the only track was flanked by a raging torrent. However, the Gurkhas began scaling the heights on the left, and with the Mountain Battery giving support, the 32nd Pioneers went forward to clear the valley. Soon it was all over. With the Maxims directing a steady fire into their ranks, the Tibetans fled, leaving 200 of their number on the field.

Next day Gyantse, the third most important town in Tibet, came into sight. Bailey was again reconnoitring ahead of the main force, and had a running scrap with some mounted Tibetans, taking five prisoners. On the 12th he led a patrol into Gyantse, recording that 'The people came out and stared at us, and one man came up and said he was a Mussulman, and the only one in the place, and that he was very pleased to see me . . . Sometime afterwards the general and force marched up . . . Then two companies of the 32nd went into the Jong [i.e. fort] and occupied it without any fighting.' Curiously enough, Bailey

gives no description of Gyantse and its giant fort, which is sited on an outcrop of rock and dominates the plain from a height of 500 feet.

The town itself, with its mean streets and wretched little shops, proved a disappointment, though the people were friendly. Younghusband recorded that 'they had not the slightest wish to fight us, and only desired to escape being commandeered by the Lhasa authorities'. Also, the place was 2,000 feet lower than Tuna, and very much warmer, and with spring coming on, the valley began to fill with flowers.

But politically the atmosphere remained frozen, and finding the Tibetans no more willing to negotiate than before, Younghusband telegraphed the Government on the 22nd April 'that the best way to meet these dilatory tactics was . . . to move the Mission straight to Lhasa. . . . This I said would be the most effective and only permanent way of clinching matters.' Before any reply had been received, however, word reached him that Tibetan forces were collecting at the Karo La, a pass on the route to Lhasa. Colonel Brander and the 32nd went forward to investigate, and behind a wall in the defile he found 3,000 men massed, and signalled his intention to deal with them. Macdonald had gone back to set up posts along the line of communications, and when he heard the news was suitably horrified. The mission, he whined, had permission to reach Gyantse only, and what happened beyond was none of its business. Later on he signalled Brander: 'Fear your action will be considered as attempt to force hand of Government. Younghusband's concurrence does not relieve you of responsibility.' Younghusband, of course, had taken a desperate gamble in letting Brander go forward; he risked not only recall but disgrace. Still, in modern parlance, he continued 'to play it cool', sensing that the Tibetan mood was hardening, and only a march on Lhasa would resolve the growing dilemma.

But even Younghusband did not foresee the next move. Having evacuated the fort because of water problems, the small force was now camped at Chang Lo, a small hamlet by a river, some 1,000 yards off. At 4.30 a.m. on the 5th May a force of 800 men suddenly swept down on the camp, surrounded it, and poured in a heavy, if ill-organised, fire. Confused at first, the

small garrison—120 rifles—manned the loopholes, and fired into the surrounding mass with deadly effect. Next morning Younghusband was able to write Curzon, in a style reminiscent of the *Boy's Own Paper*: ‘. . . all round the post were the dead bodies of Tibetans—140 is, I think, the exact number—and away over the plain the remainder were flying, pursued by half our garrison and by my Parsi clerk, who with a revolver in his hand had been my constant fear all through the attack.’

From this letter, one would hardly guess that Younghusband was the leader of a peaceful mission, but at this time, he believed that the more violent the Tibetans became the more they played into his hands. Before long he was signalling: ‘Attack confirms impression I had formed that Lhasa Government are irreconcilable, and I trust that His Majesty's Government . . . will remember that I have now been ten months in Tibet, and that I have met with nothing but insult the whole time in spite of the extreme forbearance I have shown.’

The following day Brander attacked the Karo La. The pass is a defile ten miles long, its highest point at 16,600 feet and the mountains on either side 4,000 feet higher. Towards the head of the pass the defile opens out, and here the Tibetans had built a wall 900 yards long, covered by sangars on the right flank. Major Ottley called it ‘a prodigiously strong natural position’ and he did not exaggerate. For his attack Brander had 400 men, and chose to send the Gurkhas up the cliffs to the right, while the 32nd and the Mounted Infantry were to work their way along the bed of the stream. Unfortunately Bailey has left no account of his part in this action, but he was probably with the Mounted Infantry, who were posted behind the Pioneers, ready to dash after the Tibetans once the wall had been carried. Things went wrong, and Bethune found his company exposed to an accurate fusillade from the Tibetan matchlocks and was forced to retire. Now the sangars became alive with Tibetans, and a heavy fire came down. Bethune was hit and many of his men went down also. It was 1300 hours before the situation improved, but then the Gurkhas got above the sangars, and to the Tibetans' surprise they were subject to an accurate fire from where they least expected it. But the loss of the sangars made no impact on the main position behind the wall, and Brander was forced to send

a small party up the hill to the right, where they secured a perilous lodgment eighty yards from the Tibetan forces. When the latter opened up at the remaining sangars, the 32nd brought a sustained fire against the wall, the Maxims joining in. Eventually the Tibetans behind the wall broke and fled, the Mounted Infantry chasing them at full gallop down the frozen river bed. The pursuit went on for another eight miles. This action, incidentally, was fought at a greater altitude than any other ground battle in history.

Believing that Brander's force remained intact, and could now spare some men to reinforce the depleted garrison at Gyantse, Younghusband was delighted a few weeks later to receive a telegram from the Government which reached him on the 12th May. This stated their agreement that 'recent events make it inevitable that the Mission must advance to Lhasa unless the Tibetans consent to open negotiations at Gyantse'. If nothing happened within one month, the march could therefore continue.

By this time Curzon had been replaced by Amphill, and Younghusband no longer enjoyed the complete confidence of the Government. Macdonald—messaging around some 150 miles from Gyantse—was charged with securing the safety of the mission, a task which everyone imagined he was committed to already. Then, to add to Younghusband's discomfiture, the Tibetan forces converged on his camp at Gyantse and besieged it for seven weeks. Day after day twenty cannon and jingals brought from Lhasa fired into the small encampment at Chang Lo, but without making any great impact. Through shortage of ammunition and lack of artillery the garrison were unable to make any effective reply, but somehow convoys managed to come in, bringing mail apart from supplies, and the Mounted Infantry scoured the surrounding countryside, burning villages, and driving away cattle. On the 24th May two ten-pounders of the 7th Mountain Battery joined the garrison, together with detachments of Pioneers and Mounted Infantry. Two days later the garrison was strong enough for offensive action and attacked a village called Pala, 1,100 yards from the camp, on the road to Lhasa.

It was on this day that Bailey and his Mounted Infantry

arrived at Gyantse, having gone back to Khangmar to escort a supply convoy. At Nenyi they found that the village was occupied by Tibetans, and in a letter written at the time Bailey gives a vivid picture of what life in action meant to a young officer on this expedition:

‘We rushed several houses at the edge of the village, and from one we had two men hit, so we shot away the outer courtyard door with a rifle and then rushed in. There were two doors in front of us, and I went for one and a native officer for the other. I kicked my door open but there was no one inside. Then I went round to the other door and found it still shut. Everyone shouted at me, and sticking out of it I saw the muzzle of a matchlock which went off just as I got out of the way. Then I got some gun cotton and blew the door in; but first of all I fired some shots through the doors and windows to make sure that no one would fire at me when I entered. After the explosion, I rushed in with about twelve men.’

No one was on the ground floor, but he found himself being fired at from above, through a trapdoor, and scrambled up a ladder to the first floor. Here someone struck at him with a sword, stunning him and almost knocking him off the ladder: ‘Luckily I was wearing a helmet with a puggaree, and he hit me on the helmet, just where the puggaree was thickest. The cut had gone through all the folds of cloth and through half the thickness of the helmet but no further.’ This account shows that Bailey was still fairly inexperienced in house-to-house fighting, for a more experienced officer would have put a dozen or more rounds through the ceiling, as he did later. This was a very narrow escape. The action continued thus:

‘I sent to get some more gun cotton to blow up the floor above us and make the hole bigger, and I fired a few shots through it into the floor above. When the gun cotton came . . . we found it all quiet above so rushed up. We found one dead man, but the rest had gone up to the roof, to which there was another ladder and trap door. A native officer lifted

this up a little, and we saw a sword waiting for the first man that came up, but we could not see the man who was holding it, as he was behind the wall. But the native officer got his carbine round the corner where he thought the man was and luckily killed him. We found four dead men on the roof who must have been killed by the lucky shots fired through from below.'

The Indian Army, at this time, it may be noted, was not equipped with hand grenades, and would not be for at least another twelve years.

Moving forward, Bailey blew open the door to a large building, cleared it, then went on to where the guns and Maxims were putting down fire on a village 350 yards off. Making a rush across the bridge to get inside the camp at Chang La, his party were fired on from the fort—as was everyone else—but got through unscathed.

Two days later he took part in the attack on the monastery at Gyantse, which lay on a hill beyond the fort, that is to the north of it. Bailey's task was to get into a village behind the monastery while the Gurkhas launched their assault. Soon the monastery surrendered, the lamas streaming out together with some villagers. Two days later Bailey was writing: 'They sent in a flag of truce yesterday, the 29th. I think they are getting frightened in the Jong. Two Ministers are coming from Lhasa today, and there was an armistice from yesterday till this evening at 7, by which time the Ministers will have seen Colonel Younghusband.'

The senior minister was the Ta Lama of the Council of State, who eventually agreed to a meeting at noon on the 2nd, the armistice having been extended. So far as Younghusband was concerned, the meeting was a waste of time, for the Ta Lama did nothing more than reiterate for the thousandth time that no negotiations could begin until the mission and its escort had retired across the frontier. Further talks were adjourned till the following day, when the Tibetan delegates failed to turn up. Meanwhile look-outs reported that the defences of the fort were being strengthened, which forced Younghusband to issue an ultimatum that if the troops were not withdrawn from the fort,

from the Karo La and the surrounding area, by noon on the 5th, General Macdonald would launch a full-scale attack. Not unexpectedly, no reply came and so at 0400 hours on the 5th July, after some preliminary manœuvres designed to deceive the Tibetans, the assault went in. It was another eleven hours before any real impact was made, but then a breach appeared in the outer wall, a shot blew up the powder magazine, and the Tibetan fire began to slacken. Two parties from the 8th Gurkhas and the Royal Fusiliers—strong reinforcements had now reached Gyantse—went forward to a point below the breach, and after some desperate fighting got through. Before long all fire from the garrison ceased, and then figures could be seen slithering down ropes from the embrasures. Gyantse fort, the key to any advance on Lhasa, had fallen to the British, and the road was open.

It was the 14th July before Macdonald, who had been havoring and bickering worse than ever, was ready to move. By now the lure of Lhasa was felt throughout the entire force; officers and men knew they would soon be seeing a sight shared by few of their contemporaries, a sight they would be able to boast of all their days. But the going was still difficult and slow and in two days the force covered only eighteen miles. From here the track led up to the last pass to be negotiated—the Kamba La, which stood at 15,400 feet—and, peering through their field-glasses from this elevation, some of the more optimistic officers swore they could glimpse the golden roofs of the Potala. Below lay the Tsangpo, the river which was to play such an important part in Bailey's life and which he now saw for the first time. Unfortunately he has left no record of this moment, and perhaps he was too busy with military duties to take in the geographical details. Edmund Candler, the *Daily Mail* correspondent with the mission, wrote, however, that the yellow river flowed swiftly through a valley far more lush than anything seen so far in Tibet—'we had come through the desert to Arcady'. The river was wide and dangerous, however, and the crossing was not accomplished until two Gurkhas and Major Bretherton were drowned. Later on the Royal Engineers threw a steel hawser across which enabled the crossing to be speeded up. On the 31st July when the final boatloads

came across the last stage of the advance began. Lhasa was now forty-three miles away.

It was Major Ottley of the Mounted Infantry who got the first real sight of the holy city, and it can be assumed that Bailey was not far away. On the 2nd August the troops made camp seven miles from the capital, and next morning moved up to the walls. Ottley has recorded:

‘We marched on without any incident, passing the great Debong [i.e. Drepung] monastery, outside which several thousand monks had assembled . . . The next place of importance was the Oracle House, with its shining golden roof. From this point the general view of the Lhasa plain was at its best. The Chagpori, or medical college, stands on the summit of an eminence near the Kyi Chu, connected by a col with the eminence on which the stately Potala stands, and further again to the left the Sara monastery. All these buildings with their gilded roofs were strikingly imposing.’

Three-quarters of a mile further on the city itself came into view:

‘It looked exquisite; the trees in full leaf, the gilt roofs of the Jo-Khang and king’s palace glittering in the sun, the green-sward, well planted with shrubs, through which rivulets meandered, in whose quiet waters thousands of small fish were basking. Little wonder, it flashed across us, if the Tibetans wished to keep their chief city secluded from the prying, curious world.’

As the events which followed were not recorded at length by Bailey and made no considerable impact on him, they need only be summarised. While negotiations between Young-husband and the Tibetan council dragged on, the troops became bored, and the holy city soon lost its spell. Men writing home called it smelly, nasty, and deplored the absences of such civilised amenities as whisky, jam, and soap. To keep the troops amused and out of mischief, gymkhanas, race meetings, and football matches were arranged.

From the brief notes in his service diary, Bailey seems to have been pretty well occupied on piquet and escort duty, though he did get away to fish—catching twenty-one in an afternoon—and engaged in the cavalry sport of ‘tent pegging’. As August went by he began playing football, and on the 25th rode in one of the events at the improvised race meeting. More important, he was invited to have tea or dine with the mission on several occasions, and it was here that he got to know Younghusband and, despite the difference in age and rank, their great friendship began.

It was the 6th September 1904 before the treaty was signed,* in which the Tibetans undertook to respect the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and recognise the Sikkim frontier as there defined, to open trade marts at Gyantse and Gartok, and to cancel the levies on trade from India on articles to be mutually decided upon. A separate agreement attached to the main document gave the British agent to be stationed at Gyantse the right to visit Lhasa to consult with the Tibetan officials on matters which could not be settled elsewhere. And fantastically enough there was no mention of Russia or Russian influence whatsoever.

The troops were seven weeks in Lhasa then gladly began the long journey back to India. To his delight, however, Bailey found himself detailed for another mission. Naturally wanting to extract the maximum geographical knowledge that the situation now allowed, Younghusband gave permission to his expert on Chinese affairs, Ernest Wilton, to travel from Lhasa to China, taking Bailey with him, and presumably a small escort. Before the expedition left, a mule column bringing up special equipment was ambushed by the Tibetans, and Younghusband reconsidered the position. If the line of communications was so susceptible to attack (to quote Bailey) ‘it seemed foolhardy to send out these slenderly armed expeditions’. However, Bailey was in luck. Another expedition was planned, to head for Gartok in western Tibet which was largely uninhabited, and he was transferred to this. The leader was to be Captain Rawling. It should also be mentioned here that a third expedition, led by Captain Ryder, was to explore the gorges on

*The Dalai Lama played no part in it having fled to China in August.

the Tsangpo river, features which were greatly exciting the attention of explorers but which no European eyes had yet seen.

When the mission left Lhasa, Bailey escorted Younghusband on the route to Gyantse, and as they rode side by side talked of everything under the sun. Later Bailey wrote: 'As a very junior officer, I owed a great deal to my contact with Younghusband.' Among things he taught him were 'If you are offered an appointment and want it badly, rush at it'. Also: 'It does not do simply to know the right thing to do and to do it—you must also persuade your superiors that you are right.' What impressed Bailey about Younghusband was 'his marvellous calmness, patience, and persistence in his difficult dealings with the Tibetans. I was present at many of his meetings with them. Their arguments were so hollow, full of repetitions, and so easily confuted that one felt inclined to interrupt and tell them to stick to the point and not talk nonsense. But Younghusband was perfectly calm and patient through it all . . . and finally wore them down.'

One might add here that Younghusband's opinion of the young Bailey was immensely favourable, too. On the 31st December 1904 he wrote to Colonel Bailey, his father:

'I had meant to have written you from Tibet to let you know how highly I thought of your son. He is an excellent young fellow and ought to go far. I have let the Foreign Office know how well I think of him and anything I can do for him I shall always be glad to do. He has lots of pluck and lots of common-sense and tact as well . . . he has a very happy knack of getting on with Tibetans.'

Some years later, when Bailey followed him into the Political Department, Younghusband wrote another letter, full of advice, which was always to be treasured:

'You will, of course, have heaps of heart-breaking disappointments in the future, for the dear old Political Department is a most maddening service, and for years you are treated as a dangerous lunatic whom it would be unsafe to allow at large. But then the wheel comes round again and they

suddenly discover that there was never such a splendid fellow as yourself . . . Increase your efficiency as much as you possibly can. That is where we generally fail. We have heaps of pluck and spirit and all that kind of thing, but we often lack—I have felt it myself—what can only be acquired by good hard training and intellectual effort. You have to learn how to fight official battles—not for your personal advancement, but for the job you are on whatever it may be . . . you have to learn how to present your case [to government] in such a way as to ruffle as few as possible of their prejudices and enlist as many as possible of their sympathies.’

In the same letter, he added wistfully: ‘Perhaps we might still have been in the Chumbi Valley if I had known better how to handle Government.’ By this time Younghusband had been censured by the Government for his conduct at Lhasa, and his star, so far as the Political Department was concerned, had faded. For the rest of his service he would only be given routine if congenial posts; and when the wheel came round again, it would be his achievements as an explorer and a mystic which would lead him to new conquests.

To what extent Bailey would profit from this advice from his leader may still be argued. But as he rode along the tracks towards Gartok he could not doubt that he had met a rare spirit and a great man. Even thirty years later their parting in the high mountains was to fill him with great emotion.

3 Gartok and after

The Gartok expedition provided Bailey's first opportunity as an explorer, and one wishes that he had written of it in more detail. Unfortunately, however, his diary records merely the place where he slept each night, and his official report confines itself to information on trade matters required by his superiors. Between the 9th October, when he left Gyantse for Dong Tse, and the 11th January 1905 he covered hundreds of miles at high altitude, living for weeks on end at over 14,000 feet and many days at over 15,000. Years later he wrote: 'The Western Tibetan expedition gave me experience of winter travel at heights up to 18,700 feet above sea level and in temperatures as low as twenty-five degrees below zero Fahrenheit (fifty-seven degrees of frost).' His personal task was 'to report on the trade and trade routes between India and Nari, Khorsum, the province of Tibet in which Gartok is situated'.* This he carried out in great detail, giving the Government a wealth of information, much of it new. For a young man of twenty-two this was no mean achievement. Though there is no need to quote his report at length, a few passages may be of interest to give some idea of style and content. Here is a section dealing with the Shipki Pass:

'The road runs from Shipki to Gartok. It is used by traders from villages in the Sutlej Valley in India. Between Shipki and Gartok the road is in parts very bad, there being steep ascents

*Bailey always insisted that the emphasis of 'Trade' was a pure blind—'A sop to Lord Morley and the Liberal Government'.

and descents each march, and the Ayi La, a pass 18,700 feet high, has to be crossed. This may, however, be avoided by a wide detour via Misar. There is a good road from Simla to Jangi (161 miles); and from thence on to Namagea (44 miles) a four-foot road has been made, but this is not good . . . Between Namgea and Shipki lies the Shipki pass, which is high and difficult, with a steep ascent of 6,000 feet on the Indian side. Coolies can avoid this by going along the bed of the Sutlej River, but this lower road is impassable to animals.'

Though there were still traces of schoolboy English Bailey's meaning was perfectly clear, and he did not waste words. He also knew how to convey various kinds of information without becoming diffuse:

'Gartok is known in Tibetan as Gar Yarsa [i.e. the summer Gar]. It is situated in a plain 5 miles broad, through which flows a branch of the Indus, called the Kang Gye Chu. The village consists of about 14 huts, with two large houses in which the Garpöns live. There are neither crops nor trees. The two Garpöns are high lay officials (Trungkhor), sent from Lhasa to govern Ngari Khorsum. They are known in India as Urkus.'

Later in his report, Bailey dealt with exports and imports, giving details of commodities and methods of transport:

'Borax is bought from Tsa Li Ka (or Ma Tsen), two marches east of Chang Tsa Ga, where the salt is obtained. It is picked up from the banks of lakes and transported on sheep in the same way as salt. The journey from Tsa Li Ka to Gartok takes about 15 days with sheep. One sheep-load, about 25 lbs, is sold for 8 annas. Borax is a little more expensive than salt, but the price varies according to the quality, quantity on the market and distance from the frontier at which it is purchased . . . One load of Borax is exchanged for two loads of barley or one load of rice.'

The report was published by the Government Printing Office in Simla in 1905. The main report of the expedition came out at the same time, under the signature of Captain C. G. Rawling of

the Somerset Light Infantry, who gave more details of the sights and sounds Bailey must have met with, despite his specialised interest in trade matters. Knowledge of Gartok, according to Rawling, was limited in the extreme, and so far as he was aware no European had ever visited the place. (On his own copy of the report Bailey has entered: 'Moorcroft and Hearsey visited it in 1812'.) Its position had, however, been established by the explorer Pandit Nain Singh.

The interest in Gartok was as follows: in article 5 of the Treaty signed by Younghusband it had been agreed that trade marts would be opened at Gyantse, Yatung, and Gartok. The former two were known, being on the road to Lhasa, but regarding the third it was 'a matter of importance that . . . all possible information should be obtained as to its suitability for the purpose'. At the same time (according to Rawling): 'It was determined to take this unique opportunity . . . of adding to our geographical knowledge of the little known country beyond the Himalayas.'

Though Rawling was not aware of this, Younghusband had personally selected Bailey for the expedition, though the reason given officially was that his knowledge of the Tibetan language was 'likely to prove useful'. In any event, Bailey's claim to serve in the countries contiguous with India instead of in India itself, where, so he had written soon after his arrival, 'nothing ever happens', was considerably strengthened.

On the 26th May 1905 he decided to take the plunge and apply for a transfer to the Political Department. No doubt he had received many warnings from Younghusband and others of the possible consequences of such a move. It would mean that though still holding rank, he would cease to be a soldier and would embark on a career in which the work was harder and the kicks more frequent. Also, as he knew, 'the Politicals', as they were generally called, were for the most part unpopular with the Indian Army, and sometimes relations deteriorated into open hostility. On the other hand, Bailey found regimental soldiering increasingly wearisome. As his diary at this time records, his days in Ambala were filled with routine parades, games of hockey and football, tent pegging, and minor regimental occasions. Though he had great admiration for Colonel

Brander, and enjoyed the comradeship of his brother officers, he yearned for more responsibility, he wanted to employ his talent for languages, and he had a strong urge to explore.

Nothing much happened, though, for several months, and it was in December before he was called for an interview in Calcutta. Here he was offered the chance of taking over from Frederick O'Connor, now Trade Agent at Gyantse under the Treaty, who was due for home leave. Remembering Younghusband's advice, he 'rushed at the job' without hesitation, even though it would mean the postponement of his own leave, and within a few days was on his way back to Tibet.

Younghusband heard of the appointment long before Bailey himself—having met Ernest Wilton who was in London—and immediately wrote to Colonel Bailey to express his pleasure. Gyantse, he thought, 'will be an excellent opening for him which I know he will make the most of. Do advise him to go very gingerly at first—to sit tight and feel his way for Government are going very slow just now and he may be let in very badly if he goes beyond them.' If Bailey wanted to 'air his opinions', Younghusband added, he should do so in private letters to Claude White, the Political Officer in Sikkim. Above all, he should remember that 'the post is ostensibly that of a *trade* agent and the Chinese are on the look out to catch any encroachment in the political sphere and Government are not much inclined to stand up to the Chinese in that respect'. Bailey's chief energies, Younghusband concluded, should be spent 'in watching and reporting everything that went on, and in pushing trade'. The advice was undoubtedly sound, and Younghusband's reading of the situation at Gyantse proved remarkably accurate.

Another letter from Younghusband to Colonel Bailey, written early in 1905, is worth quoting:

'I will indeed try to get your boy some military recognition. Macdonald's mentions were quite ridiculous. That absurd old Waddell got a C.B. when he deserved *nothing*, and your boy was not even mentioned. However, I hope something will come eventually, and the fact that I selected him for the Gartok trip is practical proof that I think well of him.'

What Younghusband did not know was that in an interview with Bailey, Macdonald had informed him 'as I was to get Political Rewards in the journey to Gartok he would not give me a place in his despatches'. Macdonald must have surely been one of the most contemptible men who ever wore the King's uniform.

After Bailey's appointment had been published, Young-husband wrote again to Colonel Bailey expressing his delight and adding frankly: 'You must tell him to be sure and do me credit for I am responsible for him, and I want anyone I recommend to be a credit to me. He must be all eyes and ears but only as much tongue as is necessary to serve those eyes and ears. He cannot be too careful.'

No doubt the Colonel passed this advice to his son immediately, together with his own warnings; and it was not long before Bailey began to appreciate what they were getting at. Arriving at Siliguri railway station on the 13th January 1906, he met O'Connor, and found himself taking charge of the Tashi Lama, at this time twenty-three years of age, who had been paying an extended visit to India. During the cold weather season of 1905 the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King George V and Queen Mary) were in India and it was proposed by the Government of India that they could meet various potentates from countries of the north-eastern frontier. O'Connor advised that in the absence of the Dalai Lama there was no suitable person in Tibet, but the message miscarried, and then O'Connor received instructions to invite the Tashi Lama. Though he accepted, it was thought necessary to keep the news from the Chinese Amban (i.e. Senior Chinese Resident official), for fear of offending him unduly. Eventually, of course, the truth reached the Amban and a rumour spread that he was so enraged that a feudatory of the Chinese Emperor should have visited a foreign country and kept a rendezvous with a foreign prince, that an armed force was being sent in pursuit. This rumour proved exaggerated, but the repercussions were serious enough.

Younghusband wrote in a letter to Colonel Bailey that 'the Home Government do not like the Tashi Lama coming down to India and they will throw over the whole Indian

Government and much more therefore any little Trade Agent, rather than run the very slightest risk of complications in Tibet'. Escorting the Lama and his crowd of retainers along the road to Gyantse, Bailey must have cursed his luck at arriving at this precise moment. It was all very well his father and Young-husband telling him repeatedly 'stick to trade—keep clear of politics', but in the circumstances this policy appeared less and less feasible.

However, his first task was to see the Lama safely back to his monastery at Tashi Lhunpo in Shigatse, and this was accomplished. In the following months Bailey was to become great friends with the Lama who was his own age. Many mornings would find him heading for the monastery with his gramophone and collection of music-hall records. The Tashi Lama had a great fondness for the Harry Lauder songs, and could not hear them too often. Once the music was interrupted by the sound of trumpets and Bailey asked whether he should take off the record, thinking that perhaps some religious ceremony was in progress. At this the Tashi Lama laughed, and replied: 'No, don't stop—they're only worshipping me.' From the 23rd January Bailey had installed himself in O'Connor's quarters, a large country house belonging to one of the Tibetan noble families, which had been commandeered during the fighting. With the help of the Tashi Lama, who had supplied carpenters, O'Connor and his medical officer had furnished the place in European style, and built a small mess house with a large open fireplace and bow window. This was probably the only fireplace in Tibet, and Bailey must have been delighted to see it. He was probably glad also to find that members of the escort to the trade agency* were organising games of polo on shaggy little Tibetan ponies, and that there were football matches at least twice a week. Added to these diversions were shooting and fishing, and Bailey's life was amazingly full and varied, considering the remoteness of the station. Of this time he has written: 'I increased my experience of the language, the country and the people. I won the friendship of the Tashi Lama, considered by many even holier than the Dalai Lama. At the same

*The escort commander was the future Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck.

time I read almost every book that had been written about Tibet.' He also learned everything he could about a subject which had begun to fascinate him: the Tsangpo. Where did this great river flow to? Somewhere in the unexplored tangle of mountain and jungle to the south-east of Tibet did it join one of the rivers of India or Assam or Burma? And, if so, which? And as soon as possible, he determined, he must find out.

Anxious to establish himself in his new profession, Bailey was no doubt delighted to receive this letter from Younghusband dated 10th May 1906:

'You will be glad to hear that you have produced a good impression so far and I gather that you are pretty certain to get into the Political.* The position at home is this: the present Government would in their hearts like to wash their hands of Tibet altogether but Morley is a sensible man and will go against his own personal inclination if it is necessary in the public interest. He would like to withdraw you tomorrow for instance but he is quite open to reason if it can be shown that we are doing good in Tibet, and that we would run greater risks of future trouble by going away than staying. He wants, however, to avoid *extending* our responsibilities and for that reason is rather coy of the Tashi Lama or of letting anyone travel eastward to Gyantse.

Now when can you make yourself useful by getting information? The Dalai Lama is requested to return to Lhasa and Government will be wanting to know how he is likely to be received: what effect it will have on our relations with the Tibetans. How the Chinese will view it: what the Tibetans will think if he comes back with Russian support: what would be the attitude of the Tashi Lama towards the Dalai Lama and vice versa. On all these points, and others which you will be able to think of, keep on giving information as you pick it up from different individuals. All this I tell you privately. . . . I shall always take an interest in you as you have got this on my recommendation and I want you to do me credit.'

But apart from pursuing such lines of enquiry, Bailey had to deal with a minor diplomatic crisis. Soon after his arrival, a

*Bailey's status was still temporary

Chinese, Mr. Gow, called upon him. Before Bailey realised who he was or what his status might be, Gow had burst into a violent tirade, the burden of which was that the British had been seizing supplies by force and without payment, and committing other misdemeanours. He also announced that local Tibetan officials had been instructed to deal with Bailey only through himself. His head full of warnings from Younghusband, Bailey moved with extreme care, so, while indicating that he did not appreciate being screamed at, said he would investigate matters.

What happened he found was this. The intention had been that the Treaty signed at Lhasa should be regularised by securing China's assent, but as this was not possible while the troops remained on Tibetan soil, the Chinese Government sent a Mr. Tang Shao-Yi to negotiate what was called 'an adhesion agreement' with the Indian Government. Mr. Tang proved so obstructive, however, that negotiations broke down, and it was only in April 1906 that an agreement was signed in Peking whereby Britain agreed not to annex any Tibetan territory or interfere in the internal administration.* Meanwhile, the Chinese officials in Tibet had inaugurated a campaign to re-establish China's rights as the suzerain power. Mr. Tang's emissary, Chang Yin-Yang, was appointed Amban, and travelled to Lhasa, proclaiming to everyone en route that the Treaty had been abrogated by agreement between the Chinese and British Governments, and that the Chinese had now returned to conduct all foreign relations. Chang's subordinate at Gyantse was Mr. Gow, who acted immediately and with zeal. Bailey's report to Delhi confirmed reports already received from other sources, and the Foreign Office began to take matters seriously. Sir Ernest Satow, the British Ambassador in Peking, was ordered to deliver a stiff note, and the affair echoed along the diplomatic corridors for some months before a face-saving formula was devised.

But a great deal of harm had been done, as Bailey realised, as the months of 1906 went by. The social and official relationships with the Tibetans deteriorated, not through lack of goodwill, but because the latter feared the Chinese. Unfortunately the

*The Tibetans, who had signed the 1904 Convention, were not parties, and were not even informed.

British trade agent feared to take a strong line with the Chinese, realising that the British Government would not back him up. Altogether it was a difficult and depressing situation in which Bailey found himself.

However, he worked hard and made many contacts and the days slipped by without any major incident. When Mr. Chang arrived from Lhasa in November, he entertained him to tea and was able to persuade him to watch a polo match. Then on Friday the 14th November there was the unaccustomed roar of engines: O'Connor had returned with a 6½ h.p. motor-car which he had acquired for himself, and a larger model for the Tashi Lama. These were the first motor-cars ever to enter Tibet, and the story of how O'Connor got them over the mountains was an epic of courage and ingenuity—at least as he told it. Concerning the affair with the Chinese, O'Connor was incensed, and cursed the Government at Whitehall for its myopia and pusillanimity. Summoning Mr. Gow, he told him plainly that until he had made a formal apology to Bailey he would not deal with him or even recognise him. Mr. Gow apologised.

But now Bailey was anxious about his next appointment, and was delighted to learn that he was to remain in Tibet, taking over as agent in the Chumbi Valley. Here he remained for two years, learning his job and improving his command of Tibetan, playing football and polo every week, and meeting a wide range of people, not only Tibetans, but Nepalese and Indians, and many army officers who passed through on their way up to Gyantse. Also on local leaves he was free to travel about the country, his eye as always noting any particular features of natural history, as well as of geography. On the 15th February 1907 Captain Wall, a zoologist and member of the Indian Medical Service, addressed the Bombay Natural History Society on some snakes Bailey had sent him. One of these specimens, measuring 2 feet 6 inches, appeared to be new to science and was named *Tropidonotus baileyi*, *spec. nov.* One of the matters of interest to scientists was that Bailey had caught the snake at an altitude of 14,000 feet. According to Captain Wall, 'This is a very remarkable elevation at which to find snakes living. The only instance of which I am aware, where a snake has been captured at an approximate altitude is

that reported by Dr. H. Gadow who found a rattlesnake (*Crotalus triseriatus*) in the mountains of Mexico at a height of 12,500 feet.' Of interest, too, was Bailey's report that the snakes lived in the sides of a hot spring, and were never found more than half a mile from it. Some years later Bailey was to address the Society in person, his subject being the birds he had observed and the game birds he had shot during his four years at Gyantse and Chumbi. Though apparently he described nothing unknown to science, naturalists were intensely interested to hear news from an area closed to researchers for so many years. From now onwards Bailey was an active member of the Society, and continued to send down specimens for many years.

No major theme emerges from Bailey's period at Chumbi; and in later years he seems to have regarded it as the end of his apprenticeship to the Political Department, which undoubtedly it was. By now he had been abroad for nine years and therefore accumulated two years' leave. Most of this he proposed to spend in England and Scotland, and the rest in exploring the Tsangpo.

On the 31st August 1909 he boarded the s.s. *Egypt* at Bombay, and eighteen days later was in Edinburgh. For the next twenty months—if his diary may be taken at face value—he concentrated principally on enjoying himself. He shot and fished and hunted; he dined with friends; he went to the opera, the theatre, and musical concerts; he met friends at his club, the United Service, or took girls to dine at the Trocadero or the Ritz. As he recorded later, the money went much faster than he realised. Whether he had any designs of getting married at this time, it is impossible to say; girls seemed to occupy his attention for a month or more, then to disappear, and later another name would introduce itself to his diary. It may be possible that he wanted to establish himself in his career more securely before taking a wife; or perhaps he felt that any serious attachment would prohibit him from the long travels which lay ahead. One cannot be certain. In any case, no girl's name appears in his diary during the last month of his leave in England; and on the 29th January 1911 he left for Paris en route for Brussels, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Tientsin, and Peking. His third career, as an explorer, could now begin.

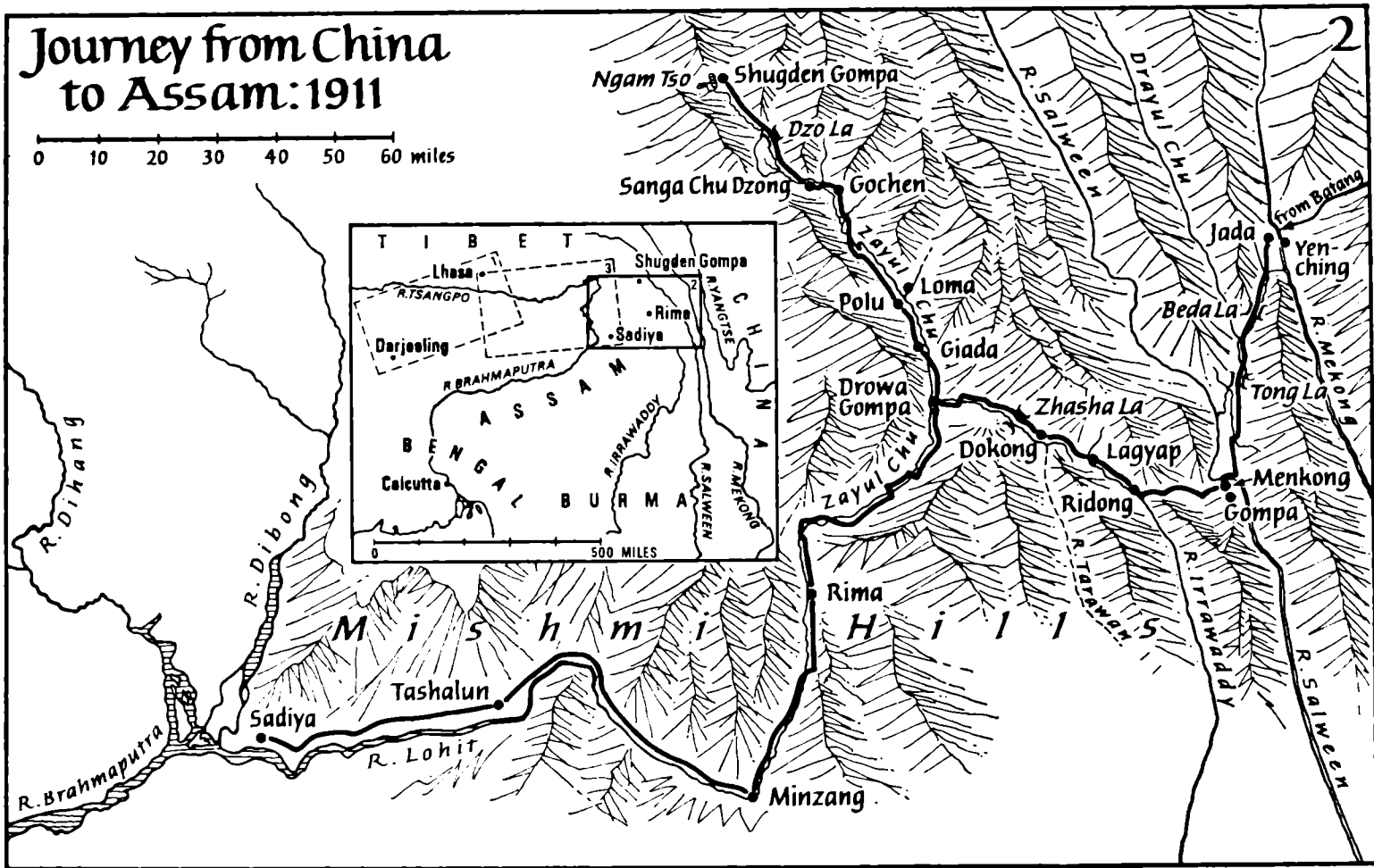
4 Journey 1911

Before commencing to describe Bailey's journey it would be useful to take a closer look at the problems confronting him, and the fate of the men who had gone before him. If one glances at a map of the vast area of mountain and jungle comprising eastern Tibet, Assam, and northern Burma, one feature stands out clearly. Flowing from north to south in close proximity are three great rivers: the Yangtse, the Mekong, and the Salween. Further west and debouching into the plains of Assam are three more rivers, the Lohit, the Dibong, and the Dihang. To the west, flowing through Tibet, is the Tsangpo, which, as already indicated, had puzzled the geographers for many years. Where did its water flow to? Such was the lack of precise information concerning this remote area, that the possibilities included any of the six rivers above, or the other great river of Burma, the Irrawaddy.

The first real attempt to solve the mystery was made in 1854, when the Commissioner of Assam, Major Jenkins, sent a travelling beggar on the job, but this unlikely character was speared by savages before he had got very far. The next attempt was made by the Survey of India, who trained and then despatched Tibetan-speaking agents, men of great courage and resource, who mapped and reported for years on end. One of these was Krishna, known by the code 'A.K.', who travelled through Nepal to Lhasa, then attempted to reach India. In

Journey from China to Assam: 1911

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 miles



this he failed, being stopped by the Mishmis, a savage tribe inhabiting the hills south of Rima in Assam, and had to make a long detour before reaching Darjeeling. However, his reports proved that only the Dibong or Dihang could constitute the lower reaches of the Tsangpo, the Lohit being ruled out. Then in 1885 another agent, Rinzing Namgyal ('R.N. '), who was to become a close friend of Bailey, was given the task of determining whether the Tsangpo formed the headwaters of the Brahmaputra—the river which curves in a great arc round the west of Assam before reaching the Ganges basin north-west of Calcutta—or of the Irrawaddy. But again the tribes interfered, and though bringing back some useful information, R.N. failed in his main task.

So the problem remained, and even while Bailey was on the way from China, General Bower, commander of the Abor Expedition, was being briefed to settle 'the question of the identity of the Tsangpo and Brahmaputra rivers'. Complete proof could only be maintained by following the Tsangpo right down its course until it joined one of the rivers, but this was not feasible. However, there was a method of deciding between the Dihang and the Dibong, and this had been employed—though the authorities seemed to have forgotten it—as long ago as the 1880s, by Captain Harman of the Survey of India. Measuring the flow of these two rivers when they left the hills, he found that the Dihang discharged 56,500 cubic feet per second, whereas the Dibong discharged only 27,200. This theoretically clinched the claims of the Dihang, and indeed the lesser river was found to rise in the Mishmi hills. It was the heavy rainfall in this area which gave it such a relatively large outflow.

But another problem still remained. Where the Tsangpo disappeared into the great barrier of mountains in south-east Tibet, it was known to be at over 9,000 feet above sea-level. At the point where it flowed into the plains of Assam it was a bare 500 feet. The distance between these two points was 120 miles as the crow flies. How did this great river descend? Had it carved a far longer and more tortuous path through the mountains than anyone imagined? Did it form a series of rapids? Or was there, somewhere between Tibet and Assam, a waterfall so immense that it dwarfed Niagara?

When Bailey set out in 1911 the solution was no nearer than it had been thirty years earlier. In 1879 the Survey Office had sent out a Mongolian monk together with his Sikkimese servant, Kintup (K.P.), to explore the course of the Tsangpo below Gyala, which lies some 225 miles east of Lhasa. If possible, according to their orders, they should stick to the river till they reached the plains, but, if this proved impossible, should throw marked logs into the river. Reaching Gyala, the pair went along the north bank until the track gave out, then returned to their starting point, crossed to the right bank and went down as far as Pemaköchung, where their track gave out again. Retracing their steps a second time, they then headed north, apparently intending to make a detour and hit the river again lower down. Now they found themselves in an unexplored region called Po-me, and it was not long before the monk decided he had had enough. Reaching a village called Tongkyuk, he told Kintup he would be going away for three days and the latter should wait for him. Two months went by without news, however, and Kintup decided that he had been deserted; he would have to complete the mission on his own. Making his preparations, however, he was informed by a local official that, before leaving, the monk had sold him as a slave, and he was set to work in the house. It was seven months before the first chance to escape presented itself, and he took it without hesitation, working his way to a place on the Tsangpo called Dorje-yu Dzong, then following the river downstream to Mar-pung. Here he was overtaken by some men sent by the official to recapture him, but with great resource burst his way into the monastery nearby, fell before the head lama, and explained that he was a poor pilgrim who had been treacherously sold into slavery. Taking pity, the lama bought him for fifty rupees, and so again Kintup continued on the mission.

Like all agents for the Survey of India he carried a prayer wheel in which was concealed a prismatic compass and a roll of paper for making notes. He also carried a Tibetan rosary of 100 beads (instead of the normal 108) for counting paces; and some metal tubes to be inserted into the logs. Unfortunately he had lost the drill for making the necessary holes, so had to tie the tubes on the outside of the logs, inserted messages, then hid

the logs in a cave. It was, of course, no use floating them downstream before the Survey officers had been given warning. To pass a message, he had to walk to Lhasa, a journey which lasted some three months. Here he must have been sorely tempted to go home to Sikkim, a comparatively simple journey, but steeling himself, he went right back to the Tsangpo, and began throwing in the logs at the rate of one per day. This job done he began marching downstream, noting the names of villages, the number of houses, details of crops, and distances. Eventually he reached a place called Miri Padam, where he recorded:

‘. . . there are about 100 houses. The Tsangpo being about 4 miles from the village. Here there is a well-known market place where traders from Yaser, Tsa-ri, and India bring their merchandise for sale. The river issuing from Sangachö Dzong joins the Tsangpo about 3 miles from Miri Padam. I could proceed no further than Onlet, and was obliged to retrace my steps . . .’

Though he does not state any specific reason, it is clear that he was now on the borders of the territory held by the savage Abors, and dare not risk penetrating further. His only course now was to return to India via Lhasa, which he succeeded in doing, to learn that the agent via whom he had sent his message regarding the logs was dead—and the logs had floated down unnoticed. Being illiterate he could not make written notes on his journeys—presumably his message from Lhasa was composed by a professional letter writer—and had to memorise the name of villages and distances as he went. Considering that his travels, punctuated by many adventures, lasted four years, it is amazing how much he put down and how accurate it proved to be.

However, on arrival in India he dictated all he could remember to a clerk in the Survey, and the material was then translated into English. The most intriguing passage concerned his description of what he and the monk had seen when they visited the monastery at Pemaköchung, the English translation running as follows:

The Younghusband
Expedition: Bailey at
Tuna, 1904

Rapids on the Tsangpo





Camp in the Dihang
Valley



A Sema Naga scout



Breakfast on the Pamirs, 1918

Luncheon party with the Chinese general Titai at Pokhtalik, 1918
(Bailey seated on the extreme right, with Blacker on his right)





Tashkent, 1919: Bailey in
Russian dress

Bokhara, 1919



‘The Tsangpo is two chains distant from the monastery and about two miles off it falls over a cliff called Sinji-Chogyal from a height of about 150 feet. There is a big lake at the foot of the falls where rainbows are always observable.’

This brief description convinced many officers in the Survey of India that there must be falls rivalling Niagara in height if not in volume. In their reports completed in 1887 which prefaced Kintup’s own report, when the latter was published in 1911, Colonel Sir H. R. Thuillier and Colonel H. C. B. Tanner accepted the evidence without question. But when Bailey began his journey, it still remained unverified. No European eyes had seen the falls or indeed penetrated the country through which Kintup had passed.

The reasons for this were relatively simple. The approach from India was guarded by savage tribes, and any explorer willing to risk his neck was strenuously discouraged by the Government of India. The murder of Europeans stirred up far too much trouble, and often punitive expeditions had to be launched at great expense. The policy, in fact, as Bailey remarks, ‘was anything for a quiet life’.

An approach from Tibet was just as difficult, for the Chinese, jealous of their suzerainty, discouraged all foreigners, as did the Tibetans themselves; most travellers were turned back at the frontier.

The approach through China proved no easier and in 1899 an expedition led by Major Davies and Captain Ryder was turned back by the Tibetans. It was only when Younghusband was about to leave Lhasa that any further opportunity occurred, and he, it will be recalled, planned several expeditions, one of which under Captain Ryder was to travel down the Tsangpo. But just before it left there occurred the ambush of the mule column already mentioned, and the expedition was cancelled.*

Now the question poses itself: what were Bailey’s chances of getting through from China? With his mastery of the language and deep understanding of the Tibetans, he believed that if he went alone with a servant, there was a good chance that he would not be turned back at the frontier, and so could slip

*See page 41.

through the eastern corner of Tibet and into Assam without major hindrance. As he knew, it was a long and hazardous journey, no journey in this quarter of the globe could be otherwise, but by now he had travelled so widely and under such extreme circumstances, that he had complete, though not overwhelming, confidence in his own abilities and judgment.

His servant, it should be mentioned, was a sixteen-year-old Tibetan called Putamdu, who, having received Bailey's cable, had travelled (with the kind assistance of Messrs. Thomas Cook & Sons) from Tibet to Calcutta, and from there to Shanghai and Peking. Naturally Bailey was delighted to see him again, and wrote later on that 'it was a great asset and comfort to me to have at least one person whom I knew and trusted, so that I would not be entirely dependent on people picked up locally'.

In later years Bailey would profess to be amused at the growing size of geographical expeditions and the long and elaborate preparations before departure. 'In my day', he once said, 'we just decided where to go and went.' This was perhaps a slight exaggeration, though he certainly travelled light. From the Royal Geographical Society he borrowed a sextant with artificial horizon, a prismatic compass and a hypsometer, the last being an instrument for calculating the altitude from the temperature at which water boils. It was this instrument he frequently referred to in his journals with the entry 'Here I took a boiling point'.

The journey proper began on the 23rd March 1911, when Bailey and Putamdu boarded a Japanese steamer, the *Tachimaru*, and sailed up the Yangtse. Without major incident they reached Hankow and then Ichang, where Bailey hired a small steamer of twenty-seven tons, on which to continue the journey through the Yangtse gorges. The captain of this vessel, the *Shantung*, proved better in promise than performance, and the voyage ahead was not without accidents. In the Shantung rapid, up which they were being pulled by coolies, one of the ropes broke. The captain, in one of his better moments, cut the second rope with an axe, leaving the boat to be carried downstream for half a mile, where it had to join the queue once more. But at least it was undamaged.

On the 6th April the river journey came to an end at Wanhsien,

and Bailey records that he spent three days 'getting my money changed, boxes made, and a contract arranged for the carriage of my things to Chengtu'. Against his inclination, he was persuaded, for the purpose of maintaining prestige, to be carried in a chair, and also had paper lanterns made with his name and rank on—by now he was a captain. Though he disliked being carried, and walked most of the way, he found the chair to be a useful refuge in the small towns, where foreigners were such a rarity that crowds would gather round, gazing at him and trying to touch his clothes. One man even pulled aside the blind to get a close look at the 'foreign devil', and Bailey gave such a loud roar that he fled in panic, to the general amusement. His journey at this time lay almost due west, and on the 27th April he reached Chengtu, and, four days later, Yachou. Here he was entertained by members of the American Baptist Mission, and was able to see the consignments of tea for Tibet being prepared in the market place. The tea was of a coarse blend, he was told, that no Chinese would dream of touching; but the Tibetans had a great passion for it, consuming no less than 20,000,000 pounds a year. All this great trade was carried on the backs of yaks, which in relays completed a journey of no less than 1,500 miles.

By the beginning of May, Bailey was leaving the plains, and on the 3rd crossed the Ta-hsiang-ling Pass, which his hypsometer showed to be at 9,367 feet. Further on, he crossed the Fei-yueh-ling, which was only slightly lower. Now he paused a day to take note of the natural history of the area; Lady Amherst pheasants, now called *Chrysolus amherstiae*, abounded, and he caught a number of butterflies 'including one new variety, *Zinaspia todara neglecta*'.

Now he began observing signs of Tibet. The first was a saddle-cloth on a mule, and later he came upon a shrine surrounded with prayer-wheels, which Putamdu paused to turn. The weather was dry and hot; lizards sunned themselves on the rocks; and Bailey was able to pick mulberries. It was a pleasant journey, and in the villages he was even able to buy oranges 'which had been kept fresh by being buried in damp sand'.

On the 9th May he reached the city of Tatsienlu, now re-

name Kangting by the Chinese Government, and here engaged a boy called Wongshi, who could understand Lhasa Tibetan, but also spoke some Chinese and the local patois. One evening while he was in Tatsienlu, Bailey was greeted by an American lady, Miss Kendall, who had just arrived from Yunnan. Wishing to consume the last of his European food, both because of its weight and his anxiety to live on the food of the country, he invited her to dinner. Some years later Bailey was surprised to learn that she had written a book called *A Wayfarer in China*, giving her reactions to the meal as follows:

‘I was impressed, as often before, by the comfort a man manages to secure for himself when travelling. If absolutely necessary, he will get down to the bare bones of living, but ordinarily the woman, if she has made up her mind to rough it, is far more indifferent to soft lying and high living, especially the latter, than a man!’

To which Bailey commented wryly: ‘Such was the effect produced by my last tins of sausages and sardines’.

It was the 19th May before Bailey left Tatsienlu, having decided to go after one of the rarest game animals in the world at this period, the takin. In this quest he failed, though he came across recent tracks, and was able to observe various birds and butterflies which were of interest to him. From now until he reached the Tibetan frontier he was forced to take two Chinese soldiers with him, the official reason being that the road was not safe. In fact, they had orders to see that he did not stray from his declared path or pry into matters which the Government wished to remain secret. The land now rose steeply and on the second day he crossed the Gi La pass at 13,813 feet. From now on game was plentiful and he could always shoot a pheasant for his supper. In the Rama La he had expected to find gazelle, but was disappointed, though he was able to collect some butterflies, including a new species of *Parnassius*, later named *Parnassius acco baileyi*. He also mentions that ‘A number of people were collecting the curious fungus which grows out of the head of a dead caterpillar. . . .’ On the 28th May another stage of the journey was completed when he reached Litang, and his atten-

tion was attracted by a group of butterflies which he could see at once were something out of the ordinary. Catching a few without difficulty, he added them to the many specimens to be sent to his friends at the Bombay Natural History Society. The species was later named *Parnassius acco baileyi*.

So far, despite their natural suspicions, Bailey had received courteous treatment from the Chinese, and it was only at Batang on the Tibetan frontier that the atmosphere changed. The passport issued to him in Peking permitted him to travel in the provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan; and this document had been stamped by local magistrates en route who also added a local passport in Chinese and Tibetan, ordering officials to give every assistance. At Batang, however, the magistrate worded the local passport in such a way that Bailey would have to travel to Yenching 'and thence to Yunnan'. This did not agree with the Peking passport, and so Bailey was forced to interview the magistrate and argue until the necessary change was made.

At Batang also he bought some ponies, wishing to be independent of local transport, in case obstacles were placed in his way. Even in this remote spot, he found there was an American missionary, Dr. Hardy, who was able to help him replace the artificial horizon for use with his sextant. Gratefully acknowledging this assistance, Bailey noted that he was more fortunate than his predecessor, Krishna, the native agent for the Survey of India, who was unable to replace the mercury he had lost. It is worth remarking that, despite such practical matters, he was able to discover two more butterflies which were new to science: *Carterocephalus postnigra* and *Ypthima baileyi*.

On the 6th June Bailey left Batang, accompanied by a Mr. Edgar from the mission, who had kindly offered his services until Bailey was safely over the frontier. Having crossed the Cho-cho-Shen Pass at 9,600 feet, Bailey caught a glimpse of the Yangtse river, which he had left 2,000 miles back. The scene from his description was somewhat idyllic: 'We reached the river at a village called Le, where we lunched among peach and walnut trees . . .' From Le they drifted down the river in skin coracles, three of these being large enough to hold seven men, and six ponies, apart from three boatmen and the baggage. Having camped near a village whose inhabitants seemed to be

afflicted by a form of goitre, the party crossed to the right bank of the Yangtse, then for two days began travelling uphill to the village of Bamutang, which lies at 13,000 feet. Having sent his baggage by the Yunnan road, Bailey galloped up to take a look at the Po La Pass, whose height he established at 13,880 feet. Later he made enquiries about the giant panda. Though the existence of this animal was frequently reported, no European had ever seen one, and it was certainly not recognised by science. To his surprise Bailey was told that the soldiers at Batang had one as a pet, and he was very much tempted to go back and see it. Time, however, did not allow this, and he pushed on towards the Mekong river which formed the border with Tibet. As his passport did not give him authority to cross, his plan was simply to keep riding, unless prevented by physical force. His main fear was from the Chinese troops, for the local Tibetans he had encountered seemed most friendly.

But the only way to cross the Mekong was over a rope bridge below Yenching, and he bore in mind the unpleasant experience of General Davies and his party who had come by the same route in 1899. While they were swaying precariously over the stream, the monks from the Lagong monastery up above had fired on them then hurled rocks. Finally they had cut the rope on the Tibetan side, leaving some of the party stranded. With Bailey things went rather better, though not without strain: 'I hurried the first coolies down without any fuss, and Edgar dealt in a similar way with some more, and finally the man with the donkeys followed . . . To our great surprise our two soldiers followed without a word . . .' Before reaching the bridge, the party came to the salt-tax barrier, and here the transport refused to go any further. Left to himself, Bailey would (as he admits) have begun to flounder, but then Edgar made an impassioned speech in Chinese, and the officials relented. The baggage was taken to the bridge where the coolies were paid off. Then it was necessary to call the Tibetan porters from their cave on the far side of the river, and to Bailey's relief they came across without hesitation. But it still took two hours' work to get the men, animals, and baggage across the river, the animals, it would seem, being blindfolded and hauled across through the air on rope pulleys. All the Chinese soldiers seemed interested in was

their tip. But such was Bailey's anxiety to get away from Yenching and the bridge, that both he and Edgar carried loads which normally would have been taken by the ponies. That night they spent at a village called Jada.

The real hardships were just beginning.

5 Towards the Tsangpo

For the next few days the march went on without major incident. A succession of passes was negotiated easily, the Beda La, the Trong La, and Tondou La. The climate became more damp and the jungle thickened.

And they headed south down the Salween Valley for Menkong. Here they found large numbers of Chinese troops, one of whom Edgar knew. After a conversation he told Bailey: 'I am afraid it is all up. These are soldiers from Batang. They say our crossing of the Mekong at Yenching has been reported, and these men have been sent here by the shorter route to stop us.' But in fact Edgar had got things wrong; the soldiers were on normal garrison relief, and took it that as the party had not been stopped on the frontier, the authorities could have no objection on their progress. The following day Edgar had to return to Batang and his work at the mission, and Bailey pushed on with his two servants and two porters. He was not to see another white face for two months.

In the Menkong area he caught a number of butterflies including several new species: *Erebia innupta*, an Argus, *Aporia baileyi*, a veined white, and *Halpe baileyi*, a skipper. As far as he knew, Edgar and himself were only the second party of Europeans to visit Menkong, the first being led by the distinguished French traveller, Jacques Bacot, two years earlier.* Curiously enough, forty-eight hours after Bailey left, another Englishman arrived—

*Bacot and Bailey became lifelong friends.

Captain Kingdon Ward, the famous plant hunter and explorer. He described his experiences in *The Land of the Blue Poppy*.

By the 18th Bailey had hit a tributary of the Irrawaddy, and following this came to a stretch of open grassy country where cattle, sheep, and ponies were grazing. The following night was spent at a village called Ridong, then he continued down the stream till he came to a watermill, which a kindly monk opened so that he could shelter from the rain while taking lunch. Now his eyes were on the look out for Harman's pheasant which he described as 'one of the secondary objects of my journey'. This bird had been described from a single skin found by Captain Harman of the Survey of India in a hut on the southern frontier of Bhutan. Before leaving London, Bailey had been to see the skin in the British Museum, but no preservative had been used and, 'It was practically nothing but a bunch of feathers lying in a cardboard box.' Rumour had it that the bird came from an area 150 miles to the east of Lhasa, but nothing definite was known. On this trip Bailey had no luck whatsoever so far as the pheasant was concerned, neither seeing it nor hearing reports. Two years later, however, he was to be more fortunate.

Bailey's progress at this time varied from fourteen to twenty miles a day, and the country was full of interest, occupying his attention both as an explorer and a naturalist. Here for example is his description for the 19th June:

'I left Lagyap . . . and ascended nine miles to the Tsong La (14,850 feet by hypsometer). The road gradually left the tall junipers and firs behind and passed among dwarf junipers, rhododendrons and willows. About a mile before reaching the summit I passed a beautiful circular lake 150 yards in diameter, on one side of which were rhododendrons in flower. The whole gave the impression of an artificial feature in a park to which a landscape gardener had given great thought. Here I shot a partridge (*Perdix hodgsoniae sifanica*).'

Climbing to nearly 16,000 feet the following day, he crossed the Irrawaddy-Brahmaputra watershed at the Zhasha La, some five miles from Dokong. Now he sensed the first faint influence of India, and was glad to meet a man from Rima who said

there was a road from there via Nahong in the Mishmi country to 'Atsera'—that is, Assam. The journey took fifteen days on foot, and he thought the road was impassable for animals. Bailey also records that he saw some blue and yellow poppies growing alongside the track, and as the former was unknown to him collected some specimens. Unfortunately these were lost.

By the 21st June, Bailey was over the Zhasha La and marching down the valley beyond, which was covered with forests of fir and pine and birch, while maidenhair fern nestled under them close to the ground. At Drowa Gompa he reached the banks of a stream called the Zayul Chu, which becomes the Lohit in its lower reaches and joins the Brahmaputra in Assam. The village had been visited by the agent A.K. in 1882, but Bailey found that since his day the population had shrunk and the terraced fields were overgrown with bushes. Some of the monks he encountered here examined his person and possessions closely, never having seen a European before. They seemed quite friendly, however, and made no attempt to impede his progress. Around the village he caught specimens of no less than thirteen butterflies, one of these proving to be a new species of *Argus* which was later named *Erebia baileyi*. A boiling-point observation gave the altitude as 9,300 feet—no less than 1,000 feet higher than that given by A.K.

To Bailey's satisfaction there seemed to be no Chinese troops about, and indeed the only evidence of occupation was a runner carrying a message on a forked stick, who passed through the village. According to the villagers, the Chinese exercised very little control over the whole area, and so far as Bailey could tell, he was free to travel where he pleased. Further enquiry elicited the fact that if he marched north to reach the river Ngagong Chu, he could follow it down to the junction with the Tsangpo. Here he would be close to the falls reported by Kintup. The accomplishment of his mission was suddenly drawing within his grasp.

Next morning he led his small party up the left bank of the Zayul Chu which here ran through thick forest. It was very muddy and about thirty yards wide at the start, but after about eight miles narrowed suddenly to a quarter of this width and rushed under an overhanging rock. Luckily the people had

thrown a bridge across, so Bailey's progress was not greatly impeded and he was able to reach some empty huts at a place called Giada. Here the men leading their ponies wanted to stay the night, convinced that no other accommodation would offer itself before nightfall, but Bailey persuaded them and the march continued. After a mile or so, however, a magnificent precipice some 1,000 feet high dropped sheer into the river, and the terrain became difficult. Luckily a small patch of cultivation presented itself at a place called Polu, and here the party camped. One of the men reported that his pony was ill through eating aconite, and could only be cured if Bailey gave *him* a glass of whisky. Deciding to try anything once, Bailey agreed, to find that having swallowed the spirit, the man then gave the pony some sour milk and cut the roof of its mouth. Next morning it was fit again. As Bailey remarks: 'The Tibetans have some curious veterinary cures.'

For the next few days the journey continued through thick and mountainous country, the track often being blocked by fallen trees. One of these was so large that the ponies had to be unloaded and put to a jump, a dangerous business, as the track was narrow and on one side lay a precipice. Despite his troubles, however, Bailey kept his eyes open for anything of interest and in the next valley caught two butterflies new to science—*Erebia inconstans* and *Lethe baileyi*.

On the 23rd June the party pushed north of the village of Loma, and after traversing a forest full of green parrots, came to the village of Gochen from where to the north-west could be seen the lamasery and fort of Sangachö Dzong, the region's centre of government. The night was spent in a rest house, where two servants only remained, the Dzongpön or District Officer having fled on the arrival of some Chinese troops the previous year. One of the servants, Bailey was interested to find, had been in the fighting at Gyantse in 1904. But he apparently bore no malice.

Whilst at Gochen, Bailey was surprised to receive an invitation from the monks at Sangachö Dzong and moved across the scrub-covered plateau to spend the following night with them. They, too, had never met a European before, but were most hospitable, preparing a house for their guest, and cooking

a meal of rice and meat served with tea. Afterwards they showed him round the monastery, and he was interested to notice that the chief image of Buddha (called Champa in Tibetan) was represented sitting like a European instead of with legs crossed like a Tibetan. To the monks' delight Bailey carried a photograph taken of the Dalai Lama while he was in Calcutta. Taking it in turn, they solemnly touched the photograph with their foreheads.

Before leaving the area Bailey made a study of the birdlife and butterflies, the latter including a new species of 'copper', *Lycaena standfussi subbrunnes*. The 25th June saw him continuing his journey north towards the head of the Dzo La, the altitude of which he fixed at 16,200 feet by the hypsometer. From the pass he got a good view of the country to the north-west; in front lay a broad, open valley without trees or houses. He had supposed that the Dzo La was an important watershed and that the valley carried the water to the Zayul Chu, but after a few miles he came across a stream flowing in the wrong direction—to the north-west. It was clear therefore that the watershed between the Lohit and the Tsangpo was in the middle of the broad valley between the Dzo La and Shugden Gompa some twenty miles to the north-west.

So he went on towards Shugden Gompa, the valley remaining some three miles in width, until it reached the Ngamtso, where he found the large lake recorded by A.K. The agent had fixed his position by counting the paces, and his estimated latitude was four miles to the north of Bailey's own estimate worked out by time. To try to settle matters Bailey took an observation on the stars which split the difference in half.

Now Bailey was on the verge of the country he had travelled many thousands of miles to enter. At Shugden Gompa, the water flows down a valley to reach the Po Tsangpo, which joins the Tsangpo proper near the falls. If he could reach the Tsangpo and get a boiling-point observation, this would go a long way towards establishing the probability or otherwise of large falls on the river. If he achieved nothing else, this alone, he thought, would make his journey worth while. But there were problems. According to the Tibetans he questioned, the inhabitants of the Nagong Valley, which he must now traverse,

were Po Bas, savage creatures and under no control, either Tibetan or Chinese. No one from Shugden Gompa ever went into Po Ba country.

To Bailey such reports did not come as a surprise, and his view was that they were exaggerated. After some argument the Dzongpön (District Administrator) agreed that he should travel for three days in the country under his jurisdiction and Bailey went ahead with his plans. Next morning, however, no transport arrived, and after more argument the Dzongpön flatly refused to allow Bailey to travel down the valley towards Po Me. 'You will certainly be killed there,' he said. 'News has come of fighting between the Po Bas and Chinese troops. The troops have been defeated and lost 500 men.' If Bailey were killed, he went on, the blame would be laid at his own door, and this, he was determined, should not happen. Having heard similar excuses before, Bailey was not impressed, but his coolies were and soon made it clear that they would not set foot on Po Ba territory at any price. To make matters worse, Bailey had sold his ponies and lacked sufficient money to buy any more. To reinforce his argument the Dzongpön naturally refused to provide any transport.

This was a bitter moment for Bailey. Having travelled from England to Russia, and from Russia to China, having crossed China from east to west, and now travelled hundreds of miles in Tibet, he was baulked from reaching his goal on the last few miles. His disappointment was great. And now he had to decide how to get back to India. He could not return the way he had come—it was too costly and too long. His only course was to retrace his steps to Drowa Gompa (where he had turned north), go south to Rima, and hope to reach Assam via Sadiya and the Mishmi country.

The route from Drowa Gompa to Rima had been surveyed by A.K. and Bailey was relieved of the duty of noting topographical details on the map. Rima, he was surprised to find, was just a miserable little village, although it had figured prominently on maps and a short time previously Jacques Bacot had described it as holding 'the residence of the Governor of the Province'. It was here that Bailey saw his first Mishmis, 'three dull, morose men with very few clothes and wearing

necklaces of dogs' teeth, with long hair tied in a topknot on their heads'. They were smoking pipes but accepted some cigarettes which Bailey offered, not without condescension.

From now on, he realised, the country would be so thick and difficult that animals would be out of the question; all baggage would have to be taken on his own back and the backs of his coolies. This meant that a good deal of equipment had to be left behind, including a saddle, which Bailey presented to a Chinese officer. Luckily there were no great heights to be scaled, so a good deal of warm clothing could be discarded.

So on the 7th July, having caught a new species of butterfly, *Rapala catena*, Bailey set off again. Now his immediate ambition was to shoot takin and he headed up the Di Chu. After some attempts he bagged two animals, but the weather became atrocious and he was unable to save the skins. To add to his hardships, the tracks were rough and covered with boulders. Frequently streams barred his way, which had to be crossed by rope bridges. The Mishmis were not hostile but had no hesitation in making known their requests—especially for opium. Anticipating this demand, Bailey had brought two pounds of the drug from Hankow, which he now doled out. While he watched, the Mishmis melted the opium over a fire, then soaked a small piece of sacking in it. This they put into a bamboo pipe and smoked.

To facilitate his dealings with this tribe, Bailey engaged the services of one of their number, who spoke a little Tibetan, and also a Tibetan who spoke Mishmi. He did not have much luck, however, for awakening one morning at a village called Tulang, he saw his Tibetan coolies disappearing over the far end of a rope bridge. Only the Mishmi-speaking character had remained, and he went across the bridge with Putamdu, to ask the Mishmis to send over some men to help carry the baggage. The Tibetan went first and having reached the far side of the bridge, broke into a sprint and headed north as hard as he could go. Bailey was left with no one but the faithful Putamdu. His situation was far from enviable.

Before long it got worse, for a truculent Mishmi headman now came across the bridge demanding ten rupees as a tax for entering his territory. Having no alternative, Bailey paid up, and

to his relief was able to engage some more coolies, a few of them women, though whether they would prove any more reliable than their predecessors he had every reason to doubt. His food at this time consisted of unripe bananas from the jungle, wild figs, and a little rice and maize that he was able to buy from the Mishmis.

At Minzang the coolies made a little basha, a hut of bamboo with a grass roof, then went off to the village. Next morning a crowd of sightseers appeared, mostly women, but there was no sign of the coolies. To Bailey's delight, however, two Tibetans turned up; they had been sent by the Chinese to bring back some Mishmi headmen from lower down the river, and explained that the Chinese had threatened that if they took more than fifteen days they would lose their heads. As over a month had gone by, they were somewhat apprehensive.

Apparently Bailey was able to get some more coolies, for the journey went on through Mishmi territory. The country was thick and difficult, and pests became more plentiful, especially sandfly and mosquitoes. The leeches also were a menace, but fortunately he was saved from these by his camp bed, which he had still managed to carry with him. Putamdu, however, who slept on the ground, suffered considerably.

On the 15th July Bailey heard some unwelcome news. He had pitched camp in a village called Ti-ne, having arrived late at night, the coolies lighting his way with torches of resinous pine. These had to be lit by flint and steel, as he had long run out of matches. During the night a party of Mishmis arrived, and through interpreters he learned that they had been summoned by the Chinese officer to Chikong as representatives of their tribe. Not unnaturally they were journeying without much enthusiasm, and were glad to take Bailey's advice to consult the British Political Officer at Sadiya before doing anything. The Indian Government were actively discouraging Chinese interference in the tribes south of the Himalayas. It was while talking to these men that Bailey learned that Noel Williamson and his party had been murdered, not by the Mishmis, he was glad to note, but by the Abors, who inhabit a region to the north-west of the Brahmaputra. If the murderers had been Mishmis of the Lohit Valley, then he would have been forced to make a rapid change

of plan. The news, incidentally, cleared up a minor mystery which had long been puzzling him. At Changtu he had received a cable from his father which read: 'Warn Bailey massacre Sadiya'. The message was infuriating, as Bailey could gain no idea of who was murdered or by whom. So far as he knew, no one had been attacked by the Mishmis since 1887, and he found it difficult to believe that Noel Williamson had been killed, both because he was popular with the tribes and these knew that the murder of a British official would be severely punished. But now the truth was out, and Bailey later recorded: 'I thanked God that the Abors and not the Mishmis had been responsible . . . because if the Mishmis had done it, they would have thought nothing of finishing me off as well.'

As July approached its end, Bailey was still struggling through Mishmi territory, and increasingly longing for the comforts of civilisation. The food was monotonous, even though villagers occasionally greeted him with presents of pigs, chickens, and eggs; and with inadequate equipment he was now traversing the wettest region on earth. All day he was soaking wet, and at night storms sometimes demolished his bivouac. Though offered accommodation in houses, he stubbornly refused, for reasons any traveller will understand; it is better to be wet than attacked by bugs.

By now he was getting anxious about the expiry of his leave. According to the rules it would end one day before he reached a seaport, so by any reasonable interpretation this would mean the day before he reached the land frontier of India. No one knew where this was, but Bailey had a nasty feeling that any decision would not be in his favour. His worries were increased when the Mishmis told him that the shortest route to Sadiya in Assam was impassable, for the bridges had been carried away in the rains, and he would have to wait for six weeks until they could be repaired. After some discussion Bailey decided to go along the foot of the hills, where the rivers were smaller and had not yet joined together. This course would involve cutting a path through virgin forest, and even so the last river, the Digaru, might prove impassable. If this proved the case, he would have to make a long detour. With time pressing, Bailey decided he must take the chance, for if he could get over the Digaru, the

whole journey to Sadiya would take only eight days. It would mean engaging more coolies and taking food for a fortnight; and he also arranged for four chickens to be carried in a wicker basket—their eggs would be useful, if they consented to lay.

The journey, as he had expected, was a fearful one. Endlessly attacked by mosquitoes and leeches, he pushed slowly through thick jungle, or waded down streams. Of the jungle passages he recorded: 'Each man took his turn to go in front and cut until he was tired, when he was relieved by another.' Sometimes it took an hour and a half to advance 800 yards. And the dense grass reduced visibility to two or three feet. In the jungle clearings there was a dense secondary growth which was even harder to cut through. Not surprisingly Bailey had bouts of fever and his feet were sore through walking in the wet; and he noted that apart from other torments, even the mud was poisonous.

Mercifully, the Digaru proved no major obstacle, the party linking hands and wading into the torrent. Of this part of the journey, the following passage gives a vivid impression:

'We joined hands and waded across [the river] more than waist deep. From the ford we cut our way for an hour, when we came to the road again. We now went along more easily, but sometimes had to slash our way through the undergrowth. We passed a stockade built for catching wild elephants—the first sign of man's handiwork we had seen for several days. We had to cross several narrow, deep, slow-flowing streams. When very deep we usually managed to fell a convenient tree and, crossing over this, cutting our way through the upper branches as it lay across the stream. On one of these was an ants' nest; large, red, vicious creatures with a terrible bite. No defence was possible as both hands were used in climbing through the thick branches. At some of these streams no suitable trees were handy, and so we had to ford more than waist deep; being already soaked with rain above and water below, this did not seem to matter as much as it might have done.

I was wearing the remains of a pair of puttees on my legs. These had tobacco leaves in the folds and had been soaked

in tobacco water. Leeches hate this, and no doubt this kept many off me. In spite of this, in two hours' march I picked one hundred and fifty off my clothes.'

After a journey full of such hazards for several weeks, it was a relief on the 7th August to embark in a long dug-out canoe. Bailey had now left the Mishmi country for that of the Kamtis. The craft was only eighteen inches wide, and shipped water at the rapids, but eventually he reached the Lohit river, where the surface of the water was smooth, and the rushing streams had been left behind. His objective was now Sadiya, where he was told that several white sahibs could be found. Sadiya, in fact, he hoped would provide the first civilised amenities he had enjoyed for some months. About two in the afternoon he saw a small whitewashed building near the riverbank, and this turned out to be the post office. Steering his canoe towards the bank, he scrambled ashore and went inside the building, where a clerk was working. In answer to Bailey's enquiry, he looked up surprised, remarking, 'There are no European officers in the station, sir.' Further enquiry, however, elicited the fact that there were two ladies, a missionary and the wife of an officer.

Bailey's immediate reaction was to retire to the *dak* bungalow and tidy himself up, considering that 'I could not appear as I was'. His clothes were in rags, and for shoes he had the remains of his canvas bath tied on with straps. Fortunately in the bottom of one of his boxes he had carried a blue serge suit, a clean shirt, and a collar and handkerchief. There was also, to his delight, a pair of bedroom slippers he had completely forgotten about. Having washed and shaved, he got dressed and went to call on the officer's wife, a Mrs. Robinson, who in the best English tradition invited him to tea. The way he demolished 'her delicious but flimsy cake' Bailey recorded, 'must have astonished and dismayed her'.

Sadiya, it may be explained, lies at the northern tip of Assam, in the Brahmaputra Valley. It was developed by the British since the middle of the nineteenth century, the climate and terrain having been found ideal for the tea gardens. Before long Bailey was to meet his opposite number in the Political Department, Captain Dundas, and Captain Robertson, who had been under

him at Sandhurst, and was now making arrangements for an expedition against the Abors. After a few days' rest, Bailey travelled on by boat and train to Calcutta.

Here he heard some interesting news: the Dalai Lama was in Darjeeling, having fled from Lhasa when the Chinese troops marched in to occupy the city in February 1910. Bailey's reaction was to telegraph his superiors in Simla suggesting that he should go to Darjeeling and make the acquaintance of the Lama and his staff in order to 'elaborate and confirm the information I had collected . . .' But the reply was:

'Regret permission to stay Darjeeling cannot be granted you are posted to United Provinces for training and should report yourself to magistrate and collector Aligarh without delay and submit through him detailed explanation of overstay of leave acknowledge receipt of this telegram.'

Bailey was not impressed; it would be far more valuable, he reasoned, to improve his understanding of the people he had to work with, and no harm would have been done by putting back his civil training for a few weeks. Not for the last time the Civil Service mind baffled and infuriated him. Once in Aligarh, he composed a long, and what his superiors must have found infuriating, document explaining just why he was late, and concluding:

'If the Government of India decide I have overstayed my leave it is attributable first to the action of the Mishmis who refused to travel at a reasonable rate and secondly to the size of the unbridged rivers in British territory between the Mishmi Hills and Sadiya.'

Not unexpectedly, this cut no ice whatever.

He did not remain long in Aligarh. After ten days or so he received a telegram from the Foreign Office demanding to know when his report would be sent. This was the first Bailey had heard that any report was required from him—he had, after all, undertaken the journey while on leave. His reply was that as he was busy all day trying petty cases in court, the only available time for writing was on Sunday. The report therefore would

take some weeks, though naturally he would do his best. The result was that he was ordered to Simla by the 2nd September, where he was interviewed by the Deputy Secretary, Scamande Clarke. 'You must realise, Bailey,' the latter told him, 'you're in serious trouble for arriving back so late. My advice is that you should be more amenable and send in the information just as quickly as possible.' He then asked how long the report would take if Bailey could remain in Simla and devote himself to it full-time, which elicited the reply, 'Ten days or a fortnight.' At this Clarke ordered him to get on with the job at once, which Bailey was delighted to do, having made a rough draft on the journey from Sadiya to Calcutta. Later he wrote: 'I was very annoyed with Clarke's attitude at the time . . . but later I learned that he had been very kind to me and written a flattering note on what I had done.'

Bailey's attitude at the time, however, was not sweetened by the notification that he was to lose twenty days' pay. When he went to argue the point with a *babu* in the accounts department, the latter asked to be shown his route on the map. As Bailey traced his journey across Russia and China the Indian commented somewhat puzzled: 'That is not the usual route, is it, sahib?' Later, when he had submitted his report, Bailey was informed that he had incurred the displeasure of the Governor General in Council; and the possible scientific results of his journey did not ameliorate matters. The loss of pay would not even be discussed.

Not all senior officials were unfriendly, however, and while in Simla Bailey had a number of interviews, both with 'politicals' and army officers who were interested to hear of his experiences. On Wednesday the 6th September, so his diary notes, he paid a call on Douglas Haig, the future field marshal, then Chief of the General Staff. Haig was engaged at this time in his struggle to prepare the Indian Army for its role in the war which he believed must come; what he discussed with Bailey is unfortunately not recorded.

'This was the first journey I had made on my own into unknown and unmapped country', Bailey wrote of his recent experience. On the whole it had proved a disappointment, and in his main object he had failed completely. But what had he

achieved? Had such expenditure of time and effort been worth while? Despite his modesty, and indeed tendency to under-rate his accomplishments, Bailey decided that it had been. He had carefully completed a route survey, calculating distances by carefully noting the time occupied by his daily marches, and allowing for halts and delays. With his prismatic compass, he had taken bearings on prominent peaks and landmarks; and with his sextant he had taken observations on the stars to fix latitude. With his hypsometer he had calculated the altitude above sea level every night, and fixed the height of passes and river crossings. He had also made detailed notes of roads, tracks, and other features of military importance.

Furthermore, he had brought back some birds and mammal skins, plants, and a large collection of butterflies, many new to science. The butterflies were described by Richard South of the British Museum, whose paper appeared in the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. In the introductory note to this he stated:

‘The collection as a whole is of very great interest, but of course, it is to the butterflies from the newly explored region that scientific value more especially attaches. A number of species new to science, and some new forms of described species, were obtained. In many cases our knowledge of the distribution of species, described from Western China, is much extended.’

What mistakes had he made? With more knowledge and experience, could he have accomplished his mission more successfully? Reviewing his efforts dispassionately in later years, Bailey wrote: ‘Were I to travel again, I think I should adopt Tibetan dress, at any rate in out-of-the-way places. This avoids tiresome curiosity and unnecessary questionings. I used to feel awkward and dressed up as if in fancy dress when wearing strange clothes. . . .’ Otherwise he could look on his efforts with satisfaction: ‘Although my attempt to reach the falls on the river had been unsuccessful, I had managed to cover a good deal of new ground . . .’

Bailey’s achievements were recognised by the award of the

Gill Memorial by the Royal Geographical Society and of the McGregor Medal by the United Service Institution of India. He could now call himself an explorer without any offence to his strict sense of propriety.

By the 9th October he was back in Sadiya. What had happened was this: the Government of India had now launched an expedition under Sir Hamilton Bower to punish the Abors for the murder of Noel Williamson, Dr. Gregorson and their followers. Hearing of this while in Simla, Bailey had decided 'to wangle a posting' to the expedition, and with the help of Sir Henry McMahon, the Foreign Secretary, had succeeded. Many civil servants up in Simla were panicking at the idea of the expedition, imagining that the north-east frontier was a replica of the North-West, and might go up in flames once Bower and his troops arrived. McMahon, however, knew better; he realised that for the first time in many years there was a possibility of entering Tibet from the Assam border, and arranged for a survey to be made of the Abor, the Digaru, and Chulikatta country. Bailey, with his knowledge and experience of travel in the area, so McMahon considered, could 'do some quietly useful work'. Though not welcoming such a swift return to the leech-infested jungles, Bailey was delighted to be back on an active mission. Everything concerning the north-east frontier was of absorbing interest to him. Also, if a suitable opportunity occurred, he was determined to make another dash to the Tsangpo.

6 Prelude to adventure

Punitive expeditions were an old feature of life under the British Raj, both on the North-West Frontier and the north-east. The usual practice was to burn villages and bring overwhelming force against any resistance offered, and the judicial and administrative procedure to cover such acts was well established. In the 1850s such expeditions had caused a great deal of argument, and Sir Charles Napier, when Commander-in-Chief, once ordered that no more should be despatched. 'It is with surprise and regret', he wrote after a column had visited the Yusufzais, 'that villages have been destroyed . . . I disapprove of such cruelties . . . war is to be made on men; not upon defenceless women and children, by destroying their habitations and leaving them to perish without shelter.' Since those days, the policy had toughened a great deal; and the murder of Noel Williamson and his party was regarded by the Indian Government as a clear case for a punitive expedition.

It was organised from Assam, then a backwater of India, militarily speaking, and not surprisingly Bailey's arrival was greeted with little enthusiasm. So far as General Bower and his staff were concerned, he was 'the damn fellow from Simla' and they had no hesitation in getting rid of him. Their method was to send him into Chulikatta country with orders to find out 'if they intended to rise, too'. To accompany him, Bower detailed twenty-five military police, and indeed Bailey was ordered not to go anywhere without these. He was also given ninety Nagas

(a hill people of Assam) to carry baggage. As Bailey realised at once, he could not go any great distance with such a large and unwieldy mass of police around him, and in the end took only three men. Even so his orders were still far too limiting. He had no great faith in the Abor Expedition either, believing that their whole appreciation of the situation was at fault. His own researches as to the murder of Williamson and his party had led him to believe that it was the result of a series of misunderstandings, quite unconnected with an incipient revolt.*

On the 22nd March, so it appeared, just as Williamson and his party were set to cross the river Dihang from Konlinghat on the right bank to Sissin on the left, four messengers arrived from the village of Kebang. These warned the party not to cross, for if they did the Abors would attack them. Not very pleased to see the messengers, as smallpox was raging in their village, Williamson told them to go away and mind their own business, then continued with his preparations. So the party crossed the Dihang and continued marching for several days before a halt was called, some of the coolies having fallen sick. Eventually, after discussion between Williamson and Dr. Gregorson, it was decided to send the three worst cases back to Pasighat for treatment while the doctor remained with the milder cases and Williamson went ahead to Komsing. The three coolies were accompanied by a Miri who was given three letters to deliver, and at a village called Rotung, which was reached on the 29th March, he flaunted these before the headman to show his own importance. Looking at the envelopes with their red seal, the headman took it into his head that they must be advising the Government that the white men were angry with the Abors. He therefore decided that they must never be delivered; and the Miri and three coolies were ambushed and killed after they left the village next morning. News of the murder and the reasons behind it rapidly spread among the Abors, and a hundred fighting men set out from Kebang, who succeeded in killing Dr. Gregorson and all except one man of his party.

*The Government had intended to send troops to Mishmi territory, but after studying Bailey's report decided this was unnecessary, so saving lakhs of rupees. Bailey always thought it was because of this that he was awarded Rs.1,000.

They then advanced to Komsing where they set on Williamson and his party, slaughtering all but a few.

In Bailey's view, the whole deplorable incident stemmed from the boasting of the Miri letter carrier; and the Abors' sole motive was to intercept the letters which they believed contained orders that they should be attacked. In Abor symbolism red stood for anger.

The Chulikatta Mishmis had, of course, no intention of rising, but were delighted when Bailey told them of the expedition against the Abors. Politely they expressed their hope that the entire tribe would be wiped out.

Having accomplished his mission Bailey returned to Bower's headquarters at Kobo, to be thanked coldly and told to go back to Simla. Here he reported to Sir Henry McMahon, who expressed disappointment that he had not travelled more extensively in the Chulikatta country. Bailey therefore had no alternative but to show him the orders received from Bower which deliberately limited his operations. Knowing the tensions between Simla and the Assam Government, McMahon understood perfectly, and absolved Bailey from any charge of failing to carry out orders, or displaying lack of initiative.

The situation was depressing all the same, especially as Bailey now found himself ordered back to Aligarh, where he carried out routine duties, played a good deal of golf and polo, and tried to prepare himself for a series of examinations in law, finance, and revenue collecting. Completely uninterested in such subjects, he never found time for the necessary study—from March to June pigsticking seemed to fill most of his leisure hours—and as the autumn examinations drew near, realised that he knew very little about the subject whatsoever.

Then came a dramatic change in events. A telegram arrived ordering him back to Sadiya, where on arrival he was told by the Political Officer, Dundas, that he was to command a larger mission than the previous year and go deep into the Chulikatta country. Though welcoming the chance for further exploration, Bailey disliked the orders as phrased, his reason being that, 'I saw myself being tied down by administration and having to fool around with accounts when the mission was wound up.' Writing immediately to Sir Henry McMahon, Bailey pleaded

that he could not produce results when shackled in this manner and suggested that he should be appointed Intelligence Officer to the mission instead. Fortunately McMahan agreed, with the result that Captain G. A. Nevill was appointed Political Officer and head of the mission. In his orders the following paragraph was included, which was to prove of great significance:

‘Captain F. M. Bailey will accompany the party as Intelligence Officer, and it is the desire of the Government of India that he should be allowed as much scope as possible for the exercise of his talents as regards exploration.’

Bailey studied this paragraph at length, pondering long and earnestly on the words ‘as much scope as possible’. Exactly how far could he go? To what extent should he regard himself under Nevill’s orders, except for administration? And was it envisaged that he might break away from the main party of the mission?

In pondering these questions, he naturally examined the tasks laid down for the mission and discovered that these were as follows: There would be two survey parties working in Abor country. The first would survey the courses of the Siyom and Simong rivers, and the second the main range as far as possible east of the Dibong river. The instructions for the second party were somewhat curiously worded, there being an injunction to ‘discover as much as possible of the geography north of the main range without crossing it’. In Bailey’s instructions, however, there was no mention of the main range and whether he could or could not cross it. A reasonable interpretation of this instruction was that the Government were not interested with the geography north of the main range; but it could mean—and this was the interpretation Bailey chose—that there was no objection to his crossing the range. In fact, taken in conjunction with the instruction that he was to be allowed as much scope as possible for the exercise of his ‘talents as regard exploration’, the instructions could be stretched—so Bailey was able to convince himself—to constitute implicit permission to enter Tibet. He was only too aware, of course, that if he chose to query the matter, the Government would clamp down on him;

no civil servant would authorise a journey which might end in massacre. His best policy, he decided, was to accept the orders as they were, and watch events.

It was February 1913 before anything interesting happened. On the 14th of that month the mission was encamped by the village of Ilupu, at the confluence of the Matun and Dri rivers, and here Bailey was surprised to be told by the villagers that further north at a place called Mipi there was an isolated community of Tibetans. The first point which struck him was that Mipi could not be much more than 4,000 feet, and Tibetans find it hard to live below 8,000. Then he recollected the story of a party which had fled from the Chinese at the turn of the century, fulfilling an old prophecy that they should seek 'the Promised Land'. Mipi lies about a hundred miles due north of Sadiya, and after an eight-day journey Bailey arrived in the area on the 28th February with Nevill and Major Bliss of the Military Police, together with porters and escorting troops. Not wishing to alarm the inhabitants, the party carried out a reconnaissance before approaching the village, Bailey noting that there were cultivated fields and houses built in the Tibetan style, but no sign of life or movement. There was not even smoke rising from the chimneys. Next day it was found necessary to bridge a seventy-yard river, which took up the hours of daylight, and the party camped by the river on a flat patch of grassland. After breakfast the three officers walked towards the houses, passing several fields of barley, and came across a Tibetan carrying a load of wood. Bailey now moved forward accompanied only by a Tibetan-speaking coolie from Darjeeling, until he reached the houses. Here a woman appeared, carrying on her back a wooden water vessel. When Bailey called out to her in Tibetan, she dropped the vessel and ran screaming into a building. Two men then came out, and rather than approach them, Bailey sat down on a log and called them over. Watching him intently to ensure that he was unarmed, the Tibetans unbuckled their belts, threw their swords on the ground, then slowly moved forward. Bailey asked to see the headman, and after some argument, he came out of one of the houses. His name was Gyamtso, and he seemed very shaken, assuming that Bailey had come to kill him and all the other Tibetans. Patiently

Bailey tried to allay his fears, explaining that he was British and had no hostile intentions. Just as Gyamtso was beginning to relax, however, Bliss and Nevill marched in with twenty sepoy—quite contrary to the agreed arrangement. Naturally the headman now thought Bailey had tricked him and a further period had to be spent in calming him down. Eventually, however, he understood that the party were intent on surveying, and wanted the help of the Tibetans in this task. Though not exactly enthusiastic—the chief desire of the villagers was to be left alone—Gyamtso promised to co-operate; and during the month which followed he and Bailey became good friends.

For Bailey this unexpected encounter with the Tibetans was exciting for several reasons. He was glad at any time to renew his contact with the race which so fascinated him, and to speak the language again. Also, as he put it, ‘the realisation flashed through my mind that here was my chance of getting through to Tibet from the Assamese side.’ Wisely he kept this notion to himself, continuing with his routine duties. But during his daily conversations with Gyamtso he gradually introduced the subject of the Tsangpo falls, and obtained a good deal of information on routes. This he incorporated in his report so that it would appear in Nevill’s main report on the mission. If he did manage to break away and head for the Tsangpo, Bailey wanted it understood that he was not just dashing into the blue, but following routes already reported on.

But one problem immediately presented itself: such an expedition as Bailey envisaged could not be undertaken alone. Somehow he had to find another officer with ideas and ambitions similar to his own. The danger was, though, that if he broached the subject, rumours of his plan might reach Nevill, who would have no alternative but to forbid such a move or at least refer to the Assam Government for further instructions. Eventually Bailey decided to approach a member of one of the survey teams, Captain Henry Morshead, who to his relief leapt at the idea. Morshead was about Bailey’s age, and had worked in the Survey of India for about six years. He had impressed the mission not only by his efficiency and devotion to duty, but his physical endurance. He could work long hours in almost impossible conditions, and seemed oblivious to the

normal requirements for sleep and food. Comfort seemed to mean nothing to him at all.

Bailey's plan was to stay on after the mission withdrew in April, and cross the mountains to Chimdro, with the help of guides and porters promised by Gyamtso. Increasingly it became obvious, however, that Nevill would have to be told well in advance, and his first reaction was to telegraph the Indian Government. In due course a telegram was received in reply: 'We approve but the party should not enter Tibet.' This was infuriating for the falls, if they existed, must lie in Tibet, and the Government was virtually saying that they approved of Bailey's going provided he did not go. In long discussions with Nevill, who now proved surprisingly sympathetic, the following conclusion was now arrived at: If McMahan had drafted the telegram, it meant that he approved of the expedition, but had to cover himself in case it ran into trouble. On the other hand it might have been drafted by a civil servant who had no idea of the geography. In this case it was difficult to know what to decide.

Two days later the position was complicated even further, for a telegram arrived ordering Bailey not to go 'without further orders'. When these orders might come it was not stated, and Bailey had a nasty suspicion that instead of giving him and Morshead 'the all clear' they would limit his action even further, or even order him back to India with the mission. Now it was Nevill who came to the rescue; at the risk of incurring official displeasure, he would report that Bailey and Morshead had left before any orders arrived forbidding the expedition. He also let Bailey scrounge all supplies not required by the mission before its withdrawal, and take them with him. So the two explorers said their good-byes and set off. As they both realised, they would have to face the music on their return. Whether they had solved the mystery of the Tsangpo gorges or not, they might—according to the whims of officialdom—be faced with loss of pay, loss of seniority, or even dismissal for refusing to obey orders. But they were determined to go nevertheless and went gladly. There are few lures more potent than the lure of untrodden land to the explorer.

7 Return to Tibet

‘I am often asked how Morshead and I *planned* our itinerary. It is the question which immediately occurs to anyone living in this age of long-term plans and universal confusion. But in 1913 the idea never occurred to us that any expedition should be routed and highly organised. There was so much to discover once we left Mipi wherever we went and whatever we saw was important. Each new place, each new bird or flower or animal, each trigonometrical point or hypsometer reading was an addition to the sum total of human knowledge. So we did not set out and say “We will do this or that, but not the other.” We were happy in being opportunists . . .’

So Bailey wrote in old age, precisely catching the mood in which he and his partner set out. Today, when aircraft can fly over any part of the earth’s surface, and man has begun reaching into space, some of the fascination of ground expeditions has worn off, except perhaps for the specialists. But in 1913, until an explorer had marched into territory, it was completely unknown; and men like Livingstone, Speke, Burke, Alexander Burnes, Burton, and Younghusband, enjoyed adulation more intense and prolonged than film stars of a later age, or even spacemen whose names tend to be forgotten as each spectacular episode excels the one before. Explorers in fact exemplified all the virtues so admired by the Victorians: lone heroism, resource, persistence, energy, and modesty. Their technical papers,

read before the learned societies, gave them enormous prestige among the professional élite; and their books, many of them long and ill written, sold in tens of thousands. Bailey belonged to the last generation of explorers before aircraft arrived and the great days were over. But he was in the mould of the giants who had gone before him; no obstacle would deter him from reaching his goal.

Though the expedition might not be 'routed and highly organised', Bailey still had a pretty good idea of where he was going. The main points of the journey and the probable routes between them were discussed in great detail, though plans were thrown out or modified as circumstances demanded. On this journey his first objective was Chimdro on the Tibetan border, and it was decided to approach this up the valley of the Yonggyap. At the far end of this valley lay the pass, the Yonggyap La, which the Tibetans said was free from snow only from July to September. Unable to wait till July, for fear of recall, Bailey and Morshead would have to take a chance on getting through.

But there was a further snag. After crossing the Yonggyap La, so Gyamtso warned, the explorers would find themselves in an uninhabited valley. They would have to push up this until a tributary valley came in from the north-east, then follow this to another pass, the Pungpung La. If they hit bad weather, there was a chance of getting stuck between the passes; and altogether it looked as if the first stage of the journey would be the hardest.

Having broken contact with Nevill, Bailey's first job was to arrange for dumps of food and equipment to be pushed forward up the Yonggyap Valley, as the snowline rapidly retreated. These dumps were hidden in the forest, then ferried forward in stages as the porters were ready, Bailey moving ahead to keep a close eye on things. Despite his preoccupation with such basic matters, it is interesting to note that he still found time to discover a species of rat unknown to science—*Epimys brahma*. He also went after takin, but without success. The coolies were not Nagas as on his previous expedition, but Tibetans and Gurkhas, with a Lepcha called Narsing.

On the 13th May Morshead arrived with his survey party, and also brought up some mail from home and a packet of films

for Bailey's camera. Amongst these letters, it is quite possible, was one from Mrs. Bailey telling him the news of his father's death. As father and son had been so close this must have been a great blow at the commencement of his expedition, and the pitiful, sentimental terms of Mrs. Bailey's letter could not have helped him greatly. Still, she did have the courage to write: 'Oh, how I wanted you today; but I know it would be wrong to interrupt your work and career.' Long separation between members of a family was of course one of the great hardships of service in India, and many parents died without the comforting presence of their children. Whatever Bailey's grief, he kept it to himself; no mention was made in his journal.

A great disappointment shared by Bailey and Morshead was that Gyamtso was not able to accompany them. However, he lent them the services of a Shikari, Sonam Chombi, and wrote a letter to be handed to the Dzongpön of Chimdro, the first Tibetan official they would encounter. At the time Bailey did not know what was in the message, but later obtained a rough translation.

'The British have arrived in Pemakö from Chulikatta land and gave us good presents. They are going to Po Me and then to India. As Gyamtso cannot himself go with them, he sends you this information. Please send a man to accompany them. The English Bailey sahib is going. Please do not stop him but give the necessary orders. There are many English in Zayul, Kala Yong Dzong, the Tsangpo valley, and here also in the Dri, Dibong, Emra, Ahui and Matun valleys. They are in countless numbers. This country is not under the Emperor of China but under Great Britain. Bailey sahib knows the Dalai and Tashi Lamas who know he has come so you must not stop him. They will not give trouble to the people. Please help them.'

Gyamtso also wrote two letters for delivery to the two queens of Po Me, who lived at Showa, some sixty miles to the north of Chimdro.

It was now that Bailey learned some of the problems of taking a colleague on an expedition. Seldom do two men have precisely the same methods of working, and if both are experi-

enced and determined, disagreements are likely to arise from the start. On the 17th, Morshead went out alone to get a prismatic compass bearing on some points up the Yonggyap Valley, and by nightfall had not returned. Worried that something might have happened—he could have fallen down a crevice or suffered a bad attack of fever—Bailey sent men along the track with lighted torches, but they came back without him. All night Bailey fretted. If Morshead was lost or incapacitated, what should he do? Delay was impossible, because their reserves of foodstuffs would be eaten into. And (as Bailey put it) ‘This heaven-sent opportunity of exploring the gorges was unlikely ever to come again.’

It was late on the 18th when Morshead finally arrived, suffering from a bad bout of fever. Next morning, however, he had recovered and the expedition got on the move, climbing to Abgya Pukpa, which lay at 7,400 feet up the valley. Next day they went on another five and a half miles to Shakang, some 750 feet higher. The major problem to be overcome at this stage was crossing the innumerable streams and rivers. Over some of these trees had been felled to make rough bridges, but the trouble was that once the bark came off, the trunks were too slippery for the porters. So time had to be spent chipping and roughening the surface with axes. On this stretch of the journey Bailey kept coming across human bones—the remains of Tibetans who had tried to emigrate after the Chinese invasion. Many of their small possessions lay beside them, such as cooking pots and other utensils.

The road still climbed. On the 21st they camped at 9,150 feet, and on the 24th at 10,600. Now they had reached the last camp before crossing the pass. In the interval there had been a halt while the coolies ferried up supplies, a slow and painful business, as the latter part of the stage was well above the snowline. In places the snow lay two feet deep. On the 25th the weather turned rainy, and that night Bailey and Morshead sat in their small tent, listening to the drumming on the canvas, and praying that the morning would produce a clear sky.

In fact it was still raining, but the supply position demanded that they go on to the pass. It was a miserable journey, Bailey recording in his journal:

'We had a difficult steep climb of 1,200 feet over deep soft snow. Rain fell the whole time . . . The whole place was clouded in mist and we had to send men ahead to find the pass. We could not measure the depth of the snow as we had no sticks long enough but there was about 12 feet on a rock near by and the depth on the ground must have been more.'

Later on there were fir trees, and among these the snow lay not so deep. By now the men sent ahead had found the pass and the expedition struggled towards the head. Here a hypsometer reading gave an altitude of 12,020 feet, the water boiling at 193.1 degrees. Beyond the pass there was a steep descent for almost a thousand feet, and the movement started up avalanches. Several of the coolies went sliding down, and Bailey, who was carrying a heavy load himself, shot down twenty feet before coming to a halt. No one was hurt. And later on in a marshy area Bailey was able to ensure a good supper by shooting some pheasant and duck.

Then there were more troubles. Making camp below the snowline, it was found that five of the coolies had gone completely snowblind. Bailey was furious about this, for he had issued all the men with a protective green veil. What had happened, he discovered, was that the weather being so cloudy and there being no obvious glare the men had neglected to use the veils. Morshead was also furious, but with himself. Somehow in crossing the pass he had dropped his sight-rule, which meant that he could not make a plane-table survey.

Next morning, however, things did not look quite so black, for the coolies had recovered their sight sufficiently to continue, and the rain eased then gave way to sunshine. Bailey wrote in his journal: 'We marched downstream all day. The road was through fir forest with occasional stretches of bamboo jungle which were rather hard to get through.' This phrase gives little idea of the difficulties of getting through belts of bamboo forest. A way has to be cut with matchets, and if the trees are of the female variety, their long thorns can rip off clothing and tear into flesh. Even at sea level the job of cutting a path is difficult; at 11,000 feet it must have been very exhausting indeed.

The next objective was the Pungpung La; unless the

expedition somehow managed to negotiate this, it would be trapped. Rising in the darkness at 3.30 a.m. Bailey hoped to make a start an hour later, but it was five o'clock before the column led off. The Tibetans had said that the snow would freeze in the night, but this did not happen, and, negotiating the rocky hillside, Bailey found it soft and deep. The route lay across a high spur, from which it was almost possible to see the pass, then down past a lake and up a stream. The ascent alone took two and a half hours, and the altitude proved to be 14,495 feet. It was still before noon and Bailey was pleased with his progress, for the Pungpung La had been occupying his thoughts for some days. But looking down the far side he realised that his troubles had barely begun.

Below him lay great cliffs dropping sheer towards the valley. Skilled rock climbers might have negotiated them, given time and adequate equipment, but for heavily laden coolies the descent was out of the question. Reconnoitring to the right Bailey found that if he could climb another 300 feet it might be possible to skirt the precipice, and this course was decided on. In snow three to four feet deep the coolies struggled up the steep path, then slowly descended a thousand feet towards a lake, about a mile long and 300 yards wide. Of the situation Bailey wrote:

'We had thought that the worst was over, but when we got to the outlet of the lake, a stream which fell steeply down the mountain side, we found what looked like a vision of inferno. We could not see the bottom of the valley. Clouds of dark mist came billowing up, obliterating the view. All we saw were steep cliffs in every direction. . . .'

Urgently Bailey began seeking an easier way down, but failed completely; the only descent offering itself was over the cliffs and into the inferno at the bottom. Things would have been difficult enough if the rock face had been uncovered, but there were deep patches of snow, and soon the climbers were starting slides and avalanches. In his journal Bailey recorded that, 'I had one rather dangerous fall but managed to save myself with the handle of my butterfly net.' In a later account he confessed that while going down he thought the fall would be his last. Sonam Chumbi,

the Tibetan, had an even more spectacular slide, shooting down about 150 feet, while the rest heard his voice calling on Ugyen Rimpoche, the Indian saint adopted by Tibetan Buddhists, to save him. To Bailey it seemed that the saint had not heard, but hours later Sonam Chumbi reached the camp, which had now been pitched under a large boulder, lit a smoky fire from some branches, and offered up prayers of thanksgiving.

Next day things were easier, and for the first time, Bailey records, he was confident of reaching Chimdro alive. The road led through a forest, after which there was a steep descent towards the village of Bolung. Beyond lay the Chimdro river, and at the bridge several people were waiting, including an old man representing the Dzongpön. Accompanying him, Bailey went on to Bolung where he was given tea and some food. Morshead had dropped behind, suffering from sore feet—through neglected leech bites—and fever. A message even reached Bailey that he had fainted, but unwilling to break off the opening formalities with the Tibetans, Bailey sent back some whisky for him, which brought him round. Already Morshead's neglect of elementary health precautions was beginning to annoy Bailey.

The importance of these opening formalities with the Tibetans was as follows. Any Tibetan official who is travelling on business is furnished with a document called a *lamyik*. This entitles him to call upon villages en route to supply food and lodging for himself and his retinue, and transport for the next stage of the journey. A *lamyik* had no date of expiry recorded on it, and could be used for the remainder of the official's life. Bailey's next and vital job, therefore, was to establish his right to a *lamyik*. Without it he could not possibly continue through Tibet and his expedition would come to an inauspicious end.

But how could he establish his right? The letter from Gyamtso would no doubt be of some help, but what would influence the Dzongpön more than anything was the standing of the expedition and its leaders. So Bailey ordered the guides forward to Chimdro to announce his arrival, then making himself as smart as possible, called on the Dzongpön with Morshead. This official turned out to be a monk in his fifties, the incarnation, it was said, of a holy lama called Pongla. After the initial courtesies

Bailey requested transport which to his relief the monk offered, though without any great enthusiasm. Next day, while Morshead got on with his surveying, Bailey called on the Dzongpön a second time, taking with him photographs of the Dalai and Tashi Lamas. Immediately the atmosphere changed for the better, and Bailey found himself invited to attend the annual ceremony of *Pubi druchen*. This was long and impressive and Bailey's hopes of obtaining the *lamyik* rose considerably; the Dzongpön would not have invited anyone of doubtful standing to such an occasion. But later it became clear that he was apprehensive of committing himself, and trying 'to pass the buck', to use Bailey's expression, to the Poba queens. Bailey, however, stood firm and said that he could not possibly wait for the arrival of the queens' representative, and was sure that the Dalai Lama would agree with him. This did the trick, and after a tantalising delay the precious document was forthcoming. Next morning the column was on its way again. Bailey could congratulate himself on being the first explorer to lead an expedition from Assam into Tibet.

Now came a three days' march to Kapu, the first village in the Tsangpo Valley. For the first two days Bailey followed the line of the Yonggyap river, but left it before the confluence with the Tsangpo, to strike further north. At Kapu, a village which does not seem to have filled Bailey with enthusiasm, it was decided to get a message through to the Abor Survey party, as Morshead badly wanted to replace his lost sight-rule. It is possible, too, that Bailey wanted to learn the official reaction to his break-away expedition. The alleged site of the Tsangpo falls lay upstream, but to shorten the time before the return of the runner from Mipi, it was decided to work *downstream* for three days, to a place called Rinchenpung. (Though Bailey does not specifically mention this, presumably the Tibetans had a shorter route to Mipi than that the expedition had been forced to take.)

From now on Bailey lost no opportunity of asking any Tibetans he encountered about the existence of the falls, but without much success. One old man said there were some falls below a place called Sengdam, and when asked how tall, pointed to a walnut tree and added, 'Twice as big as that.' The tree was

no more than twenty feet high. He knew of no falls at Gyala or anywhere else.

Rinchenpung proved even less attractive than Kapu, and by mutual agreement Bailey and Morshead decided to work upstream before awaiting the message from Mipi. The diversion, however, had proved most useful, Morshead being able to cover territory not so far surveyed, and Bailey obtaining boiling-point observations at two places on the river.

By the 15th June the party was back at Kapu, and as a message had still not arrived, decided to continue upstream. This had been the course taken by Kintup, and comparing his account with features as they appeared on the ground, Bailey found himself cheered considerably. If he could be so accurate about minor details remembered years afterwards, then surely he must have been accurate about the falls. . . .

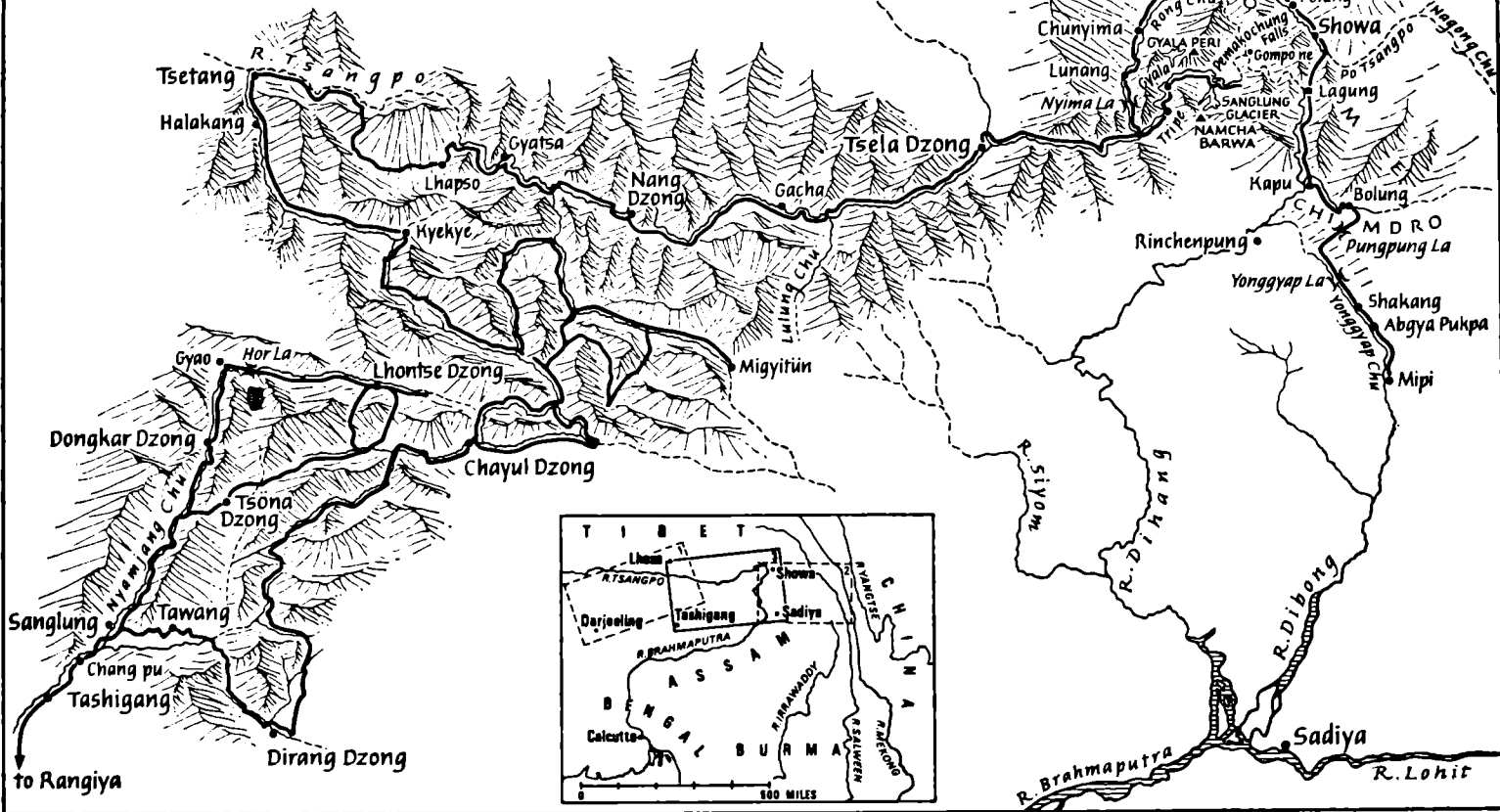
But now came another snag to plague the expedition. The Nyerpa Namgye, a representative of the Poba queens, had sent a message some days previously, asking the expedition to return to Chimdro because the people of Kapu were dangerous. This, as Bailey realised, was merely a ruse to get rid of him and his party. Discussing the matter with Morshead, he decided to send a message saying that unfortunately he could not read the Nyerpa's writing, but would be going north to see him. Reaching Pangshing on the 17th June, however, Bailey learned that the Nyerpa was collecting transport at Tsenchuk in preparation for crossing the pass back to Showa, the capital of Po Me. This was very worrying. His game, Bailey reasoned, was to leave a message repeating his instructions to return to Chimdro in even more emphatic terms, then disappear before Bailey could arrive to plead with him. So there was only one course open: to push ahead swiftly and surprise him before he left.

The meeting took place on the 19th at Lagung, a village which, so far as could be seen, consisted of a single building. The Nyerpa, whom Bailey described in his journal as 'a pleasant man but at first inclined to impress us with his importance', had some surprising and unwelcome news. He had been exchanging messages with Captain Dundas, of the Abor Survey party, which was now, it seemed, trying to reach the Tsangpo falls by another route. Horrified that even now he would be

Journey with Morshead: 1913

Route of Captains Morshead and Bailey

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 miles



beaten at the post, Bailey showed the Nyerpa a photograph of the Dalai Lama, hoping to speed things up, but this made no impact at all. So after talk about battles with the Chinese two years previously, in which the Nyerpa greatly exaggerated Chinese losses, the conversation was broken off.

After a restless night, Bailey walked out to find that the day was clear and fine. It was a wonderful day, in fact, to push on towards the falls but frustratingly he had to wait until the Nyerpa made his mind up. A present of butter and wheat flour which issued from the official's room seemed a good omen, but when he appeared in person it was to say that he had no authority to grant permission to travel through Po Me. However, he would accompany the expedition to Showa, the capital, which lay some fifteen miles to the north, where Bailey could plead his own case.

This was certainly better than being sent back; but the Nyerpa could not leave till the following morning, and when Bailey called on him then, he seemed rather under the weather. Again he touched on his correspondence with Dundas, which it now appeared had been initiated by the Nyerpa himself. He had written advising the party not to come up the Tsangpo, to which Dundas replied that he had no intention of doing so. His letters however were placed in Chinese envelopes with a red band down the middle, as he believed that the unfamiliar sight of English envelopes would alarm the Tibetans. But the familiarity of the Chinese envelopes alarmed even more, and the Nyerpa had become convinced that Dundas was Chinese. From this it was only a minor step to conclude that his friend, Bailey, had some connection with the Chinese also.

So there began a long-drawn-out tragi-comedy, which vividly illustrates the problems of dealing with Tibetan officials, lacking knowledge of the West or Western Ways. In a desperate effort to free the Nyerpa's mind from suspicion, Bailey pointed out that the writing paper at least was not Chinese but English, and holding it up to the light indicated the water mark. 'Show me any letter', he added, 'and I will match it in my English dictionary.' Eventually the Nyerpa seemed satisfied, but before leaving reminded Bailey and Morshead that they should regard themselves as prisoners.

Later Sonam Chumbi gave them a further clue to what was in the mind both of the Nyerpa and the Tibetan ministers, who now came on the scene. It was useless persisting with the story that they were officers on leave, interested in collecting birds and butterflies and taking photographs—no Tibetan could believe that. The best course was to explain that the party had come by special order of the Viceroy to gain information about the Tibet-India frontier. What the officials would really like was a letter from the Viceroy ordering the Chinese to leave Po Me.

The next day the Nyerpa and the ministers arrived to continue the discussions. The party's equipment fascinated them, even Bailey's watch, an object they had not seen before. When he tried to explain that its purpose was to ascertain the precise time of day, or night, they were quite baffled. However, things seemed to be going well until the Nyerpa picked up a small stick of Indian ink which Morshead carried, and saw some Chinese characters marked on it in gold. Turning to the travellers he remarked curtly, 'You can't deny you have nothing to do with the Chinese now.'

After this the discussion went on interminably, the ministers stressing that they needed help from the Viceroy, and Bailey explaining that although pressure would be exerted, it was unlikely that troops would be sent. Then suddenly the ministers gave in, the head of the council announcing, 'You can travel where you like in our country.' There was one proviso, however, the people of Po Me were at war with Dashing, three marches up the Po Tsangpo (on which Showa was located). Anyone approaching the wall between the two districts would be shot. Bailey therefore said he was very anxious to go to Dashing, hoping that when he finally gave way and marched in the opposite direction to the Tsangpo—as he had every intention of doing—the Tibetans would be so relieved that there would be no further hindrance.

Before matters were decided, however, a message arrived from the Abor Survey party; they would be sending a party above Kopu, but this would be withdrawing to India about the 12th July. There was no intention of heading for the falls.

On the 28th June Bailey and Morshead were eventually able

to leave Showa. 'When we first heard of you', the chief of council told them, 'our ears were very hot. And even when we saw you, we were full of suspicion. But now we understand you, and do not mind your coming.' Gifts were exchanged and speeches were made, the *ula* transport arrived, and the column began marching towards Petang.

As one may observe from the map, there had been a major change of plan. In making the journey from Lagung to Showa—to obtain the necessary permission to continue through Po Me—the explorers had left the valley of the Tsangpo, and were now on the right bank of the Po Tsangpo, its tributary. This curved in a great arc towards the west, before continuing south to join the Tsangpo at Gompo Ne, some fifty miles to the south-west. Bailey and Morshead had, of course, intended to return to Lagung and continue their journey along the Tsangpo, but now they decided that 'It was far better to travel down the Po Tsangpo through country unexplored and unsurveyed by Europeans and join the Tsangpo at the confluence. . . .' From here they could work their way *downstream* as Kintup had done, till reaching the falls. This accomplished they could go on to Lagung, thus coming full circle, and having filled in the empty spaces on the map, where the river was still represented by a broken line.

The journey was one of great fascination, full of minor hazards if not of major incident. The Nyerpa had warned that several bridges would be washed away, and on every occasion his information proved correct. At Trulung, for example, it was found that both bridges over the Rong river were down, and, as this barred their way, it was necessary to make an even wider circle to the Tsangpo. This meant of course that they would hit the river further upstream, which they were glad to do, for Bailey was of the opinion that the falls must be above Gompo Ne and the confluence with the Po Tsangpo rather than below it.

Progress up the Rong Valley was swift, and on the 10th July they were able to cover sixteen and a half miles on hired ponies. Bailey's journal here is of special interest, for not only does he describe the country, but mentions the discovery for which in some circles he is more famous than any other:

‘About five miles through pines we came to a single house in fields called Gomo Chandze. Just beyond here are some grassy meadows covered in Alpine flowers on which I caught butterflies. About ten miles from camp we reached Chunyima village of two houses just beyond which we had lunch. After this we got into a narrower part of the valley among pines and larch trees. The road was rough and stoney. Fourteen miles from camp we crossed the Lunang chu to the right bank by a cantilever bridge. From here we went a mile up the open valley, when we reached a stream across which we climbed a steep cliff where we entered the big open valley of Lunang . . . We went on one and a half miles and reached the lower part of Lunang village where we put up in a house. I rode a pony on a rather uncomfortable Tibetan saddle for the first time today. Among the flowers were blue poppies I had not seen before and purple iris and primulas. There was also a good deal of aconite.’

Many years later Bailey wrote, ‘What a pedestrian way to record one’s assigation with the immortality of a seedsman’s catalogue! Not even a sentence to itself.’ The item he is referring to is *Meconopsis betonicifolia baileyi*, the famous Himalayan blue poppy which now bears his name. The reason why the flower merited such an insignificant mention was that ‘We were travelling as I have said through country unexplored by western man. Each day brought new discoveries, new sights, new marvels.’ Such a small expedition was not equipped to handle large quantities of natural history specimens. All he could bring back was a number of blooms; it was impossible to gather seeds at the height of the flowering season. If chance had willed otherwise, the poppy might have remained in obscurity like so many other plants and insects which Bailey came across, but in 1924 Captain Kingdon Ward, the famous plant hunter, who had heard of Bailey’s discoveries, made a journey to Tibet with Lord Cawdor and brought back the seed of the flower. Soon it was to become common throughout Britain and the United States. It is interesting to compare Kingdon Ward’s description of the poppy, as he first came across it, with Bailey’s:

‘Beautiful as were the meadows of the *rong*, a patchwork of colour exhaling fragrance, nevertheless the finest flowers hid themselves modestly under the bushes, along the banks of the stream. Here among spiteful spiny thickets of hippophae, barberry, and rose grew that lovely poppy-wort, *Meconopsis baileyi*, the woodland blue poppy. This fine plant grows in clumps, half a dozen leafy stems rising from the perennial rootstock to a height of 4 feet. The flowers flutter out from amongst the sea-green leaves like blue-and-gold butterflies; each is born singly on a pedicel, the plant carrying half a dozen nodding, incredibly blue 4-petalled flowers, with a wad of golden anthers in the centre.’

Even allowing for Kingdon Ward’s professional interest in botany, the blue poppy growing in profusion in its natural habitat must have been a magnificent sight. Bailey, however, must have been very preoccupied with other matters, and as he records, had come across so many beautiful poppies before; even so it is surprising that he did not even mention the discovery in his official report to the Indian Government. As he confessed, he found space to include such items as ‘The people of Lunang wear a peculiar felt hat made of yak’s hair . . .’

On the 11th July the weather deteriorated, and the following day the rain came down solidly. Bailey and Morshead were now making their way to the head of the Nyima La, which they fixed at 15,238 feet. Later in the day the rain ceased and in good visibility they saw the mountains on the far side of the Tsangpo. Six miles on they caught a glimpse of the river itself, which ‘looked very wide and we could see broad acres of cultivation and trim villages with whitewashed houses’.

Next day, the 13th July, they made their way down to the river and crossed in a ferry boat which, so Bailey noted in his journal, was ‘made of two dug-outs tied together like the one we used at Dre . . . On the opposite bank we were met by the Dzongpön of Tsela . . .’ There was also an Indian whom Bailey had met in the Chumbi Valley. One of Bailey’s first jobs was to obtain a hypsometer reading by the ferry, which gave an altitude of 9,683 feet.

That evening he had a long talk with the Dzongpön, who

had heard about the Abor Survey party, and indeed seemed very well informed in general, though like many Tibetans he was not too accurate when it came to numbers. The troops accompanying the Survey, he assured Bailey, totalled 26,818. However, the Dzongpön had a very favourable opinion of British and Indian troops, as opposed to the Chinese, who he said had killed women and children and stolen all the horses and cattle from his village. He had sent seven men to fight the Younghusband expedition, he added, of whom two were killed and the rest taken prisoner.

He had other news of greater import. The Shatra Lönchen (literally the 'Great Minister', usually translated Prime Minister) had gone to Darjeeling for conversations with British and Chinese officials about Tibet. Discussing this news between themselves, Bailey and Morshead agreed that no international treaty on the frontiers between Tibet and Assam could be arrived at while the border country remained unmapped. They therefore decided that once the issue of the falls had been dealt with, they would work their way back up the Tsangpo as far as Tsetang. They would then be able to present Sir Henry McMahon with the map of the frontier he required.

But for the moment their journey lay down the Tsangpo and towards the falls. Of the first day's journey Bailey wrote:

'15th July. About two miles below the ferry the river suddenly breaks into rapids, which continue up to here [i.e. Tri pe]. The hills on the left bank are covered with firs at the top—lower down are prickly oaks called Parto in Tibetan and scrub. Then come flat terraces about 600 feet above the river with some times a lower terrace . . . Spurs jut out between these terraces and each terrace is cultivated and contains a village. On the right at the top there are rocks which go up to Namcha Barwa which is just above us but which we have not seen owing to clouds. The people say that they never see it except on three or four days in summer.'

They now headed for Gyala which was reached on the 17th. While Morshead was busy mapping, Bailey took a close interest in the animal life about him, noting for example:

‘I saw some partridges (Che Tra) fly from the hill to the fields while waiting for the red-start. I had not got far over the fields when I heard crossoptilon (called Changa). I saw a large troop of monkeys here on the rocks. They were like the common Indian monkeys but some of them had grey hairs round the face. I also saw a smaller game bird than Changa, black with a white head . . .’

Also, of course, he noted precise geographical details:

‘About six miles from Lana we crossed a small stream, the Tsalung. This stream comes down an extraordinary narrow cleft in the rock. From further on I saw a glacier up this valley. Half a mile from the stream we came to a place where a cliff runs down to the water. It was very difficult to get round on the slippery sloping rocks and the ponies had to swim.’

This feature was of great importance in the search for the falls, and set Bailey and Morshead looking carefully at Kintup’s report. The river at this point was flowing calmly between cliffs forty feet high, the rapids having ceased about a mile and a half further back. Near the spot where the stream—a small one—came down through the narrow cleft lay a monastery called Gyala Gompa and a group of houses. When Bailey got talking to their inhabitants he learned that chained in the stream was a god called Shinje Chö Gye. Peering down into the water Bailey failed to observe a deity of any form, but the Tibetans assured him that they were telling him the truth, and when the stream was low in February and March the god could be seen quite clearly. There seemed no reasonable doubt now that this must be the place that Kintup referred to, and Bailey returned again to the relevant passage:

‘They stopped at Pema-kö-chung three days in search of a road, but as they did not find one they retraced their steps. There is a monastery (with seven or eight priests) but no other house at Pema-kö-chung. The Tsang-po is two chains distant from the monastery and about 2 miles off it falls over a cliff called Sinji-Chogyal from a lake at the foot of the falls where rainbows are always observable.’

The important thing was that Kintup stated—or everyone had taken him to state—that it was the Tsangpo itself which made the falls, not just a small tributary. It was possible, of course, that he had muddled names or mixed up several places and Bailey resolved not to stay and investigate further but push down to Pemaköchung.

This was a march lasting four days. One of the first features to attract attention was a great peak, partly seen from Mipi but obscured by its rival Namcha Barwa. Now it loomed up in solitary magnificence to the north-east; its name was Gyala Peri, one of the great mountains of the world, whose snow-capped peak lay at no less than 23,460 feet. According to the Tibetans, so Bailey learned, the Gyala Peri and Namcha Barwa were the breasts of Dorje Pagmo, the Diamond Sow, whose incarnation lived at Samding Monastery on the Yamdrok Tso. 14,000 feet below the left breast and 16,000 feet below the right flowed the Tsangpo river, providing (to quote Bailey once more) ‘an example of the power of water as startling as that of the Colorado river in the Grand Canyon’.*

With every mile the journey grew harder, as the road became rougher and the valley closed in on the Tsangpo. Time and time again Bailey wished that they were travelling in winter when the rivers were frozen over and the streams were low. Though neither he nor Morshead would yet admit it to each other, they knew in their hearts that they would never get through the gorges along the river bank. After leaving Sengedzong on the fourth day they found a path through the jungle, but this petered out and they had to climb over boulders in the river bed for half a mile. But now a spur barred further progress, and Bailey had to cut his way through the jungle. For six miles he lost sight of the river altogether. Then, as he records:

‘I found a path leading down to the Tsangpo at the end of which I could see a cloud of spray. I went down the path half a mile, dropping about 400 feet. I first went out on to a rock about 100 feet above the water, which was rushing through

*According to the *Standard Encyclopaedia of the World's Mountains* (1962), editor Anthony Huxley, these mountains remain unexplored, and indeed no climber has yet stood on their slopes.

a narrow chasm about fifty yards wide. To my left there were violently swirling rapids, below and to the right the river plunged over a ledge and dropping about thirty feet sent up clouds of spray which formed a cloud about twenty feet above the top of the fall.'

Morshead, who came to the spot later, having dropped behind to continue surveying, saw a rainbow in the water and as the Tibetans had no name for the feature, called it 'Rainbow Fall'. It was the biggest fall they had seen so far.

Kintup, it will be remembered, found a monastery 'but no other house' at Pemaköchung in 1880. Bailey found some houses for the monks and one other house in which lived a Tibetan couple. Seeing him approach, the woman fled, thinking he was Chinese, and altogether he did not have 'a very auspicious arrival'. The whole place, in fact, was very depressing, having just survived an outbreak of smallpox three months earlier, in which several people died. There was no cheer either when Bailey made enquiries about the route ahead, the dialogue going something like this:

'Could you tell me about the road downstream?'

'There is no road.'

'Then how do you get down the river?'

'We don't.'

Although—as Bailey knew—the confluence with the Po Tsangpo at Gompo Ne could only be about ten miles ahead, as the crow flies, the people professed themselves quite ignorant of it. Eventually he decided that they had no men spare for *ula* transport, and regarded his arrival, so soon after the epidemic, as a great inconvenience.

After some thought, it was decided that the party would remain at Pemaköchung for a few days, to see if a way through the gorges could be found. Next morning Bailey set out with some coolies and a Tibetan called Dorje, heading for a spur coming down from Namcha Barwa, from which to get a clear view of the country. He did not have any great success, being held up by a stream flowing down from a glacier, which he was told was called the Sanglung Glacier. Of this he wrote:

‘This glacier had very little vegetation on it and some of the stones were evidently from the bed of a river, being smooth and waterworn and mixed with sand. The snout was concave with the sides projecting beyond the place where the stream came out and the ice sloping back in terraces as before.’

Crossing the glacier, Bailey led his party into the jungle on the far side. Here were thick clumps of rhododendron bushes which cut and lacerated arms and legs, and, losing his sense of direction, Bailey decided to return. All he could conclude was that ‘the Sanglung glacier would at any rate make a site for a camp . . .’

For the next two nights it rained hard, but it was now decided to move camp to the Sanglung Glacier, and four coolies were sent ahead with the kit. Bailey himself and Dorje made another attempt to find a route through the gorges, using the Rainbow Fall as a starting point. Dorje had told him about a pilgrim road used in summer, and he decided to explore this. To his surprise it went through a tunnel, and the episode which followed might have come from a romance by Conan Doyle or Rider Haggard:

‘I and the man crawled in and were soon in the dark but I could see light ahead. We had to slide down a steep place with the help of a rope of creeper fixed to a root which was growing down into the cave. It was difficult in the dark and once I got stuck and could not find any place to find my feet and I did not know how far the drop was. I wanted the man to take my matches and light one, but I could not as I was hanging on by my hands and he did not know how to strike a match.’

Bailey called out to Dorje that he could not stand, to which the Tibetan replied, ‘Let yourself drop. It isn’t far.’ But now hanging in the darkness, Bailey remembered the resentment over his arrival in the village; he knew also that at the entrance to the tunnel Dorje had said, ‘You go first.’ Was this a plot to get rid of him?

With his arms growing tired, Bailey could not hold on much longer, and when Dorje again called out to let go, there was no

alternative but to trust him. So, preparing himself for the shock, Bailey dropped in the darkness, to hit the ground with a fearful shock. This was caused, however, not by the length of the fall, but by the fact that he had braced himself to drop ten to twenty feet but in fact had dropped about four inches. Greatly relieved he made his way to the far entrance of the cave. Out in the sunlight he found himself on a terrace with a raging torrent on one side and steep cliffs on the other. The pilgrim road came to an end at the river-bed below the Rainbow Fall, and the way through the gorges seemed as elusive as ever.

Still, when the explorers were united in camp on the Sanglung Glacier on the evening of the 24th July, both were in good spirits. So far, their journey along the Tsangpo had been trodden by Kintup, but from here onwards 'as far as the western world was concerned, [we] were exploring country of which nothing was known, but much was speculated; one of the last remaining secret places of the earth . . .'

On the night of the 23rd–24th it rained heavily, and when morning came the party found themselves enveloped in dense cloud. Setting out early with three coolies, Bailey cut a way up the right bank of the glacier, and later was surprised to find the end of a path which someone had cut through the jungle. Dorje thought they must be hunters from Gyala, for no one from Pemaköchung ever went near the glacier, and the Mönbas and Lopas downriver, he said, were thieves and would have stolen his cattle. At this point one of the coolies, a man called Dawa, piped up to say that he was a Mönba and very much resented such allegations. However, as Bailey was able to point out, the track had been made three years ago at least and the identity of those who had cut it was of less immediate importance than the fact that it led them to the top of the ridge. From this vantage point, when the clouds cleared for a moment, Bailey could see a stretch of the Tsangpo, though disappointingly no sign of any falls. Later the party picked up the track once more, which led to a large stream which they bridged before making camp.

Next morning (25 July) the weather had cleared and Bailey could see that they were now about 700 feet above the Tsangpo, which at this point was at about 8,700 feet. The view of the

river was excellent. There was not much time to linger, however, for Bailey was determined on an early start and at 6.45 a.m. was leading the way along the track which still climbed uphill. When eventually it gave out, he continued in the same direction, cutting a path through the jungle.

The ground here was steep and overhung by precipices. No ideal camp site offered itself, and eventually the coolies had to build up a platform with sticks and stones on which the party slept. They had now been without meat for two days, and Morshead had failed in a search for takin, although there were plenty of tracks. On the morning of the 26th it was decided to send a coolie back to Pemaköchung to bring up a bag containing thirty pounds of flour which had been left there.

Meanwhile Bailey went ahead, cutting a path through the rhododendron jungle. From time to time he walked out on to a spur to catch sight of the Tsangpo, and even spotted a fall with a good deal of spray. But it was not even as large as the Rainbow Fall at Pemaköchung, and for the most part the river was flowing quietly.

The effort of cutting through jungle, however, was beginning to tell. If the party had been better equipped, Bailey decided, it would have been wiser to take a road higher up and cross on to the glacier; but with limited supplies and equipment such a course was out of the question. When he and Morshead met in camp that evening they reluctantly had to admit they were beaten. As Bailey wrote wearily in his journal, 'I don't think any of us can cut any more.' The rhododendron trunks were now as thick as a man's leg and the wood was hard. Every yard, every foot had to be fought for; and it must be remembered that the party was still living at above 11,000 feet.

But in camp on the Sanglung Glacier, to which they had retreated on the evening of the 27th, an incredible surprise was awaiting the explorers. Dawa, the coolie who had brought up the flour from Pemaköchung, said he had met about thirty people who had come up the valley all the way from Lagung with a lama who was en route for Lhasa. But how had they done this when to all intents the country was impenetrable? According to Dawa they had used an old path they knew of, which they had opened up with their swords. As Bailey wrote later: 'It was

typical of Tibet. After all these protestations that the journey down to Lagung was impossible, thirty people arrive with a lama, having done it.' Immediately he began considering how this chance could be used, for miraculously it now seemed possible to achieve close to the river what they had failed to do by the hill route.

But there was a problem of administration. Between them the party had a mere twenty-eight pounds of flour. If both Bailey and Morshead went, they could travel one and a half days downstream only. If one of them went, with a coolie, however, he could travel for three days down and three days back. After debating whether they should toss as to who went, it was decided that Bailey should go, while Morshead worked his way back to Gyala mapping.

So Bailey set off with a coolie called Anay, fifteen pounds of flour, and some blankets, and struck downhill to the Tsangpo, hoping to locate the path taken by the party with the lama. They found it with little trouble and marched downriver for two miles. Soon they came across a cave where the Tibetans had slept the previous night, and looking up, Bailey saw some men taking honey from a bees' nest in a rock. Shouting to them, he asked the way and soon was on the track again. Further along he came across the Tibetans, all eighteen of them, seated by the side of the track. They were Mönbas from a village called Payu, and were not at all pleased to see him. However, he succeeded in getting them to talk and learned that their journey would take them three days. It was no use Bailey accompanying them though, they emphasised, for their road left the river long before Gompo Ne.

Not knowing whether to believe them or not, Bailey asked where they proposed to camp, and they said in the big ravine. Bailey replied he would go ahead and wait for them. When they did not come by next morning, however, he decided to go ahead with Anay. He was worried about his baggage which he had left with the Mönbas, but reasoned that sooner or later they must come down the track, there being no other route. Unfortunately, he had left his pistol with the baggage so could not shoot anything for the larder, and living on *chappatis*, was losing energy. To make matters worse, his knees were hot and swollen from

the poisoned cuts and he began running a fever. It is at times like these that things start to go wrong, and soon he realised that his camera was missing. Frantic at being unable to take more films, and losing the one already in the camera, he went back to search. But the camera had disappeared completely, and then Anay was missing. Going back along the trail, Bailey found him with the Mönbas, his excuse being that he was investigating the delay. It was a lie, but there was no point in discussing the subject. That night Bailey camped by the Mönbas, a move they very much resented.

At five next morning he woke with a start to find them moving off silently without waiting to cook breakfast. Devouring a couple of *chappatis*, he followed them down the track which continued for four miles till it reached the river. Here the Mönbas paused for a rest, while Bailey took a boiling point, which gave an altitude of 8,090 feet.

After this the track climbed again before dropping back to the river five miles further along. At this point the Mönbas halted for breakfast, sitting on a patch of sand. Though the atmosphere had improved slightly, there was still some lingering suspicion and mistrust, and Bailey sensed that he would never be accepted by these people. Later they continued up to a waterfall, and what happened now he described in his journal:

‘There were people from two villages, Luku and Payü and the Payü people were carrying some of my things to lighten my coolie. They had promised to take me to their village and give me food for the return journey and to send two men with me; but while sitting by the waterfall they said that none of them could return and they begged to go back at once. They said that if it rains the streams here and at Pemaköchung will swell and carry away the bridges they have just made, that two people could not make them again and that they were afraid of getting stuck on the road and dying.’

The road ahead, they added, was very hard, a fact which Bailey had to concede, having seen a great cliff while breakfasting on the patch of river sand. The only method of negotiating the cliff, the Tibetans added, was by hauling each other up

with ropes, and Bailey and Anay would never manage it. Still undeterred Bailey said he would go along and see for himself, and the party moved forward, bad feeling evident on both sides. The cliff was very formidable indeed, and flinging down Bailey's baggage at the foot, the Mönbas hurried on. Contemplating the obstacles carefully, Bailey told Anay to hide some flour for the return journey and then they began climbing. At first they made some progress, but then Bailey came to a difficult bit of rock, and was unable to negotiate it without a rope. Calling to Anay, who moved well over the rocks in his bare feet, Bailey asked him to approach the Mönbas, who were resting on the far side, to ask which way the river ran. The Mönbas told him; they also said that their reason for rushing on was their fear that Bailey would fall and kill himself, and they would be blamed.

Unable to climb in bare feet himself, and with his boots almost worn out, Bailey had no alternative but to return to the base of the rock. Here he decided to follow the other party of Tibetans—the men from Luku—but could not find the road. All hopes of going further were lost. Philosophically he recorded: 'Perhaps this was as well. I would not have been able to resist the desire to follow it, though by then I was in no physical condition to do so. We had just enough food for our journey to Pemaköchung.' A mile above the further point reached, he took a boiling point at river level, which gave an altitude of 7,480 feet.

It was on the 31st July after a wretched journey in the rain that Bailey and Anay reached Pemaköchung which, as he observed, 'just over a week before had seemed to me an abomination of desolation, but now represented the last outpost of civilisation'. It was also the first stage on the journey home.

8 Return and post-mortem

It was the 1st August when Bailey left Pemaköchung for the last time, and having joined up with Morshead began a journey which was to last for three and a half months. It must rate as an epic journey, even taken alone, and not only took the two men hundreds of miles through Tibet, but across the eastern flank of Bhutan and into Assam. All the way Morshead continued mapping, and Bailey noted every feature, whether geographical, military, or scientific, which might be of use. For almost 300 miles from Gyala the route lay along the Tsangpo, and it was when they reached Tsetang to the south-east of Lhasa that they turned south towards India.

Naturally such a feat could not be accomplished without some adventures. At Gacha a message arrived (with an English translation) from no less a person than the Tibetan Commander-in-Chief, demanding who they were and what they were doing. Bailey replied that they were private travellers on their way to India. At Lhapso they heard rumours of falls 'three times as high as a house' and climbed in search of them. The falls (according to a Tibetan en route) turned out to be 'as high as your tent perhaps'. At Halakang the coolies got drunk. And at Kyekye they were robbed, and left with insufficient money to pay the coolies. At Sömpü Do no *ula* transport was available. But somehow they struggled on, even though conditions got worse rather than better. The 31st October, for example, Bailey wrote:

‘. . . was the worst [day] of any we experienced, not excepting the passage through the deserted valley on our way to Chimdro, right at the very outset. We made a march of nineteen miles, crossing over our last high pass, the Hor La (17,680 feet).’

Arriving at a village called Gyso, Bailey made camp and waited for Morshead and the coolies. As the pass was hidden by a snow storm he could not watch their progress, and it was nine o'clock before they fetched up in the darkness. Then it was found that one of the coolies and Morshead's guide, a woman, were missing, and a search party had to be sent. They carried torches made of strips of bark from a white poplar, and came across the couple lying on the freezing ground a couple of miles up the valley and resigned to death.

By the 5th November the party had descended to 5,500 feet, and near Sanglung overtook traders and pilgrims en route for India. Six miles on from this village they crossed the Bhutanese-Tibetan frontier, a small dried-up watercourse which apparently lacked a name. In the first village within Bhutan, which was called Chang Pu, the party was given an enthusiastic welcome and an excellent meal. Servants of the local administrator were on hand to give every assistance, under orders of the ruler the Tongsa Penlop.

On the 9th November they camped at Tashigong, at a height of 3,250 feet, and a few miles from here Morshead closed his survey. There was still one pass to negotiate, the Yönpu La, at 8,250 feet, and from here they gained a magnificent panorama of the country through which they had passed. Forty miles to the north the snows glistened on the mountains beyond Mago, and running east to west lay the great range forming the border between Tibet and Bhutan. Turning south they descended through the foothills, and on the 12th crossed the watershed over the Rimpa La. From now on the streams did not flow westwards, but south towards the plains of Assam.

When the plains eventually came into sight, Bailey recorded, ‘They were very different from the forest-clad plains near Sadiya, as they had greeted me at the end of my long journey through China and Tibet two years before. This was a great

expanse of rolling browns . . .’ On this last stage, infuriatingly, Bailey had a bad bout of fever, and then the transport arrangements broke down. However, the party was able to make new arrangements and went on to Diwangiri along a new road. Soon afterwards this disappeared, having been washed away by the rains, and the party continued down the rocky bed of a river, which had to be forded no less than thirty-two times. On this stage they came across some working parties, the first Indians they had met. Bailey’s journal for the last day read:

‘We went on six miles to Tampalpur . . . Here we got three bullock carts. They can only travel at night as the heat is too much for buffaloes. We put our kits on one, our two beddings in the second and our coolies in the third, and after dinner started with a bright moon. We reached the station [at Rangiya] at 2.30 a.m. and slept on the platform. The next day we took the train. We tried to get money for a cheque but could not. We only had R75 (£5). We got second class tickets for ourselves as far as Lalmehirhat and took the coolies too. Morshead goes on 2nd to Calcutta, while I stop with the coolies till he can send me money. We met a police inspector at Tambalpur who at first seemed suspicious of us but gave us a letter to the sub-inspector at Rangiya, asking him to help us to get money, but the sub-inspector did nothing and did not even come to see us at the station.’

So on this minor key ends the journal of one of the longest and remarkable journeys of exploration completed on foot in this century.

Many years later Bailey gave some more details of the reception at Rangiya. The refreshment room at the station (in reality an unpretentious and grubby little place) appeared ‘so resplendent with bright linen and gleaming silver that we were shy to sit down. We were back in a country where appearances mattered, and though we had done something of which we might quite reasonably be proud, we were ashamed of each other and of ourselves.’

The Indian waiter who brought breakfast did not conceal his contempt for the scarecrows seated before him, and was rather

amazed when the bill was paid. At the next stop on the railway, Lalmanir Hat, the reception was somewhat cool also, until Bailey, who had got into conversation with an Anglo-Indian guard, made a Masonic sign. Responding immediately the guard said, 'I am only too glad to help a brother in distress. Tell me please, just how much you want and I will lend it to you.' So for the first time in his life Bailey travelled in a second-class compartment on Indian railways, and later wrote: 'I am glad we did it. I shall never forget the meal which we had on the steamer crossing the Ganges; the look of horror on the faces of the European ladies in the first class, who shrank to avoid contamination from us tramps. I say tramps, but perhaps lepers would have been nearer the mark.' In Calcutta, however, Bailey visited the Army and Navy Stores where he had left a box of clothes. He visited a barber and looking respectable once more booked in at the Grand Hotel.

Neither Bailey nor Morshead took to the conventions of life under the Raj with great pleasure or alacrity. They conformed reluctantly and in no great good humour, and when a bunch of reporters marched into their room, demanding the truth about the Tsangpo Falls, they met two infuriated men who kept repeating, 'There are no falls. Just miles of rapids, and in one place a big jump.' Expecting a big story and the end to several decades of speculation, the newsmen became infuriated in turn. 'What about that chap Kintup?' they asked. 'He said there were falls', 'Are you sure you went to the same place?', 'If he could find them, why couldn't you?' Finally in exasperation Bailey snapped, 'If you want a story, go to Sealdah Station. You'll find our coolies waiting to catch the train back to Darjeeling.' Eventually the pressmen trooped out again, feeling let down and baffled. Some of them were openly hostile.

However, once news appeared in the press that the party had reached India, friends from all over the world cabled Bailey conveying their congratulations. There was no immediate reaction from the Political Department, however, not even a cable demanding that Bailey explain himself.

The most sensational development was triggered off by the *Morning Post*, who sent a man along to Sir Thomas Holditch, an ex-president of the Royal Geographical Society, and an alleged

authority on Tibet, to ask his views on the achievements of the expedition. Sir Thomas was not in generous mood; and the interview gave rise to the following article:

THE BRAHMAPUTRA FALLS

Sir Thomas Holditch said he regarded the identification of the Brahmaputra with the Tsangpo as of minor importance in view of the fact that there is already a large body of evidence which virtually established the identity of the two rivers. The old dispute has, indeed, long since ceased to whet the appetites of geographers, who have come to regard the matter almost as *chose jugée*.

As regards the statement that Captain Bailey has found the Brahmaputra Falls to be non-existent, Sir Thomas Holditch was of opinion that the evidence for this statement would be eagerly awaited by those interested in unravelling the secrets of the Tibetan frontier. While paying a tribute to Captain Bailey's intrepidity and entire credibility as a witness, he expressed the gravest doubt whether he could possibly have acquired such evidence as would justify him in saying that the Brahmaputra Falls did not exist. The following statement was made by Sir Thomas Holditch:

'Unless Captains Bailey and Moorsom [*sic*] have been able to visit the supposed site of the falls and the monastery near those falls from the Tibetan side, and have seen for themselves that there are no falls near that monastery, the evidence of their non-existence is imperfect. All visitors to the falls have reached them from the Tibetan side, and agree in stating that there is no possible route closely following the banks of the river through the gorges and clefts of the Himalayas from Tibet to the plains of Assam. The evidence of the Tibetan Lama who made a sketch of the falls for Dr. Waddell (who is one of the few frontier officers well acquainted with the Tibetan language) has at least as good evidence as any that could possibly be collected from native sources on the southern side of the Tibetan border. This rough sketch is published in Vol. 5 of the *Royal Geographical Journal*, and it bears out what the survey of the Indian explorer Kintup

proved about those falls. Kintup's evidence is, of course, entirely distinct from that of Waddell's Tibetans who visited the place. Until Captain Moorsom . . . can give us a full account of the extreme point to which his exploring party penetrated, and the exact route followed, the question of the falls must remain still in the air.'

This was of course a stupid statement which did Holditch no credit. It was ludicrous to imagine that explorers of such integrity and accomplishment as Bailey and Morshead (whose name he had not even accurately ascertained) would state that the falls did not exist unless they had adequate evidence. Nevertheless, such a statement from a man of Sir Thomas's eminence could not fail to give rise to speculation and doubt.

Fortunately, however, before news of the interview reached Bailey and Morshead, they had received a telegram which read:

'Delighted to hear of your safe return hope you are well I would like you to come up to Simla as quickly as possible.

McMahon foreign'

The cause of the summons was that the Simla Conference (of which Bailey, it will be recalled, had got wind while in Tibet) had begun the previous month, after a waiting period of four months in which the Chinese delegate, Mr. Ivan Chen, had failed to appear. Negotiations went on with painful slowness, both the Chinese and Tibetans having to refer back to their governments at every stage. The fact that there was still no telegraphic communication with Lhasa meant that a series of messengers had to be employed and there were long gaps while these ran through the mountains.

From Bailey's viewpoint, the delays were not unduly inconvenient, for he was able to stay in Simla at government expense, indulge in polo, and enjoy some excellent meals at the club. Meanwhile Morshead continued working on his maps, calling in Bailey for consultation whenever necessary. It was very gratifying, and a welcome change, to feel the glow of official approval; and a fortunate chance that information acquired on the expedition should have proved so vital to the political

negotiations. Without it the Indian Government would have been negotiating a treaty regarding territory both unexplored and unmapped.

On the 27th April 1914 a Convention was initialled by the representatives of India, Tibet and China. By this Chinese suzerainty would have been recognised over the whole of Tibet, but the Chinese undertook not to convert the country into a Chinese province. Great Britain undertook not to annex any part of Tibet. At the same time the frontier between Assam and Tibet was negotiated. To quote Sir Charles Bell, who dealt with the Convention in his *Tibet Past and Present*:

‘From the east of Bhutan, along the northern and eastern border of Assam, round to the meeting place of China, Tibet, and the Burmese hinterland, this frontier had never been defined . . . It proved fortunately possible to establish the frontier between India and Tibet over eight hundred and fifty miles of difficult and dangerous country. We have thus gained a frontier standing back everywhere about a hundred miles from the plains of India. The intervening country consists of difficult hills and valleys, and so constitutes an excellent barrier.’

This barrier, it may be remarked, was put to a stern test during the Japanese advance on India, in 1944; and indeed there are great problems between India and China today. So far as China was concerned, in fact, the Convention proved a dead letter, for two days after Ivan Cheng had initialled the document, his action was repudiated by the Chinese Government and he was forbidden to add his full signature. The British Minister at Peking was instructed to inform the Chinese Government that Great Britain and Tibet regarded the Convention concluded by the initialling, and it was their intention to sign. But the Chinese continued to act as if the Convention had never existed, and their ambitions over Tibet grew with the years rather than diminished. Today the whole country is under Chinese dominion.

But to return to Bailey and his stay in Simla. With doubting and even snide remarks in his ears, such as those emanating

from Sir Thomas Holditch, he was anxious to do everything possible to convince the world, and the professional geographers especially, that the Tsangpo falls did not exist. As he realised, many criticisms were coloured by romanticism if not sentimentality: the falls had existed as a dream for so long that people—even those who should have known better—were reluctant to relinquish the dream for the truth. Inevitably his thoughts dwelt on Kintup, and it took only a simple calculation to ascertain that were he still alive, he would only be in his fifties. But was he alive and how could he be found? Officers at the Survey of India could provide no clue whatever, so Bailey decided to write to a friend called Gyaltzen Kazi, a Sikkimese landlord who had ‘excellent sources of information’, and ask him to institute a search. Gyaltzen Kazi acted at once, and before long Bailey was delighted to receive news that the legendary figure had been located. He was working as a tailor in, of all places, Darjeeling.

Armed with this exciting revelation, Bailey called on Colonel Sir Sydney Burrard, the Surveyor-General, and asked if he would authorise funds for Kintup to come to Simla for an interview, so that the mystery could be cleared up, once and for all. Burrard agreed, and a few days later when Bailey was working in his office, a young journalist burst in crying: ‘Kintup’s been found! You ought to have a talk to him.’

That evening the two explorers met and talked for some hours. For Bailey it must have been an experience of absorbing interest and elation. Here seated before him was a man who had become a legend, a man in whose footsteps he had travelled so many days. Inevitably there came the moment when Bailey put the question: ‘What about the great falls you reported on the Tsangpo?’

Kintup looked puzzled. ‘I never said there were any great falls on the Tsangpo’, he replied.

‘You did not?’

‘No.’

What had happened, it now became evident, was this: Kintup had dictated his report to Lama Ugyen Gyatso who had later translated it into one of the main Indian languages from which it was then translated into English. In the published

account the narrative is stated to be 'translated by Norbu', though at what stage he came into the picture it is not clear. However, according to Kintup, Lama Ugyen Gyatso must have entirely misunderstood him, confusing the 150-foot fall of the stream in which the deity Shingche Chögye was hidden, with the thirty-foot fall by Pemaköchung. But why had the mistake never been spotted? The answer to this was quite simple: Kintup could neither read nor write in any language, and apparently the completed report was never read over to him so that he could make his corrections verbally. So through a *babu's* error the Tsangpo Falls had passed into the report and from there into scientific literature all over the world. And, quite ignorant of the matter, Kintup had slipped into obscurity.

Greatly moved by Kintup's courage and simplicity, Bailey strove hard to get him a pension from the Indian Government; a small pension to keep him from want in old age. Protesting that such a commitment was far too grave, for Kintup might live till ninety, the civil servants would not agree. However, Bailey did manage to secure a grant of one thousand rupees, and with this Kintup returned to his tailor shop in Darjeeling. A few months later he was dead.

By June 1914 Bailey was back in London, where he had been invited to read a paper before the Royal Geographical Society. Now at last he could face his critics. Naturally there was great interest and speculation as to what he would have to say in substantiation of his claims, and the hall was crowded by a distinguished audience. On the platform was the president of the Society, who was in the chair, and flanking him, Bailey and Morshead. In one of the front rows sat Sir Thomas Holditch. Bailey spoke first, giving (as he put it) 'A full account of the extreme point to which our exploring party penetrated and the exact route followed.'

To begin with he explained how the journey had come about, then sketched in previous attempts at exploring the area. Regarding Kintup, he continued: 'He succeeded in following the river down to Pemaköchung . . . then made a detour, and, striking the river again below the impassable gorge, followed it down into the Abor country, but, owing to the hostility of the people, he was not able to reach India by that route. He

reported that there was a fall in the river 150 feet in height at Pemaköchung.' How Bailey looked at this moment, whether he paused before delivering his major revelation, one cannot say from the bald report of the meeting. But that he was not unaware of the drama of the moment is quite clear from his statement that he and Morshead were quite ready to deal with Holditch if the occasion arose. However, he now said quite simply: 'Quite recently I questioned Kintup on his recollection of these falls, which he then said were only fifty feet in height; from this and from statements in his report . . . it is clear that either he or his interpreter had confused this fall with one on a small stream which joins the Tsangpo at Gyala.'

The fact that Kintup was alive and available for questioning must have come as a great surprise to most members of the audience; and Bailey's case had been greatly strengthened. But, it could still be argued by his opponents, there was still one stretch of the river which he had not covered—from above Gompo Ne to Lagung. Could not the falls exist here? Bailey had clear evidence to the contrary: 'On this portion of the river the people we asked agreed that there were no falls, though there is apparently an extraordinary turmoil of waters where the two rivers [i.e. Po Tsangpo and Tsangpo] join at Gompo Ne.'

Having completed his review of the journey, Bailey then summed up what in his view were the chief results. These were:

1. The mapping of some 380 miles of the Tsangpo, which had previously only been done by untrained or unreliable explorers.
2. The mapping of the lower course of the Nagong Chu.
3. The discovery of Gyala Peri, a snow-peak 23,460 feet in height, and of the glaciers on it, and Namcha Barwa, the peak on the opposite side of the river.
4. By taking observations for altitude on the river, where it breaks through the Himalayas some information regarding the enormous drop on the river has been gained, and the falls reported to be 150 feet in height have been proved to be merely an exaggerated rapid of thirty feet.
5. The upper waters of several branches of the Subansiri

have been discovered, and the fact that this river rises north of the Himalayas and breaks through the range in several places has been established.

6. In the area where Captain Morshead surveyed were many snow-peaks, mountain ranges, and rivers. The two largest of the latter, which were previously unheard of, are the Chimdro and the Nyamjang. Several large towns were visited, and the size and importance of Tsetang and Tsöna had not previously been realised.

In addition to the geographical results, small but interesting collections of mammals, birds, and butterflies were brought back, among each of which were new species.

Faced with this evidence, Sir Thomas Holditch had no alternative but to attempt an *amende honorable*, although he couched it in somewhat oblique terms. Welcoming Bailey ('the son of my old friend Colonel Bailey'), he acknowledged that 'He has succeeded in unravelling a geographical knot which we geographers in India have looked at with longing eyes for many a long year; he has disentangled it with an energy and determination—well, such as we might have been led to expect from the previous records of this gallant young explorer. Incidentally, he has disposed of the falls of the Brahmaputra. . . .' Though continuing for some time in this somewhat effusive vein, Holditch made no attempt to apologise for his distasteful and foolish remarks in the *Morning Post*, but did give—if unwittingly—a clue to his behaviour: '. . . knowing and expecting that such falls might exist, the idea was doubtless partly due to our own imagination . . . We expected magnificent falls there . . . and we are to a certain extent, I think, disappointed that we have not found them.' Geographers, in fact, like any other scientists or indeed any other men, hated being robbed of their dreams.

After this it was plain sailing. And then a member called H. J. Elwes rose to speak of the zoological results of the expedition, which Bailey had lacked the time to deal with. These results represented a very distinguished achievement indeed on Bailey's part—'Several new mammals, including a goral and a deer, are included in the collections he has made, and he has also brought back specimens of a pheasant of uncommon

interest.' A full account of Bailey's butterfly collection was later given by Colonel W. H. Evans in the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society*. It contained no less than 2,000 specimens, including several new species and forms. Among the latter were *Erebia pomena* with its sub-species *shuana* from the Tsangpo Valley while *Erebia phyllis gyala* was a new sub-species. From Po Me came the new species *Erebia tsirava*, and the new sub-species of a skipper, *Cartercephalus houangty shoka*. In Tawang he caught a large Argus, *Erebia annada polyphemus*, only known previously from western China; and from the high country south of the Tsangpo several small Fritillaries, including a sub-species of *Argynnis gemmata*, in which the patches of silver on the underside were replaced by a yellowish brown. This was described as *Argynnis gemmata genia* var *fulva*. Since Colonel Evans's description, several of the generic names have been changed.

Some notes on the mammals he had collected were published by Bailey in the *Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society* in September 1915. These included a new species of shrew, *Soriculus baileyi*, the Mishmi Chestnut Rat, *Epimys brahma*, also new; a new sub-species of hare, *Lepus oiostolus illuteus*, a new goral, *Nemorhaedus baileyi*, and a takin, *Budorcas taxicolor*.

But even these specimens did not complete Bailey's collection, for he brought back thirty-seven specimens of rare birds. Among them was a Prince Henry's Thrush (*Trochalopteron henricii*).

Apart from the actual specimens, Bailey's detailed and extensive observation of the habitats and location of all forms of wild life were of enormous interest to science. Seldom can such a small expedition have brought back such a wealth of information.

He also brought back two magnificent specimens of Harman's pheasant (*Crossoptilon harmani*). This bird had been discovered some twenty years earlier by Captain Harman of the Survey of India, but the sole evidence available to science was 'the bunch of feathers' Bailey had seen at the Natural History Museum in London.

After his triumph before the Royal Geographical Society, Bailey might reasonably have expected to be launched on new

expeditions before too long; and, of course, the unmapped stretch of the Tsangpo still remained to tantalise him. But within six weeks of the reception of his paper the Great War had broken out, and further exploration was out of the question. He must now revert to his previous profession as a soldier. Before dealing with his further adventures, however, it would be well to conclude the story of the Tsangpo, for he was never able to complete his task here. The job was done by Captain Kingdon Ward and Lord Cawdor in 1924, and on the same journey in which they brought back the seeds of the blue poppy. It was on the 25th November when they arrived at the cliff which marked the furthest part of Bailey's journey, and were able to descend on ropes. From now on, so Kingdon Ward records:

‘During the next four days we made very slow progress, averaging no more than three miles a day. The difficulties were immense. Each morning the pioneer party started off early, cutting a path for a mile ahead, the coolies following . . .

The river continued to advance by jerks in a general north-east direction, with fierce rapids which ate hungrily into the core of the mountains. Already we seemed to be far below the level of the ground, going down, down, into the interior of the earth; and as though to emphasise the fact, the temperature grew steadily warmer. And the gorge was growing ever narrower, the gradient steeper, till the power behind the maddened river was terrific. Its blows fell on rock and cliff with frightful force; and at every turn a huge cavernous mouth seemed to open, and gulp it down faster and faster.’

Further along they cut through the jungle to a cliff covered with pines and juniper trees, and parting the branches at the edge, looked down to see the river running a thousand feet below.

It was the 6th December when they reached the confluence of the Po Tsangpo and the Tsangpo, and as the Tibetan villagers had told Bailey, it proved a sight of some magnificence.

‘The view from this point, 2,000 feet above the river, almost took our breath away. The whole southern horizon

was filled with the great white trunk of the Sanglung Namcha Barwa massif which throws out dark furry limbs towards the river. To the right was a magnificent range of icebergs, rising out of a sea of forest, with the snow cornice of Gyala Peri, and the bold crags of Makandro, clear against the setting sun . . . Then . . . comes the Tsangpo, just as hard as it can go, a roaring, bouncing, bellowing flood. You see one flash of green, like jade, where the sunlight gleams on a pool far up the gorge, and after that all is white foam. On our right, almost directly below, the Po-Tsangpo came galloping down from the north, while on our left the Kongbo Tsangpo came reeling up from the south, slewed sharply round a high cliff, and wriggled eastwards again.'

After this Gompo Ne proved a great disappointment. The monastery, so Kingdon Ward was told, had fallen into the river, and pilgrims slept in an open shed. From this village the explorers went on to Payü, where they turned north. Only a small stretch of the river remained unmapped, between Payü and Lagung, but the non-existence of the falls had been put beyond doubt.

Long before the journey of Kingdon Ward and Lord Cawdor, on the 22nd May, 1916, at the Anniversary General Meeting of the Royal Geographical Society, Bailey was awarded the Gold Medal. The citation, after recounting the mapping of 380 miles of the Tsangpo and the discovery of Gyala Peri, concluded that he had provided 'proof that there are not, as had been conjectured, extensive falls in the hitherto almost unknown section of the river where it breaks through the Himalayas in the very rapid descent to the valley of the Dihang'.

By a happy chance it was Sir Francis Younghusband, then joint honorary secretary of the Society, who first broke the news of the award to Mrs. Bailey, on the 6th March 1916. He wrote:

'I know you will be glad to hear (though it must be kept secret for the present) that we have awarded Eric the Gold Medal of the Geographical Society. I had the pleasure of proposing this and Sir Thomas Holditch kindly supported it. It will not be given out for a few weeks as through a matter of

form it has to come up before another meeting of Council and then go to the King (who nominally awards it and certainly pays for it!). It's quite *certain*—but I thought you would like to send the news to Eric. All the Council were so appreciative of his splendid work.'

To Bailey himself, Younghusband wrote:

'I am indeed glad to hear of your splendid success and am most anxiously looking forward to seeing a full account of your adventures and wish you could come here and lecture about it at the Geographical. Well, you have worked hard and pluckily and shown the good stuff that is in you and now you can aim to get along to the front. It is all that early part of a career that is the hardest—the breaking through the regimental and examination barriers.'

On the day the Gold Medal was presented Bailey was on leave in Kashmir. His diary reads simply: 'Rain morning, did not fish. Fished evening got nothing.'

9 France and Gallipoli

On the day the Great War broke out, 4th August 1914, Bailey was fishing near Edinburgh where he was on leave. With admirable sangfroid he continued fishing for several more days, no doubt awaiting word from the India Office as to whether his services would be required in France or in India. He seemed to be well informed of what was happening in Whitehall at this critical time, for on the 7th August he was writing that according to Lady Haldane, on whom he had just called, 'Lord Haldane went to the War Office and refused to leave till Kitchener had been appointed.' Haldane at this time was Lord Chancellor, and on page 278 of his memoirs would appear to confirm this item of gossip. Haldane's main battle, apparently, was with the Foreign Office, who did not wish to move Kitchener from his post as Consul-General in Egypt. On the 31st August Bailey arrived in London for an interview at the India Office and War Office, where it was decided that he should go back into khaki, and report to the 6th Reserve Regiment of the 12th Lancers, in Dublin. He had family connections with this regiment, three cousins being serving officers. He remained in Dublin till the 13th January 1915, when he arrived in London to be invested with the C.I.E. by King George V. In March 1915 he made two trips to France taking some remounts over on the first occasion and a detachment of troops on the second.

In April he went back a third time, having learned that he was to be transferred to the Indian Expeditionary Force, for which

he had volunteered. There was a great shortage of Urdu-speaking officers, owing to casualties. His regiment was to be the 34th Sikh Pioneers of the Lahore Division, his brother's regiment. All his letters of this period are preserved, and though his experiences were common to countless thousands of officers short passages are worth quoting. For example, there is his description of the Frenchwoman in whose house he was billeted: 'I apologised for the trouble I was giving her, but she said she had her only two sons and the husband of her only daughter killed and if I would only kill some Germans she could not do enough for me. We occasionally hear a gun here but are quite safe.' A few days later he gives an account of his first experience of working at night.

'The day I joined 2 companies had been out the night before to join up a loop in our trench in front of the enemy and make it shorter. I went out last night with 100 men to try and finish it. The Germans were only 70 yards off and were firing all the time but we were under cover. I put the men on to deepen the trench and we worked about three hours till midnight, got it quite deep and the parapet made up with sandbags. We could hear the Germans singing in their trenches. . . . They threw up flares many of which burned behind us as they came over our heads.'

On the 12th April he wrote: 'We sent several bombs and rifle grenades at the Germans last night. One of their bullets came through the parapet we were building and hit me in the shoulder, but it was a spent bullet and only bruised me.'

At this time Bailey's unit was in the Ypres salient near Rue du Bois. On the 22nd April the Germans launched their first gas attack against the northern half of the salient, and the French territorial troops and Africans fled. Within four hours there were no troops in position to the east of the Ypres canal, and a five mile gap appeared in the line. The second battle of Ypres had begun. Luckily, the Canadians on the left of the British line held firm, and General Plumer, G.O.C. II Corps, was able to rush forward reserves. On the 24th the Germans discharged more gas against the apex of the salient and launched

a heavy attack on the Canadians, and again the line was dented. Many battalions were commanded by captains or subalterns, and in some units the men were left to command themselves. Half a mile of ground was lost and it seemed that nothing could stop the Germans covering the last few miles to Ypres.

On the 26th General Keary and the Lahore Division were ordered to the attack, in concert with the French divisions under the ineffectual General Putz. According to Brigadier-General Ballard, in his life of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, who commanded II Army, events marched as follows:

‘Unfortunately General Putz changed his orders at a late hour and this led to confusion. Originally he had promised to attack on the 25th; then in the evening he decided to start at 5 p.m. on the 26th; again late at night he changed the hour forward to 2 p.m. on the 26th. On receipt of this last order, Sir Horace protested, as it curtailed the time for preparations of the Lahore Division after marching all night. He was definitely instructed by Sir John [French] to proceed, and accordingly his orders were issued giving 2 p.m. as the hour of attack.

The French advanced punctually at the appointed time and made some progress. But it so happened that they were moving against part of the line in which the Germans had installed gas tubes; some local commander gave the order to release the gas. The wind being from west to east blew the cloud not over the French but on the left of the Lahore Division. Some of the Indian troops suffered heavily and fell back in confusion; some battalions held on under heavy fire, but all hope of reaching the enemy’s line was abandoned. The Division . . . withdrew inside our line, having lost five commanding officers, 53 other officers, and 1,700 other ranks.’

Bailey’s diary for the 26th is somewhat more laconic: ‘Parade 6 a.m. Joined Jullundur Brigade. Marched from Ypres to Potizje and Wieltje attack shot in arm dug trenches with Manchesters 200 yards from Germans.’ Potizje is a small village a mile to the east of Ypres, and Wieltje is about the same

distance north and slightly east of the latter. The Germans were attacking the northern half of the salient from the canal and St. Julien, and Wieltje therefore lay opposite the centre of their advance. Lieutenant-General Sir George McMunn in his *History of the Sikh Pioneers* gives a few more details of the Pioneers' role:

'The share of the 34th in this historic battle was not sensational, but the companies had been distributed one to each brigade with No. 3 in reserve. Even marching through Ypres there were very few casualties, and then the companies found themselves hard at work with their brigades, improving communications; when the advance was made later, consolidating, and when the fronts were lost, making new defences—long hard days with death more than adventure.'

Though it would appear that Bailey carried on for a while after being wounded, his condition deteriorated and it was obvious that he must go back for medical attention. So his diary records on the 27th: 'Got to dressing station [outh] of Ypres 4 a.m. Motored to Bailleul and in hospital had bullet cut out. Went to Boulogne.' By the following day—such was the efficiency of the system for evacuating casualties—he had reached Guy's Hospital in London.

The period which followed need not be dealt with in any great detail. He was soon out of hospital but his weakness brought on a recurrence of fever and again he was back in bed. Again he recovered swiftly, and on the 30th June a Medical Board in Edinburgh passed him fit for active service. On the 18th July he boarded the s.s. *Northland* bound for Alexandria; he was to join the Indian Expeditionary Force again, but this time on Gallipoli. He did not stay very long in Alexandria and on the 11th August found himself aboard a trawler, and heading north across the Mediterranean. For some reason he was being transferred to the 1st/5th Gurkhas.

By this time the Gallipoli campaign was in its fifth month, and any hopes of a swift and brilliant success had long withered. June and July had seen a stalemate on the Anzac beaches, and though the generals and the majority of their troops still

believed that victory could be won, given the guns and ammunition, visiting journalists and government representatives were beginning to have doubts. On the 5th August some new life was injected into the campaign by the Suvla Bay landing, but 1,500 Turks with a few howitzers managed to hold up 20,000 British troops for the first twenty-four hours. And even when the Turks retired, and the British generals had their chance to advance across the plain, they muffed it completely. On the 6th August the Australians had opened an offensive on Anzac beach, and again, high hopes had come to nothing. By the 10th August no heights of any great importance were in Allied hands either at Suvla or Anzac. From now on the battles dragged on fitfully till the last weeks in August, though without significantly changing the front line or giving any major advantage to either Turks or the Allies.

When Bailey reported to his unit on the 11th August, he knew very little of what was going on. In his letter dated that day he expressed disappointment that he had been posted to the Gurkhas instead of to the 14th Sikhs as he had hoped. He also gave his first impressions of the scene, which though not particularly original, remain vivid, all the same:

‘The beach was an extraordinary sight, the whole thing a mass of dug outs and funk holes, piles of stores. It gets shelled sometimes but not when we were there. We passed lots of wounded. I felt sorry for them as it was very hot and dusty and they cannot be got away quickly as in Flanders.’

On the 17th he wrote again:

‘We are still reserve and have luckily not been shelled at all. We expect to go up in front in a day or two. We have had two nights digging in the front line but it is much safer doing that [here] than in France. The Turks are not so enterprising and also have no flares like the Germans use at night. We bathe a good deal in the sea and the Turks sometimes send some shrapnel after us when they see many of us together but the nearest I had was a shell which did not explode and fell into the water about 100 yards off. . . .

I had a man hit when working the night before last and was bandaging him in the bottom of the half made trench with my electric torch when the sniper must have seen the light and sent another shot which knocked a stone out of the parapet and bruised my forehead.'

On the 21st his unit joined in one of the attacks on the Turkish line, and his diary recorded simply:

'Sat. 21. Attack. Bombardment 2.45 advance 3.30. Wounded 4.15. Started back 7.45. Tied up by Drake. Got to beach 9. Lost kit and waited 3 a.m. then on Formosa, French Hospital Ship.

Two days later he gave further details of these events:

'We made an advance on the 21st and I got hit again but not badly. We the Indian Brigade had not to do very much, only advance a little on a broad flat plain between hills but the troops on the hills on either side had a rough job . . . we heard they did it but didn't know for certain. The land and naval guns bombarded the Turks for about an hour before we moved and the Turks replied by bursting a lot of shrapnel over us where we were lying ready to advance . . . but we had no casualties. We had to come round a corner company by company and advance. Harry Webb who commanded the leading company and who I knew in Abor land was badly wounded . . . I went up to command his company but Cummings the adjutant was there already and I went back to my own company and we advanced. We got almost 500 yards up when I caught up Cummings and we found we had very few men as they had stopped in a ditch. I went back and got some more together and met Molloy who was commanding the regiment with a lot more and we advanced again, but had not gone 50 yards when I got a bullet through both legs just above the knee. It missed the bone but I could not move. There was luckily a small "pip-squeak" shell hole near by which I managed to get into and I spent the afternoon deepening it with a penknife, the only thing I had, as I was right in the

open and there was a very heavy fire and I think specially at me whenever I put my head up. I could not move very fast . . . and I thought it best to lie still till dark. Once for about a quarter of an hour there burst a lot of pip-squeak shells and I was several times covered with dust but they were shelling some hedges behind me. I was hit at 4.15 and about 7.45 when it was dark I crawled to the hedge and soon some men passed and one carried me about 100 yards to a safer place in a ditch and later I got a man to carry me to the dressing station.'

Here he met an M.O. called Drake, who had served with him in the 32nd at Ambala; and soon his wounds were dressed and he was taken down to the beach. Being put on a boat, he found that his kit was missing, so insisted on being put ashore again till it was found. Eventually news reached him that the kit had been put aboard a ship, and so eventually he had to leave without it.

Again, it is necessary to add that such experiences are common to anyone serving at Gallipoli, and indeed are common in any war. Reading Bailey's letters, however, over half a century since they were scribbled in pencil from Gallipoli, one cannot fail to be struck by the calm, almost nonchalant manner in which he viewed battle and the business of being wounded and escaping death. He put down the facts as he saw them, accurately and without any attempt to magnify or glamorise his own role, or dramatise the events in which he had taken part. His innate sense of modesty never deserted him.

Once again he found himself sailing back to London, this time aboard the R.M.S.P. *Arcadian*. On the 29th August he wrote, as the ship approached Gibraltar, 'I am getting on quite well and able to walk about.' His wounds were far from healed, however, and on the 10th September he found himself in the Royal Free Hospital in London. Here he began a course of massage which seems to have been very successful for a week later his diary records that he was walking round the Zoo. During his time at the Royal Free, however, he was visited by two Harley Street specialists who, though they questioned him closely, showed a curious lack of interest in his legs. Later he

learned that they had been sent by the India Office with strict instructions to report on him in such a way that he could not return to the Army. Belatedly the Indian Government had awoken to the fact that if Bailey were killed there would be virtually no Tibetan specialist remaining in their service.

So in November he was called to the India Office and formally advised of his return to the Political Department. On the 28th December news came that his posting was to the North-West Frontier Province, and on the 1st January he left for Boulogne on the first stage of his journey.

Of the next two years there is little to record. He worked as a Political Officer in Kohat and then Charsadda. Contrary to the vast majority of Indian Army officers, Bailey had no desire to remain longer on the Frontier than he had to, and hearing that a job might be going in Sikkim, decided to approach Sir Henry Roos-Keppel, the Chief Commissioner, to request a transfer. At this time Roos-Keppel was at the height of his fame and authority, but not noted for gentleness in dealing with subordinates. Not unnaturally Bailey's fellow officers, learning of the step he was taking, warned him: 'For God's sake don't—he'll eat you!' Roos-Keppel was certainly not very pleased at Bailey's request and exclaimed, 'Leave the Frontier for Sikkim! You're impossible, Bailey, quite impossible!' In March 1917 Bailey found himself sailing for Shushtar where he worked as a Political Officer. The work was not particularly rewarding and eventually became dangerous.* In March 1918 some Persians appeared in Bailey's office warning him that three men had arrived in the city with the immediate job of assassinating him. Naturally, the informants wanted payment in advance, to frustrate the plot. It was with some relief therefore that at this point Bailey received a telegram from Delhi asking if he were medically fit for a long and arduous journey. On confirmation that he was, a second telegram arrived, ordering him to go at once to Kashgar in Chinese Turkestan, passing through India to receive detailed orders for his mission.

Bailey's greatest adventure of all was now due to begin.

*During this period he founded a Masonic Lodge in Basra.

10 Simla, Kashgar, Tashkent

Chinese Turkestan stretches 1,100 miles from east to west, and, being roughly oval in shape, is enclosed by the Tian Shan mountains to the north and the Kuen Lun to the south, both ranges running down from the Pamirs. Taking a larger view, it is sandwiched between Russian Turkestan and Tibet, and is one of the most remote and inaccessible places on earth. Till the late nineteenth century the principal towns of what Younghusband called 'that hazy mysterious land beyond the Himalays', especially Kashgar and Yarkand, exerted a great pull on the imaginations of explorers. It was, in fact, Younghusband's uncle, Robert Grant Shaw, who was the first Englishman to cross the Himalayas into Turkestan. Younghusband himself was to reach Kashgar from China, during his first great journey in 1887, and no doubt had told Bailey a great deal about his experiences. To Bailey, carrying out routine duties in Persia, the chance of leading a mission to such a place was therefore welcome on many counts.

But what was the object of the mission? With the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the collapse of the eastern front against the Germans, a state of chaos and uncertainty developed over vast areas of Central Asia. To what extent the political upheavals had affected Russian Turkestan and whether local soviets had been set up, no one in Delhi or Whitehall seemed to have the least idea. What was known, however, was that large numbers of Austrian and German

prisoners of war were at large, who constituted a danger. Also it was known that there were large stores of locally grown cotton, which the Germans might attempt to acquire for the manufacture of TNT.

So in Simla Bailey (now promoted temporarily to lieutenant-colonel) found himself at the head of a mission including Major P. T. Etherton, Major L. V. S. Blacker, commanding a detachment of Guides, and a small administrative staff headed by Shahzada Abdul Rahim of Beg Kokhand. The Beg was related to the rulers of one of the Central Asian Khanates, and had been ousted by the Russians; Bailey, foreseeing danger, asked him to keep quiet about his origins, but to no effect. Etherton had travelled widely in the Pamirs, and Blacker had made an adventurous journey in 1914 from India to Kashgar, and thence to England via the Russian railway. He was an inventive character (later he was to be responsible for the Spigot Mortar) but Bailey did not take to him, and indeed regarded him as a complete liability. Blacker had recently been injured in an aircraft incident, and could not march or ride long distances. Altogether he was unfit for active service. To carry the baggage of the mission 160 coolies were engaged, and the whole party was equipped for a journey over the snows to Gilgit and the Pamirs.

The mission travelled in three columns, each under an officer. Of the three officers, it was Etherton who reacted most eloquently to the spectacular scenery, and wrote of the Mintaka, or Pass of a Thousand Ibex, where a cairn of stones marks the crest line of the Hindu Kush:

‘As I stood on the summit and surveyed the view unfolded to north and south, the contrast was unusually striking. In the direction of India lay range upon range of mountain and, comparatively near at hand, many of the peaks of the Hindu Kush. We were at a point . . . marking the convergence of three empires, India, Russia, and China, as well as the Moslem states of Afghanistan.’

Beyond the Pamirs lay Chinese Turkestan, the land of ancient Tartary, towards which the columns were streaming. On the Pamirs Bailey encountered a detachment of Cossack scouts; and

later came across the first *yurts* he had ever seen. These are the poleless tents of Central Asia, which he found to be 'more stable, roomier and warmer than our own tents'.

Though in command of a large number of men and animals, Bailey still neglected no opportunity to assemble data of all kinds. He made a collection of butterflies, shot some rare birds, and at every pass took a boiling point.

It was the 7th June, six weeks after the departure from Srinagar, that the mission arrived in Kashgar. Bailey wrote: 'Sir George Macartney met us and we rode through the hot streets of the town which had been beflagged in our honour. We reached the consulate at lunchtime and our long journey was over.'

The next few days were spent in exchanging visits with Russian and Chinese officers. From 1913 Chinese Turkestan had been constituted as a separate province, its control being vested in a Governor responsible to the central government in Peking. The Russian officers were all adherents to the old regime. The social life in Kashgar seems to have been hectic at this period, and Bailey spent a good deal of his time at dinners, parties, and dances. However, he was able to begin studying the situation beyond the borders of Russian Turkestan. Information was scarce, and the Intelligence summaries emanating from Simla were compounded of rumour and guesswork. No one seemed to know precisely what a Bolshevik was or how he differed from a Menshevik—Commissars were confused with 'commissaries'—the old army term for contractors dealing in supplies. How the revolutionary government would handle 'the Great Game', and whether this would be brought to an end or intensified, were also open questions. But, with the North-West Frontier restless and the regime in Afghanistan unstable, anything could happen. There was no guarantee that a Bolshevik mission might not suddenly appear in Kabul.

One of the great problems, Bailey soon found, was the slowness of communications with India; instructions and directives could rapidly be overtaken by events. In an effort to improve the situation he initiated a carrier pigeon service, but with no success whatever. As he put it in his report to the Indian Government, 'the pigeons merely served to nourish the numerous hawks on the road . . .'

To what extent Bailey was in the confidence of his superiors at this time it is difficult to say; but he must have known or at least suspected that the ultimate destination of the mission was not Kashgar but Tashkent in Russian Turkestan, some 450 miles to the west. Only by despatching an officer to this city could accurate information be obtained.

Discussions on such a project had, in fact, been going on between London and Simla since the beginning of the year, some months before Bailey received his summons to leave Persia. On the 31st March Sir George Macartney signalled the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford:

‘At present short of a Bolshevik safe conduct I doubt if British officers could enter Russian Turkestan without dangers to their persons and much less make propaganda.’

On the 15th April, after plans had obviously been considered further, the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Montagu, was cabling the Viceroy:

‘Please consider whether it would be feasible to add a few Indian soldiers to Bailey’s mission . . . under guise of assistants, batmen, etc.’

By now, however, the Viceroy was becoming concerned at the risks, and cabled that it would be unwise to send Bailey to Tashkent ‘until the situation in Turkestan is clearer’. A few weeks later he was back-peddalling harder still, and on the 3rd June signalled that any move ‘would excite the liveliest suspicions in Afghanistan and might upset the whole situation’. On the 6th he instructed Macartney to take no action pending further orders; but soon afterwards a telegram came from Macartney indicating a modification of the situation:

‘As I shall be leaving for England shortly, it appears to me that I may have the opportunity of doing useful work by taking the Tashkent route instead of the Indian route. I have spoken to Russian Consul-General Kashgar as far as my own journey is concerned. He is prepared to give me on his own responsibility an open letter by way of passport as well as a letter of recommendation . . . Have you any objection to my

asking Russian Consul-General to give also an open letter to Bailey so that he can travel with me to Tashkent?’

Macartney did not appear to realise that Bailey had been sent to Kashgar with the express intention that he should carry out a mission to Tashkent. He failed to mention also that the Consul-General, Stephanovitch, belonged to the old Imperial regime and had no standing with the Bolsheviks whatsoever. However, the Viceroy telegraphed the Secretary of State:

Macartney thinks he might now be able to arrange through his Russian colleague for Bolshevik permission from Tashkent for mission to enter Russian Turkestan. But for reasons given in my telegram of 3 June [i.e. reaction in Afghanistan] we think it would be grave mistake to act on his suggestion and have accordingly instructed Macartney to take no action.’

But increasingly the Viceroy was coming under pressure both from the Central Intelligence Office and from his own staff. A secret Minute Paper dated the 17th June, for example, put the situation thus:

‘We are without the means of obtaining prompt and reliable reports on what goes on in Turkestan. We do not know what party is in the ascendant . . . or what anti-German or pro-Ally elements the population may contain . . . All this seems clearly to point to an agent on the spot. We have taken the preliminary steps of sending a mission up to Meshed and Kashgar; but no British or Indian officer has been authorised to enter Turkestan.’

The writer goes on to point out that the Amir of Afghanistan would not object to the mission; and reminds the Viceroy that Macartney has stated that permission might be obtained to despatch the mission via his colleague in Kashgar. A few days later the Viceroy gave way, and put up a proposal to the Secretary of State. On the 12th July the latter signalled: ‘Proposal that Bailey and Macartney should proceed to Tashkent is approved.’

In his own account Bailey conceals this background to the mission, implying that the mission originated in a letter from

Roger Tredwell, newly appointed United States Consul-General at Tashkent, who wrote expressing his desire to make contact with the nearest Allied representative. Such a letter was received; but it was purely incidental to the mission. However, it was decided that Bailey would leave for Tashkent with Major Blacker, Stephanovitch, and his wife, and the head clerk of the Kashgar Consulate-General, Khan Sahib Iftekhar Ahmed.

‘We left Kashgar on 24th July and crossed the frontier into Russian Turkestan at Irkeshtam on 31st July. . . .’ This bald statement conceals a wealth of detail. First there were stretches of desert to negotiate, then the green mountains of Alai, where the hospitable Kirghiz tribesmen lived in their *yurts*. Near Shorbulak the column passed through a marble gorge so narrow that the loads on the backs of camels had for centuries polished both sides. Two days out from Kashgar, Blacker went down with a mysterious fever, and had to be carried on a litter between ponies. The frontier post at Irkeshtam was staffed by a team of anti-Bolshevik Customs officers who proved most hospitable. Their post was surrounded by a barricade of cotton bales, as if they were expecting trouble, and indeed they were eventually forced to take refuge over the border. Three days’ journey on, Bailey and his column crossed the highest pass on their journey, the Terek Dawan, which lay at 13,000 feet, and he noted that, although it was the hottest time of the year, the ground was frozen hard, and there were patches of snow in the hollows. Among them lay the bones of thousands of animals who had not survived their journey across this difficult terrain.

On the 7th August the town of Osh came into sight, and here Bailey learned of the extraordinary rumours that his progress had given rise to: ‘We were the vanguard of a force of twelve thousand men sent from India to capture “Ferghana and Turkestan”; our servants were sepoys in disguise.’ Two days later, at Andijhan, Bailey came across his first Bolsheviks, ‘who are always dressed in blouses with a revolver conspicuously in the belt or on the table’. The whole town was full of released Austrian prisoners of war, many of them playing in hotel orchestras, for despite the uncertainty and threat of bloodshed, the place seemed full of a hectic gaiety. Bailey even saw a film and an open-air production of a play called *Mazeppa*. It was here

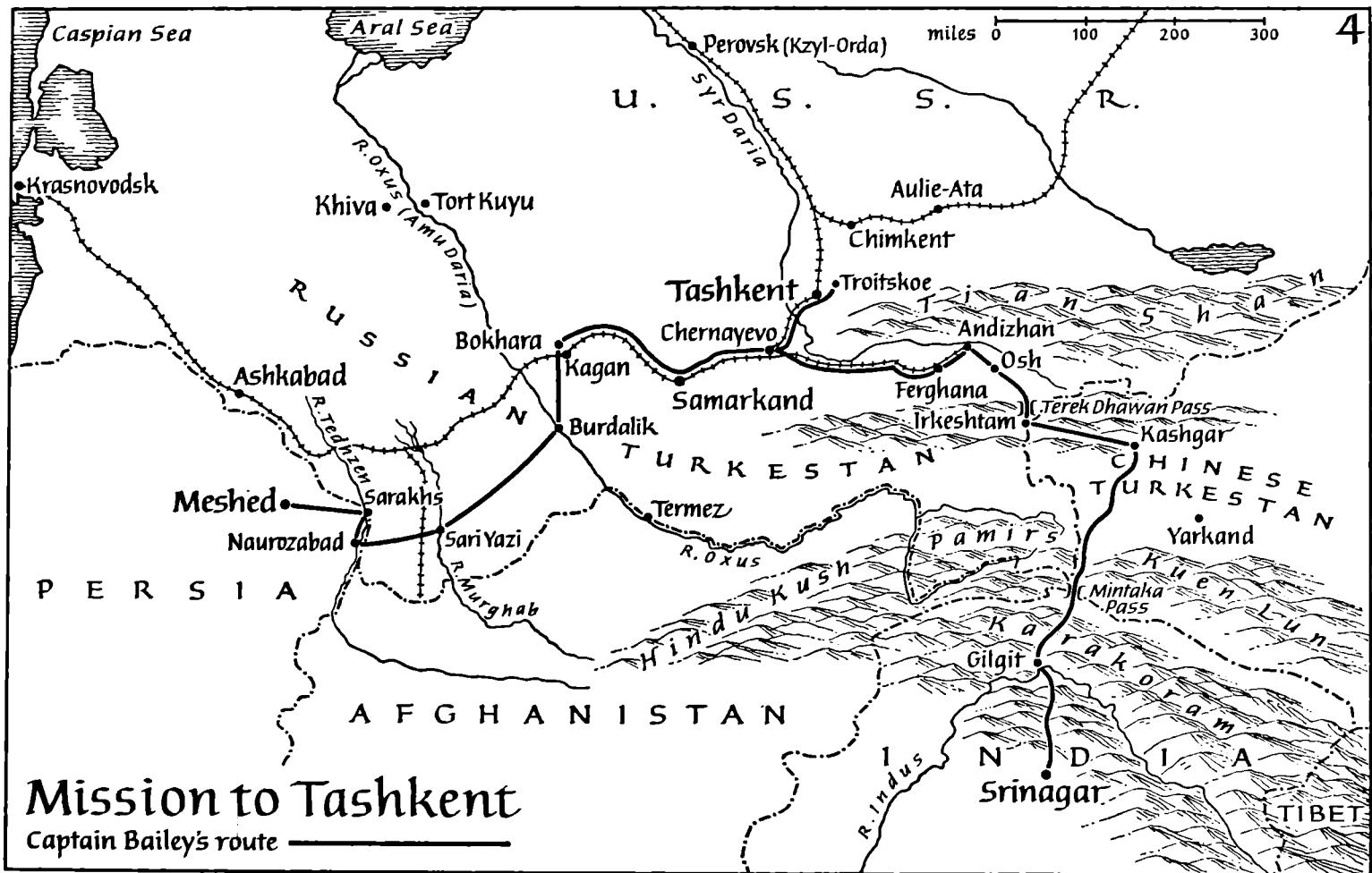
that Russian officials warned Stephanovitch that it would be unwise for him to continue to Tashkent, and consequently he went back to Kashgar. His wife continued with the mission however, supervising the catering arrangements and acting as interpreter. According to Blacker, 'She rather astonished us by laying on 200 live chickens for the journey . . .'; he did not know the Russians' taste for *tsiplonac* or *poussin*.

On the 12th August the party continued their journey by train, reaching Tashkent two days later, where they booked into the Regina Hotel.

Tashkent (the Russian as opposed to the native town) proved to be charming, with wide streets lined with poplars, elms, oaks, and acacias. Down the gutters ran streams of water fed from the irrigational system, and men armed with large cans moved along sprinkling water to lay the dust. The modern city had a population of 50,000, merely a quarter of the population living in the native city. On the outskirts set in a fine park, lay the house of the Governor-General, and there was also a fort and a radio station. Though Tashkent had been under the Bolsheviks for almost a year when Bailey arrived, the hotels were still running and the food was good; trams and horse cars still plied in the streets, and the theatres were open. In dozens of cafés and restaurants Austrian orchestras played, and there were ice-creams to be had and beer to be drunk. Soon the position was to change rapidly, hotels being closed and turned into Soviet institutions; while the trees were cut down for fuel. All cars were commandeered for Soviet officials.

One of Bailey's first moves upon arrival was to get in touch with Roger Tredwell, whom he later described as 'an ornament to his profession and a credit to his country'. The Consul-General was living with a family called Noyev whose children were in the charge of an Irish governess, Miss Rosanna Houston. From Tredwell Bailey learned a good deal about events in Tashkent during the previous year.

When the first revolution of February 1917 occurred in Petrograd and Kerensky formed his government, the population of Turkestan—both Russian and native—were delighted, and the majority of government officials transferred their loyalty. The first provisional revolutionary government in Tashkent was



Mission to Tashkent
 Captain Bailey's route

a mixture of socialist-revolutionaries, cadets, Mensheviks, and Bolsheviks. But with the return from Persia of Russian troops in a revolutionary mood, and the chaos caused by the shortage of food and other commodities, plus the growing tension between the Uzbek-Kazak and Tadjik population and the Russian settlers and officials, the extremists gained control. Despite resolutions passed in Leningrad giving them independence, the native population had no real say in affairs whatever; and their subjection was confirmed by a declaration at the first sitting of the Soviet in Tashkent on the 17th November 1917. A declaration of independence by the Uzbek-Kazak population of Kokand brought the newly recruited Red Army into action; Kokand itself was destroyed and a large part of its population massacred. Hatred of the Russians was common to all the native peoples. Early in 1918 a movement similar to that in Kokand occurred in Tashkent, and one morning an enormous crowd of unarmed men marched into the Russian town and released from gaol a group of members of the Provisional Government. Before they could get away, however, a detachment of the Red Army arrived and opened fire. The released prisoners were shot in the street. The Russians, not differentiating between the various races of Turkestan whether Uzbek, Tadjik, Kirghiz, or Turkman, designated them all 'Sarts'. The Sart population totalled almost seven million, outnumbering the European Russians by twenty to one. When Bailey arrived, these people had long realised that the pronouncements of the Central Government in Moscow meant nothing, and that now they must live under the heavy hand of the commissars. While trade slumped and unemployment rose, they listened impatiently to exortions to send away large quantities of cotton and fruit.

On the 19th August, by which time they calculated that Stephanovitch had reached the frontier, Bailey and Blacker called for their first interview on Damagatsky, the foreign commissar, who before the revolution had been a draughtsman in the Ministry of Agriculture. The interview got off on the wrong foot, Bailey (using an interpreter) referring to 'the Bolshevik Government' instead of the Soviet Government. Then Damagatsky demanded Bailey's papers, hoping for a document which would show recognition of the Soviet Government by the

British Government. Unable to oblige, Bailey suggested that the commissar communicate with Delhi by radio, to assure himself of the mission's status. This Damagatsky agreed to do, and meanwhile promised to listen to what Bailey had to say.

Bailey made three points. There were 180,000 Austrian prisoners of war let loose in Turkestan, and with rations scarce and medical arrangements almost non-existent, there was the danger of epidemic. In fact, the British Government did not want large numbers of these men entering Afghanistan, where the Amir was said to have agreed with the Central Powers on a joint invasion of India. (In 1919, of course, Afghanistan did send an army through the passes, though by this time Germany had collapsed.) Secondly, Bailey asked, there was the question of cotton. The Central Powers were very short of this commodity and Turkestan was full of it, 200,000 tons being available for export. German agents were trying to export quantities of these stocks by camel trains—the railways being cut. The third request was as follows: the Germans were trying to use their alliance with Turkey to gain support among the Muslim population. If they succeeded, then the effects would be felt in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier of India, not to mention in India itself. Solely occupied with the task of winning the war, the British Government naturally did not view such a prospect with favour.

To these requests, Damagatsky replied thus: his government hoped to convert the Austrians to communism and enrol them in the Red Army. Those who did not enrol would eventually be sent back to Europe. Regarding cotton, his view was that war among imperialist capitalist powers was no concern of Soviet Russia, and anyone who wanted the cotton and paid for it, could have it. At the moment, he added, any cotton which did leave was bound for Russia. Regarding propaganda, among the Muslims, he said that this would be suppressed, as any form of religion was against the tenets of the Soviet Government.

Now he had some questions for Bailey. If he came as a friend, how was it that British troops from Meshed, in Persia, were supporting the anti-Bolshevik Government of Transcaspia? This question came as a bombshell, for, being out of communication with India for so long, Bailey had no idea of such a

development. As he learned very much later, what had happened was this:

Intent on forestalling a German-Turkish thrust from the Caucasus through northern Persia or Turkestan, towards Afghanistan and India, the Indian Government had set up two cordons. The first of brigade strength under General Dunster-ville (and later known as 'Dunsterforce') was sent to Baku. Here it succeeded in occupying the town but a few days later was driven out. However, the Royal Navy secured command of the Caspian Sea, a vital step should the Turco-German threat materialise. The second cordon under Major-General W. Malleon (whose force also amounted to a brigade) was set up on the Meshed-Merv line, with orders to keep a close watch on the situation in Transcaspia, take action against enemy agents trying to penetrate Afghanistan or Baluchistan from the west, and take advantage of any opportunities to deny the use of the Central Asian railway to the enemy. Malleon, it should be explained, had served on the Intelligence Staff at G.H.Q. Delhi, and on Lord Kitchener's staff, almost without a break from 1904 to 1914. He knew Persia and Afghanistan well and had made a study of communications throughout the whole Middle Asian area. Apart from a short period as bridge commander he had little experience of command, and indeed had been selected for the post at Meshed as a senior Intelligence Officer. As his role changed from Intelligence to operations, however, he came under a great deal of criticism, and he was certainly not the man to lead troops in battle. According to Colonel C. H. Ellis, who served on the mission, he had a dour personality, lacking 'interest in society or the lighter graces of an army career'. He was not an attractive man at all; and to his annoyance no one had thought of informing him of the Tashkent mission.

The situation facing him was explosive. Arriving in Merv, he found his troops under attack by Bolshevik forces which he drove off. Then he made contact with a group of Mensheviks who had gained temporary control of Ashkabad, on the Central Asian Railway, and the latter agreed to help him deal with any German move from the west. (The Mensheviks, incidentally, wished to continue the war against the Central Powers, as opposed to the Bolsheviks who had made peace.) For

a time the Mensheviks maintained control of the Transcaspian Railway, so blocking communication with the Bolsheviks at Tashkent. Twenty-six commissars trying to make their way through from Baku (which had changed hands again) were caught and shot. Enraged, the Bolsheviks attributed this incident to British influence, and indeed Russian historians maintain the same opinion. Inevitably, the Mensheviks—usually known as the Ashkabad Committee—had to face a counter-thrust from Tashkent by the Red Army and hurriedly improvised defences. On the 24th July their forces came under attack, and being heavily out-gunned, were driven back to a position covering the Merv oasis.

Informed of these developments, Malleson sent an officer to the Persian-Transcaspian border to report on the situation, and meanwhile moved up a company of the 19th Punjabis to the frontier. Later two more companies were brought up and the 28th (Indian) Cavalry. Meanwhile Malleson had opened further negotiations with the Ashkabad Committee, and agreement was reached in principle whereby the Committee would improve the defences of Krasnovodsk and render the Central Asian Railway useless to enemy traffic, while the British furnished limited assistance. But the next thing that happened was that the Mensheviks were defeated in a series of actions, losing Merv and the surrounding area. Worse still, the Bolsheviks had seized the railway from Merv to Kushk and were able to draw on supplies of artillery and ammunition from Kushk fortress. Faced with this situation, Malleson ordered a company of infantry and a machine-gun section across the border on the 10th August. Three days later, on the 13th, these troops came into action against the advancing Bolsheviks at Dushakh; for the first time in history British and Indian forces fought the Russians in Central Asia.

Unfortunately for Bailey, it was on the 14th August that he arrived in Tashkent.

Faced with Damagatsky's questions, what could he say? The only course was to try to bluff his way out, and this he proceeded to do, the dialogue going roughly as follows:

'But it is incredible that my mission should be sent to Tashkent, while elsewhere in Turkestan my countrymen are at war with you. There must be some mistake.'

‘There is no mistake.’

‘How do you know the troops were British or Indian?’

‘Because their artillery was good, far better than anything we have in Russia.’

‘That is flattering, but hardly proof.’

‘There was English writing on the shells.’

‘That is not proof either. We sell shells to all kinds of people—we sent large quantities to Russia to help you win the war. You’ve probably got English writing on shells fired by the Red Army.’

‘In that case I will try to produce a prisoner for you.’

This was the first of many interviews with Damagatsky, Roger Tredwell often being present also. As Bailey realised, the Bolsheviks would have been justified in interning him, and long internment in Tashkent meant certain death. He also knew that he must stay where he was and continue to bluff; any attempt to escape would constitute an admission that he was an enemy agent. And at the moment there was nowhere to escape to.

So with Blacker and his staff he continued living in the Regina Hotel, as if the times were normal and danger did not exist. Some evenings he went to the cinema and others to a concert or the circus. On all these outings he was followed by the police, Cheka agents, and members of the counter-espionage section of the local militia. So complicated did the spy network become, that on one occasion the counter-espionage men arrested the Cheka agents in the belief that they were employed by Bailey.

All this frenzied activity reflected the insecurity of the Bolsheviks in Tashkent. Apart from the Mensheviks in Transcaspia they had a force of Cossacks harassing them from the north, while the peasants were rising in Semirechia and the Muslims in Ferghana, under a leader called Irgash. If all these forces had acted in concert, Bailey believed, the Bolsheviks would have been crushed. Unfortunately, they never did, but still the 16,000 men of the Turkestan Red Army, half of them Austrians and all badly armed and equipped, were kept fully engaged.

On the 23rd August Sir George Macartney arrived. His knowledge of Tashkent was invaluable, and Bailey was soon to

accompany him on an interview with Kolesov, chief commissar for the Turkestan Republic. Introducing himself, Sir George explained that he and his colleagues were not spies, but came on a peaceful mission with definite objects. Kolesov listened, with Damagatsky at his side, and when Sir George had finished dropped another bombshell. How was it, he asked, that a peaceful British mission should have arrived just as a British army landed at Archangel? Was this not rather extraordinary? Amazed and horrified, Sir George began bluffing, as Bailey had been forced to do a few days earlier. 'I have no information on the matter', he said. 'It has been impossible to communicate with my own government.'

But the situation was taking on the aspects of a tragi-comedy. The affair at Archangel was not just a matter of a cordon and a few small detachments coming into action; some 7,000 men had been landed with guns and tanks, and were co-operating in the field with the White Russians. This was an act of war which reduced the Tashkent mission's cover story to rubble. By what right, Kolesov could well ask, did Sir George and Bailey come asking the Soviet Government's aid with regard to the Austrian prisoners and cotton supplies in such circumstances? The evidence was that Britain was the enemy of Soviet Russia.

Soon after this meeting with Kolesov, it was decided that there was no point in Sir George staying any longer, and a visa was requested to allow him to return to Kashgar. Blacker, who was far from well, was to return too, leaving Bailey and Iftikhar Ahmed to carry on. Why Bailey should have remained, it is not clear. In his official report he wrote: 'I had considered whether we should also return and had discussed the matter with Sir George Macartney. I think it was very doubtful whether the Bolsheviks would have let us all return. . . .' But the fact was that he neither applied for a visa nor took any other steps to effect his departure. What were his reasons? In the report he explains: 'I could, I believed, give a good deal of useful information to the force in Transcaspia which I believed to be advancing on Tashkent, and expected that I should have to hide when they commenced a serious advance . . . If they did not advance, I hoped to be accepted more or less as Tredwell was . . .' Many years later in *Mission to Tashkent* he gave another reason: 'It was

becoming clear that the Bolsheviks had no intention of helping us to defeat the Germans in the Great War and it was becoming necessary to see what could be done with other Russians who claimed to be ready to step into their shoes.'

Do these reasons represent the whole truth of the matter? To begin with it is obvious that Bailey was woefully misinformed on the size and intentions of the North Persia Cordon. How could a weak brigade make 'a serious advance' against the Red Army forces? Also, once he went under cover, the nature of his mission would undergo a complete change; he would become a secret agent or spy. His suggestion that he might become accepted as Tredwell was appears somewhat far-fetched. Tredwell had arrived as a consul-general in the normal way and with the correct papers. He was not a soldier. And his government were not sending troops into Russia. There was not the slightest chance that Bailey could be regarded as a consular or diplomatic figure. His last reason, that it was necessary to contact anti-Bolshevik Russians, seems far more logical. Bailey had seen how insecure the Bolsheviks were in Turkestan, and probably, like most Englishmen at this time, he thought it quite inconceivable that the revolutionaries could maintain themselves in power for any length of time. He also looked on Bolshevism and the repression of the native population as evil. Therefore, his duty was to stay in Tashkent, help anti-Bolshevik forces in their struggle, and send information to the British Government whenever possible. At the same time, it would appear, he realised that this duty was self-imposed, and had little connection with the task he had been set originally. There was the distinct possibility, too, that the desk-bound civil servants who had disapproved of his previous exploits would condemn this one also. They would assess his motives as being more closely related to a craving for adventure than the strict call of duty. Whether Bailey recognised that adventure and his proclivity for playing a lone hand may have influenced his decision, it is impossible to say. All one can state definitely is that he was determined to stay, and entered into the battle of wits against the Bolsheviks with great enthusiasm. It was to be a battle that would exercise all his courage, his resource, and his ingenuity.

11 Battle of wits

Shortly after the departure of Sir George Macartney, Bailey obtained a *mandat* for half a single-storeyed villa, No. 44 Moskovskaya. In these quarters he had his own front door but shared the use of the garden with the other occupants. One night after curfew there was a knock at the door and a man appeared who gave his name as Manditch. He had come on behalf of the police, he explained, to ask if he could be of service. Bailey's first reaction was to treat him as an *agent provocateur*, but listened to his story all the same.

He came from Sarajevo, Manditch explained, and had been a friend of Princep and the men who assassinated the Austrian Archduke in July 1914. Enlisted in the Austrian infantry on the outbreak of war, he had deserted to the Russians and for a while had worked for the Tsarist Intelligence service. When the revolution came, he had immediately transferred his loyalty and had been given a job in the police. He was, however—for some unspecified reason—anxious to help Bailey in any way he could. Thanking him, Bailey replied, 'I am the head of an accredited mission and have no intention of doing anything against the Turkestan Government.' With this Manditch left, still with protestations of friendship.

Waiting and watching the situation carefully, Bailey had time to indulge his taste for natural history. Going along to the museum, he presented the butterflies he had collected en route from Kashgar, only to discover that although there was a

collection of South American butterflies, no local species were represented at all. Later on, at his suggestion, the local school children were provided with butterfly nets, and a national collection was started. He also visited a man called Zarudni, an ornithologist of international repute, and tried to acquire his collection of 28,000 skins, and unique collection of books, for the British Museum. Unhappily the collection was 'nationalised' by the Tashkent Government.

With Tredwell he also went to the cinema and opera, escorted by spies. Damagatsky was making increasing and ludicrous attempts to set a trap, and on one occasion a man rushed into Tredwell's office in a state of great excitement. He had come with a message from the British general at Ashkabad, he announced, and after fearful adventures had been forced to swallow it. Tredwell, of course, treated the character as a joke, and later discovered him to be a clerk working in the Foreign Office.

A few weeks later Bailey received a second visit from Manditch, and this time decided to trust him a little. Reiterating that he had no designs against the Soviet Government, he confided that he still feared Damagatsky intended to arrest him, and Tredwell also. Could Manditch arrange, he asked, that they were not sent to prison? And might they have some notice of arrest? Manditch replied that both requests might be granted, and after further protestation of friendship disappeared into the night again.

The next developments were even more bizarre. A man called Babushkin was ordered to lead a mission to Major-General Malleson in north Persia, and arrived to ask Bailey for a letter of introduction. Bailey obliged, despite the treatment he was being given, for, as he says, 'I could not neglect this opportunity of sending out a message which unknown to themselves the mission carried and delivered.'

In October Bailey applied to Damagatsky for permission to send a courier to Kashgar, and permission was given, provided nothing was sent in code. Later, to Bailey's great surprise, a sealed bag arrived by the hand of a *sowar* of the 11th Lancers. Soon afterwards, through some clandestine channel he does not disclose, Bailey received a radio message ordering him to return to India. He could not let the authorities

know, for this would have resulted in his informants being shot, but obviously the order could not be ignored. He therefore pretended that they had come with the courier, and having interviewed Damagatsky, sent in an official request for his papers. This was ignored.

A few days later on the 14th October, Manditch paid yet another call to Bailey's house and warned, 'You and your clerk and Tredwell are to be arrested at six o'clock tomorrow evening.' Bailey's first action was to run over to Tredwell's quarters, risking the curfew regulations, to let him know. Next he burned some private papers and hid others, together with an Austrian uniform which he was keeping for a possible disguise. Also he wrote a letter designed to hoodwink Damagatsky. This was addressed to Sir Hamilton Grant, Foreign Secretary in Delhi, and in it he explained that as it was impossible to come to any understanding with the authorities, who were extremely suspicious and surrounded him with spies, he could see no sense in remaining and would take steps to leave as soon as possible. He then added a few words in favour of the Bolsheviks, explaining that they 'were not so bad', and were having great troubles with the Muslims in Ferghana. The Muslim leader, Irgash, he added, was being financed by the Turks and Germans. 'This sentence', Bailey wrote many years later, 'was to make all the difference to me and probably even saved my life.'

At 6 p.m. next day, as Manditch had predicted, the doorbell rang and in walked the chief of police, Gegoloshweli, his assistant, some soldiers, and members of the *Sledstvennaya* (Enquiry) Commission. The dialogue went as follows:

'You are Colonel Bailey?'

'Yes'.

'I have orders to arrest you.'

'Whose orders?'

'The orders of my superiors.'

'Whose orders? The police or the *Sledstvennaya* Commission?'

'The Commission.'

'This is an outrage. Does Damagatsky know you have come here?'

‘Naturally.’

‘I don’t believe you. The Commission is acting independently and without authority.’

‘Please, Colonel. You will be held under guard here . . .’

‘Has Tredwell been arrested, too?’

‘Yes—he has given us a letter of protest. I’ve got it here.’

‘Well, I’ll give you a letter too.’

‘Very well. But now we must conduct a search . . .’

‘Well, give me one moment. Would you like a glass of wine and a cigar? I know that you’re only subordinates carrying out an unpleasant duty—I bear no personal grudge against you . . .’

Bailey was acting, as Gegoloshweli knew, and could barely keep a straight face. The men in the room were heads of the Commission who had turned out in full force. While the wine was passed round, the soldiers searched the room, then took away every scrap of paper with writing on. They also seized with delight a revolver, unaware that Bailey had planted it on purpose, having concealed another one.

In due course the whole party went away, leaving a sentry on guard at the outer door. Next morning, by which time news of the arrests had got all round the town, a number of visitors arrived, whom the sentries tried to keep away at bayonet point. A lady whom Bailey had seen at Tredwell’s house managed to get into the garden, however, and ignoring the sentry’s protests, shook hands with Bailey, neatly slipping him a message. This gave the news that, following Tredwell’s protests, Damagatsky and Kolesov had arrived to secure his release and apologise on behalf of the Government. Tredwell was now taking urgent steps to get Bailey released also.

Before these succeeded, however, six members of the Commission arrived to conduct Bailey’s first interrogation. Their leader was a young man called Siderov, and the proceedings were conducted in a mixture of Persian, French, and Russian. Bailey began by protesting once more at his arrest and demanded permission to send a radio message to India. Curtly Siderov refused, and the dialogue went as follows:

‘The charge against you is that you paid two million Nikolai roubles to Irgash who is in rebellion in Ferghana.’

‘It’s stupid for you of all people to make such a foolish charge



The Dalai Lama, 1924

Collecting goose eggs, Rham Tso, 1925





Gilgit flight, 23rd October 1933

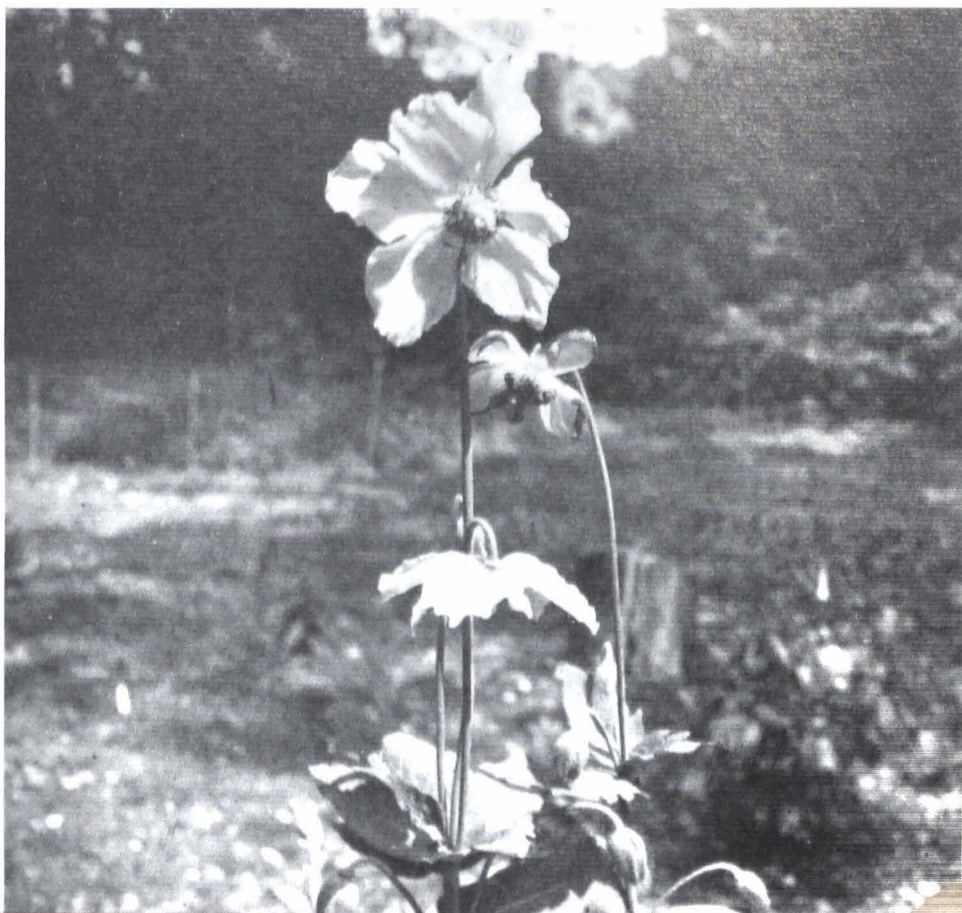
Pear blossom, Nepal, 1937





Home Guard, 1942: tea at Hill House, Northrepps

Meconopsis Betonicifolia Bailey





Kittiwakes, Farne Islands, 1952

The library, Hill House, 1952: Tibetan pheasants under glass



against me. I did not pay anything to Irgash, but I know who did. It was the German agent, Hermann. And I can give you his address and the date and time the money was handed over.'

'That is all nonsense—you have invented it.'

'Well, I did not invent it today. I have put it in a report to my government.'

'Have you a copy of that report?'

'No.'

'Of course not. You never wrote it!'

'Yes, I did—and the report is in your hands. It's among the papers you stole from me last night, an act of violence about which the House of Commons will hear in due course.'

Somewhat amazed, Siderov sent a soldier to one of the cars where the suitcase holding Bailey's papers had been deposited. When the case had been brought in, Siderov opened it and asked Bailey to indicate which letter he was referring to. Bailey did so, picking up an envelope with a large red seal. The scene continued:

'Here is the report.'

'Open it.'

'I refuse. This is a privileged document written to my government.'

'You will open that envelope.'

'There are twelve of you and all armed. I can't prevent you from breaking the seal, but I would not care to be the man who does it once news reaches the House of Commons and they protest to Moscow.'

Bailey waxed so indignant that he almost went too far. The men backed away from the envelope, and then Siderov pleaded:

'Let us be reasonable. We have made a charge against you. You say this document contains evidence that the charge is untrue. Will you not open it in your own interest?'

'Very well, since you ask so nicely. But I must make conditions. Have you any other charges? It is possible that this letter may refer to them, too.'

'No, we have no other charges.'

Eventually Bailey opened the letter and read the sections concerning Irgash, translating into French as he went along.

The French-speaking members of the Commission seemed satisfied, but to make quite sure, Mrs. Gelodo, the landlady, was brought in and she translated the English directly into Russian. After this the senior members of the Commission together with Gegoloshweli (who knew Bailey was playing a trick all along) went out into the street for a long discussion. Finally, they shouted, '*Voi svobodni*' (You are free). Bailey immediately asked about his clerk, Iftekar Ahmad, to be assured that he would also be released.

So the immediate ordeal was over. Though Bailey had played his game with a light touch, he was playing for high stakes none the less. Once the Commission took it into their heads to throw him into prison, he knew he would never get out again. It was only by keeping alive the seeds of doubt in their minds that he could prevent such a step, for he had no illusions as to their ideas of right and justice. Every day people were being hauled away to die, or were shot in the street, without any charge being preferred. The Bolshevik policy in Tashkent as elsewhere was to kill first and ask questions later.

The next day, the 17th October, Bailey walked into Damagatsky's office and asked for a reply to his written request presented three days previously for an exit visa to Kashgar. Damagatsky pleaded that he had been away from his office and therefore had been unable to deal with the matter, though it was quite obvious that he was awaiting instructions from Moscow. Further interviews brought no result, as did discussions with Kolesov, the chief commissar. Increasingly it became obvious that the visa would never be granted, and that when instructions did come, the strong probability was that they would order Bailey's arrest and execution. So, having talked things over with Tredwell, Bailey decided that he must go underground. By this method he could still co-operate with Tredwell in furthering the Allied cause, and would gain mobility.

So the plan was this. Changing into Austrian uniform, Bailey would walk out of Tashkent at dusk and continue for ten or fifteen miles. He would then lie down at an agreed spot in the road where a man called Voznisensky would drive along next morning in a cart. During the next two days he would be taken to Yusuf Khana, where he would be hidden in the Meteor-

ological Station. In due course he would contact the White Russian, General Kondorotovitch, and go with him to Fergana. Here he hoped to interview Irgash, the leader of the revolt against the Bolsheviks there, then cross the border to Kashgar.

The plan had to be put into effect rather sooner than expected. On the 20th October when Bailey was lunching with Tredwell, there was a ring at the door, and the Noyevs' young daughter went to answer it. Outside stood a white-haired old lady who handed in a message then disappeared. The message was from a friend called Vodopianoff and was dated the 18th; it said briefly: 'You are both to be arrested at once and the situation is particularly dangerous for Bailey. Shooting is not out of the question.' Obviously instructions had been received from Moscow, and their contents were just as Bailey had anticipated. A week or so later the text was printed in the *Nasha Gazette*, and ran as follows:

'With reference to your telegram concerning the advance of British troops and the repressive measures you have taken, it is necessary to take the following steps:

1. Intern all subjects of Allies between 17 and 48, except children and workmen, who support the Bolsheviks, also making exceptions for others if political considerations require it.
2. Stop all payments to British subjects and their allies.
3. Arrest all official representatives, seize their correspondence and send it to us.
4. Take strict measures against all those who have intercourse with the British and their allies.

Your second proposition of declaring all Englishmen hostages is not convenient, and is sufficiently covered by point number one. There must be no exception for official representatives of the allies, as their pretended partiality towards the Soviet authorities is a trick well known to us for the purpose of deceiving local authorities.

Consider these instructions as issued by the Central Government and let us know when you have carried them out.

What about Colonel Bailey? Your former considerations are now worthless. He should be arrested immediately.

For the People's Comissar,
(Signed) Karakhan

But to return to the warning message received at Tredwell's. Noyev urged Bailey to get away without a moment's hesitation; he also advised him that at Nikolsk, a mile from the city, there was a guard who examined every one passing after dark. In fact, Bailey had intended to go by this route and hurriedly revised his plans. The landlord also advised Bailey to hide in Tashkent for ten days, till the hue and cry had died down, then get away.

This advice proved sound also, but it was not a simple matter to shake off the spies. So a plan was carefully worked out by which Bailey would filter through various houses, leaving a few of his possessions in each. Then he would walk to a house with which he had a previous connection, to change into the Austrian uniform. Even this process was complicated. In Tashkent the houses were divided by wooden partitions in which there were doors. It was therefore arranged that a man would leave a series of these doors unlocked, so that having entered one house and changed, Bailey could then skip along several houses and enter the street again in disguise.

But first the preliminaries had to be disposed of. Bailey told Khan Sahib Iftekar Ahmad to disappear then make his way to Kashgar. As he spoke Turki and could disguise himself as a Sart no great trouble was expected and indeed he reached Kashgar on the 7th December. Private letters were burned, and a copy of Bailey's diary was entrusted to a friend.

Then at dusk, wearing his Austrian top boots under his trousers, he walked to Tredwell's lodgings. Here a code message was received, indicating that all the escape plans were ready, and after eating a meal and gratefully accepting a bottle of brandy to take with him, Bailey said good-bye to Tredwell and the Noyevs and walked to the house where his identity was to be changed. With six spies watching him at a discreet distance he rang the bell, and when the door was opened, stepped inside. Then working at top speed, he threw off his overcoat, put on the

tunic and kepi which were lying on the hall table, tucked his trousers into his boots, and ran through the open doors between the gardens. One of these had been locked accidentally so had to be kicked open. Further on, Voznisensky, who had been involved in the discarded escape plan, appeared to act as a guide: and soon Bailey was through a second house and out into the street. The six spies, he learned, had thought it safe to go into a café round the corner for tea.

The first house he was to stay at was owned by an engineer called Lebideff, who had a wife, a son aged twenty-two called Shura, and a small girl called Annechka. For the first few days he did not leave the house, using the time to make several more changes to his appearance. Having shaved his moustache and gone over his head with a fine clipper, he then let everything grow—hair and beard. He also joined in the home life of the family, even playing children's games, which he found excellent for learning Russian. More important, he began thinking himself into the role of an Austrian prisoner of war, recollecting all he could of the techniques employed by John Buchan's hero, Richard Hannay, in *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. He practised the way Austrians got into their greatcoats, lifting up the left shoulder before the arm was inserted in the sleeve; and tried to inculcate the habit of heel-clicking.

As he learned from Tredwell and others, his escape had produced a gratifying burst of activity among the authorities. A letter was delivered to Tredwell's house signed by Solkin, President of the Executive Committee, who suggested that Bailey should see him, with regard to his departure from Turkestan. Notices were put up in the streets and the railway station offering a reward for information leading to his arrest. ('An insultingly small one,' Bailey commented later.) The block through which he had filtered was searched and the occupants were questioned. On the 26th October, Tredwell was arrested and held in his quarters for five months. Meanwhile, the situation of all foreigners deteriorated, the Government issuing an order that Allied subjects must be arrested as a reprisal for British atrocities at the capture of Merv. (Malleeson's small force had taken the city just before the end of October.)

Despite the oncoming tragedy, comedy managed to reassert

itself from time to time. The Turkestan Government's situation remained so shaky that even Damagatsky approached the 'underground' with a view to getting away; and when Kolesov received a telegram, drafted by some unknown wag, 'All is discovered fly at once', he and the principal officers of government got into their cars and roared away. Only several miles later did it occur to them that they had been hoaxed. Sheepishly they returned to their offices.

Early in November some copies of radio messages reached Bailey in his hiding place. One was from his brother saying: 'Am getting married 5 December hope you will be there'; and another from Sir Hamilton Grant (Foreign Secretary in Delhi) and Sir George Macartney asking the Turkestan Government to send him back. The clash at Ashkabad, they explained, occurred after Bailey had been sent on his mission. A third message came from General Malleon, and this advised that the Bolshevik mission to Meshed had been arrested as hostages for the safety of Bailey and Tredwell.

But now it was time to leave Tashkent and Bailey's journal records:

'On the evening of 5th November in my Austrian uniform I got into Shura's cart and he sat in it behind and I drove out. I felt rather queer in the open street and always imagined that other prisoners were staring at me but I don't think anyone took any notice of me. One man ran up and asked us to give him a lift to Nikolsk but Shura refused. We reached Nikolsk at dusk and here stopped for a minute at the house of Shura's father-in-law and his wife gave me a hot *perok* of apples. It was freezing. This was the village where there was a post to examine all people who passed after dark . . . but we avoided it by taking back lanes.'

Sixteen miles from Tashkent, Bailey and Shura reached the village of Troitskoe. Here had been one of the largest prisoners-of-war camps, and no less than 8,000 Austrians were buried in a large cemetery. The place was still teeming with soldiers and Bailey was anxious to get away. His Russian hosts had an infuriating habit, however, of getting up early then talking for

hours round the *samovar*; on this occasion it was noon before the cart was moving again. The immediate destination was a bee-farm near Brich Mulla, owned by Shura's father, and this was reached on the evening of the 8th. Here, as arranged, General Kondratovitch was waiting, and, to quote Bailey's report, 'I told him that I wanted to go to Ferghana at once and the next day [9th November] we sent off two men to reconnoitre the road and see whether it was possible to go and whether Irgash would receive us well.' The scouts were not expected to be back for at least a week.

Meanwhile several things happened. With Bailey and the general at the bee-farm was a Tartar, Colonel Khoshaiëff, and a Polish-Russian cavalry officer called Captain Proshkovsky, and on the 9th November—having sent off the scouts—this officer accompanied Bailey to a hill behind the bee-farm, where they found a cave. Here they concealed some rifles, kit, and a primus stove. Once the Bolsheviks got wind that four officers were in the area, they might send out a party of troops, and the cave could easily be defended. There was no intention, however, of resorting to the cave until necessary, and meanwhile the quartet lived in a hut, making life as comfortable for themselves as possible. The general had learned to bake bread, and Bailey would go out with Proshkovsky to cut firewood, or kill one of the wild boar which roamed the area. Bailey also collected seed from various wild flowers.

Though no major threat developed, there were still some minor alarms and excursions. One evening when the officers went out to help search for a lost pony a man was found hiding in the bushes, and he jumped up and ran away. Another evening, when Bailey and Proshkovsky were returning to the hut, they spotted some horses grazing outside, and for a moment were afraid that the Red Guards had arrived. In fact, it was a party of Tajiks, and they were on the run, too.

On the 21st November the scouts, Vasili and Eshan, returned with bad news. Every track to Ferghana was guarded by Bolshevik patrols, and it was obvious that the authorities were quite determined to prevent communication between Tashkent and Irgash. At first Bailey could not credit that things were so bad, but gradually came to the conclusion that it would be

foolish to take risks. A new plan would have to be thought out. Meanwhile Ivan was sent off to Tashkent, where Bailey had heard that Tredwell was holding some letters. Nothing more was heard of him till the 4th December when a message came through that he was robbed on the road and had been forced to return to the city. Whether he had the letters on him at the time it was impossible to say; but he did have Bailey's second and last revolver. Everything seemed to be going wrong.

However, three days later Ivan turned up at last, explaining that he had been held up by Red Guards, who confiscated his property. Showing great pluck, he had expostulated that he was an officer of the Red Militia, and everything was handed back again, including Bailey's revolver and camera.

The letters were safe, too. From these Bailey learned that the war was over and the Allies had won. Revolution had broken out in Germany. Rumours were going about that Britain would get not only Arabia, Mesopotamia, Palestine, West Africa, and the Caucasus, but Turkestan as well. Later rumour had it that Turkestan would be held for twenty-five years only as security for loans advanced to Russia.

Welcome as it was, the news gave little immediate comfort to Bailey, who was still determined to get through to Irgash. As the mountain route was sealed, he would have to return to Tashkent and make other arrangements. Then an accident intervened. One day he was out hunting pig in the snow, wearing native *chukai* instead of boots. These were a sort of sock made of softened hide and worn with a cloth wrapped round the outside. Though warm for travelling they did not give a good grip on the hard snow, and what happened Bailey described in his journal:

'We tracked the pig over the ridge and down the other side. Here as I was crossing a steep slope I slipped . . . I started to slide down getting faster and faster as I went. My rifle was slung and I could not use it to get a hold on the snow. The slope was about 2,000 feet down and jutting out into it about 200 feet down were some rocks and I quite expected to be dashed to pieces among these. I passed one bush and tried to catch it but was going too fast and only tore the skin off my

hands. I then struggled to work to the right to avoid the rocks, though what would have happened if I had gone right down the 2,000 feet I do not know. After I had come down two or three hundred feet in a few seconds I must have got into some soft snow for the surface broke and I went head over heels and pulled up with something wrong in both my knees.'

One leg was very bad, but somehow Bailey managed to get astride a pony that Shura brought for him, and after an agonising ride reached the hut. Here a local doctor said he had dislocated the knee, and with a single jerk got it in position again. But there was no question of his walking or even standing on the leg for some weeks. The plan to make for Tashkent had to be abandoned.

So as the winter closed in, life went on in the hut much as usual. Messages came from Tredwell, and Etherton in Kashgar, but nothing of any particular interest; and no message at all came from Irgash.

Early in January 1919 the party heard that a search was going on in Brich Mulla and Khodjakent, a nearby village, and that a forester had given them away. This news spurred Bailey to move, and though there was four feet of snow round the hut, he persuaded Eshan to lay on ponies to within two miles. This distance he was carried by the others who took turns, and eventually reached the Meteorological Station at Yusuf Khana.

It was while staying here that he learned of the disturbances in Tashkent. Again there were rumours that the Bolsheviks had been overthrown, but these proved exaggerated, to say the least. Later it transpired that the revolt had been led by the War Commissar, Osipov, a young man of twenty-three who had previously served as an officer in the Tsarist army. Supporting him were groups of railway workers and one of the best Bolshevik regiments, commanded by an ex-cavalry N.C.O., called Kolosaiev. Bailey knew Osipov by sight and had little to thank him for; he had caused trouble over the courier to Kashgar, after Damagatsky had given permission. Osipov's tactics for the revolt were rather novel; going to the barracks of the 2nd Turkestan Regiment, he telephoned Kolesov that there was trouble among the troops, and requested that some commissars

should come along and help him talk to the men. Eight of them arrived who were promptly shot, after which Osipov formally announced that the Bolshevik regime was over and got drunk. But Osipov had planned quickly and badly, and had not contacted General Kondratovitch and enlisted his secret army. However, he did gain the support of several prominent Bolsheviks, including Gegoloshweli, and showed sufficient initiative to remove all the gold from the bank—almost four million roubles. Fighting went on until the 21st October, after which Osipov recognised that he was beaten and retreated to the mountains with a small force, leaving detachments of his men still in action in Tashkent.

A few days later the Bolsheviks took a terrible revenge, shooting some four thousand people in one day, many of them quite innocent. Anyone merely wearing a collar was liable to be classed as *bourjoui* and shot. Among the victims was an engineer called Kerensky, brother to Alexander Kerensky who had formed the first revolutionary government in Moscow.

Bailey did not get wind of this incident until the 18th, and the following day was forced to hide when some Bolshevik troops searched the house where he was staying, at Troitskoe. The following day he tried to reach Tashkent, but was turned back; from the town he could hear the sound of artillery and the crackle of small arms fire. So he went back in the village and he remained for some time in great danger. His only document of identity was a Magyar passport, but he could not speak Magyar; and his Russian was not yet good enough to enable him to argue his way out of arrest. The confused situation in Tashkent was reflected in the village; lorry loads of troops kept thundering through, there were searches for White Guards; and some of the peasants were given rifles and sent off to fight Osipov's men. One night the Commissar for Iskander came to stay in the house where Bailey was lodging, and began putting questions. Bailey concocted a story of being a Rumanian serving in the 32nd Magyar Regiment, and to his relief this was accepted.

On the 14th February, by which time Osipov and the remnant of his forces had retreated to the mountains, Bailey walked into Tashkent, eluding the patrols, and went into hiding once more with the Lebideffs. Here he was visited by Miss Rosanna

Houston, who gave him the news that Noyev, Tredwell's landlord, had been in prison for five weeks until released by the White Guards. He had been examined at great length on the subject of Bailey's whereabouts, but like the many others questioned, could give no information.

Unfortunately Bailey could not stay at the Lebideffs'. Shura had gone off to join the White Guards, and the Lebideffs were almost hysterical with worry. The hut above the bee-farm had been searched and looted by the Bolsheviks, and now they were afraid that their house in Tashkent would become suspect. Mrs. Lebideff, Bailey records, 'got quite hysterical and said she would go and tell the whole story to the Enquiry Commission. She screamed and banged the furniture about and it was really quite unpleasant for me.' So he had to search for new quarters, and was lucky to find them with an engineer called Mashmeer. Here, for security reasons, he was confined to his room all day, and was relieved when Miss Houston found him somewhere more congenial. He records:

'I was to meet at a certain spot a grey haired lady carrying a bundle wrapped in red cloth who would light a cigarette. Follow her, see the door she went in, and go in a minute after. This I did. These people were Madame Dimitrieva and one son aged 18 who had been with the White Guards, one son aged 14 and one 7. . . . The other families in the courtyard had all had men with Osipoff and were quite safe, but they did not know who I was.'

Considering himself quite safe here, Bailey moved around as he liked; he also changed his Austrian uniform for Russian clothes.

But the times which followed were difficult. His attempts to get a *mandat* for accommodation resulted in the confiscation of his passport. His leg was still bad and needed massage, but masseurs in Tashkent were far too talkative. Worse still, knowledge that he was back in the city had spread to more people than was wise; and he had to start a rumour that he was leaving for Ferghana. Even so, he narrowly escaped arrest on numerous occasions, and when the house was searched, had to

pose as a foreign language teacher. It was fortunate on this occasion that the Bolsheviks did not ask to see his passport.

On the 27th March 1919 a special train left Tashkent carrying any foreigners who wished to leave the country. Among those aboard was Roger Tredwell whose departure was a great loss to Bailey, for they had maintained contact throughout the winter. Bailey could not take advantage of the train himself, of course, being regarded by the authorities as an arch conspirator. He was even being blamed for fomenting Osipov's rebellion. However, he was able to pass a message via Tredwell to the India Office, and also to assure his mother that he was still alive. He also sent a message via Captain Brun of the Royal Danish Artillery, for it seemed to him very possible that the train and all its occupants would not reach the border. As he puts it, 'One always had to be thinking along these lines.'

By this time things were so bad that he was forced to sleep in a different house each night. Fear of arrest never left him. On one occasion he went to the barber's for a haircut, when one of the members of the Cheka who had arrested him came in and sat in the next chair. Fortunately he was occupied with his own thoughts, but Bailey says 'this was about as uncomfortable a time as I ever had in a barber's chair'.

Somehow he managed to survive until summer. Though the food situation improved, and fruit kiosks appeared at street corners, the political situation remained just as tense. Most nights he could hear shooting in the city—'police firing on robbers' was the official explanation—and one afternoon he came upon some militia having a gun battle with a deserter. Searches for wanted men were more frequent than ever; and once when Bailey was lying in the basement of a house, the Enquiry Commission marched in to arrest a man on the floor above. From time to time he even heard rumours about his own movements, from people not suspecting his identity. Several times he passed Damagatsky in the street. . . .

Now it is necessary to leave Bailey for the moment, to trace the course of events in Simla and London. On the 18th September the Viceroy had cabled the Secretary of State quoting a paragraph from the Tashkent newspaper, the *Nasha Gazette* of the 21st August:

‘An English Mission has arrived in Tashkent consisting of two officers. . . . The Mission has come to Tashkent with a view to obtaining news and to dispel groundless rumours as to intention of British Government to intervene in affairs of Turkestan Republic. The Mission denies these rumours and gives as its opinion such rumours emanate entirely from German sources. . . .’

He had received no news of Bailey, the Viceroy added. Six days later, however, a telegram arrived from Damagatsky, which ran:

‘Macartney and Blacker left for Kashgar. Bailey is safe in Tashkent. His powers are not clear to us. Please explain them clearly to us. We are surprised that the Indian Government has evaded replying to our question and the reason for hostile conduct of British troops in Persia.’

Not surprisingly this message initiated anxious discussion in Simla, and one of the Viceroy’s advisers minuted, ‘as we cannot reply without lying, it would be better not to reply at all’.

The Viceroy, however, saw it as his plain duty to do everything possible to extricate Bailey and so the Foreign Secretary was instructed to telegraph Damagatsky:

‘Please understand Bailey was despatched Russian Turkestan several weeks before occurrences near Ashkabad. Sole object of his mission was to establish friendly relations with Tashkent authorities and influence them in favour of Allies . . . But events on this side are absolutely and entirely separate from Bailey’s mission which has no responsibility for them . . . Government of India . . . trust Bailey may be permitted to return to India.’

This message did not, however, draw any reply, and on the 22nd October the Viceroy informed the Secretary of State that Bailey was apparently detained in Tashkent. He continued:

‘We are not at present in favour of any direct threat to Bolshevik leaders named but if there are important Bolsheviks

in England or elsewhere an exchange might perhaps be arranged . . . Ashkabad affairs must have, however, partially prejudiced Bailey's position.'

'Partially prejudiced . . .' One cannot but admire the Viceroy's talent for understatement.

The next development occurred on the 28th October, when the Chief of General Staff, India, advised Military Intelligence that Malleson had picked up the radio message of the 26th, already mentioned: 'In what position is Colonel Indian Army Bailey? Your former views are wrong and he should be arrested.' On the 8th November a message from Bailey reached Delhi:

'I propose to join General head of White Guards and after consulting him join with British forces at Chargui.'

This message showed that Bailey was already out of touch with the situation, for no British troops had reached Chargui. Already the Secretary of State was agitating that steps should be taken to secure Bailey's release, and on the 21st November the Viceroy called for a report. From the Political Department, however, came the depressing minute: 'I am unable to suggest any further steps for securing Colonel Bailey's release.' A few days later, however, it was found possible to contact Malakov, Commissar for Foreign Affairs at Tashkent, who radioed on the 28th November, 'We repeat Colonel Bailey is not detained. He has disappeared and it is not known where.'

A short time before this message three Soviet emissaries had arrived in Persia: Babushkin (carrying Bailey's message), Afanasiev, and Kalashnikov. As they had no credentials they were held as hostages for Bailey and Tredwell, to the fury of Malakov and his government.* Malleson now found himself beset on all sides, for Lord Curzon, the Foreign Secretary, decided to put his oar in, and urged that one of the Russians should be exchanged for Roger Tredwell. Neither the Secretary of State nor the Viceroy approved of this move, but Curzon did not give up easily, and Malleson began to wish that the Russians had never walked into his lines and Bailey had never existed.

*This news reached Bailey.

Not the least of his problems, which he dare not divulge immediately, was that the Russians had informed him in private that they refused to return home under any terms.

Nothing more was heard of Bailey till the 20th February 1919, when G.H.Q. India signalled the Director of Military Intelligence: 'It is stated by deserter from enemy that Bailey escaped from Tashkent rather more than four weeks ago . . . it is believed that he went towards Ferghana.' This report was unconfirmed, however, and on the 1st May 1919 the Secretary of State signalled the Viceroy: 'Do you consider time has come when hopes of Bailey's safety must be given up? Bailey's relatives in state of anxiety.' Not unnaturally, Mrs. Bailey and Bailey's brother had been writing regularly to the India Office asking for information and urging that pressure should be put on the Russians.

The silence was broken by the Assistant Military Attaché at the British Legation in Stockholm, Major J. D. Scale, who signalled on the 2nd May:

'Colonel F. M. Bailey sends his best salaams to Hirtzel and Shuckburgh India Office and states "he is not downhearted." He is at present disguised and when last seen on 25th March was quite fit.'

The following day came a message from Tredwell, who had at last reached Europe:

'Bailey is using code key 'Where 3 Empires Meet'. All papers received from Tashkent should be rubbed with ammonia. Bailey is trying to get short messages interpolated in Bolshevik wireless from Tashkent.'

How he proposed to do this he has never revealed, but presumably he had a contact at the radio station. On the 6th July another message was received via Kashgar, in which Bailey gave a full report of the activities of Barkatulla and Mahendra Pratap. At this stage the Viceroy was anxious both that Bailey should be informed of the withdrawal to Meshed, and that he should be instructed to get away at the earliest opportunity. But the messages did not reach him.

In July Bailey seized the chance to get out of Tashkent for a short period. A man called Mashkovtseff had some official business out near Brich Mulla, and agreed to take him in his covered cart. For travel purposes, Bailey managed to get a false paper in the name of Muntz, which designated him a geologist on a mission for the Government. To support this unlikely story he took a compass and a piece of black stone or iron ore, and if interrogated proposed to say that he was searching for deposits of this substance. The journey began well, and soon Bailey was passing through the familiar village of Troitskoe, and from here went on to Khodjakent, from where a road led up into the mountains. While in Khodjakent, Bailey's story was put to the test, for no lesser person than Federmesser, commander-in-chief of the Turkestan Army, came up and spoke. Asked what he was doing, Bailey produced the compass and iron ore, which created great interest. Finally Federmesser said, 'Good luck with your search—the Soviet Government need more iron for munitions.' He also added jokingly that he was just returning from the Aktobinsk front where things were going badly against Dotov's Cossacks near the railway line, and was off to Ashkabad where things were easier.

From now onwards the journey lasted several weeks, but it became obvious to Bailey that his chances of reaching Ferghana were almost non-existent. Troops, agents, spies, were in the villages and on the roads and more than once it looked as if his cover story had been penetrated. By the end of August he had been forced to return to Tashkent.

Here things were worse than ever. On the 26th August he received a telegram call to go to a house where a Colonel Vodopianoff had important news. Having confidence in his informant, Bailey went along to meet the colonel, who, it appeared, had heard of his plight from a friend. The news was that the Cheka were taking a fresh interest in Bailey's movements, and already were hot on his trail. 'All this', Bailey records with a dry sense of humour, 'made me no less anxious to get out of the country. . . .'

In fact, he had completely revised his ideas both on the general situation and his own duty. As he explained later in his report, 'All this time [i.e. from February to July 1919] I was hoping to

receive news from Kashgar or Meshed, but nothing arrived. In August I heard that a message had been sent for me from Meshed in March, but this never reached me. I believed that the British force in Transcaspia would advance in which case it would be both more useful and safer for me to remain in Tashkent until they arrived. . . .’ The retirement of Malleon’s forces in Transcaspia, so he believed, was not because the war was over and therefore the danger of a Turko-German advance but because of the Afghan War which he knew had broken out. Briefly the facts behind this conflict were as follows. On the 20th February 1919 the Amir of Afghanistan, Habibullah Khan, was murdered, and after a brief dynastic squabble his third son, Amanullah Khan, replaced him on the throne. Afghanistan at this time was far from stable, and to cement the tottering loyalty of the Army, Amanullah raised the troops’ pay. He then began making contacts with Indian revolutionaries including Mahendra Pratap and his ‘Provisional Government of India’ who happened to be in Kabul. A pact was arranged whereby the Afghans would send an army down through the Khyber, while the Punjab, the great province of northern India, would go up in flames. Exhausted at the end of a long war, Britain found herself having to rush 750,000 men and 450,000 pack animals over the Indus river. Thanks to a brilliant action, fought at Thal by Brigadier-General Rex Dyer, the war was soon over and the Afghan Army destroyed. Bailey knew about the war both from newspaper accounts in Tashkent and the statements of Mahendra Pratap and his fellow revolutionary Barkatulla, who turned up in Tashkent. But naturally the news was distorted; headlines appeared proclaiming major British defeats; and Bailey was led to believe that things were far worse than they were in fact. However, his conclusions—reached by the end of August—were that there would be no advance from Transcaspia, and he therefore had no useful role to play, were correct. All his efforts now were concerned with escape.

But with the net closing, how could he escape? Increasingly he began thinking about Manditch, the Serb working for the Bolsheviks, who had approached him on two occasions, offering help. Could he be trusted now? Bailey contacted a Polish-Austrian prisoner of war and asked him to act as an

intermediary for finding out Manditch's attitude, and the prospects of getting help from him. A few days later the soldier came back with the news that Manditch seemed very friendly and indeed had remarked, 'I'm surprised he had not come to me before, considering the danger he is in.' So an interview was arranged, at which Bailey learned a great deal. After his disappearance in October 1918, the authorities thought initially that he had been murdered by a German agent. A tiny incident had given weight to this theory: the fact that his toothbrush was left in the house. 'Aha . . .' the Bolsheviki had said to themselves, 'a British officer would not have left voluntarily without his toothbrush, whatever the circumstances. Bailey must have been murdered.' In fact, Bailey had acquired a new toothbrush and left his old one behind. Later, when no further news was received, Manditch went on, the authorities revised their views. All agents, policemen, and spies, were ordered to be on the look-out, and the roads to Ferghana were guarded especially. A thorough search was carried on throughout Tashkent; and every house Bailey was known to have visited was combed from top to bottom.

After this initial meeting Bailey saw Manditch frequently, and as the search grew increasingly hotter, his was one of the two houses in which he could spend the night. It was here that on occasion members of the counter-espionage department came to spend the evening, and Bailey had to reassume his role as an Austrian prisoner of war of Rumanian nationality. It was very fortunate indeed that he did not encounter any linguists.

During his meetings Bailey had been preparing the ground for yet another escape plan—probably one of the most fantastic escape plans ever devised. There was a branch of the General Staff called 'War Control' (*Voinye Kontrol*), which had just been separated from the Cheka. Its duty was to track down foreign agents and spies in Turkestan, and to collect information from Persia, Afghanistan, Bokhara, and China. It had nothing to do with saboteurs, hoarders, or counter-revolutionary elements, which were dealt with by the Cheka. Bailey's plan was to enlist in the War Control, and get posted on a mission which would take him towards the frontier. There was even a rumour that a mission was to be despatched to the Pamirs.

Manditch was in favour of the plan, but at once pointed out the snags. The head of the counter-espionage department was a man called Dunkov, who was not only educated and well informed, but fanatical. He would enlist no one on his staff without a thorough interview. This made it obvious that Bailey, as a non-German-speaking Austrian, would be spotted at once, and some other cover story would have to be invented. But what was it to be? The only possible language of which no one in Tashkent had any knowledge, according to Manditch, was Albanian, and this seemed to leave a loophole. In 1915 the Russians had formed some divisions from Austro-Serbian deserters from the Austrian Army, and some N.C.O.s were sent from Serbia to train them. Manditch's idea there was that Bailey should pose as a soldier clerk, Joseph Kastamuni, of the 5th Regiment of Serbian Volunteers, and somehow he managed to get hold of some blank papers signed by the colonel of this unit, before it was broken up. With these a passport was manufactured. To begin with Bailey had his photograph taken with his Austrian cap on back to front—Serbian caps had no peak—and with the shoulder straps of his tunic cut off. A Serbian badge was made out of brown and white paper, and altogether in the Kodak snap, the uniform looked genuine enough.

Then a story had to be invented to fit the passport in detail, and visas faked to correspond. As Bailey recounts:

‘I had been given permanent sick leave in Odessa on 14th February 1918. I then went to Viatka where I worked for a couple of months, after which I went to Archangel where the British fleet was evacuating the Serbian Corps. Here I was mobilised and forced to serve in a railway regiment as a clerk, and on 1st August 1918, was given two months' sick leave. On 4th November I was given my permanent discharge as unfit and permission to reside where I like in Russia.’

Also the places where Bailey-Kastamuni had worked were decided on and the route by which he had reached Turkestan: ‘The signatures and rubber stamps on the passport were all fudged, the latter by twisting the stamp round a bit so that the writing could not be read.’

The interview with Dunkov was fixed for Sunday the 7th October. According to Manditch it would be difficult and dangerous, for Bailey would have to walk down a long room, full of counter-espionage men working at their desks. Some of them had been detailed to find him, and had been on the job for months; they had studied his walk. Dunkov would then initiate a long and detailed discussion in which Bailey's story would be probed at every point. Bailey was naturally far from happy, and as Manditch went on emphasising the difficulties, insisted that some plan must be made to reduce them. His story would never stand up to a detailed examination—he had never even visited half the places mentioned on his passport. So it was fixed that Dunkov would be invited by Manditch to drink some good German wine which he had managed to get hold of. The invitation would be for 5 p.m., but by the time that Bailey arrived—he was supposed to be giving French lessons—an hour would have passed, and Dunkov mellowed.

But even this plan did not satisfy Bailey. Dunkov might not wait for an hour, and decide to go back to his office. Someone else might arrive . . . or Dunkov might prove one of those people whom wine rendered aggressive rather than mellow. Manditch, however, was reluctant to make further changes, and it was fortunate that on the Saturday, when Manditch and Bailey were out walking, they saw three men ahead of them. One of these was Dunkov. So seizing his chance Bailey suggested that they catch up the party, and an introduction was made then and there. Dunkov seemed in good humour, remarking on the splendid boots Manditch was wearing—they were a pair that Bailey had given him—and adding: 'Such things are not to be seen in Tashkent these days, look at mine.' Quickly Manditch invented a story of how he got the boots from an Austrian who died.

Dunkov then fell in beside Bailey, and after a few general remarks, said abruptly: 'We are very anxious to get definite news from Bokhara as soon as possible. You must go at once and see what truth there is in these stories of British officers. We are sure there is something going on. Time is of great importance in fact, you must take the train tomorrow. I will have your papers made out immediately.'

Bailey could guess what he was talking about. Bokhara lay some 200 miles to the west and therefore towards the Persian frontier. On the outbreak of the revolution in Russia, the Amir had protested his loyalty to the new regime, and in April 1917 was granted a constitution which recognised a limited independence. A few days later there was a revolt in Bokhara led by the Muslims, which was tacitly favoured by him, and Russian troops entered the city. Promptly the constitution was restored, and the Bolshevik government at Tashkent sent a Resident to watch their affairs, a not particularly energetic individual who adopted a policy of non-intervention. On the 25th June 1918 the Amir collected his troops together and proclaimed himself an independent sovereign. For the moment, the Bolsheviks, having sufficient problems on their own doorstep, did not interfere. Malleon, in his dealings with the Amir, urged him to refrain from any action provoking retaliation by the Tashkent government, but had sent a small quantity of rifles and ammunition by a camel caravan accompanied by two Indian N.C.O.s. These had arrived in February 1919, and since then rumours had grown about the employment of British officers.

Bokhara did not lie on the main Transcaspian Railway, but ten miles to the north, the main line station being at Kagan. At this time Russian territory on Bokhara consisted of a narrow strip either side of the railway line and a small area around the stations. Now, as Bailey knew at the time of his interview with Dunkov, fifteen spies had tried to enter the city of Bokhara, and not one had returned. He was therefore being recruited to play the role of the sixteenth. To do this, however—at least to get into the city—he needed the help of Manditch. Their plan was, in fact, once they got inside, to sever their Bolshevik connections immediately and work out an escape plan either to Persia or Afghanistan. To this end they had a letter of introduction to a man called Simeonov, a friend of the Bokharan consul in Tashkent.

But to return to Bailey's interview with Dunkov: the order to travel at once presented almost insuperable difficulties. Bailey could not go without Manditch, and the latter was being married on Wednesday. Somehow the journey had to be put off till Thursday. But what excuse could be made? Obviously as a

penniless prisoner of war, Bailey-Kastamuni would not have any property to dispose of or financial matters to wind up. He could not even plead the necessity of purchasing equipment. So, on the spur of the moment, he said, 'Comrade, I am not a Communist.'

Somewhat amazed, Dunkov, stopped and stared at him. 'Not a Communist. You mean you are not a Party member?'

'No,' Bailey replied. 'I am a friend of Manditch who asked me a great favour to go and find out these things in Bokhara. I never realised that I was coming under military discipline again. I would rather have nothing to do with the job than be ordered off at a moment's notice.'

Dunkov changed his tune immediately. As Bailey knew, he was having great difficulty in finding a spy after the death of all the others, and was scared of losing him. Finally Dunkov said, 'Never mind—go when you like and send me back news as soon as possible. Your documents will be prepared and be waiting in the office.'

With this Bailey rejoined Manditch and they continued their walk. Two days later the papers were collected: an open permit to travel, and a secret document to be shown to Cheka agents. Everything seemed ready.

Then another of the seemingly endless series of snags occurred. As a condition of giving his help, Manditch had extracted a promise from Bailey that he would help both him and his wife to reach Serbia. Now he also wanted to bring a friend of his called Baltschisch, who was head of the counter-espionage department at Ashkabad, on the Persian frontier. Bailey agreed, provided Baltschisch would join them in Bokhara. But just before he and Manditch were making their final preparations to leave, a telegram reached the authorities in Tashkent advising them that Baltschisch with his wife and child had made a bolt for the Persian border. Being caught and brought back to Ashkabad, Baltschisch had drawn a revolver, proclaimed himself an Anarchist, and threatened to shoot anyone who approached. The heads of the department, however, instead of having him shot, chose to believe that he was having a brainstorm—Baltschisch was one of their best men—and Manditch was

ordered to go down to Ashkabad and settle matters, before returning to Kagan and his job with Bailey.

The last two days were coloured by a mounting suspense. The counter-espionage people began asking themselves whether there might be trouble with other Serbs, and even Manditch became worried about his position. Then the departure was put off from the 13th to the 14th . . . and information came through that trains were stopped in the desert outside Tashkent and searched from end to end. Should this happen to their train, Bailey and Manditch were determined to use their Cheka passes and join the search party.

But first they must get away. Anxiously Bailey awaited the hour when he would drive to the station. His luck could not hold very much longer.

12 Break for freedom

At the station all was noise and confusion, and large crowds were trying to fight their way on to the platform, with baggage, trunks, cooking utensils, and in many instances the sole possessions they had left in the world. The train was officially due to leave at 10 a.m. but the time was put back to noon and then 2 p.m. Eventually it crawled away from the platform at 7.15 a.m. on the 15th October. The wagons and carriages were full to bursting point, and Bailey and Manditch and his wife just found room to squat on the floor. Many people were jammed in upright, and some perched precariously on the roof. The first 90 miles to Chernayevo took over nine hours. It was here that the Orenburg–Tashkent line joined the Transcaspian Railway, and here also that the passengers were turned out of Bailey’s wagon, as it had developed a hot axle. The railway officials were full of assurances that another train would be along in a few days, but as Bailey and Manditch knew, it would be crammed to the doors like this one. If they were to reach Kagan at all, they must somehow find another place. Flourishing his Cheka pass therefore, Manditch marched into the Cheka branch office on the station. ‘We are members of the General Staff of the War Control Department. We are the most important people, and whoever is turned off this train it must not be us.’ The Cheka man agreed, and emptied a wagon immediately. Once Bailey and his companions were installed, he then asked them to select anyone else from the crowd whom they would

care to have travelling with them. Altogether they were very much better off than before.

The train lumbered on. It went through a rocky gorge, where Tamerlane's successor, Ulug Beg, had carved an inscription to record his passing. It went on to Samarkand, Tamerlane's ancient capital, which was reached just before daylight on the 17th. Here the officials said there would be a wait of two hours, and Bailey was determined to use this first and last chance to see the city. This episode illustrates vividly the extraordinary control which he maintained over himself. His life having been suspended by a thread for so long, and even now in jeopardy, one might have expected him to be so concerned with getting to the border that any intellectual curiosity was completely subjugated. But the reverse was the case. With Mrs. Manditch, who also wanted to see the sights, he visited the famous Registan, the mausoleum of Bibi Khanum, Tamerlane's queen, and the blue-tiled tomb of Tamerlane himself. He even made time to do some shopping, buying grapes and raisins, to eat on the journey.

The train left seven hours after the officials had promised, and by this time an Afghan mission had clambered into Bailey's wagon. Understanding some Pushtu, he was able to follow a good deal of their conversation, but naturally had to conceal his knowledge. When the train stopped en route, women appeared with hot water and food for sale, and to Bailey's delight he was able to eat much better than in Tashkent. So in good order he and his companions reached Kagan, and the next phase of their adventure.

There was only one hotel in Kagan, 'The Russian Hotel', which was reserved for Soviet officials. Preliminary enquiries indicated that it was full up, but after Manditch had interviewed the management a room was found, opposite the quarters occupied by Mahendra Pratap and his followers. Manditch now had his orders to take over counter-espionage in Kagan, but had no intention of doing so, all his efforts being directed towards getting himself and his wife plus Bailey into Bokhara. However, he visited the head of the War Control Department and here was handed a telegram which read: 'Please communicate all information you have regarding

Anglo-Indian Service Colonel Bailey'. It was not difficult to concoct a reply. From secret agents, Manditch wrote, information had been received that Bailey had been in Ferghana, in December. In January during Osipov's revolt he had been hiding in the old town of Tashkent. Then in September three Europeans disguised in native dress, one of them who tallied with Bailey's description, had been seen at Pattar Kessar on the northern Afghan frontier. From there it was believed that they were either heading for Ferghana or the Pamirs. He was definitely nowhere near Bokhara. . . .

In the hotel Bailey found himself the centre of rather too much attention. The Bolshevik agents looked on him as a brave man and probably doomed. How, they asked Manditch, did he propose to get into Bokhara? How could he succeed when all the other agents had failed? Manditch replied that the matter was secret—and in any case not their affair.

Meanwhile Bailey was making the initial arrangements for his move. Calling on the Bokharan consul in Kagan, he handed him a letter from Mir Baba, his opposite number in Tashkent. The consul, a well-dressed official wearing a large white turban, sat in an open doorway attended by his secretary, and having read Mir Baba's note gave the necessary permit without comment. That evening Bailey took the Manditches to a restaurant where they dined well on *shashlik* and *pilau*.

Knowing the interest of the Indian Government in that active enemy of the Raj, Mahendra Pratap, Bailey took Manditch along to his room at the hotel. Pratap was quite willing to talk, but wished to finish a letter first, so they went back to their room to await him. The conversation was conducted in German, Pratap muttering his replies in English first. Bailey who had understood everything the first time had to wait till the laborious and ungainly German sentences uncoiled themselves. 'My one aim in life', Pratap said, 'is to unite Hindus and Muslims against the English, and I want to found a college where these two religions can be taught together for this purpose.' The Amir of Bokhara having refused to see him, he now intended to return to Afghanistan, where he expected another war to break out soon against the British. When this happened he would try to get Hindus and Muslims to launch a revolt in India, in support of

the Afghans. If this did not happen he would go to China and study Buddhism.

Bailey then began drawing him out on the subject of the Raj. Was it really so bad? Were not English officials on the whole more honest than Indians? Pratap agreed, but put down the difference to educational standards. Bailey went further: 'One thing puzzles me. During the war we nearly had the English beaten. It was a very near thing for them. Had the millions of India risen it would surely have turned the scale? Why did not this vast suppressed population rise?' The explanation to this question, came the reply, was quite simple. 'Although I hate English rule, and all foreign rule, I think the English are better at it than you Germans would be. Also, owing to your alliance with Turkey, the position of two hundred and twenty million Hindus would have been far worse than at present.'

To this Bailey commented that he supposed the Indian troops who had fought for the British were entirely Hindu. Pratap had to admit that they were not, but the majority were, he said, and the rest came from 'the uncultured frontier tribes led away by British propaganda'. The lie was so enormous that Bailey found it difficult to sustain his Albanian role and refrain from comment. Fortunately he succeeded in doing so.

On the 19th October Manditch secured a *tarantas* or carriage and with Bailey drove the ten miles to Bokhara city. Mrs. Manditch was left in Kagan, to be collected the following day. Bailey's plan, once he was inside the city, was as follows: he was carrying two letters from Noyev, one for a Russian called Tisyachnikov and the other to a rich Sart, Arif Khoja. Through one of these two he hoped to obtain an interview with the Amir, contacting the second only if the first failed him. The important thing was that his true identity should not be known to more than *one* man.

On arrival at the city gate Bailey and Manditch were stopped by a sentry, then summoned before an official who made a brisk demand for papers. Bailey showed him the permit obtained at Kagan, but, as the official pointed out, this was for one man only. He could not possibly allow two men to enter. After some argument it was agreed that Manditch should go in while Bailey waited at a tea garden by the gate. Once Tisyachnikov

had been located, Manditch would bring him to the tea garden.

But things did not quite work out. It was an hour before Manditch returned, and then he gave the news that Tisyachnikov was scared stiff and refused to have anything to do with Bailey. So there had to be a second discussion with the official. From the back of his watch Bailey took the secret letter to Arif Khoja, the rich Sart, and this produced such an effect that finally both he and Manditch were allowed in, though their baggage was held and an armed guard accompanied them.

They made for the house, and here found Tisyachnikov, to whom Bailey explained about the letter from Noyev. Before long this had been produced, but to the Russian's amazement was a sheet of blank paper. Explaining that he had the developer in his pocket, Bailey asked if they could go indoors to use it. He did not want the whole street to know. Reluctantly, after insisting that Manditch stay where he was, Tisyachnikov led Bailey into a large hall where they found a Russian friend of his called Biletsky and two Jews. All these, it was insisted, must stay, so Bailey sat down and developed the writing. When the signature came up, Tisyachnikov recognised it immediately. Turning to Bailey he said: 'If you are a British officer, how is it that you are travelling with a Bolshevik like Manditch?' To this Bailey could only reply that he had known him for a year and Manditch—despite appearance—was really his agent. This explanation cut no ice whatsoever, and Tisyachnikov finally broke off the conversation, saying he wanted no more to do with Bailey. In desperation the latter now had to mention the letter to Arif Khoja, and the Sart was summoned. While the situation was being explained to him afresh, there was a sudden development in the situation: the arrival of an official called the Karshi Beg.

The Beg's duties were to interview and if necessary investigate all travellers through the city, and make a report on them to the Amir. Not unnaturally he regarded Bailey with some suspicion, and questioned him for two hours, while Manditch remained outside in the courtyard. Suddenly there was a commotion and Bailey ran out to find Manditch being harangued by a Tartar, Haider Khoja Mirbadalev, who was shouting, 'You won't get back this time! I'll have you arrested at once.' With this he

went off to telephone the police. Anxious to prevent Manditch's apprehension at all cost, Bailey got hold of Tisyachnikov and begged him to stop the man phoning. After a while the Tartar calmed down and examined the letters which Bailey had brought from Tashkent. Eventually it was agreed that action would be postponed.

As Bailey now realised, all these men were terrified at the sight of Manditch, a known Bolshevik agent. With Red Army troops not far from the city and liable to strike again, the situation in Bokhara was tense in the extreme, and no one could guess how the political situation would develop. But the result of the fracas was that Bailey's plans had to be changed. Half a dozen men knew his identity and that he was trying to escape to Persia. This news would soon be all over the city, and any idea of Manditch taking over as head of counter-espionage in Kagan, until escape plans had been perfected, would obviously have to be abandoned.

The next task, clearly, was to get Mrs. Manditch over from Kagan, and after a good deal of argument and negotiation this was achieved.

In the days that followed Bailey saw a good deal of Haider Khoja, and learned that he had been a political officer for Bokhara under the Imperial Russian authorities, and after the revolution had taken service under the Amir of Bokhara. In his fifties, he was well educated and well read, speaking Russian, Turkish and some Persian. In 1888 he had shown Curzon over Bokhara, during his famous journey across Central Asia. Two days after Bailey's arrival, Haider Khoja asked him. 'Do you know a man called Awal Nur?' After a moment's thought Bailey recalled that the name belonged to an N.C.O. he had left in Kashgar, to be told that the man was staying in Bokhara. Later the Karshi Beg arrived to examine Bailey on the full story of the journey from Kashmir to Gilgit and thence through the Mintaka Pass and over the Pamirs to Kashgar. Apparently satisfied, the Beg announced that Awal Nur and another N.C.O. were staying at the Amir's palace and would be sent over to him.

That evening, when Bailey was seated with Haider Khoja and his family around the *samovar*, there was a knock at the door and the two soldiers came in, dressed in magnificent Bokharan

costumes. Springing to attention, they gave a military salute, then smiled their greeting. The second man proved to be Kalbi Mohammed, a Hazara from western Afghanistan, and like his companion had a fine military record. But how had they arrived in Bokhara? The story was that they had gone back to India with Blacker, then followed him to Malleson's force in north-east Persia. Later they had been ordered to take a caravan of a hundred camels loaded with supplies to Bokhara, and after avoiding Bolshevik patrols had succeeded in this mission.

Listening to Awal Nur as he recounted this story, Bailey realised at once how the rumours had reached Tashkent that British officers were in Bokhara—the rumours which resulted in his own enlistment by Dunkov. He had a lot to thank the soldiers for.

Next day Manditch sent a message to the *Voinye Kontrol* office in Kagan, saying: 'Am engaged on dangerous work. Will not be able to communicate further for a week at least. Am urgently in need of money. Please send 40,000 roubles immediately.' Eventually a routine acknowledgment came but no money. Whether Dunkov and his men realised what had happened, Bailey could not be sure. But news was bound to reach them before very long.

On the 18th November Malleson telegraphed to the Viceroy: 'Agent arrived Bokhara reports Bailey now at Bokhara.' He added: 'There are risks in getting away from Bokhara but it is done every day and risk of remaining there is probably even greater.' To this the Viceroy replied that Bailey should be instructed to head for Meshed at once. On the 14th December Malleson telegraphed the Viceroy to say that a message from Bailey had been brought by a Russian officer. The latter on being questioned said, 'Bokharan officials regard Bailey with suspicion and will have no dealings with him as he has no credentials.' Malleson concluded, 'I hope by now my letters have safely reached the Amir and he is helping Bailey.' This reply is rather curious as on the 7th August Malleson had already signalled the Chief of General Staff, Simla: 'I have already reported that the Amir of Bokhara has given me his promise to assist Lieutenant-Colonel Bailey should he come into Bokhara territory.' Malleson, in fact, was becoming rather tired of the

constant enquiries about Bailey from all quarters, and resented any suggestion that he had not done everything possible to facilitate his passage. He suspected, too, that Bailey was lingering longer in Bokhara than was necessary.

Bailey, in fact, had sent a message suggesting that he should remain in Bokhara to act as a go-between with Tashkent. Whether this message ever arrived, it seems very doubtful; but the situation was that, despite his promises to Malleson, the Amir was not being particularly forthcoming, and Bailey was embroiled in long and tortuous negotiations with his staff.

The Chief Minister was the Khush Begi, the second being the Kaznachei or Finance Minister. The N.C.O. Awal Nur was staying in the royal palace, which lay three miles away, at Sittar Mahasar, and through him Bailey sent a letter to the Kaznachei. A reply came that the minister would speak to the Amir, and meanwhile would like to know if Bailey required any money. To this Bailey said that he was not a beggar and would only ask for assistance if treated properly; he also asked Awal Nur to inform the Kaznachei that he intended to leave Bokhara, taking both N.C.O.s with him. A few days later Awal Nur came back to give the news that there had been a row between the Amir and his minister, and further audiences were being denied.

Meanwhile there had been another development. The counter-espionage group at Kagan had obviously learned the truth about Bailey and Manditch and laid a trap for them. Manditch was also ordered to return to Kagan. Now the dangers were immeasurably increased, for the Bolsheviks might instruct agents to shoot the defectors, or alternatively put pressure on the Amir. Bailey and Manditch moved about as little as possible and with great caution; Bailey kept a revolver by his side day and night. There was increasing peril also from the Bokharan authorities, for a Russian trade delegation had arrived in the city, and the Amir would not wish to face an allegation that he was harbouring a British officer. From everyone's point of view, in fact, Bailey and Manditch were a nuisance and far less harmful dead than alive.

Bailey was therefore determined to get away just as soon as

possible. With him he proposed to take the two Indian soldiers, his Punjabi servant, Haider, who had just arrived from Tashkent with his dog 'Zep', Manditch and his wife, and four Russian officers. The latter included Captain Iskander, son of the Grand Duke Nikolai Constantinovitch, and a former Turkoman A.D.C. to General Kornilov, Captain Azizov. Though not wishing to enlarge his party unduly, Bailey accepted the officers as they were armed and would be useful if the party became embroiled in a fight. He told them, however, to keep the plan secret, and to hold themselves ready to move at an hour's notice.

The journey to the frontier would not be an easy one. From a map which he had torn from a library book, Bailey calculated that the distance would be between three and four hundred miles, and he would be travelling across desert nearly the whole way. Bolshevik patrols and detachments of mounted troops would be infesting the area, and no doubt the border would be watched closely. Once information reached Dunkov, there was no doubt either that he would make every effort to have the escapers intercepted, and so take his revenge.

Altogether, the plan demanded speed, and speed demanded horses. Reluctantly, the Bokharan authorities let Bailey acquire the mounts he needed, but in the open market, which meant that his intentions were broadcast throughout the whole city, and anyone wishing to earn a small fee from the Bolsheviks had only to pass on the information. As it transpired, several people did so. Apart from horses, saddles and bridles had to be acquired; and food bought and cooked ready. Water was to be carried in leather bags, and two large pieces of felt were adapted to form a communal bed.

These preparations did not go ahead without some major hitches. First an official called on Bailey who eventually declared himself to be the private secretary to the Khush Begi. When was Bailey going, he wanted to know, and was it true that he proposed to take the two Indian soldiers? Was he short of money and equipment? In reply Bailey said that his plans were in very good order; all he awaited were replies to the messages he had sent to Meshed and to the Amir. The upshot to this visit was a message from the Amir, stating that he refused to let the

Indian soldiers leave. 'The Indian Army will not miss two men,' he said naively. But Bailey had no intention of leaving without these men, and reminded the Amir of their reason for coming to Bokhara in the first place. They had risked their lives to bring him much needed supplies. This attitude produced results, and later on Bailey was informed that the objections had been withdrawn. Then two days before he planned to go, he learned that a large party of Russians had been given permission to go at the same time and by the same route. In the desert wells were few, and a large party would hang around them for hours causing delays, and all manner of other difficulties. It was with relief the following day that Bailey learned that like so many rumours, this one was exaggerated; the party consisted of seven Russians, all unarmed.

On the 17th December the party assembled at a *dacha* where the Turkoman officer, Azizov, had been staying. The two Indian N.C.O.s, it was now learned, had been treated generously by the Amir, each being given a present of 10,000 roubles. And when the leader of the seven Russians, who it now transpired were to join the expedition, came to report, to Bailey's amazement he handed over a sum of half a million roubles—presumably Bailey's fee. Next morning Bailey gave all the money to Awal Nur, with orders to return it to the Kaznachei, informing him that he had been badly treated by the Bokharan authorities 'and could not let the account be squared by a money payment'. Later on the N.C.O. returned with the news that Kaznachei was furious, and threatened to stop the party leaving.

However, when the column reached the gates of the city, they were not impeded, once the guide had given the password, and went on twelve miles to the village of Khumum, where they slept till morning. Next day the journey continued through fields and villages, until the column entered the steppe, the bare treeless plain. At mid-day they halted at a well, but the water proved salt and undrinkable, so they went on again till dark, the guide leading the way along a faint track. Then it began to rain and the guide lost the track, which infuriated Bailey, for, with his customary thoroughness, he had sent some men on ahead a few days previously with food for the animals and their riders. Now it looked as if they would have to do without it.

The night was cold and wet, and Bailey and his companions spent a miserable night in the open. Next morning, however, the track was located just a few yards away, and they headed along it. As the sun came out, their clothes gradually dried off, and altogether good progress was made, twenty-six miles being covered before night came on again.

The next day was the 21st December and began rather well. The supplies from Bokhara had been dumped by mistake at the well, at Koile, but were safe and still in good condition. During daylight the party rested, then at dusk went on again to a place called Burdalik, where the Bokharan Governor proved unexpectedly hospitable, roasting a whole sheep in the party's honour. At the same time he was careful to point out that his authority had to be respected, conducting Bailey on a tour of the local gaol, where prisoners sat in rows, one leg in the stocks and with their neck secured by chains. Among these were two suspected Bolshevik agents whom the Governor said he would probably shoot. The tour completed he then presented the bill for hospitality—5,000 roubles.

From Burdalik Bailey had expected to continue with camels, but opinion was that ponies could manage the journey, so he bought some more, bringing his total up to thirty. Nine of these were used to carry loads and others were needed by the guides whose strength had grown from one to four. The next obstacle to be crossed was the Oxus river, which was reached after a journey of about fourteen miles. By now it was afternoon, too late for the whole party to get across in the two boats available before dark. Bailey therefore decided to camp by the river bank, keeping the boats by him so that news could not be carried to the Bolshevik patrols ahead.

So it was on Christmas morning that the party went over, the job taking nearly four hours. Beyond stretched some tall grasses, and the journey through these proved difficult, the new ponies trying to throw off their loads. Eventually some objects, including Mrs. Manditch's portmanteau, had to be jettisoned.

Bailey was now much concerned with speed, and decided that the practice of camping at wells wasted time. As he put it, 'You might reach your well at three in the afternoon and not be able to reach the next before dark and thus waste several precious

hours of daylight.' From now onwards therefore he disregarded wells as stopping places, and went on till dark before bivouacking. Sitting round the camp fire at night he began to teach Manditch some English and, finding that the verbs had no complicated conjugations, the Serb declared happily 'I could learn a language like that in a few days.' His progress from now onwards was quite remarkable.

The weather was cold and dry for the next few days, but the wind howled across the steppe carrying the dust with it. To Bailey the steppe looked 'rather like a stormy sea, the waves of which had been frozen solid'. In Tashkent he had been told that there would be people at the wells, ready to sell him fodder but this did not happen. The result was that for four days the ponies had no grass at all and only a little grain. Even the water was salt. Bailey learned why the desert was so feared by Turkomans and why also it was regarded as impassable in summer.

On the 28th Manditch cracked up, Bailey recording in his journal: 'He is no horseman and all his ponies pull. I have changed his pony three times already and it is always the same. I told him that we must go on . . . that we had no food and could not wait and we should all die of hunger and thirst if we did not get food for the ponies at once.' What followed was a big scene, Manditch offering to stay behind and die . . . anything but keep on riding. Then his wife began weeping, and the whole column was held up for nearly an hour. Finally Bailey found him a horse which seemed rather more amenable than the others and he rode on.

The great need now was for grass, and Bailey was very relieved to find a little at about 5 p.m. It was growing not on the ground but from the walls of a group of huts near a well. Before the party made camp that night, Bailey had made them cover forty-two miles.

The next phase of the journey lay to the Murghab river, about eighty miles ahead. From now on it would be dangerous to buy food, except at villages where the guides had friends, as news might reach the Bolsheviks. On the 29th the party headed for a place called Yur Chilik where there was said to be a good well. To reach this they had swung far to the south, and as the afternoon went on Bailey grew anxious. One guide had admitted he

was lost, and another kept varying the time estimated to reach the well. Somehow the ponies had to be given grass that night or they would not go on much further; and if no well was located the whole party might find itself in great difficulty. All water supplies were now exhausted.

Then the well came into view. Luckily there were people around it, for it was 750 feet deep, and Bailey had no rope long enough. Of this stay he wrote: 'We bought three sheep here . . . they are the Karakul breed which gives what we call Astrakhan fur. The water was very good and clear. We are told we are about 80 versts [i.e. 54 miles] from the Murghab river and Khushk railway.' As this distance could not be accomplished in a day it was decided to stop at a well about halfway for the night. Bailey continues: 'We spent . . . the next morning, eating, resting and looking after our ponies. . . . We cooked large *shashliks* on the cleaning rods of our rifles, as Peter Fleming did on his journey across China. We ate these with delicious hot bread baked for us by the Turkomans.' Like an Indian *chapatti* in texture, the loaf was two inches thick and two feet across.

Next evening as planned they reached the well at a place called Humli. This was 600 feet deep, and camels were used to bring up water, the bag taking seven and a half minutes to be lowered and brought up again. People by the well told Bailey that some Russians had left that morning for Burdalik, and thinking they must be carrying a message for him from Meshed, he sent a man to call them back. They arrived in the afternoon of the following day, and proved to be a party he had sent off from Bokhara. They had been well received in Meshed, and given clothes and equipment for the journey back to Bokhara; the rations for the Indian troops had impressed them enormously. Bailey does not give the text of the message, merely noting that it contained instructions to go to Meshed. Malleeson also mentioned that he had written to the Amir of Bokhara, asking him to see Bailey, and had also written direct. All except one of the letters, so Bailey suspected, had been held by the Kaznachei, who was curious to see what was inside them, although he did not read a word of English. The Amir had simply ignored Malleeson's request.

As the New Year came in it was snowing hard, and the blizzard

went on through most of the following day. The wind was freezing cold, and altogether conditions could hardly have been worse, but Bailey decided to push on. For twenty miles they ploughed through the snow, until nearing the well at Tort Kuyu. It was here that they saw a man riding hard, some two miles to their left, but did not pay a great deal of attention to him. A few minutes later, however, it became evident that a group of men around the well were preparing to defend themselves and had their rifles at the ready. The Russian officers wanted to attack at once, but Bailey restrained them. 'We have only seven rifles between us', he said, 'and there's no cover between here and the well. Apart from that how should we deal with any wounded? And if we fail to capture the well, we shall die of thirst.' Fortunately the party then came across an old man who had strayed from the well to collect fuel. Going up to him, Bailey explained that his party had no desire to fight anyone; they merely wanted to water men and beasts then get on again. The old man seemed to understand, and walked slowly across to the well where he could be seen in conversation with his friends. Eventually one of them signalled the party to come on, which they did, but cautiously. This was fortunate for it was found that the group contained two notorious robbers and four of their henchmen, apart from a suspicious-looking character in Persian costume. Of the latter, Kalbi Mohammed, the Hazara soldier, murmured to Bailey, 'I know that man. He is Said Mohammed, also known as Eshan, and he is well known as a bad character in Meshed.' Bailey now addressed the Turkoman robber:

'Do you know who this man is?'

'No, I never saw him before. He arrived only a few minutes before you did and told us you were about to attack the well. He is Persian.'

'In that case I would not be breaking my word to you if I took him in charge?'

'No—you can do what you like with him.'

That night everyone slept in a hut by the well, the robber band in one room and Bailey's party in the other. The Persian was held under guard, and next morning he was put on a horse with his legs bound, and the horse was led by one of the

soldiers. Bailey was now convinced that he was a Bolshevik spy sent to report on parties making their way to the border. After travelling ten miles he could see that the Murghab river was not far off, and began making preparations for the crossing. Having halted, he sent a man forward to reconnoitre, then climbed a hillock from which a good view of the river could be obtained. It was 8 p.m. before the column moved on again, the guides finding the way in the dark, and after ninety minutes they reported that the river bank lay just a few yards ahead. Moving forward, Bailey could see that the Murghab was only twenty yards across at this point, but that the banks were steep. Not far off lay the village of Sari Yazı.

The crossing began immediately. Bailey related in his journal: 'There was one boat in working order which was dragged across by a wire rope. It was only about 20 feet by 4 and could not take a horse. The horses were made to swim two or three at a time being held by men in the boat.' It took an hour and a half before the whole party was across, and the boatmen then presented their fee—12,000 roubles.

Two miles beyond the river lay the Khushk–Merv railway line, which was crossed in bright moonlight, Bailey even being able to read the telegraph pole number, 167/12/12. After this they pushed into the desert for three hours before making camp.

Next morning it was cold and foggy, but Bailey got everyone on the move by half past eight. When the fog lifted he saw to his annoyance that the Murghab was still not far away, despite the distance he had travelled. Presumably the channel had curved back on the course he was taking. From now on he became increasingly worried about Bolshevik patrols; if the boatmen on the Murghab talked, which they might well do, any moment could bring the sight of black dots on the snow, and the patrols galloping in pursuit.

It was very cold now, and the whole party was feeling the lack of food. For some days they had been living on *chapattis* which, though filling their stomachs, did not give a great deal of energy. At one of the wells they stopped to make tea from melted snow; Bailey saw a gazelle but could not get a shot in. Later on the fog came down and he became anxious about the course. From his compass bearings things seemed to be going

wrong, but the guides assured him they knew where they were going, so he let them carry on. Then suddenly the tracks of a large party appeared in the snow, and he realised that they had been going in circles. After a swift interrogation the guides admitted they were lost, so Bailey led the way back to the well, where they had made tea, and decided to camp. Of twenty-six miles covered during the day, six had been completely wasted.

Next morning the fog had gone, and setting his compass, Bailey led off at 8 a.m. Ten miles on some wells came into sight at a place called Gokchu, but the party did not have sufficient rope to reach the water. Urgently the column pressed on again, and just before dark reached another well, at Gumbuzli Tekke. Here was a man with a camel drawing up water. By now food supplies were completely exhausted, and they had to boil some of the grain intended for the ponies. It was a far from satisfying diet, but better than nothing, and by now the situation was growing desperate. In fact, Bailey decided that they must push on again in the dark, but soon the track was lost. So the party camped till daylight.

From now it was a matter of struggling on from well to well; and towards the Persian frontier wells and inhabitants became comparatively frequent. The objective now was Sarakhs, a frontier town, and a well-marked track led towards it. Bailey had been warned, however, that he could not go direct to Sarakhs, for on the north of the river, forming the border, lay a Bolshevik garrison town. So it was necessary to leave the track after dark and steer due west by the stars. Now they traversed another stretch of desert, without wells or any signs of habitation. It was very cold. And there was no food left either for men or ponies. They had to cross the frontier during the next twenty-four hours or perish.

Soon after midnight the moon came up, and Bailey spotted a track cutting across their route. The guides recognised it immediately. 'It leads to Sarakhs.' They said. For nearly three hours the party went down the track, and when clumps of *saxaul* bushes came in sight, Bailey decided to make camp and light fires. The Russians spent a long time making tea, but Bailey preferred to sleep immediately. During the day forty-two miles had been covered.

Next morning, 7th January, as dawn came up Bailey looked to the west and saw a range of snow-covered mountains, and in front of them 'a prominent low conical hillock'. The mountains were in Persia. They represented freedom. As Bailey wrote: 'The feelings of all of us at the sight of a free land, even in the distance, is hard to describe.' It was no doubt a moment of great emotion. Bailey had been in danger for eighteen months, he had been arrested and hunted, and passed through every conceivable vicissitude. He was determined not to fall at the last hurdle.

Ten miles on there was a small hollow in the steppe; and from the ridge beyond this could be seen less than a mile away the river Tedzhen, which formed the frontier. Not realising it was so close, Bailey had needlessly exposed his party to view, and quickly sent them back to the hollow. Meanwhile he went forward alone, using the cover of the *saxaul* bushes, then brought up his field glasses. Through these the Persian village of Naurozabad could be seen, but it was impossible to gauge the size of the river. On either side there was a belt of green rushes, which possibly indicated swamps. More disturbing, about a mile away on another hillock overlooking the river was a group of people who suddenly got up and went away.

Who were they? And had they seen Bailey's party and gone off to report? Bailey's first inclination, quite understandably in the circumstances, was to ride hard for the crossing before the Bolsheviks—if that is what the men were—could organise themselves to oppose the crossing. But wisely he then decided not to rush the last fence. Going back to the hollow, he detailed two of the Russians as sentries, then briefed the two Indian soldiers to carry out a patrol down by the river.

An hour later Bailey looked up to find to his surprise they were back. Why had not the Russian on sentry duty given warning? Running across, he found that the man had left his post to talk to his friends, and cursed him for letting the party down. The sentries reported that there was no one about and the river was fordable straight ahead. Bailey decided to make a dash for the frontier immediately, but now some minutes were lost as girths were tightened on the ponies, and the party got organised. Everyone was very excited, and the Russians wanted

to put their horses to the gallop, but Bailey would not have this. Some of the party were bad riders, and so he ordered, 'No galloping. We'll go ahead at our usual jog trot.'

Ahead rode Kalbi Mohammed, acting as a scout, and Bailey watched him approach the belt of reeds on the near side of the river, which now appeared some five hundred yards in width. Once he had reached this belt, he turned and shouted something which Bailey could not catch, then rode on again. Telling the rest of the party to continue at this jog trot, Bailey galloped down the valley after the Hazara, and caught up with him as his pony entered the water. The river was about eight yards wide and four feet deep, and as the ponies gulped a much needed drink, Kalbi Mohammed said he had seen some men hiding in the reeds over to the right. At this moment a shot rang out. Bailey, who was in mid-stream, looked back to see that the rest of the column were still two hundred yards off. Where the shot had come from, he could not be certain; it was possible that the Persians from the village nearby imagined they were to be attacked. In any event something had to be done quickly, and seizing Kalbi Mohammed's rifle, Bailey told him to ride hard for the village and tell the people they were in no danger. Meanwhile he waited for the rest of the party who were galloping towards the river. Arriving, they leaped down from the bank, and then urged their ponies across before they could stop to drink. Mrs. Manditch's pony, however, threw her and then fell down into the water. The shooting continued. With great courage, Captain Iskander, the Grand Duke's son, rode back to where Mrs. Manditch was lying on the ground, apparently injured, and unable to rise. At this moment however a bullet hit the ground a few feet from her, and she got up and ran, clinging to Iskander's stirrup. Reaching the river bank, she was able to mount behind him, and he splashed across under fire. Meanwhile the other Russians were on the Persian side of the river, firing from the saddle. With their ponies twisting about, there was no hope of their hitting anything; but fortunately they escaped being hit themselves. The Bolsheviks, as Bailey could now see, were hiding in the tall reeds about four hundred yards off, standing up to fire, then bobbing down again. Wearing large Turkoman hats they made conspicuous targets,

and Awal Nur, behaving like a trained soldier, had taken up a prone position from which to deliver a steady and accurate fire. The battle went on until the whole party were across and behind the shelter of a well. The Bolsheviks then gave up, apparently not wishing to offend against Persian neutrality. Looking round, Bailey could see that none of the party was killed or even wounded, though Mrs. Manditch was sobbing at the loss of some jewellery. They were free at last.

Slowly they made their way to the village, where at first the reception was far from friendly, the menfolk rushing towards them, rifle in hand. Luckily Kalbi Mohammed had done something to reassure them, so they did not fire, but they were still very excited. A one-armed man rushed up to Bailey and said, 'Don't you know this is Persia?' Bailey answered him in his own language. 'Yes,' he said, 'a pleasant land which I have been hoping to reach for a long time. I am a British officer on my way to Meshed.' After this the atmosphere improved, and the party found itself invited to a good dinner.

During conversation, Bailey learned that Sarakhs was twenty-four miles away, and when the shooting had started the Khan (or village chief) had sent off a mounted runner to report that the Bolsheviks were attacking. The Governor of Sarakhs acted promptly, despatched a detachment of cavalry followed by infantry, but soon he received a second message to explain the situation. Later on Bailey learned that the men who had opened fire were Baluchis in Bolshevik pay. He heard also that in Tashkent the Bolsheviks put out a report that he had been shot dead, but 'they had no grudge against me and had given me a military funeral, paying me the honours due to a Russian officer'.

It was the 8th January when the party reached Sarakhs, which proved to be a small town, joined by a bridge to the Russian town of the same name on the eastern bank of the river. Bailey was given a room by the Governor, and later the rest of his party joined him. Russians were very unpopular, and Bailey was told that Captain Iskander and his companions were very fortunate indeed that they were with him.

On the 10th a signal arrived from General Malleon, whom Bailey had telegraphed at the first opportunity. He had informed

London, India, and Teheran, the general said, and orders had been sent that Bailey and the Russians were to be given every assistance. So on the 11th the party began the eighty-five-mile journey to Meshed, camping for the first night in a shepherd's hut at Shorok, and the second at Kara Bulak. On the morning of the 14th Bailey records: 'We got our first sight of the golden dome of the mosque of Imam Reza at eleven o'clock, and reached the outskirts of the town just as they fired the midday gun. My difficulties and dangers were over. It was pleasant to see the Union Jack waving over the barracks after such a long time under other colours.' Riding up to the gate of the staff quarters, Bailey asked to see General Malleon, only to be told by the sentry that no Russians were allowed to enter. By this time he had discarded his Turkoman costume for a suit of Russian cut made in Tashkent, the only clothes he had. After the necessary explanations, he was allowed into the headquarters, and later invited to lunch in the mess. The lunch seemed like a banquet.

Bailey did not take to Malleon, whom he thought rather odd. He was not impressed either by the general's attitude towards the Russian officers, relating that 'he was not inclined to put himself out for these refugees, who were eventually sent to join the last remnants of the anti-Bolshevik forces still holding out in Transcaspia'. Bailey thought it strange also that Malleon's efforts to contact him had been so ineffectual, though he may have been unjust here.

Apart from Malleon, however, the authorities greeted Bailey's return with great relief and enthusiasm. On the 22nd January the Secretary of State signalled the Viceroy: 'Please convey my congratulations to Bailey on his safe return.' This message was passed on, and some months later on the 28th July the Secretary to the Government of India wrote more formally: 'I am to convey to you an expression of the Government of India's appreciation of the services you rendered at great personal risk in obtaining valuable and first-hand information regarding the Bolshevik situation in Russian Turkestan.' Four months later a message came from Lord Curzon, at the Foreign Office, conveying his wish to be associated with this commendation.

But what had Bailey achieved? From the Minute Papers in the India Office Library it is obvious that officials lower down the hierarchy were not so impressed. A Minute referring to his official report contains the remark 'much of it is stale and a good deal of it is inaccurate'. The only thing of major interest, the civil servants thought, was the interview with Mahendra Pratap.

This reaction was undoubtedly unjust, and as years went by and history of the events in Russian Turkestan was written, the uniqueness of Bailey's experiences came to be realised. Even so his role has been rated far higher by Russian historians, and indeed they blame him for many deeds of which he was quite innocent. Babakhodzhayev, Kuliev, Aleskerov, A. M. Matveev, Inoyatov, and others take the same line, and indeed have evidently worked from the same official sources. The British are blamed for all the disorders in Russian Turkestan at this period, and in more recent accounts propagandist writers try to assert that the native population collaborated with the Red Army 'to suppress Imperialist inspired disorders'. The British are also accused of trying to seize Turkestan and of instigating the troubles in Transcaspia and the Caucasus. Against this background, Bailey is naturally seen as an arch conspirator and the agent of imperialism. He is accused of triggering off the Osipov rebellion, though at the time he was away from Tashkent and recuperating from a broken leg. The Russians also find it difficult to believe that he was not at the centre of some web of intrigue at Bokhara, though they carefully omit to mention that one of their own agents, Manditch, left with him. The supply of rifles to the Amir of Bokhara is magnified by Babakhodzhayev and Iskandarov to appear as large-scale military and political support. Again, Bailey's role is made to appear central and crucial.

Despite these regularly repeated charges, the Russians have never, it may be needless to add, produced any documentary evidence. The truth is that from the time of his arrest onwards, Bailey was concerned with collecting information and escaping. He had no orders to intervene in local affairs; and no finance for setting up a counter-revolutionary organisation. It may be conceded that the mission to Tashkent was ill-conceived, and

that, had all the circumstances been known, Bailey and the other officers would never have been despatched. It may be conceded, too, that because of his extreme isolation, Bailey misjudged events in Transcaspia, and especially the size and objectives of the Malleson mission. But that he bore a major responsibility for the Bolsheviks' troubles in Turkestan is complete nonsense.

Before dealing with the later phases of Bailey's career, it may be convenient to wind up the Tashkent affair. As the Soviet Government extended their hold over Turkestan, and occupied Bokhara, murdering the Amir's ministers, information became increasingly difficult to obtain. So the General Staff India consulted Bailey, when preparing the Military Report on Russian Turkestan; the Survey of India came to him for geographical data; and the Central Intelligence Office, to assist in their hunt for Bolshevik spies who were filtering into India via Afghanistan. He became a recognised authority on Russian Turkestan just as for many years he had been on Tibet.

There was one unpleasant echo, however. In 1924 Bailey was reprimanded by Sir Denys Bray, for the route he had taken on returning from Lhasa. On asking Sir Denys for further details Bailey received a further letter which seemed to call his general behaviour into question. Apparently Bailey did nothing further to clear his position at this time, but five years later, decided to take further action. In a letter dated 12th May 1929, he wrote:

'My Dear Sir Denys,

You will remember that on my return from Lhasa in 1924 I drew your attention to what I thought was a want of confidence in me regarding my return journey from Lhasa by a route diverging from the direct road. You replied that I had a bad reputation in such matters, and instanced my remaining in Turkestan during the Bolshevik disturbances, for what you thought to be an unnecessarily long time. I pointed out that I had been forced by circumstances to remain there, and you promised to look into the matter.

I should be very glad to know if this opinion is still held by the Government of India and, if so, I would be glad if a

detailed statement could be furnished to me, which I might have an opportunity of answering.'

Sir George Macartney and Roger Tredwell, he added, were in full possession of the facts. On the 3rd July Sir Denys replied from Simla:

'My Dear Bailey,

You desire to know the opinion held by the Government of India over your remaining in Turkestan during the Bolshevik disturbances. The answer is contained in the appreciation of the Government of India which was conveyed to you on your return, and was subsequently endorsed by His Majesty's Government.

The Government of India have of course always held a high opinion of your gallantry, adventurous spirit and exploring qualities. These have stood you and them in good stead on other occasions but were obviously calculated to cloud, not assist, judgment over your proposal that you should return from Lhasa off the beaten track, and this no doubt is the point I sought to make in our conversations five years ago, of which I fear I have but the haziest recollection.'

This tortuous reply could have given Bailey very little comfort; and may indeed have confirmed his suspicions that among the chair-borne legions of Simla his friends were not particularly numerous. To complicate matters, few people knew the facts of the Tashkent mission, because of official secrecy; and there was a mistaken idea in some quarters that Bailey entered Russian Turkestan of his own volition. No honour or decoration for his services seems to have even been discussed. In 1924 when he wrote his account of the mission for general publication, the Foreign Office raised objections which were supported by the India Office. 'I am sure you will realise', an official wrote, 'the importance of avoiding anything that could possibly give any cause for offence to our Russian ally.' *Mission to Tashkent* was eventually published in 1946, but even then it was necessary to conceal identities and pull many punches. The discussions between London and Simla which led to the mission are completely omitted.

A final question on the Tashkent affair remains to be answered, perhaps one of the most important questions of all: how was it that the Government of India allowed itself to get into the position where it had both a peaceful mission to the Bolsheviks arriving in Tashkent at the precise time that its troops went into action against the Red Army on the Persian frontier? How could such utter diplomatic confusion have arisen? An examination of the relevant dates in 1918 may be helpful:

12th July: Secretary of State telegraphed permission for mission to leave Kashgar for Tashkent.

24th July: Bailey and Macartney left Kashgar.

24th July: Mensheviks were driven back to position covering Merv oasis.

8th August: Indian Government authorised Malleson to give limited assistance to Askhabad Government.

10th August: Malleson ordered troops into Turkestan, Bolsheviks having seized Merv–Khushk Railway and Mensheviks having lost Merv.

13th August: British/Indian troops went into action against Bolsheviks at Dushakh.

14th August: Bailey and Macartney arrived in Tashkent.

From this it will be seen that on the 24th July when Bailey left Kashgar—from which date he was out of regular touch with Simla—the question of committing troops beyond the Persian frontier had not arisen. It was precisely on this date that *the question did arise*, the Mensheviks having been driven back to the Merv oasis; but by the time the implications of this event had been digested and the question of committing troops was discussed, he was well on the way to Tashkent. When the decision of the 8th August was arrived at, the probable impact on the Tashkent mission was not apparently considered; or, if it was, the Allied interests in the Merv–Khushk Railway were considered paramount. As already indicated, the whole Transcaspiian episode was improvised without any clear plan, to deal with a chaotic situation as it developed. And except for his courage and resource Bailey would have been one of the many casualties of the chaos.

On the 9th February 1920 Bailey was back again in Delhi which he had not seen for almost two years, and a few days later was received by the Viceroy. By July he had reached London on leave and on the 22nd of this month was received in audience by King George V. Soon they were talking not only of Tashkent but of events earlier on in Bailey's career, especially his long journeys of exploration. At one point Bailey said the greatest honour ever paid him was to incur the grave displeasure of the Governor-General in Council, for returning back late from leave in 1911. 'Most Governors-General', he laughed, 'have never even heard of humble Captains!' Naturally the King wanted to know the name of the Governor concerned, and Bailey informed him that it was Lord Hardinge. A few days later Bailey was summoned to the Foreign Office, where Hardinge was now lodged as Permanent Under-Secretary of State, to find himself asked peremptorily, 'What have you been telling the King about me, eh? What have you been telling the King? I have been told to apologise.'

Having been away from civilisation for five years, Bailey found that many things had changed, and that dancing as he had known it before the war had gone completely. The jazz age had arrived. With typical thoroughness he enrolled immediately for a course of dancing lessons.

In the years that followed he heard often from the people who had shared his adventures in Turkestan. Mr. and Mrs. Manditch settled down in Sarajevo. Roger Tredwell continued his career in the U.S. Consular Service, and on one occasion visited Bailey in Sikkim. Rosanna Houston made a remarkable escape to Meshed. The Tartar, Haider Khoja, fled from Bokhara when the Bolsheviks took over in 1920, and eventually settled in Peshawar, where he set up an agency for karakul skins. What happened to the Russian officers is apparently not recorded.

One of the minor irritations suffered by Bailey as he tried to pick up the threads of his career in 1922, was a book by Major L. V. S. Blacker called *On Secret Patrol in High Asia*. This managed to deal with the Tashkent mission without even mentioning Bailey's name, let alone that he was head of the mission. Major Etherton, who was left behind at Kashgar,

also produced a book in 1925 called *In the Heart of Asia*, which gave him merely a perfunctory mention. More amusing was the novel *Chelovyek Menyayet Kojhu* (The Man Changes His Skin) by Bruno Yasenski, a Pole and former editor of a Communist newspaper at Lvov. Yasenski had been to Tashkent to carry out research and had obviously been given access to official papers. From the novel Bailey learned that when the mission left Kashgar a man working in the Russo-Asiatic Bank had written to the Bolshevik Government to warn them. He also learned that Damagatsky had got into serious trouble with the authorities for the leniency of his measures. An amusing revelation was that Bailey had given himself away on one occasion by walking on the outside of the pavement, when accompanying a lady, instead of on her left. As a tail-piece to the novel there was an open letter to him, part cynical but part complimentary. In Tashkent if not in Simla, Bailey had become a legend.

A final anecdote to close the Tashkent affair. At a reception in London in 1938 Bailey met M. Maisky, the Russian Ambassador, and jokingly asked if he would now be welcome in Russia. Maisky replied, 'If you wish to return, I will have your dossier looked up.' He need not bother Bailey assured him. 'I assure your Excellency I have no desire to visit Russia under the present regime.' The Great Game was definitely over.

13 The Everest affair

In 1921 Bailey was appointed to the post of Political Officer, Sikkim, the small state tucked away in north-east India on the borders of Tibet. Here at Gangtok he was to make his home for the next seven years, apart from leave periods and trips into the neighbouring state of Bhutan, and to Lhasa. The job was known as a 'Second Class Residency', the Resident—the title is said to have been coined by Clive of India—being the senior representative of the Raj in the State. After years of war, adventures, and privation Bailey was reluctantly to become settled at last. Before leaving England he had married the Hon. Irma Cozens-Hardy, daughter of Lord Cozens-Hardy, who had now come out East for the first time. His predecessor in Sikkim until 1920 was Sir Charles Bell, who was on excellent terms with the Dalai Lama, and no doubt Bailey hoped to continue and indeed develop his own links with Tibet and her ruler. Undoubtedly he was the ideal man to be in Sikkim at this time, and indeed was the only member of the Political Department who could converse with the Dalai Lama without an interpreter.

But a chain of events had already begun which was to embroil him in an incident causing him great concern before his conduct and professional judgment were finally vindicated. The facts may now be told for the first time.

Even before he arrived in Gangtok Bailey had learned from the press that a reconnaissance of Mount Everest was being planned. Until 1849 the world's highest mountain was thought

to be Kanchenjunga, whose peak soared to 28,146 feet. In that year, however, the Survey of India under Sir George Everest were taking observations of the eastern Himalayas, and concentrated their attention on a mountain known as Peak XV. Six observations were taken from different stations, and when these were computed in 1852, it was realised at once that Kanchenjunga's claims could be upheld no longer. Unfortunately it was not realised that Peak XV, now established as reaching 29,002 feet, had been named *Chomolungma* (or Goddess Mother of the World) by the Tibetans and so it was named Mount Everest. Later the height was revised to 29,141 feet. About this time, in 1857, the Alpine Club was formed, and the sport of mountaineering as it is known today was born. As peak after peak in the Alps and throughout Europe was climbed, the club began to look further afield, and its enthusiasts began posing questions about Everest. How could it be approached? What were the best routes? Was it climbable? What new equipment would be needed? In 1907, Arnold Lunn proposed that, to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Club, a first reconnaissance should be made. When an approach was made to the Secretary of State for India, however, the reply was a firm 'No'; a treaty was being concluded with Russia, in an attempt to end 'the Great Game', and he did not want any rumours reaching Moscow of suspicious movements towards Tibet. During the next five years Alpine enthusiasts such as Brigadier-General Charles Bruce and Captain J. B. Noel made repeated attempts to gain entry either to Nepal or Tibet for the purposes of exploring Everest, but to no avail. Then came the Great War which put an end to all negotiations for five years. In 1919, however, Captain Noel raised the matter with the Royal Geographical Society, and his proposal was strongly supported both by Sir Francis Younghusband, shortly to become president of the Society, and Captain Farrar, president of the Alpine Club. This time the Secretary of State proved amenable, suggesting that Colonel Howard-Bury should visit the Viceroy of India to explain the project. The Viceroy was in favour. But as the ruler of Nepal was adamant that no expedition should pass through his territory, a southern approach to the mountains was out of the question, and the only hope lay with the route via Sikkim

and Tibet. So Sir Charles Bell, who happened to be on a visit to Lhasa at this time, was requested to take up the matter with the Dalai Lama. No doubt the Lama, like all Tibetan monks, found it difficult to conceive why men should come from across the sea, merely to climb a mountain, and suspected that the expedition must have some ulterior motive. However, Sir Charles managed to allay these suspicions, and on the 9th December 1920 the Dalai Lama gave his written consent, in a document which began: 'To the west of the Five Treasuries of Great Snow (within the jurisdiction of White Glass Fort, near Rocky Valley Inner Monastery) is the Bird Country of the South. . . .' The news reached London in January 1921.

The reconnaissance expedition was led by Colonel C. K. Howard-Bury, who had under him four climbers, Harold Raeburn, Dr. A. M. Kellas, George Mallory, and G. H. Bullock. There was also a naturalist and a medical officer, Dr. A. M. Heron as geologist, and two surveyors, one of whom was Bailey's old friend Major Henry Morshead. The expedition set off on the 18th May and lasted till September. For everyone engaged it was an unforgettable experience, and in mountaineering circles throughout the world excitement mounted steadily. Morshead, working imperturbably as always from dawn till dusk, surveyed and mapped thousands of square miles of new territory. Even before the reconnaissance was completed, however, the Everest Committee, a joint body formed from the Alpine Club and the Royal Geographical Society, met in London under the Chairmanship of Sir Francis Younghusband and decided that the first full-scale attempt to climb the mountain should be made in 1922. The leader would be Brigadier-General Charles Bruce.

Before the expedition had left England, however, Bailey was already grappling with the diplomatic problems which were arising from the reconnaissance. On the '27th day of the intercalary 7th month of the Iron Bird Year', or, in Western parlance, on the 28th September 1921, the Prime Minister of Tibet, Lönchen Shokang, wrote to Sir Charles Bell (who was in Lhasa),* that local officials had reported that members of the

*He had gone there in 1920, having been recalled from retirement, as Bailey was still in Tashkent.

Everest reconnaissance team 'have dug and carried away turquoises from the Lachi frontier . . . and rubies from Rong-fu and She-chhung. . . .' The constant movement was also troubling the villagers. The Prime Minister continued:

'It was agreed between the British and Tibetans that Mount Everest might be explored. But if the British officials take this as an excuse for digging earth and stones from the most sacred hills of Tibet, inhabited by fierce demons, the very guardians of the soil, it is feared that human and cattle epidemics may break out in the country causing serious loss of life.'

In these grave circumstances the Prime Minister asked that the climbers should be prevented from 'wandering about the mountains'.

On the 2nd January 1922 Bailey took up the matter with the Foreign Secretary in Simla. The letter addressed to Bell, he said, had apparently been unanswered, and the Tibetan Government were now pressing for further details of the Everest Committee's plans, adding: 'Under the circumstances I think it possible that the Tibetan Government may hesitate to give the necessary permission, though I do not think they will refuse in the end.' Enquiries in Simla elicited the fact that Bell had given verbal assurances to the Dalai Lama, and considered the matter closed. The Viceroy, who was now drawn into the affair, told the Political Department that 'We trust that complaints about mining are without any sort of foundation . . .' but suggested that precise details of Dr. Heron's activities should be obtained from the Everest Committee. Meanwhile, he concluded, "Bailey has addressed the Tibetan Government giving composition of this year's party and asking for facilities as before. . . .'

As it transpired, Bailey was able to assure the Dalai Lama that no mining had taken place, and that efforts would be made to comply with the wishes of the Tibetans in every respect. So permission was given and the 1922 expedition moved up through Sikkim towards its goal. Bruce and Finch reached to within half a mile of the summit, but the expedition was dogged

by disaster, seven men dying in an avalanche, and any further attempt had to be called off. After prolonged negotiation, a third expedition, under General Bruce, left in 1924, and again there was disaster. On the 6th June N. E. Odell looked up through a gap in the clouds and saw Mallory and Irvine climbing steadily at what he estimated was an altitude of 28,230 feet, less than a thousand feet from the top. They were never seen again. After one further unsuccessful attempt the expedition was forced to return, leaving Everest still unconquered.

In due course preliminary moves were set afoot to obtain permission for yet another expedition, but Bailey now had to advise that the chances were very slim. What had happened was this. A company called Explorer Films Ltd., with Sir Francis Younghusband on the Board, had been formed with a view to making a film of the attempts on Everest. In charge of the filming was Captain J. B. Noel, who accompanied both the 1922 and 1924 expeditions as photographer. Though giving its blessing to the enterprise—in view of the wide public interest it was a very sound one—the Everest Committee had no financial stake in the film, or control over its production. When the film was shown in London and elsewhere, a group of Tibetan monks, who had been brought to England by Captain Noel, appeared on cinema stages to perform various rituals. There was nothing unseemly about their performance, and indeed it was enjoyed by thousands of people who would never have the chance to visit Tibet in person. At the same time the ‘holiness’ and general standing of the monks was greatly exaggerated. When the Archbishop of Canterbury presented them with a beautifully illustrated copy of the Bible, they tore it to pieces, on leaving Lambeth Palace, and each monk took his own share.

When news of the performances, and the presence of the monks in England, reached Lhasa, there was great consternation, and Bailey was asked to approach Mr. A. R. Hinks, secretary to the Everest Committee, for further information. Was it true, he asked, that religious robes were worn, that masks were put on, and dances performed? On the 8th December Hinks replied that, so far as he could remember, the performance had no religious connotations, but he would

approach Captain Noel and Sir Francis Younghusband on the matter.

On the 1st January 1925 Bailey wrote again warning Hinks that 'I am afraid that there is every chance of the Tibetan Government refusing permission for the next Everest Expedition'. They had been upset by several things; an allegedly unauthorised journey by J. de V. Hazard, a member of the expedition, to Lhatse; some sequences of the film which Captain Noel had refused to cut despite requests; and most important: 'What they consider the enticing away of monks from Gyantse to England with their religious paraphernalia for pecuniary gain—you know that there were complaints about some religious dances at Wembley.' Bailey continued:

'There is no doubt that no one in Tibet welcomes these expeditions and permission is only obtained out of friendliness to us, and that will cease to weigh sufficiently with the Tibetan authorities if the actions of the expedition hurt their religious and other feelings. I am writing to you because it seems to me that the prospects of a further, and we hope successful, attempt on the mountain are being jeopardized by the owners of the film.'

No official complaint, Bailey emphasised, had yet arrived from the Tibetan Government, but many people in high places were enraged, especially the commander-in-chief, Tsarong Shapé. Unless all the Tibetans' requests were granted, Bailey felt, and some satisfactory explanation for the presence of the monks in Britain could be given, 'their whole attitude towards us will be affected . . .' He added:

' . . . the Tibetan Government were repeatedly told (once in a letter from Sir Francis Younghusband) that due respect would be paid to their religious feelings; and Noel in a letter to me said that the material of his film would, if anything, improve friendly relations.'

Some weeks later Bailey received a letter from Explorer Films Ltd. assuring him that no religious dances or ceremonies were

being performed, and no masks had been taken to England. The letter continued: 'The head Lama and others are performing ceremonies which take place on the occasions of festivals and public holidays. We explained to them that we wanted them to do something which was not religious in any possible way, something which would illustrate the music of thigh-bone trumpets and drums.'

But the concern of the Tibetan authorities was increasing, not only the nature of the monks' performance, but the circumstances in which they had left the country. At the end of April Bailey received news from Mr. F. Williamson, of the British Trade Agency at Gyantse, that the former abbot of Palkor Chöde Monastery, who had agreed that the monks should go, and supplied religious costumes and musical instruments, had been summoned for questioning. Williamson added: 'He admitted his fault and asked for pardon, and has been sent to Lhasa where his case is being further enquired into. The Khenchung thinks that he will be severely punished.'

By this time an official request had been forwarded to Lhasa via Delhi that yet another expedition should be launched on Everest. It was refused point-blank. So in due course Bailey received a somewhat unpleasant letter from Hinks of the Mount Everest Committee, which began as follows:

'We have been very disappointed, and more than disappointed, to receive from the India Office a letter saying that they had received by telegram the refusal of the Tibetan Government to allow a further expedition to Mount Everest next year. It does seem to be very unfortunate that when the Government of India are doing so much for the Tibetans . . . that they refuse such courtesy as allowing the return of the Expedition, which has always been particularly careful to pay its way properly and to respect the wishes of the Tibetans. You will doubtless be writing to tell us the circumstances of the refusal. At present I will say no more.'

With the letter from the India Office, Hinks continued, had come a request that the Everest Committee should effect the return to Tibet of the monks. While giving an assurance that the

Committee 'were absolutely without any responsibility' for the matter, Hinks said he had replied that the monks had left England some time previously. He then concluded his letter with a distasteful comment, which must have given Bailey a strong hint of the troubles to come:

'Since this question has been raised, it would be useful to know exactly what permission was given to Noel. I imagine that you were in a position to stop the party proceeding to Europe if you had not approved, and that the fact that they came shows that you did not feel it was necessary to interfere.'

Hinks, in fact, had got it into his head that Bailey was against the Everest Committee and its work. This was far from the truth. Like most Buddhists, the Prime Minister disliked the British habit of shooting animals and birds; he had the gravest suspicions of geologists who took away rock specimens; and as the desire to reach the top of Everest had no religious connotations, he was completely incapable of understanding what it was all about. However, with great patience and understanding, Bailey had dealt with his complaints over the 1922 expedition; given assurances that wild life would not be disturbed or villagers away from the main route, discommoded; and gradually won permission for the 1924 attempt. Now, he was being rewarded by snide suggestions from the Everest Committee.

As always, however, he kept his temper. Replying to Hinks on the 25th June, he said the reasons for the refusal were precisely as he had predicted in previous letters: the unauthorised journey to Lhatse, and the business over the monks. As to the exact circumstances in which they had left Tibet, he explained:

'... no permission at all was asked for or given beyond the ordinary passport with which I had nothing to do. The whole thing was done with the greatest secrecy (by David Macdonald—presumably to get employment for his son John). I was not in a position to stop them after they reached India, although I knew, as you can see from my previous letters, that it was a

very unwise thing to do in view of the possibility of future expeditions.’*

Realising that Bailey was not to be shaken, the Mount Everest Committee now decided, in a manner which may be thought somewhat unscrupulous, to outflank him by destroying his credit with the India Office. (It should be noted that Sir Francis Younghusband, who would not have countenanced such a move, had now yielded up the chairmanship, on the expiry of his term as president of the Royal Geographical Society.) On the 28th May 1925 Hinks wrote on behalf of the Committee to L. D. Wakely at the India Office, again expressing disappointment, especially as the villages through which the expeditions passed ‘are very glad to see them and make a very substantial profit out of them, part of which profit no doubt goes to the local authorities. . . .’ He then continued:

‘We cannot help feeling that the refusal is due to what looks like an exaggerated deference to the more reactionary side of Tibetan feeling paid by the Political Officer in Sikkim. . . . The question is of course more important than even the question of the Mount Everest Expedition, because we could not look with any satisfaction upon a return to the old idea that Tibet is a closed land. I do hope therefore that the India Office and the Government of India will not readily acquiesce in this refusal communicated by Bailey, and that . . . the apparent misunderstanding about the permit for the Lamas will not be accepted as an excuse for shutting up Tibet again to travellers who go with proper credentials and for purely scientific purposes.’

This communication, the brash arrogance of which needs no emphasising, cut no ice whatever at the India Office, and the Committee was asked formally to furnish further information on (1) how it was that Colonel Norton, who took over the 1924

*Macdonald, who had retired from his post as Trade Agent, Yatung, and now lived at Kalimpong, was half Scots and half Lepcha. He had been brought into service during the Great War, and acted as Trade Agent for Yatung and Gyantse. Bailey had already crossed swords with him on a number of occasions.

Expedition from General Bruce, departed from the agreed route, and (2) how Captain Noel arranged for the departure from Tibet of the monks.

Norton had a perfectly reasonable explanation. General Bruce had recommended to him the Rongshar Valley as a place where climbers could recuperate at low altitude before undertaking the return march to India. Norton had therefore negotiated permissions via the Dzongpön of Shekar, who had in turn passed him on to officials at Tropdé. All necessary permits were supplied, together with local transport, and 'There was never a hint of any objection to this expedition from any of the officials. . . .' According to the translation furnished with the Dalai Lama's passport, there was no ban on entering districts other than those specified, and, Colonel Norton added: 'I had a perfectly clear conscience and an easy mind in the matter.'

Captain Noel also gave his explanation to the Committee

'These Lamas travelled as private people and were not on any political mission. They came as my friends and guests to England at their own consent and wish. There was no reason to correspond through official channels concerning their journey beyond obtaining them the requisite and necessary passports for their journey, and these passports were issued by the Secretary of the Bengal Government at Darjeeling, after authority from Lhasa to issue such passports was first obtained. The Secretary of the Bengal Government wired to Lhasa before he consented to issue the passports and he obtained information from Lhasa that there was no objection to the issue of such passports.'

The lamas were in his care, during their stay in England, Noel added, and were treated as his own friends. He concluded:

'I must ask leave to take vigorous exception to the expression of Major Bailey Political Officer of Sikkim by which he says the Lamas were taken away deceitfully. This is untrue and is a discreditable assertion to me, because I arranged the

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passports through the Government of India and with the knowledge of Lhasa in a perfectly correct manner. . . .’

Copies of both Norton’s and Noel’s letters were sent to the India Office, with a covering letter from Hinks, in which he asserted: ‘It is difficult to see how Colonel Norton could have acted more correctly, and we feel that Major Bailey could have no difficulty in making a perfectly clear and sufficient explanation to the Tibetan Government on this point.’ As for any restrictive clause regarding the districts to be visited the Committee did not recognise ‘any such stipulations in the translations furnished by Major Bailey of two documents which appear to constitute the passport and covering letter’.

Turning to Captain Noel’s letter, Hinks asserted that this officer could not have acted more properly, and added darkly: ‘I should suppose it probable that the telegram to Lhasa [i.e. from the Bengal Government at Darjeeling] went through the office of Major Bailey at Gangtok, and in any case it must have been possible for Major Bailey to ascertain the facts.’

The inference here was unmistakable; Bailey had become too closely allied to the Tibetan Government and did not want the trouble of more expeditions. Therefore, knowing of the plans to take the lamas to England, he let them go through purposely, realising that any future attempt on Everest would be obviated. To anyone knowing Bailey, of course, such an action would have appeared quite ludicrous; he was utterly incapable of such deceit. The truth was that in its deep disappointment, the Committee was threshing around for a scapegoat; and Bailey, as the middle man, presented the most likely candidate.

Hinks’s letter continued in forthright terms, an implicit threat not being entirely absent. The Committee would greatly regret it, he said, ‘if the Political Officer in Sikkim did not take immediate steps to make a suitable and conclusive reply on the question of the lamas . . .’ and explain that any trespass had been unintentional. He added:

‘It will cause the Mount Everest Committee great concern if the allegations of the Tibetan Government . . . have not already been repudiated in firm language by the Political Officer in

Sikkim. In any case the Committee hope that you will now be in a position to ask the Government of India to instruct Major Bailey to explain the misapprehension by which the party inadvertently exceeded the intention of the Tibetan Government in visiting Rongshar, and that he will further be instructed to make it quite clear to the Tibetan Government that the Mount Everest Committee were in no way responsible for the visit of the lamas to England . . .’

As inter-departmental minutes show, this letter infuriated senior officials at the India Office; but such was the prestige of the Mount Everest Committee and its influence in the corridors of power that the affair had to be treated with the utmost seriousness. Mountaineering might only be a sport; but national pride and prestige were involved; military and scientific interests were involved also; and the weight of the Royal Geographical Society could never be ignored.

Not unconscious of the complaint against him, Bailey had discussed the matter with Lord Cawdor, who had stayed with him in Sikkim, and later after his return to London in July 1925, Cawdor wrote him as follows:

‘I saw Hinks and after saw Younghusband, and have tried to make them both see the Tibetan point of view with regard to refusal of permission. I didn’t quite like Hinks’ attitude—you know the sort of thing: “It’s what happens to these fellows after they’ve been in a place for a while. They get to look on their particular district as their own private preserve.”

I must confess I was rather sickened to find men like Hinks argue that point of view, staying as he does in Kensington Gore, and having not the vaguest conception of the difficulties of making an agreement with the Tibetan Government.’

So in Whitehall, in Delhi, in Simla, and in Darjeeling more and more civil servants found themselves briefed to institute enquiries, as the affair spiralled. On the 31st July the Secretary to the Government of India, in the Foreign and Political Department, wrote to Mr. L. Birley, Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government, asking him for a complete statement, regarding

the monks. On the 20th August Birley replied, expressing his surprise that Captain Noel 'should have made circumstantial statements of facts, apparently on his own responsibility, as he took no part in application for passports and no correspondence or interview took place between him and any officer of the Government of Bengal on this matter'. Noel's information, in fact, came from an informant, and was therefore second-hand.

The truth was as follows. The passport application was made in Darjeeling by John Macdonald, who was informed that no passports could be issued pending the orders of the Government of India. Macdonald therefore went to Calcutta to await these orders. Here he succeeded in obtaining from the Commissioner of Police permits for the party to sail for England, not disclosing that 'these had been applied for, and withheld in Darjeeling'. When the monks reached Colombo in Ceylon, they were held up by the authorities on the request of the Government of Bengal, pending the final ruling of the Government of India which had now learned of their departure. When the Ceylon authorities explained the problems of keeping the monks for any length of time, the latter were permitted to continue their journey. Birley concluded: 'Captain Noel's statement that passports were issued by the Secretary to the Government of Bengal in Darjeeling after authority had been obtained from Lhasa is entirely without foundation.'

Meanwhile, Bailey interviewed the Prime Minister in Lhasa concerning Colonel Norton's journey to the Rongshar Valley and reported to the Government of India on the 26th August. The Prime Minister had accepted Colonel Norton's explanation, and no longer seemed concerned with this incident. He did however take great exception to Hazard's visit to Lhatse on the Tsangpo. The sahibs, he said, had persuaded local officials against their will, taking advantage of the general orders of the latter 'to assist the expedition in every way'. Regarding the wording and translation of the passport, Bailey agreed that it did not say 'in so many words that the expedition 'should not go about in other districts as they like'. But the Tibetan Government did feel that the passport had been interpreted more widely than was intended. These remarks, however, did not apply to Colonel Norton.

Coming to the vexed question of the monks, Bailey added: 'The Tibetan Government have taken this matter very seriously. I very much doubt if the permission [i.e. for another expedition] would have been refused and whether the questions of the visits to Rongshar and Lhatse would have been brought up again, if it had not been what the Tibetans consider the enticing away of monks to perform religious ceremonies for gain in a theatre.' As to the details of how the monks had been enticed away, Bailey considered that several statements in Noel's letter were at variance with the facts, and the statements of other people concerned. David Macdonald (whose letter he enclosed) denied that he 'ever knew of the departure of the monks until they left India'. And it was clear from the Bengal Government's letter 'that they had no communication from Lhasa'. Further, the letter from the Tibetan Government in which they refused permission for future expeditions indicated clearly that they had never given permission for the monks to leave. Not even the officials at the Gyantse monastery knew the monks had departed.

Regarding Noel's objection to the word 'deceitful' which Bailey had used to describe the manner in which matters had been conducted, Bailey explained that it 'was only used by me in translating a word from the Tibetan Government's letter'. In the dictionary the word meant 'Craft, cunning, deceit'. But in any case Noel had been unwise to take the monks to England without going through the normal channels.

As to the question of the monks' performance, Bailey conceded that the programme stated that no religious ceremonies were being performed, but 'the men were religious monks and took with them religious robes and musical instruments'.

Bailey concluded:

'I feel sure that when the Committee know the true facts of the case, they will realise that the Tibetan Government have some grounds for the unfortunate refusal to allow a further expedition. I do not think that the Committee quite realise the difficulty experienced in getting permission for such expeditions and how the hands of the many people who dislike them are strengthened by any embarrassing incidents.'

In the circumstances it was impossible for him to repudiate the allegations of the Tibetan Government in the firm language suggested by the Committee.

Earlier in August there had been communication between the Government of India and the India Office on the exact position of the Mount Everest Committee regarding the film and the monks. On the 4th the Government of India gave its views as follows:

‘[We] find some difficulty in reconciling the statement of the Mount Everest Committee that it had no responsibility for the bringing to Europe of the Tibetan monks with the actual position as they understood it. The film was made by Captain Noel, as a member of the expedition, and the arrangements for the monks were made during the expedition; the Committee is receiving financial benefit from the film, and Captain Noel and Sir Francis Younghusband are directors of the Company. The control may have passed from their hands but the responsibility must seemingly remain with the Mount Everest Committee and the Royal Geographical Society.’

In October these views were embodied in a letter addressed to the Committee by the Under-Secretary of State for India, and according to the draft which is still preserved in the relevant file, this concluded with the following:

‘Finally I am directed by Lord Birkenhead [Secretary of State for India] to say that he must take the strongest exception to the tone of your remarks in regard to Lt.-Colonel F. M. Bailey . . . the criticisms and insinuations in your letters regarding Lt.-Colonel Bailey appear to his lordship to be misplaced and uncalled for.’

Bailey’s conduct and judgment were entirely vindicated at long last.

The Mount Everest Committee was now in some disarray. In September, after the India Office had begun to throw doubts on the Committee’s version of affairs, Hinks sought an interview with Wakely, at which he expressed his concern. Wakely in

turn suggested that the Committee should wait till it had all the facts available before committing itself to paper again, hinting that there was a good deal which the Committee did not know. The result of this interview was that the Committee asked Captain Noel to produce the passports mentioned in his letter and learned to its horror, as the Government of India had done in August, that his evidence was purely hearsay. So after a further meeting of the Committee, Hinks wrote to the Under-Secretary to make an abject apology. Captain Noel, he said, 'made the statements in his letter in all good faith, they were based on reports made to him by others which most unfortunately he took no steps to verify'. Hinks continued:

'The Committee regret very deeply the humiliating position in which they were placed by the discovery that Captain Noel's statements were incorrect. They ask that you will accept for yourself, and also will convey to the Government of India, that as soon as the correctness of the facts was challenged, they did everything in their power to discover the truth, and immediately communicated to Mr. Wakely the result of their enquiries. They trust that both the Secretary of State and the Government of India will recognise that they did all that was possible in a most difficult and humiliating position.'

The letter ended with an apology to Bailey:

'The Committee will be glad also if you will ask the Government of India to convey to the Political Officer in Sikkim the Committee's regret that so much trouble has been given to him by these unfortunate occurrences and to convey to him their thanks for his good offices in representing the Committee's explanations and regrets to the Tibetan Government.'

This apology was hardly satisfactory; the Committee expressed no contrition for its attack on Bailey's character and judgment; nor did it withdraw the charge that he was allying himself to the more conservative elements in Lhasa. This fact did not go unnoticed at the India Office and the Committee's credit suffered accordingly.

From every viewpoint the affair of the travelling monks was unfortunate. It delayed further attempts on Everest for seven years, for it was not until August 1932 that the Dalai Lama relented, and a new generation of climbers including Eric Shipton and F. S. Smythe could carry on the saga. If the Everest Committee and the members of its expedition had trusted Bailey, this long delay need never have occurred. This is not to say that Noel acted in bad faith; everyone working with this officer had the highest opinion of him and no doubt he was misled—he was certainly misinformed—by people he trusted. The fact that he did not verify his sources need not be regarded as sinister either; at one time or another, everyone must accept the word of another man without opportunity of verification. No doubt this is what happened to Noel. So far as the Committee are concerned it is difficult to be so charitable. Seldom has so much arrogance and pride been displayed before a fall.

To round off, it must be said that on the brief note he made on the affair many years later, Bailey showed no animosity, and indeed treated the episode with a light touch. At the same time he left no doubt that in his view mountaineering in Tibet had been delayed by pure ignorance and stupidity. Any notion that he was biased against the expeditions is, of course, complete nonsense. He had been captivated by the magnificence of Mount Everest many years previously, while on the Younghusband expedition of 1904; and among his notes he left concerning the mountain is scrawled: 'It must be climbed one day and I hope I will be one of the men to do it.'

14 The years in residence

Bailey's appointment to Sikkim was the first of a series of Residencies which, with a few breaks, were to occupy the rest of his service in India. When he arrived in Gangtok he was approaching forty and at the height of his powers; few men had crammed so much travel, adventure, and achievement into such a short time. Apart from the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society awarded in 1916, he held the Gill Memorial (1912), the McGregor Medal of the United Service Institution of India (1914), and the Livingstone Gold Medal of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society (1920). Though the great adventures were behind him, he still loved travelling and still retained an enormous zest for life. As he once put it to his wife, 'Three nights is enough to spend in one place.' He was a superb game shot, and one of the few men to shoot a takin, he had also got a record *Ovis ammon*. He had accumulated an immense fund of anecdotes, and could hold a dinner table enthralled for hour after hour. Most of his anecdotes were amusing rather than dramatic and he would happily tell stories against himself. His charm was immense as were his powers of persuasion. Many people who met him during his time at Sikkim are agreed that he could get anyone to do anything. He always got his own way—often without the fact being realised. Without any trace of snobbery, he treated people of all classes, ranks, and races with due courtesy; and made friends with maharajahs as easily as with monks or farmers. His command of

languages was now quite formidable. Frank Ludlow, of the Indian Education Service, who went up to Gyantse to start a school for the sons of Tibetan nobles, has described how he would stop anyone he met on the road and engage him in animated conversation. In Tibetan he spoke with a country accent, but still was the only British officer who could talk freely to the Dalai Lama without an interpreter.

But although he was now a famous figure in the Indian Political Service, and indeed could claim to be one of the greatest of living explorers, his modesty never deserted him for a moment. Even his anecdotes tended to throw the limelight on other people; and Sir Eveleyn Howell, Foreign Secretary of the Government of India in the 1930s, says that although Bailey was often a guest in his house, he had no idea of his role in the Tashkent episode. With his delightful sense of humour, Bailey's instinct was to entertain while in company, rather than inform or instruct.

Most people are agreed that he was not very good at sticking to the point. His interests were so wide and varied, and his experiences covered such a vast territory, that there was never time to say all he wanted. So he found himself switching violently from one subject to another, with his listeners following breathlessly from Tibet to China, India to Assam and back again to Tibet. He would talk of obscure villages, visited perhaps by only a few Europeans, as if they were as familiar as Paris or New York; and like many explorers, he assumed that at any dinner-table there was a working knowledge of the Abors and Mishmis, that no one could doubt the latitudes of Kashgar or the geographical importance of the Nathu La. Still, as Frank Ludlow, puts it, 'most people were spellbound'.

The civil servants of Simla and Delhi, however, remained singularly unspellbound. Whether Bailey's reports were late, it is difficult to ascertain, but they definitely found little favour. On at least one occasion they were described as 'models of what reports should not be'. The attitude in Simla is not difficult to understand. The vast majority of officials in the Indian Civil Service had an identity of experience; they had spent their years doing mostly routine work, in administering their districts, handling taxation, and presiding as magistrates in court.

Bailey had little experience in these fields, and in many matters was quite ready to confess that he was not only ignorant but uninterested. He was a specialist, with his own values and his own methods. He despised the little men in their offices, and regarded the vast flow of paperwork as merely a nuisance. The job as he saw it was to get around Sikkim and meet people, and deal with problems as they arose. To him problems were far more important than reports on problems, an attitude which in Simla appeared highly idiosyncratic.

It may be recorded here that on the Ha La on his way to Bhutan in 1922 Bailey rediscovered *Meconopsis superba*, which had been lost to botany since 1881. His wife recalls:

‘My husband was riding well ahead of the cavalcade, as was his usual practice, so as not to disturb the butterflies when he saw this beautiful white *Meconopsis* as large as a saucer with a gold centre. He left a piece of paper stuck into the middle of the road telling me to look up on the left and collect some which I did, and a pressed specimen was sent to the Edinburgh Botanical Gardens. It was a really thrilling moment for me . . .’

During his tour as Political Officer, Sikkim, he developed close relationships with the neighbouring state of Bhutan. In July and August he made an extensive tour, taking with him his wife and her mother, and they therefore became the first European ladies ever to be seen by the Bhutanese. The latter were somewhat amazed. As on all his journeys, Bailey kept a journal, noting every detail which happened to catch his eye. He wrote of finding great quantities of purple orchids, of joining in an archery competition (‘The range was 130 yards and the target very small, only one arrow hit it’), of coming across some soldiers of the Paro Penlops bodyguard ‘in blue uniforms and steel helmets’, of eating rice cooked with saffron and butter in the monastery of Gorina, of playing five-a-side cricket with bats made locally, and of finding a quail with a most unusual call. The people of Bumtang, he noted, had a curious way of reaping: ‘They have two bamboo sticks about 2 feet long and they catch the stalks of barley between them and

pull the heads off.' The object of the visit was to present the Maharajah of Bhutan with the G.C.I.E., the ceremony taking place at a Durbar in the temple at Bumtang. Of this Bailey wrote:

'Red brocade carpets and silk had been spread and we were met at the door by His Highness. He sat on a throne with his back to the windows, I, a little lower on his right, and the rest in a line at right-angles. Opposite them were lamas in robes, I made a short speech in Tibetan, then hung the gold chain on his neck and fixed the star and presented a scarf. In return he placed round my neck three scarves, red, green and white.'

After this the Maharajah's grandson moved forward, knocked his head three times on the ground, then 'with a great flourish flung out a scarf which was folded in his hands and a servant brought a huge bundle of different kinds of cloths and banged them on the ground'.

In 1924 he returned to Lhasa for talks with the Dalai Lama and the Prime Minister. Apart from the Everest Expedition, probably the most important topics were the flight of the Tashi Lama, and Bolshevik intrigues. The curious financial arrangement in respect of the Tashi Lama—the spiritual leader—was that he paid a quarter of the Tibetan Government's expenses in time of war, and nothing in time of peace. As there had been fighting against the Chinese for many years, his contribution fell due annually, but he had failed to pay. When he was eight years in arrears, the Dalai Lama had demanded immediate payment, and so the Tashi Lama had fled to China. During the talks in Lhasa Bailey was asked to try to effect the return of the spiritual ruler, but was unable to make any practical suggestion.

Never losing any chance to explore, Bailey decided to travel from Bhutan to Gyantse in Tibet, crossing the main range by a new route. With him, apart from his wife and her mother, was Captain H. R. C. Meade of the Survey of India, who was able to survey 6,000 square miles of fresh territory. In contrast with early times when such activities were regarded in Tibet with extreme suspicion, Bailey was now able to report that 'Captain Meade received every assistance for his survey, and the Dalai Lama is very anxious to receive a copy of his map'. It would be true to

say that this improved atmosphere was in no small measure due to Bailey's own efforts.

The Tibetan ruler, in fact, now trusted him so completely that he expressed the wish he should not be transferred from Sikkim. He also gave permission for Bailey to travel down the Tsangpo from Lhasa to Tsetang, the highest point he had reached with Morshead. This four-day journey gave Bailey great satisfaction, and later he wrote: ' . . . with my journey to the source with Ryder, Rawling, and Wood in 1904, I may say that I have seen this great river over all its length in Tibet except for a few small sections.'

In some ways the period in Sikkim was frustrating, and many of the schemes he put forward to the Indian Government were ignored. For example, he proposed to harness the water power of Sikkim, which he calculated was sufficient to light the whole of Calcutta. In fact, it was only after a good deal of delay that electricity was brought to Gangtok. He urged that roads should be built both in the interests of trade and of defence, but nothing was done. He did succeed, however, in introducing trout both into Sikkim and Bhutan, notably in Lake Changu, on the Sikkimese side of the Nathu La. Since his time the trout have become a great tourist attraction.

In the following year, 1928, his tour in Sikkim came to an end, and when he advised the Dalai Lama, the following letter arrived. The charm, and indeed the warm friendship the letter conveys needs no emphasising:

'A special letter. I have received your letter dated the 12th day of the 8th month of the Earth Dragon Year (26th September 1928) and have understood the contents. In this you inform me that you are retiring from the office of Political Officer in Sikkim and are leaving on the 2nd day of the 9th month of the Earth Dragon Year (15th October 1928). In token of our friendship you have sent me an electric heater. I see that this is very useful in winter. I have had a talk about this electric heater with Lha-nyer Sho-trung Chang-ngo [i.e. Mr. Ringang]. You also ask me to write to you unhesitatingly for anything that I may require from England. I thank you very much for this and will act accordingly.

Sent with a silk scarf on the 13th day of the 10th month of the Earth Dragon Year (25th November 1928).’

On leaving Sikkim Bailey had accumulated two years’ leave which he proposed to take, pending retirement. Ten months of it was to be spent on a world tour, staying with friends in many countries.* Before the leave was over, however, he was told that owing to the troubles in Peshawar, the service was under strain and all experienced officers were needed. Sir Dennis Bray whom he met in London went so far as to state, ‘It is your duty to go back.’ Bailey agreed; but where was there a post for him? Bray explained that he could not get a Class I Residency until he had experience of Indian states. Also, Kashmir would be vacant within nine months, and in the meantime he could have the job of Political Officer in Baghelkhand, central India. So Bailey went back, his new tour of duty commencing on the 20th October 1930, and lasting for about fifteen months.

In March 1932 he left Baghelkhand for Baroda, taking up the appointment as Resident. Though not without interest—Bailey was amazed at the intrigues which proliferated in the Indian states—this was on the whole an unprofitable phase of his career and it was with some relief that he learned that he was to go north again. This time the job was that of Resident in Srinagar, Kashmir, generally regarded in the Political Department as the most delightful of the Class II Residences. With his home in one of the most beautiful places in the world, and away from the heat and turmoil of the plains, the Resident, in normal times, could live like a minor prince, indulging in his favourite sports and pastimes, and dispensing wisdom and advice from a lifetime of distinguished service. But Bailey had come at the wrong time. From 1885 to 1925 the ruler of Kashmir had been the Maharajah Sir Pertab Singh, a quiet, devout little man, if hardly a progressive. His successor was a nephew, Hari Singh, a very different character, who eagerly embraced the luxuries of Western civilisation, and was not ashamed to use his wealth to enjoy himself. In 1921 he monopolised the headlines of the

*It had been extended by the Acting Governor-General, Lord Lytton, over the head of Sir Denys Bray, who considered that tours should be limited to two years.

British press, in the guise of a 'Mr. A.' who had been black-mailed by an unscrupulous British Army officer. Quite indifferent to the welfare of his people, Hari Singh was very unpopular with the officials of the Raj, and Bailey was warned by his predecessor 'never to invite him to lunch at a party of less than sixteen people'. He was also said to be anti-British, and certainly at first regarded Bailey with some suspicion; but as time wore on the two men got to know each other and the formal atmosphere was dissipated.

The first serious opposition to the rule of Hari Singh coincided precisely with Bailey's arrival. In 1930 a man called Sheikh Abdullah* had returned to Srinagar after completing his studies at Aligarh University, and started a campaign for greater Muslim representation in the administration. The campaign gathered momentum and on the 24th September 1932 Abdullah was arrested and the country placed under martial law. So on arrival Bailey found himself pitched immediately into a delicate situation. After centuries of docility the Kashmiris had found a leader and were prepared to risk their lives in a political struggle. Given a free hand, Hari Singh would no doubt have employed his Dogra troops to crush the revolt out of hand, and there was some firing in the early stages, but as Bailey realised, the policy of the Raj was to use the minimum force on any occasion, and any massacre on the scale of Amritsar in 1919 must be avoided. In 1932 Abdullah was released, and promptly announced the formation of the 'Al Jammu and Kashmir Moslem Conference' which claimed to speak on behalf of the entire population. By this time Bailey had called for British troops to maintain order, for the situation in the streets was getting out of hand. When he attempted to give his annual garden party the demonstrators lay down in rows outside the Residency, preventing the entry of cars. Eventually it was decided to cancel the party and 4,000 guests were turned away. An amusing incident occurred when some Kashmiris asked to speak to Bailey who went out accompanied by the chief of police. At this point a 'corpse' splattered with blood got up from the rows of demonstrators and walked away, to the laughter of the crowd.

*Later he became well known to the Indian Government.

At this time Sir Bernard Glancy and a Commission were sitting in Srinagar to investigate Muslim grievances, and as they could not fail to observe, Abdullah was being supported by the Moslem Ahrar Party, a Punjab group sympathetic to the Indian National Congress. In the spring of 1932 Chaudri Ghulam Abbas, an ally of Abdullah, tried to organise a 'civil disobedience' campaign, following the pattern already tried out in India. Again Bailey counselled restraint, and was relieved when the campaign petered out. By this time the Glancy Report had been issued, and Hari Singh was compelled to form a State Assembly in which twenty-one seats were reserved for Muslims.

By 1937 Bailey was determined to leave India altogether. It was quite clear that he would not be offered a Class I Residency, with its increased pay and prestige and inevitable knighthood; and he had no desire to become Foreign Secretary or Political Secretary, the other 'plum' appointments of the Service. However, men of his calibre were scarce, and again he allowed himself to be persuaded to stay for a few more years. These he spent as His Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Nepal.* Despite its magnificent title, this was a Class II Residency also, and Bailey found himself irked by the restrictions placed on his movements and contact with the people. Officially he was not allowed to speak to anyone except the Maharajah, and even had to present his credentials to the King via this noble. Sadly one must record that Bailey's Indian service dwindled to a close, rather than ended in a burst of glory. However, one great achievement of this period must be noted here and that was his collection of 2,306 specimens of birds from Nepal which he later presented to the British Museum of Natural History. In 1938 he sailed for England to begin his retirement.

*He was the first British Minister to Nepal, the appointment being made by the Foreign Office in London. On 'kissing hands' he found that King George V was greatly intrigued by the 'Mr. A' affair and spoke of it at length.

15 The last phase

Until 1952 Bailey made his home near Cromer, then in that year moved to Stiffkey, a small isolated village near the Norfolk coast. Here he acquired a rambling house dating from the Regency period and large enough to house his butterfly collection—later to find its way to the Metropolitan Museum in New York.* The connection with Norfolk came through his wife's family; and he apparently had no desire to follow his father's example and retire to Edinburgh. When he arrived in England the war clouds were gathering, and soon the Second World War broke out. At fifty-seven he was too old to be called to the colours, but hoped nevertheless that there might still be a place for him on the north-east frontier, from which quite obviously the younger men would be withdrawn. No summons came, however, so when the Home Guard was formed in 1940 he joined at once, and soon was to become involved in the formation of one of the guerilla formations, referred to by Winston Churchill as 'Auxiliary Units'. To this job he brought all his vast experience of operating in rough country. He used his guile, too, laying a pipe from his observation post to an underground signal office, and through this rolled messages inserted into tennis balls. On one occasion when an inspecting general asked him how he proposed to get a message away he was able to tell him that it had already gone while they were talking. To his amazement the general was then shown the end of the pipe.

*The 'types' were given to the British Museum a few years before he died.

In 1942, still searching for more active ways of helping his country, he was enrolled as a King's Messenger. For the next two years, based on Miami and Washington, he flew around central and South America delivering despatches, an arduous job even for a man much younger than himself.

In 1943 he came home again to Norfolk. By now the Japanese war was at its height, and many places he had known came to be mentioned in the news. As a soldier he now hoped that his great knowledge of Assam and northern Burma, and the routes towards China, would be of use to the War Office; but no approach was made and his knowledge lay unused. Still immensely fit and energetic, he turned to writing about his early experiences, and even considered working on a full length autobiography. Unhappily the latter was never accomplished, but he did produce three books. The first of these, *China-Tibet-Assam*, telling the story of his lone journey in 1911, appeared in 1945, and was followed twelve months later by *Mission to Tashkent*. As already indicated, publication of this work was delayed several years on the insistence of the Foreign Office. Finally in 1957 came *No Passport to Tibet*, perhaps the best of his books, giving the story of his journey with Major Henry Morshead. To many people these books came as a revelation, for although explorers and travellers and specialists of many kinds had made frequent reference to Bailey, the extent of his achievements and the extraordinary nature of his adventures had not been realised. Also, as so many years had elapsed, he seemed a figure from a bygone age. To others, the books came as very welcome news, for they had long imagined him to be dead. For some reason yet to be explained, his name appeared among the fallen on the Menin Gate, and all efforts to have it removed were without success. In 1924 Bailey's mother saw Lord Stopford of the War Graves Commission, and according to his own account, the interview went as follows. 'She said that I was still alive and asked that my name should be taken off the memorial. She was told that it was impossible to do that—"Our records have been very carefully checked. Where is your son now?" My mother replied, "I tell you he is alive and at present is staying in Lhasa as a guest of the Dalai Lama." This was quite enough and the demented lady was

shown out. I believe my name is still on the Menin Gate. It certainly was up to 1939.'

The books also served as a reminder that Bailey was a great authority on Tibet, and requests for help and advice reached Stiffkey from scholars and writers all over the world. Government officials arrived from Pakistan to consult him on the McMahon Line. He maintained his contact with the learned societies, and for some years was honorary librarian to the Royal Central Asian Society, travelling regularly to London for meetings. An excellent lecturer, he was frequently called upon, though unfortunately he did not develop into a broadcaster like so many explorers. In fact, he made only two broadcasts, in 1954 and 1956, the sight of a microphone robbing him of coherence let alone eloquence. Even attempts to record his experiences in the privacy of his study were not a great success. His anecdotes belonged to the dinner table.

With his wife he still travelled a great deal, to the Continent on holiday, to Finland—where he was a great friend of Field Marshal Mannerheim. Sir Francis Younghusband had died in 1942, but many of his old friends were alive and delighted to see him. For some years he sat on the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, greatly respected as a holder of its Gold Medal, but in the 1950s his relations with this august body became less cordial than in former days. As the man who had done as much as anyone to make possible the Everest Expeditions of 1922 and 1924, it was a great disappointment to be excluded from the tea given in honour to Sir John Hunt and the members of the victorious expedition of 1953. The cause of this deterioration in relationships is hard to define, and no doubt personalities were involved; but Bailey's papers are to be lodged in the India Office Library. Before finally leaving the subject of Mount Everest, it is pleasant to record an incident at the Nepalese Embassy. Invited to a party attended by Sherpa Tensing and the other Sherpas who had accompanied Sir John Hunt to London, Bailey was formally introduced by the official interpreter. After a few sentences, however, he brushed him aside and burst out into fluent and idiomatic Tibetan, to the delight of Tensing. The Sherpa, of course, knew all about Bailey, who had long been a legend in his own country, and

happily swapped reminiscences of people and places. This encounter did much to compensate for the slight suffered at the hands of the Royal Geographical Society.

In 1966 his health began to fail, and on the 17th April 1967 he died at the age of eighty-five. Inevitably the obituaries dealt mainly on his early years, for it was in the period from 1904 to 1920 that all his great exploits belonged, and which saw him rise to fame. His loyal service in India for the next eighteen years, and his service to England and to science in the half century which followed, were virtually ignored. But all the obituaries were agreed on the immense quality of the man and the diversity of his accomplishment. So *The Times* recorded:

‘In its diversity of adventure his career as soldier, explorer, linguist, secret agent, and diplomatist can be compared with that of Sir Richard Burton and it included not a few incidents reminiscent of Kipling’s *Kim*. . . . Curiously enough, Bailey for all his explorations and secret service work in Central Asia, is likely to be remembered for his incidental discovery of the now celebrated Tibetan blue poppy named *Meconopsis betonicifolia baileyi*.’

Bailey, it will be remembered, had made the same point many years previously: ‘If I am to perpetuate my name at all, my best chance is as the discoverer of the blue poppy . . .’ In the *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* his friend Colonel C. H. Ellis wrote:

‘Bailey was a man of many parts; soldier, explorer, naturalist, diplomat, intelligence officer, and linguist, excelling in all these capacities. He was fortunate in living at a time when it was still possible to exercise all these gifts . . . He was an outstanding representative of a great period. . . .’

Sir Olaf Caroe, the distinguished administrator of the North-West Frontier, echoed these sentiments:

‘Eric Bailey was undoubtedly the greatest explorer and geographically the most distinguished officer of the Indian

Political Service during the last half-century of its existence. In this he was a most worthy successor to Francis Younghusband; indeed in some respects his wanderings were even more daring and further from the beaten track . . . To meet he was the most modest and gentle of men, apparently only addicted to . . . quiet countryman's hobbies. But the exterior was misleading; it concealed a subtle mind, an intrepid heart, and a very clear vision of where he was going and how to arrive at his destination.'

These tributes immediately pose the question: why did these qualities not bring him greater recognition or honour in his profession? Caroe suggests that 'Perhaps because of this very modesty his government failed to honour him publicly as he deserved', but there is probably more to it than this. Some of his contemporaries who still survive have given vent to the opinion that he was scandalously treated. Granted that as a specialist he was not fitted for the top positions of the Political Department, they argue, he should have still been awarded a C.S.I. or even a knighthood. Though despised by many, such honours were eagerly sought by servants of the Raj, and having received no recognition during his last twenty-two years of service, Bailey sometimes expressed a feeling of failure and disappointment. But he was never bitter; and he was wise enough to know that in government service initiative and individual achievement must be paid for. The honours go, perhaps quite rightly, to the men progressing quietly in the middle of the road.

How long and by how many his name will be remembered, it is hard to predict. Perhaps the blue poppy will serve as his memorial; though for some he will always remain the last player of 'the Great Game'.

But should China become more civilised one day, and relax her hold on Tibet, then perhaps exploration on India's north-east frontier may commence again. Men will go to see the last few miles of the Tsangpo river not yet glimpsed by European eyes; and mountaineers will set foot on Namcha Barwa or Gyala Peri. Then Bailey's great journeys will be recalled again and his fame as an explorer will be set beside that of Younghusband and Sven Hedin, Livingstone and Speke.

Meanwhile, as Sir Olaf Caroe suggests, he may be remembered as a representative of a great age. In a time of increasing specialisation, it is hard to imagine that we shall see anyone like him again.

Botanical Note on the Blue Poppy taken from G. Taylor in Genus Meconopsis, New Flora Silvae (1934)

‘Credit for discovery of this species belongs to Père Delavay who collected it in woods near Hokin in N.W. Yunnan in 1886. His specimens were described and figured by Franchet three years later. The specimens on which Prain based *M. baileyi* were sent by Bailey from Lunang Kongbo in S.E. Tibet but the material was so incomplete and fragmentary that the author did not recognise the proper affinity of his species. Only one or two flowers were collected and thus a proper conception of the vegetative plants was possible only when Kingdon Ward in June 1924 returned to the same locality and obtained ample material. He subsequently identified his specimens with *M. baileyi* Prain and the extensive introduction of the plant under that name was due to him. Further, Kingdon Ward supplied an amplified description of the species but at that time drew no comparisons with *M. betonicifolia*. Separation of the two species has suggested an account of habit differences and relative length of the style and degree of hairiness of the ovary. The first two characters at once proved untrustworthy, but the pubescent character of the ovary appeared more significant, and it is on this alleged distinction that the specific status of *M. baileyi* depends. While it is to be admitted that the pubescence on the ovary in Kingdon Ward’s specimens is generally much more dense than in the Yunnan forms, and that this character is retained in cultivated plants, it is possible to obtain a range from a glabrous or sparsely hairy condition to the densely hairy state ascribed to *M. baileyi*. That the two plants are conspecific seems evident and I have expressed the opinion that they may be regarded as geographical forms of the same species. Stapf has since accepted this view by identifying the cultivated plant as *M. betonicifolia* forma *Baileyi* and for the other form on which the species was founded he has proposed the name *M. betonicifolia* forma *Franchetii*.

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UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

All his adult life Colonel Bailey kept a diary. This was very brief and only one line was devoted to each day. It did indicate, however, where he was, what activity he was engaged in, and whom he met.

During his major journeys he also kept a journal which later on was polished and in places amplified. It was from these journals that he drew the material for his official reports, and later on his books. The principal journals are as follows:

South Tibet, 1913
Russian Diary, 1918–20
A Tour in Bhutan, 1922
Lhasa Diary, 1924

In addition to the above the papers include a large quantity of miscellaneous documents and correspondence, and a number of Confidential Reports printed by the Government of India. Bailey's printed reports include:

Report on a Journey from Peking to Assam, 1911
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Report on a Visit to Lhasa, 1924

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