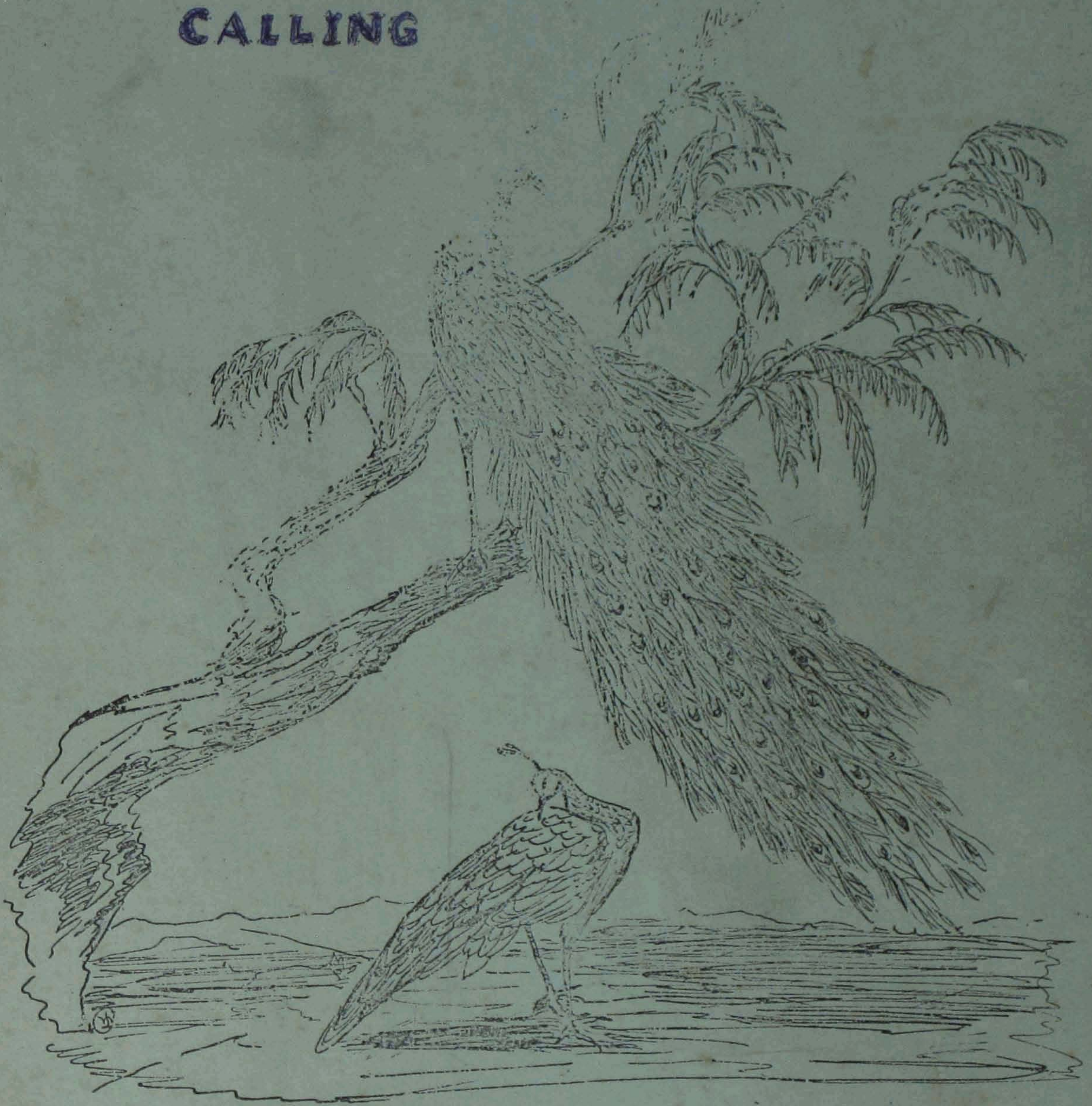
PEACOCKS CALLING



BILL COWLEY

PEACOCKS CALLING

One man's experience of India 1939-1947

by

BILL COWLEY

For Savitri Sachdev, and for Bonnie
with love to all the family

Bill
March 1978

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POSTSCRIPT 178

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I am deeply indebted to my friends for producing it---to Jackie Holland for the typing, to Keith Walters for the copying, to Jean Walters for assistance with the binding, and to my wife, Jean, for the map and drawings.

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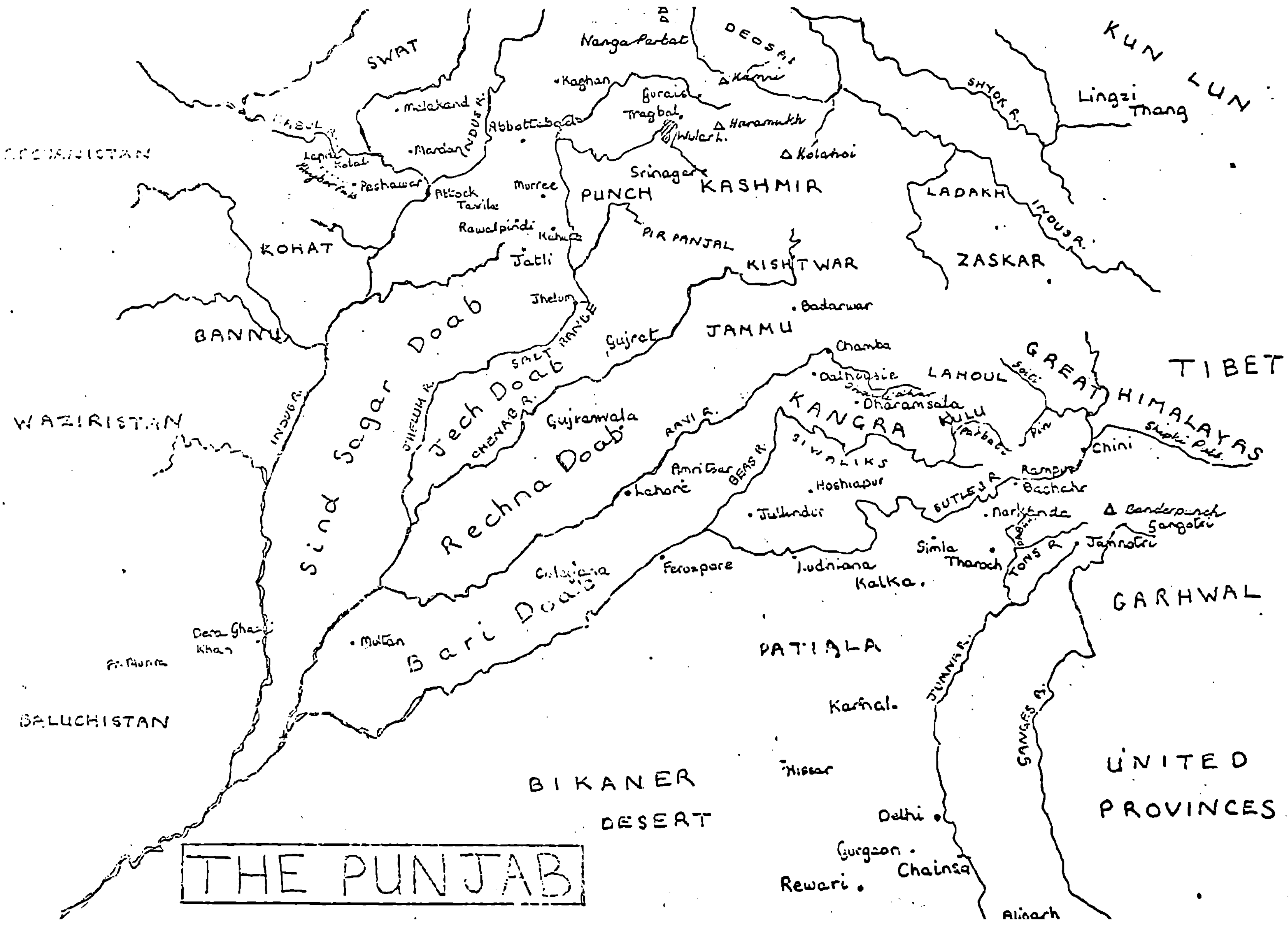
PREFACE

In October, 1939, after a month when it had seemed that war might alter everybody's plans, I received 48 hours' notice to sail for India. It had been decided that trained administrators were more urgently required there than in the Army.

This book may seem too much concerned, during a time of war, with a background of peace. Yet, there were times when we envied our Army friends the companionship in danger of their comrades in arms.

That first great Punjab civilian, John Lawrence, had had similar feelings, caught up so often in wars and the rumour of wars. Ever since his day the Punjab had kept its reputation for a strong and efficient Civil Service based on hard work and intimate knowledge of the districts. I am proud to have belonged to the Punjab Commission. This book is about the people and the land whom we served. When the Punjab was partitioned in 1947 not only did a career come to an end, but a country was destroyed which, over a century, we had created.

When I went out to the Punjab in 1939 I was homesick for my native Yorkshire for a year. I have been homesick for the Punjab for thirty years since 1947. But the Punjab as it was no longer exists. This is the story of its last eight years.



THE PUNJAB

PRELUDE 1 - Cleveland

I grew up in Cleveland, a country of family farms that lies between the Tees and the moors that stretch south from the Cleveland Hills. My family had no connection with India. They were mainly small farmers or farm labourers, with one or two blacksmiths and a shoemaker amongst them. There was only Uncle Fred who had been all his life in the Navy and the Merchant Navy. He knew Calcutta and the ways of the Hooghly well. In my Aunt Emma's sitting room was a splendid fan of peacock's feathers, and a stuffed mongoose, frozen in deadly combat with a snake.

Uncle Fred was short, broad, and immensely strong. In his youth, if he really got going when on shore leave, it took four policemen to hold him. It was always exciting to meet him on leave, full of strange oaths and stories of tropical heat. In the later twenties he gave up the sea for the new I.C.I. works at Billingham. But he never really settled on shore. After some years the call of the sea was too much for him and off he went again to the East. I visited his ship in Middlesbrough docks. He was Quartermaster, with a comfortable, small cabin, and a lascar crew to control - thin, dark men with faded blue cotton clothes, shivering in the cold damp Northern climate and longing for the heat of the Indian Ocean once more. The silent fan in Uncle Fred's cabin was a reminder of that heat. Though fascinated by the stories, I had no desire to go to India myself. I wanted to be a farmer.

My mother had gone through the arduous training of a nurse in the first years of the century, hard worked, under-paid, and very often under-fed. In spite of this she had got the nickname "Cocky", and cocky she has remained through the various fortunes and misfortunes of ninety years. During the war, she married a minor executive who died of pneumonia shortly after my birth, leaving no provision whatsoever. We lived with my maternal grandparents in a poor street in Middlesbrough, except for periods when Mother got a job as housekeeper at some country vicarage or farmhouse. These were the times I loved most, the fields and the woods, the country life and the village schools. For years afterwards, in that dusty street of Middlesbrough, I would dream of them. My grandfather had a similar nostalgia all his life. He was a village carpenter, a master-craftsman who had had to seek employment in the town. He worked in Middlesbrough all his life until he died of consumption at 68. By that time I was at Middlesbrough

High School, which my grandfather had helped to build in the early years of the century.

Life had been difficult for her for many years, and there was happiness and relief on Mother's face when she came home one day with the news that she had been given an appointment by the Board of Guardians as Child Welfare Officer, at the wonderful salary of £120 per annum. To us in 1925 that was wealth. Through illness and transfers between schools, I had lost a year and I could not sit for the scholarship examination from my elementary school. But Mother was determined that I should go to the High School and paid the fees of three guineas a term from that salary of £120.

In 1928 the Great War was only ten years away. Many of the High School staff had been through it. Most impressive was Wallace, with weather beaten skin and jutting jaw, a real fighting face. Some of his fingers had been blown off at Paschendael. Wallace ran the harriers, with hot cocoa after runs, and harriers' camps at Kildale.

Wilson Smith was a slight, gentle man who introduced us to French through phonetics, an introduction of the greatest value later. Like Wallace, he was a lover of the countryside, and would be found at any camp that was going - Scouts or Harriers. Then there was George Oswald Fox, Senior French - who at first seemed aloof, and always Olympian, largely because of shrapnel in the back. He first introduced me to the wild inner moors beyond the Cleveland Hills, which have been an abiding love. These last two gave me also, between them, a love of French and of France that has added an extra dimension to life, another richness that has grown with the years. All three remained friends and part of the Cleveland background into ripe years of retirement.

Was it my own antipathy to science that made all science teachers seem - to me - lacking in any personal appeal? One of them, in charge of the School Scout troop, together with the Troop Leader, a King's Scout with an armful of badges, turned me down in an interview for admission to the School Scout Troop. I was thin, pale-faced, bespectacled - very unpromising material. But Mother was most anxious that I should become a Scout. Her younger brother, Frank, had been one of the first Boy Scouts in Middlesbrough, in the 1st Settlement Troop. From the way everyone spoke of him he must have been a wonderful person. I have always had a memory of a leafy lane, a deep ditch, and a lych gate - Ormesby Church. He took me there in a push chair

when I was one and a half. With other scouts he went on Coast Guard duty during the war and was accidentally shot in a training camp. His scout shirt and badges had been carefully preserved.

It might be said ours was an unlucky family. Another brother - my Uncle Albert - who lived with us, had lost a leg in an accident in his teens, with no compensation. All his life thereafter he struggled against pain and discomfort, earning a meagre living as shoe-repairer. All his savings went on buying new and more comfortable artificial limbs. Here is just an example of the fear, depression and poverty which lingered on for even the upper working classes during the first thirty years of this century. For such people were craftsmen, not just labourers. There were many worse off, whose children - just the other side of Newport Road - went in rags and barefoot. If there is more violent crime and juvenile indiscipline now, it is nothing compared with the violence and misery that society once inflicted on so many.

It was easy enough to get into the Scout troop at St. Alban's Church. The Scoutmaster was a strong, alert, handsome man of 25, John Haymonds. He had left St. Paul's elementary school (and that could be described as little more than a slum school) at 13, during the war, but was now in the purchasing department of the I.C.I., the new colossus at Billingham, and rising rapidly with it. His younger brother, Arthur, was Troop Leader, just as impressive as the High School one, with King's Scout badge and All-round cords. He had just started work in Bolckow's (Steel) Office, and shortly became Assistant Scout Master. For these two Scouting was a game that they were young enough to enjoy on level terms; rough games in the church hall, tracking games out into the country, summer camps - axemanship and woodsmoke, peaty moorland streams and camp fire songs. I was never any good at organised games but Scouting became an obsession, the ruling passion of my life for the next three years. Iread Policy Organisation and Rules until I could quote almost any paragraph on demand. I had - and still have - my Uncle Frank's "Boy Scouts' Handbook" (1915) and I turned my enthusiastic attention to one proficiency badge after another. Leather-worker, with Uncle Albert's assistance, and Carpenter, with my grandfather's, were easy, although grandfather, in the last year of his life, made some caustic comments on my dovetail joints. "Thoo'll nivver make a craftsman, lad" he said. And he was quite right. Even now our social and educational system sets far too great a value on mental skills compared with manual ones.

My real loves were the out of doors badges - Naturalist, Starman, Pathfinder, Camper, Stalker, and Tracker. There were only two patrols in the troop - from twelve to sixteen of us altogether. I was soon Patrol Leader of the Woodpeckers; the leader of the Wolves was Fred Carvell, a year or two older than me, serving his time as a bricklayer, very strong and tough. One day there was a commotion at the top of Fred's street - a gang of lads from Cannon Street, where the policemen went in couples, had come on a foray and had some local lad up against the wall. He was in tears. One or two adults passing by shouted at the gang to leave him alone - with no effect. I came hesitatingly up the other side, knowing it would be suicide for me to intervene, when suddenly I was aware of Fred coming up behind me. He took in the situation at a glance and veered into the centre of the road. Hands in pockets he headed straight for the gang. The gang noticed him now and a silence fell. There was a tenseness in the air and everyone's eyes were on Fred. Never altering his pace, hands still in pockets, he made for the leader, an inch or two bigger than himself. Before this quiet confidence the leader stepped back. Fred never spoke but his right hand moved fast. There was a smack, a howl, a shout of approval from the passers-by - and the gang melted away. But Fred didn't pass his First Class tests, and later it was I who had to step over his head to the position of Troop Leader. But if he was as contemptuous as some efficient N.C.O. for an officer untried in battle, he never showed it. And soon came a joint triumph. There was to be a Trek Cart Race at the District Jamboree. Arthur, Fred and I really got to work on training our team for that. We got down to 60 seconds flat for taking the cart to pieces and putting it together again. We knocked the High School Troop out in the first round, to my great satisfaction - they hadn't a bricklayer in the team, of course - and then met another crack team in the final. We had to take the cart to pieces, put it over a 5ft fence, put it together, race around a post, then back over the fence again. The first time it was a dead heat. The second time, some-one fumbled a lynch pin and the other team got away from the fence. Fred couldn't contain himself. He heaved us away, saw that the others had gone a bit wide, and pulled us over to cut in. It was ungentlemanly, but it succeeded. We caught the other side's wheel, there was a moment of confusion, and we emerged a second ahead at the fence. Our

trek cart was torn to pieces, and Fred hurled wheels right over the fence. It was a miracle no one was hurt but it was the heat of battle, and we won. Years afterwards the photograph of that winning team was to appear (filched from me by some of my staff) as the frontispiece of a Punjab Boy Scouts' Bulletin, and it was these few years, and the memory of these men, which shaped my Indian future as much as anything. John and Arthur - and Fred - were to affect the lives of a lot of people in a land they never visited.

But the early thirties were years of depression. Both John and Arthur were out of work for a time, in 1930, Did I know of a nice little camp-site not too far away, where they might spend the Summer in camp, until things got better? I went to Bilsdale to explore. It was June. The narrow white road wound up Ingleby Bank through a natural forest of oak and alder and bird cherry. Everywhere was a thick carpet of bluebells and the scent was intoxicating. I followed a sheep-track into the depths of the wood. Blackbirds called and pheasants burst away. In a daze of beauty I came to a glade that was one mass of bluebells, and in the centre the hollow shell of what had once been a huge oak tree - a tree that must have been there, I thought, when William the Conqueror was in those parts.

I found a site at the head of Bilsdale, and all that summer, John and Arthur camped up there and I visited them at week-ends. They were both anxious to use this time to get on, and were studying economics for the Chartered Secretaries' examination. We would walk down Clay Bank, with them trying to explain what a Bill of Exchange was. Some months later they were back at work, progressing steadily to important positions. They were good friends to me, welcoming me for the first time into an adult circle. Their father was a lean wiry steel worker with a sardonic humour. He worked too hard all his life, and died at 69, after just four years of retirement. Both John and Arthur went to poor schools and had little help from early education. But they got on - and they helped me on as much as anyone else.

The year 1931 to 1932 was School Certificate year.

In the great hall of Constantine College, with the spaced desks, the sealed papers ceremonially handed out and eagerly scanned, the invigilator like a high priest on his dais, a completely new emotion gripped me. It was an intense joy, a complete concentration, where time ceased to exist, and three hours passed from life unnoticed, except that

the paper had been answered. I have felt the same sensation since, in climbing a difficult mountain, crossing unknown country, or making love to a woman.

We had had a new Headmaster that year, W. W. Fletcher, a mathematician. He had been a Scholar of Jesus College, Cambridge, and came to us from St. Paul's School, London. When I went into his study one August day for the results he greeted me with a warm, if somewhat amazed, smile - as one might when an ugly duckling suddenly turns into a swan. "My dear fellow!" he said "Do you know what you've done - you've got five distinctions! It's a school record! Now, we must get you straight onto an Oxford or Cambridge Open Scholarship. What subject do you think - mathematics perhaps - you have distinctions here in maths. and physics?" I hastily explained that though I had enjoyed the logical beauty of maths. I thought my real bent was for History. "That's a pity - but we have a new Senior History Master this year. He was an Open Scholar at Wadham - I'll get on to him straight away. By the way, what will be the financial situation at home?" I told him. "Well, you must be very grateful to your mother. But no need to worry now. You'll get a scholarship for the rest of your time at school - and you'll get the £10 Lowthian Bell prize out of this...." From that time I never cost Mother a penny except for my board when at home. But I drank the wine of success for a week only. As soon as I met the new History Master, F. M. Plant, I knew there was hard work ahead. Plant was an aloof type, conscious, one felt, that he had left the famous Lancashire public school, Rossall, for our rather inferior establishment. But he was a professional scholar, and immediately pointed out that because my birthday fell in November instead of December, I would have to take an Open Scholarship ("Not over 18 on December 1st.") before taking the Higher School Certificate, that is in one year and one term. He would help all he could - but he thought it was pretty impossible.

From then on, except for a week in summer, I worked something like sixteen hours a day. I have never worked quite so hard since, except for a fortnight in Ferozepore when I was acting Deputy Commissioner on top of a full list as magistrate in my own court. I certainly was not thinking of India at this time. When Donald Hardy, who had gone from the High School to Cambridge three years before, passed top in the Civil Service examination and chose India, I thought he was crazy.

On a visit to Richmond I had seen in the church a memorial to "John Laird Mair, first Lord Lawrence of the Punjab, who from the Civil Service of the East India Company rose to be Viceroy. His public service began among the races of Upper India whose hearts he won and whose lives he inspired. In the Mutiny of 1857 he maintained the Punjab in peace and enabled our armies to conquer Delhi. Born in this town, March 4, 1811. Baptized in this church."

Plant was particularly strong on Imperial History, and the Empire seemed a grand thing then, a real and powerful entity, for which Seeley's "Expansion of Empire" was still the blueprint. However, my own ambitions went no further than Cambridge, and then perhaps teaching or lecturing.

But in the second cold December, when Plant bade me farewell for Cambridge, he was still pessimistic. Perhaps he meant well but he needn't have been quite so blunt. "Go on - you haven't got a chance - but good luck!"

I loved the old courts, the lawns and flowerbeds of Jesus. How I wanted to go there! I had a medical student's rooms on J. staircase, and a skeleton fell out of the cupboard onto me. Again there were those three-hour periods of intense concentration, the intellectual pleasure of judgment, in selecting the right questions. Plant had picked a few winners, at any rate! Then the journey back - flat lands wheeling to the window, sad as sorrow. Crows tossed up by the wind of our passing, like scraps of black paper over the frozen furrows.

One evening a few days before Christmas a telegram came - "Awarded £40 Exhibition Jesus - Congratulations - Manning, Senior Tutor." I cycled over to the Head's house immediately, and I don't think my wheels touched the ground. He was as delighted as I was that the venture launched just fifteen months before had succeeded. "This deserves a drink" he said, and produced some sherry.

All through the years at school I had looked up at gilt-lettered scholarship boards - just two of them with twenty or thirty names on from the school's beginning. "J. Pringle - £60 Science Scholarship, £75 Middlesbrough Major Scholarship. D. P. Hardy, £80 State Scholarship, £75 Middlesbrough Major...." and so on. Those boards acted as a considerable incentive. That summer, the Higher School Certificate made sure

that my name would go up with satisfactorily lucrative figures attached - "W. Cowley £40 History Exhibition, £80 State Scholarship, £75 Middlesbrough Major Scholarship, £20 Thomas Dalkin Scholarship." I never did find out who Thomas Dalkin was but he provided me with pocket money for the next three years, and bought my first typewriter. The boards are things of the past. A few years later scholarships were far more generally available, as many each year as had previously been won in ten. The boards that had meant so much to my generation were taken down, and eventually chopped up for firewood.

PRELUDE - 2 Cambridge

The cloistered courts were mine, the mellow old brick and the ancient carved stone, the great limes and horse-chesnuts towards Jesus Green, the Common and the river, the stately swans and the urgent, probing eights. There was a fast walk across the Green and round the Backs to lectures in the morning, a light lunch in my rooms, an hour or so's hard rowing in the afternoon, and a large and excellent dinner in Hall at night. Jesus was famous for its cuisine, and the panelled Hall, with paintings of former Masters and Tudor kings looking down on the polished oak tables was a beautiful setting.

There was one snag. I had severe mental indigestion with two years' effort in history. For my first tutorial with Bernard Manning I had to write an essay on the Value of History. I took a serious and painstaking view. The tutorial was shared with T. R. Tiller, who had beaten me to the College History Scholarship, and who had the rooms opposite mine under Archway. He is the one person I have ever met who corresponded to my idea of a genius. He had a beautiful, sensitive face, a wave of soft hair, and was one of a brilliant coterie from Latymer, a famous London school, who had helped themselves to several scholarships at various colleges. I understood now what Plant had meant when he said I hadn't a chance. Tiller, in the most urbanely decisive way, demolished the concept that history had any value at all. Tiller, of course, went on to get a double starred first - in History. But he had convinced me. "Sir," I said to Manning (it took me a long time to get used to the custom of addressing dons by their Christian names), "I would like to change to English." The College, unfortunately, having awarded an Exhibition in History, could not permit me to read English. I sought some other loophole, and came up with the suggestion that I be allowed to read Economics Part 1. in my first year and go on to History Part 1. in my second. This proved acceptable, and I did well enough in Economics Part 1. to be allowed to go on with it, so that I never read History after all. Academically this was a mistake, but economics was good for my soul and more useful, both in India and later, than anything else would have been.

Though I sometimes went in to hear G. M. Trevelyan lecturing,

there is no doubt that the Economics Faculty was more intellectually stimulating and exciting at this time than that of History. Men like A. C. Pigou and D. H. Robertson were perhaps rather coldly academic. But there was the colourful personality of Keynes, then writing his General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money, which did so much to affect the trend of economic thought and of Government policy. Pigou himself, and half the other members of the Faculty, would come to listen to Keynes. One sensed that here was theory and policy in the making. Those were the years of Depression, and this was the doctrine of full employment taking shape, in angry criticism of the wasteful idleness of men and machines that was leaving the "Special Areas" derelict. Why, I thought myself, could there not be a University of the Unemployed, to utilise all this forced leisure? But when the hunger-marchers came down from Jarrow, they were not allowed into College premises. This edict fired some of us to immediate rebellion, and we took a couple of pleasant young lads into my rooms for tea and supper, with a sing-song in between during which we learned to sing Blaydon Races, Cushy Butterfield and other Tyneside songs with the proper burr and intonation.

One man who sympathised with me was John Hilton, the unorthodox Professor of Industrial Relations. He had won a Cambridge scholarship in his youth but being the only breadwinner of the family couldn't take it, and went to work in a factory. After many years in Industry and the I.L.O. he became the outstanding authority on Trades Unions and labour relations, - and came to Cambridge after all to take over the new Montague Burton Chair of Industrial Relations. He ran a club for the unemployed in Cambridge, and was at home to his students every Sunday, with Mrs. Hilton dispensing a generous tea. He thought nothing of whisking two of us off to Norwich when there was a bus-strike, to study the facts of the dispute, and talk with both sides. Few could resist his appeal, and his broadcasts made him nationally famous.

It may have been some sub-conscious reaction against the more affluent and southern aspects of Cambridge life and culture that prompted some of us to start a Cambridge University Yorkshire Society. The suggestion met with a good response and in my last two years at Cambridge I was very occupied with this. The experience of working with a committee, and getting other people to do things, was very useful later.

A special subject for Part 2. of the Economics Tripos that year of 1934 was the Economic Development of India. C.R.Fay had just spent some months in India to bring his knowledge up to date, and again one had the feeling of grappling with immediate and important practical problems, besides which Joan Robinson's mathematical curves of monopoly and oligopoly seemed merely an abstract academic exercise. I had chosen India because the alternatives were mathematical statistics and taxation, but I soon became fascinated. At this juncture Sir Edmund Blunt gave a lecture about the Indian Civil Service. Like Hilton, Fay kept open house to his students on Friday tea-times, and I.C.S. probationers to whom he also lectured would come in, often in breeches straight from riding. Suddenly this seemed a very desirable life - riding around one's district, holding court under a pipul tree, tiger-shooting and pig-sticking. (I never saw a tiger, and I never stuck a pig; otherwise the reality was better than the dream). I had perhaps still a faint hope of being my college's first economics don - but this other possibility grew daily more attractive. In turn of course it involved a stiff competitive examination. However, Tripos first. I had missed a first in Part 1., being in the upper bracket of the second class. There had been only one or two firsts awarded. I worked hard to be in the few for part 2. - too hard, perhaps. For once I did not enjoy an examination. I felt ill, and impatient with some of the theoretical and financial papers. And I remember the empty feeling when a week or two later I scanned the lists to find my name not in the first class, nor even in the few at the top of the second class, but down amongst many in the second division of the second class. For the first time I felt the helpless frustration of having suffered something a bit unfair, an irrevocable decision without appeal that I could do nothing about. But I enjoyed my last week of Cambridge in June - madrigals under King's Bridge, and Chinese lanterns floating slowly down the river; wisteria hung with flowers like blue grapes, a girl at Newnham called Wendy, the first who ever filled my heart; filled it with a gossamer-like romantic love, sweet but insubstantial. I yearned, and wrote poetry, but never

even kissed her! Newnham and Girton were still Victorian, institutional, and smelling of floor polish. Girls were only allowed to visit men in couples, like the policemen down Cannon Street.

There were two afternoons. One in the Fellows' Garden at Jesus for men who were going down. My tutor, Paul Sinker, was sympathetic. I hadn't done as well as expected. Just one of those things. There was still the Indian Civil - but certainly the college could not now consider a fourth year. The other was also in a garden, under lilac trees in bloom, a lazy afternoon of hot sun and pure happiness. Wendy leant against my knee and we talked about India. She was ambitious for me - but she made it clear that the thought of snakes horrified her and she would never want to go to India herself!

I don't remember any particular disapointment. I had not got as far as thinking seriously of marriage. Now it was the thought of India and of adventure that filled my mind.

A month later, by no means recovered from Tripos disappointment I had to take the even more arduous Civil Service (Class 1) Competitive Examination. I can remember that examination only as a steady slog, like trying to climb a mountain through deep soft snow. The all-important interview, which alone carried three hundred marks, was even worse. The Board asked me what I felt were silly questions. If I had £50 given to be spent in a week, what would I do? My problem had always been to get £50 for necessary things. I said I'd probably buy some books and take my Mother for a holiday. I don't think filial duty was what the Commissioners were looking for.

In the result - after months of anxious, but not very hopeful waiting - I had done much better in the written papers than in my Tripos, but had only rated half marks in the interview. I was fifty marks or so behind the last successful canditate. Ted Shields of the Yorkshire Society was one who did succeed.

It was clear that I was not the type the I.C.S. wanted - nervous, bookish, uncertain of himself. The Secretary of the University Appointments Board said as much and advised me strongly to try for something else. Paul Sinker wanted me to accept a

Social Welfare Exhibition at Cambridge House, the University Settlement in Camberwell. But I was obstinate. I had set my heart on the I.C.S. Only the interview had let me down. With 250 marks I would have been in. I would have another try.

But I would not go back to Cambridge, even if I could. I had worked too hard for several years, and if anything that was what was wrong. I had long dreamed of having a "wanderjahr" on the Continent - and now, as it happened, I had £50 in the bank, saved from my scholarship grants at Cambridge over the years, and what to do with it was no hypothetical question.

PRELUDE - 3 Grand Tour

I do not like cities much, but I fell in love with Paris. 1937 was the year of the Exposition Internationale and all along the Seine, from Concorde to the Trocadero, the pavilions of the nations flaunted their banners, the German and Russian pavilions in prophetic confrontation. The Exhibition was a world tour in miniature, and I spent many days there.

I also went to a few lectures at the Sorbonne and studied Montesquieu's Esprit des Lois. At the Cité Universitaire two Chinese students had the room next to mine. We became good friends in a peculiar mixture of French and English, and when we parted they insisted on presenting me with a beautiful panel of Chinese silk and a "lucky" ring.

At the beginning of December I set off for the South, At Angoulême the Youth Hostel was in charge of a retired bricklayer, who sat in shirtsleeves playing the violin and loved discussing philosophy. From Bordeaux I worked my way from vineyard to vineyard up the Garonne - Graves, Cerons, Barsac, and Sauternes.

For miles outside Toulouse the road was up and I walked past jeering workmen without getting a lift. Finally a car stopped - and it had G.B. on the back. It was a Londoner, Percy Cohen, attached to the International Brigade Ambulance division in Spain.

Next evening we spent on the Mediterranean at Banyuls drinking the rich local wine, with the last light of sunset flashing between the Pyrenean peaks above. Early next morning I saw Percy across the Spanish frontier with one of my precious pounds in his pocket. He never did pay that loan back in cash - he said, long afterwards, that it was so seldom you got anything out of a Yorkshireman that he would hang on to that. But he more than repaid it with hospitality in London.

After he had gone I climbed high up into the Pyrenees, crossing the frontier just to say I had been in Spain, then worked my way back through the cork oak forests to Collioure. That night in Perpignan, after covering over thirty miles in warm sunshine, I found a cheap restaurant where there were large bottles of delicious Roussillon wine at each table for four. Nobody else

sat at my table and I drank the lot, then staggered happily up to my room to sink down and down and down into a soft feather bed of infinite depth.

North and East along the Mediterranean, through Montpellier and Marseilles, I had lifts from a police car, a woman lion-tamer from a circus, and an Egyptian body-culture expert who was training on the beach at St. Juan les Pins.

The youth hostel at the Col de Porte above Grenoble was deep in snow and crowded with men and girls who slept indiscriminately - not that that mattered much since nobody ever took off their warm ski-ing clothes. We ski-ed all day and sang all evening. They were a gay lot of Marseillais, and I acquired a repertoire of ribald students' songs. Too ambitious, I joined an expedition up Charmant Som on my third day's ski-ing. I had a bad fall and broke a ski-point. It was that or my leg and fortunately the point was weaker. But I had to trudge the long way back through the forest carrying my skis, instead of sliding gently down.

Two days later I was a guest in the Benedictine Abbey of Hautecombe on Lake Annecy. The gentle monks had welcomed me like a travelling student of the Middle Ages in spite of my Protestant upbringing. I spent three days reading in their famous library. It was Epiphany and the Grand' Messe was impressive. Excellent food and wine were served to me at a special table below the Abbot's dais. The cowled brothers ate more frugally all round, whilst one read aloud from a great bible. After dinner the Abbot and some of the senior monks would chat about the affairs of the world. Most of them had fought in the Great War and were afraid another was coming. One brother kept the bees - and collected stamps; another made pathways and water courses.

A fresh mantle of snow lay in the cloisters, and silence lay over the monastery; even my footsteps were silent in the snow as I left that kindly place early one morning.

In Italy there was Gigli at the Scala in Milan - and snow in Venice. I crossed the Adriatic to Trieste in a tramp steamer with a flagon of Chianti in my rucsack. The empty flask, and a worn out pair of boots, were ceremoniously buried on a hillside above Villach -

and I walked down the Murzdal with a Tyrolean carpenter who yodelled most of the way. In Vienna there was Richard Tauber in the "Magic Flute", and wine at Grinzing -

"Oh mocht i' einmal im Grinzing sein
Beim wein, beim wein, beim wein......"

It took nearly a week to walk through the hills to Salzburg - where another monastery provided hot soup and bread to travellers. In Munich I met my first Nazis - but the beer in the Hofbrauhaus was an antidote. I did not visit Munich again for twenty nine years - and then it seemed that the same men, with the same faces, the same bowed shoulders and green aprons, were still there in the Hofbrauhaus rhythmically filling litre steins of foaming beer from inexhaustible vats - and the same Bavarian crowd cheerfully drinking and singing. One of the best places in the world, the cellar of the Hofbrauhaus in Munich.

Through a Black Forest white with snow I made my way back to Strasbourg and France. A commercial traveller in ladies' underwear gave me a lift into Joan of Arc's village of Domremy, where we picked up a lady customer and went on. Between them they completed my education before we arrived in Paris by way of a railway carriage in a forest clearing at Compiègne where the Armistice had been signed.

Hitler moved into Austria, and the clouds of war began to gather. I worked steadily through lecture notes, and spent a week in Cambridge going through the year's periodicals at the Marshall Library. Then it was London and my last hope of the I.C.S. Seven hundred competitors - and perhaps forty places in the Home Civil and thirty in the Indian. I stayed at Cambridge House, The Head, Herbert Livesey, who had Yorkshire connections, thought I needed a little more education and took me to the Junior Constitutional Club the night before the Essay. He introduced me to vintage port - we tasted three or four, including a Cockburn and a Dow 1912. They were magnificent. I wrote a splendid essay next morning. And the interview - well, obviously here was the very type the I.C.S. wanted. Fit, alert, adventurous; observant of the countries and sympathetic with the people he had met. He's not public school, of course, and he still speaks with a Yorkshire accent, albeit in several languages. Not full marks perhaps -

but certainly 250.

That was quite enough to get me in. The long wait was at last over, the lists came, my gamble had succeeded. We were summoned to London for a medical examination by surgeons in morning coats and top hats. We had to indicate our preference for a province. I wasn't high enough in the list to have any hope of the crack province and usual first choice, the Punjab. I thought I might have more chance for the U.P. where Donald Hardy had gone. But when postings came through I had been allocated to the Punjab after all.

I chose to pass my probationary year at the School of Oriental Studies in London, which offered a fresh experience, rather than going back to Cambridge. I could live at Cambridge House.

PRELUDE - 4 I.C.S. Probation

There were about fifteen of us on the I.C.S. Probationary Course in London, eight or nine British and the rest Indian. The Director of I.C.S. Studies was Vesey FitzGerald, who had retired from Madras and was a Barrister of Gray's Inn. He took us through a course of law, studying general principles, then the Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Evidence Act, Civil Law. It was a thorough course, designed to turn us out as competent professional magistrates. The logic of legal argument attracted me - then, as later in practice, I found myself arguing the case step by step in my judgments and not deciding the verdict until the end. I thought the judicial side of I.C.S. work might be very attractive, and joined Gray's Inn as a student myself, intending to read for the Bar whilst in India. Meanwhile I kept terms and ate dinners in the beautiful hall of Gray's Inn. One man I met was Russell, a Home Office expert on nervous diseases, who had been in India and the East a good deal, We drank together later at Hennekey's wine bar "Best advice I can give" he said, "Never have a car that's better than your superior officer's - and always have a servant or two less!"

On other dining nights I met members of the Malayan and the Somaliland Civil Service, and the Indian Forestry Service. On Grand Night, Sir John Anderson, one-time Governor of terrorist Bengal and now in charge of A.R.P. was a guest. Great silver loving cups of mulled claret were passed round and drunk "To the pious, glorious and immortal memory of Good Queen Bess".

No less important than law was language - for the majority of us, Urdu. J.R.Firth started us off on phonetics and I was grateful for what I knew. He was a Yorkshireman himself and we became good friends. Years later, when he was Professor of Linguistics, we would drink whisky together and consider that we were probably the only two people who could talk two Yorkshire dialects and Punjabi with equal fluency! From a Muslim friend at Cambridge, M.A.Butt, I had an introduction to the Imam of the Putney Mosque, Maulvi Shamsud Din of the Ahmediyya community, and went there regularly

to practice Urdu, and sample my first curries and pulaos. For riding we went to a covered school in Clapham run by a Captain Lawrence.

"Circle LEFT!" "Circle RIGHT!" "Without stirrups, at the TROT!" "Without reins, figure of eight, TROT!" But the horses knew the commands, and made us think we were better riders than we really were. With us in our group (and not very good in the saddle!) was an American, Phil Talbot - the only one of his countrymen ever to take the I.C.S. probationary course. He was being sent on a Research Fellowship to become a specialist on India, and had done us the honour of thinking this course the best possible introduction. I was to see a great deal of him in India and he has since risen high in his country's service, as Under Secretary of State and Ambassador.

Various visitors came to our I.C.S. club - one was Robert Wingate, C.I.E. who talked about the Indian Political Service which some of us might later elect to join. He himself after four years in Arabia, was transferred to Kashmir, and within five days from the desert heat was fighting his way over a 12,000ft pass against a blizzard. (Within two years I was to know what that meant myself!) There were of course rewards - some Residents' jobs at £5,000 a year and a palace thrown in!

As probationers we got £300 a year, and a generous outfit allowance - with a long list of suggested purchases which included morning suit, top hat, half a dozen lounge suits, dinner jacket, evening suit, a dozen or so dress shirts, riding clothes and so on. War clouds were looming larger, shelters were going up everywhere, and parts of this list seemed unreal. I gradually acquired most of them but drew the line at a morning coat and top hat, which might have come in useful twice on my service, but their absence excited no comment.

One day A.deB.Codrington, a brilliant man, showed us over the Indian Museum near the old Imperial Institute. It contained some exquisite paintings and sculptures, including the most delightfully indecent statuette that I had seen. A most interesting event was a reception by the East India Association and the Indian Village Welfare Association. Lord Hailey, the most distinguished member

of our service since Lord Lawrence, welcomed us. Lord Willingdon, an ex-Viceroy, was there, and four ex-Governors of the Punjab - Sir Geoffrey de Montmorency, Sir Herbert Emerson, Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Sir Edward Maclagan.

I was invited to be guest at the Cambridge University's Yorkshire Society Annual Dinner at the end of November. I was a bit rude about Yorkshire beer not having been obtained as in my day, and the Secretary, a girl from Newnham, called Mary Dyson, took exception to the tone of my letter to the Vice-President, and replied rather sharply. To soothe matters I invited all the Committee - who had meanwhile managed to get a barrel of Tetleys' beer delivered - to a sherry party in my old rooms at Jesus. Mary Dyson was a tall dark girl, with spectacles and an Eton crop, who thawed rapidly with conversation and with sherry. She sat on the other side of the Vice President at dinner and I smiled at her behind his back. She wasn't pretty. Unusual. Rather attractive. A Science Scholar at Newnham. The beer was good, and afterwards we had port. When we left the table, I read a dialect story about someone called Mary, and Mary being next to me I addressed it to her and put my hand on her arm at one point for emphasis. It was warm and sympathetic, and some sort of an electric shock went between us that was to change both our lives.

When the girls had left there was still some beer in the barrel. None of us wanted any more so I suggested that we carry it around to Emmanuel College close by, where some of those present belonged. I remember getting it down the stairs with difficulty and great merriment, and staggering with the awkward load, laughing all the time, as far as Christ's College, where I collapsed in the gateway with my arms around the barrel. I don't remember anything else until I found myself being pushed into the police station from a van, and charged with being drunk and incapable. By that time I was cold sober, but tired and ill and conscious of the terrible indignity of the position. But there was nothing I could do then, except ask that my landlady be informed. I was shown into a cell, with a couple of blankets, and eventually slept on an uncomfortable bench-bed.

I never could account for this. No doubt the cold night air suddenly hit me on top of some mixed drinking, and perhaps mixed

emotions. But it looked like being disastrous - a magistrate and member of the I.C.S. in a cell and before the courts! Released on my own recognizances in the morning I went straight to my late tutor, Paul Sinker, who came with me to the court. In the dock I pleaded a shame-faced "Guilty" -- but Sinker had handed the magistrates a note and they retired to discuss my case with him. When they returned they announced that in the circumstances of the case they thought justice would be best served by granting an Absolute Discharge. I indicated my relief and gratitude -- but the police quickly asked for costs and I was poorer by a couple of guineas.

I found myself worrying about the evening before, and Mary Dyson, and whether I had behaved properly - so I went over to see her at Newnham. I must have been a bit incoherant, not wanting to tell her just what had happened. I felt that warm sympathy again - but we didn't know just what we wanted from each other. A few days later I got a letter - she had found out, and was all sympathy and assurance that, up to the girls' leaving, I had given no indication of being overtaken more than the rest. And how was London? She was coming up for the Varsity Rugger Match.

We had tea at Lyons' Corner House, looked at photographs, and talked about the Yorkshire Society. I was to give a talk to the society next term on Yorkshire Dialect. Still talking we walked into the street, and almost under a taxi. Mary pulled me back just in time and there have been few narrower escapes. That sobered us up, and we parted with some constraint.

Early in the Easter term I felt sick. A doctor was summoned who diagnosed appendicitis - not immediately dangerous. But the pain got worse, and a message came from our family doctor - "Get him home at once. They'll charge him a hundred guineas in London." I crawled onto a train home, and was soon gratefully, if apprehensively, sinking into a warm bed at the Carter Bequest hospital. Dr. Longbotham was a G.P. and surgeon of the old school, a large, red-faced, jovial man with a drooping moustache. His word was law to all, but he had a great sense of humour. He had known me from birth, and refused to charge "the Judge" a penny.

I had to let Cambridge know of the operation due, and that I wouldn't be able to visit the Yorkshire Society as arranged. In the anaesthetic I solved all the mystery of life. It was a long

climb up a steep mountainside. At the top was heaven, the answer to all questions and aspirations. I climbed and climbed, and when at last I gripped the edge at the top and looked over - there was nothing.

Next day there was a letter from Mary. She had rung up the hospital and heard, with relief, that all was well. She hoped I would be feeling better soon, and told me about Cambridge and the February crocuses, and the almond blossom on Jesus Green. As soon as I could hold a pen I replied. By the time I got into a private ward, with the Indian Penal Code and Evidence Act beside me, we were writing to each other every day. They were long letters, quietly searching and revealing, both of us conscious that we were drawn into something unusual, knowing more and more, as we went on, that it might mean everything, but guarded until we could meet again.

We met at Easter, at Coxwold, with Joyce Reeve and two or three other C.U.Y.S. members, for a five day hike across the Hambleton and Cleveland Hills. I was just about fit enough again to do a gentle ten miles a day. I remember the peculiar searching looks we gave each other all that first evening. From Rievaulx we walked up the lovely valley of Ryedale and sat close together during lunch by a stream in a narrow ghyll. A ploughman was whistling in a nearby field, his horses' harness jingling, and the sun was warm on our faces. I took her hand and felt electric fingers close on mine. We climbed on up the dale, and up the steep side of Black Hambleton. The sun was dropping low over the Pennines, lighting up ridge after ridge, with a misty light between. We sat close together in the deep heather, my arm around her and my lips touching the soft hair behind her ear.

Whilst the others stayed in Stokesley for the night I took Mary home with me to Middlesbrough and at last we were alone. Silence fell between us. I gently kissed her cheek - and slowly, almost reluctantly, as though a little afraid of the next moment, she turned, until lip met lip, and we were lost. "Darling" I said eventually, "we have just four or five months to find out about each other, and then - you know, don't you, that I shall be asking you something?" She nodded, still in a dream. I suppose we were being extraordinarily cautious. It was many weeks before Mary

could bring herself to say "I love you." It seemed to tear her heart out. But that's what it meant to her - everything.

When we rejoined Joyce and the others at Stokesley we were different people. Our hands touched often as we climbed the long ridge onto Urra, the highest of the Cleveland Hills. We walked on hand in hand into Farndale, climbing walls and fences without letting go of each other, bubbling with a rare happiness and infecting everyone around us.

That last probationary term we spent alternate Sundays in London and Cambridge. Chaperoning rules were no more, and in Mary's room above the Newnham gardens, or in mine above the Cambridge House croquet lawn in Camberwell, we could be alone, slowly climbing that long ladder of the heart's delight that never stopped for us.

In spite of this emotional preoccupation I did well in the Probationary Examination, but could not of course take the usual riding examination at the Mounted Police Training School. As a result - most unfairly, I thought - my name was last on the seniority list for my year, though even without riding marks it would have been well up.

When term ended I went up to Mary's home at Skelmanthorpe, in the West Riding hills, and everything began to fall into place. We were almost twins in experience. Her father had been a private in the Regular Army before marriage, serving for a time in India, and ending as a Sergeant. She had loved him dearly, and his death, when she was twelve, had been a great blow. Mrs. Dyson was a rosy faced Kentish woman, in whose speech the accent of the Weald was still, after many years, stronger that that of the West Riding, where life and her husband had brought her. As a girl she had spent some years in Australia as house-maid to a Bishop. Since her husband's death she had had to work in a nearby factory.
Mary had had a more difficult task than I had had to get to Cambridge, with a struggle against ill health as well as poverty. She had had twelve weeks in hospital in her last year at school - and I remembered, when I felt morbid after my operation, how she had lectured me - she had felt despair herself, she said, but had fought on, and when she thought of all that Cambridge meant, and all that life had brought her since, she knew it was always worth fighting, even to the very

last.

She was to fight twice more, but we did not know that, and the summer was lovely. We were seldom apart. Yet pain seemed always part of our love. We knew that war was ahead and that separation was ahead. Perhaps the full intensity of love comes only when time is limited. Our time was always limited. In eight years we had only two together.

In August we were camping high on a hillside above Bilsdale, beside a clear spring. We called on a farming friend, Dicky Dykes. Dicky had fought in the first war. He had lost one eye and a leg. Farming on that poor little hill farm must have been a struggle, but he was always cheerful and hospitable. He made us stay to dinner. There was Yorkshire pudding. Dicky, in shirt sleeves, cleaned up his gravy with his knife and told story after story in broad Bilsdale dialect. The room was warm with the comfortable informality of the un-bound, the convention free. In her letters Mary had said that she thought convention would rule her in the end, but there was never any convention or barrier between us, other than our mutual interest demanded. That night, over the camp-fire under a clear starry sky, I held her close. Now that we knew each other so well, with all the difficulties ahead, would she marry me? "Oh, Bill" she said, and the words seemed to be sobbed from her heart, "I couldn't live without you." As a temporary token I slipped onto her finger the lucky ring that the Chinese students had given to me in Paris. Perhaps it was lucky. I do not know. Next morning some armoured cars came up Bilsdale and we learned that war had been declared.

In Middlesbrough we chose a ring with a bit of Yorkshire and a bit of Cambridge about it - white gold, with a large zircon. We both loved zircons from then on.

We had planned to walk down the coast to stay with Joyce Reeve at Bridlington. There was no news from the I.C.S. so there seemed no reason to change the plan, except to take our gas-masks. We walked across the cliffs from Staithes to Runswick Bay, and the North Sea glittered below in pale sunlight, the colour of a zircon. On the steep bank down into Runswick an old man was making flower patterns from peeled rushes. I wonder if he was the last to practice that old country craft? I have never seen it again. I got him to make a white rose for Mary. We walked on over the high cliffs to Sandsend, intending to spend the night in Whitby. "Darling" I

said suddenly, "I can't bear to be apart from you all night when time is so short - shall we ask for just one room?" She smiled, and showed me her hand - she had turned the ring around so that it looked like a wedding ring. We found a room in a house above the harbour and under the Abbey. Mars was shining ominously over the dark sea, and later a waning moon shone through our window. We were young and inexperienced. We dare not take any risks. I might disapear at any time and Mary had another year to do at Cambridge. But love and passion, and above all , tenderness, surrounded us all night. I had to live on that for five years, and the memory of it is with me still.

From Bridlington we walked the Wold Gate to York and were in Skelmanthorpe when the telegram came. I had 48 hours to pack and get down to Southampton. We took the next train back to Middlesbrough and there was little sleep that night. There were last minute purchases to make, two steel trunks and one cabin trunk to pack - all those lounge suits and dress shirts! - and a last visit to friends and relatives. My grandmother was growing very old and frail. She clung to me as I said goodbye, and wept quietly. I did not see her again. Then Mother, who was very brave. Mary came as far as York with me, and that was the worst of all. As I kissed her on that final platform of separation, her face was wet with tears - mine too. I don't know how I tore myself away. As the train drew slowly out I looked back at that forlorn figure on No.10 platform. It was just a few months short of five years before I saw her again.

CHAPTER - 1 Voyage and Arrival -- Rawalpindi

The sun was setting gloriously over the New Forest as the Empress of Canada, hurriedly painted a drab grey, moved out of the Old Dock,and slid gently down Southampton Water. Thursday, September 28th 1939 - Waterloo had been crowded with people, topi cases and trunks, colonial officers in shorts and plumed helmets, some of my own colleagues.

Our convoy of four ships waited at the mouth of the Water for our escort, as the moon rose high above the Channel. Three days before I had been sitting peacefully reading with Mary sewing by my side - then the telegrams one after another, and the indecision of that lazy afternoon changed to swift and definite action. The journey back to Middlesbrough through darkened unrecognisable stations, with vague blue lights in which Mary's zircon scintillated so strangely, and which added to the tense communion of those hours. That parting at York. Yet in spite of the heart's and the body's longing, there was the excitement of adventure ahead.

By 8.0 am we were well out in the Channel, with two destroyers guarding our flanks. It was a day of sun and wind, with a gentle swell running to lift and roll us a little. As we sat at lunch - our group of London probationers now gathered together, with others from Ozford and Cambridge gradually making themselves known - there was a loud explosion and a trembling shock ran through the ship. We all rose to our feet - so soon? But it was just a depth charge. There were other scares as we zig-zagged West and South. Then as the seas grew rough we made faster and more direct progress. A terrific Sou-wester was blowing against us right across the Bay of Biscay. It took the tops off the waves and shattered them even on our high decks. The destroyers were lost in spray and tossing about like corks. Night after night I stood forrard, clinging to the bulwarks of the front promenade deck and wrestling with the wind and the spray and the rain. Or I went right up onto the boat deck, which reeled and swayed and see-sawed beneath me, until it seemed the wind would tear me from it into the wild confusion of black waves and white foam. Down in my cabin on "D" deck the beds rose and fell with the ship, the sea battered like continuous thunder,

and steel and timbers groaned and squeaked in agony. I was grateful for the storm.

Through a quieter sea we nosed towards Ceuta and Gibralter. As we lay in the blue bay under the grey rock I thought of Mary's father who had served there for so many years.

In the smooth and sunny Mediterranean, with the snow peaks of the Sierra Nevada fading behind us, two of our convoy managed to collide, the "Franconia" doubling up her prow and pouring the pieces of three life-boats into the sea. We sat in the sun reading, working, writing; played deck-quoits; exercised on the mechanical horse and camel in the gymnasium, laughing at ourselves as we did so; and swam a good deal. Port-holes had to be kept closed and even with the fans on it was hot in the cabin under a single sheet. I was to make two more war-time voyages in even less comfortable conditions, when all liners had been converted to troop-ship accommodation.

At Valetta there were lights, and we could open our ports to a night cooler than any since we had left Gibralter. Beyond Malta the cabins were terrible at any time. Sheets would be soaking wet with sweat. I slept up on the boat deck one night - it was cooler there, high above the sea, watching the stars swing round to the movement of the ship. Towards dawn I noticed Orion staggering drunkenly about in an unusual position, straddled over the mast, and thought that Mary would not see our favourite constellation in England for another two months. There was also the last hollow remnant of the moon which had lit our path down Southampton Water.

There was £22 in the sweep for time of passing the De Lessep's statue at the entrance to Port Said harbour, but I never won anything in raffle or sweepstake in my life. There were no women on our ship, and we had seen none since Southampton. It was quite a thrill to see a skirt. One of our Indian members, Ronnie, suggested going out after dinner to see some Arab dancing. We had visions of veiled houris, Eastern music, sinuous belly movements, all of the most cultural kind. We explained our requirements to a taxi driver, who proceeded to drive us through many side-streets and deposit us outside the biggest and most up-to-date brothel in Port Said. A large sailor from the ship leered at us with a drunken eye as he came out, jaded but happy.

A bulky Madame showed us into a large reception room, let loose a bevy of girls, and asked us our requirements. The girls made it apparent that they wore nothing under their flimsy dresses. We explained hurriedly that all we were interested in was to see some of the Arab dancing we had heard so much about. This could, it seemed, be arranged for £1 per head. Dodging the girls' clutches we followed Madame into a smaller room, where an old gipsy woman with a tambourine, and a youth with a drum, joined us. Three of the girls then stripped off their frocks and proceeded to gyrate stark naked before us. Anything less alluring it would be difficult to imagine. We sat around, upright and uncomfortable, each trying to conceal how unamused and disapproving he felt. It was a study in expression. The girls seemed to think they were not giving us our money's worth and went on to demonstrate several ways of making love if you didn't have an actual man around. This just about finished us off, and we got out hurriedly, with dignity lost but virtue retained. Ronnie was apologetic, and wanted to pay for us all, but we put it down to experience, and went on to a bar in the centre to wash away the nasty taste. We looked in at a night club, and chatted to two French hostesses. They were expensive even to talk to, so we soon left and went back, sick of Port Said, to the ship. But Ronnie stayed behind. Next day hehad a detailed story to tell of persuading one of the girls to take him home with her, and excused himself by saying that in his well-to-do household in the Central Provinces, his parents had made sure that from the age of 15 he was provided with maid servants for his amusement, and he probably needed this more than we did. This side-light on Indian feudal customs may have been true, but his general attitude at this stage made us want to brain him, The other Indian members of our group were all quiet and reasonable products of the same educational system as ourselves, in most cases, but Ronnie was incorrigible. The Indian Civil Service had long recruited equal numbers of British and of Indian probationers and certainly my generation were never conscious of anything other than equality amongst us. I remember how astounded and infuriated I was when I first heard British Army people referring to Indians as "wogs". For us who lived and worked with them, talked the language, often served under them as senior officers, there was personal

insult in the term. It was only revelations like Ronnie's, and the fact that another colleague had been married to an uneducated girl before he came to England and didn't see how he could go back to her now, that made us conscious of any differences.

The Englishmen of my year were mostly - apart from myself - public school. A good many had land or capital in the background, and some private income. Those I was to see most of in the Punjab were Thomas Tull, who had a collection of expensive hand-made shoes and brewing connections; Duggie Bolam, a boxing Blue; Peter Ensor, who had played rugger for Blackheath; John Butler, with Scottish farming interests, a keen shot and a sheepdog trial judge; and Dick Slater, an Old Etonian who was later our Ambassador in Cuba. The only time I ever saw Dick Slater look undignified was the afternoon of the day we left Port Said. We had all gone on a foray to the Casino and then opened up negotiations on the sands beyond for the hire of horses or camels. There weren't enough to go around so I walked, and laughed at the others. Even Dick couldn't look dignified on a scraggy bag of skin and bones that just wouldn't go, with a little lad in a raggy shirt pulling and an old Arab behind trying to beat him along.

In the Canal the Empress grounded at a corner, wasting an afternoon. The desert stretched away towards Palestine. Slater and I spent the day on the top deck, reading, conversing in Urdu and playing quoits. Most of us were using the voyage to improve our Urdu, knowing that we would be thrown in at the deep end on arrival, and would need a colloquial fluency as soon as possible.

Down the Gulf of Suez there were rugged mountains on each side, impressively bare and inaccessible. The sun was low when we saw the great scarred height of Mount Sinai to the East, and we entered the Red Sea with one of the finest sunsets I had ever seen. There was also excitement when we saw a rare phenomenon, a giant water-spout. A tall, perfect column of water rose about four miles ahead, bending slightly as it entered a cloud. Presently, over to the West, it began to come down again in heavy curtains of rain. We veered starboard to miss it, whilst our guardian cruiser made straight for the rain-storm to get a free wash and cool down. A quarter of

an hour after the first sighting, when we were within a mile, it began to disperse. The base grew wider and less dense, but with a dense black cone. Then the whole thing bent right over until the upper end in the cloud was almost horizontal. It parted and joined again twice before finally breaking up and a considerable length seemed to be left standing in mid-air, before disappearing into a cloud. It was the largest and closest any of the crew had seen, and there had been plans to open fire in order to disperse it.

There were more fine sunsets across the Indian Ocean. A curious lake of blued gold lay at the end of our long wake each night, with the crescent of the growing moon above. The Plough had disappeared, Pegasus had turned on one wing, and to the South and West was a great field of unknown stars.

When John Lawrence first went to India in 1829 - at the age of 18 - the voyage took five months, around the Cape, and John nearly died of seasickness. It was six weeks before he could leave his bunk. Our war-time voyage seemed long enough at three weeks. At sunset on Thursday, October 19th. we saw the water front of Bombay ahead, and the white sails of fishing vessels dotted around on the blue waters.

I had been posted to Rawalpindi, the longest journey anyone had to make except Thomas Tull, who was going to the neighbouring district of Attock. Both our districts bordered on the North-West Frontier Province and the journey would take two nights and two days on India's most famous train, the Frontier Mail. The Mail left at 9.0 p.m., and we were on it. Some green, attractively ramshackle suburbs flashed by, some wide rivers or arms of the sea - and then it was time to unroll our beds. A valise or bedding roll had been an important item of our equipment list. This was now for the first time ceremoniously unrolled, like Kai Lung's mat, on an upper bunk. The first class compartments of Indian trains are very comfortable. There are coupés for two, or compartments for four, with shower and toilet. The lower bunks which form seating during the day are opulently padded. The upper bunks, which let down at night, are less luxurious, but more private. One can be alone with one's thoughts in an upper berth.

Across the deserts of Rajputana I remember only heat and dust,

monkeys at a wayside station, and little villages which the anonymous train caught unawares, giving us intimate and unofficial glimpses of daily life.

On the crowded kaleidoscopic platforms of Delhi Station, the "races of Upper India" took shape -- large bearded Sikhs, stalwart Jat cultivators, lean and arrogant Pathans. As we drew slowly away for our second night only Thomas Tull and I were left - and he got out at Lahore next morning, planning to go on later. From Lahore I had the whole compartment to myself, and stretched out on a lower berth with a book. Some time on that second hot, dusty day, as the train wound through the dry distorted gullies of the Salt Range, I lifted my eyes to look across this lunar landscape, and came suddenly awake. Far to the North, above the blue foothills of Jammu, a white curtain was hanging in the sky, the long gleaming line of the Pir Panjal, the Western Himalayas. For another two hours as the train went on through Jhelum district I could not take my eyes away from a sight that has haunted me ever since.

It was 4.0 pm. when I arrived at Rawalpindi, and the Deputy Commissioner, Arthur Williams, was at the station to meet me. New recruits to the Indian Civil Service were always allocated for their first year to some older officer of the service for training and general supervision. Arthur had been given charge of this important district after only five years service, and was now just seven years older than me. About my own height, 5'10", slim and dark, he had what I came to recognise as the I.C.S. face-lines of responsibility, nose of authority, and eyes deep-set and wrinkled against the sun, looking always ahead to prevent trouble. Arthur had a passion for law and order. No file was ever delayed on his desk, no trouble was ever allowed to gather momentum in his district. In pursuit of order he was ruthless and could be vindictive. He was an entertaining and instructive companion, but a difficult man to get to know. I believe that under a stern exterior he hid a real love for the country, and for the people around him. But they had to be on the right side of the law.

That October Sunday was the Hindu festival of Dussehra, an autumnal Saturnalia corresponding to our Guy Fawkes night. It celebrates the victory gained by Rama over the demon king of Ceylon. After a cup of tea the D.C. took me off to see the celebrations. We were driving sedately down the Mall when an Army

officer sped past us. I shot back in the seat as the D.C. accelerated to overtake in his turn and flag the other peremptorily to a halt. Name and address - and hadn't you noticed the speed limit signs on the Mall? My court tomorrow, please. Arthur wouldn't have let the G.O.C. Northern Command himself break the speed limit down the Mall.

On the great maidan or parade ground of the City a vast crowd was gathered. The mammoth paper Images of Dussehra, representing the rival factions of Hindu mythology, were being tilted against each other until the Demon King was vanquished - then all went up in flame and smoke to the accompaniment of fireworks. There was a bullock-cart race, a fancy dress competition, and a man lifted weights with his eye-lids. I shared a throne with the D.C., who presented prizes, and the S.P. - Superintendent of Police - a very fat man called Scott whose great hobby in life was model trains. One room of his bungalow was devoted to a magnificent model railway. I have never been able to take seriously anyone who played with model trains, but there is no doubt he was a very tough policeman.

There was some rumour from the City of trouble from the Muslims on this Hindu occasion. Prize-giving over - how incredible all this seemed after my month's journeying, and how glad I was to have come straight on into the middle of it all! - we hurried off into the narrow ways of the City. A very smart and very large Inspector of Police, with the flowing puggree, or head-dress, of a Muslim, brought forward a couple of men. They were told to carry a message that if there was any trouble certain people would be arrested immediately, and would be very sorry afterwards. There was no trouble, and the D.C. went off on tour the same night. These two - Williams and Scott - were not always orthodox in their ways of keeping order, but order was invariably kept. At a later date some real political trouble threatened a particular occasion. The ringleaders were arrested the night before, held in jail on suspicion for the night, given a medical examination and a large dose of castor oil, then released. There was no trouble. In 1947, when Arthur was Home Secretary, an editor endangered the already difficult task of keeping order by a virulent attack on the Governor. Arthur not only sent him to jail but sent him to the hottest and most uncomfortable jail in the Punjab - Multan, so that he might stew there during the hot weather and repent of his misdeeds.

This was the strong method of government, and strong Deputy Commissioners were always admired and respected in their districts. There were others who were also successful, either through knowledge, intrigue and diplomacy, or through winning the confidence and affection of all parties.

Rai Bahadur Lala Izzat Rai, the Additional District Magistrate, was a good example of the second kind. He was an extremely fat and very shrewd Hindu member of the Provincial Civil Service who took charge of my training for a week whilst the D.C. was away. The training consisted of listening to his stories and sitting in his court. Since he spoke a very fast and very broad Punjabi dialect, which I had the greatest difficulty in following, and lapsed into this for every other sentence, even when talking English, I did not get quite as much benefit from the week as I might have done. But he certainly showed me the typically Indian way of doing things by manipulation - so deploying one's knowledge, and using one's contacts and connections, as to exploit any given situation in the most advantageous way. The "Rai Bahadur" was a title conferred in British India, a sort of minor indigenous knighthood. Hindus could be Rai Sahibs, or - the higher rank- Rai Bahadurs; Muslims, Khan Sahibs and Bahadurs; Sikhs, Sardar Sahibs and Sardar Bahadurs. "Bahadur" means "great" or "honoured". An English officer was usually addressed as "Sahib Bahadur" - "Honoured Sir". Izzat Rai spoke with mingled shock and glee one day when describing how some colleague had been talking with him. "Can't understand it" he said, "Yih bilkul na-mumkin hai. I did not tell him anything, and he gave me all this information!" His colleague was obviously some weak type destined to a sticky end. Not Rai Bahadur Lala Izzat Rai. Only a few of his service rose to have complete charge of a district, but he was one. Years later I was to meet him again when he was D.C., Multan, in the middle of the hot weather. He was fatter than ever, and had to have a special chair to sit in. This was placed in a darkened room, with "khass-khass tatties", fibre mats, draped around running with water. Fans played on these, and the room inside was comfortably cool. The Rai Bahadur sat within, in little more than a loin cloth, and files were brought in for his signature, or people ushered in for an audience. This might have been one of the great Hindu <u>wazirs</u> of the Moghul emperors, running his district in comfort, with a masterly hand, knowing everyone else's weaknesses.

Carrying that weight, he can scarcely be alive today, but with his astuteness I feel sure he was safely into Hindu areas before Partition cut Multan off from India.

On November 8th, having been officially gazetted third-class magistrate, I moved into a court of my own, in a tent pitched opposite to the Treasury in the Kuchery, the compound which held all the District offices and courts. No proper court was vacant, hence the tent. All grades of officer in India were entitled to an appropriate tent. This was an Assistant Commissioner's. It was made of thick quilted cloth, a pleasant yellow colour inside, with a decorated border all around the bottom. At the top of the high walls was a decorated frieze, with a fringe of red, white, green and gold. The main tent was about 10' x 12', big enough to hold the parties, pleaders and witnesses. A large canvas fly-sheet went over all, leaving an awning in front where my orderly and a policeman stood, and a closed-in apartment at the back, my "retiring room". Sanitation almost everywhere in India outside the more modern flats of Bombay and Calcutta was still by commode, or "thunder-box", and sweeper. Why generations of supposedly powerful I.C.S. officers accepted this primitive and nauseating method, except in camp, I will never understand. As soon as I got any power myself I installed a septic tank and flush system, and went around preaching rebellion and revolution on this subject in all districts. Often, of course, it was a water-supply which was non-existent, but given the water a sanitary system could be installed for three or four hundred rupees.

My initial powers as magistrate were up to a month's imprisonment and a hundred rupees fine, and as soon as word got round that a new young Sahib had set up court, a host of petty complainants with false cases flocked in. I had a reader, or clerk, to take down statements in Urdu, translate for my benefit when necessary (which was often at first) and advise as to procedure. But with previous training I was soon at home. By Christmas I had settled forty cases and could tell pleaders and parties just what I thought of them. Dick Slater wrote from Amritsar, which he had found rather dull as a city. His D.C. talked nothing but shop, so that Dick found meal times his hardest work!

I had been invited to live with Arthur Williams and his wife in the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow. This was a large house in

beautiful gardens. There was one big central room with a very high ceiling. Out of this opened the D.C.'s sleeping accommodation at one end and the dining room at the other. The kitchen and the D.C.'s office were at the back. In front were two small self-contained wings of which I had one. We ate together and I was to pay Rs.150 per month - just under £12 - as my share of expenses. This was a very usual arrangement in India.

Marjorie Williams was a slight, dark woman in her late twenties. She could be vivacious, gay, sparkling like champagne. Or she could make life a misery for everyone. She frequently felt ill and spent the afternoons in bed. She would have me go in and talk - or rather listen - to her when I got back from court. This I found distinctly embarrassing. She lectured me on points of social etiquette, and guided me in the correct presentation of visiting cards at all the Generals' houses and Officers' Messes. She was horrified when I went to tea with a Naib-Tahsildar, a very junior Indian revenue official. This was absolutely not done. It would get me a bad name. I must not fraternise with Indian subordinates. (I continued to have tea with the Naib Tahsildar, or the village lambardar (headman), or my office clerks whenever the occasion arose). Marjorie was an Army daughter who had been brought up mostly in India. She was typical, as most I.C.S. wives were not typical, of the caricature "Mem Sahib" in the East who has nothing serious to do, whose husband is always busy, and who fills in time with endless bridge and mahjong parties, gossip, and complaints about her husband's inattention. It worried me, remembering the complete understanding that Mary and I had, to find no basis of that in this household. Yet Marjorie had moments of great intuition, and an uncanny gift at times. She was remarkable at fortune telling with cards. She told me I was engaged to a dark girl, and that an older relative, with grey hair, was dead - drowned. A week later I learned that Uncle Fred, who had twice survived torpedoe attacks in the Great War, had been torpedoed again - and had not survived.

The best thing Marjorie ever did for me was to select a bearer - a personal servant - from amongst several who came along for the job in answer to the bush-telegraph. The one she advised, Madar Bakhsh, was a gentle, likeable little Muslim of about 40, who attached himself to me with a quiet efficiency which developed, as we grew to know and trust each other, into a devotion to my interests that

was restrained and undemonstrative, but absolutely dependable. He was to be with me all my service, and give me complete freedom from all domestic worries, whilst always I was conscious of his sympathy and support in other matters. One of the hardest things in losing India was to lose Madar Bakhsh, but at least I was able to get him a safe and sure post, and corresponded with him until his death in 1974. He had to employ a letter-writer for this, as he did for his accounts at times, since he knew only the basic Urdu figures and letters. But he was "the friend of my friends, the enemy of my enemies," the perfect butler, valet and cook. He had obviously been trained in the highest circles as a valet, and this took me by surprise when he insisted on holding my trousers in the correct way for me to put on, each leg in turn. I thought this was going a bit too far, and gradually managed to break him of the more intimate attentions. I don't think he minded much, as his real métier was as cook. He was not very happy in the Williams' household, because there was little for him to do except keep my rooms tidy. Marjorie Williams had an excellent Goanese cook, whose vegetable curry, every Friday, was magnificent. It was so hot that you had to keep eating it rather fast or your mouth scorched between mouthfuls. Breakfast might be Indian semolina and cream; battered prawns and chips; eggs to order. Dinner might be teal with an orange salad, or a brace of roast snipe each; and he was adept at making intricate sugar baskets for holding fruit salad and cream. Although she had spoken for him Madar Bakhsh was always a little distrustful of Williams Mem Sahib. He was happy when we went on tour, because then he could look after me fully and show off his own cooking. And it was very good. Not perhaps quite so good as the Goanese, who was a chef of no mean order, but still above average. He had learned a great deal from various Mem Sahibs, and I taught him to cook Yorkshire pudding. Soon ours was the only household in the Punjab where a real Yorkshire pudding could be had, served properly with gravy, as a separate course before the meat.

Arthur Williams was a Lancashireman, and a History Exhibitioner of Selwyn College, Cambridge. We got on very well, and he was pleased to find me trained in economics, with some knowledge of farming. He had found a complete ignorance of farming to be a

[illegible] The Indian Census required two economic surveys of villages to be made and he suggested that I do these later when I had seen something of the district. But first, of course, I would have to get a horse.

One evening I borrowed Arthur's horse, a strong bay gelding, and went off into Topi Park, an area of woods and a golf course, with rides laid out covering several miles. I hadn't ridden since my operation, and I had never ridden a horse like this, that really wanted to go. When that horse turned his head for home, my riding school experience went by the board. He set off along the tarmac road like a Derby winner with a tiger behind him, and nothing I did had any effect. Along we went the length of the Jail, with a right-angle bend ahead. There was a pile of gravel too, and I decided discretion was the better part of valour. As we skidded wildly around the jail corner I let go and fell into the gravel. Apart from a minor scrub or two I was alright and went in rather shamefacedly. Arthur was not too pleased at having his horse at risk - I thought he might have been a bit more solicitous about me! Dick Gooderson, a year senior to me, was injured so badly in a fall onto a railway line that he had to be invalided out for a couple of years.

For my 24th. birthday, November 17th., I bought a lovely chestnut mare, 15 hands, 13 years old but still very fit, for about £15, complete with saddle and bridle. The Indian Cavalry were becoming mechanised at long last, and horses were very cheap in India. This one was just as lively to handle as Arthur's, but not quite so strong. She ran away with me regularly at first, but I managed to stop her. Then a friendly cavalry officer took me in hand and put me through it properly, rough riding through the woods and across the most difficult terrain he could find. It was frightening but exhilarating. Soon I passed my riding examination in the Police Lines, the district Superintendent, Scott, examining. Before I left Rawalpindi I took Arthur's horse out again, put him over all the jumps, and rode him quietly back round the Jail corner. I felt better after that.

My first glimpse of the outlying district was one evening when the D.C. was on tour and some important files had to be

delivered to him. He was about 40 miles out, at the back of beyond - Jatli. Marjorie borrowed a car and driver from a wealthy Sikh contractor and asked me if I'd like to accompany her. The Grand Trunk Road - that historic piece of engineering, that had gradually been extended from Calcutta to the North West Frontier over a century, as British power spread West and North - took us for twenty miles, past the old Moghul fort of Riwat, crumbling walls and towers on a wooded hill. Trees lined the road, and between them the fresh green of winter wheat, now springing up rapidly, or green-brown grazing grounds broken by hills and nullahs, with the Himalayan foothills beyond. We crossed the rough chasms of the Ich and Sohan rivers, trees dotting their jagged sides, with droves of black buffaloes below. In one nullah a company of troops was encamped, in the next a group of wandering herdsmen. From Mandra an unmade road - dust and ruts and hollows led us for another fifteen or twenty miles due West into the setting sun. There were lonely farms, little villages, jagged ravines, forsaken graveyards, a wide, sparsely populated land.

Jatli was a police-station, two shops, a rest-house and a graveyard set in the middle of a vast waste of thorn-bush and desert, where the D.C. had gone for a walk. I went to find him, with the glow of sunset dying on a desolate horizon.

In Delhi, Wavell had succeeded Linlithgow as Viceroy. It was said that he had arrived in New Delhi from North Africa, war-weary and in battle-dress, to be met by civilian officers in morning suits and army officers either in mufti or in peace-time full dress. His comments were pointed, signals went forth, battle-dress began to appear everywhere, and India suddenly realised there was a war on. At the same time a letter went out to all I.C.S. officers (some of whom during the Great War had been released to the army and had distinguished themselves), stressing the fact that no-one could be released this time, that the work we were doing was far more important than anything we could do in the Armed Forces, and that it would be essential to have a reserve of fully trained officers when the war was over.

I went on with my training, accompanying the D.C. on his next tour. Apart from Murree, Kahuta was the most beautiful tahsil (a revenue subdivision) of the district, rising to pine-covered hills of 4,000ft or 5,000ft. The extraction of resin was a major industry. It was an exciting tour, over hills and down nullahs. The Deputy Commissioner's tent was rather larger than mine, with a bamboo enclosure round the front awning to make an office. But I was getting impatient at being just tagged on to the party.

Early in December I went on my own first tour, this time North along the Grand Trunk Road to the lonely little rest-house of Sangjani. Such rest-houses, with one or two sets of rooms, had been built by the P.W.D. - Public Works Department - every fifteen or twenty miles on main touring routes. The Irrigation Department had some along the Canals, the Forestry Department some in the hills. Where there was no rest-house, a tent had to be sent ahead, and a tour had to be arranged so as to give time for tents to be leap-frogged along. Sangjani was also a camping ground and soon after my arrival in the afternoon an Army detachment came in. I invited the two officers to dine with me - Madar Bakhsh was delighted - and we had a convivial evening. It was the first of many chance encounters in lonely places.

After some cases next morning I set off with two or three

local headmen and a motley crowd of beaters for a shoot in the rugged country between the Grand Trunk Road and the Margalla hills to the North. Somewhere in the centre of where the new Pakistan capital now is, I shot my first hare. All afternoon we tramped around the barren hillsides after partridge and chukhor. I failed to keep up the standard of the first shot, but I knew a good deal more of the country and its people when I returned, weary and thirsty, for a late tea.

Next morning I moved further up the Grand Trunk Road, past Nicholson's monument on its hilly spur. John Lawrence, then Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, was on tour at Rawalpindi in May 1857 when the news of the Mutiny reached him. Nicholson, that great Frontier officer, had gone there to see him. In just over four months Nicholson was to take his Moving Column through victory after victory to Delhi, recapture the City, and die a hero's death. (Except that only someone battle-mad would have led the last futile and useless charge after all the great work had been done). An engineer, Alexander Taylor, was building the Grand Trunk Road hereabouts at the time. Told that he ought to be in the trenches at Delhi, he said he would give his eyes to be there. "Send him" said John Lawrence. "Has anyone got a sword?" asked Taylor. He became the life and soul of the trenches and batteries on the Ridge at Delhi, and the night before the attack Nicholson said "If I survive tomorrow I will tell the world it was Alec Taylor who took Delhi."

Further along the Grand Trunk Road was Wah, home of the great feudal family of the Tiwanas. In the Punjab we were proud to serve under an elected Unionist Ministry of Muslim, Sikh and Hindu leaders, with Sir Sikundar Hyat Khan Tiwana as Premier. His grandfather, Malik Sahib Khan, then a small landowner, with two relatives, Fateh Sher Khan and Mohammad Sher Khan, took 250 Tiwana lancers to Delhi. Barkat Hyat Khan of Wah, then still living, was the son of Nicholson's orderly, who was by his side when he fell.

But before reaching Wah I turned off towards the hills, for

Taxila, where there was an Archaeological Museum and Rest House. The existing village was quite a large one, but the Potwar plain around, in its amphitheatre of low stony hills, was the site of several ancient civilisations and cultures, between the 7th. Century B.C. and the 5th. Century A.D., in the investigation of which Sir Mortimer Wheeler played a big part. There was a well-laid-out city in existence when Alexander the Great crossed the Indus in 326 B.C., and the foundations of the palace where he feasted, and all the streets and houses around, can be seen in the Bhir Mound. When Julius Caesar landed in Britain, Taxila had been a flourishing University town for several centuries, with a number of Buddhist monastries. Here the art of Maurya and Gandhara flourished. Taxila was the seat of one of Asoka's three viceroys, and then the home of the Bactrian Greeks. In the Museum I found one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen - an oval seal of cornelian set in gold, with four rings at the back for attachment. The seal was engraved in exquisite Grecian style with nude figures of Eros and Psyche, with a baby Eros, or Cupid, behind. It was found in the second city, Sirkap, in the early Scytho-Parthian strata, and dates from about the beginning of the Christian era. I still treasure a plaster-cast of this given to me by the Curator of the Taxila Museum, Dr. Gupta. Local legend is that Sirkap (Cut-head) got its name from a king who was very fond of chess. Any stranger who came to the city had to play him. If the stranger lost, he lost his head. If he won, he was to have the city. But it was the White Huns who finally destroyed ancient Taxila in the fifth Century.

When I held court next day in a small village close by I could not help thinking of all the races that had come through this region. I was sitting in the sunshine, in the open air, with villagers sitting informally around on the walls. Some shepherds from the hills might, apart from their dress, have come straight off the North Yorkshire Moors - the same lean bronzed faces; and drooping moustaches. One prisoner brought

before me for a minor theft reminded me irresistably of an I.C.S. colleague - the boxing Blue, Duggie Bolam. I don't think I had ever looked on Indians as being essentially different, but certainly from that day I realised in practice how similar we were in race to the people of Northern India.

The Haro river was our district and Provincial boundary - the Frontier district of Abbotabad lay beyond. From the river ran some ancient channels still used for seasonal irrigation. By the river at Usman Khattar lived a Pathan farmer, Haider Zaman Khan. With perhaps fifty acres he was well off by Punjab standards, and had a gun. Another was borrowed and I went duck-shooting with him along the river. We got one duck each, but had a very pleasant afternoon amongst those rough hills and ancient civilisations.

Rawalpindi was the H.Q. of a division as well as a District. The Punjab had five divisions (composed of four or five districts each), a division being in charge of a Commissioner. Our Commissioner was Percy Marsden, a scholarly looking man of 25 years' service who rode hard to hounds and rarely spoke without some flash of wit or quirk of humour lighting his words. Mrs. Marsden, who also rode to hounds, was irresistible and irrepressible. She was also very superstitious, or pretended to be. One evening the phone rang. "Mr. Cowley? Oh, I say, we are thirteen to dinner - I wonder if you would come along to prevent us all having something dreadful happen to us?" This unlucky number seemed to dog Mrs. Marsden's footsteps and I was summoned to the rescue several times that winter, finding myself, at the Commissioner's generous table, sitting with Brigadiers and Major-Generals.

At Christman Arthur took me to Lahore for the Governor's Dinner. Every year the Governor, as senior member of the Punjab Commission, invited the rest of the Commission to dinner at Government House. It was an unwritten law in all districts that no trouble should be started at Christmas time. The Sahibs, it

was realised, got excessively angry if that particular occasion was spoiled. So for the day before and the day after the Governor's Dinner practically the whole province was denuded of I.C.S. officers At Government House orderlies in red and gold were in attendance. After cocktails everyone lined up to be presented to H.E. whilst after the excellent dinner, and speeches traditionally witty rather than profound, H.E. had five minutes alone with each of the new members in turn. He talked to me mainly about horses. Sir Henry Craik, Bart., was tall, lean, distinguished, with the longest service in the province - 40 years. He looked very much a Governor, though after 12 years service he had still been a minor D.C. and had given up hope of promotion! H.E. left at 10.0 and conviviality grew apace. Senior Commissioners and Financial Commissioners could be seen trying to upset each other at cock-fighting.

Another Assistant Commissioner, Leslie French, with two year's service, now took up residence in the other wing of the D.C.'s bungalow. He was going to be S.D.O. - Sub-divisional Officer- of the Hill station of Murree in the Spring, and I would be going up there for six weeks' Treasury training. Snow was now thick on the hills - my main memory of that first winter in India is how cold it was ! - and one Sunday Leslie took me up to Murree in his car to see if we could get some ski-ing. Murree at 7,000' looked like Switzerland.

Just then a belated Christmas card arrived from George Thomson, living a precarious existence on art and smallholding in Fife. It was a coloured cartoon of me, sunburnt and ina white suit, sitting by an oriental table, one foot on a tiger skin, glass of whisky in one hand and a very thinly veiled houri on one knee. A coolie was sweating at the punkah inside, and outside the snow was falling. A board said " B. Cowley, Assistt. Viceroy."

The Muslim festival of Mohurram - a sort of Passion Play recalling the last days of the martyrs at Karbala - was the week-end February 16th - 19th., and Leslie French suggested that we make a trip to the Frontier. A small punitive expedition had started and some Army friends had gone up the Khyber. We could have lunch with them - if we could get up the Khyber ourselves.
By 4.0 pm. that Friday we were admiring the magnificent old fort of Attock. Round a corner the land suddenly fell away and opened out. There was that curious feeling that the sea ought to be somewhere.

But it was the Indus, which sprawls out into miles of stony bed until it reaches the fort and is joined by the Kabul river. The a narrow gorge takes both rivers through the Attock Hills. A two-tier road and railway bridge spans the gorge, but the great brick walls of the fort dominate everything. The father of one of our Punjab Commissioners, Macnab, had been A.C.Attock in 1857 and had had the fore-thought to collect the land revenue in grain, vast quantities of which he stored in the fort for despatch later to the Army at Delhi. One of our Financial Commissioners, Sir Colin Garbett (his brother was Archbishop of York) had been D.C.Attock in 1929 when a traveller discovered that the Shyok River, main tributary of the Indus, had been blocked by a fall of the Kundam glacier. This had happened before in historical times, and when it broke the flood had wiped out a Sikh army camped by the Indus. Precautions were taken, and evacuation techniques practised at Garbett's instigation. When a 27' flood came down the Indus only three cattle were lost.

The Frontier Province was greener than the Punjab, and Peshawar a pleasanter place than Pindi. The D.C.'s bungalow was on the site of John Nicholson's, with old lawns and lovely trees around it. The Indian Political Service staffed the Frontier Province, recruited half from the Army, half from the I.C.S. We met some of each sort, and were hospitably entertained.

Next morning we were in the Khyber, bare hills towering above us, crowned with pill-boxes, or look-out posts, and occasionally tipped with snow. Roadmen worked with their rifles beside them. It was not unusual for a lorry to come through from Kabul with a body spread-eagled over its radiator, as a warning to anyone else who might think of holding it up. From the fort of Landikhana, across the frontier barrier below which a whole line of lorries was waiting, there was a magnificent view over fifty miles of hills to the long line of snowy mountains towards Kabul. I wondered how many of the ancient conquerors of India must have looked back on that view. The first of the Moghuls, Babar, adventurer and poet, certainly did :-

" Drink the wine in Kabul keep
And send the cup ceaselessly round,
For Kabul is mountain and city,
Desert and river in one."

A wonderful man, Babar, coming out of Samarkand and winning an Empire, yet always appreciating a good line of verse as much as valour, and much more than virtue!

At Lundikotal the officers of the Mountain Battery welcomed us to their very comfortable mess with silver tankards of excellent beer. The luncheon table was laden with the regimental silver. The C.O. was a lean, bronzed Major whose hobby was climbing all the peaks in the neighbourhood. I wanted to join him in an assault on "Pisgah", but Leslie wanted to be back in Peshawar and on to Mardan.

In the busy bazaars of Peshawar City, the cobblers, the cloth-weavers, the brass and copper workers, each have their own street. At Mardan we spent half an hour in the Guides' beautiful Mess, occupied by them for nearly a century but soon to be evacuated.

"Now here is thy master" Kamal said, "who leads a troop of the Guides -
And thou must make a trooper tough and hack thy way to power;
Belike they will raise thee to Rissaldar when I am hanged in Peshawar!"

Kipling's poem gives the essence of the love-hate relationship between the British and the Frontier, but it is the second part of the famous stanza that carries the stress -

"But there is neither East nor West, border nor breed nor birth,
When two strong men stand face to face - - "

We climbed slowly up the curving mountain road from Dargai to Malakand and had lunch looking out over wild olive trees and the green valley of Swat towards Chitral's snow-covered mountains. An hour's scramble later and two thousand feet below, the engineer in charge of the Power Station, Dale, and his wife, gave us a hearty welcome assisted by seven retrievers, two Scots terriers, a pet lamb and a mongoose. Their bungalow was packed with bowls of fragrant narcissi picked from the Swat valley, where later pink tulips and blue lilies and irises would grow. The over-flow channel, a series of waterfalls, came roaring down from high above in a shattering mass of white foam, sending spray far out over the valley and making the bungalow ten degrees colder than the top of the hill!

As we returned to Peshawar the sun was setting over the Khyber, and the rich evening light was reflected in the Kabul river.

From Rawalpindi, next day, I rode the twenty-four miles to Kahuta in the hottest sunshine we had had since October, glad to be on horseback after three and a half days in the car. I had to study the work of a tahsil H.Q. - the land revenue work, with land measurement and crop statistics; the registry of land transfers, sales and mortgages; the finance department dealing with loans for agricultural improvement and well-digging, suspension and remission of land revenue, and recovery of fines and fees as arrears of land revenue. There was also some civil and criminal work. I went shooting in the early mornings and riding in the evenings, stopping to chat with zamindars about their crops. The scenery all around was magnificent - the high mountains only a few miles away, beyond foothills with jagged ridges and steep-sided valleys. I reined the chestnut in on the summit of a hill to watch one sunset; as the light faded she gave a contented sort of sigh and nuzzled my boot. I bent to caress her glossy neck, then as a rising moon flooded the land with silver we picked our way carefully back to camp.

I had joined the Rawalpindi Drag Hunt and that Sunday I was up at 6.0 am. hacking out to the meet as my fifth sunrise in succession spread its colours on the palette of the sky. We hunted a "dragged" scent mainly because of the very dangerous character of the terrain, and that morning was an exhilarating nightmare of pot-holes, cracks and steep nullahs. There were other Sunday mornings when we rode out of darkness into dawn, and sometimes hounds would flush a jackal and there would be a real hunt - mad breathless moments when high banks loomed or steep drops opened up - the chestnut was always up at the front because I couldn't keep her behind! She was much fancied for the Point to Point, "If only" (said the form book) "her rider can hold her in." He couldn't. We led from the start, over a quarter of a mile and two thorn fences. Shouts in my ears and the thud of hooves, wind bringing tears to my eyes - life was a mad excitement. Someone trying to come up inside pushed us out slightly and the mare took the next fence short. She caught it, landed awkwardly, and fell forward. I sailed over to make a perfect one-point landing on my head. For half a minute hooves were flashing past or over me as I crouched low. My topi was a thick one and I wasn't hurt but the mare was lame. We retired very crestfallen. I had to go around the course officially later to assess the damage to the crops and decide on compensation for the cultivators.

I rarely had more than a morning's work in court. In many private complaints I managed to effect a compromise, which was cheaper for the parties and saved me having to write a judgment. But the afternoons were always devoted to study. At the end of March there were the Higher Standard Departmental Examinations in law, language, revenue work, office and Treasury procedure. The nine of us in my year met together in Lahore for this, Slater, Tull and I passed in everything and were gazetted second class magistrates, with power now to sentence up to six months' imprisonment and Rs.500 fine. The D.C. sent me a nice little note of congratulation. More serious cases now began to come into my court, including procuration, rape and criminal assault. It was with considerable legal interest that one waded through the cases and commentaries on the various offences of the Indian Penal Code, including a page and a half devoted to a detailed consideration of how much penetration constitutes the offence of rape.

About this time there was a spy scare involving a gynaecologist of foreign extraction and unsavoury reputation. As magistrate I accompanied the party that arrested him and had the job of going through his appartments and papers with the S.P. In spite of a careful study of Peter Cheyney, and other detective story writers, I could fine no incriminating evidence whatsoever but I remember viewing the examining chair in the surgery with some distaste.

In Kahuta again amongst hills covered with pines and flowering shrubs, the growing heat filled the air with intoxicating scents of resin and of flowers. There was a day-long ride on a narrow track high above the Jhelum river. The hill-side dropped away steeply, at times precipitously, to the grey waters a thousand feet below. Logs swirled down the river, which was then the main outlet for Kashmir's timber wealth. There was a huge timber-yard where the Grand Trunk Road crossed the river some sixty miles lower down. Up here that river was the Punjab, as well as the Rawalpindi, border. On the other side was Punch, part of the State of Kashmir. The men of Punch were no different from those of Kahuta. They crossed the river on inflated skins to work in Rawalpindi, and often joined the Indian Army, as Punjabi Muslims.

I thought how lucky I was to be touring in a countryside like this, and actually getting paid for it! Yet overnight there was transformation - cloud and mist and rain came down from the hills,

and I might have been back in Cleveland.

The garden around the D.C.'s bungalow was beautiful through those March and April weeks of early summer. Red flowers of hibiscus and beds of roses; narcissi and wallflowers, carnations and orange-blossom, an almond tree - one long succession of rich scents. A two-bullock private well kept this and the vegetable garden irrigated. There was over an acre of ground altogether in the compound.

The chestnut mare had gone very lame and didn't look as though she would stand up to hard touring again. Marjorie said she would like to have her as a brood mare, so I offered to sell - for four annas - about 4d. Marjorie was very proud of her "char anna ghori". Sir Henry Craik was reputed to have a good eye for women as well as horses, and he had a very good stallion. When the Governor's Private Secretary called in one evening Marjorie wanted to know what the chances were of getting her mare to H.E.'s stallion. "Really, Marjorie" came the prompt reply, "I am not a procureur for H.E.!"

That first hot weather was not unpleasant. Through May and June the thermometer rose to 110°F, for a few days to 115°F. But it was usually a dry heat, that hit you in almost tangible waves as you cycled along the baking tarmac. A typical day would be to rise at 6.0 am., have a fast ride (on a borrowed horse) in the park, where it would still be beautifully cool under the trees; 8.0 am. bath and breakfast, 8.30 - 9.30 am. study with my Punjabi teacher, a cheerful but painstaking Hindu munshi, 10.0 am. court. Only rarely did I have official work after lunch for these two months. I had taken on the job of librarian at the Club, and worked my way steadily through piles of books to choose our purchases - the first time for years I had had leisure to read fiction. After tea at 4.0 pm. I would go down to the Club, which had a fine swimming pool surrounded by jacaranda trees hung then with bunches of blue flowers. I would swim, sunbathe, read, and play strenuous water-polo until 7.0 pm. or 7.30 pm., then go into the Club and drink a tankard of iced beer. But it was a worrying time. When Italy came into the war air mails ceased, and sea mail was taking six to eight weeks round the Cape. We had long ago decided that Mary should come out as soon after her Tripos as she could get a passage, but for weeks there was no news, except bad news on the radio. My life seemed sybaritic - but I had to live it as it was, and it was shared

with a great many Army officers.

Rawalpindi was a very important training centre. It also had an arsenal, an oil refinery - and a brewery. Amongst other things I was Excise Officer for the District. One file came for my signature to authorise "the destruction of six barrels of beer which had gone bad in the presence of the Excise Sub-Inspector." I paid a visit to the excellent Brewery, which brewed the best beer East of Suez. The Cold Room there was a wonderful place to be on a June afternoon. Coming out of it was like climbing into an oven.

For weeks I was almost dragged by the hot sun, the exercise, and the fully occupied, if not hard working, life. At the end of June I was due to go up to Murree for Treasury Training, and thanks to Government rules had a week's joining time to cover the fifty miles. I decided to go via Kashmir. A signpost outside the Deputy Commissioner's Bungalow said "Murree 51, Srinagar 165." Early one Sunday morning- June 23rd.- the Royal Mail Van whisked me out of the heat of Pindi up the hill to Murree and on, a long day's journey on, by the narrow winding road up the Jhelum valley. I was cramped in an uncomfortable front seat beside the driver. The engine made the whole space under the windscreen like an oven and my feet were baked. Behind me, and squeezing in and out past me at every stop was a filthy oil-soaked cleaner, who smoked vile cigarettes and hawked and spat out of the window. We halted at every village to deliver mails - or to take a loaf of bread to the other end of the village for the post-master. Everything was shrouded in a haze of heat, from the mountain tops to the turgid brown river swirling its logs far below. A veil of dull homogeneity was over everything, destroying the individuality of the hills. Only at one point did a group stand out, appearing in the peculiar light as though composed of green mould, beautifully fluted, with the sunshine lying thickly on them through the mist. Domel, Uri, Baramulla, and we were out as evening fell into the Kashmir plain, with avenues of slender poplars pointing the way through green paddy fields to Srinagar.

My room looked out on the green turf of the Maharajah's polo ground. I gloried in the freshness of the air and the pleasure of sleeping once more under a blanket.

I wandered around Srinagar in the morning sun, gazing in wonder at the green beauty of enormous plane trees along the Bund, a

boulevard by the river, where houseboats are moored. A friendly tonga-driver from Peshawar showed me the city and its bazaars. Finally I succumbed to the temptation of an empty houseboat moored in the clear water and amongst the floating gardens of Dalgate.

It seemed a terrible waste that evening, to travel alone through twilit lanes of water in a shikara - a luxurious sort of gondola, fitted with deep springy cushions - to lie back in solitary state and watch the stars swaying across the sky, feel the cool breeze coming from the mountains across the lake, hear bursts of music and song from distant houseboats, or wilder songs from the boatmen. It was maddening and ridiculous to be alone.

Houseboats were grossly over-rated however - quarters were cramped, the night was sticky, frogs croaked all around, babies cried somewhere at the back, and a dog barked all night. I was glad next morning to pack my luggage in the shikara and set off on a 16 mile journey by water to Ganderbal. Four strong young boatmen propelled me through the city, by picturesque but squalid channels, strange verandahed houses with intricately carved beams, and curious old bridges of wood or stone. Gangs of naked children swam in the dirty water, We threaded a way through channels crowded by other boats and barges, a monotonous chant of welcome sounding all along our path, until at last we emerged into tree-bordered water-ways and green fields, watered by peasants working a weighted lever arrangement like an Egyptian shaduf. Presently we broke into a small lake covered with water lilies and lotus - the whole area seemed to be a maze of water-ways, men and dogs amphibious. The water now was crystal, with small fish swimming amongst the weeds and moss below. We skimmed a smooth surface between willows and poplars, then seemed lost in a world of water as a large lake opened out, Anchar. Some miles across this, and we were in a narrow channel again, with a swift current against us. The water was turgid and ice-cold, and the breeze that played over it was touched with ice. We had reached the snow-water, a branch of the Sind River, coming down from Sonamarg and Baltal and the Zoji La. The boatmen walked along the bank pulling the boat against this current for an hour or so, and we were at Ganderbal - and there was Phil Talbot, whom I had last seen just a year previously in London when the I.C.S. Probationary course ended.

I had followed his progress through India by letter. On his

way to becoming - in American phraseology - a "trained-in-depth foreign area specialist" he had stayed at various ashrams - places of Hindu religious study - and the Muslim University at Aligarh, and was now doing a social and economic study of Salura, a little village on the other side of the river from Ganderbal. His quarters were a shock at first - a broken down hovel on top of a butcher's shop. But it was clean and airy, with no windows - just a completely open front. "However hot the day may be, under a chinar tree there is coolness," and we spent the hot afternoon in a grove of these oriental planes, talking. So far I had seen India from the top down, whilst Phil had seen it from the bottom up. He conferred the same privilege on me. His village friends came and squatted round us over tea, unsophisticated enough to treat us on friendly, equal terms. Nearby a large group of lads were engaged on embroidery, working all day at fine and beautiful stitching, for a few annas, and singing all the time in unison. Some of them beat us badly at badminton.

Next morning we rode up the Sind Valley on borrowed ponies, by flooded paddy fields, rushing streams, and green, tree embowered glens, until the mountains closed in on either hand. Caravans of pack-horses and camels passed us, from Dras and Kargil over the high Zoji-la, the drivers always with a word of greeting. Sometimes there were "zoh", the cross between ox and yak. My pulse thrilled at this first encounter with the nomads of the Himalayas, the caravans of Central Asia. How well I came to know this mode of travelling, this meeting and exchange of information as to route. But now we returned and took a village shikara back into Srinagar. It had no luxurious trappings, but we spread our bedding rolls and floated down a lazy afternoon dozing or reading poetry to each other.

That evening I was again in a luxury shikara, with a girl called Gwynneth - a sweet girl of 18 or so, only just out from England, but not my girl, and it seemed almost worse than being alone. Phil had made the acquaintance of a pleasant young woman, Mrs, Nancy Brown, who was chaperoning Gwynneth and her friend Barbara for the summer. They had given us dinner in their house-boat and we had persuaded them to join us on a short trek. Phil and I spent a night with our bedding rolls spread in the drawing room of an Indian friend of Phil's, the Minister of Education,

bathed in a [illegible] on [illegible], [illegible] fashion, and break-fasted off sweet [illegible] pink Kashmiri tea, which tastes more like soup and is drunk with salt. After long bargaining we hired a lorry and camping equipment, picked up the girls, and left for Ganderbal and Manisbal. By 4.0 pm. we had hired horses at Sonarwain and were starting our long climb to Tragbal and the 11,000' Razdaihangen Pass. The forest got thicker, and there was the wonder of strange and lovely flowers. We were continually finding something fresh - a sort of rock vetch which looked like heather at a distance, blue larkspur, roses, wild pinks.

We found a beautiful camp-site in a forest glade, with groves of cypress and Douglas Fir all round, and next morning set off to climb the pass. At Hafkhalanmarg was a grassy terrace in front of trees. From it the land fell sheer away for four thousand feet; cloud shadows hanging like black veils diapered the steep greenness.

I reached the summit alone, and broke for the first time into a high Himalayan meadow, a paradise of flowers. There were masses of iris, blue and purple and mauve; pink sedum; golden potentillas; blue and pink forget-me-nots; blue poppies; gentians, geraniums, primulas and saxifrages. Phil came up and we reached the next summit together, flinging ourselves down into a springy bed of dwarf juniper. Below us the road stretched on to Gilgit, to Kashgar, to Chinese Turkistan and Russia. Caravans plodded slowly on and we were filled with a wild longing to follow on that mysterious road,

"Beyond that last blue mountain, barred with snow."

On Saturday the local police inspector came the twelve miles up from Bandipur to check Phil's registration as an alien. He was an unusual policeman who talked - over tea - of trees and of history and of Mohammad Tughluq, who tried to invade China through Kashmir and Tibet. A passing Englishman called, who in a long holiday in the hills had grown a beautiful beard. It was Ian Stevens, Editor of the Statesman, on the two biggest English language dailies in India. He was a very pleasant companion and a great conversationalist, though war and politics seemed a civilised intrusion into that place of uncivilised peace and seclusion. (I met Ian again in Calcutta later on, reviewed some books for him, and we met again after Independence in King's College, Cambridge, when he was writing the book "Horned Moon" which strongly criticised some of Mountbatten's decisions at the time of Partition. But all that was very far

away, that idyllic afternoon in the Tragbal forest!)

A camel-caravan of Afghans taking salt to Gilgit and encamped below us. One man came begging for medicine as he had pains about his heart. We gave him Andrews' Liver Salts and he came to thank us for a complete cure next morning. But that night we were disturbed by a panther which tried to attack the horses. The coolies built up a huge fire; Stevens' spaniel Julie growled ominously into the depths of the forest; the Afghan dogs barked furiously, and then there was silence.

There was a peculiar sadness in breaking that camp, which had been so happy, so much out of life and out of the world. Phil and I did our best to break our necks in a hectic descent down the short cut, sliding from rock to rock and tree to tree, twisting round curves and leaping down sudden drops. At the bottom we were soaked with sweat, and spent an hour or two bathing in an ice-cold stream. We felt like a couple of kings when the girls arrived. Except for a few minutes on their way through Murree I never saw them again -

> "You who were bright and beautiful and gay,
> And made unhappiness a lighter load."

Phil had done a good job . In a week he had removed from me the incubus of authority, any incipient aloofness and superiority; he said I needed a week like that every year to keep me sane and human - but I was never in danger again. The funny thing is that now the positions are reversed. I have been a farmer for years. Phil was to become one of Kennedy's young men, an Assistant Secretary of State, and then a United States Ambassador. It is I who try to lift the official cloak from him and rub away the diplomatic patina of office.

The Jhelum Valley seemed altogether more beautiful on the return journey, with green valleys and high waterfalls. The only others on the bus were an R.A.F. man from Kohat, a highly intelligent Indian mechanic from Bannu, and an Anglo-Indian girl who had been teaching in a convent at Srinagar. She was a lively and interesting person, courageous and completely at home in life, getting the most out of it by subordinating her job to herself. She simply took a job wherever she wanted to go. We talked poetry and politics amongst us, and stopped for tea and cherries in a ramshackle restaurant high above the river.

In Murree there was home mail - and every hope that Mary would

be leaving at any moment - might already have [illegible] to Kashmir again at the end of my Treasury training - [illegible] for my honeymoon.

I settled down to Treasury work, counting notes, weighing coins, being a Bank Cashier for an hour or so a day, and a magistrate trying forest cases for the rest. There is little crime in the hills except for breaking forest laws. These were hill men, wanting a bit of extra wood or a bit of extra grazing. I knew them well, and was lenient. There were a few offences against municipal bye-laws, and even a few European motoring offences. I was less lenient with these. There were days and evenings of strenuous climbs up and down into the valley to see a piece of land in dispute, or visit a village.

One evening I had to go down to Sunny Bank, two miles below Murree, to witness the will of an old Indian farmer who was too sick to come to see me. I made the occasion my evening walk, and both court reader and orderly insisted on accompanying me. The Head Treasury Clerk had to come as sub-registrar, and he brought his son-in-law! The testator was the lessee of a large market-garden and orchard - an old peasant wrapped in a quilt outside his mud hut. He was 90 years old and had worked that garden for 60 years. An Englishman had started the garden long before that, and this man had worked for him and then taken over the lease. Amongst all the flowers and fruit was a hazel copse with the nuts almost ripe. I picked a juicy Keswick apple from a tree - thinking of a Yorkshire orchard - and climbed back up to Murree with a bunch of large white dahlias, white phlox, and salmon-and-gold gladioli.

It was monsoon weather still, and storms tossed frequently at trees and windows, and at my heart. The weeks passed, and no cable came.

I went to someone else's wedding - Christine Marsden, the Commissioner's daughter, marrying the Governor's A.D.C. The I.C.S. were there in force and we drank champagne in the club. The D.C. introduced me to Thapar, one of our senior Indian members, who was doing the Settlement of Jhelum District. He asked me if I was married, because he had trained one I.C.S. wife to be a better revenue officer than her husband. I hoped he might have another to train next year.

I was wondering what my own wedding would be like, what I

should do about a cake, whether it would [illegible] to go to Bombay, for a quiet wedding, or have a big reception in Pindi, with all the I.C.S. and the Army there. Mary would like the Army, with their uniforms, medals and swords. I rather envied them myself. The D.C. remarked that the I.C.S. needed no such exterior distinguishing marks. Like Alex Taylor, I would have liked a sword just then and our civic training seemed unreal in the aftermath of Dunkirk, with frequent air raids on the North East Coast.

However, at the beginning of August I was deep in court work - I had been in charge of the sub-division for a week. One night I went 4,000 ft down into the valley to settle a village dispute. I sat in the middle of a pine wood with the parties all around me, the whole village and a good many neighbours spending an enjoyable evening as spectators. I had tea on top of a carpenter's house with a view right over to the plains, and passed on the latest news, and stories of the war, from home. An hour's strenuous climb at speed through dark, cloud-filled forest took me back to beer, a hot bath and dinner.

Two days later I arrived in Srinagar at 9.0 pm. Phil had a tonga (pony-cart) waiting and after a quick meal in an Indian restaurant we jolted off through fifteen miles of moon-lit paddy-fields to Ganderbal. It was midnight when we arrived, and after a few hours sleep we left at 7.0 am. This was going to be a strenuous trip and we were travelling light, with one tent and a boy of 14 to do the cooking. Somehow we got all the expedition equipment on the tonga, some in front, some on the back, some on the sides, and set off up the Sind Valley. The road was rough and muddy, and at last we broke a spring. All was to unload, then somehow we got the spring tied up with string and pushed on a few more miles to Kangan. We had meant to cross the Yam Har Pass, but a glance at the map showed us a track from Kangan over the lesser-known and higher Sekwas Pass. Whilst we were considering this a car drew up - an Army officer and his wife on a fishing holiday, with a camp near-by. It was a happy meeting. Lt. Col. Ely gave us tankards of ale from a store of bottles which he kept cooling in the glacial stream, a dish of trout for supper - and a lift to where our path started a mile further on.

We camped on a beautiful stretch of turf above a rocky stream just through the village of Sura Purao. Above us towered the snowfields of Sarbal and Hoksar, 13,000 ft, and Yamhar Peak, 15118 ft. Our river was crystal, smashing into white falls. We bathed in it,

naked in the sunshine. The water was so cold it seemed to burn.

Climbing up that valley was a tough pioneering proposition. The bridges were single, slippery tree trunks, or none at all. Through spruce and deodar we came to the meadows of Sonamus. Here a young herdsman had fallen cruelly on sharp rocks, cutting great lumps out of his leg. It had been wrapped in cow-dung, but was going gangrenous - a horrible sight. All we had was iodine. I ordered him to be taken immediately to hospital - but that would be two days' journey. We left some money - but would they go?

The upper valley was bare, surrounded by peaks and hanging glaciers. Grey crags rose sheer from the grass slopes. Rocks lay scattered everywhere. We gnawed greasy chicken bones on a rock by the freezing stream. We were dressed like the early mountaineers, with no modern equipment. The final climb went very steeply up fifteen hundred feet of loose rock. We wore long coats against the cloud and rain. At the top there was a small lake in a triangle of three peaks. We were at 13,631 ft. and it was bitterly cold. The lovely conical peak of Deo Mosjid came out of the clouds - and I found fifteen different species of flowers in five yards. Beyond the pass was a long gentle valley of green, marshy meadows between grey crags. Masses of white saxifrage, blue gentians and purple bugles gave way to the gold of corydalis, geum and potentilla. The Yamhar track and stream joined ours a few miles down at Sekwas, a wild and desolate place with only juniper wood for a fire. But sunset flushed peaks and clouds with rose.

Sending our camp on down the valley we climbed the steep Pahilmaza ridge to the South. Valley and mountain were dappled with the shadows of white clouds that floated slowly over a blue sky, and then, over a brow of juniper-covered crags, we looked down a thousand feet on to Tar Sar, a lake of turquoise blue enclosed by snow-capped peaks. We sank into the juniper and just gazed at it for half an hour. At first it was like glass, with no ripple, a miracle of every shade of turquoise, blue, green and black, the mixture altering every minute as the shadows moved. Then the wind came up and the magic was destroyed.

In the rock clefts were blue poppies and pink roses, on the lake margin, above some snow patches, gentian and primula, and a scabious like a thistle with a great spike of pink flowers. At the valley junction a patriarchal herdsman offered us milk, and then we

were down amongst straggling birch forests that clung to the steep hill-sidé with the great cliffs of Chumanai Gali towering above and the rapidly swelling stream below rushing down in a series of spectacular water-falls. At Lidderwat were green pastures framed in spruce and deodar and sown with lumps of grey-white rock. Above the forest more cliffs, fluted like giant organ pipes. Rivers met below, and that night half a mile of white foam tossed like molten silver in the moonlight. Again there was a sick-parade of herdsmen, one old man with a septic hole above his elbow and two broken ribs. But here there was a hospital one day down the valley at Pahalgam.

On Thursday August 15th. when, though we did not know it, the Battle of Britain was being fought out, we narrowly escaped disaster ourselves. Sending our camp down the Lidder Valley to Arau, we turned up-river meaning to circle right-handed over the ridge by Sosirwen and Katarnag to our camp. A herdsman-guide we had picked up took us far past our point of turning, and we saw no bridge. We were forced into attempting a longer and higher route right up the West Lidder Valley and over the Kolahoi Glacier itself. Through an old spruce wood huge fallen trees covered with moss lay across our path. Another herdsman forced his way through a furious strength of waters to sell us a large lump of curious rock crystal - but we had no intention of carrying that around Kolahoi. Ahead of us the magnificent massif of Kazimpahilin Bal, 15,528 ft., seemed to block the way, and here stream and path turned East under the mountain's towering Southern cliffs. A sharp conical peak of sheer rock and snow pierced the sky ahead, Kolahoi, the Matterhorn of Kashmir, 17,799 ft. Five years later I was to lead an assault on that startling peak itself, but our only concern then was to find a way beneath its precipices. How ignorant we were, to think our plan was even remotely possible! We floundered through miles of glacial moraine, our guide missing the path completely, until at last we came to some Gujar herdsmen's huts. But they were at the other side of the river. We would need a guide from them, so cross we must. The water rushed furiously from the glacier above. We held each other's shoulders firmly and crossed abreast, bracing ourselves against the icy flood that surged around our thighs and drenched us to the shoulders. We had to push all our weight and strength up-stream to be able to go on at all. At last we were out of the maelstrom, and wringing the water from our clothes. A handsome girl of 14, silent but smiling, took us to her father - and

then came the blow. Our path was impossible at this season, he said, the glacier broken up by crevasses. We looked at each other in sick dejection. We both hated retreat in any circumstances. But this was the point of no return. If we went on, we would have to go all the way whatever the risk. It would be shorter to go on, a long, long way back - but going back was certain. We did not realise even than what it would have involved to make that apparently short crossing ahead. It went over 15,000 ft., over glacier all the way. Had we been so foolish it is doubtful if we would have lived to tell the tale. Prudence prevailed. We smiled at that girl who belonged to the mountains, and she smiled back. We waved goodbye to the Gujar camp and climbed through the rocks and scree that led up to the glacier mouth. We would at least see that, and save re-crossing that icy stream.

Around the corner a grey wall of rock-capped ice blocked the valley, the stream pouring from a dark cavern at its base. Above, the glacier spread wide and long, grey with rock and shale for a mile or two, then rearing up in dirty white fissures and folds to split around the pyramid of Kolahoi, etched in black and white against the blue.

> "   the firths of ice
> That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
> To roll the torrent out of dusky doors."

We turned and lunched on cold chicken and scones washed down by ice-water, and great clouds came up the valley to meet us, bringing rain. Suddenly there were shouts and a shot - and a man ran past with a rifle. It was some Rajah's party out after bear.

We now had to go back not only all the route we had covered, but a further eight miles down to our camp at Arau. The last eight miles went high up the side of the valley, over immense lawns of lovely turf, dotted with white rocks, and edged by spruce and deodar and cypress. By the end we had covered 25 miles of rough going, and just crawled into our tent.

Pahalgam was full of pilgrims going up to the sacred caves of Amarnath for the Hindu festival of Janamashtmi, Krishna's birthday. In the most sacred cave is a stone <u>lingam</u> or phallus, which at the right moment of mysticism and exaltation at the full moon, is said to swell and lengthen. (For the mass of Hindus, worshipping the powers and even the organs of procreation as part of religion and of life, birth control is not easy to accept).

We bought the beer and chocolate we had longed for all the week, and looked for someone with a radio. In the one shabby hotel that the village possessed was an Indian business man who welcomed us with tumblerfuls of whisky and conjured out of the air of that remote valley the news that 170 German planes had been shot down out of the air of Britain the day before. He was probably Congress and anti-British in theory, but he poured out more whisky and we were one in friendship and jubilation.

The next evening in Srinagar was wholly Indian. We had a Kashmiri dinner with Phil's friend Mukhtar of the Education Department - the main dish being yakhni, balls of finely minced meat cooked in milk. Two famous Kashmiri musicians played for us with harmonium and drums, and sang haunting Kashmiri songs.

I was back in Rawalpindi the following evening as the full moon rose over the maize fields, and I wondered if the Amarnath lingam was rising too.

I had Phil's economic and social survey with me and spent the next week checking the typescript and translating some Kashmiri poems into English verse for him.

" In city or in village, field or wood,
where can I seek? under what envious sky?
in what rich garden does your beauty lie? - - -

You are my garden, full of lovely flowers;
you are my soul, and its oppressor too;
a torture are these separating hours, - - -"

And there was the song of the women in the fields -

" Ah lovely rose, where growest thou?
In my own garden rose of mine;
And he must pay the price, I vow,
That thinks to drink thy heady wine "
The pear tree too is flowering now.

" Bring tea, O you who own these fields
We toil in, slave-like, all day long;
You need not worry for your yields -
You'll get your tea come right or wrong "
And now the pear its blossom shields.

" Ah, go not, till our heart be told;
We would make love, go not away;
Ear-rings we'll make for you, of gold -
We would make love, beloved, stay! "
The pear-tree's flowers are growing old.

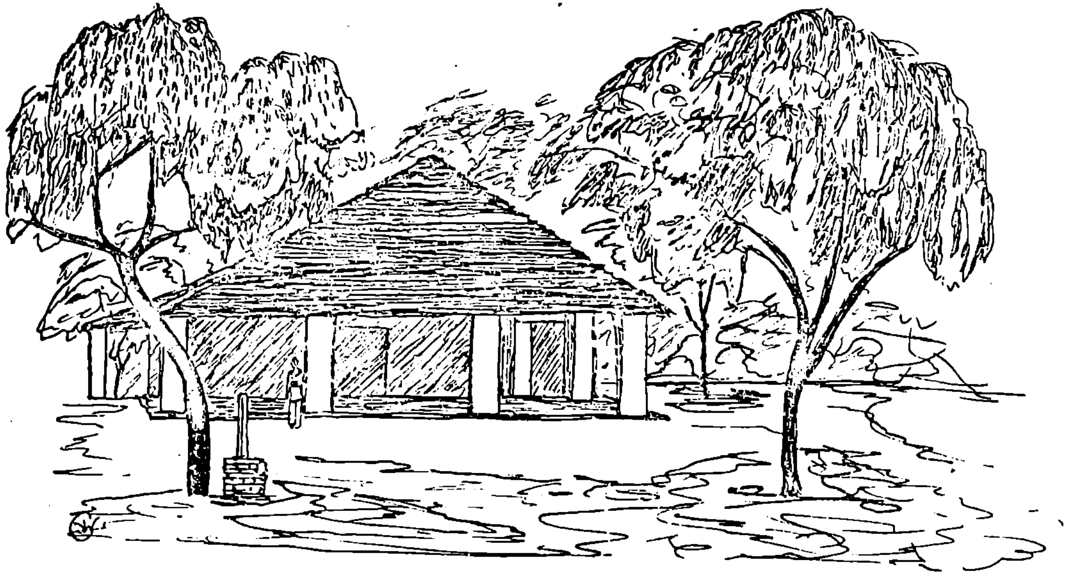
Phil had made a study of the very poor economic condition of the

predominantly Mohammedan peasants

of Kashmir under their Sikh Maharajah. He had even found out what the Kashmiri women wore under their flowing outer garment or phirin - rough drawers and a shift if they were lucky! In cold weather they often carried a tiny charcoal brazier under their phirin to keep them warm. Generally taxes were heavier, and the proportion of produce taken as land revenue greater, than in British India, and far less was done in the way of education and medical care. For 1,990 villages there were only 824 primary schools. There were complaints of forced labour. Though 92% of the population were Mohammedan, the tiny Hindu oligarchy forbad cow slaughter. Already Sheikh Abdullah, the Lion of Kashmir, was agitating against the Maharajah.

I now had to do economic surveys of two villages myself. Rawalpindi District was, on the whole, more prosperous than the average Punjab district, as the Punjab was more prosperous than the average Indian province. There was better land and better production in some of the canal-irrigated districts, but the climate and the natural rainfall were better in Rawalpindi than in most districts. In addition there were good opportunities of employment in this big Cantonment, whilst in the hills there was timber and resin extraction. Above all there was the vast amount of employment in the army itself. These stalwart Mohammedan cultivators from Rawalpindi and Campbellpur and Jhelum were the backbone of the Indian Army. The Punjab as a whole, with Sikhs and Rajputs, provided something like 90% of India's front-line fighting troops. But in Rawalpindi and Jhelum the amount paid out in Army pensions every year exceeded the amount gathered in as land revenue. There was one village on the Salt Range which alone had provided one hundred Viceroy's Commissioned officers. If therefore I give a typical case of a small cultivator in this area, it will give some idea of the poverty elsewhere. On a holding of 5 acres he could grow 2-2½ acres wheat each year giving him, if he was lucky, about a ton of grain. Now any Punjabi looks on about 2lbs. of chapatties a day as his basic food ration, the wheat being ground by the women in a stone quern, and baked into thin, unleavened pancakes on a curved iron sheet over a cow-dung, or wood and cow-dung, fire. The family, with one aged parent and three children, would need every bit of that wheat to live on. But of course they might grow half an acre of maize, which also made a delicious chapatti, and there would be a summer crop on half the land of some millet -

sold, used as cattle-feed, or eaten in an emergency. In summer the other half of the land probably lay fallow, but in winter the half not in wheat might carry a mustard frop for oil seed, or some other green crop for cattle fodder. Two bullocks and a milk cow had to be kept, but the bullocks did a bit of carting on hire. There were a few hens and a few vegetables. Meals consisted mainly of the chapatties, with a small amount of curried potato or vegetable of some sort, rarely meat. The total cash income of a family like this without any pension might be no more than Rs.100-150 a year over and above subsistence, - £10 say. But 55% of Punjab cultivators had less than 5 acres (only 23% had more than 10) and the Punjab had the largest average holding in India. In Rawalpindi a man with much less than 5 acres naturally had to find work as well, or join the Army. Elsewhere in India he often starved and still does. At this time a labourer's wage in a poor district was only 4 annas a day - 4d. For comparison a bearer's wage (Madar Bakhsh for example) was Rs30 a month (45/-); a syce (groom) Rs15. My own salary was Rs700 a month.



Chainsa Rest House

CHAPTER - 3 Gurgaon and the Jumna River

A year had gone full circle. I was thinking of a Birkdale campfire, the cliffs of the Yorkshire Coast, and a room above Whitby Harbour when my orders came for Settlement Training. This was to be at the opposite end of the Province, beyond Delhi, in Gurgaon. There were only two people from the Punjab whose names I had heard of before ever coming to India. One was F.L.Brayne, an I C.S. man who had spent many years in Gurgaon as Deputy Commissioner, and devoted himself to the improvement of village life and farming. His enthusiasm for manure pits and latrines was a source of some amusement to many of his colleagues, and he never received in the Punjab the recognition he deserved. But his work became known in many other countries and his influence lasted longer than that of many more orthodox and more highly decorated contemporaries. The other was H.W.Hogg, who after Army service in the Great War and Y.M.C.A. work in India afterwards had built up the Boy Scout movement in the Punjab and indeed in India. He too I was to meet for the first time through this appointment to Gurgaon.

We arrived at the little station of Gurgaon one evening, and to my astonishment Madar Bakhsh appeared on the platform with four figures in white burqas - the flowing white cloak and veil which covers a purdah woman from head to foot. This was the first time I had met his family, or realised that his youngest daughter was 14. Someone had come to meet me with a car, and the word flashed around the province that Cowley had turned Muslim and landed in Gurgaon with four wives!

Although only twenty miles South of the Imperial Capital of New Delhi, Gurgaon was a small town with no power station. The bungalows in the Civil Lines - there were only half a dozen, belonging to Deputy Commissioner, Settlement Officer, Assistant Settlement Officer (A.S.O.), Superintendent of Police, A.S.P., and Civil Surgeon - were fitted with antique punkahs, and oil lamps. There was no cantonment here and nothing could have been a greater contrast to Rawalpindi.

The main historical source of revenue in India was from the land. Even in the twentieth century, as Income Tax became heavier on salaried and business classes, it was the 72% of India's population engaged in agriculture that was the more easily assessed and the more important source of Government finance providing at least a third of total revenue. There had been a detailed system of land revenue assessment under the

Moghul emperors, and with improvements the British carried on a similar system. A "Settlement" was the complete revision of the land revenue assessment of a district. It involved the checking of the original field survey, and of the field registers and lists of holdings which together form a very detailed village domesday book with a complete record of crops on every field over the period between settlements. There would be a new settlement about every thirty years, and amongst the Punjab's thirty districts, at least two would be under settlement at any one time, since a settlement would take three or four years. In re-assessing the revenue consideration would be paid to the improvement (or deterioration) of wells and of the water level; the general state of land and crops at the time of inspection as well as in the records; any rents being paid; and all the local customs of common right and grazing. In addition transfers of land and rights of ownership were checked in open court and everyone given a chance to state their case or bring complaints. All this work, conducted in the local vernacular, gave an unrivalled opportunity to know the people, their language and customs, intimately at the level of the soil.

The Settlement Officer for Gurgaon (a predominantly Hindu area) was Akhter Hussain, a Mohammedan member of the I.C.S. The S.O. for Jhelum, overwhelmingly Mohammedan, was a Hindu, Thaper. This was pure coincidence. The prestige of the I.C.S. was such as to overshadow race or religion.

Akhter Hussain was a short, broad man of about 45, with a friendly smile and a quiet voice. His wife, the Begum Sahib, was equally friendly. She spoke no English and - except that there was no purdah - they kept a fairly traditional Indian household, with a court-yard in the middle of the house and a more or less open kitchen. I liked them very much and stayed with them a good deal. There was an English Assistant Settlement Officer, under Akhter, Lewis Addison, with about eight years' service and a charming French wife. There were five Assistant Commissioners gathered in Gurgaon for Settlement training - Tull, Bolam, Butter and Kewal Singh, a Sikh member. Some of us stayed with the S.O., some with the A.S.O. and some in the Rest House, but we tended to congregate in the A.S.O.'s bungalow in the evenings, Akhter as well, and carry on a polyglot conversation. One day the Financial Commissioner paid us a visit. Sir Colin Garbett was now at the head of the Punjab's revenue system, and he

talked with much scientific detail about the problem of water-logging. This was affecting large areas of irrigated land, where the rising water table had brought noxious salts to the surface. As I listened to the chemistry my mind went off to Mary as it very frequently did, "And what are you smiling at, Cowley? I expect you know more about this than I do and you're laughing at me!" I had to explain hurriedly that I'd been thinking of my fiancee, who was a chemist, and would certainly have enjoyed the present discussion! However, Garbett never quite believed after that that I wasn't a secret authority on the subject, which wasn't fully understood, then, at all. It has now been realised that it is essential to combine drainage with irrigation, so as to keep the water table down and the salt below the surface.

This was the most difficult time of all for Mary and me. Having failed to get a passage in the summer after coming down from Newnham, she had taken a temporary post teaching mathematics to young men at the Huddersfield Technical College. She thought it was altogether better than teaching children! We were still hoping for a passage, and here was I, soon to go off alone to some isolated rest house, where we might have lived rent-free during a sunny Gurgaon winter.

Before sending me off into the wilds alone, Akhter Hussain took me off on tour with him for a week. I had arrived in Gurgaon without a horse, but Akhter offered to lend me one. He had a beautiful but very lively Arab mare which he said frankly he didn't like riding himself. She was black, like polished jet, with a white blaize down her nose and one white fetlock. It took two men to hold her whilst I mounted, and then she was like coiled springs unloosed. It was hard work keeping her reined in to the more sedate pace of Akhter's horse and the rest of the cavalcade. Our party was large, with Tahsildars, Revenue Assistants, and the leading farmers and land-owners of the district. In the villages it became a triumphal progress. This was the most important day for thirty years in any village - every man, woman and child was out to greet us, the village band in full blast and fireworks going off right and left. My Arab nearly landed on a house top at the first trumpet-blast and again at the first explosion. After that she seemed to enter into the spirit of the thing, with pricked ears and proud arched neck. We were in no danger of being crowded, because she seemed only too ready to nip anybody or anything that came too near in front or lash out at any-thing too near behind. Since she was equally dangerous at both ends I christened her Deadly Nightshade.

There were some very companionable evenings with Akhter, in his tent, by the light of an oil pressure lamp. He was an unassuming man, who knew his job well, and did his best to pass on experience to me. Whilst he dealt with files I would study old Settlement reports and the District Gazetteer which gave a history of the district and of all its tribes, stopping to ask questions now and then. There was one particular tribe in the area called Meos. Unlike most of their neighbours they were Mohammedan, having been converted from Hinduism only a few centuries ago, in the time of Aurangzebe. They were a rough, tough lot, with straggling hair and untidy turbans, still more given to theft and dacoity than to agriculture. This part of Gurgaon and some neighbouring districts was known as the Mewat, and the Meos had a fund of folk-songs, and a haunting way of singing them, with some most melodious long-drawn-out notes. One of their songs was about a famous dacoit called Sultan, who had held sway on both sides of the Jumna for years. Something of a Robin Hood, he had won the fear of some and the devotion of others. An English police sahib also figured in the song - the one who had at last tracked Sultan down. This was Freddy Young, of the United Provinces, who was already legendary as a dacoit-chaser.

Another evening, with files finished, we talked about life in general, Akhter quoted some Persian poetry, and I gave him my own verses to look at. I had been experimenting with some free verse. One could hardly call it poetry but it had helped to relieve my feelings in the past few months. Here are two of them -

> I was lost in the labour of verse,
> in the production and polishing of beauty
> lost - - -
> when in came an agent of the Sun Life Assurance Company
> of Canada.
>
> I enjoy excellent health
> and had my appendix out last year.
> There were crocuses outside my window
> and a girl called Mary wrote to me every day
> for some reason.
>
> At forty-five I may have children.
> One rupee a day now
> will give me £700 then.
> Seven hundred pounds can accumulate thus
> only with the help of the Sun Life Assurance Company
> of Canada.
>
> Mary and I rather fancy twins,
> but she may be bombed or torpedoed out of existence
> at any moment.

Then there won't be any twins,
and I shan't want £700.
I shan't want anything.
And even the Sun Life Assurance Company
of Canada
will not be able to help me.

Under the dappled grey September sky
mist crept like a forgotten ghost
through stooks of maize and millet.
Peace lay over the land
and the morning stillness of an English Sunday
breathless with the expectancy of bells.
I waited for bells
until listening became a tension, an anxiety,
a longing for bells
for church bells sounding over English harvest fields
in the grey quiet of a September Sunday morning.

Suddenly, on the silence,
broke the jangle of camel-harness
and the raucous cry of a parrot.

Late that night in my own tent I wrote something for Akhter -

Friend,
I read my own verses with fresh interest
because your eyes saw them
and having read
laughed into mine.
My poems are so much the better
because you understood.

To ride Nightshade was to spoil one for any other horse, ever. She was a compound of fire and steel and velvet. She demanded a gymnast's ability to mount her, and she would spurn the earth for the first hour. With twenty miles behind her she would nuzzle her head against you in the warmest affection, drink from the lid of a Thermos flask, and go twenty miles back faster than she had come. Akhter Hussain gave her to me.

It happened that I got the furthest and most isolated part of the district for my practical training. Chainsa was on the banks of the Jumna River, our boundary with the United Provinces. There was no direct motor road. To get there it was necessary to travel back almost into Delhi then out again on another road to Ballabgarh, which was the tahsil headquarters and a station on the main Bombay-Delhi railway line. Then there was a twelve mile stretch of kacha (unmade) road to Chainsa - at least sixty miles altogether by road and a day's journey by bus. (The Indian word for bus was "lari"

and lorries they really were). But if I rode across country it would only be thirty miles, would take less time, and be altogether more enjoyable. I had purchased a second horse from a Brigadier in Delhi, a gelding just half a hand taller (at 15½ hands) than Deadly Nightshade. He was black too, but not such a glossy jet as Nightshad and he was called Black Knight. I had acquired a local syce (groom) and with him as guide set off early one morning, having sent luggage and bearer round by road. Soon we began to climb into a range of low stony hills, covered sparsely with thorn. For a few miles there was nothing but this desert of stone and thorn, then we descended into a green valley where a herd of black buck were grazing. They scarcely heeded our approach at first, and we were within bow-shot before they took off. Beyond, amongst some wheat-fields, a few graceful <u>chinkara</u> deer were much more timid. Away they went as soon as they saw us, their fast run punctuated by incredible leaps. After twenty miles we paused at Ballabgarh, where Kewal Singh was installed in the Rest House for his training. He gave me a welcome meal, and we talked over the work that lay before us. After an hour's rest I left, and was soon entering the country that was to be mine for the next six months. A narrow lane between mud banks, topped by bushes and trees took me through fields into a waste land of stagnant lakes and thorn jungle, more fields and a large village, Dyalpur. Beyond, the lane climbed onto lighter, sandier land, where in addition to wheat there were fields of gram, a dwarf pea. With the lane now a sandy track between avenues of trees, we began to descend gently towards the river. The road forked - left to Chainsa village on a mound overlooking the river, and right to a wood of <u>nim</u> trees - rather like ash - and <u>kikar</u>, a thorny acacia. In the middle of the wood was a white-washed rest-house with thatched roof, delightful as a temporary home. I settled in, putting water-colours of the Cleveland Hills on the rough white-washed walls, Persian carpets on the floor. If this was to be my home for the winter I might as well make it as home-like as possible. In the sunset I strolled out to where a small lake reflected the evening light. Doves crooned gently from the trees, some partridge twittered, and then for the first time I heard the long wild call of peacock. It came, hollow and haunting, from across the river Pee-OCK, Pee-OCK - - -, and was answered by birds close at hand. I went to the other end of my little wood, beyond a small police house that was behind the bungalow, and found a dozen great

birds roosting high up in the nim trees, silhouetted against the dying light. Some pi-dogs barked in the village, a wolf howled far off, and from the waste of tamarisk by the river came a chorus of jackals.

My first task was to do a field survey and special study of one particular village, before inspecting and assessing a circle of twenty five neighbouring villages in an area of about a hundred square miles. Hirapur, my "special" village, lay three miles to the South of Chainsa. The land between was open, with no hedges or ditches and no irrigation. The fields were mostly bare stubble, with the winter crops of wheat and rape and gram and further over towards the village tall patches of sugar-cane. A herd of black-buck were grazing the stubble, and further on by a patch of thick jungle a grey wolf appeared, saw me and vanished. I was not far from the country of Kipling's Mowgli, but though there are some similar stories in Indian folk-lore, Kipling's imagination was never stronger than when writing about these wolves. On the Punjab side of the Jumna they were poor specimens, going in pairs rather than packs, and no more danger to man than the jackals.

To help me in my task there was a Kanungo (an area revenue clerk), a patwari (a village revenue clerk) and the headman and some of the cultivators of this Hindu village. First a base line had to be put out with a chain and a primitive sort of sighting stick. There were plenty of willing hands to run the chain out. I sat at a rough table brought from the village, with old maps spread out and a new sheet of mapping paper pinned on a drawing board. Measurements would be made wherever the base line crossed a field boundary. Other measurements would be made from the base line to field corners, and so the map could be built up. But a snag appeared at the next field boundary - a kikar tree stood in the way of the base line. Someone went to fetch an axe and I went over to examine the obstacle. The villager who brought the axe was about to attack the tree when I stopped him. For months I had been longing to get hold of an axe again. I'd even written a verse in Murree -

" Oh God, for tools to fill my hand again,
To stretch the muscles of an idle shoulder;
Axe, scythe or fork, the symbols you disdain - - "

It wasn't a very good axe - straight-shafted and awkward - but I took it. It suddenly dawned on the gathering that I meant to fell

the tree myself, and there was consternation and protest at first - "Oh, no Sahib Bahadur, you must not do this - this is our work" "That's alright" said I, "I'm a farmer myself - stand back!" and I set to work on that tree. The wood was rather harder than I'd b bargained for, but down it came eventually and the line went through! Perhaps I lost a bit of caste in the eyes of my clerks - a Sahib soiling his hands with such a menial task! But the village welcomed me as one of its own, and I could sit under the peepul tree in the centre with everyone gathered around talking freely. They were grand people - hard-working, poor, but their friendship and everything they had was mine. Two miles away towards the river was another village, Mohena, with one very old brick-built house in it. During the Mutiny, it was said, some Europeans, with women and children, had escaped from Delhi before the massacre, and had found refuge in this village, being kept in safety there until order was restored.

Day after day of warm bright sunshine and a pleasant breeze; and every day I rode through herds of blackbuck. Sometimes I would touch Nightshade away into a mad gallop after them, to admire the fawn and black males in full flight. Each day I got to know the village and villagers better - Shiv Charan and Amar Singh and Dhannu. Dhannu had very little land, worked often as a labourer, and eventually he came to work for me as an extra groom. A short, stocky man he was completely illiterate and had never been as far as the main road. But he was always cheerful, always anxious to help.

One Sunday (December 8th. 1940) having been in the saddle for six hours a day all the week I went walking for a change - down to the Jumna, glittering in the sun through beds of grey-white sand and tamarisk-covered banks. Half a dozen village lads had attached themselves to me to show me the way - lively, responsive youngsters lost in a village at the back of beyond with probably no future but herding buffalo. Before long I had them playing some well-remembered scout games amongst the tamarisk. They brought me back through the one place that made Chainsa slightly different. It had a "Gaushala" - cow home, with a farm attached that was quite well managed by a little Hindu, Gopal Krishna. This was one of those amazing institutions, to which pious Hindus subscribe, whose purpose is to keep useless cows alive as long as possible. But Gopal Krishna was a farmer as well as a Hindu, and tended perhaps to give special care

to some rather better cows. So that, whether that was the original pious intention or not, he ran the place rather as a dairy farm, and from then on I never lacked for milk and cream and butter. Gopal was the only person in the neighbourhood with any education, and we saw a good deal of each other. He would come over to the Rest House once or twice a week and I would play some English classical records - Beethoven's Seventh Symphony or a Mozart Concerto. I had acquired a portable gramophone to take on Settlement Training with me, and we would put a record on and then go out into the moonlight to listen to it. And sometimes I would visit his tiny house at the Farm, with a garden full of marigolds, and he would play some Indian records. He was a wizened little man with steel spectacles, dressed always in drill jodhpurs and jacket and a khaki sun-helmet. He would be about 50 and had lost his wife the year before after twenty six years of married life. She had been "his only companion in this wilderness," a graduate, with - from her photograph - a fine, strong, intelligent face.

I was feeling very despondent myself. Mary had had a passage promised at last - and then the boat was commandeered. It looked as though there would be no further chance and that we were to be separated for the duration. For the moment everything seemed to me too a wilderness. My colleague Kewal Singh on the main road at Ballabgarh, twelve miles away, was my only contact with the outside world. If there was any special news he would send a message to me. That was the nearest post office and if I wanted to send a wire or a cable I had to ride there. Apart from these contacts I had been on my own for six weeks and decided to go into Lahore for Christmas. There could be no greater contrast to Chainsa than Lahore, with the Governor's Dinner, the Charity Ball, and the New Year's Eve celebrations!

Yet after a week of that it was pleasant to be back in the wilderness again, with my horses and a puppy that now adopted me. The Police Sub-Inspector that lived near the Rest House had two puppies in whose ancestry was spaniel and terrier. One was grey, the other brown, but both with long fine hair - more comical than handsome. The brown one had taken to coming into the Rest House to beg a crust or find a slipper to chew. One day I found them having a ferocious tug-of-war with a bit of cloth. I cheered them on, almost helpless with laughter, until I suddenly noticed it was one of my shirts they had stolen. The brown one proceeded to put in a

take-over bid for me in the next few weeks, sticking to me like a shadow and trotting along behind Nightshade whenever I went out. I had to give him a bath as he started creeping in through the bamboos and sleeping inside my door.

Settlement work went on and I travelled further afield now to distant villages. One of these was particularly interesting as the home of a special tribe or clan of snake-charmers. These were the people that went all over India with their snakes, and the village was quite prosperous. Various astonishing demonstrations were given to me, and there was no doubt that those people had a very special understanding of and power over snakes. They swore that the snakes were not rendered harmless. To see some lad playing around with a basket full of young cobras was enough to make me think that these people were probably immune anyway.

I now frequently spent the weekend in Delhi. It meant riding into Ballabgarh, leaving the horse there, changing in Kewal Singh's rooms and catching a train or bus. The Frontier Mail stopped at Ballabgarh so it was possible to get into New Delhi late Friday night. Sometimes I stayed in the luxury of the Gymkhana Club, with glossy magazines, comfortable chairs, magnificent meals. Sometimes I stayed with a friend of Akhter Hussain's, Khan Bahadur A.H.Mirza. Mirza was a Moghul, of a clan that had come in with Babar. He was a Cambridge man who had been very successful in business. He had a flat in Connaught Circus, the very heart of New Delhi. He lived in a complete mixture of Indian and European culture and cooking, and it was always a pleasure to be with him.

Often I would arrive back at Ballabgarh at midnight and ride on through the darkness or the moonlight as the jackals gave their "second call". (Jackals, it was said, gave united voice at regular hours - 9.0 pm., 1.0 am., and 4.0 am., and this did seem to be very nearly so).

I had made friends with the family of the Naib Tahsildar at Dyalpur, the one big village on the way to Ballabgarh, and when passing in daylight would call there. He had four daughters, aged from seven to fourteen - Subashni (the sweet-tongued), Sarojhini (a beautiful flowering creeper), Savitri (a lady who was very faithful to her husband), and Srasvati (the Goddess of Learning). The younger ones clambered on my knee whilst the older ones served tea and biscuits, sang Indian songs, and told Indian fairy stories.

Two weekends also I was able to spend at the Muslim Unuversity

of Aligarh. My friend at Cambridge, Butt, was now a Professor of Mathematics there and invited me over. This meant fording the river and going ten miles of rough track and six miles of road to the Delhi-Calcutta railway. The first time I went was by Gopal Krishna's fast bullock cart - the river was in flood and we had to be ferried across. The sixteen miles took seven hours, but it was quite an experience to lurch along on that cumbersome cart. The next time I took four hours, fording the river on Nightshade, riding ten miles on her, then taking an uncomfortable flat-bottomed pony cart called an ikka to Dunkaur station. The only train available was Third Class and I travelled in very crowded conditions, but very cheaply. A man had put his small daughter onto the luggage rack and accidentally she kicked his turban. He started beating her unmercifully and I remonstrated. He took no notice, so I hit him. It was the only time I ever hit an Indian and although this was the U.P. and rather anti-British, there was a chorus of approval, then a barrage of questions about England and the War for the remaining thirty miles to Aligarh.

Abdullah Butt had an orthodox Muslim household but was all hospitality. His wife was supposed to be in purdah but on my second visit this was forgotten and I spent half my time in the kitchen with the whole family, including the grandmother, Bibi Ji, who sat bent on a charpoy smoking a hookah, and talked to me in the broadest Punjabi, calling me "Beta" (son). There were various daughters who flitted around the house in beautiful saris or in silken shirts and pyjamas - the shalwar and kamise, Punjab national dress. In such a household there was a complete lack of privacy. We breakfasted, and sometimes dined, in pyjamas, reclining on the floor at a low table. I drew the line at eating with my fingers, only because I was not yet sufficiently adept to get enough that way!

Aligarh was intellectually the most exciting place I ever visited in India. Not too large, it held a closely knit coterie of academic friends of many disciplines. There was the mathematician, Rahmat, who was also a brilliant photographer and had a Danish wife and a fascinating little boy, Rafiq; there was Sarwar, a white-haired lecturer in English who had studied at Leeds University and become an adopted Yorkshireman; there was a German, but Francophil, economist, Heider who discussed Keynes in French.

One weekend in Gurgaon, the Deputy Commissioner, a fairly senior

Indian member of the I.C.S., gave a magnificent dinner party with wines and liqueurs. One guest made that party memorable - Freddy Young, the famous dacoit-chaser, now Inspector General of the U.P. Police. He was rather a surprise, for far from being a lean and hawk-like predator of predators, he was a man of huge girth, with the rich voice of a born raconteur. He kept us enthralled all evening with stories of dacoit chasing and tiger shooting. He had been head of the special branch created to put down dacoits in the 1920's when they were particularly troublesome in the U.P. and neighbouring Native States. (Those ruled by independent Rajahs). Dacoits - mobile bands of armed robbers - gathered an aura of romance about them, but some were ferocious criminals who perpetrated the most dreadful cruelties. They might cut off a woman's breasts and send her in to her husband with one in each hand, whilst if a wealthy Hindu refused to reveal the hiding place of his money they would not bother with any finesse, they just twisted his testicles until they got the information, and he would be lucky if they stopped then.

Sultan, or Sultana, the most famous, does not seem to have been quite so vicious. For years he eluded Freddy, who chased him all over the country. Once going through a jungle Freddy was stopped by Sultan's men and invited to accompany them alone as Sultan wished to meet him to discuss possible terms. Freddy went, but nothing came of it except a certain mutual respect and liking. At last some information came, and a village was surrounded one night. Freddy climbed on a roof - and fell right through onto one of the dacoits, who succumbed on the spot to fifteen or sixteen stone falling eight feet. Sultan was caught - and Freddy was admitted into the secret fraternity of the caste so that they could tell him certain things. Even when he was conducting the case against them they asked his advice about their defence. And when Sultan was hanged Freddy looked after the dacoit's widow and family.

Freddy had hunted tiger too, in the Kumaon terai and the jungles of Indore. He had some blood-curdling stories, but undoubtedly his best was from Calcutta. In the jute depression of the early thirties a Scots factory manager found himself unemployed. Hearing of a job at the Zoo he applied to the Curator. "Thank God!" said the Curator, "You're just the man we want. The Governor's paying an official visit tomorrow and our special exhibit, the gorilla, has died." And he

offered the Scot Rs100 to wear the gorilla's skin. The "gorilla" quite enjoyed himself next day, showing off his almost human antics to the Governor's party. In fact he got a bit beyond himself, and dancing out along the branch of a tree fell, with a thud, into the cage next door. The biggest and most ferocious tiger he had ever seen came slowly at him - he retreated until his back was pressed against the railings, and still the tiger came on until he could almost feel its hot breath through the gorilla's skin. "My God!" he burst out, "Why the hell did I ever take on this job!" The tiger opened its mouth "D'ye think you're the only unemployed Scotsman in Calcutta?" it said.

There were two occasions when I was host at Chainsa. One week Phil Talbot, on his way down from Kashmir to look at Southern India, spent a few days amongst my villages to see what Settlement work was like. I mounted him on Black Knight and showed him what I could of the work. Phil had an innate American suspicion of "colonialism" and unfortunately the villagers tended to behave with some timidity and reserve in his presence. They knew me alright, but who was this strange Sahib? In the Punjab proper he would have been accepted as "Friend of friend", but not here, amongst these Jumna Hindus. There had been too many doubtful visitors from Delhi and the North over two thousand years.

Another week-end I was invaded by Tull, Bolam and Butter from their respective circles in other parts of the district. They had wanted to have a look at the Jumna "khadir" - the riverain jungle of rush and tamarisk where wild boar and black partridge lurked. John Butter was a particularly keen shot - it was said that he had shot more partridge on Settlement training than anyone in the history of the I.C.S. He only visited his "special" village once, by mistake when he was out shooting and got lost; and then he asked only one question - "Where are the partridge?"

For us, he brought in some <u>harial</u> - green pigeon - that were excellent eating.

Thomas Tull had brought a couple of boar spears and took me out along the river after pig, but we found none. Older members of the Service had been famous pig-stickers and tiger-shots, but I never actually saw either a tiger or a wild boar. There were no tiger in the Punjab and wild boar never came my way.

After they left I looked mournfully at my empty whisky bottle.

"Never mind" said Madar Bakhsh happily, "look how great Huzoor's name has become!" And indeed their first remark on arriving at Chainsa had been "Bill, you sybarite! Pictures on the wall, flowers on the table, a gramophone - this is positive luxury compared with us!"

It was getting hot in Chainsa by March, and the river at one side and the canal at the other were very tempting. Some of my villages lay down the canal and after finishing one inspection I dived in - to the mingled consternation and amusement of the villagers - and swam with the gentle current a couple of miles down to the next village. The only trouble was that Nightshade showed a strong desire to join me in the water and nearly pulled the orderly in with her! So on Sunday I took her down to the river with me, and rode her bare-back into the deepest part. As she started swimming I slid off beside her and swam alongside, carefully avoiding her hooves. She revelled in this and we spent hours playing about in and along the river. The boys from the village came and joined us. The Jumna here had come for miles over a sandy bed with no village very near its banks. The river at this season flowed gently, a few feet deep, now in one, now in several channels between beds of silver sand. Here and there were pools, deep and clear, where river terns cried like sea-gulls and sand-martens flew in and out of the bank. Fields of green wheat and yellow mustard stretched away from the white sand and glittering water, until tamarisk and jungle took over. A lark sang in a sky higher and bluer than any I had ever seen, and almost lost in it, like the lark, was a tiny white wisp of moon. I remembered the quotation that Mary had written on the back of the photograph she had sent -

> " We two went walking on a day
> When earth was fair and skies were blue,
> The gayest among all things gay
> We two - -
> You laughed at me, and I at you.
> We toyed with time, as lovers may - - - "

The winter was over. The wheat was in full ear, and the yellow flowers of the mustard had faded. My time at Chainsa was almost at an end. All my life I have remembered that place, the thatched bungalow in the nim trees, the river in the sunshine, the smoke of cow-dung fires rising from the village, and the peacocks calling at sunset. Twice I have been back amongst those gentle people, and some day perhaps I shall be there again.

When I left on Nightshade, the bullock cart was piled high with luggage, and on the top "Pup" was perched, so that I took something of Chainsa with me. I did not go direct to Gurgaon, but South around the hills I had previously crossed. Thomas Tull had come into contact with Hogg, the Organising Commissioner of the Punjab Boy Scouts' Association, had organised a camp on the low hills near Sohna, and had asked me to help. I was in a receptive frame of mind, conscious of the possibilities of the youngsters I had met along the Jumna, and of the complete lack of any opportunity in life for them. There wasn't much one could do with the old and superstitious. But those youngsters - one could do anything with them. I was looking forward to Tull's camp, but I was not quite prepared for my own reaction to it or the obsession that gripped me then and altered my career in India completely.

They were good lads at that camp, mostly from High Schools. They knew nothing about Scouting beyond the wearing of uniform, marching and drilling. But they were quick and eager to learn, There seemed no time for meals, between building bridges across nullahs and playing "wide" games in the jungle. After camp-fires under the stars, Tull and I talked late. We were both agreed that Scouting in India needed some new fillip, and that far more in the way of youth work was urgently necessary. Hogg would presumably be retiring in a few years' time, and Tull thought an I.C.S. man should take over. He obviously rather fancied the job. I felt rather like a professional does to an amateur and kept quiet.

We neither of us settled down very well at Headquarters to the task of writing our Settlement reports and working out the mathematics of circle and village assessments, but somehow it was done. I had one week-end break. Ted Shields, of the Cambridge Yorkshire Society, who had got into the I.C.S. the year before me, had gone to Bombay. For the past six months he had been standing by to meet Mary when she arrived there, and put her on the train for Ballabgarh. Now he had been transferred to that part of his province nearest to Gurgaon. Rajputana separated us. We decided to meet half way, at Ajmer. I can remember nothing of Ajmer except a lake full of sacred crocodiles. On the way back to Gurgaon I called at Jaipur, seeing the intricate enamel ware being made, and visiting a strange Hindu temple. There was a dark, deserted gateway and hall, and a bright interior court-yard, with a fountain. At the fountain sat two beautiful girls in yellow

saris, who gave me the gracious Hindu greeting with folded hands - Namasthe. They talked without shyness, and showed me around. I wondered for a moment if they could be *devadasi*, those temple girls who give themselves in dedication to the god, and in his service offer themselves to men. I could have been sorely tempted by these two - but time was short and my train due.

At Gurgaon were orders for my transfer as First Class Magistrate to Ferozepore, a Cantonment City fifty miles South of Lahore. And to Lahore for a week I went first, to call on Mr. H.W.Hogg, C.I.E., O.B.E.

CHAPTER - 4 Ferozepore and the Sutlej River

Land at Walton, seven miles South of Lahore had been given to the Scout Association in 1929, but in 1934 there was only one building on it and Hogg and his family were living in tents. The new Chief Justice, Sir Douglas Young, who took over as provincial Scout Commissioner in that year, determined, with Hogg, to build a fully equipped Headquarters with a College of Physical Education and Scouting, a Swimming Bath, Indoor and Outdoor gymnasium and vast playing fields and camping grounds. Lord Baden Powell himself opened the magnificent swimming pool in 1937. With the war however, the College had been offered to the Indian Air Force for training and Hogg had remained as Commandant with the rank of Squadron Leader, later Wing Commander. He was now in his early fifties, stout but fit, with a typical strong but friendly Scots face. We became close friends immediately.

In 1921 when Hogg left Y.M.C.A. work for Scouting there were only two or three Indian Scout Troops in the Punjab. There were now 90,000 scouts in the Province. It is difficult to give an idea of the importance of Scouting in India. There was then no other youth movement, and practically no voluntary social work done except by Scouts. The Punjab was in the forefront of world scouting because of the great work it had done in social service on many occasions such as the religious festivals and gatherings of pilgrims. Above all it had done outstanding work at Quetta, when after the earthquake in 1935 Hogg had led a body of Scouts of all castes and religions to the scene of the disaster and taken on the urgent task of removing and burying thousands of putrifying bodies. For this and other great things that he and his Scouts had done Hogg had already received the O.B.E. and the C.I.E., but although he was proud of his decorations his main concern always was the Scout Movement. He was very occupied now with Air Force recruitment and training, and with extending the buildings at Montmorency Park for the Air Force, knowing that they would come to the Boy Scouts after the war.

It was my view that so far Scouting in India had concentrated perhaps too much on drill, physical training, and social service (which were the urgent things at first), and not enough on training in scout-craft and camping. Troops were mostly confined to schools

and there were vast rural areas which were scarcely touched. Hogg had only an Assistant Provincial Secretary and two or three Circuit Organisers to assist him. In this and subsequent meetings we discussed these views and the chances of extending the great work. We visited Sir Douglas Young. The Chief Justice's residence in Lahore was a very large and beautiful house, the hall of which was decorated with a macabre collection of weapons and implements that had been used in various murder cases tried by Sir Douglas. In addition to the usual guns, knives, swords and knobkerries, a bit of bullock-harness cord (used to strangle someone) a crude hay-fork, and a mattock showed the rural character of the Punjab. Sir Douglas had been attracted to Scouting in the first place because of the part it could play in raising the standards of life in India generally and doing something to combat crime.

The third man met in Lahore was F.L.Brayne of Gurgaon fame who had been another firm supporter of Hogg and the Scout movement. Unlike the other two he was a typical tall lean I.C.S. man who had spent a lot of his life in the saddle. Apart from his devotion to rural improvement he had been a famous pig-sticker and big-game hunter. He was on the point of retiring as Financial Commissioner and joining the Army as Lt.Col. in charge of Welfare, Indian troops. He was one of the few I.C.S. men who had been allowed to join the Army in the Great War - and had found himself in charge of the civil administration of Aleppo after Allenby's advance.

It was May 18th. when I arrived in Ferozepore by the bridge and barrage across the Sutlej River. The Deputy Commissioner was an extremely able Indian who had read Natural Sciences at Cambridge - M.R.Sachdev. We liked each other from the start and I never met anyone whom I would rather work with or for. To begin with it was a pleasure to be welcomed at last on equal terms. My training was now over. Sachdev was snowed under with work and he expected me to take a good deal off his shoulders. I was invited to dine with him that night, and meanwhile established my quarters in an empty palace belonging to one of the local princes. Ferozepore was a big district - stretching a hundred miles to the South - and included two small States. It was also a Cantonment.

The Deputy Commissioner's bungalow was comfortably and beautifully furnished, and dinner was a dream, beginning with a cold fish souffle (Ferozepore in May was very hot indeed, with day temperatures well over 100°F); I felt in a dream myself, so different was the

atmosphere here from anything I had yet experienced in India. Savitri Sachdev was, I thought, the most beautiful woman I had ever seen, and the most charming hostess. At that moment I became her devoted servant and have remained so all my life. The friendship with the Sachdevs that started that night was to enrich all my time in India. They visited me several times in England after independence, for Sachdev held posts of great responsibility in the new Government of India, until finally he killed himself with over-work in 1965 as Governor of Goa.

Ferozepore was a turbulent district, half Sikh, half Muslim. It was a fairly rich one too, with some canal irrigation and a few small industries. Crime was terrible. Our record for one month was 26 murders, and I never had less than six murder cases going in my court. The causes were usually women and water, and the water was rather more important than the women, for water meant crops and crops meant life. The Sikhs were particularly prone to strike first and think afterwards, and since they were big strong men a blow with an iron-shod staff was often fatal. Fortunately the Indian Penal Code distinguished culpable homicide from worse forms of murder which involved planning and premeditation, and you could find many murderers of the former class having not too bad a time in prison, with better food than many of them got at home. They were mostly not murderers at all in the sense we use the word, just hot-blooded farmers that had struck a bit too hard, the same type that were winning V.C.'s in the Army. There were some gardens and a memorial hall in Cantonments to 21 Ferozepore sepoys who held a frontier fort for many hours against an overwhelming force of Pathans, and killed between 300 and 400 of the enemy before being killed themselves after refusing to surrender though their ammunition was exhausted.

This was also the district where some of the bloodiest battles of the First Sikh War were fought, when John Lawrence as Commissioner at Jullunder was responsible for sending up transport and supplies, and the Governor General himself, Lord Harding, was in the field with the Commander in Chief Sir Hugh Gough. Those battles were a very near thing indeed. Mudki, Ferozeshah and Sobraon were all in my magisterial area. I was in court every day from 9.0 until 5.0 and then had other work to deal with, being in charge of Excise and of Panchayats (Village councils). Tours were brief and busy - by road to one of the other towns in the district. Only now did I acquire

a car - a Ford 10 that had done 23,000 miles. It cost me £100 and lasted me reasonably well; I never had another.

When the car arrived I took ten days' leave and set off for Simla - over 200 miles, the last fifty up mountain roads. Hogg was running a Scoutmasters' Advanced training headquarters at Tara Devi near Simla. There followed a strenuous week on that lovely wooded hillside, when I lived, ate and worked with Sikh, Hindu and Muslim Scouters and Scout Commissioners. The Chief Justice visited us for a couple of days, and one evening the Punjab's new Governor, His Excellency Sir Bertrand Glancy, paid us a visit. I was busy scrubbing out some pans at the time and it must have imprinted me on his memory!

As Excise Officer I was invited by my staff to join two interesting raids, just to see for myself - -. There was a lot of illicit distillation and hemp smuggling. One night they took me into the City and up a narrow street which appeared to be the brothel quarter. Women sat alone in rooms with open windows, waiting for customers. We surrounded one house - and duly found a few men smoking hemp. More exciting was when we took a flat clumsy boat down the river one night, stalked quietly through tall grass and rushes, and caught men working a still. The liquor I smelt and tasted would have been certain death if drunk in any quantity.

A very unpleasant task I had to undertake one day was to go with the Civil Surgeon, a stalwart, black-bearded Sikh, to disinter a corpse in a case where murder was suspected, and to be present whilst he did an autopsy. The body had already been buried a week and although I got well away up-wind and the surgeon soaked disinfectant all around, the stench was terrible. I realised then what the Scouts at Quetta had had to tackle, with upwards of 3,000 bodies to find and bury.

Even more unpleasant mentally was having to be duty magistrate at a number of hangings. This meant going down to the jail in the early morning, seeing the culprit hooded, and watching execution. Usually they went fatalistically or defiantly, with the Sikh War Cry of Sat Siri Akal! I never felt like breakfast afterwards. In theory I approve of the death penalty for the worst murderers - why should Society have the expense of keeping them? But those who argue so loudly about bringing back hanging should have to watch one or two executions.

For two periods of a fortnight the D.C. was away and I had charge

of the district, in addition to the work of magistrate. Every aspect of the district work came to me in voluminous files every evening, with previous papers, notes and references. Municipal decisions, new schools, new bridges, new roads, health problems. Some nights I got only four hours sleep. When the D.C. came back there was an outbreak of cholera in the City and it was almost a relief to go out into the open air and inspect the Public Health Department's precautions. The Deputy Commissioner was still very much the head and ruling force of his district. Municipal boards and district boards were working, but they needed constant guidance and advice and sometimes a very sharp reminder to get on with an urgent project.

What made Ferozepore particularly interesting however, was that Sachdev had a big War effort going in the district. On the outbreak of war the District Board had offered any help to Government it could give and a "War Co-operation Board" had been formed (of which I was now invited to be Secretary). Its main concerns were recruiting and the raising of War Funds. Ferozepore provided many thousands of excellent recruits for the Indian Army. In one tour alone which I made in those areas of Sikh War memory, a thousand recruits were forthcoming. At that time also Ferozepore headed the Punjab in its contributions in cash - some £45,000 to September 1941. One popular way of raising funds was by holding "War Fund Concerts" and I became involved in several of these. There was a Sikh woman singer, Bibi Joginder Kaur, with a wonderful voice - rather like an Indian version of Joan Baez. And there were various popular Indian film stars who who would come along and sing and dance, drawing huge audiences. There was one particularly attractive star I had long wanted to meet and I managed to get her to come to a concert in one of my own outlying towns, Muktsar. Alas! The day before the concert I was stricken with a virulent form of influenza. I did rise from that sick-bed and stagger over to greet the star with a weak smile and open the concert, but then I had to stagger back to bed again. I had to be driven back to Ferozepore on a bed spread in the back of the car, and the Sachdevs came over, very worried, to make sure I was having proper attention. Savitri insisted on sending special dishes over for me for several days and for the first time I really felt that poem of Tagore's -

> " Thou hast made me known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger."

I wrote a sixty page report on all the war work the district was doing, including the scouting side of it; and Sachdev was very pleased when this was printed and published. I dined with him quite often now as this was the only time we could get for discussing things together, but generally as the evening progressed we would be led astray by Savitri into talking of English poetry or Hindu philosophy. She thought we were working too hard anyway and a little relaxation would do us good. About the only way you could get Sach to relax was to side-track him into a philosophical argument. Savitri had taken a degree in philosophy and had lectured for a time so she was generally able to organise things her way!

My weekends were frequently spent in Lahore either with Hogg at Montmorency Park or with Sir Douglas Young. But once or twice the Sachdevs took me to visit Savitri's family, the Vasudevs. Her father had been in the Provincial Civil Service, and she had two elder brothers in that Service. Her mother was a gentle lady who talked only Punjabi, whose smile greeted you always with warm affection, and who was still close enough to the soil to keep a buffalo in the back garden to provide milk and butter. And there were five younger sisters - each one seemingly more beautiful than the last! Chandrakanta ("Kanta") - the name meant light or moonlight - who lectured in political philosophy at the Lahore College for Women; Rajeshwari (Gulu) who was a student at Tagore's open-air university of culture at Santiniketan, and a very fine singer (she was chosen by Tagore to record some of his songs, and I have one of the most beautiful treasured still, with its high sad notes -- a song of the rains and of a love that does not come); Rameshwari (Sheri) who was just finishing her studies; Mohini ("desirable") the dark, the shy, the mysterious, to whom I laid seige in a friendly, teasing way that in other circumstances might have been serious; and Sirojhini, the gay young schoolgirl. I had always wished I'd had a sister - now I had six, for over the years that followed I was very much adopted into this brilliant and affectionate family. What is the fascination of Indian women? Is it thousands of years of culture endowing them with grace and beauty? Or the apparent submissiveness which gives them command of most situations? There is something else which distinguishes them from most Western women, with whom one might have an easy, superficial friendship, and that is a real depth of affection, of the heart and mind, by no means unconnected with sex, but far removed from its cruder manifestations.

of the breaks in my time at Ferozepore consisted of a few days' leave which I spent on Scout duty with the Ferozepore Boy Scouts' contingent at Kurukshetra, a sacred lake not far from Delhi, closely connected with Hindu history and mythology. At any eclipse it attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, who camp in the area and bathe in the lake. Until the Punjab Boy Scouts took over social service there in 1928 conditions were indescribable. Hundreds of lives were lost by drowning, cholera and snake-bite; sickness was spread over wide areas; thousands of women and children were lost from their families - sometimes never to be restored. Over the years Hogg and his Scouts had taken over the social organisation of the fair, running bathing patrols, cholera patrols and a lost persons' bureau. With something like 2,000 scouts involved running these services was a major piece of organisation. I acted as Hogg's Personal Assistant and Camp Officer on this occasion, and took over completely when he left a day or two early. An elephant had been allocated to us for use in the camp; I rode many horses and camels, but this was the only time I ever rode an official elephant. Kurukshetra was famous for its snakes - two or three times a day there would be a flurry of movement amongst a group of Scouts, some quick blows with a Scout staff - and another snake hung up as a trophy. A Scoutmaster getting into bed remembered just in time the usual precautions - move and shake everything before you do anything - and found a deadly krait curled up under his pillow. The <u>sadhus</u> and <u>faqirs</u> - holy men of various sorts - flocked to the festival. These were not really holy men such as you might meet, men of the greatest culture and deepest philosophy, but rather the degenerate and superstitious guardians of mythology - some sleeping on beds of prickly thorn, some on beds of nails; one who had sworn never to lie down, and lived and slept leaning against a swing hung from a tree; one who never walked but prostrated himself full-length at every step. Some were completely naked to show their complete indifference to the world and to the body. And one of these, with a gold ring on his penis which he kept covering and uncovering, had placed himself at the entrance to the women's bathing section. Hogg and I thought this objectionable and moreover it contravened the rules of the fair, so we took an Hindu Inspector of Police along to see if we could persuade the man to move to the area allocated to his kind - where the women could come and worship his penis and place garlands on it if they wished, and not have it thrust before them willy-nilly. He was an obstinate and

evil man, who not only refused to move but siezed the opportunity to make as much noise and attract as much attention as possible. A crowd of supporting riff-raff began to gather, grey with ashes, sticky with paint, flourishing their sharpened tongs - a fearful weapon. They were held at bay by a handful of Boy Scouts who formed a ring with their staves. One villanous looking character with a three-pronged spear like Neptune's trident jumped the barrier and started to incite others to attack. I hurriedly consulted Hogg and the Inspector who so far had been preoccupied with the original malefactor. Hogg took one look around. "Get away and bring some police immediately." It was half a mile back to the police lines and I ran all the way in the heat. I could scarcely gasp out the order at first, but when the Inspector in charge wanted me to fill in a form I got very voluble indeed. In no time twenty men had tumbled out of tents putting on their puggrees and picking up lathis (bamboo staves). I led them off again at the double with a sub-inspector trotting beside me. I was very worried indeed - that situation had looked extremely nasty. We were just in time. The boys had been swamped - not hurt, just ignored - and gangs of the more evil-looking sadhus and their hangers on were pressing forward, weapons of all sorts in their hands. I never had the pleasure of saying "Charge"! With one accord the police let out a ferocious yell and flung themselves on the assembly with uplifted staves. That crowd went back like a wave. A sweet-stall in the way just disappeared, the owner flying backwards with a bowl of milk on top of him. We bought some of his scattered sweets for the boys and were left with our original sadhu and the ringleader of the attackers. They were each put into the bottom of a tonga, with two heavy policemen on the seat. The policemen seemed to derive considerable satisfaction from rubbing their boots on the bodies of their prisoners, and I felt that whatever happened to the sadhus when they came to court, they would not be so anxious to flout the law again for some time. It was a rough and uneven road, and a long way to the jail.

The dust and heat and dirt and noise of half a million people gathered on a few square miles of sandy ground by a dirty lake made me forget for the moment all the beauty and romance of India. Ferozepore seemed no better - religious fair and noisy processions going on, Sikh-Muslim tension, everything hot and dry and dusty, and the land flat and dreary. One night I nearly died. Madar Bakhsh

had given me fish - excellent fresh fish came from the River Sutlej - with anchovy sauce. The sauce was from a shop - and by 11.0 pm. I was writhing in agony. I could only just crawl to the door and shout weakly for an orderly. Fortunately someone heard, and I sent him off for the Civil Surgeon. It was ptomaine poisoning of the worst kind and I was helpless in paroxyisms of pain - until by the grace of God I was violently sick.

Narindar Singh was one of my most outstanding scouts. About 15, he had got his King's Scout badge and the Bushman's Thong, a very rare thing in India. There now came at very short notice a chance to snatch a week's leave. I got hold of Narindar and his Scoutmaster, a Hindu called Chopra and in the space of two hours we collected two or three other Scouts, the minimum of camping kit, and set off for Lahore. Early next morning we found a lorry going to Kashmir via Jammu and the Bannihal Pass. All day long the lorry wound its way up towards Kashmir, through Sialkot, Jammu and Udhampur. By late evening we had got only as far as Batote, not much more than half way. Chopra had done quite a lot of trekking in neighbouring regions, and now made the suggestion that we set off from here and find a way back through the mountains to Dalhousie, which as the crow flies was 60 miles to the South East. This was completely fresh country to me and the suggestion was immediately adopted. We had no map and no compass and it looked like being a very interesting exercise. It was.

We hired a donkey and a mule, with driver, and set off along a mule track high above the Chenab River, one of the "Five Rivers" of the Punjab. Where a tempting footbridge went over into Kishtwar, towards Nun Kun, we left the Chenab and climbed slowly towards Bhadarwah for our second night's camp. Chopra was always busy gathering information from people we met - not only about our own possible routes, but about any routes anywhere in the area, on the principal that you never knew when you might want them. This is the universal Himalayan habit, to exchange information with anyone you meet. Over the years you build up by hearsay a vast knowledge of routes, passes and camping sites. This is the only sort of map that these people who spend their lives amongst the mountains ever possess,

From Bhadarwah we were to go over the 11,000ft Phadri Pass and then down a long valley and over a couple of ridges to Chumba. But Chopra had also heard of a very beautiful Hindu temple - Jindri, on a mountain rising abruptly to the East of Bhadarwah. He thought that if we sent the boys and the baggage to the Phadri Pass he and I

travelling light could climb to this temple and then make our way along the ridge Southward to reach the pass. Remembering Kolahoi and Phil Talbot, I should have known better, but set off we did early next morning leaving Narindar in charge of the packing. By a narrow forest path we climbed steadily up above Bhadarwah. After four hours we were about six thousand feet above the village and still climbing. That temple was very elusive and it was after 3.0 pm. when we came out into a green meadow, dotted with primula and clumps of iris, and set in the centre like a jewel, a tiny building gleaming white and gold. Chopra paid his respects to the divinity, and we bought some hot sweet milk from a small stall nearby. But of the Phadri Pass no-one had even heard. There was only one thing to do - follow the ridge to the South. We set off, travelling now as hard as we could. But it was not a simple ridge, and we found ourselves in a series of meadows, woods, and cross valleys. About two hours later we at last met someone who had heard of the Phadri Pass. We were going in the right direction, and it was about two days' journey. We looked at each other in dismay. Darkness would soon be falling, and we were not yet on a track. After another hour we were faced with a steep wooded rise ahead. Had we gone wrong? Suddenly we heard voices at the top of the rise. We scrambled up from tree to tree, and found ourselves between 11,000ft and 12,000ft on a long ridge which dropped steeply on both sides. To the West it was almost sheer for thousands of feet, and we could see right over the Vale of Kashmir, to where the sun was setting behind the distant peak of Nanga Parbat. Nearer, to the North, were Nun Kun and neighbouring peaks. We were on a regular path now and one or two small parties of travellers were settling themselves into blankets beside huge fires. We passed a Gujars' hut. It was getting too dark now to go further - and it was getting cold. We were in shorts, with no blanket. We decided to try the hut.

The Gujars are Mohammedans, nomadic herdsmen descended from a Scythian tribe. For thousands of years they have followed recognised routes - along ridges and half way up mountain sides - to their traditional summer grazing grounds, each family having by unwritten law the right to a certain area. Some on the Deosai Plains, some under Nanga Parbat - all over the Himalayas they go in the Spring, travelling back in the Autumn to the lower valleys or the plains of the Punjab. Here we were, a Hindu and a Christian. "Call me

Khan Sahib" said Chopra quickly. But the dignified patriarch who came to the door was too simple or too naturally courteous to ask us our religion. He welcomed us with spontaneous hospitality. A fire was burning in the centre of the room, with only part of the smoke going out through a hole in the roof. Along one side were half a dozen cows and buffaloes. There was an old woman at the fire making maize chapatties, and a girl with a squalling baby. A lad hovered in the background. The Gujar handed us some maize chapatties and a vegetable like spinach made from wild plants. We were starving, and the chapatties were delicious. There was milk too. After all had eaten and we had chatted a little, the old man reverently produced a large book -- the Koran. He couldn't read himself, he said, but would we very kindly read for them out of the sacred book? Chopra was a deeply read philosopher. That is a picture I shall never forget - those Biblical surroundings, the cattle, the child and the smoking fire, and the cultured Hindu reading and expounding from the Koran to these simple and devout Muslims.

They gave us a blanket each, and we lay down by the fire between the cattle and the girl with her restless baby. I had a restless night too, eaten alive by fleas, but at least we were warm and well fed.

We could not insult the Gujars' hospitality, poor as they were, by offering them money. Chopra pressed a silver rupee into the baby's fist and we left with warm thanks and a "Khuda Hafiz!" from the old man. (God be with you). The early sun was gilding the ridge, and across the plain the cathedral roof and spire of Nanga Parbat rose clear and shining white, 26,500ft high, 280 miles away.

All that morning we worked our way along the ridge. Another Gujar gave us milk. About noon we dropped down to the pass. There were no boys and no camp, but we found an arrow - and we set off as fast as we could on their trail. The track was high above the growing river below when we caught up with them an hour later. They had been in trouble. The hillside dropped steeply below the path and the ladened donkey had slipped off. Instant in action, Narindar had jumped with it, caught hold of its tail, and held it on a narrow ledge, saving both the donkey and our precious baggage from sliding a thousand feet down into the river. The others had just managed to drag it onto the path again with Narindar pushing from below when we arrived. In due course Narindar was to get a

commission in Hodson's Horse and is now a Major General. In 1965 in the N.E.Frontier war as Brigade Major he had the task of extricating the Indian Army from forward positions over-run by the Chinese. "Bhai Sahib" he said to me a year later in London, "It was terrible. The Chinese were all around us, shot and shell flying all over the place. I was terrified for the first ten minutes, then forgot about it. It took us three days to get out. And all my parents said was 'We weren't worried - we knew you'd be alright in the mountains after all that trekking and climbing you did with Cowley Sahib'!"

("Bhai" means brother, and "Bhai Sahib" is the usual way to address an elder brother for whom you have both affection and respect. Hogg had for years been known as "Babaji" to his Scouts, which might variously be rendered "Father", "Old Man" or "Skipper". Narindar's habit of calling me "Bhai Sahib" was taken up by Scouts all over the Punjab).

On our Chumba trek the only obstacle left was a flooded river, forded where it spread wide over a stony bed. The Prime Minister of Chumba State gave us lunch and we visited the bazaar, famous for leather work and for the special Chumba sandals. I set off ahead of the others next morning and walked alone through magnificent spruce and fir forests, disturbing a black bear who fortunately lumbered off as I approached. Half way, at the lovely rest house of Katrain, a Forest Officer was in camp. He gave me a meal and showed me a wonderful collection of butterflies. At Dalhousie Barbara and Dick Slater gave me another enormous meal - I had been living on chapatties and curried potatoes for this strenuous week. Dick was Sub Divisional Officer here, Barbara busy knitting socks for an expected baby - a domestic scene I envied.

At Ferozepore was news that Mary was seriously ill and had had an abdominal operation. The air letters had taken four weeks and there was no cablegram - she must surely be on the road to recovery now. Then a wire came - "Much better". As the letters trickled in it became clear by how narrow a margin she had pulled through - saline injections for five days and no solid food for three weeks.

It was many months before Mary was herself again. For two years her letters had been wonderful, keeping our love vivid and growing so that there seemed a telepathic link between us all the time. Now they were a clinging to life - even I could not then understand how near to death she had been or how slow and gradual was the long fight back.

September in Ferozepore was frightful with heat and dust and court work. One man was brought before me in chains. He had committed one murder and during proceedings in a junior Indian magistrate's court had escaped. He proceeded to murder three members of the family that had given evidence against him. He was a pleasand looking young man but I lost no time in committing him to Sessions trial on a capital charge.

In November the Governor was to come for a War Front Durbar and I had to arrange this. I became steeped in Army Lists and Orders of Precedence, working out the order of seating and of presentation - Brigadiers and Group Captains, Deputy Commissioners in their own district, Lt. Colonels with three years' seniority, Deputy Commissioners not in their own district - all according to dates of promotion or appointment. There was a Scout display, a repulsive Guy "Hitler" was burnt on a huge bonfire, and H.E. Sir Bertrand Glancy, always to be relied on for a vivid turn of phrase, returned to Lahore with the comment that "Cowley had those Scouts dancing around like a lot of sand-lice". The Sachdevs gave a grand dinner for H.E. and the Army top brass, and I had to assist Savitri with the seat-placing here too, being now the expert on protocol.

Out of the blue came a sudden and urgent order transferring me to Hissar for famine duty. I had made this warm circle of friends in Ferozepore and Lahore, life had seemed likely to be settled for some time, and now I was to go off into the wilds. For the first time I felt resentment at the blind and peremptory ways of Chief Secretaries. Sachdev sent telegrams of protest, and the case even went up to the Governor, but the famine was considered to have priority.

CHAPTER - 5 Hissar and Famine Duty.
Camels and the Great Indian Bustard.

The district of Hissar started about eighty miles south of Ferozepore and stretched for a hundred miles along the edge of the Bikaner desert. For five years it had had no rain at the right time for crops, and a famine administration had been distributing food, fodder and other forms of relief. At first there had been public works on quite a large scale. By 1941 the administration had become fairly routine, a mere checking of the relief in cash being handed out. In complete contrast to Ferozepore, there was practically no work at Headquarters for Famine Officers. The Deputy Commissioner Badrud Din Tyabji was an I.C.S. man of about eight years service, a pleasant but tough Mohammedan from a cultured Bombay family. His wife, Soraya, tiny and attractive, shared his international culture. I saw very little of them at first.

Kewal Singh had come onto famine duty direct from the Gurgaon Settlement, and he took me straight out on tour to show me the ropes. Horses, he pointed out, were useless for the long distances we had to travel over desert or semi-desert regions. Touring was mostly by camel, for only camels could cover the necessary thirty or forty miles a day in this sort of country. On the edge of the Bikaner Desert villages were often four or five miles apart, and we had to inspect five or six a day.

My first day on a camel was torture. The long-legged shambling walk found out muscles that had never been used before. The trot was agony. I prayed for the last village. After the first week riding a camel seemed quite pleasant. A lazy, loose, swaying motion; no concentration required; a good view from your proud eminence. But the work was soul-destroying routine. Just one village after another - did the grain and fodder situation since the summer harvest justify cutting relief rates or not? By now many younger people had migrated, and some areas had had some monsoon rains. I found myself generally cutting relief, and taking some villages off altogether.

The rates of relief were 3/5d per month for an adult male and 2/6d for a woman, which bought 50 lbs. and 40 lbs. of grain respectively. In addition there was a more general distribution of 4 oz. germinated grain per week to provide vitamins.

Touring alone in areas that seemed completely desolate, twenty miles even from any road, I felt very homesick for Ferozepore. Yet this land had its own fascination - mile on mile of brown and bushless sand, where Imperial Sandgrouse and the Great Indian Bustard could be found, a land of limitless horizons.

The bustard was hunted from a camel - you rode out into the sand-dunes with a shikari (a hunting guide) and his sharp eyes would spot the quarry. The camel would be made to circle round and round the bird, slowly getting nearer. Even at 40 yards you might not see the great bird, so completely did its colouring blend with the landscape. But if you got it it was delicious eating. There was no fresh meat on tour except what you shot. One evening I strolled out with a gun at sunset, and to my astonishment on the one muddy pond in the area a wild duck was swimming. That made a very unexpected meal. Some twenty miles to the north was the channel of a river, the Chaggar, that only ran seasonally. Enough water came down in the monsoon and in winter to fill two short canals. At Otu headworks there was always water, and a colony of fishing eagles. You could sometimes get fish there, and nearby was a marsh much frequented by duck, geese and snipe (including the Painted Snipe).

Imperial Sandgrouse flighted in to favourite drinking and feeding haunts, often in very large numbers, and experts in this sport could tell of very big bags indeed. It was a special kind of excitement, to crouch behind a sheltering bank in the darkness before dawn, and hear the birds come in wave after wave.

It now transpired that there was to be a Governor's Durbar in Hissar, and learning of my previous experience Tyabji asked me to organise it. Hissar possessed an excellent District Hall, long, narrow and tall. It also possessed an ingenious District Engineer, a Hindu who had studied at Leeds and almost qualified as a fellow Yorkshireman. We decorated that hall with full length flags of all the Allied Nations made on the spot. The Order of Precedence was worked out satisfactorily again, the Scouts duly danced like sand-lice once more, I received a special letter of thanks from H.E., and Tyabji invited me to spend future weekends in the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow, a vast old house on the very edge of a stretch of jungle. There was a still older house in Hissar, the original Deputy Commissioner's bungalow, now part of the Government Cattle Breeding Station. (Hissar cattle were a famous breed, the best draught oxen in India). At the time of the Mutiny the D.C. had returned from

tour to find his wife and children murdered in this house. It drove him mad and he rode around for weeks with a hog spear, trying to kill everyone he saw, himself protected by his own madness, for no-one would touch a madman.

Tyabji's younger brother came up from Bombay and I took him on tour with me. One day we were returning to base on a very tall and unusually clumsy camel. We at length emerged from sand dunes onto a rough road, and tried to get the camel to trot. It stumbled and went down with us. To fall from the height of a camel is frightening. With loaded guns it can be dangerous. As we fell I instinctively threw my gun well clear, and had a vision of the camel's body rolling on top of me as I scrambled clear myself. Tyabji had got clear too and the only damage was to his false teeth. We picked ourselves painfully up and walked the camel the last two miles. That evening we had sufficiently recovered to do a little poaching from the car on the way home. I noticed some peacock settling in to tall trees near a village. In this Hindu area they were sacred birds and the only thing to do was to wait for darkness, find a bird silhouetted against the evening light, then get the body into the car and away before the village got upset. This was successfully done, but then conscience smote us. What would Tyabji senior say? The general opinion was that he wouldn't hesitate to fine himself if he ever found himself committing an offence. But the peacock would be so good to eat. We took it to Soraya and consulted her. Amongst us we decided it was too much risk - so we had to take that blessed bird out at night and bury it in the jungle

There was now a rumour that some civil officers might be released for the Indian Army after all, and in volunteering I sent a strongly worded letter to the Chief Secretary through Tyabji - "Whereas in Ferozepore I was working concentratedly for 16 or 18 hours a day on work of some importance, partly at least directed to recruiting and the raising of War Funds, in Hissar I spend about six hours of every day riding a camel and four hours mechanically going through registers applying a fixed Work and Means test, a job requiring the intelligence of a Kanungo and the honesty of a Naib Tahsildar. With War so close to hand the waste of trained men in such a task seems criminal and at the risk of incurring displeasure I feel obliged to say so".

I had gradually been coming to the conclusion that the elaborate famine administration was being carried on from habit rather than

necessity and no-one had yet realised this. [illegible] was inclined to accept my views and quoted them in his Famine Reports. Meanwhile he sent me on a mission to Patiala, the leading Sikh state, to negotiate a revised agreement with the Maharajah's ministers on the supply of water through State channels. This proved a very interesting job and another report went in to Government.

A fortnight later I was touring in a distant corner of the district when a telegram was brought out to me "Report Monday morning Jullunder to take over judicial inquiry into defalcations by Government Tanning Expert - Chief Secretary". The unlikely nature of the job caused me some amazement, but it looked as though I was out of Hissar. After this the famine administration was gradually run down and the I.C.S. officers withdrawn.

It was noon on Saturday. I had to ride fifteen miles back to the main road and my car, drive sixty miles into H.Q., and sit up until midnight packing and writing a handing-over-charge report. Early Sunday morning I gave Madar Bakhsh a hundred rupees, told him to get everything to Jullunder, and - happy in the knowledge that everything would be perfectly organised and accounted for - I left with what things could be packed in the Ford 10, and Pup on top of them. (Pup riding on top of a camel had caused much amusement in Hissar - he was thought at first to be a particularly sacred monkey!)

Sachdev had got an O.B.E. in the New Year's Honours List, and had been appointed Price Controller, Supply Department, Lahore. I was with them by tea-time in a cool house on the Canal Bank where the dust of both Hissar and Ferozepore seemed far away.

Jullunder is one of the Cantonment towns along the Grand Trunk Road. The district is one of the fertile "Doabs" (land between two rivers). The Sutlej and Beas join to the south of the district, with Ferozepore district beyond - the area of the manouevres and battles of the First Sikh War. Arthur Williams was D.C., Jullunder and he and Marjorie gave me a very friendly welcome and an invitation to stay with them for a week or two, after which they themselves were going to Campbellpur. It was a very pleasant fortnight. I was a different person from the raw young A.C. who had lived with them two and a half years before, and Marjorie was different too - healthier and happier, and even more effervescent.

A Judicial Inquiry was a solemn affair, used very rarely to examine the conduct of some public servant. Jullunder was the centre of an important tanning industry, and the Government had its own Tannery here with experimental and display departments. The expert in charge of this was accused of a great many small defalcations over a number of years, mainly concerned with falsification of travelling expenses, and the disappearance of some items from stores. There were 140 prosecution witnesses to be heard, and a special Public Prosecutor had been allocated to the case. I felt rather sorry for the tall and bulky Tanning Expert, caught up in a mass of papers, ticket receipts, train time tables and store registers. But in the end I had to find him guilty of some of the charges. The case went on for eight weeks. Witnesses were difficult to get hold of and often I found myself with the afternoons free. There was still one examination I had to pass, in Punjabi, and as this was the heart of the best Punjabi-speaking area, I soon found a good munshi and worked with him every afternoon. I was fairly fluent in the spoken language by this time, Punjabi as well as Urdu. But I needed much more practice in the Punjabi script - Gurmukhi. Scouting and Scout campfires had given me a repertoire of Punjabi songs and when I did take the examination the oral part was a gift - I managed to direct the conversation onto subjects where I could quote the songs and the elderly Sikh examiners laughed so much that I wondered if some of the lines had double meanings!

When Arthur Williams left the Commissioner very kindly invited me to stay in his very spacious old bungalow "Bara Dari". Parts of

this historic building dated from Moghul times, the dining room being the original "bara dari" or twelve doors - three on each wall - of an open-sided Moghul hall. This had been John Lawrence's residence when Commissioner here a century before, and there was a brass plate to bear witness to the fact.

The Macnabs were characters in their own right, part of Scottish and part of Punjab history. Archie, then in his fifties and a senior Commissioner, was high in the hierarchy of the Clan Macnab and eventually became Chief - the Macnab of Macnab. It was his father J.W.Macnab who as Assistant Commissioner at Attock had collected grain in the fort. Alice Macnab was the daughter of Dame Flora Macleod of Skye, head of the Clan Macleod. She was an enthusiastic worker for Girl Guides and both of them were followers of Brayne in working for rural improvement of every kind. Their Division stretched north to the borders of Tibet and Macnab was one of the few Commissioners to go right into Lahoul and Spiti during his tenure of office. The Macnabs kept an excellent table - we never seemed to have less than three vegetables, and one of them one night consisted of a hill delicacy, the flower-buds of the kachnar tree - long, tightly-rolled and pink. The kachnar with its pale mauve flowers and the Flame of the Forest with bright red made a beautiful sight on the lower hill slopes of Hoshiarpur and Kangra.

The Army ran a polo club on one of the parade grounds and I was invited to join, Nightshade must have been a polo pony at an earlier stage in her career, because she soon proved to know much more about it than me. When I galloped up and took a back-hand shot she was round in a flash after the ball. She soon taught me, and I found it an exciting and exhilarating game.

More exhilarating still was the view northward from Jullunder across the Siwalik Hills of Hoshiarpur to the Dhaulidhar, the "White Wall" of peaks of the Outer Himalayas above Dharamsale. This fantastic ridge rises sheer from foothills of about 3,000ft to peaks of 17,000ft - 14,000ft in about six horizontal miles. For fifty miles the wall stretches unbroken by a pass lower than 15,000ft. A hundred miles from Jullunder, it was clear enough most days, a white curtain of snow hanging in the Northern sky. I could not resist it and at Easter took two Indian Rover Scouts from the City with me and drove straight for Dharamsala through the green district of Hoshiarpur and by rough hill roads to Kangra. At Kangra is a magnificent old fort,

built on top of a precipitous rock and never taken by assault. After the first Sikh War it had closed its gates against John Lawrence, who promptly ordered up heavier guns than had ever been seen in those hill areas. He invited the Sikh leaders to see the guns arrive, dragged by elephants up a hastily constructed road, and the fort was surrendered without a shot being fired. Kangra was later a Cantonment, but a disastrous earthquake in 1907 caused great loss of life. The Deputy Commissioner at the time lost wife and children in the disaster, and the cemetery contains many graves of that year.

The present D.C., Zafrul Ahsan, had obtained some local men as guides and porters for us. We had left Jullunder at 6.0 am. with the heat already considerable. At 6.0 pm. we were crossing our first snow The whole hillside above 6,000ft was a blaze of red rhododendrons varying in size from bushes to large trees. All were of the one blood-red species, and all were at their flowering peak, sending tongues of flame up to the edge of the main snow-fields at 12,000ft, whilst in the gullies snow came right down to 7,000ft. lying under the rhododendrons. In all Kashmir, in all the flowering meadows of the Himalayas, I have never seen anything quite so beautiful as that for sheer mass and magnificence of colour. At sunset the high peaks above glowed almost as red as the rhododendrons.

It was dark when we reached the little forest hut of Triund at 11,000ft.

Next morning another thousand feet of rhododendrons took us up to where the final ridge soared straight up above the tree level, a snow gully steepening gradually from 1 in 2 to 2 in 1 near the top, between 3,000ft and 4,000ft of it. We had had some rough ice-axes made in Jullunder, and leaving a bottle of beer and some food at the bottom we started to climb slowly and painfully up the slope. After two hours the Rover Scouts, on snow for the first time in their lives, had had enough, and first one, then the other, gave up and sank onto a rock to rest in the sunshine. It was getting hot for climbing though the snow was in ideal condition, soft enough to kick into but not too soft. Another half hour and the local men began to flag. I was about half way up now - but the snow was getting softer as the sun rose. Men were strewn all down the mountain side behind me. I pushed on until suddenly I found myself floundering full length up a slope, my face in the snow, and not wanting to rise. I rolled over and looked up. It was a long long way still, getting steeper, and I

knew I couldn't do it. But the view from where I was, over the two thousand feet of snow below me, and over the rhododendrons and the foothills to the plain, was unforgettable. Reluctantly I slouched back down the way I had climbed so painfully, collecting men as I went. I retrieved the beer from the snow - it was like nectar. Then I opened a tin of tongue. I could not eat much. I felt suddenly sick and weary. Whether it was mountain sickness or another dose of ptomaine poisoning I do not know but within half an hour I was very ill indeed. With the support of my companions, and frequent stops, I managed to stagger down to Triund, and on and on the long way down to Dharamsala. It was a nightmare. Zafrul put me to bed and sent for the Civil Surgeon. Next day he insisted on sending his own driver with me back to Jullunder, with a permit to go by the Canal Bank - a pleasant ride down the tree-shaded Sobraon branch of the Bari Doab Canal, much easier than the rough direct road, and shorter than the long way round by Amritsar. It was to take two more attempts before success finally crowned my efforts at an Easter ascent of the Dhaulidhar.

CHAPTER - 7 Multan and Civil Defence.

Of the Punjab I.C.S. only two members were freed for the Armed Forces, both trained pilots. One, Colin Macpherson, was very soon killed on a bombing raid over Germany. The other was Thomas Tull, who before he went distinguished himself by winning a well-judged Point to Point race at Delhi. Eventually he was parachuted into Java, and like Brayne in the previous war, had to take over the Civil Administration of the island. He did this extremely well and received both the D.S.O. and the O.B.E. for his War service.

Instead of active service, Peter Ensor and I were asked to become Civil Defence Officers, and to take a Staff Officers' Course at Calcutta in April. The Cripps Mission had failed - no-one in India had been very hopeful about it - and the general outlook was gloomy. In many ways the Spring and Summer of 1942 seemed to be rock-bottom. Rommel was threatening Egypt, the Japs were threatening India. Amongst the stringencies and shortages at home Mary had slowly recovered physical health and had so far given up all hope of coming to India as to take an important post as Research Chemist at the N.W. London Blood Supply Depot under Dr. Janet Vaughan. That post meant a lot to her and really brought her back to life, but at first it was all she could cope with. Her letters had become factual and scientific. It seemed almost as though we were growing apart. For both of us it was a period of emotional cold-storage, a memory that we had once loved and a hanging-on to the belief that we would love again, but the empty time seemed to stretch endlessly ahead.

Calcutta was dreadful after the Punjab, the climate sticky, the British people in the hotels there "fat, coarse and run to seed". The Swimming Club was the one bright spot. We spent all one Sunday there, lunching in the Club and drinking iced beer between swims.

Japanese air-raids were expected and there were several alerts but no incidents. It was a very thorough three week course, but compared with the real work being done at home it seemed rather like being taught to tie knots in the way some Indian scoutmasters used - by little drawings on a blackboard.

Out of the blue Sachdev came down to a Calcutta Price Conference and brought Savitri to visit her sister. They whisked me off to stay with them for a week-end in the very large house of a Bengali friend

a writer and poet, Sudarshan Datta. Thus came the unexpected privilege of seeing a little of Bengal culture - and of its cooking. At meals a large circular brass tray was served to each guest, with a dozen or more brass bowls on it, each holding a different curry, of which several would be fish of various sorts. There was Bengali music and singing - but one evening we all went out to a Western style dance and cabaret, after a Chinese dinner!

I travelled back to Delhi with the Sachdevs, a large compartment to ourselves in a train that seemed to crawl across the Gangetic Plain, through Bihar and the U.P. - Patna, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Agra, Aligarh and Delhi. There we parted as they had now been transferred to Bombay, where Phil Talbot was also stationed. After Pearl Harbour Phil had joined the U.S. Navy and was Naval Liaison Officer in Bombay.

In Lahore I stayed with Sir Douglas Young and discussed plans for a Youth Movement after the War. We went out to Montmorency Park to discuss them with Hogg, too. He had just been promoted Wing Commander and his son, Hamish, had been commissioned in the Gurkhas. That weekend at the end of May was the last time I saw Hogg.

There is an old Persian proverb about Multan - that four things are to be found there, dirt, heat, beggers and graveyards. In the South Western corner of the Punjab, near to the confluence of the Punjab's five rivers with the Indus, Multan is one of the hottest places in the world. It was here that Alexander the Great, scaling the walls ahead of his men, received the wound from which he died. It was the murder of two British officers in this city in 1848 which started the Second Sikh War. The ancient walls and fortifications still remained. If Rommell had broken through the Middle East, Multan would have been the next stop after Quetta, and the key to the Punjab. With 200,000 inhabitants in the City alone, Civil Defence did seem to be urgently necessary.

The Deputy Commissioner was George Brander, nine years my senior. Over six feet tall, he had rowed for Oxford. He was extremely able and had passed the advanced Interpretership examination in Punjabi. His wife, Joan, was also tall, with dark Irish beauty, and delightful humour. It was always a particular pleasure to meet Joan at a party for with just one small drink a charming initial diffidence would disappear and she would hold you in appreciative fascination. They had one daughter and were expecting another child. The real heat of June was upon us, and Joan moved up

to the hills. I moved in with George and Nader Bakhsh took over as cook. As the thermometer rose to 125° - it could be 110° inside the house at midnight - office hours were put on a summer basis - 6.a.m. until 1.0pm. We lived on iced beer and cold consommé. We drank water with salt in it, so that for a long time I could not drink plain water. Fans would swirl down a ceaseless spiral of heat as we tried to sleep the afternoons away. It was almost a relief to face the heat after tea and attend Fire Service or Rescue Exercises. If a High Explosive bomb had fallen anywhere within five miles of Multan half the city would have fallen down. Half the city did fall down one night in the monsoon when we had five inches of rain in six hours. It was the only time my Civil Defence organisations came into real action, digging people out. There was no loss of life, just a lot of liquid mud - a good exercise for the Rescue Teams, in which I was using Scouts a good deal.

One night later in June I was sitting in the office at the D.C.'s bungalow when George came in with a serious face. "Bill" he said, "I'm afraid I've got some very bad news for you. Your friend Hogg has been killed. No-one seems to know just what's happened yet but someone's held up the Simla-Kalka rail motor. I think his son was killed too." The incredibility of this news made it even more of a shock. George brought me a whisky. Next morning more facts came through, but the full story was not known until more than a year later, when by a considerable feat of scientific detection the culprits were found.

On the narrow-guage mountain railway between Kalka and Simla, in addition to the slow trains there were two fast diesel rail-cars which took first-class passengers at a supplementary fare - a very pleasant way of going up or down. The cars set off much later than the trains and got into Kalka just in time to catch the main-line train, having stopped for dinner on the way. On June 20th, 1942, just three miles from Kalka the driver had noticed a boulder in the track and had stopped. There was an immediate burst of firing and Wing Commander Hogg and his son Hamish had been killed in the first volley, with several other people. Two masked men ordered the survivors to hand over all valuables, and shot another man who resisted.

Long afterwards, in England, I met a man who had arrived at Kalka station that morning and tried to go into the waiting room. He was stopped by police, but not before he had seen a number of

bodies laid out.

Shock and horror went through the Punjab. Nothing like this had happened since the Mutiny. Was it political? Was it aimed at Hogg who was doing such important recruiting work? There was unrest and political trouble elsewhere - but surely not in the Punjab?

Meanwhile the Province's sympathy went to all relatives, but particularly to Mrs. Hogg who had lost both husband and son when they walked cheerfully down to catch the rail car that evening.

It gradually became apparent that there was nothing political about this. It was just a simple but outrageous dacoity. Two young Pathans wanted some money and had three possible plans for getting it. All of them involved murder, and it was just unlucky that they chose the one that would involve most murder, and provide least money. They had armed themselves with home-made automatic rifles and this was what finally hanged them. Bullets from the victims went to Du Heaume, at the Police College, Phillaur, an expert on ballistics. He was able to give some idea what they had been fired from. Many months later another bullet came to him from a Police inspector who had been shot whilst arresting a Pathan, in a village miles away from Kalka. There was something distinctive about the bullet, and he compared it with the others - the same weapon. Then the whole story came out. I happened to visit Ambala Jail when this man who had killed my friends was in the condemned cell. He was a typical reckless Pathan, a nice looking chap to whom life meant nothing, and not very worried about his own.

Now rose the question of who was to succeed Hogg and how a number of urgent problems could be solved. The Air Force would take over the Service side of things straight away, but Hogg had undertaken many building commitments on behalf of the Scouts Association, a lot of money (and of urgent construction) was involved and chaos threatened. Sir Douglas Young asked if I would be prepared to take over, and approached the Governor. Sir Bertrand Glancy asked for my views and invited me to stay at Barnes Court, the Punjab Governor's summer residence in Simla, towards the end of July.

At Barnes Court Sir Bertrand Glancy was entirely sympathetic to the suggestions which the Chief Justice had been pressing. The best plan seemed to be to give me a Provincial I.C.S. post as Assistant Organiser of the National War Front with special responsibility for Youth Organisations, and for the Boy Scouts' Association to appoint

me Honorary Provincial Secretary. This would give me a free hand to do what I wished but would keep the Scouting side unofficial.

The monsoon was in full swing and it rained all the time I was in Simla. I went with Mrs. Hogg up to the cemetery at Sanjaoli, a sad afternoon by the fresh graves, high above a green valley at the beginning of the road to Tibet. I left some verses amongst the fading flowers.

" At campfires we will set apart his place,
Recall his songs, the ever-ready joke;
And those he loved so well will see his face
In the red embers and the dying smoke."

One man I had to see was G.T.J.Thaddeus, an Indian Christian from Madras who was Secretary of the All-India Boy Scouts Association and Deputy Camp Chief (head of training) for India. He was grey-haired, tending to weight, friendly and helpful, but a bit doubtful about a young Englishman taking charge of Punjab Scouting. The rest of India was always distrustful of the Punjab. There were many reasons for this - historically, invasions had come that way; it was the last province the British had taken over and in many ways they had created it, building the great canals that transformed it; the Punjab had swayed the balance in 1857, standing by the British against the rest of India; and now it was again the only province co-operating with the British, with its own Ministry fully behind the War Effort. It was also the only province with a surplus budget produced by its own Finance Minister, and with a considerable food surplus which it was exporting to the rest of India. Now for the first time I realised fully how different the Punjab was from India. In the Punjab you were not conscious of any colour bar or racial bar either way. I had never been conscious of any distrust or diffidence because I was a shade paler than my companions. In point of fact the pale Punjabis tended to look down on the dark Dravidians from the South. There was more of an obvious gulf between the Punjab and Madras than between the Punjab and Europe. An average Punjabi could pass for a Spaniard or a Marseillais any day. Some of the hill women had an almost North European complexion. But colour was a very minor factor. The real point was that the British could feel completely at home in the Punjab and never be conscious of any anti-British feeling. This was not so in the rest of India. Perhaps from the factors I have touched on here stemmed the final tragedy of the Punjab. But until 1946 the Province was an outstanding example of a multi-racial, non-communal

Government.

There was plenty of religious tension at times, of course, and Multan had always been a place noted for communal riots between Hindus and Mohammedans. Perhaps the Multan heat was as much to blame as the religion. August 1942 was no exception. In the rest of India the "August disturbances" followed the failure of the Cripps Mission and the start of a new fast by Gandhi. Some Hindu students in Multan collected a noisy protest gathering which threatened to get out of hand. The young English S.P. who lived next door to us went up to disperse the throng and rather than arrest lads who were only out for a bit of fun he told his men to duck a few of the ring-leaders in a handy pond. To prove that this was no punishment the rest of the students began jumping in of their own accord. It looked as though everything was dissolving in good humour, and the S.P. returned to his H.Q. Half an hour later someone came running in with the message that three bodies had been pulled out of the pond. Whether some people had got trodden under in the excitement, or whether - as the S.P. darkly maintained - three corpses had been hurriedly obtained from elsewhere and put into the water, we did not know, but whatever the explanation we could see the headlines already-"British Police Officer drowns three students. Mass murder in Multan." We had all the ingredients of real trouble on our hands. The wires were humming to Lahore and Simla - full reports had to go to the Chief Secretary and the I.G. of Police, and either George or I had to stand by the telephone for the next twenty four hours. That night I had promised to attend a Wrestling Match in the City in aid of War Funds. For the second and last time in India I put a small revolver in my pocket. (The first time had been when I went up in the rail car to Simla after Hoggs' murder). It was only a gesture to myself. To have produced it in these circumstances would have meant failure - and I need not have worried. There were some Muslim and Sikh leaders at the City gate and their faces were wreathed in smiles. It seemed that tension had become less, and we could breathe freely once more. Apparently the Mohammedans had treated the whole thing as a joke and made the Hindus feel ridiculous. Anyway, no riot resulted, though the S.P. was shortly afterwards transferred. Next day I thought I might as well try this revolver out and strolled down the garden. The first shot jammed - and though at all times in India it was as well to keep a sharp eye on any suspicious character coming near, I never again felt the need

to make a gesture even to myself.

A good dog was the best of safeguards, and my Chainsa pup had been an inseparable companion for two years. He had proved to be one of those rare intelligent mongrels who can almost talk, affectionate to all his friends but keeping a careful watch on strangers. Alas! I had not taken him to Simla and he had been run over in my absence. I gave a last whistle over his grave, sad that he would never run eagerly to answer it again. Life seemed empty for these few August weeks.

There was one dinner party in Multan which was unforgettable. Given by a prominent landowner, Nawab Ashiq Hussain, it began as an ordinary European meal - soup, fish, and excellent mutton with a fine selection of vegetables. Most of us had already eaten a shade unwisely when to our horror the meal now transformed itself into a Punjabi banquet of the most lavish kind. Huge dishes of pulao were brought in - rice cooked with <u>ghi</u> (clarified butter), with chicken or mutton and a variety of spices. Alongside these came curries of every conceivable variety - chicken and mutton, kofta and kebab of finely minced meats, quail and partridge, vegetables in various mixtures. No one who knows only Indian restaurants in Britain can imagine the entrancing aromas and flavours that are achieved by a really skilled Punjabi cook, of the kind seldom met outside the homes of the great feudal landowners. When that magnificent meal was at last finished, the Nawab himself poured water over his guests' hands from a heavy silver ewer.

Before leaving Multan I spent the first week of September at Fort Munro in Baluchistan, staying with the Commissioner. Multan, like Rawalpindi and Jullunder, was the H.Q. of a division as well as a district, and H.D.Bhanot was one of the ablest and best-liked of Commissioners. He was an Indian Christian, with a strong sense of duty, relieved only by a gentle humour. Though he never said so, he was one of those, I think, who disapproved of an I.C.S. man branching off into the unorthodox, almost frivolous kind of work that I was now going to do. But he remained the kindest of friends and the best of hosts. The Commissioner's house, either at Multan or Fort Munro, was very much a social centre. The Bhanot family typified the multi-racial character of the old Punjab, with relatives as well as friends in different communities - a family, that like the Punjab itself, was to be split by Partition, with mother and daughter, for example on different sides.

Mrs. Bhanot was an outstanding hostess. Socially, departmentally, politically she knew everyone in the Punjab and was a gay conversat-

ionalist who would often try slyly to shock her audience. "Oh, you Englishmen! You are so cold and passionless!" she would say to me, knowing that I was just the opposite, and wait for me to take umbrage. No one could be cold and passionless with the Bhanot daughters around. Gipsy, the eldest, was about 18, small and slender and graceful, with flawless skin of pale honey and a hint of roses; a piquant rather than classical beauty, with an almost lop-sided elfishness which made her particularly attractive. Again there was the synthesis of cultures here - less of the Indian mystery, more of the open European friendliness. We teased each other at table, wandered in the bazaar looking at Baluchi blankets, rugs and saddlery; and walked on the rocky plateau away from everyone except an old shepherd.

I never wished to know the future, preferring the excitement of life as it came, but at a lonely railway junction I had happened to meet a Hindu astrologer of compelling personality. We had looked at the stars together whilst waiting for a train, and he had told me strange things about myself - some in the past which he could not have known, some in the future many of which have proved correct. He said that for me the head would always rule the heart. I wonder. If I had not given my heart three years before, my head might easily have given it away in Fort Munro. I could have very happily become part of the Bhanot family and of India. Or would it have been Pakistan?

This was the stage when I was furthest from Mary in many ways. If we had not met, it was at this point that my life might have been quite different. Fortunately there were others in the field. A year or two later Gipsy did marry the young English S.P. who was amongst the Fort Munro party that week. They seemed happy for some years, but not long after Partition they parted. I cannot think it was Gipsy's fault. Perhaps the English had proved cold and passionless in the end.

These were the undertones. In fact that Fort Munro week was a gay and convivial one with events crowding upon each other. It was the Tribal Jirgas, or parliaments, and there was a Resident and three Political Agents present as well as the D.C. and S.P. from Dera Ghazi Khan and the Commandant, Baluch Levy - Buggie Bolam, last met in Gurgaon. The tribesmen were there in force, with their leaders, the most prominent being Nawab Sir Jamal Din, Chief of the Legari. He was a strong, stalwart man who looked like a Baluch chief, but

he had a son in the Punjab I.C.S. - Deputy Commissioner Ludhiana - and two or three daughters. He and Lady Jamal, like the Bhanots, kept open house both here and in their Lahore Home. There were many happy evenings now and later with both these families.

Apart from the Jirgas, there were the games, with some brilliant riding by tribesmen on their little Baluch ponies, and some close-fought shooting matches. The tribesmen in untidy turbans appeared to look with distaste at the cardboard targets, as though they would rather have picked sides and shot at each other across the valley! However when it came to the annual contest in shooting and in tug-of-war between the British officers and the tribal chiefs, we managed to win both events!

Fat-tailed sheep - quite a flock of them - were distributed and at night the parade-ground and market-place were a sight to see. Each tribe was roasting its sheep separately in the traditional Baluch method. The sheep are cut into handy joints - one man's portion - and these are skewered and stuck in a long line in the ground, with fat tails at the end. Fire is then built all around, the "sajji" joints thus being cooked within a circle of fire. Small round stones are made hot, and rolled in dough which is then put by the meat to bake, a favourite place being under the fat tails. This thick bread, rather like twist, is delicious. When the meat is done, each man is handed a skewered joint and a hunk of bread (fat soaked if he is lucky or an honoured guest). You then produce a Baluch knife - ideally designed for either this purpose or slitting an enemy's stomach - and with skewer in one hand and knife in the other proceed to eat. We wandered around, singly or in small groups, visiting the various tribes and accepting one or the other invitation to join them. It was a wild scene on the mountain top, with the fires, the tribesmen and the great joints of mutton. The mutton was excellent but I could not eat anything else for twenty four hours.

Below on the school playing field I was running a camp for scouts from various Baluchistan schools, and very good they were too, Scouting being very much their natural way of life. At the grand final camp fire everyone in the post was present, with the tribesmen in the background joining in the choruses and dances.

The long road down to Dera Ghazi Khan was rough and dusty, and I had to sleep on the roof of the rest house to catch a suspicion of breeze that night, before catching the steamer over the Indus back to Multan. In winter the Indus here can be crossed by a long bridge of

boats, with a mile or two of cart track on each side through dry sandy beds. But in summer when the snow melts in the Himalayas and the monsoon comes, the Indus is a very wide river. An ancient paddle steamer with twin funnels plied across, under the command of a famous character "Admiral" Reilly. The journey took about three quarters of an hour East to West and twice as much coming back, fighting against the current. The steamer was packed with bullock carts and camels, goats and sheep, hides and corn.

Until the railway to Karachi was built there was a flotilla of such ships navigating up the Indus (and Chenab) to Multan. A notice from the 1850's reads -

> "Steamers will leave Kurrachee for Mooltan on the 24th. and the latter place for Kurrachee on the 26th. of every month. Where scantiness of water may prevent steamers from attaining higher stations, goods will be conveyed onwards at the expense of Government."

The distance from Multan to Karachi by river was counted as 800 miles and the fare was Rs200 for a cabin upstream, Rs133.5 downstream, plus Rs4 per day for first class food "at the master's table". Before any railways had been built, in the season 1853, no less than 9,105 hogsheads of beer were sent up the Indus from Karachi for the "troops in Ferozepore". Railways from Karachi to Kotri, cutting out the coast and the delta, and from Lahore to Multan, with the most easily navigated part of the Indus between, were a first step, but it was the through railway which did more than anything else for the economic prosperity of the Punjab. As I stepped off that steamer and got onto a lorry for Multan I remembered with amusement Fay's lectures on India's economic progress.

Offices, bungalows and playing fields shimmered in the early September heat when I arrived at Montmorency Park to take over officially the work attached to an imposing array of titles: - Honorary Provincial Secretary and Organising Commissioner, Punjab Boy Scouts Association, Principal of the Punjab College of Physical Education and Scouting, member of the Punjab War Board (and of the Soldiers' Sailors' and Airmen's Welfare Sub-committee) and member of the Punjab Board of Film Censors! At the price of occasionally attending an interminable Indian film to see if it was likely to corrupt the morals of youth (with Indian films then this was highly unlikely. Lovers were scarcely permitted to hold hands, let alone embrace) this last post gave me free entry to any cinema in the country! Since there now followed eighteen months in which I seldom slept in the same bed for more than three nights at a stretch I was not often able to avail myself of this privilege.

The Provincial Secretary's House had been rented to the Air Force as Commanding Officer's Residence, and the bungalow ear-marked for me was not yet available, so like Hogg so many years before I began my residence at Montmorency Park in a tent, pitched amongst shady trees.

The Scout Headquarters Staff with which I now started the most enjoyable four years of my life was not a very large one. There was an office staff of half a dozen and an overseer in charge of grounds and construction. The senior secretary, an Indian Christian, Moti Lal, was quite outstanding. He had read widely and spoke and wrote excellent English. He was the best secretary I ever had and a community of ideas and understanding grew between us. He became my right hand man administratively. That reliable and friendly office staff were an important part of the team and of the pleasure of the life we shared together.

Chief of the field staff was Hogg's Assistant Provincial Secretary, Sardar Sahib Sardar Hardial Singh, a Sikh of venerable appearance, with comfortable girth and silver beard, though he must have been then barely 50. Sardar Sahib had been in Scouting since the beginning in India and had been to the Arrowe Park Jamboree at Birkenhead in 1929 which as a young Scout I had heard so much about. I recalled hearing from some Rover Scouts of their meeting with a "white bearded Indian, the venerable Chief Scout of the Punjab" who could have been no other than Sardar Sahib. This was the man who had

been to Quetta with Hogg and had been particularly responsible for building up the social service work at Kurukshetra and elsewhere. He had, I knew, hoped to take over as Provincial Secretary himself. If it had been a question of merely carrying on existing work I would have hesitated to disappoint him. But I felt at this juncture there were great opportunities for Scouting and Youth Work in India to take a big step forward, and I had something special to contribute. Sardar Sahib took this in very good part, and as my schemes developed I think he really agreed with this point of view, though there was always some professional rivalry between us. Sardar Sahib was an outstanding technical scout - good at handicrafts, with a great collection of Scout souvenirs, and an authority on the rarer knots, splices and lashings. He was a good naturalist, and had done a lot of trekking in the mountains. He had even spent a year as a hermit living on practically nothing on the banks of the Narbadda. We were frequently tempted to try to score off each other, but Sardar Sahib was very difficult to score off. Like Rai Bahadur Izzat Rai, Sardar Sahib did not squander his knowledge. Sometimes you had to work hard to get it out of him. But there was rarely any knowledge that you could give him that he did not already have. Astuteness and diplomacy were part of his being, and you had to get up very early in the morning indeed to get the better of Sardar Sahib.

The head of the Physical Education side was a Muslim, M.U.Bhatty, who had been trained in Glasgow. We still had responsibility for much Physucal Education work for the Education Department, and Bhatty was also doing some work for the Air Force. There was an unfortunate incident one evening. Bhatty kept his family in purdah and some of the officer cadets had been hanging around. Bhatty caught one of them making eyes at his daughter over the wall and hit him with a stick - rather too hard. He came straight to me with the blood-covered stick, in great distress, having done what he could for his victim. I rang the C.O. to come straight over and between us we decided that having got the lad to hospital it really would be best to hush the whole thing up. Though the lad had a badly dinted head he would recover and a court would be almost certain to hold Bhatty's action justifiable, if rather too energetic. Soon afterwards Bhatty accepted a commission in the I.A.F. and left Walton. He did very well and became Sqdrn. Leader.

I now have the greatest pleasure in introducing my Three Musketeers.

All three were graduates of the Punjab University - or University of the Panjab, as it insisted was the correct spelling - and also of the College of Physical Education and Scouting. They had been selected and trained by Hogg and appointed to the staff as Circuit Organisers, responsible for touring and running training camps in the districts. Iqbal Qureshi was a tall, well-built, very handsome Muslim with a strong religious background and some priestly character - a definite Aramis. Sita Ram Mahindroo was not so tall as Qureshi, but of similar build - a Kshatriya, the Hindu warrior class; cleverest in thought, noblest in philosophy, he was a good Athos. Chowdry Mohammad Latif was big and strong amongst the strong, a lion of a man in every way, never failing in health and good humour, a real Porthos, less orthodox in his Mohammedanism than Qureshi. All were good friends and became my bosom companions. Qureshi would not touch pork. Latif preferred not to know if he was eating pork and Sita Ram not to know if he was eating beef. Otherwise we feasted often together - for any meal with them was a feast - and there were no other differences.

From this staff I wanted a full programme of training camps for Scouts started immediately and planned to coincide with any district's War Front efforts, particularly official visits of the Premier or Governor.

One of the first of these happened to be at Simla and offered the opportunity of visiting the Punjab Boy Scout Association's other Headquarters at Tara Devi. This consisted of two commodious bungalows built on the top of a wooded hill five miles south of Simla, and surrounded by beautiful gardens. Below the "Homestead" stretched some hundreds of acres of forest and mountain side which provided an ideal summer training centre. The estate had been given to the Goad family in the 19th. Century on condition that they supplied milk to Simla and to the Viceroy when in residence there. Several members of the Goad family were in the Indian Police, and one, a famous character, was Superintendant of Police at Simla. He once fell out with the Deputy Commissioner and chased him around Simla with a hog spear. The estate was run as a dairy farm for years and my own bungalow there had been converted from cow sheds. On retirement the last of the family, L.B.Goad, had presented the estate to the Punjab Boy Scouts Association, the finest of possible gifts and one which has given to thousands of people the experience of living in a unique mountain paradise. For me, and for many, Tara Devi will always be the

most beautiful place on earth. There were seven masters of Hindu mythology who, attacked by devils, took refuge on various mountains - Nanda Devi, Kailash, Kamet - and Tara Devi. The name means Goddess of Light, or of the stars. Her temple, with white walls and gilded top, was at the 7,000ft summit of the mountain, two miles away along the narrow ridge, and 500ft higher than the Homestead. There were one or two tiny hamlets here and there in the forest of oak and pine that clothed that vast hillside. Otherwise, from the stream in the nullah far below, to the grey crags of the ridges, 4,000ft of vertical height and many thousands of acres in extent, we had the freedom of wood and waterfall, of bird and beast and flower. Golden eagles soared high above the ridge, kingfishers darted by the stream, and to the Homestead garden came Scarlet Minivets, Golden Orioles, Barbets and Bulbuls, three or four different kinds of cuckoo. Banksia and other roses ran riot, and honeysuckle and buddleia were haunted by many of the rarest and most beautiful of Himalayan butterflies.

Mrs. Hogg was still in residence at Tara Devi, a lonely but indomitable figure. When my work in Simla was over she accompanied me on a day's trek of ten or twelve miles over to Junga, the capital of Keonthal State, whose young Raja was a scout. We could see Junga clearly from Tara Devi, but it was 4,000ft down into the valley and 2,000ft up the other side to get there. Qureshi came too and he and I - and Pluto - had an exciting journey back, scrambling along the steep and rocky nullah itself, then straight up the hillside to Tara.

Pluto had been Hogg's dog, and I had met him as a boisterous puppy a year or so before. He was still boisterous, but now weighed 50lbs. He had been accidentally bred from a bull terrier bitch of Sir Douglas Young's who met a Kerry Blue belonging to one of the Chief Justice's friends - both champion dogs of their breed. The Governor with his usual wit suggested that Pluto should be awarded a Half Blue, and that he might justly be called a Blue Kerrier. But Pluto never did anything by halves. Like a true Irishman he didn't care whose side he was on in a fight so long as he was in it. Mrs. Hogg had decided that he was too much for her - and wondered if I would take him. And so Pluto joined the staff to blaze a trail of glory over every district in the Punjab and half the peaks and valleys of the Western Himalayas.

In the next five weeks I was at camps and War Fund rallies in Rawalpindi, Campbellpur, Gurgaon, Tara Devi and another again at

Montmorency Park. Usually there were two going on at once, each run by a Circuit Organiser, and I would spend a couple of days at each.

At Walton (the general Air Force station, which included Montmorency Park was called Walton) a dozen or so R.A.F. lads had been joining in camp-fires. I had moved into a bungalow now and some of these lads began dropping in. It was obvious that this was a civilian island for them in a Service sea, and a friendly informal club began to form. Eight of them managed to get leave and come up with me to Tara Devi for a week, where the November air was very bracing, the autumn cherry trees in bloom, and fresh snow on the high peaks made a superb panorama. A services Rover Crew came up from Karachi too and this was the beginning of a sort of "Leave Hostel" which we ran at Tara Devi every summer. There was only one rule - "Abandon rank all ye who enter here" and there were frequently gatherings which included a Major General, a Brigadier, the Chief Justice, two or three Indian Scouters, and half a dozen B.O.R.'s. At parties in Lahore these might well be joined by three of Savitri Sachdev's sisters as well as any English girls available.

The Organiser of the Punjab's National War Front was John Eustace, some years senior to me in the I.C.S. On the rare occasions when I ventured into the War Front Office he affected surprise amounting to shock, but he was very good-natured and now suggested some big displays combining War Front Work, Scouting and Civil Defence, to coincide with a tour by the Premier, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan. We went into conference with the Director of Civil Defence and the Home Secretary, and I had a personal interview with the Premier for the first time. I had already put up a scheme to him and to the Governor for quadrupling the Scout grant, doubling the staff, and greatly increasing training camps. Though from a family of feudal landowners and warriors, Sir Sikander gave the appearance of a mild and scholarly man, but he was both an astute politician and a great statesman. He needed little persuasion of the value of youth work, and promised to do all he could for the scheme.

John Eustace and I accompanied him throughout that tour, the main rallies being at Sialkot, and at Chakwal on the Salt Range, where my old friend the Commissioner of Rawalpindi, Percy Marsden was present. That was one of the best joint rallies we had and I have a photograph of Sir Sikander taking the salute. It was one of the last photos taken of him in public. At Christmas he died suddenly of heart

failure, and the one man who might have prevailed against Jinnah and the Muslim League was removed. A first dark shadow of doubt touched the bright winter skies of the Punjab.

CHAPTER - 9 Scouting in the Punjab-2. Camps in Kulu, Climbs in Kashmir.

The year 1943 began with two more special events - one was a camp at Gujrat where across a wide lake scouts built a rope monkey bridge 220ft long - claimed as a world record! H.E. Sir Bertrand Glancy was very impressed by the bridge, particularly when a scout demonstrating it fell off in the middle!

An outstanding camp, never to be forgotten by those who were there, was held in February in a green, tree-girt meadow on the banks of the Chenab River between Multan and Muzaffargarh. For once all the staff were gathered together, reinforced by some first class local scouters. Three hundred and fifty scouts, from all three neighbouring districts, came into that camp. For some from the tribal areas of Fort Munro this was the first time they had seen the plains, their first sight of a railway. The highlight of this camp was the construction of an elaborate stadium platform and a 60ft high tower, using telegraph poles and other heavy timber. The Punjab winter is the finest climate in the world. The skies were a cloudless blue, the bright sunshine not too hot, a gentle breeze came over the sparkling river. Men and boys were busy everywhere, and to be balanced high up above it all on the tower with Latif or Qureshi and a group of boys, lashing on extra cross-beams and singing Punjabi songs, was sheer happiness. The river provided swimming and fishing, there was jungle along its banks for tracking and wide games, whilst only a quarter of a mile away was a _jheel_ - a lake and marsh - where we stalked wild duck by moonlight. There was a plague of starlings and we discovered that these, split and fried, made excellent eating. We had starlings for breakfast and wild duck for dinner. Then Latif with his rich strong voice would have us all singing a local folk song about the love of Hir and Ranja "On the banks of the Chenab". Pluto was in his element, with water to swim in and camp games to join in. But one day a very large pi-dog wandered on to the site and before we could stop him Pluto went straight into battle. However civilised and non-violent one's training, to own a dog like Pluto was to experience some of the cruder mediaeval thrills. He was a born fighter, scientific and deadly. Although half as big again that dog never stood a chance. We actually saw Pluto, teeth firmly fixed in his opponent's

neck, lift the bigger dog off his feet and twist him over in the air to break his neck. By the time we got to Pluto it was all over.

At 10.30 one morning H.E. Sir Bertrand Glancy arrived. Commissioners and Headmasters greeted him at the entrance, but not a sign of any boys. He looked slightly puzzled as he mounted the platform and looked out on a wide empty space, but then the various contingents tore in with tribal war-cries from all corners of the camp and marched past to the tune of various rousing Punjabi songs.

H.E. seemed to enjoy that camp as we had done, free for an hour in the sun and the wind with boys at work and play around him. Within two hours of his departure tower and tents had been razed to the ground and there were no signs that that camp had ever been. Two days later on his way back from tour H.E. insisted on stopping there again, to stroll across that green site by the river.

At Montmorency Park we had a visit from a Chinese Educational Mission, and one Sunday a military mission arrived unexpectedly. No one else seemed to be entertaining them so I sent an invitation over and the Commanding General with three officers came to share Madar Bakhsh's Yorkshire pudding, of which they were duly appreciative.

The C.O. of the Station now was W/C Bill Cox, R.A.F., who being a bachelor and an old scout, had come into residence with me. As he was a Lancashireman (and a Catholic) we thought this was a convincing demonstration of the Fourth Scout Law about brotherhood between castes and creeds. Also living with us in March was Sir Douglas Young, who had retired as Chief Justice but was carrying on for the time being as Provincial Commissioner. After rather too good a night at the Volga, a Russian restaurant in Lahore whose Chicken Stroganov was the finest I have ever tasted, Sir Douglas Young decided to start a fast. He was a very good guest, because he ate nothing during his week's stay. He had once done a month's fast at a Nature Cure establishment near London, two weeks on water and two on orange juice, and going to court each day with a 7 mile walk thrown in. Sir Douglas claimed never to have had a day's illness, and scarcely a cold, since then. When anything was wrong with him, he just fasted. Naturally he rather laughed at the fuss Gandhi and others made of fasting, when all the time they knew it was the best thing they possibly could do. Sir Douglas had written to the Viceroy and given him all the facts and received a grateful letter back, which may explain the firmer approach Wavell adopted to Gandhi's fasting. Sir Douglas was so persuasive that Bill Cox and I joined him in his fast, and poor Madar Bakhsh, with

nothing to do, thought we had all gone raving mad. Muslims fasted a good deal of course, but only from sunrise to sunset. Bill Cox, with the weight of the Station on his shoulders, soon weakened, but I managed to fast for four days.

In March, we were sleeping out in the garden with a wall of sweetpeas down one side. George Brander had become Private Secretary to the Governor, his predecessor George Abell having gone as Assistant Secretary to the Viceroy. Another colleague, Stuart Abbott, was Secretary to the new Premier, Sir Khizar Hyat Khan, a nephew of Sikander's. Khizar was more of a country gentleman than a politician, with a special interest in extending youth work into the villages. A Committee which consisted of Sir Douglas Young, Mian Abdul Haye the Minister of Education, Mr W.H.F.Armstrong Director of Public Instruction, and myself had drawn up a report strongly recommending a rapid expansion of Scouting and an adaption of it to village needs - to bring in ideas of village reconstruction and "rural uplift" so vitally necessary for India. We had already done something by training Village Guides for the Panchayat Department. Now my detailed scheme for expansion was accepted and in the new budget the Scout Association received extra grants of about £10,000. Amongst others I now persuaded two young men to come onto my staff who were to play a very big part in the future of youth work in India and Pakistan respectively. Both belonged to the Pioneers, an independent Scout Group in Lahore with a very fine history. Both were graduates, but working in private business. Both had the real stuff of Scouting in them and I wanted them. They were a most happy addition to the staff. Ved Parkash Dhawan is now National Scout Commissioner for India, and Mian Abdul Raoof is Secretary of the West Pakistan Scouts Association, so that between them they control Scouting through most of the sub-continent.

With so much Air Force work going on at Montmorency Park, and so many new buildings there, an important part of my plan was to shift as much central training as possible to Tara Devi, and to devote all possible resources to increasing facilities there. Before moving to the hills however there was another of those particularly interesting Social Service Camps at Choa Saidan Shah, a very beautiful village on the Salt Range. Some of my colleagues (including Dick Slater) had done their Settlement Training there and Phil Talbot had written to me from there, describing apricot trees in bloom against

the green wheat of spring, and [illegible], that I must go there some day. My chance had now come, as there were April fairs and festivals at Choa and nearby Katas, where holy men would bathe in the sacred tank below the temple on the Hindu festival of Baisakhi. Latif organised this camp at a spot between the two villages, whilst Qureshi went over to run a training camp at Rawalpindi. I arrived to join Latif the day before Baisakhi and found a very social gathering which included an I.C.S. colleague, Harcourt, who was sub-divisional Officer of the area, and some Fathers from the local Belgian Mission. Conversation was going on in a mixture of French and Punjabi.

It was strange to find so important a Hindu shrine and festival in the heart of the Mohammedan Salt Range, but the temples were very ancient and were probably here before the prophet Mahomet lived. The tank at Katas, filled by a sacred spring, was famed particularly as the place where those Sadhus who believed in going entirely naked came to bathe. There was a packed audience to see these "Nanga pangas", twenty or thirty of them, stalk solemnly around the tank, stark naked and grey with ashes, until with one accord they jumped in and ceremonially bathed. When they withdrew there was a struggle amongst the many pilgrims to bathe in the water rendered still more holy by the ashes washed off the sadhus. This was what the scouts had to control and they did so very well.

At Rawalpindi Qureshi had a grand camp going by the lake in Topi Park, where I had ridden so often in my first year in India. Qureshi was the aquatic expert of the staff, and could be trusted to find swimmable water if any could be found. Amongst visitors to this camp were the Commissioner Percy Marsden and Mrs. Marsden.

Sir Douglas Young had moved up to Tara Devi when I got back to Lahore, and for a time it looked as though we might do battle for once. He had a lovely Red Cocker spaniel, Simon, and wanted me to leave Pluto behind in case that redoubtable warrior should pick on Simon. Since Sir Douglas was there on holiday and I was going to work I didn't think this was right and said so rather emphatically. In the end Sir Douglas gave way but insisted on my keeping Pluto tied up. One day I left him tied in my room with the door open, whilst I went to discuss something with Sir Douglas. After some time we noticed Simon was missing and rushed out. A horrid thought had struck me - sure enough, he had found the open door. But he was so completely everybody's friend that he had walked straight up to Pluto, licked him on the nose, and Pluto was won over immediately.

They were the best of friends from that moment, which, considering Pluto's character, was remarkable. When Sir Douglas left the country a month or two later he gave Simon to me.

There were many camps and treks before then, however. Narindar Singh came up for Easter and joined Qureshi and me with some Rover scouts in a short trip of inspection to one of the Simla Hill states, and then over to Kulu by the Jalori Pass. We went out past the cemetery at Sanjaoli onto the Hindustan-Tibet Road. Thirty miles on, at Narkanda, was a shrine with prayer-flags and a milestone "Tibet -157". Across the great gap of the Sutlej Gorge the white peaks of the Outer Himalayas spread in a tremendous arc, cold sentinels guarding the Tibetan border. From East to West the icy semi-circle spread, from Hansbeshan to the Shrikand Range, Gushu Pishu, Ghatakanda and Kand Mahadev, all from 17,000ft to 19,000ft with higher peaks behind. We looked at them with longing. Next year, we said, we might go further on that road, to Chini and Shipki and on to places with such fascinating names as Poo, Madxong, Nuk, Luk and Op. We sat on the lawn there, drinking tea and making plans, whilst Pluto crunched a plate of bones at our side. That very autumn some of us did climb Hansbeshan. Some of our other dreams came true later - much later. Some now never will.

The forests beyond Narkanda were magnificent. Douglas Firs 300ft tall, deodars towering like green pyramids, or reeling drunkenly in old age and lying in decay across the path, hung with lichen. There were tents at Kumharsain, and scouts crowded around us with gifts of wild raspberries.

At 3.0 am. we left in moonlight, to avoid the heat of the Sutlej Valley. We took a short cut that suddenly dropped into darkness. Hanging perilously over steep places, we went down slopes in the darkness which we would never have dared to tackle in daylight, and reached the river at dawn. At mid-day we were bathing in an icy mountain stream with the heat of the Sutlej left behind. Shoja Rest House near the pass was one of the most beautiful places I had seen - green meadows, covered with primula and gentian and iris, deep forest and that range of snowy peaks. Some day I would come back there, I thought, and have my wife with me. The next hot afternoon Narindar and I were bathing in the cool river at Banjar, and basking in the warm sand near a tree where two Golden Orioles were playing. Eight hot and dusty miles later we tramped into Larji thirsting for some tea we knew we wouldn't get - and there

was an orderly resplendent in red and gold uniform. It was the Macnabs, on tour from Jullunder. They gave us tea and scones in copious quantities and we went on through the lovely Beas gorge in the cool of the evening.

But it is a walk two mornings later that I remember most vividly - from Kulu to Kuraon. The others had gone ahead and I walked alone in the cool freshness of the morning, eight miles of the Valley of Paradise to myself. Heavy rain had washed atmosphere and foliage clean. Towering horse-chesnut trees were heavy with pyramids of white bloom. The delicate pink blossom of Shirin trees contrasted with their sprays of green leaf. Strawberries and raspberries were everywhere, every rock was festooned with wild roses and far below the river ran chuckling through banks of lush pasture and fields of waving corn. As the path climbed higher snow-peaks appeared at each end of the valley until I was walking in a daze of beauty.

The Babhu Pass led us over into Kangra, and to the Canadian Mission at Palampur where Padre Guiton ran a first class school and scout troop. Every year he took his senior boys for a month's trek into Lahoul and Ladakh, along the Tibetan borders. Lord Baden Powell had come here in 1937 and had run the troop for a day. I did the same and found them grand lads. Mrs. Hogg was now at this mission, running the hostel, and it was good to see her happily occupied.

Towards the end of May Tara Devi too was a riot of roses and honeysuckle. To the bird-spotters' collection were added long-tailed tree pies, bay-backed shrikes, yellow-throated sparrows, and several tits. Alexander and Montgomery, with the 4th Indian Division prominent amongst their troops, had cleared North Africa of the enemy. There was a brightening of the outlook at last.

The Indian Army had several "Boys' Companies" at various regimental centres, and one officer in the Mountain Battery at Ambala had conceived the idea of scout training for them. This was considered so beneficial that the Director of Training came to Tara Devi to discuss the idea and during the next two years we trained about 500 of these boys. Three different companies came to one training camp, the highlight of which was a spirited battle fought with pine-cones for possession of the Homestead Hill. Two Colonels and a Brigadier assisted me as umpires, but we became casualties ourselves.

The Divisional Forest Officer walked around the estate with me one morning. The forest needed thinning out, and there would be about

,000 trees to fell. In certain areas more planting should be done. n my first visit to Tara Devi I had started clearing a site for my small tent. This clearing and levelling of sites on the steep hillside had become a staff hobby, too. Latif took a particular delight in joining me to build a new site with axe, pick and spade. One of the schemes I was anxious to get adopted was a new type of social service and mountaineering camp for students. I had gone around already lecturing at several colleges and a trial camp was a great success. or educated Indians manual work was something scarcely thought of. ut in these surroundings, with us showing the way, they set to with will. Gradually over the years we cleared and levelled many acres in terraces. There were sufficient good rocks near by to give lementary training in rock climbing, and the best students were picked out for inclusion in more ambitious treks and mountaineering xpeditions. One purpose of these was to provide enthusiastic leaders or future expansion of this work.

For June Tara Devi had been lent to the Girl Guides, and Latif, ureshi and I took a party of twenty students to Kashmir. Ted Shields came up from Bombay to join us, and we took a lorry from Rawalpindi up he familiar Jhelum Valley road. At Domel we stopped to drink tea at cafe built above the river. A large Tibetan mastiff was sleeping n the sun outside and I edged Pluto carefully past him. As we came out however the dog woke up and growled. Pluto was out of my hand and at this huge dog in a flash. No one dared interfere once battle as joined. As usual it was scarcely a battle. With sharp tugs luto dragged his opponent backwards until suddenly, with one last icious tug they both disappeared over the edge into the river below! hat separated them. Pluto was soon back shaking water all over us, nd we hurriedly departed. Around the corner we caught a last glimpse the other dog standing forlornly on a rock in the middle of the iver.

The C.M.S. High School in Srinagar, run by an old Jesus man, ndale Biscoe, was carrying out much of what I wanted for India. oys were taught to live, and to keep their eyes open, as well as to arn out of books. There were "Rolls of Honour" for outstanding eds of courage, feats of endurance and examples of kindness to imals. Swimming, rowing, mountaineering and nature study played large part in school life.

So once again I climbed up through the forest to Tragbal. This me we went on - over four miles of snow, with patches of purple

Primula Kashmiriana, blue gentian and yellow rock rose. Far ahead the white spire of Nanga Parbat showed for a time above the clouds. There is a rough stone hut on the 12,000ft pass, for there have been some bad accidents here - one autumn storm killed a whole train of 300 mules and their drivers. The improved road ("not less than 10ft wide, with maximum slope of 1 in 10,") was built by Messrs. Spedding & Co. about 1890-93. As we came down from the pass, we turned a corner and stopped in mingled horror and amazement. A mule had perished there, and around it were four fearsome birds, the size, it seemed, of ostriches. They were Himalayan Griffons, with a wing-span of 18ft. As we rather doubtfully approached they took lumbering hops to one side and watched us pass as though sizing us up for a future meal.

The hillsides were covered with silver-grey Artemesia, gathered by a contractor for a factory at Baramulla where santonin was extracted. Down by the Kishenganga river were willow, dogwood and wild apricot trees, with patches of blue iris and some very tall "white-hot pokers". A Plumbeous Redstart flew across the river. The Gurais Valley was full of Gujjars and their flocks on their way to summer grazing. Latif and I walked four miles one night in the moonlight, threading our way through sheep and goats that were sleeping on the road.

Above Kamri Rest House all was snow. In the active climbing party were Latif, Qureshi, Vasudev (Savitri Sachdev's young brother) and my orderly Dilawar Khan (Madar Bakhsh's brother and a recent addition to my staff, young, handsome, intelligent and adventurous). All these, and Pluto, set off with me to climb the Kamri Peak, 15,000ft, 5,000ft above us. The snow was in excellent condition. We kicked our way steadily up in zig-zags, roping up for a steep bit of loose rock and scree that led us to the ridge at 13,000ft. On the final pyramid piles of loose rock alternated with patches of soft snow, all at a steep angle. At times we had to lie full length and drag ourselves up with ice-axes caught in the rocks ahead. The final obstacle was a narrow knife-edged ridge of snow. At 2.0 pm. we were gazing entranced at a vast solitude of icy peaks etched in black and white, the valleys completely lost to view at this height of 15,000ft. Less than forty miles to the north, soaring above the cloud with the whole of the west ridge and the eastern shoulder visible, was Nanga Parbat. We examined it with hungry eyes. Some day, perhaps - - . The sun was hot, and all, including Pluto, curled

up on our respective rocks to doze. Occasionally from deep in the valley, and mellowed by distance, floated the lonely call of a cuckoo. A pair of Alpine Swifts circled around us, tails vibrating, and a few dark sparrow-like birds - Stoliczka's Mountain Finches.

Next day, whilst Qureshi and Shields (sho had been out of the serious climbing with a strained knee) took the rest of the party down to the main valley, Latif, Vasudev and I, with Pluto, climbed onto the ridge again intending to travel south along it and drop down into the valley further on. In a meadow between birch trees at 11,000ft were clumps of Primula Rosea, Gentiana Carinata, and Delphineum Vestitum with its long sprays of dark mauve. Higher, on the scree, was a great patch of Androsace microphylla covered with pink flowers. To our birds were added Crested Black Tits, playing amongst the birches, and a pair of Hodgson's Pipits. From the ridge Nanga Parbat was clearer even than the day before, but even as we feasted our eyes on it the clouds gathered round - the "Naked Goddess" was shy. We toiled south along that snowy ridge for three hours, climbing three peaks and a rock gendarme. Pluto forged ahead as guide, with an infallible instinct for the safest way over a snow-field. Yesterday's lovely conical peak was far behind us now, but we were tiring. That ridge was magnificent - 13,000ft to 14,000ft all the way, in a world of snow-peaks on every side - one of the finest days I have ever spent amongst mountains. At last we came to a peak that rose sheer and unclimbable, a rock precipice dotted with pink and yellow stone crop. We descended a thousand feet of scree-riding and then a snow-filled gully. We tobogganed down that on large pieces of slate, an unorthodox method!

Again the camp moved down, and only Latif and Pluto and I were left for the third day's climb - Habba Khotan, 14,5000ft, the bare mountain of sheer rock that dominates the Gurais Valley. We took it from the rear, by the steep high pass that goes over to Tilel, up a snow-packed nullah between dark spruce and silver birch. There were some hoof marks, then a dead pony, and we caught up with a small party of Tilel men struggling to get back with their ladened ponies. If they were coming that way there was obviously no way through the Tilil river gorge below our peak, and we would have to go back the way we had come.

That peak was formidable. A knife-edge of jagged rocks with a drop of three thousand feet on each side led to the summit. I crossed a gap by dropping the length of my body from one hold to another and

then noticed that Pluto, game to the last, was trying to follow. As I clung precariously to a pinnacle Latif appeared and grabbed Pluto. I did the last fifty yards alone and it took half an hour. Dark clouds were pouring round and snow was falling. A four-thousand foot precipice dropped from the summit to Badwan in the Gurais valley below - our destination! Descending, Latif had to lower Pluto onto my shoulders as I stood on a narrow stone ledge with a steep snow slope below. We went down this in an exciting glissade, losing three thousand feet of height in twenty-five minutes. We were shouting with exhilaration, and some girls gathering wood at the bottom were scared out of their wits. They must have thought we were abominable snowmen intent on rape, and dropping their loads they ran screaming ahead of us. We shouted after them not to worry, but they ran all the faster. At the village we were met by angry men armed with sticks and an old blunderbuss. It took all Latif's charm to pacify them but eventually he had them laughing with us. We were back at Chorwan, our previous night's camp, at 5.0 - the climb had taken five and a half hours, the descent one. Some hot sweet tea revived us for the eight miles down the valley to Badwan.

Lieut. King from the Mountain Battery Boys' Company we had trained at Tara Devi arrived next morning. Next morning we had brown trout for breakfast, and stewed wild apricots. We also had a day's rest. In the full moon Ted Shields and I walked along the river. Swollen by melting snows it surged swiftly by, sending silver ripples and eddies onto the dark sands of the shore. High on the sphinx-like peak of Anzbari a lonely fire twinkled and we wondered what solitary herdsman had bivouacked in that precarious spot. At the western end of the valley Venus shone more brilliantly than either of us had ever seen. I hoped it was an omen. It was for Ted. He had been telling me about a girl he had met in Bombay, and that autumn they were married.

We moved down to Koragbal and pitched our tents by the Gosai stream. Some traders camping near-by gave us sattu - parched barley, ground and sweetened. We had a magnificent supper of chicken and chips and wild rhubarb pudding. Pluto and I climbed a 12,000ft ridge alone that evening, to prospect tomorrow's peak, Hant, on the other side of the valley. The last reflections of sunset were dyeing the peaks as we dropped down again through darkening woods.

Ted and I climbed Hant (13,469ft). Half way up a shepherd taking his flock along the mountain side gave us fresh goat's milk, milking

the animal into our mugs as we waited. He worked for the owner, and the flocks travelled by day on the hillsides, grazing as they went. They would gradually move up the valley, he on these high paths and the headman with cattle in the valley below. He would live for days on his little bag of sattu and the milk from his animals.

Below the snow the whole hillside was a mass of yellow corydalis and artemesia. The haunting, curlew-like cries of monal pheasants floated across the forest below. From a pile of rocks a large silver fox loped away. Pluto was off like a flash in pursuit and we followed, but the altitude was too much for us, and snow too much for Pluto.

Next day we re-crossed the Razdaihangen Pass. At least 500 people and 2,000 head of sheep were going over every day now. We met two happy soldiers of the Indian Army going back on leave to their home in Gilgit.

Since 1947 that lovely valley of Gurais, and those ridges of paradise above, have been the Cease Fire Line between the opposing forces of India and Pakistan, of Kashmir and Azad Kashmir. Tragedy came to the wandering herdsmen who for centuries had passed that way. Turned back from their traditional grazing, many of their flocks starved to death or were dispersed at great loss.

There was no thought of that in 1943. There is a note in my diary "Some day I shall tell incredulous listeners how on Midsummer Day in 1943, in India, I sat in a tent in the middle of a snowstorm drinking China tea". The tea and the tent were John King's. From Bandipur Latif, Ted Shields, Dilawar Khan and I went up the Erin Valley with John King and the minimum of kit, carried by seven porters. We were to cross two high passes into the Sind Valley. A local guide, Lala, was a cheerful, bearded ruffian who insisted on us stopping in his village to drink Kashmiri tea. From an almost cloudless sky that night a cloudburst descended on us. The meadow on which we had camped became a rushing stream. We all sought refuge in John King's tent, on the one high piece of land. We were in his tent again the next evening, at 11,000ft, drinking tea with large snowflakes falling. The route ahead seemed barred by jagged peaks.

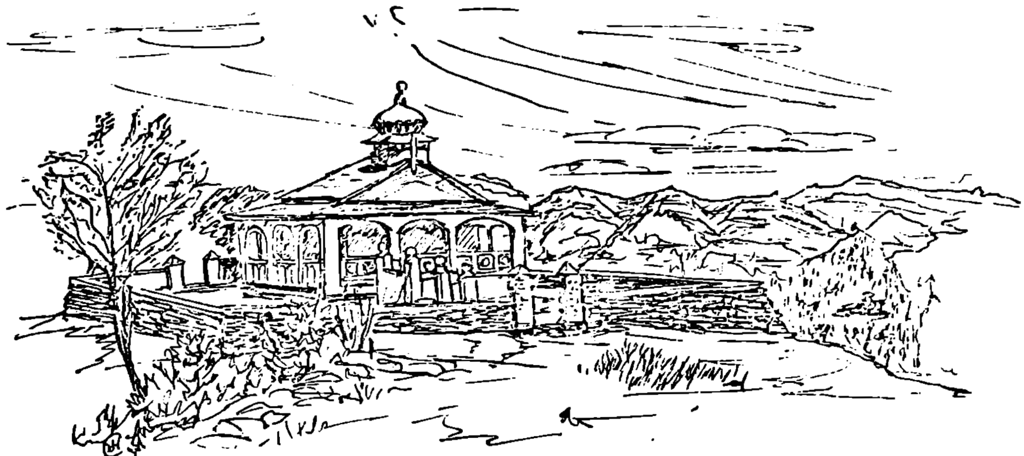
We breakfasted on scrambled eggs, sardines, tomatoes and baked beans cooked together, a delicious mixture. The climb to the first ridge took four hours. Juniper-dotted slabs led to a steep snow gully where every step had to be cut. At the top we looked over onto a snow-field several square miles in extent, with a tiny lake, but to

get down to it we had to negotiate a perpendicular snow face, and a long steep slope, itself steep. We rolled the loads down and having got past the steepest part, glissaded after them ourselves. The Kashmiris had never tried this before and there was great laughter as they followed.

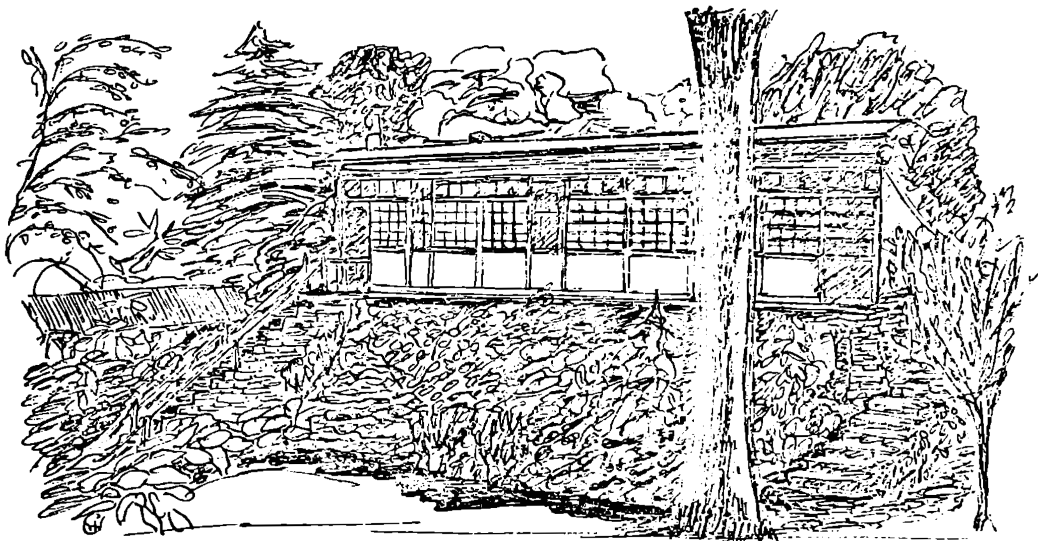
Another ridge took us to Gangabal Lake at the foot of Haramukh (16,872ft). In all my life no single view has been more beautiful than that. The lake or lakes were two miles long. The centre was frozen, but for several feet all around the edge there was blue water with snow-trout clearly visible. Beds of Primula Rosea were so thick that their reflection made red patches in the blue. I have never seen such colour contrasts - dark blue water, pale blue sky, white clouds, whiter snow, black rocks, green grass, red, blue and yellow flowers in masses, and at the other side of the lake the peak of Haramukh rising sheer for 5,000ft, patched with hanging glaciers.

From the next ridge we looked across the Wangat Nullah and Sind Valley to where the sharp point of Kolahoi was visible beyond a nearer range of mountains.

From a grassy meadow amongst deodars, a day later, we took a short cut down a steep gully through the pine forest. Sliding down on a carpet of needles, occasionally grabbing a tree to slow us down, we covered twelve miles of pathway in an hour and three-quarters. Near some ruined temples amongst elder and dog rose, a pair of stonechats were fussing over a pale blue egg - in the nest above a baby Himalayan cuckoo was making room for itself. The valley was full of yachpal, a sweet-smelling Viburnum, and kuss, a species of indigo. Through an area of rice-fields we came into the Sind Valley where Phil Talbot and I had started another trek three years before. Again we floated down the lakes and canals to Srinagar, stopping only to buy and eat some delicious wild honey.



Tara Devi - the Temple



Tara Devi - Homestead Cottage

CHAPTER - 10 A Tara Devi Winter.

For three months there were camps, tours, inspections, reports, accounts, Scout Bulletins to edit, and two estates three hundred miles apart to look after. A camp-conference was run for teachers, members of the Education Department, Civic Guard officers and National War Front workers; syndicates discussed problems of village and town life. Amongst suggestions put forward were that village clubs should be started, that all demobilised soldiers should be given some training in rural uplift and youth work, that "cottage industries" should be encouraged and more training and advice be available for improvements in agriculture. To the thirty random people collected there what India needed was quite clear, and much of their thought went along lines that Brayne and others had long preached, and which post-war development has followed, but with too slow a rate of progress.

There was one more trek for a few days in October. Thomas Tull came up on leave and we took him along the ridge beyond Narkanda. He developed bad blisters and used a precious bottle of gin to bathe them. But he had to turn back. Latif, Sita Ram and I went down into the Pabar valley, where a Forestry Officer, Sammler, gave us some of the famous Pabar trout for supper. From here in three days we climbed Hansbeshan, 17,000ft, our highest peak yet. Our base camp was at 10,000ft in a wood of holly, with comfortable beds of spruce branches and fern, for we were travelling light and fast, carrying our own kit. We made one more bivouac behind a big rock at 14,000ft, and lit a fire with bunches of aromatic dwarf box. The night was brilliant with stars, and at dawn frost lay white on the mountain grass. Water in the canvas bucket was frozen solid. There was no snow on this south side of the ridge, though old ice lay under the shale and boulders as we climbed the 16,000ft pass. On the ridge were stone shrines erected by passing shepherds. Beyond, a slope of old snow went down towards the Sutlej Valley, beyond which were the peaks of Kulu and the Parbati. The six or seven peaks of Hansbeshan and Krunshikring - all one mountain massif - were around us. The one on our left, 16,940ft. was the only one possible for us. All were sheer precipices of loose rock on their western sides, the strata sloping up east to west. Sita stayed on the pass and I led up the jagged ridge. Pluto and I reached the peak at 1.0, five hours after our start. There was room for only one at a time on that sharp peak,

which overhung a thousand foot drop. I moved off for Latif to take my place.

Back at base by sunset we decided to push on down the valley. With Pluto at my heels I plunged down into dark woods, until brought to a halt by the beauty in front. Framed in two enormous spruce trees was a patch of light green sky fading into dark blue, with pink clouds below and a crescent moon above. Then a last afterglow suddenly flooded the sky between the trees with orange light. We pitched camp by a spring, with a roaring fire, a billycan of coffee and pan of stew adding their aromas to the night.

Two days later we were guests of the Raja of Jubbal, a small but wealthy hill state with its own electricity and two beautiful palaces. We stayed in one whilst inspecting schools and scout troops.

The Jubbal Scoutmaster guided us through the maze of forest tracks and ridges south towards Bamta and the Chaur.

At 12,000ft the Chaur is several thousand feet higher than any other of the outer ridges of the Himalayan foothills and gives uninterrupted views over the whole area of the Simla, Narkanda and Chakrata hills. Its great wooded ridge is always prominent in the South East from Tara Devi, and we had long promised ourselves a visit of exploration. This is rich timber country and a timber merchant, Rai Bahadur Jodhu Mall, had built a serai, a rough hostel, under the final peak of the Chaur. This is all Hindu country. It was Dusschra, and in the valley below a shopkeeper had pressed halwa upon us, the rich Punjabi sweet of ground rice and honey. We addressed Latif as Chowdhryji, a Hindu as well as a Muslim name not to risk offending anyone's caste susceptibilities.

The summit peak of the Chaur was buttressed by great pillars of silver-grey granite. From the top the view was wider than any we had ever seen, embracing the whole of the Himalayas from Nanda Devi and Kamet, around the Tibetan border, westwards to Kulu and the Dhaulidhar. Hansbeshan and the peaks shutting off the Baspa valley looked quite near, with a peak on the South, towards Kumaon, that must have been Banderpunch, 20,000ft and still unclimbed. Lost amongst the ridges to the North West lay our own hill of Tara Devi, looking incredibly small.

That was the first of many trips to the Chaur, and the only one that went smoothly throughout. For the Chaur is a more formidable mountain than it seems, as Latif was to find out just fifteen months later, But a great deal was to happen in those fifteen months.

Meanwhile the three of us, with Pluto sat on the summit rock for an hour at the peak of physical fitness, successful effort, and good fellowship. No orthodox way down for us! We took the shortest and steepest way into the nullah below - 2,500ft of descent in less than a mile. At times we paused on perilous ledges whilst we sought the next way of descent, or clung carefully to juniper bushes whilst we worked our way around a corner above a hundred foot drop. We went down places where it seemed no four-footed animal could follow, but Pluto always managed to find a way. Beyond some meadows a forest path took us down to a big timber camp. All over the slopes skilled workers from Jammu were felling and logging spruce and fir and sending them down streams and chutes to the Giri River. Our progress consisted of headlong rushes down needle-carpeted paths, interspersed with chats with groups of lumberjacks. At the edge of the forest, in the sunset, we came on a pair of flying foxes clinging to a rock above the path. Disturbed, they dived in a long swoop down the hill landing with a scratching rush in the trees below. It was almost dark when we camped at Rataish, near a picturesque house belonging to the Rai of Kot, a small Hill State princeling. As we were packing next morning the Rai himself passed by and examined the map which was lying open on the ground. Sita Ram committed the dreadful mistake of asking him in his own state who he was! Four hours hard climbing took us up onto the Simla road, and then with heavy rucsacks we did the 12 miles into Simla in two and a half hours - the church clock was showing a minute or two to six when we reached the Ridge. To celebrate we dined together at the Chinese restaurant on chop suey, chow mein, and sweet-sour pork. As Latif was still masquerading as a Hindu this was considered to be alright. Scorning the night train we then walked six miles back to Tara Devi, having covered 26 miles and 5,000ft in 12 hours.

That winter an enlarged staff was busy all over the province and I completed visits to every one of the Punjab's thirty one districts - equivalent that is to visiting every Department of France in eighteen months.

In Europe, Italy was out of the war, though the Germans were still in Rome. In India the Bengal famine was causing much anxiety and there were communal disturbances in Calcutta. Mr. W.H.F.Armstrong (soon to receive a knighthood) the Director of Public Instruction, had taken over as Provincial Scout Commissioner. I called on him one sad

morning when he had just received news of his son's death at Anzio. "A lad that never wanted to do anyone any harm - he landed at Anzio and in a few hours he was dead."

In Lahore we had decided to form a Punjab Mountaineering Club. Henry Lall, Director of Sports and Physical Recreation at the University, and his wife Sheila, became close friends. I lectured at all the colleges. Kanta Vasudev, who lectured in political science at the Lahore College for Women, was a great admirer of Sir Ernest Barker, and knowing that I had been his pupil at Cambridge, asked me to lecture to her senior students. That was a particular pleasure! I called in often at the Vasudevs - it was pleasant to have four girls to talk to. I had been away from home and from Mary for over four years now. There still seemed no hope in the near future. Mary was herself again at last, very keen on her job and making a name for herself as a bio-chemist with research on nutrition and the blood. She was alive once more, and we found ourselves falling in love again by letter as we had done so long ago. "Can't you get sent home on a special mission?" she wrote. That brilliant girl! The idea came just at the right phsychological moment. I had drawn up a detailed Memorandum on the History of Youth Movements which drew attention to recent developments in England. The Board of Education "Youth Service" and "Challenge of Youth" circulars had laid the basis for much that was going on and much more that was planned. Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Govt. of India, had accepted the idea for a "national youth movement to provide opportunities of social recreation and physical training for all students." What the Punjab wanted was not a single youth movement, but several, including especially the villages. We needed to know more about Young Farmers' Clubs. The Premier, Sir Khizar Hyat Khan, was very enthusiastic about this. There were rumours that some people might get leave in 1944. In the ordinary way I stood no chance, but I put up a good case for combining business with pleasure. The Chief Secretary, F.C.Bourne, had been to Tara Devi once or twice, and I had taken him and his wife on the strenuous "short cut" back to Simla -- down three thousand feet of our forest slopes into the nullah, and up the other side! He was afraid of having to do it again, and hastily promised to give me every consideration.

In February Hardial, Sita and I were up at Tara Devi again. Some Service Rovers had asked us to run a Wood Badge Course for them. They were the Oates Crew from R.A.F.Karachi and apparently wished to keep

up the Polar tradition. Tara Devi was deep in snow, and it was more of a winter survival course. The wide games developed into snow-ball fights and the obstacle course was of special difficulty. One evening Sita Ram and I, on top of one of the Tara peaks, saw the most beautiful sunset we had ever seen. To the West the sky was a golden fire turning to rose and shot across with bars of black and gold cloud, whilst the distant plains showed grey beyond the dark serrated edge of the hills. To the east the snowy peaks of Chaur and the Srikend were flooded with crimson, and crimson touched the snow-laden trees of Jakko hill, beneath which the lights of Simla were shining across the deep gloom of the valley. There had always been a quality of aching beauty about Tara Devi, with the soft contours of its wooded slopes leading up to the sharper ridge. Covered in snow those contours seemed softer and more beautiful still. In hollows and nullahs deep in the forest there was an incredible stillness. We would break through the snowy twigs of a thicket into a glade of virgin whiteness which seemed remote from the world. Everything was new and we discovered it with fresh wonder. Sunsets and dawns were a spiritual experience. Often the ordinary world was cut off completely by a belt of cloud or mist below us, shining white in the sun. We felt that we were privileged to have seen all this beauty together, and that indeed "In a thousand ages of the gods I could not tell thee all the wonders of Himachal".

The twenty lads on the course felt that it was the experience of a lifetime. The final two day hike took them over the Temple and deep down into the snow-free valleys four thousand feet below. All of us gathered in the common room that last night, on our return from this strenuous adventure, to feast on stew, pulao and curry, then lie helpless on the floor until midnight singing song after song in three or four languages. Stories of that camp have been told to youngsters in Leeds and London and Liverpool, in villages in Devon and in Australia.

Within a fortnight of returning to Lahore I was offered a passage to England in March. I was to have two months' leave there and two months on special duty, to prepare a report on the Youth Service in England for the Punjab Government. I had been away for four and a half years but I sent a wire to Mary immediately "Arrange wedding April 29th. Love, Bill". I left before any replies came. I had only five days to settle the manifold affairs of the Association before leaving for Bombay. At the first hint of leave I had gone down

into Lahore city and found a jeweller with a fine collection of loose zircons. I got him to set two of these on platinum brooches, and the finest matching ones in the form of a Yorkshire rose, with white saphires, as a pendant. That was my main packing settled - a wedding present.

Sachdevs had been transferred from Bombay to Delhi a few months before and came to meet the train there and wish me Godspeed. From the Frontier Mail, speeding through the dusty plains beyond Delhi, I wrote this for the April Bulletin -"The last memories of the Punjab I take back with me are very beautiful - glimpses caught in the last few hours of a rushed week. Friends throwing flowers into my car; a little girl in vivid yellow pyjamas standing solemnly under a Gold Mohur tree in full bloom; the scents in Lawrence Gardens; the crowd of friends at Lahore station and the mass of garlands they smothered me with, and which are still hanging in my carriage; women in bright clothes working in the wheat fields of my old district, Gurgaon; a mango tree in full bloom and the red flowers of Flame of the Forest trees along the railway side. It is pleasant to think that in six months' time I shall be coming back again to the Punjab I love".

CHAPTER - 11   Home and Marriage.

Only the fact that we were going home made it a pleasant voyage. There was a cold head wind in the Red Sea. I didn't go ashore at Port Said. The Atlantic was grey and I kept the zircons to hand in case of accidents.

I couldn't get away too quickly from Liverpool. Mrs Dyson was waiting with news at Huddersfield where I made my first unhappy acquaintance with spam in a restaurant. Mary would be up from Slough as soon as she heard I'd landed.

I went on to Middlesbrough and home and Mother, and there was happiness around us. A letter awaited me - careful synopsis of times and dates from Mary, with the remark that she now had reached the stage where she felt the whole thing was highly improbable, that I was a product of her imagination, and not a very vivid one at that. She had been told this was the usual reaction but still wasn't sure that one of us wasn't disembodied.

The next day I was back in Huddersfield station and there was Mary again at last, in a grey suit, and the longer hair I hadn't seen - - -. We sat on a porter's truck for half an hour, looking at each other and smiling and touching now and then, to make sure that we were neither of us disembodied. Then we took the bus to Skelmanthorpe, holding tight to each other and I can't remember what we talked about at all. I can only remember that we kissed and laughed and cried and kissed and laughed all evening. I gave Mary one of the zircon brooches as a long service medal, and her mother the other.

Two days later we were married. We walked again, slowly, through that Yorkshire countryside we had lived and loved in five years before. Mary was safe in my arms at last and the Punjab seemed far away.

A fortnight later it came close again in London. I went to the Board of Education and began a detailed study of the Youth Service. Mary had to go on with her scientific work at the N.W. London Blood Supply Depot in Slough, and we lived there in a house with a large garden. The first 'V' bombs fell.

Presently my studies involved travelling, with conferences at Oxford and Cambridge. After our long separation we could not bear even a short one now. With the start of the Invasion the situation

was especially difficult. I felt that Mary's responsibilities were soon going to be in India, and that she ought to be with me gaining experiences that would be useful to her and to the Punjab. The head of the Depot had been a good friend to us both but her interest naturally was in the work for which she was responsible. Mary was torn between the two of us until she was almost ill - and a misunderstanding finally precipitated trouble with Dr. Vaughan. Mary made the greatest of sacrifices, for her, by leaving the job she loved. Yet she threw herself eagerly into our joint work, and never referred to that incident again.

At a Gilwell Scout Wood Badge Course at Boar's Hill Oxford with the Camp Chief, John Thurman, in June, I thought of Tara Devi -

> "June in Tara Devi and the sun hot on the hill,
> Grass growing browner, and long the wild hemp stalks,
> Stream cool and shady at Shalgaon by the mill,
> And cool the forest paths where the brown deer walks.
>
> Here in warring England the wind blows damp and chill,
> Grey clouds sweep across the mournful English skies,
> And my heart is in another camp, upon another hill,
> Whose high peaks guard the forest where the eagle cries."

Punjabi songs and war-cries were soon ringing through the woods of Youlbury, and a farce at one camp-fire, Kiddem Khan's Tiger Hunt, was the more successful because I had with me a fine Punjab puggree.

Mary joined in a Cub Wood Badge Course. She had never done any Scouting or Guiding before, but she had that rare quality of not only adapting herself to, but of being part of anything she undertook free of any age or class grouping. She loved to play, and this was part of our love - "That last great childhood in the heart of man". So she danced jungle dances and did the Grand Howl with zest. I must admit I have never felt wholeheartedly in sympathy with Cubbing's "Jungle atmosphere" myself, or felt other than slightly ridiculous doing the Grand Howl! For a "Project" meeting the whole Pack turned themselves into Indian villagers with improvised huts, played village games, sang Punjabi songs and acted scenes from the Jungle Book. Particularly to be commended was the troupe of dancing girls!

We entertained John Thurman and some of his staff to lunch at Shafi's Restaurant in Soho and discussed Punjab problems ovdr pulao.

One Youth Conference happened to be at Newnham, and its interest was rather overshadowed by our pleasure at being together once more in Mary's old room, with the gardens below, and all Cambridge to

wander in again.

From the Punjab's point of view Henry Morris's "Village Colleges" were the most important things we saw in Cambridgeshire, and in other parts of the country the Young Farmers' Clubs. To see so much going on, to meet the people who had initiated and developed plans of many sorts for post-war reconstruction and social improvement, was exhilarating and inspiring. But the summer was going by, and some of my leave was supposed to be more than a busman's holiday. It was mostly spent at home, entering once more, for me, the life of Cleveland or Skelmanthorpe, and, for Mary, saying good-bye to it, or so we hoped.

Our hopes were dashed to the ground. As my time for return drew near there seemed still great difficulty in getting Mary a passage with me. Boats were full of officers or officials on leave or business. Wives as such carried no priority. It was ridiculous. After four months together we were going to be separated again.

In some ways that was better than the first time, in some ways far worse. We were sick at heart as we travelled up to Glasgow. All night we clung to each other in mingled happiness for what we'd had and despair for the immediate future.

It was a miserable voyage back. A few good friends saved me from complete despair. There was no pleasure in seeing Bombay. Only as the Frontier Mail ran through Gurgaon district and the familiar little station of Ballabgarh did the heart begin to lift. Sachdevs were there to greet me in Delhi and I left the train to spend the night with them. The Punjab began to reassert itself. On the platform at Lahore next evening the first faces I saw were Savitri's sisters - Kanta and Mohini Vasudev. They ran smiling to greet me and I took them in my arms in a brotherly hug. I felt I was embracing India again. Then the staff were all around me and my neck was loaded with garlands. This was more my home now than England. If only my wife had been with me to share that home-coming - - -.

CHAPTER - 12 Autumn of Discontent, Winter of Happiness.

It was the end of September. Lahore was pleasant and there was much to do - most important of all a report on the Policy and Organisation of the Youth Service in England, with detailed recommendations for a Youth Service in the Punjab. John Eustace had this printed under National War Front auspices and it was presented to Government and widely circulated. It included suggestions for students' camps, a Youth Hostel at Tara Devi, further expansion of Scouting, and most important, a plan for starting Young Farmers' Clubs as a separate organisation. A Provincial Youth Organiser should be appointed to administer Government grants and advise on or control development in the various sectors. There were conferences with the Department of Education, with the Premier and with the Governor. Eventually the scheme was accepted and included in the 1945 budget.

At the end of October I was in Tara Devi again, with the north wind carrying an autumn freshness from the newly fallen snows of the Srikand Range. Sunlight glinted on the glossy needles of the pine trees, sunsets splintered into black and gold and red, turned the distant snows to pink, and died in burnished copper over the plains. The gardens were proud with colour, the full moon flooded the hills with magic and filled the valleys with mysterious shadow. The same songs were sung around the campfire, with the lights of Simla in the background. Only a wedding photograph on the mantlepiece and a few new books in the bookcase prevented me from thinking that the last six months were just a figment of my imagination.

Down on the plains the staff did their best to cheer me up at one camp after another, but I could not be philosophical for long. In November I went to the Governor. There had been some talk of starting a nutritional research centre. Mary might stand more chance of a passage as a scientist than as a wife. Sir Bertrand Glancy was very sympathetic. "If there isn't a job we'll invent one" he said, and a week or two later he met me again. "Your wife should get a passage now, after all the perjury I've committed in the past week."

In fact Mary was offered a post as nutritional adviser in a new research unit. Before Mary's arrival the scheme fell through owing to the untimely death of the medical officer responsible, but as far as we were personally concerned it had served its purpose. Armed

with the offer Mary secured a passage for December and sent a joyful cable. She had been using the time profitably attending one or two conferences on my behalf and keeping in touch with the Young Farmers' Club movement, but we could ill afford to lose those four precious months. How ill we did not realise.

A students' Camp had been arranged for Tara Devi from December 22nd. to 31st. and I went up happily for that knowing that Mary was well on her way and I would have to leave before the end of the camp to meet her in Bombay. When I was feeling bitterest Moti Lal had quoted an Urdu poem for me - "People say the New Year has started, but how am I to believe them? For me there is nothing new in it, just the same lonely nights. If my beloved comes to me, then it will be something new. Then my New Year will start".

I chose this very time to be laid low with my first (and only) attack of dysentery. I stayed in a warm room and dosed myself with castor oil emulsion. The dysentery soon passed, and leaving Latif, Qureshi and Raoof in charge of the camp I began that journey into happiness. Latif and Raoof were going to take selected students for a climb on the Chaur over New Year's Eve but should be back in time to welcome us home.

I kicked my heels in Bombay for three days, thinking mostly of the ship that was coming close, but sometimes of the wooded ridges and granite peak of the Chaur, just powdered with snow when I left.

Mary didn't dock until late on January 3rd. and then wasn't allowed to land until the 4th. We finally saw each other at opposite sides of the busy main street outside Thomas Cook's. The traffic seemed to be pushed aside like the waters of the Red Sea for Moses, and we were in each other's arms. Next morning there was an urgent telegram from Qureshi at Tara Devi. "Latif and party missing on Chaur. Taking search party."

We had a coupé for two on the Frontier Mail that evening. I had complete faith in Latif's ability to cope with any situation as well or better than I could, so was not too worried. If there was no news in Lahore I would go straight up myself. Meanwhile we had two nights and a day all to ourselves, with India sliding gradually past our windows. I was a whole person again, and this was a journey as it should be. Mary was as intrigued as a child with the compartment, the bunks, the shower-room. And later from the shower-room she came out fresh and scented into my arms.

We were late into Lahore, and it was cold and raining, but in the warmth of her welcome Mary hardly had time to notice that. About forty people - the Office staff, Madar Bakhsh, Dilawar Khan, and sundry friends -"gathered around her, garlanded her, and proudly bore her away to Montmorency Park" (Moti Lal's words). And there was a wire from Simla "Latif safe - all well."

The Staff had arranged a celebration picnic for the next day, Saturday, and fortunately the sun shone brightly. We were on the bank of the River Ravi, in some orange groves, and the picnic was largely an orange party. No one who has not tasted oranges fresh from the tree can dream how delicious they are. The owner of the groves kept bringing us baskets full of oranges from different trees. We sampled each kind, until we found the tree most to our taste. Sardar Hardial Singh, Sita Ram and Moti Lal kept introducing people to Mary, and offering more oranges. We must have eaten more than a dozen each during that happy afternoon. And in the middle of it all happiness was complete. Into the grove marched Latif, Qureshi and Raoof, still in climbing kit. And after they had greeted Mary and slaked their thirst on a few oranges, Latif told us the story.

All had gone well as they climbed the main ridge but when they bivouacked for the night some snow fell. Next morning more snow fell and in the afternoon this became a blizzard. They should have given up here but Latif was never one for turning back. Progress became painfully slow and suddenly he realised that two men were missing. An hour was spent looking for them, in vain, and darkness began to fall. Latif remembered the valley we had gone down the year before. He and Raoof led the way carefully down to lower levels, seeking shelter in the forest. "In the morning" he told us, "people were scattered all over the hillside, each in his sheltered little pocket. We even found the two missing ones - they had dropped down earlier into a cave." The only casualty was one man with frost-bitten toes. Latif found shelter in a village the next night and they had a good time entertaining and being entertained by the whole village. Raoof had then gone ahead when the blizzard cleared, to take the news, and the others had come on slowly on paths made difficult by snow, meeting Qureshi and his rescue party on the way.

This adventure seemed to give great confidence to all who took part in it. The snow grew deeper and the stories grew longer as the years passed, but all distinguished themselves in other ways.

The next three months were busy ones. Detailed budgets had to be worked out for all the new schemes. The training staff were busy all over the province. Latif was experimenting with village clubs and we were invited to Coleyana. This was a large estate in the centre of the province that had been given on an improvement lease to Col. Sir Edward Cole after the Great War, when it was almost barren desert and scrub. With the use of tube wells, and the arrival of an irrigation canal nearby. Sir Edward had transformed this into a very productive farm. Much of his own personal interest lay in a stud enterprise for thoroughbred racehorses, which were grazed on a paddock system. The Coles were wonderful hosts. They lived in baronial splendour in a large house, which seemed always full of flowers arranged in great silver bowls won at various horse shows and race meetings. Every meal began with their own delicious grapefruit, served with a dash of rum! Sir Edward Cole was a hale and hearty 70. He would take you off in an open brougham with a magnificent carriage horse in front, to look at the stud and the paddocks. Lady Cole was slight and silver, devoted to her very large and beautiful garden - full of sweet peas and bougainvillea. Mary and she took a great liking to each other. There were several villages on the estate and Sir Edward was anxious to start a Young Farmers' Club. We promised him one.

Mrs. Hogg had now gone home to England, and Mary was appointed in her place as Assistant Provincial Commissioner for Cubs. She began to take a good deal of the editing and writing of the Punjab Scout Bulletin from my shoulders, and some of the account-checking and financial work. When we were at headquarters our bungalow was a hive of industry, with three or four secretaries working hard and staff coming in to discuss plans. Life and love, work and pleasure were all one, and we were at the head of an enthusiastic team.

Madar Bakhsh was delighted to have a Mem Sahib at last. He continued to run the household, discussing details now with Mary instead of me, and with so much else to do Mary was happy to leave things to him.

Always at Walton my day had begun with an early morning ride of ten or twelve miles before breakfast through the open fields that surrounded us. There were half a dozen villages that knew my horses and Pluto well; two or three patches of jungle; and a canal where on the way home I would always give Nightshade her head. I had

sold Black Knight, but was looking after a bay mare belonging to Sachdev - "Ladybird". Despite the absence of hard work since coming to Walton, Nightshade was still steel springs and black velvet. From the canal she would gallop two miles home flat out, jumping everything in the way. I would always edge her carefully around the corner by the canal bridge - then she would be off like an arrow from the bow. Mary had obediently been taking some riding lessons at home and was anxious to see the Indian countryside around us. She rode Ladybird - and after years of solitary touring it was wonderful to have my wife beside me, our stirrups touching companionably. But I could scarcely hold Nightshade in at the canal corner. Before we had got halfway home she was soaked with the lather of impatience, cavorting in frustration - and she infected Ladybird. Away went that usually sedate mare at full gallop, with three mud walls and a ditch ahead. "Hold tight!" I yelled frantically after Mary, and sent Nightshade away in a wide circle. I dare not go straight after the bay - that would have offered a racing incitement. Better to leave it to Mary - who managed to stay on and slow the bay down beyond the ditch, by which time I had come round in front to block further passage. Mary was shaken but exhilarated. After that when she was with me I chose a safer route.

Pluto had immediately adopted Mary as his special care and even took her side if we had a friendly fight. He wouldn't actually draw blood but would grab my arm in a polite warning that would almost break the bone. An R.A.F. officer had brought a large bull mastiff onto the camp. Pluto had been much quieter of late, disdaining dogs which in earlier years he would have chased off the grounds. As long as they kept their distance they were safe. He eyed the mastiff with some respect - it was a fearsome animal. But one morning I came back from a ride and Mary came out into the garden to meet me. The mastiff was just outside and I grabbed Pluto and edged him away into the garden. I wasn't at all happy about his prospects with this antagonist - though most of the R.A.F. lads on the camp had been making bets on the issue for weeks, the odds being on Pluto. At this juncture the mastiff had the temerity to come in at our gate. Mary went forward to shoo him out and he growled. That did it. Pluto was out of my hold and the mastiff was on his back outside the gate in less time than it takes to tell. Several N.C.O.'s appeared, trying to conceal the smiles of satisfaction on their faces, but we couldn't get Pluto off. It was no use hitting him - the harder you hit, the harder he bit. The only thing to do was to prise his teeth open with an iron

bar. In this way the mastiff was released but he never ventured near our corner again. Pluto never left Mary now. Any stranger was watched with the greatest suspicion, and not permitted to come too close. Only scout uniform or European suit were considered safe passports.

We had been too busy working out the new Youth programme, the financial details that had to be included in the Budget, to do much touring, but with this work finished at the end of March we visited a Mountaineering and Woodcraft Training Camp that Qureshi was running at Dharamsala for a hundred University students. The Kangra Valley was green with Spring, and full of the colour and scent of Persian lilac, cotton tree, kachnar, and wild roses. Above Dharamsala the rhododendrons were again a mass of vivid colour, flooding the steep mountain sides for miles in a belt that stretched from 5,000ft up to the snow at 10,000ft. Qureshi had planned this camp so that we could make one final assault on the 17,000ft Dhaulidhar in winter conditions, and at the end of the camp a couple of dozen of the best students were chosen for the expedition. Raoof had been assisting Qureshi, and Latif had arranged a Young Farmers' Club recruiting campaign in Kangra to coincide with the camp, so a strong team was gathered for the week-end's attempt.

As we climbed through the pines and rhododendrons to the Forest Hut at Triund Mary had a narrow escape. Someone above dislodged a stone. There was a warning shout and I looked up to see a stone the size of a cricket ball bounce off a ledge and come hurtling towards Mary's head. Instinctively I put out a hand and by a miracle felt my fingers closing around the stone. The momentum drove my hand back against Mary's cheek but the blow was cushioned - it might have been a very nasty injury. My language scorched the hillside above - I understand that even B.P. could be expressive at times - and no-one walked above us again.

The rocky spur of Triund, jutting out above the pines and rhododendrons, gave Mary her first Himalayan sunset. Hand in hand we watched the red flush fade from the snows above, whilst thousands of feet below, across a valley of dark forest, the lights of the Italian Prisoner-of-War camp at Yol shone like a fallen constellation.

This time we had determined to pitch an advance camp as high up the final 4,000ft slope as we could get, and next day Mary climbed up with us to about 12,5000ft, where we found a small snow-cave under a

large rock. Latif and students set to work to enlarge this and Mary and I went down together, walking slowly along forest tracks looking at birds and butterflies and flowers. Latif and his party came down late that night, Qureshi and another party came up. There was a gay camp-fire in the forest, and a lazy morning afterwards. In the late afternoon we left Mary with Pluto to look after her, and climbed up to the ice-cave. Latif and I pitched a tent in the only place available. and the other fifteen crowded into the cave, complaining that it was like the Black Hole of Calcutta! Nobody slept well except Latif, and he and I led the assault in the morning, half an hour ahead of the others. The steep snow was frozen hard, and we had to cut every step for three thousand feet. Generally one swing of the ice-axe was enough, and we took it in turns to lead, climbing steadily in zig-zags as the slope grew longer and steeper below us. We made about 600ft an hour - a little more at first, a little less later. We could see our main party below, then two men appeared in the centre of the snow field below them. The two began climbing steadily and soon passed Qureshi. Using our steps they came up fast and Latif and I redoubled our efforts to stay ahead. We couldn't make these two out at all. We were 500ft from the top at 1.0pm. when they got near enough to exchange greetings and we found they were Italian Alpini soldiers from Yol who had come up for ski-ing and seeing us on the climb had decided to join in. We offered them (abit reluctantly) the place of honour in front but they politely declined, thanking us for all the work we had put in, step-cutting. We reached the top at 2.0pm., after five hours steady climbing, and looked over a knife-edge col into a desolate valley of rock and snow going down towards the higher reaches of the Ravi river, with all the peaks of Brahmaur and Bara Bangahal beyond. In another half hour Qureshi and his party joined us, and we sat there singing Italian, English and Punjabi songs until we began to get cold. There was still another small party coming up under Professor Hamid Beg, but time was getting short and we shouted to them to turn back as we were coming down. It was only when we began to descend that we realised how steep that snow-slope was. Our steps, alright for climbing up, had to be enlarged for climbing down. We thought that the Alpini troops should have the place of honour now and invited them to show us the way. They had no hesitation in facing inwards and stepping very carefully down for the first few hundred feet. We were just in the middle of this bad bit when there was a frantic shout from Hamid Beg's party. They had kept on, ignoring our shouts,

and were now almost on the ridge above but twenty or thirty feet away from us. One student had slipped, lost his ice-axe, and was now sliding helplessly down the slope, with two rock steps below him. "Dig your heels in !" we shouted. We had not roped up on what seemed safe slopes, but for a moment we were worried. If this lad banged his head on the rocks ahead it could be nasty. One of the Alpini, leading down, made a move as if to attempt an interception, but his companion stopped him. Fortunately the falling student, who seemed completely mesmerized sailed safely over the first rock step, dropping clear into the snow again, and then he stuck his heels in and stopped. He was shaking with fright when we reached him, and we belayed him down on a rope until we were past the very steep part, then he managed to walk.

With this one mis-hap everything went splendidly on this third attempt, successful at last - and Mary was waiting at the foot of the snow to greet me, with Pluto at her feet. Down at Triund a rough-looking forest worker had come too near her on the path and Pluto had gone straight for him. Fortunately Mary had managed to get hold of him before he could do any damage.

In Lahore my plans for a full-scale Youth Movement had gone through, funds had been allocated, and I was now Provincial Youth Organiser with the responsibility of starting Young Farmers' Clubs, building Youth Hostels, and continuing the work of Scouting and of Students' Camps on a larger scale. I had managed to get some extra money for the Girl Guide Association too. Latif was placed in charge of a new department for Young Farmers' Clubs, staff that we had already ear-marked were officially recruited, and a house at Walton obtained as a temporary office. By the end of April Lahore was getting very hot, and at last it was time to show Mary Tara Devi. She had heard so much about it from everyone that she was almost afraid of being disappointed. The happy winter was over. An even happier summer was to follow.

CHAPTER - 13 Summer in Tara Devi - Kulu and Kashmir - Kolahoi

Tara Devi in May sent long tendrils of honeysuckle and roses twining themselves immediately round Mary's heart. We had come up in the rail-car, on that narrow mountain line from Kalka, had breakfasted at Barog (where an aged Englishman, retired from more important hotel posts, ensured perfect service and a warm welcome to thousands of travellers on that line during the War years), and then had looked out with ever-growing anticipation onto the hill-side of Tara Devi itself. There had been the slow walk up the winding cinder-path, past the rock-walls with their begonias, through the rhododendrons and the Japanese bamboo, the shrubbery and the orchard, half a mile and five hundred feet up to the Homestead with its lawns and deodars - and Mary's first exclamation of delight when she saw our cottage above, with its glassed-in verandah up amongst the tree-tops.

When we climbed the steps and found ourselves alone in that verandah-lounge, with its deep old comfortable settee, Mary flung herself in my arms. "Oh, Bill" she said, "I've had such a wonderful time everywhere - I loved our home at Lahore and Dharamsala was beautiful - but I didn't know a place like this existed." "Darling, you haven't seen half" I said, and when she had recovered from the climb I took her into the upper garden. From the back-door to the old kitchen was a covered trellis-way of banksia. The kitchen and a garden shed were lost in a blanket of wisteria and honeysuckle. Rambling roses, red and yellow and white, climbed fifty feet high amongst the deodars. There were beds of salvia and cosmos, dahlia and columbine. Sweet-peas, long finished in Lahore, were rampant again here. And all this on a spur at 6,500ft., with the peaked ridge going up from our garden gate to 7,000ft. and the pine covered hillside below the garden dropping away steeply to the camping sites 500ft. below. Jai Ram met us with bows and smiles in the vegetable garden. An intelligent young hill man, with some education and some land of his own in the village below, he had been trained by the last Goad, who had given the estate to the Scouts, and was a clever and enthusiastic head gardener. His manner might have been mistaken for servility, but he was a strong, active, independent hill man. If he liked you, he would do anything for you, with a real affection of the heart and an unbounded desire to please. He, too, was delighted to have a young Mem-Sahib around the

place. He had made a special effort at the salvia and cosmos beds, building a whole new garden above the cottage to greet her. Now she was here and in his delight he almost ran around the garden showing her one thing after another. But it was not a garden you could see in a day. It had all sorts of paths and levels and hidden corners; a circle of deodars around a tiny lawn; a terraced garden beyond that sloping down to a mass of buddleia at the jungle's edge; shady paths through another deodar wood where periwinkle shone low and blue between the trees. Above all, that garden was made by the birds and butterflies that came to it, changing in character from day to day. I don't think Mary had ever looked at birds before coming to India. Now she lived with Whistler's Indian Birds never far from her hand. Within a few days she had identified five different cuckoos and wrote - "The walnut trees outside the cottage are infested with caterpillars and a pair of Indian Plaintive Cuckoos have discovered this. Their loud, complaining whistle, "ca-weer", is often answered by an Indian Cuckoo down the hill in four notes - "cuck-cuck-CUCK-coo". On the hill above the Homestead a Himalayan Cuckoo goes "khud-khud-khud" rather like a steam engine. A Common Cuckoo is heard occasionally, as in England, and down in the valley the call of the Brain-fever Bird or Hawk-Cuckoo seems rather less maddening than when heard on the hot plains.

A Dark-grey Bushchat has built his nest in the cottage gutter, and his mate, a sedate little brown bird, is sometimes seen. A pair of Cinnamon Sparrows are also nesting nearby - he is a gay little bird in chesnut and black, with yellow underparts, whilst she is a paler edition of him.

The bird-bath on the lawn is very popular. A Black-throated Jay made his first appearance there, and once our breakfast got cold whilst we watched the antics of a Red-billed Blue Magpie whose eighteen -inch tail made his balance somewhat precarious. Other visitors have been Streaked Laughing Thrushes with chestnut markings and floppy tails, a Rufous Turtle Dove whose favourite perch is a solitary horse-chestnut tree, and a pair of White-cheeked Bulbuls. Near the campsite is a big mulberry tree, much visited by Black Bulbuls and a pair of Kokla Green Pigeons. In the eucalyptus tree near the Bee-hive Hut are some Indian Grey Tits and at prayers one morning my attention was distracted by a four foot high Himalayan Griffon sitting sentinel on a pine tree across the parade-ground. During a walk to the spring we met a whole flock of Red-headed Tits indulging in their usual gymnastics whilst investigating every leaf and twig of the oak tree they were in. Close

by we saw a Brown-fronted Pied Woodpecker. The orchard is haunted by several fruit-loving birds. One Greater Himalayan Barbet swallowed so many apricots whilst we watched him that he swelled visibly. The Verditer Flycatcher's greeny-blue plumage is one of the most colourful at Tara, outdone only by that of the Scarlet Minivet whose fiery colour appears in startling contrast to the bright yellow of his mate. Finally, Pluto discovered a Mynah in the Cottage chimney and tried to climb up the chimney to reach it. By the time the Mynah was rescued and set free neither it nor Pluto could be identified by their plumage, whilst the rescuers were nearly as bad."

Catering at Tara Devi was greatly helped by the presence of Keventers' Dairy Farm down near the Railway Station. This had originally developed from our own Estate and the manager was a kindly old Norfolk cowman, George Bee, who had lived in the little house down at the camp site which had ever since been known as the Bee-hive. This was in the early years of the century when the dairy had been in buildings which we had converted into barracks. Earlier than that, when Goads ran the dairy, our own Cottage had been the cow-sheds! Mary made great friends with George Bee, who still, after fifty years in India, talked with a broad Norfolk burr. We had fresh cream from him every morning, and fresh butter whenever required. Every morning too Jai Ram would bring Mary a wide flat basket full of vegetables and flowers for the day. Life was very good.

One of the old cowsheds near the camp-site was in a particularly good position, looking out through thick pine forest to Tara Devi temple. Here we had decided to build a model Youth Hostel with a Rs.30,000 grant from Government. It was to have accommodation for 120 students in two-tier bunks, and we were hoping to get it ready for a visit by the Governor and the Premier in June, for the annual Provincial Council meeting.

Early in May a Wood Badge Course at Tara Devi was attended by 28 scouters, including several from Services Rover Crews in Calcutta and Karachi. One very amusing afternoon was spent in Simla - half the course had to defend the Ridge, whilst the others had to penetrate the cordon in disguise and reach Umpires near the Church. The disguises worn, and the ruses employed, were quite outstanding. Three men were disguised so well as Tibetan coolies that they were stopped in the street and asked to carry loads. One man asked his best friend for baksheesh without being recognised - but without getting any

bakhsheesh. One man hired a large box and a strong porter and was carried straight through the cordon. The scene by the church beggars description. Ragged and disreputable coolies would arrive and shake hands with gentlemen in immaculate lounge suits. Two policemen grew very disturbed as the crowd gathered - they had themselves been subjected to a close scrutiny to make sure they were not in the game! Pandits, chaprassis, fortune-tellers and a Muslim holy man all swelled the throng and some genuine representatives of these professions joined them, thinking there must be some money in it somewhere. Sardar Hardial Singh placated the policemen and we returned to Tara Devi, where one patrol found a panther in their kitchen. It departed very quickly and next morning we had a tracking session following its pug-marks half a mile down the valley.

With Mary's arrival Sardar Sahib had been finally won over. He had been more and more impressed by the developments in Scouting and in Youth Work generally, and he threw himself wholeheartedly into all development at Tara Devi. One of these was a new house for him, also built amongst the treetops, below the Homestead. Sardar Sahib taught Mary some of his repertoire of the rarer knots, and they discussed flowers and birds together. Mary took over the Nature Study sessions in the camps.

The Homestead itself was a very large house with four complete sets of rooms. We continued to run a leave hostel here and on May 8th. the Wood Badge Course and the visitors at Homestead joined in a grand dinner to celebrate V-E Day. After dinner there was a Thanksgiving Service at which representatives of all the four religions present read short extracts from their respective scriptures and Indian and English hymns were sung. Afterwards an International Campfire went on far into the night.

One of the visitors to the leave hostel was an expert on butterflies and he fired us with enthusiasm for his hobby. We determined to make a collection of Tara Devi butterflies and Mary made a very professional net with some decorative knotting around it. Most of the English butterflies are found also in India, not a few of them at Tara Devi - the Brimstone, Painted Lady, Red Admiral and Tortoiseshells amongst them. But the gorgeous insects that daily haunted the buddleia hedge far transcended any of these. One of the most beautiful was a large swallow-tail, the "Peacock", an iridescent black and green with a number of round blue patches edged with rose on each hind wing. There was an elusive Green Oak Leaf that we never saw

flying less than 15 ft. above the ground, and an Orange Oak Leaf which appealed to me because according to the book it was attracted by claret!

The best specimens were carefully set and mounted so that all campers and visitors could study them. Some duplicates were folded into neat triangular envelopes. I looked at them again the other day. Some are a little faded, some as brilliant as when they were picked off the buddleia one sunny morning over thirty years ago. The names come back from the depths of memory - _argynnis_, the Silverstripes; _dodona_, the Punches; _precis_, the Chocolate Soldier, _neptis_, _melanitis_, and _danaus_. Here is the splendid Peacock, and the delicately marked Map Butterfly, _cyrestis thyodamas ganescha_. And here is a favourite of Mary's, the day-flying Japanese moth with deep-blue vein markings and bright patches of red, yellow, and light blue between.

In the second half of May I took Mary on her first long Himalayan trek to Bashahr and Kulu. Bashahr was a Stateof some 4,000 square miles on the border of Tibet, stretching along both sides of the upper Sutlej Valley to the Shipki Pass. The Raja had an ancient treaty with Tibet, giving his people rights of trading into Gartok and Tibet "until the glaciers melt and the rivers cease to run". The Bashahri traders, whose mule trains with their musical bells could be met all the way along the Hindustan-Tibet road from Simla, would take cotton pieces and other manufactured goods into Tibet, bringing back the fine pashmina wool, borax, and Tibetan craft-work. In 1902 the value of this trade had been estimated at £20,000 annually. It was many times greater than that in 1945.

A very smart Scout troop - many of the boys' fathers were men who traded into Tibet - greeted our arrival in Rampur, capital of Bashahr, and at the guest house a column of the Raja's servants carried in gifts - flour and milk and _ghi_, butter and eggs and a couple of cockerels. Qureshi and several students were with us so the gifts were welcome. Next morning we had audience of the Raja - a funny little man who bounced up and down in his chair in almost childish eagerness to talk. He had a strange passion for collecting dolls, and the palace rooms we saw held hundreds of them - mostly cheap celluloid dolls, pink and naked. In the basaar was a Buddhist temple, with intricate wood carving, and some of the traders' houses were also built of fine ancient timber, beautifully carved.

The climb out of the Sutlej took us 4,000ft above Rampur. The Raja Sahib had lent us some of his famous Bashahri hill ponies, and all morning they climbed with eagerness and agility as Rampur grew smaller and smaller below us, with the palace guarding it like a building out of a Chinese legend. From 8,000ft even the palace looked Lilliputian.

A long double march, with a storm in the middle, took us to Sarahan in Outer Saraj. One side valley that we crossed seemed as though hewn out of solid marble - a series of water-falls bounced gaily over edges and pinnacles of white marble. Higher up were large beds of blue iris, with horse-chestnuts in full flower. Between great boulders and through rocky defiles draped with roses the track burst suddenly out onto a wide green meadow surrounded on three sides by precipitous mountains. On a spur was the red-roofed rest house, guarding that green basin like a careful watchdog.

The Bashloe Pass, 12,000ft, was at the top of one of the steep walls that flanked the meadow. The ponies climbed from rock to rock with incredible skill, but we were glad to reach the top - an open meadow inhabited by red-legged choughs. We said good-bye to the ponies, and walked down the other side of the pass to a more sheltered meadow carpeted with yellow lilies, purple primulas and pale-blue gentians. Whilst lunch was being prepared Mary and I climbed to a higher meadow where there were blue anemones, yellow begonias, and masses of dark blue gentians amongst patches of juniper scrub. Pink rhododendrons against the snow made a picture, said Mary, like an enormous birthday cake. I left her gazing entranced, and scaled the 13,000ft peak above, glissading back across the birthday cake an hour later.

We were now in Saraj, the Southernmost part of Kulu, where religion is of a primitive, pre-Hindu, type. Though classed as Hindus, the villagers really worship the "Nags", the serpents and spirits of springs and rivers, and of the mountains. Each village has its deota, or godling, and we met one of these being taken up onto the pass accompanied by a brass band of weird and wonderful instruments all demonstrated for our special benefit. Five miles and 4,000ft down, the stream had become a river, with White-capped Redstarts and Brown Dippers, and we saw a Crested Bunting, and some Yellow-billed Blue Magpies. Between Bathad and Banjar next day we gathered wild water cress from a half-acre bed, and met a Forest Officer who had known Hugh Whistler. Whistler, a name honoured by all lovers of Indian birds, had spent much time in

this very valley of the Tirthan. And here Mary saw her first Golden Orioles, bright birds full of the joy of life, playing aerial games through the trees above Manglaur. Here too were some flights of Red-rumped Swallows.

The wide village green of Kulu township with its English trees, made Mary homesick for the first, and perhaps the only time. It was forgotten as we travelled back to Banjar and the Jilori Pass. Two years before I had longed some day to stay with Mary at Shoja rest house, with its smooth lawn sloping to the forest, and beyond that the circle of snow peaks. Now this dream too came true.

Next day was made memorable for Mary by her first sight of Paradise Flycatchers. Two adult males chased each other amongst some apricot trees, twisting and turning with the effortless ease of silver fishes, their long tails like silver streamers floating behind them. Just beyond was a White-collared Blackbird and further down still a Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush.

At Tara Devi there was sad news for us. Pluto had been ill for a week or two before our departure, and we had left him in the Veterinary Hospital at Simla apparently recovering. But he had not recovered. He had died a few days before our return, and Sardar Sahib had had him buried in a wild bit of the garden above the cottage, under an oak tree near a rough stone temple -

> " Sleep well, old soldier, lying deep and still
> Beside these grey, mossed stones, this ancient oak,
> Our well-loved hill.
>
> This was the only fight you lost, with death - - - "

It's wrong to be too sentimental about animals, but there was never another dog like Pluto, with that strength and courage and great-heartedness, gentleness, affection and ever-watchful care.

June and July were busy months at Tara Devi. Over a hundred selected scouts from the whole province had been turned out into the jungle to build their own huts. When the Governor and the Premier arrived for the Provincial Council meeting we took them around the forest path and scouts kept appearing from all directions giving their patrol cries. Glancy said it was as good as a Zoo. The new Youth Hostel had been encircled by climbing ropes, and H.E. undid the knot at the door to open it officially. Armstrong, Director of Education and Sir Douglas Young's successor as Provincial Commissioner,

spoke warmly of all the development in Scouting and Youth Work, which he hoped would be an example for the rest of India. "To one like myself, who has spent thirty two years doing his small best for the youth of India, it is heart-warming to see the bright vista that lies ahead! Although I shall not see the full development of this great new movement, I shall always remember with pride that I had something to do with its beginnings." A Commissioners' Course and Conference was being held to coincide with the Council Meeting, there was a course for Young Farmers' Clubs organisers, and two American Scouters serving in the U.S.Army in Delhi had brought up troops of English and Indian boys from Delhi and Meerut. There were over 300 campers at Tara Devi that week.

There was one startling experience before the end of June, when Tara Devi was at its hottest and driest - a forest fire which threatened a neighbour's house. This neighbour, two miles away, was an English private soldier called Harris who had retired with a tiny pension to this smallholding on the Tara Devi hillside. His son had been educated locally and married a village girl. They led a hard-working, frugal life, and old Harris never tired of telling how he had shot a panther on the ridge outside his half-timber house. He and his son had helped to save the Homestead in a fire in 1942, and now that fire was threatening them we were glad to help in our turn. It was Mary who raised the alarm. She had been stoning apricots, for drying and for jam-making, all morning whilst I was busy in the office. John McKelvie, now D.C. Hissar, who was on the Commissioners' Course, came up from the camp and casually remarked to Mary that there seemed to be quite a fire on Tara Devi Hill. Mary immediately ran up into the garden, saw the fire making straight for the Harris bungalow, and shouted for help. I hurriedly gathered Latif and a dozen Y.F.C. organisers, two Principals of Colleges, and three gardeners, with any axes we could find, and set off. The fire was still in the oak woods and we had to stop it reaching the pines. Mary insisted on coming too. Orders had been sent down to the camp, and another party from there went to the bottom of the fire by the railway, working up a gully towards our party at the top, to prevent any further spread towards our estate. Latif and I went straight on to the main path of the fire with the strongest of the party and we fought on that hillside for five hours in the smoke and the heat. At one point we were going along a path when flames shot up between us, singeing Latif's moustache. Mary was with me in a steep little gully full of dry brushwood when the wind

changed we turned and fled and had only just reached safety when the whole gully exploded in one burst of flame. In the middle of the battle Sardar Hardial Singh appeared on the scene with a bucket of ice-cold spring water and news of the battle on other fronts. The situation was continually altering as the wind changed, and when we thought all was under control a fresh burst threatened the Harris bungalow more nearly than before. Here we had to cut a fire-break and finished only just in time. None of us had thought of time at all until it was all over - it was 6.30 pm., the sun was getting low and we were all exhausted, sooty, scratched and scorched, but the fire was out. Mary had had one rest whilst she comforted young Mrs. Harris, but otherwise had fought alongside us and was as sooty and tired as the rest. "Everybody without exception" she wrote, "had enjoyed themselves immensely!"

In August, as the monsoon rains washed away the dust and ashes of that forest fire, we were in monsoon-free Kashmir. Mary and I stayed with Sir Edward and Lady Cole in Srinagar for a weekend, and explored together the lakes and waterways, the bazaars and the carpet-factory. Over thirty students under Qureshi and Raoof, with an Army climber Sgt. Hepburn, met us at Pahalgam to trek up the West Lidder Valley for an assault on Kolahoi. We camped on a grassy ledge above the stream at Arau, where Phil Talbot and I had camped five years before. In our tiny mountain tent I held Mary close in thankfulness that she was with me now in this lovely valley.

So by the meadows and forests, crags and peaks we climbed to the foot of that familiar glacier, to pitch a base camp amongst the rocks and juniper below the ice. A day or two were spent in training on the rough ice-fall, a day spent seeing if it could be by-passed to the East over some meadows thick with flowers around the small lake of Dudh Nag - the Milk Pool. Mary was with me here and on the edge of the upper glacier, at just over 14,000ft, we saw a startlingly beautiful butterfly alight on some saxifrage. A good 2" across, it was a translucent pale green, like opaque glass, with strong vein markings and spots of red, blue and white. It was one of the rare Snow Apollos, but which? We captured it after an exciting chase amongst scabious and aster, gentian, primula and corydalis. Later we identified it as Parnassus charltonius, one of which had been found at 17,000ft by an early Everest Expedition.

Next day whilst Mary stayed below collecting flowers and butterflies

I led the first assault party up to establish an advance camp near the foot of the final pyramid. We went up the Western branch of the glacier where a simple 30ft ice-step took the place of the tortuous ice-fall on the main glacier We cut steps up this and left a fixed rope. At 15,000ft, looking up at the terrific rock face of the pyramid soaring nearly 3,000ft above us, we pitched our two tents. Qureshi and Hamid were in one, Parkash Chand Singha and I in the other. Hamid was a Kashmiri from Mirpur College, a brilliant natural climber with no nerves who could go up sheer rock faces like a goat. Singha was a Bashahri with an agricultural degree and a fruit farm near Narkanda. He had been with Latif on the Chaur Expedition. We were a strong team but I wished Latif had been with us, and I hated being separated from Mary by that long glacier even for a night. Singha wrapped himself in a Bashahri _gudma_, a very thick soft blanket of the finest wool, and was soon asleep. I lay long awake, listening to the ice cracking and an occasional stone falling, until everything was frozen fast.

We crossed the upper glacier carefully next morning, four on a rope, and soon were on the steep rock. It was easier than it looked, but we went carefully for much of the rock was loose. Roped as a four we made slow progress, and this was our big mistake. Hamid led up like a cat, but after an hour to our dismay he began to tire. The altitude was telling on Qureshi too, and first I took the lead, then Singha. We kept on for another two hours until we reached a prominent rock-spike at the top of the steepest part, where the slope began to lessen off a little to the summit. We were at 17,000ft, looking down the precipitous 4,000ft face of the mountain. Both Hamid and Qureshi were now exhausted, and Hamid was sick. Singha wanted me to go on with him the remaining 800ft to the summit. I reckoned it would take us another two hours. I dare not risk leaving the others to descend by themselves. Reluctantly I ordered retreat. Singha's outer trousers had all but disintegrated on the climb and he tied them to the rock pinnacle hoping that our second party might carry them further to the summit next day.

Raoof, Sgt. Hepburn and two others were waiting at the advance camp. Hamid was so tired he asked to be left there too. The rest of us went on down to base and I was too pleased to have Mary in my arms again to be too disappointed about the summit.

Next day we spent lazily amongst the flowers, wondering how Raoof was faring on the peak. About 3.0 pm. it was reported that a student,

Taqi Mohsin, son of a prominent Scouter and Educationalist, had been missing since morning. He had been last seen climbing the steep mountain side above the camp. Mary was particularly worried, because he had spent the day before with her in search of butterflies. I set off up the rocks, climbing fast for an hour and shouting occasionally. No reply. I began to get worried myself. But in another half hour I found him lying in a bed of green cushion of juniper, gazing at a green cushion of androsace microphylla starred with pink flowers. He was so lost in a dream of mountains that I hadn't the heart to speak harshly to him but when we got down Mary lectured him severely for going off alone without telling anyone. He placated her with some of the androsace and kept a special affection for her from then on.

Nearing sunset figures were at last seen coming down the glacier. We climbed up to meet them - the peak was won. Our casualty, Hamid, had made a remarkable recovery overnight and insisted on going up again. He had picked a new line, traversing across from ours and by-passing Singha's pants. He, Raoof and Hepburn had reached the summit between 2.0 and 2.30, two others having had to give up 500ft below. At the summit three rupees had been found and a note from a Sgt. Robert Leakey who had climbed the peak alone in June. There had, we knew, been several ascents of the peak previously, but we thought this was the first Indian ascent. Raoof and Hamid had done extremely well and their success gave a fillip to the Punjab Mountaineering Club which we had recently formed. In later years Abdul Hamid distinguished himself as an officer in the Azad Kashmir forces, and in giving mountain training to units of the Pakistan Army.

For Pluto

(who fought more battles and climbed more mountains
than any other dog)

Sleep well, old soldier, lying deep and still
beside these grey mossed stones, this ancient oak,
our well-loved hill.

This was the only fight you lost, with death;
and still undaunted thumped that gallant tail
with your last breath.

Keep your long guard, whilst those you loved are near,
and then--no need to leave one eye unclosed,
to cock one ear.

Here are the hills and streams that were your own,
the woods whose inmost secrets were revealed
to you alone.

There are the hills you've won, the fields of snow,
the last great mountain you're exploring now
where we shall go.

Scout round that peak, old dog, we'll come in time;
and full of pride you'll greet and guide us then
up that last climb.

Tara Devi: June, 1945

CHAPTER - 14 The Wine of a Punjab Winter

We stayed late at Tara Devi that autumn. Occasionally I would go down to Lahore for a day or two to make sure that everything was alright at Headquarters. It was almost worth it for the delight of coming back again. As soon as the rail-car was seen below Mary would come down the hill to meet me and pass on all the camp news.

Whilst we were in Kashmir George Bee had died, and a German agricultural expert called Kirschner had been released from internment to take his place. He had been a planter in Java and his wife and two sons were still there, having precariously survived Japanese occupation. With the surrender of Japan he was hoping they would soon be able to join him in this new life.

Near the Beehive was a huge eucalyptus tree that had been planted by George Bee in 1901. He used to say that he would live as long as that tree. It was now 90ft high, with a girth of more than twelve feet. For a year or two this tree, leaning over the Beehive and shedding its branches in every gale, had been getting very dangerous, but we could do nothing whilst George Bee was alive. Now, reluctant as we were to see it go, and to lose the pungent smell of its leaves, we decided it must come down before winter. It would have to be felled accurately between the flag-pole and the terraced walls of the parade ground - that is into a space twenty feet wide opposite to the way it was leaning. Three ropes were attached at the top, and a platform built around the base. This, and cutting a deep kerf on the lower side, took all the morning. The timber was hard as iron. All afternoon we worked with cross-cut saw and wedges from the other side, and it was dusk before the tree began to creak at last. A block and tackle had been fixed around a big tree at the other side of the parade ground, and now a dozen men led by a heavy-weight American scouter hauled on this. Very slowly the great tree was brought up to a perpendicular position, and then a little further until it leaned away from the Beehive. Some final blows with an axe, a tremendous heave on the rope, and the whole hillside seemed to shake as the giant crashed just where we wanted it. It was a weekend between two camps, and the training team, with Hardial Singh and Mary supervising, and Services Rovers from the Leave Hostel assisting, had enjoyed themselves!

After our return from Kashmir I had bought Mary a handsome and affectionate Alsatian puppy - Zhuky, and now Sir Douglas Young wrote

to ask if we would like his Red Cocker, Simon, whose present guardian was leaving India. (Sir Douglas had gone as a judge on the War Crimes Commission in Vienna). Both dogs followed Mary everywhere, and that golden October passed in great happiness. We made one trip down into the valley and up to Junga to inspect the Scouts and Cubs and spend a pleasant evening in the young Raja's guest house. On a spare afternoon at the Homestead we collected what pears the raiding langur monkeys had left, and started the process of making apricot brandy with the fruit we had dried in summer. The dried apricots were stuffed into a bottle, and cheap local spirit poured in on top. By Christmas it was delicious!

Looking casually at a plan of the Homestead we suddenly noticed that there was a room at the rear we had not realised existed. We summoned Jai Ram who said Yes, it was an old storeroom that nobody had been in for years. We found some keys and went to explore. There seemed to be nothing but junk inside. A lot of empty bottles were piled in a tin bath - and there was a dusty old saddle. I examined it - it was a very good one by Peat of Jermyn Street and needed only new padding. I still have it. We left Madar Bakhsh and Dilawar Khan to tidy up the place. Half an hour later Dilawar came grinning to the cottage. "Mem Sahib - not all those bottles are empty. We've found a dozen full ones!" Strange that my best wine story should come from India. We hurried to examine the find, laid out in the kitchen. Eight of the bottles were dark - and disappointing. They had apparently contained the sort of apricot brandy we were making but the corks had dried out and only two bottles, when strained, yielded a glass or two of quite excellent liqueur. But the other four bottles were clear glass, with a golden liquid inside. The labels were indecipherable, but looked like Chateau labels. The cork disintegrated as I opened one bottle, but there was nothing wrong with the wine. It was the finest wine I had ever tasted. Memory may be prejudiced, but I have tasted nothing like it since; liquid sunshine, every sip of which, rolled slowly over the tongue, made you feel like saying a prayer of thanks to Heaven. We carried those four precious bottles away to the cottage, and invited Sardar Sahib to share the one I had opened. There was no doubt that the wine was a great Sauternes. It must have been in that store-room since at least 1934. There might have been other clues if I had thought to look for them. I can only think now that it was a Chateau Yquem from the 1920's, in all probability from the greatest year of all, 1921, so incomparably was it above other great Sauternes

that I have tasted since. It certainly set the seal on that golden autumn.

All summer on the plains Latif had been working hard getting his Young Farmers' Clubs organised. Now, with fresh snow on the far peaks, and cold winds sighing amongst the deodars, we moved down to Montmorency Park. I had been planning a protracted tour of the Eastern Punjab, to visit Latif's pilot clubs, and some of the District winter training camps, whilst at the same time showing Mary those districts she had heard so much about in letters, particularly Gurgaon and Hissar. We set off in the old Ford 10, with two dogs, luggage and an orderly crammed in the back, Madar Bakhsh having gone ahead by train. We visited Jullunder and the Commissioner's house. In Hoshiapur deforestation of the Silwalik Hills had led to erosion of sandy chasms called chos. Great efforts had been made by Brayne and others to get areas closed to grazing, and forest re-established to prevent further erosion. One Young Farmers' Club had cleared itself a football field in the middle of a cho, and planted trees all around. Latif met us here and we joined the club in a hectic game of Volleyball. We camped in a grove of mango trees, and peacocks called in the sunset.

At Ludhiana there was a telegram from the Chief Secretary such as I had not had since Hissar. "Return Lahore immediately as Arbitrator Trades Union dispute with Electricity Supply Company." Bhanot had taken over as Chief Secretary from Bourne, who had gone as Governor to Bihar. Frantically I rang him up. "What on earth is this? I'm doing three jobs as it is, this tour has been planned for months and hundreds of people are waiting for me along the route." "Sorry, Bill - there's no one else available. You'll have to come - that's an order."

I was furious. I caught a train at midnight and was at Walton by 7.0 am. As soon as Moti Lal came I took him with me into Lahore. We were at the Company's offices when they opened and I spent the morning with their directors and lawyers. In the afternoon Moti Lal took me to the Trades Union office in the city. The officials were staggered by this invasion, pressed tea upon me, and unburdened their woes. It would take time to prepare their case properly, I suggested - would a hearing in a fortnight's time be alright? They agreed happily to this, promised no action meanwhile, and back I went to the Company. By 4.0 pm. all was settled, the hearing fixed, Bhanot satisfied, and I was on the way back to Mary in Ludhiana.

Beyond the green countryside of Karnal we spent two days in Delhi,

camping at the Delhi Scouts' ground near Humayun's Tomb. The beauty of New Delhi, in those days, lay in the vast expanses of lawns and gardens where ancient tombs and other vestiges of an older Delhi contrasted with the magnificent buildings that Lutyens had designed.

At Ballabgarh my old friend Gopal Krishna had sent his tonga to meet us, and we left the car and bounced away over the sandy road to Chainsa. There in that thatched rest-house amongst the nim trees that had been my home for so long, it did really seem as though happiness was complete, and that life "for all pains and sorrows passed' was paying us "usury of long delight." At Hirapur the villagers greeted us with warm affection, men sang joyfully at the wells as their bullocks hauled up the great leather buckets of water, and the sun was warm on wheat and gram. The haunting cries of peacocks filled the glade again as darkness descended, and jackals howled across the river. In Hissar John McKelvie welcomed us to the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow. John had recently married a Parsee girl of great charm, and we had two very pleasant days with them. In the Bhir, the scrub jungle that stretched away from the house, Simon chased a wild cat nearly as big as himself and striped like a tiger. Fortunately he didn't catch it. We thought of Pluto, and how we had once found him fifteen feet up a thorn tree trying to get at a cat. In the north of Hissar we rode out on camels after bustard. We saw Rosy Pastors and Black Ibis, flights of Imperial Sandgrouse, a pair of Sarus cranes, and by the Otu jheel many kinds of duck, some geese and some white cranes.

Back in Lahore with the tour safely over I enjoyed the Trades Union arbitration that Bhanot had thrust upon me. It was an exhilarating change to go back to semi-legal work, and in handling this particular problem I thought of John Hilton, who had discussed labour problems with so much knowledge at Cambridge. The unorthodox approach of that first hectic day (dictated though it was by my own eagerness to be elsewhere) had so impressed both parties that in the course of a fortnight I managed to get a fair measure of agreement and put in a report that was accepted by both parties, and very thankfully by Bhanot, who had had visions of the electric supply for Lahore being cut off for Christmas! The report included a strong recommendation that a Sports Club and other recreational facilities should be started for the Company's employees. I had discovered that a judge doing a similar arbitration in another province had received a substantial honorarium,

so pointing out that this arbitration had been entirely outside my other work I put in a request for a similar sum - and got it!

Sachdev was Supply Secretary in Lahore now and we saw a good deal of Savitri and him, but for Christmas we were back in Tara Devi for the Students' Mountaineering Camp that had become a feature of the winter there. We had 140 students and 10 Army Cadet Officers. In his list of "aims" in the camp brochure Qureshi had uncompromisingly included "To break down the too-common prejudice of educated young men against manual labour". We had had some excellent students in previous camps but Qureshi was landed with a weak lot this time and several failed to stand the pace. Latif came up for a few days' break, and Jai Ram watched his arrival with alarm - "Not going to the Chaur this time, Latif Sahib? There'll be heavy snow in a day or two." But indeed Latif had his gaze riveted on the Chaur, standing out white and clear against a bright blue sky. It was strange to think that it was only a year since he had been caught on that peak, only a year since Mary had arrived. Latif did take a small party, met old friends in the village that had been their last year's refuge, and had a successful climb. Besides being a brilliant organiser, Latif wrote extremely well. "We worked our way up a ridge strewn with huge rocks that looked like the gravestones of giants. The sun shone brilliantly as we reached the peak and looked on a glistening panorama of snow-clad summits and deep green valleys. We thought of our flounderings in darkness and thigh-deep snow last year - what was then a nightmare of blizzard and cold was now a pleasant and thrilling memory."

At Tara Devi Mary and I had celebrated with another bottle of that wonderful Sauternes. Pears had kept well in the store-room, I shot some jungle fowl, and we lived well. On some days we had snow, otherwise brilliant sunshine with the air as bracing as iced champagne. On New Year's Eve we found a red rhododendron in full bloom against a patch of snow, and at midnight Mary opened the new Hogg Memorial Campfire Circle by lighting a huge bonfire of oak and pine and eucalyptus wood. Months of work had gone into this circle, which had begun with a small site "Woodpecker's Corner" which I had cleared and levelled for a one-man tent on my first visit to Tara Devi in 1941. Since then great rocks had been levered out, dry stone retaining walls built up, and a whole section of the ridge levelled off and surrounded with stout timber fencing. Above the circle the ridge had been terraced out in an amphitheatre. With this and other sites, kitchens,

dining-rooms, stores and the Youth Hostel. Tara Devi was now the finest camp training centre in India and because of its situation one of the finest in the world.

With all its amenities, Montmorency Park seemed tame in comparision, though the January sunshine was warm and the sweetpeas brilliant. We were sitting in the garden for a lazy half hour after lunch when a pi-dog came crashing through the far hedge. It was slavering at the mouth with rabies but for a moment just stood and looked at us. Mary caught Zhuky in one hand and Simon in the other - "Hold 'em tight" I said, and moved quietly into the house, grateful for the French windows in every room. I can still remember vividly the anxious speed of the next few seconds - grabbing and loading a gun, going through the bedroom and very carefully opening the other French window, flanking the intruder. Mary was sitting tight, Zhuky's ears were cocked, Simon was growling, the pi-dog still standing still, a terrible sight, watching them. I took careful aim behind the shoulder, and he dropped where he stood. We got the dogs into the house, had the corpse buried deeply, and disinfected everything around. The whole action had taken just thirty seconds.

In February we paid another visit to the Coleyana Estate for a Young Farmers' Club Tournament. Latif and his staff had in the past year trained 500 Club leaders. Over 200 Young Farmers' Clubs had been affiliated and as many more were on probation. In Indian conditions, with smallness of holdings and frequent under-employment, we had decided on a recreational approach and Latif's declared aims were firstly, to bring together village youth for social, cultural and recreational purposes and to teach them intelligent use of leisure, and secondly, to encourage knowledge and skill in scientific farming, and in rural industries. Each village was to provide a building as Club hut which could also be used as a Youth Hostel, so that soon members would be able to travel across the province and into the hills if they wished, staying in Club huts on the way.

At Coleyana the tournament had now become an annual event, with ploughing matches and sports. Our visit this year was a sad one, however, because Lady Cole had died during the winter and the Colonel, nearing 80, was a lonely man.

We went on through Multan to the State of Khairpur Mirs in Sind where Scouts and Scouters had visited us often at Tara Devi. Another guest in the palatial State Guest House was Sir Henry Holland, Provincial

Commissioner of the Baluchistan Scouts, a famous eye-surgeon who had spent his life-time on the frontier. In a week he would perform several hundred operations for the removal of cataracts. We had corresponded frequently on Scouting matters, as the Punjab put training facilities at the disposal of Baluchistan, and it was a great privilege to meet him now.

Amongst other things Khairpur is renowned for its camel-wool weaving industry. Almost indestructible carpets are made in the natural colours of camel-wool, shades of fawn and brown, and white. We visited the great Indus barrage at Sukkur, before taking the train on to Karachi. The Indian Navy had organised a Sea Scouting Course on H.M.I.S. Dilawar and most of the H.Q. Staff from Sardar Sahib downwards, with other leading Scouters from the Punjab, were present. Many of them had never seen the sea before, but in a day or two they were in skiffs running free before the wind, one hand on the tiller and another on the mainsheet, discoursing eloquently about leach and luff, clew and cringle, tacking and close hauling, weather and lee. When the Naval officers accused us of lubberliness, we challenged them to meet us on a glacier! Mary raced me round the assault course, and with a head start and a helping hand now and then from Qureshi, she beat me to the finish. We spent a day sailing over to Manora and we swam in cool green waters, tasting the salt in our mouths, and lying on the warm sand in the sun.

The last and greatest event of the winter was a Provincial Rally at Montmorency Park in March to bid farewell to Sir Bertrand Glancy, whose term of office as Governor (and Chief Scout) was now ending. The Provincial Commissioner Armstrong was also retiring as Director of Public Instruction. Fifteen hundred Scouts from all over the Province, from Khairpur and from Baluchistan, were in camp for eight days. The whole H.Q. staff and the most experienced Scouters in the Punjab were busy for weeks with the formidable problems of organisation involved. Sardar Sahib arranged the transport, Qureshi the camp-sites, Sita Ram the competitions. A new staff member, Chief Petty Officer Sher Khan, erected a rally mast with Scout flags on the yard-arm - a most impressive sight. Others painted placards, collected rations to keep thirty kitchens supplied, or persuaded the Army to lend us lorries. Lahore college students set up an Enquiry Office, and the National War Front, now converted to National Home Front, installed a Public Address system. In the middle of all this I succumbed to a

heavy cold and retired to bed. Mary carried on as final umpire and authority for three days, until I managed to get up for H.E.'s visit. Glancy had been a very good friend to Scouting, and to us. We now had 104,000 Scouts in the Province and were training 10,000 a year in H.Q. camps. Those gathered here were the cream, and they gave him a wonderful send-off. He had been a first class Governor and a most likeable person. I had seen him so often in the comparative informality of Scout camps since the "sand-lice" first danced in Ferozepore. He still looked very fit but politics had become an increasing strain. With the tug-of-war between Congress and Muslim League in Delhi the Punjab's Unionist Ministry was being seriously threatened. H.E.'s last words to that mixed gathering were to remember that they were first Punjabis. I never saw him again. He retired to Kenya but after a pitifully few years succumbed to a heart attack.

Armstrong had a special day to himself at the end. Mary in her turn had taken to a sick-bed but got up for this final rally and presentation of flags and shields. With guests from the Army and Air Force -- British, Indian and Chinese officers and men - there were over 2,000 people at the Closing Campfire. Scouts from the Himalayas, from the Frontier hills, from every corner of the Punjab, showed their different folk-dances or sang local songs. As in innumerable camps all had lived in complete amity in mixed communities and mixed kitchens. No one dreamt then that in little more than a year all this would have disintegrated.

CHAPTER - 15 Valley of Paradise

The gardens at Tara Devi were full of April blossom - draped curtains of pale mauve wistaria, festoons of pink and yellow roses. The orchard was full of apple and pear blossom, and down at Shalgaon the plum trees promised well. One night the hillside shook with thunder and hailstones battered the roof like cannon balls. Some were over two inches in diameter and weighed six ounces. The glass frames over the seed beds were shattered and the soil was pitted with holes as though with machine gun bullets. Paths and lawns were carpeted with blossoms which the hail had torn to shreds. The pine tree behind the cottage had its bark ripped from top to bottom by lightening - when that flash struck we thought the end of the world had come. Everything fused, the room was full of smoke, and our hair stood on end with static electricity.

The old temple at Tara Devi, a pleasant, weather-beaten structure of ancient timber, stone and slate had been replaced during our absence by a concrete and plaster affair with a gilt cupola. It was clear that the Goddess had been displeased.

Some new staff quarters at the camp-site had been finished - log cabins that Mary had helped to design, built of rough timber, with built-in bunks, benches, tables and cupboards. They were the envy of all the Service men who came up to the Leave Hostel. Sir William Armstrong (just knighted) and Lady Armstrong also came to stay with us for a month before sailing for home. He had provided many of the funds for developing Tara Devi and it was appropriate that he should enjoy it for a little while at the end of his service.

Maxl Kirschner at the Dairy Farm was overjoyed - his wife was on the way, expected any day now. He had not seen her or his sons for four years. Two days later he brought her up to the Homestead. Marie Louise was more our own age - tall and attractive, but showing the strain of those recent years. As a German she had not been in a prison camp, but living had been hard with nothing but what she could earn. She had run a laundry for a time. Both she and Maxl were liberal Bavarians, absent from Germany for many years and having no shadow of Nazi sympathy. Maxl told some fantastic stories of his adventures with the Dairy Farm. He had been a tobacco planter and

knew little of cows at first. He went to the great Punjab cattle fairs to select the best animals - but a cow had been milked in front of him to yield three gallons and when he got it home it gave less than one. The milker had had bags of milk concealed up his arms and running down into his hands as he milked.

On a visit to Simla we met a Tibetan trader who had set up stall by the footpath. In the centre was the most beautiful vase we had ever seen. It was, Marl said, a very fine piece of cloisonné work, the whole vase being composed of enamels looking like precious and semi-precious stones - turquoise, jade, tiger and pearl stones, set in a brass matrix. Mammoths and tigers and flowers and joss sticks were intricately worked over its elegant inverted-pear shape. We coveted it, and bargained for a week with the man who had brought it out of Central Tibet. We got it eventually - our one extravagance! - and carried it off in triumph to Tara Devi. From the Ridge in Simla we had looked at the snow-peaks eighty miles away. "Not much snow this winter" I said, "it should be a good climbing season and an early one." Mary put her hand in my arm "You know, darling" she said, "I would so much like to climb a mountain." I smiled. "Why not? You've been very fit. I hate sharing an advance tent with Latif - I'd much rather share it with you. We'll plan a tour for next month and take ten days off in the middle of it to climb Banderpunch."

Banderpunch, 20,720ft, in Tehri Garhwal, was ninety miles east of Simla as the crow flies, and well over a hundred and fifty on foot. It had been attempted several times from the south, from the Jumna and Bhagirathi valleys, but never climbed. There seemed to have been no previous approach from the north, from the Tons valley, which we could reach through the Simla Hills and the Pabar valley, visited before on the Hansbeshan trip. We would pay official visits to Balsan, Tharoch and Jubbal States on the way. Latif had been working hard on the plains for months - he could join us and try to interest the States in Young Farmers' Clubs.

Whilst we were making preparations for this trip I was in Simla one morning when a hand clapped my shoulder. I turned to see Phil Talbot. With the end of the war he had left the U.S. Navy and was back in India as a journalist to cover the progress to Independence. He had brought his wife and baby daughter up to Simla for the summer whilst he toured India. We had exchanged only an occasional letter over the last three years and there was much to say. He brought

Mildred and Susan over to Tara Devi next morning and we had a long and happy day together. Roses and honeysuckle at their peak were making up for the hailstone damage earlier, and the gardens were resplendent once more.

After two days spent packing and sending off the mules we took a car through Simla and Sanjauli to Phagu ten miles out on the Hindustan-Tibet road. From here the Simla-Mussouri mule-track dropped steeply down four thousand feet into the Giri Valley. From a narrow bridge we looked down into a small gorge with a stream cascading below and a black and white bird with V-shaped tail flew by - the Little Forktail. Just beyond we met for the first and only time that curious bird the Racket-tailed Drongo, with the thin forks of its tail curved round like the rim of a tennis racket.

The Thakar's house at Sainj reminded Mary of the buildings in "Lost Horizon", and here two ponies from the Raja of Balsan awaited us. We climbed steadily now, through forests of blue pine and deodar, spruce and ilex, to the State capital, Deah. Latif, Qureshi and a student party were already here and a pleasant Sikh official met us with the offer of beer now or tea when it was ready. With great presence of mind Mary accepted the beer, and the tea came in due course. The Sikh State Manager gave Mary the key of a cupboard well-stocked with beer, soda, whisky and gin. We offered him one of his own drinks and invited him to dinner. It was 11.0 when we got to bed. "It had been a lovely day" says Mary's log "and I remembered the red-headed lizard which had peeped at me from the top of a yellow cactus flower."

On a 9,000ft pass next day we caught another Snow Apollo - Parnassius Hardwickei - not so rare as the one caught near Kolahoi but very beautiful with its red, blue and white spots on green wings. At the border of Tharoch State two days later our collecting mania made us forget our manners. State officials - a Forest Officer and Police Inspector - were waiting to greet us, and a smart policeman solemnly presented arms. Just as this ceremony was completed we noticed some very beautiful butterflies, with transparent blue wings, edged with black. They were a kind we had long sought, papilio cloanthus, the Glassy Bluebottle, and with a hasty explanation we gave chase. Far from being put out, the Police Inspector joined eagerly in the pursuit and shared our triumph at the capture. That was a long day of twenty miles, with another high ridge to cross,

and we were grateful for Tharoch ponies. Qureshi and the students had left us now for the Chaur, and only a small party were left for Banderpunch - Latif, Raoof and our naval man Sher Khan making his first trip in the hills. Madar Bakhsh was with us as cook to make sure that Mary stayed fit. From the ridge top she walked ahead of us along a forest path whilst Raoof and Sher Khan rode the ponies for a change. Suddenly there was a scream. We rushed to her - a snake had crossed the path in front of her and we saw it disappearing. She knew it was harmless, and the scream had been instinctive - a very funny sensation, she said.

The Wazir of Tharoch welcomed us to the comfortable Guest House with the traditional dali, a gift to a guest of all the things he will need whilst in the State - flour, eggs, butter, trout, biscuits, sweets and a half bottle of whisky. The fish worried us as Madar Bakhsh and the mules were far behind and didn't arrive till midnight, but Sher Khan cleaned them with naval efficiency and all was well.

The Wazir took us to the palace next morning. The door was a solid piece of deodar six feet high, five feet wide and five or six inches thick. The Rana of Tharoch was a friendly middle-aged man who spoke no English and took a great fancy to Zhuko. We persuaded him to start a Young Farmers' Club but a modern outlook could scarcely be expected in a small state fifty miles from the nearest cart road.

Two days later we were down at 3,000ft. seeking relief from the heat in the ice-cold waters of the Tons. Our ten days' leave and assault on Banderpunch had begun. The Tons, coming down from the glaciers of the Borasu peaks, was pale jade in colour. For two days we climbed up it to Datmir, the last village. The villagers had never heard of Banderpunch or of anyone travelling up the side valley we now followed. It was a mess of rhododendrons and azaleas for miles and the going was extremely rough. Waterfalls came down from the snow peaks above, two thousand feet in two or three graceful leaps. The mules had been left at Datmir and some cheerful villagers carried our loads. All day we fought our way up this narrow valley but by 4.0pm. we had covered only nine miles. We were then in a wood of silver birches near the upper tree limit of 14,000ft. Beyond a stone-covered slope a tiny lake nestled in a grassy hollow, with the last of the birch trees and a clump of

pink and mauve rhododendrons. Beyond that was a rough stone hut, built by the Gujar summer herdsmen who would not bring their flocks up for a month yet. This would provide shelter for the porters, and here we made our base camp at 14,500 ft. Clouds obscured the view ahead; no sooner were the tents pitched than rain fell in torrents, and fresh snow appeared on the slopes just above us. So much fresh snow had fallen in the last two days that we had given up hope of climbing Banderpunch. We had not seen it yet, except from the top of a ridge three days before. We had only three days at the most and the map, an old edition of O.S.53 I, 4 miles to the inch, was useless. This valley had never been properly surveyed at all, merely sketched in according to the surveyor's imagination. Not only were several glaciers not shown, but whole ridges and valleys were missing.

The night was cold, and it took stern will-power to rise early, but the dawn was lovely, A short way above us began the glacier, a formidable ice-wall much higher and rougher than Kolahoi. Great peaks towered all round, but which was Banderpunch? We packed for a high camp and Latif, Raoof, Mary and I left with porters at 9.0am. The porters would return and Sher Khan would bring up further supplies next day.

An hour's arduous scrambling brought us above the mouth of the glacier. Steep grassy slopes studded with primula and dwarf iris led to loose shaley nullahs, and these to the huge boulders of the terminal moraine. For the next hour we went up a subsidiary lateral moraine with a magnificent peak of sheer rock and hanging glaciers towering above us on our left - Sugnalin or Swargarohini were its two names, meaning "Path to Heaven". Above us to the right, on the other side of the glacier a jagged rocky ridge soared up to what must be one of the main peaks of Banderpunch. Over its N.E. shoulder jutted a triangular rock peak which must be the slightly higher Black Peak 20,956ft. The main glacier ahead over which one of the Datmiris said he had once gone to Harsil in the Bhagirathi valley, gave access to an evenly sloping ridge of snow that led in one long sweep to the summit of the Black Peak. Alas, that was too far for us, necessitating two more camps. (Seven years later the Black Peak was climbed by that ridge). In the time at our disposal there was only one way we could go. Across the glacier to the South a hanging valley

of snow, reached by a steep slope of ice and boulders, led to another amphitheatre of peaks West of the one above us. For two hours we threaded our way through a chaos of ice valleys and moraines, and for another hour through snow and patches of shale. At 3.0pm. we called a halt in the middle of the valley, scratched a level place amongst some shale with our ice-axes, and pitched two tiny tents. The porters went down and left us alone in that valley of snow and silence. A tiny frozen pool gave us water and we heated soup and ovaltine on Ditz stoves. A roar like an express train shattered the silence, and an avalanche peeled off the face above us. Some of it rolled towards our shale island, but we were safe enough in the centre of the valley. We settled down to a long and not very comfortable night, holding each other close for warmth. We shouted Good night to Latif and Raoof in the other tent, but heard only snores.

At 16,500ft. the cold was intense. Getting up was painful, and our boots had to be thawed out over a candle. The valley was a glistening white basin in the crystal air. The far rim, perhaps two miles away, looked only a few hundred yards. From its lowest point, just under 18,000ft., three peaks led up in abrupt steps to the main peak of Banderpunch. We would never make that. But nearer to us, on the right of the col was another fine 19,000ft. peak rather nearer to us. A snow gully, and rocks, led up to a beautiful cone of snow. We could manage that. It was May 7th.

The snow was frozen crisply under our feet and going was easy, but the valley was a sun-trap and by 9.0 am. the heat was intense. Heavy clothes were shed at the foot of the gully.

Two hours' stiff climbing brought us to the ridge at 11.30, and then came a hard struggle up the last two hundred feet of steep snow and rock. Raoof led the way, I helped Mary from above, and Latif assisted from below. We reached the peak at noon, but in front was a higher peak still, joined to ours by a knife-edge ridge of snow. We negotiated this carefully and Mary set her foot on the final peak at 12.30. We sank thankfully onto a convenient rock, the battle won. Below us rock faces and snow slopes dropped steeply away to a small snow-field a thousand feet below, and then the world ended in a sea of cloud. A slight break showed the Jumna Valley apparently miles below - and indeed

it would be 14,000ft. straight down. At the head of that valley would be Jamnotri, the source of the Jumna - that river where the peacocks called far away by the thatched rest house of Chainsa. A storm seemed to be raging below, but our own world was one of remote, untroubled peaks. We could not now see the main glacier at all but Sugnalin rose beyond it, clothed in chaotic ice.

We spent two hours on that glittering peak, out of life and out of the world. "He who thinks of Himachal shall have pardon for all sins, and all things that die on Himachal, and all that in dying think of his snows, are freed from sin". Then carefully we traversed the knife-edge, descended the steep pitches - and threw caution to the winds in a glorious glissade down the gully we had so painfully climbed. Sher Khan, waiting at the tents, had to be restrained from starting straight up the West face above. That night was very uncomfortable. Strange boulders had appeared under my bed. My burnt face and neck were an agony. Outside the moonlight lay silver on the snow and the valley was almost as bright as by day.

We had had no glacier cream. Mary had protected her face a little, but mine was raw. We packed and moved the baggage down next day whilst the others made an attempt on the peak to the East. A storm broke as we reached the glacier. We were soaked when we reached the base camp and the dogs, who went wild with joy. It rained heavily for three hours more as we lay in our sleeping bags, worrying for the safety of the others. Then we heard their voices. Blizzard had shrouded them on the second highest peak at 19,500ft; Latif was snow-blind; they had wisely turned back.

By those fantastic waterfalls, those acres of yellow azalea and pink rhododendron, we marched rapidly next day, the last three miles through panther-haunted forest. One of our mules had been killed by a panther and we were fearful for the dogs. They were no Plutos! The irritation of my burnt face nearly drove me mad, till in desperation I siezed a razor and scraped off a ten days' old beard and much of the peeling skin. Mary had suffered too but the last of the Rana's whisky made us feel human again. On May 15th. we were back at Tara Devi having covered 300 miles in 20 days. A last surprise for Mary had been

Jubbal State, with its own hydro-electric scheme, modern sanitation and electric heaters for the Guest House bathwater!
Latif left immediately for England, first of the staff to be sent to see youth work and attend courses there. It was pleasant to be home again in the gardens, to meet Talbots and Kirschners again; pleasant not to have to rise at dawn and pack everything for a fresh move onwards. But our minds were still filled with the unearthly beauty of that high, snow-filled valley walled round by peaks. It seemed so remote, so much another world, that we wondered if it had ever existed.

CHAPTER - 16 The End of it All.

There was a party in the Homestead gardens on June 2nd. for Mary's birthday, and Kadar Bakhsh produced a magnificent cake with twenty eight candles on it. A busy week followed. Scouts from all over the province had been invited to an Adventure camp from which some would be selected for the International Jamboree to be held in France next year - 1947. The Punjab's new Governor, Sir Evan Jenkins, came out to visit the camp and attend the Provincial Council Meeting. Mary was hostess at the Council tea afterwards and showed H.E. round the gardens. She took part in the Commissioners' Conference the following day and was never fitter or happier in her life. She had climbed her mountain, sunshine and flowers were round her, and the Tara Devi summer stretched timelessly ahead.

Afterwards I remembered that she had made one or two strange remarks. Had she suspected something - some symptoms remembered from a previous illness? On the 9th. we joined in all the fun and companionship of the last dinner and campfire. Next morning she was ill. I cursed the camp cook, and sent for the Tara Devi doctor, an old friend. He came up twice a day and I nursed her carefully for three days. We had been so busy the fortnight before we had had little time together. Now we were together the whole time, and strangely happy in spite of the illness. Next day she was no better and Dr. Mahajan rang the Civil Surgeon in Simla. I helped her to bathe and put on clean pyjamas, she tied her hair with a red ribbon, and we carried her through the gardens and down the long path to the ambulance. The Walker Hospital was just off the Hindustan-Tibet road, a Swiss-type building on a wooded ridge looking down into the valleys north of Simla. I felt relieved that she was in capable hands and went off to see Mildred Talbot in Corstorphans Hotel nearby.

It was Mildred who came for me next day. An immediate operation was necessary. Mary was cheerful - very much herself, but a little weak. She held tightly to me, and just said "My Bill" several times. At 3.0 the Civil Surgeon arrived, Temple-Raston, smart, dapper Army type, immaculately dressed. "Cowley" he said, "We'll do our best, but it's very doubtful. It's dangerous to do

it but it would be more dangerous to leave it." Three interminable hours later he came out, no longer dapper, his face pale and drawn. I held the verandah rail very tightly and Mildred stood close to me. "I'm sorry" he said, "It was hopeless. We did what we could. She'll be comfortable, but she will live perhaps twelve hours, perhaps twenty four. It would have been better for her, and perhaps for all of us, if she'd died on the table." It had developed gradually from her last operation. India had made no difference. The sunshine and active life had helped her. He didn't know how she had lived the last time, and the last three months had been a miracle, a sheer gift from heaven.

"Can I tell her? I think she'd rather know," I asked. "No - I can't say there's no chance whatever, and she ought to be given every chance, even if she lived only for a month, as an invalid." There was a sickness in my throat and a pain in my chest. Mildred put her arms round me and tried to comfort me, then went off to ring Phil in Delhi. The Cabinet Mission was there and important announcements were expected but he said he would come immediately.

The Matron gave me a room near Mary's and some dinner. Mary had come round and was still cheerful. I sat by her for an hour and managed to be cheerful myself. Then the house-surgeon and nurses got to work on her with injections.

She had a good night and woke at 5.30, very bright and chatty. I was with her for three hours. She complained that they weren't giving her enough to drink and when she got out of this place she would drink two bottles of beer straight off. Temple-Raston said he'd buy her the beer himself, the darling! She had rallied wonderfully - he couldn't hold out false hopes but each twelve hours counted. Phil had arrived by lunchtime and was a tower of strength. But as the afternoon wore on she grew weaker. The Civil Surgeon said it wasn't so good but for two hours Phil should take me away, and he prescribed a large whisky. We had hardly finished dinner when a phone call came. We dashed round. She had refused to have an oxygen tube and they thought I might succeed. I told her we must climb our mountain, and needed oxygen for the last few hundred feet to the peak. "I shan't be there" she said. Once she slapped my face for bothering her with the oxygen, and then for a wonderful moment put her arms round my neck, pressed me close to her, and murmured "Oh Bill -

this is our first night together for a long time." We fought on for another hour, I holding her hands and Phil holding the oxygen funnel. We had to stop her pulling anything away. Once when I nearly gave way Phil leaned over and kneaded the back of my neck with iron fingers. She couldn't make it. Sleep came, the breathing altered, and sometime after midnight she died in my arms.

It was very peaceful outside, a full moon bathing the woods and filling the valley below. Some Himalayan Barbets gave their melancholy night call from the hillside above, like a peacock's call but shorter and sharper. Jai Ram and Dilawar Khan had been taking it in turns to wait outside. It was Jai Ram now who ran to me with anxious face as I walked weakly down the steps. I shook my head, unable to speak. "Oh, Sahib - -" Jai Ram turned aside to hide his own grief. I scribbled some instructions for the funeral which would have to be that afternoon, and Jai Ram went sadly back to Tara Devi.

When he returned twelve hours later, it was with all the wealth of his gardens - - white roses, white lilies and gladioli, blue agopanthus. Sardar Sahib had made the other arrangements. There was a guard of honour of scouts, and Taqi Mohsin, her friend of Kolahoi and other camps, carried the Headquarters Standard. So we went along the Hindustan-Tibet road again to Sanjaoli, with the snow peaks beyond, and she was buried next to George Bee, the old Norfolk cowman. The Governor was there, George Brander, the Bhanots, the Marsdens, and the Macnabs; the Kirschners, and all the staff and gardeners from Tara Devi. Phil and Mildred kept close to me. The sun was hot and below the cemetery was a deep green valley. For years afterwards, in sleep, I would sometimes find myself sinking down and down into that valley.

Kirschners took me to drink cold beer at the station before we went home. We walked up the cinder path and Sirdar Sahib remembered that as she was carried down it she had said "Good-bye" to him in a soft voice. The dogs behaved very strangely and sadly.

Sir Evan Jenkins had asked me to stay at Government House, and a week later inquired very gently if I would like to change my job. I said I would have to retain some administrative control

for the time being but that the staff were quite capable of carrying on otherwise and I would be grateful for a change.

In July I was at the Secretariat in Lahore as Under Secretary Supply Department, responsible for purchasing, collecting and inspecting the Punjab's surplus corn and rice, allocating and despatching it to other provinces. I continued to live at Montmorency Park, and to ride out over the fields in the early morning before going to office. R.A.F. personnel were still about and I even took some of them up to Tara Devi again in October for ten days' leave. Marie Louise Kirschner came with us on a trek to the Chaur, as I had once gone with Mrs. Hogg to Junga. But it was too painful.

Latif had gone straight to my mother's house on arrival in England, to get the news that shook him perhaps more than anyone else on the staff, and cast a shadow over his short time in England. He was back with me in November, and Sita Ram went to Loughborough on a year's Diploma Course. Qureshi would follow a year later and take the Punjab scouts to the Jamboree in France.

Tours now were to grain silos and storage sheds, but Qureshi came on some of them to organise District Scout meetings and the collection of funds for the Jamboree contingent. Latif came on others to take me to some of his Young Farmers' Clubs.

There were uneasy rumours in the Province now. We heard them through the Y.F.C.'s. The Muslim League was working against the Premier, Sir Khizar Hyat Khan, and the Unionist Ministry. "Pakistan" was now the word everywhere. None of the I.C.S. in the Punjab had ever seriously believed this possible, but it seemed that Jinnah was adamant against Federation. Phil Talbot had interviewed him and found him difficult and inconsiderate. On their side the Hindu leaders had made no great effort to placate the Muslims. The Sikhs were also clamouring for special treatment.

In February 1947 I gratefully accepted an offer of eight months' leave, which would cover the Jamboree in France. I should be back in October to see the handing over of power scheduled for 1948, and maybe I would have recovered sufficiently to stay on in independent India if offered a job. I still could not believe that Pakistan was politically or economically a feasible idea.

I resigned as Provincial Secretary and Sardar Sahib Sardar Hardial Singh at last attained the post which he fully deserved. Latif accompanied me to Karachi. He had never been very far away from me these months. My plane was a day late in departing, and we went out to that sunny beach at Manorar and swam again in a sparkling sea, but a ghost was with us both.

As the York circled up into the dawn above the Persian Gulf I little thought that it would be ten years before I saw the soil of India again. It was February 20th. Over the radio as we neared Baghdad came Attlee's announcement that power would be transferred not later than June 1948, and that Mountbatten was to replace Wavell.

In his New Year Message for the Scout Bulletin the Punjab Premier Sir Khizar Hyat had written on the problem of communal harmony in India and "this great province of the Punjab". "With its allied movements for Young Farmers' Clubs, Students' Camps, Mountaineering and Youth Hostels, Scouting can play a vital part in the immediate future of the Punjab. It is a pity that the leaders of all political parties have not been trained as scouts, or that they cannot now be gathered together into one scout training camp. Our greatest hope is that those young people who are now scouts will eventually be the leaders of the future, with the spirit of camps where Muslim, Sikh, Hindu and Christian work, play, cook and eat together. Let 1947 be a year when the scouts of the Punjab set a shining example of brotherhood and good fellowship to all."

The April Bulletin told of "the mad orgy of Bloodshed and arson which has worked havoc in Lahore, Amritsar, Rawalpindi, Attock, Gurgaon and Multan." This was nothing to what was to follow. On June 3rd. Attlee announced that power would be transferred "to one or two successor authorities" by the middle of August 1947. This meant Partition. The Muslim League had at last overthrown the Unionist Ministry and the Sikhs had thrown in their lot with the Hindus. On July 16th. the Indian Independence Bill passed its third reading in the Commons. British India was to be divided into two independent Dominions of India and Pakistan from August 15th. A Commission would demarcate boundaries in the Punjab and Bengal.

It was murder. This precipitate decision by the Labour

Government which Wavell had refused to carry out, cost over a million lives. There are some members of the Punjab I.C.S. who think it was correct, that the situation had deteriorated so much, the authority of district officers been so undermined by the politicians, that we could not have prevented catastrophe by staying longer. The majority share my view that it was a disastrous error. Wavell himself had a plan for a two-tier withdrawal, retaining control of the disputed areas until some reasonable solution could be reached. This would have been sensible. It would not only have saved the Punjab but also have prevented Kashmir becoming a world problem for our lifetime. One wonders by how narrow a margin that was turned down as "politically impossible". Nothing could have been worse than the plan adopted and the timing and method of its adoption. I have the greatest admiration for Mountbatten as a Supreme Commander. No doubt as Governor General of the new independent India he was a success. But for the Punjab and for Pakistan he was a disaster.

There had been trouble in the Punjab for months, yet no special precautions were taken. The Governor, Sir Evan Jenkins, gave repeated warnings of the danger. The stress from Delhi was all on getting out and leaving the new Governments to clear up the mess. The men who would be the new governors did nothing whatever to help. The administration of the Punjab, built up over a century as a political and economic unit, with its fine network of canals taking no account of communal alignments, had to be split in a matter of nine or ten weeks. Police, finance, education, railways, canals, all the departments of Government had to be divided. It was an impossibility. The Punjab exploded. Whole villages were massacred. Millions of refugees flocked both ways and were murdered as they went. The fanatics and criminals on both sides led a mass hysteria of killing. In the middle of it British officers were going home, the British Army was going home, Muslim units of the Indian army were being transferred to a new Pakistan Army. The Pakistan Government, starting completely from scratch, was in a poor position to be effective at first. It is difficult to believe that something more could not have been done from Delhi.

Amongst all the blood some noble deeds were done by men of all communities who kept their heads. Scouts did indeed set a

good example, as Khizar Hyat had exhorted. The Scout Association, like everything else, had to be divided. Montmorency Park went to Pakistan, Tara Devi to India. I had walked out of my house at Montmorency Park with luggage for air travel only, and left everything else as it was for my return in October. I had sold the horses, parting with Deadly Nightshade most reluctantly after nearly seven years. But Madar Bakhsh had taken his family and my two dogs up to Tara Devi for the summer, and Raoof also was there when the massacres began. Sardar Sahib concealed them in the homestead for a week and then put them on a lorry with a load of firewood built around them, and sent them to the safety of a guarded camp in Delhi. He himself sat at the Tara Devi telephone for an hour to make sure that no messages were phoned through to Simla to warn the bazaar crowds of the ruse. Eventually by guarded convey they arrived safely in Lahore where Raoof joined Latif and the rest of the staff in running a gigantic refugee camp at Walton. The Scout Association played a very big part in handling the immense refugee problem. Everyone was worked to a shadow. Latif almost died of cholera. Padre Guiton of the Palampur Mission and Scout Troop did die. Many friends were never heard of again. Madar Bakhsh and Dilawar Khan as cooks and orderlies worked as hard as anyone and remained permanently on the Scout staff, so that their futures were assured. Poor as he was Madar Bakhsh adopted a little boy who had lost all relatives in the disaster - no-one knew who he was or whence he came.

Sita Ram, in England, had left his family at Walton, but they were well cared for by Latif until they could go safely to India. At Easter and Whitsuntide Sita and I went climbing in the Lake District with two friends of Mary's, Peggy and Jean Warren. Later Jean and I went walking together - and got quietly married. Qureshi brought the Punjab Scouts to London and I went with them to the Jamboree in France. But it was not a happy time for any of us. Many of the boys did not know the fate of their parents. After the Jamboree we all went and camped with F.L.Brayne, retired now from the Army as well as from the I.C.S. He had a successful fruit farm in Norfolk and we picked his apples for him.

A demand had come from Lahore that those I.C.S. Officers who wished to return should indicate which of the two Governments, India or Pakistan, they wished to serve. Latif, Qureshi, Madar

Bakhsh were in Pakistan. Sita Ram, Sardar Sahib, the Sachdevs were in India. I could not choose between them. I might prefer Tara Devi to Montmorency Park - but as a Civil Servant I thought I should be prepared to serve either Government. My passage was booked and I was ready.

In the state of national jealousy prevailing neutrality was not acceptable. If I had chosen either outright I might have been on that plane. But in fact no one who was on leave was invited back. A few still in the country stayed on, in both India and Pakistan, but only a very few. For most, a career had come to an end. But for those of us in the Punjab it was worse than that. A country had ceased to exist. In November Phil and Mildred Talbot stopped in London on the way home to the U.S.A. and Jean and I met them. We were talking in the lounge of their hotel when a tall figure in a flowing pugree came in. It was Sir Khizar Hyat Khan, who had narrowly escaped with his life from political enemies, and had come to England for a time. "Well, Cowley" he said sadly "We are both exiles now." He was able to return later to lead a quiet life on his estates, but that sense of exile persisted for many.

Postscript

When John Lawrence was Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab after the Mutiny he used to say that he wished he could retire to some quiet corner and become a farmer or grazier. After retirement he did buy a 60 acre farm near London and reared cows, sheep and pigs. On one occasion he was seen carrying a large hamper into the India Office, which he refused to trust to anyone else. It was a special pig which he was presenting to an Indian friend! It was said of him that at any time in his career - except later on when he became Viceroy and his health failed - he could have earned his living as a navvy.

I bought a small farm myself, below the Hambleton Hills. From time to time members of my old staff, on the training periods in England which I had arranged, came to stay - Qureshi, Raoof and others. Sardar Sahib came and proudly drove a tractor for me. P.C.Singha came on an agricultural course and we talked of Kolahoi. After its explosion the Punjab, shaken and ashamed, had settled down in its separate halves to a bewildered sorrow of the heart from which the older people never recovered. There were terrible problems to solve. Whole agricultural communities had been moved to alien land. Millions of refugees had to be re-settled, deserted villages to be re-allocated. Canals in Pakistan had their headworks in India. Rivers flowed from India into Pakistan. How should their waters be divided?

There were able Indian and Pakistani I.C.S. men, lately colleagues, on both sides, as well as many technical experts. The two armies were commanded by old comrades. Most of the practical difficulties were gradually solved. The two countries might have settled down reasonably well if it had not been for the question of Kashmir. Behind all the legal and political arguments the basic facts remain that Kashmir's natural geographical and economic links, as well as its religious ones, are with Pakistan. Pakistan could have obtained some benefit from Kashmir. With awkward communications, and with the great

defence problems involved, Kashmir has cost India far more than she can ever hope to get out of it. Mountbatten should never have accepted the accession to India of this Muslim State with a Hindu ruler. Nehru should have had the statesmanship to let it go. India would have been far better employed using her resources to solve her own internal problems. Again terrible sufferings were involved in the forcible partition by war which resulted.

Farming is a great anodyne. Across the years and across the distance I began, as a farmer myself, to feel a closer kinship with those peasant farmers of the Punjab plains and the Himalayan valleys. At times the longing became terrible to hear the village sounds again - the creak of a bullock cart; mule bells; the peacocks and the jackals calling by the Jumna river. Or to smell the yellow mustard flowers, and the smoke from a cow-dung fire.

It was not till 1957 that I did go back, with a Yorkshire Himalayan Expedition, but that is another story. I was greatly impressed then by the progress made, and by the almost missionary enthusiasm of some of the young men engaged on rural development work in India. The Sachdevs and the Vasudevs were in Delhi. I visited my old friends at Chainsa and Hirapur and heard the peacocks calling in the sunset; I wandered again by the Otu jheel in Hissar. In Pakistan Latif, Raoof, Bhatty and Qureshi welcomed me at the border with open arms and led me to Walton. Madar Bakhsh showed me proudly his adopted son. The Young Farmers' Clubs had continued in India but had been dropped in Pakistan for political motives, because of their connection with Khizar Hyat Khan. Latif was responsible for a chain of Youth Hostels through the Murree Hills, with a model one at Taxila near the Archaeological Museum. We went there and visited the Zaildar, Haider Zaman Khan, with a flourishing farm by the River Haro where he and I had shot duck seventeen years before. I climbed with Latif in the Kaghan Valley. In Rawalpindi I met Zafrul Ahsan, who, as Deputy Commissioner in Dharamsala, had looked after me in an attack of mountain sickness. He was now managing Pakistan Airways and arranged a flight for me on the Dakota that flies daily over the Himalayas to Gilgit and Skardu. The pilot circled close under the icy walls and spires of Nanga Parbat for my benefit.

The Expedition took me to Kangra and Kulu, and the peaks