

BEHIND THE RANGES

FRASER OF LISULAND
S.W. CHINA

By
MRS. HOWARD TAYLOR



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JAMES OUTRAM FRASER, B.SC. LOND.

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*Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look
behind the ranges.*

*Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and
waiting for you. Go!*

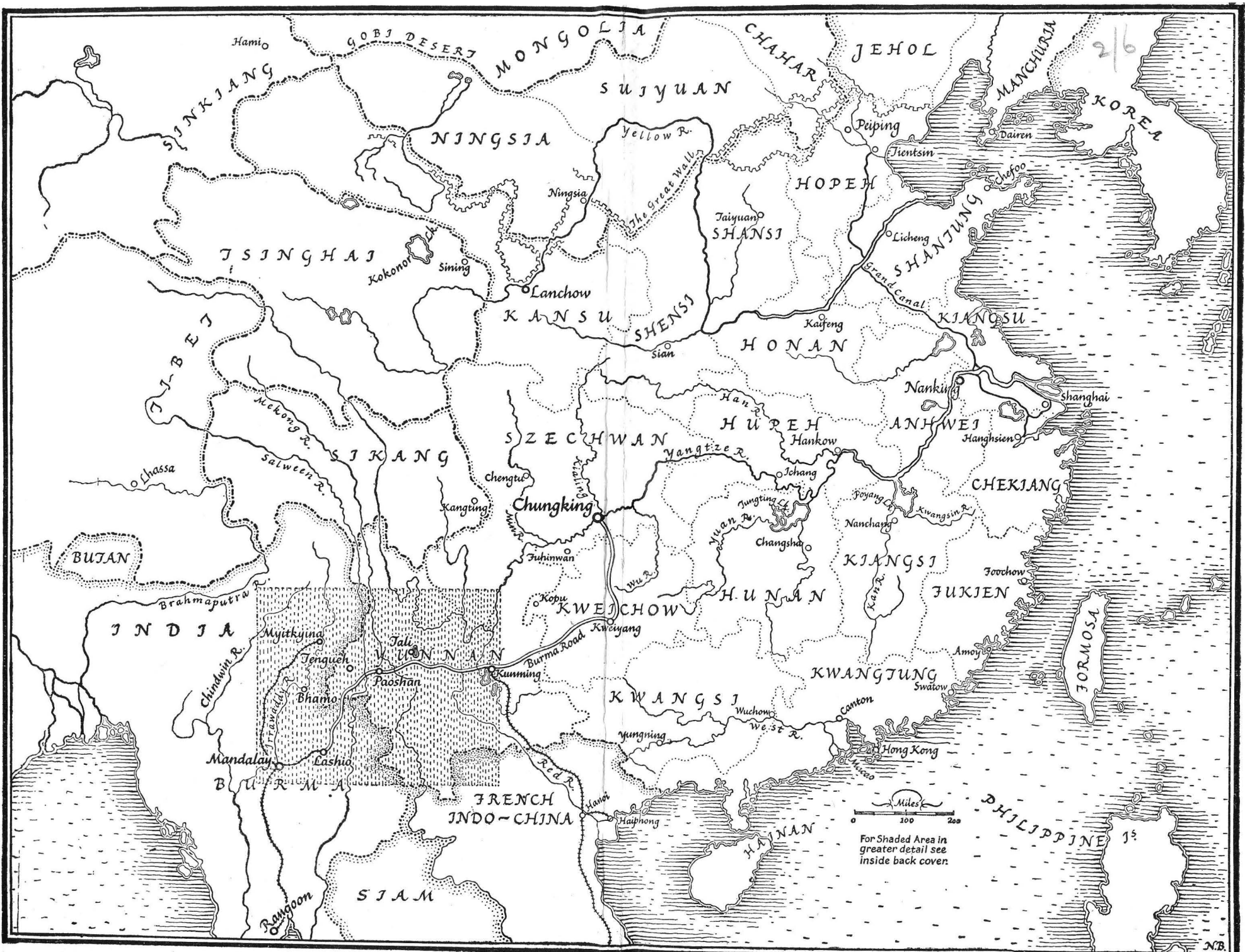
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*God took care to hide that country, Till he judged
His people ready.*

*Then He chose me for His whisper, And I've
found it. And it's yours.*

KIPLING,
'The Explorer.'

TO THE
DEAR AND HONOURED MOTHER
ANNIE ROSSELL FRASER
LIGHT OF HIS CHILDHOOD
FRIEND OF HIS MANHOOD
TRUE YOKEFELLOW IN SPIRITUAL THINGS
THIS RECORD OF THE LIFE
OF HER MISSIONARY SON
IS
DEDICATED



FOREWORD

As the story of the life of J. O. Fraser is unfolded in these pages, the reader cannot fail to be impressed with certain outstanding qualities and characteristics which combined to make him a great missionary. The stern self-discipline they picture reminds one of a Henry Martyn. He accepted unreservedly the word of his Master, 'If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.' His consuming passion for souls is comparable to that of David Brainerd. How Fraser longed and prayed for the conversion of his beloved Lisu ! And when there came the first signs of life, how earnestly he desired that they should go on to know the life more abundant. Then there was the sustained zeal of his prayer-life, recalling the fervour of 'Praying Hyde'.

Indeed, it would seem as though the outstanding feature of Fraser's spiritual life was that of the prayer-warrior. We would commend the chapter in the book entitled, 'The Prayer of Faith' as one to be read and read again. It is almost a classic commentary on intercessory prayer ; and yet it is more than that, for it was born out of the travail of a soul and is a priceless lesson learned in the school of prayer.

But with it all, Fraser was a man of like passions with ourselves, and he did not attain to a mature Christian experience without sore and costly conflict. The chapter entitled, 'Blood of His Own' draws aside the veil and gives us a glimpse of this man of God bracing himself for the fight against sloth and prayerlessness and against that 'weakness of spirit' which he says was the cause of defeat.

As a missionary, Fraser was a wise master builder, laying good foundations. The churches were to be self-governing and self-supporting right from the outset, and he strenuously resisted the temptation to allow them to

FOREWORD

become dependent on him or on funds from foreign sources. No large foreign style buildings were erected, and all the work was kept on the simplest possible lines, in harmony with the simple and primitive characteristics of these lovable Lisu.

Fraser and his colleagues had the joy of giving to the people among whom they worked the whole New Testament in their own language. Could there have been a more precious legacy for that infant church? They might have sung the 'Nunc Dimittis' in the day when the task of that translation was completed.

This missionary biography is going to be an inspiration to those setting out on a missionary career; it will be a joy to older missionaries as they read the record of trial and triumph, and it will bring its message and call to prayer to all who desire the extension of our Lord's kingdom. That its publication should coincide with Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor's golden wedding is surely matter for congratulation. Manifestly the long-practised pen has not lost its inspiration. It is indeed a privilege to commend this book as one demanding careful reading and prayerful meditation, and worthy of an honoured place on the shelves of all lovers of Missions.

W. H. ALDIS.

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THE PATHFINDER

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

A YOUNG girl was walking down a quiet street in East London toward the great thoroughfare that runs from east to west through the heart of the city. On her way she looked with interest at one little house which seemed to stand out from the rest. For behind the curtains of that window by the door and those above, she knew that something unusual was going on. History was there being made in a realm that was very real to her, little more than child though she was. 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'—how the people in that house not only prayed but lived for this! Her father and friends in the chapel to which she was going knew about it all, and she shared their interest.

It was a young missionary from China who had come to the little house with his wife and children, to prepare for returning to the work they loved—but not alone. Strange to say, they were taking with them a number of other people, all young as they were and of a kindred spirit, to do the impossible as it seemed; for was not that great land closed and barred against both themselves and the message they had to bring? Yet their object was to reach all its inland provinces with the message of God's redeeming love in Christ, the message we are charged to give to all men everywhere.

And the strangeness of it all was that they had none of the usual means of support. No missionary society stood behind them, for none was prepared at that time to undertake so hopeless a task. No one was promising them any salary. They were just going out in obedience to the plain command of Christ, trusting Him to be with

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them and to meet all their need, as He had promised. For to them that word was sufficient, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.'

Thoughts such as these stirred the heart of the girl who passed the house Sunday by Sunday. There, in the sitting-room beside the door, Hudson Taylor and his young wife were often busy writing, writing and praying. For their moments of leisure on Sunday were given to the book that was to accomplish so great a work—the little book that came from burning hearts, about 'China's Spiritual Need and Claims.' As she sat at the table, pen in hand, and he walked up and down the room in prayerful consideration, thoughts were given which were to move hearts the wide world over and through long years to come, laying abiding foundations for the work to which they had given, in faith, the name of the 'China Inland Mission.' But all that was still in the future, and almost as hidden from them as from the schoolgirl who glanced at their windows in passing. Little did she think that, in coming years, a son of hers was to be one of the bravest pioneers of that same Mission, or that his Home-call in the prime of life would occasion the heart-cry, 'a prince and a great man is fallen among us!'

There was much coming and going in the little house, for the first party of the Mission was soon to sail on the good ship *Lammermuir*.¹ Among the most helpful of the young men in preparation was John McCarthy from Dublin, who a few years later was to make his remarkable journey on foot right across China, by the dangerous regions of western Yunnan, into Burma. Strange that the son of that young girl—whose story is recorded in these pages—was to follow him in that wild border-land, winning to Christ hundreds of its mountain people! All this and much more was hidden in those days from the leaders of the movement that, without observation from the busy world, was striking its roots deep into great

¹ Sailed from the London docks on May 26, 1866.

realities. Before the Coborn Road house was finally vacated for the *Lammermuir*, all the young people had been received into temporary homes, while their household belongings went down to furnish the cabin accommodation of the seven hundred and fifty ton sailing ship *Lammermuir*. It was all humble and self-sacrificing to a degree! And when the last night came, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor were alone in the little house, sleeping on straw in one of the empty rooms, ready to go forward in quiet faith into the unknown future.

Yes, much was to grow out of the happenings at Coborn Road just then, and the prayers through life of that young girl—Annie Rossell Palmer.

CHAPTER II

YOUNG LIFE

JAMES OUTRAM FRASER, born in 1886, was the third son of Annie Palmer who at twenty-three became the bride of a young Scotsman, already making his way as a veterinary surgeon. The bridegroom, James Fraser, was a Highlander by birth, whose grandparents had emigrated to Canada when the then Duke of Sutherland evicted not a few of the crofters on his estate to make space for a deer forest. These farmer folk had character as well as godliness, and in spite of prolonged hardships founded a flourishing community near Hamilton, Ontario. Here it was, almost within sound of Niagara Falls, that young Fraser grew to manhood, developing gifts which carried him through a successful university career, first in Montreal and afterwards in Edinburgh.

'Send me your best student,' wrote a veterinary surgeon in Yorkshire to the Principal of the Edinburgh college.

It was James Fraser who was sent.

This unexpected development decided the young Canadian to remain in England rather than return to Canada. By dint of hard work he did well, bought a practice of his own and before long was in a position to marry. It was then his good fortune to meet Annie Palmer, who was attracted by his fine personality and Christian principles. And the attraction was mutual, though the sweet, quiet girl had neither Scottish nor Canadian ancestry.

Descended on her mother's side from Thomas Rossell, leading member of a settlement of Moravians still found at Ockbrook in Derbyshire, she had inherited much of his upright and generous character. His son, Edward Rossell, had literary taste and was popular on the hunting-field, but he was unsuccessful as a farmer. His property having to be sold up he fell back upon writing, chiefly on antiquarian subjects for reviews and journals. This meant

hardship for his children, one of whom became Annie Palmer's mother.

Early left an orphan, this bright, attractive Fanny Rossell was adopted by an uncle in Nottinghamshire into a congenial group of cousins and their kin. Twelve or more young people growing up together on neighbouring farms had plenty of good times as well as thoroughly practical training. Among the boys, William Palmer, two years her senior, was Fanny's special friend. Eager to make his way in the world, he joined relatives in Canada, but work on the land proved too much for his strength. The home-pull was strong ; and when he returned to the scenes of his childhood it was to find an unexpected opening with the Midland Railway—and the love of early years unchanged. The outcome was the singularly happy marriage of the young station-master with Fanny Rossell.

Of these beloved parents Mrs. Fraser found it difficult to speak in later years without seeming to say too much. The building and brick-making business which brought them to London prospered greatly, and Mr. Palmer became a considerable employer of labour. There, too, in London, he was brought into the full rest of faith as a Christian which he had long sought. The experience mellowed and sweetened an already beautiful character, and conquered the natural reserve which had hampered his intercourse with others. From that time his life was a constant overflow of loving Christlike ministries.

'No man ever had a better master,' said one of his workers in the brickfield. 'He was an angel from heaven to everyone who had anything to do with him.'

His employees stayed with him year after year, and many were the personal kindnesses done so quietly that only the sorrow of his passing revealed them.

With all this he had a fund of quiet humour [his daughter recalls] and enjoyed fun immensely, so long as it was harmless. I never heard him say an unkind word of anyone. His sensitive, refined nature showed itself in his very appearance. . . . There was a quiet dignity in his bearing that

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came of high moral character and a nature in which nothing mean or selfish ever found place. He carried with him an air of purity and nobleness, so much so that anything unworthy was rebuked by his very presence. Yet his humility was just as manifest. Tender-hearted though he was, his moral and physical courage were very marked. He never shirked anything he felt to be his duty. To my young heart, his loving nature interpreted our Heavenly Father's love.

Of all his forbears, this grandfather was the one James O. Fraser most resembled. With his own father's fine physique and strength of character, he had the disposition of William Palmer and a large share of his musical and artistic gifts. Jim was five years of age when his parents moved to St. Albans, to occupy the spacious house they had planned and built. The father was by that time absorbingly busy. He saw little of his children, for to his responsibilities as Vice-President of the College of Veterinary Surgeons (England) he had added political activities that brought him into prominence. He was an able public speaker, and was twice offered to be taken up as a candidate for Parliament : but his private practice was too clamant. Evening prayers he conducted daily with the household ; but it was the mother who made home for the young people, four boys and two girls, and kept them the united group they were all through school and college days. And few mothers can have had a more rewarding task.

For the Fraser children were warm-hearted as well as gifted above the average. The breakfast-room in the big house was their special domain, and there Mrs. Fraser lived with them in all their interests. She was cultured in her tastes and was their first teacher in music and drawing. She read to them and talked with them often about the things that matter most. She studied carefully beforehand for the lessons on the life of Christ which went home to their hearts, and through her own love for foreign missions interested them in the advance of the kingdom of God. She did not tell them that she had long prayed that

one at least of her children might become a missionary. Did she think of James especially in this connection—strong and loving among that promising group? In his pioneer days in China he wrote of his missionary call being due to his mother's prayers. But in the old home at St. Albans he was a somewhat dreamy though venture-some boy.

While he was still a child, the foundation stone of a new Wesleyan Chapel was being laid, just opposite their home. Jim could not see the proceedings for the crowd; so he disappeared and was discovered not long after standing boldly out on the narrow parapet that ran round the roof of the house, quite unconscious of the dismay his dangerous position occasioned.

Music was his passion, and his persistence came out in more than one way in this connection. He knew of his mother's love for the great masters and determined to spend his little all in obtaining a bust of Beethoven to give her pleasure. This he ordered from a music shop in the town, little expecting to have to wait months for its arrival. Five months is a long time to a boy of twelve, especially when it concerns a great surprise. But Jim appeared at the shop, week after week, and could not be discouraged. At last the beautiful thing arrived—a small white bust of the noble head of the musician. Then patience was rewarded in the loving appreciation of his gift—which still adorns that dear mother's desk, forty years later. The tie between them was always one of unusual closeness, though Jim took his full share in the endless interests of the family.

Out of school hours, they must have worked hard to produce their little monthly magazine, price one farthing, with its pictures, music, puzzles and serial stories, and a lively Table of Contents on the illuminated cover. To this Jim contributed drawings and musical compositions. His bent of mind appeared also in 'The Marvel Twopenny Atlas,' another of their efforts, with ten pages of maps, brightly coloured and surprisingly accurate. A

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list also remains in his handwriting of all the counties of England, made from memory, before he was six years old.

When photography became the rage, Mrs. Fraser had no fewer than five camera enthusiasts about her. Jim and his favourite cousin established The Imperial Photographic Company Limited, sending the following letter to all shareholders :

Dear Sir or Madam,

We, the above company, hereby acknowledge the receipt of 4d. on January 5, 1900, from which you will receive a dividend of 5 per cent.

Signed—Hon. Sec., J. O. Fraser.

Hon. Treas., A. W. Bourne.

The Company had By-Laws which included one to the effect that 'persons having ordered photographs are obliged to pay for them.' This bore hard upon one of the household more distinguished for good nature than for beauty, who had allowed herself to be photographed. Dismayed at the result, she would have declined the picture, but By-Law Number Two was brought into force :

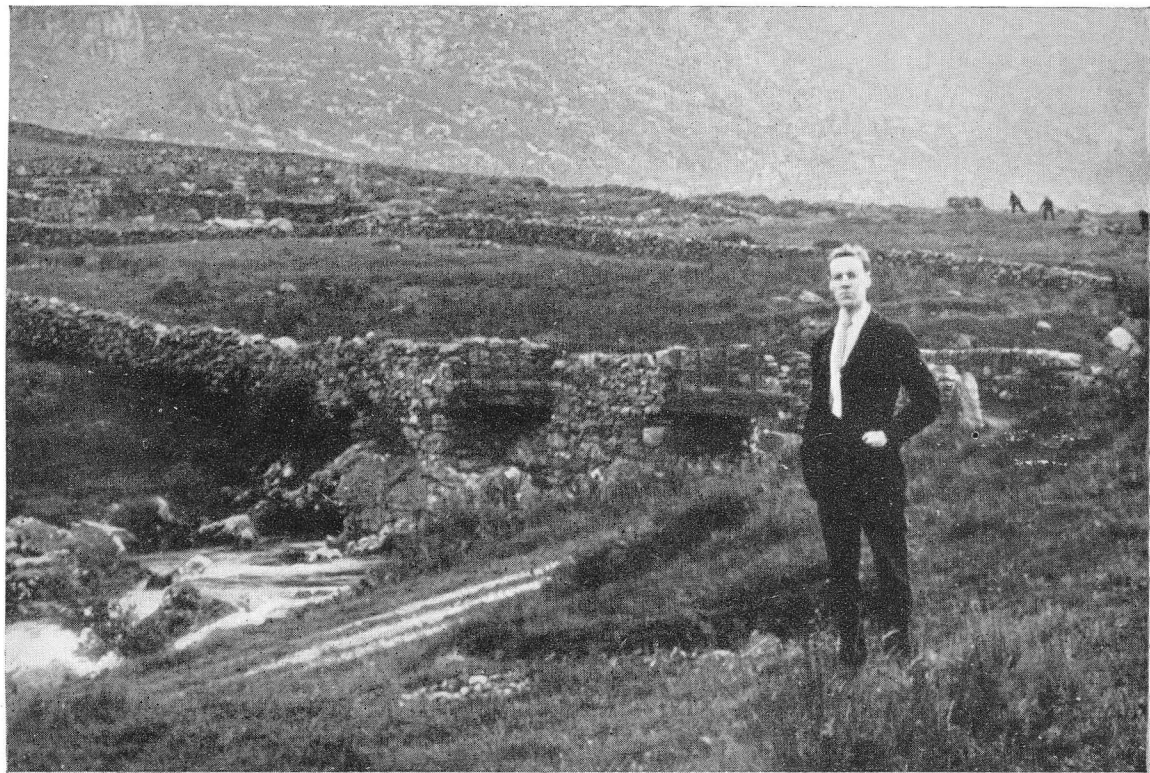
If the Company takes a photo which is perfectly finished but does not give satisfaction, because of the fault of the person photographed, he or she will have to purchase the photo.

Another, no doubt equally necessary regulation was : 'No person must meddle or in any way damage the Company's materials.' But catastrophe was not to be avoided—for the Company's affairs were wound up long before the dividend fell due.

What grand times the young people had with their music on winter evenings and outdoor sports in summer ! The programme of one Christmas concert given at home shows that all but the youngest took part in violin and piano solos, duets and trios, recitations and songs. Cycling was also a family recreation, for they would often make excursions together, or ride over to Barnet, where after



ANNIE ROSSELL FRASER IN EARLY MARRIED LIFE



J. O. FRASER ON HOLIDAY IN NORTH WALES

his retirement from business their grandfather kept open house. Great were the attractions of the lovely garden and Mrs. Palmer's perfect housekeeping, but the welcome that always awaited them and the atmosphere of loving sympathy meant even more to those young hearts.

As Jim grew older, he developed powers of endurance that were to stand him in good stead in many an emergency. 'He once walked to London and back, forty-four miles in one day, and on another occasion rode a hundred and ninety-nine miles on his bicycle, without dismounting.' In his studies he was equally persevering. The Master at St. Albans Grammar School had to make a special class for him in mathematics, and after three years at a school in Sheffield, he passed the London University Matriculation twelfth in all England.

His love of music showed itself from childhood in the pains he took to master its difficulties. He learned under good teachers and so made his own the works he studied that, even as a boy, he could play the best classical music, hour after hour, with no notes before him. His enjoyment of Symphony Concerts in London during the Season was correspondingly keen. It is not difficult to imagine the eagerness with which he and his musical sister, Millicent, would ride up together on their bicycles for those enchanted hours in the great city.

Vacations from college brought other enjoyments that left a mark on life.

One year [recalls Millicent] Jim and I and Aleck Bourne had a cycling tour. We took train to Shrewsbury, then cycled all through North Wales and down to Torquay on the coast of Devon—a rapturous time! I was eighteen then, and the boys two years younger.

Jim was such good company—so interesting to talk with! He had an alert mind, and was sympathetic toward other people's ideas and had a keen sense of humour. He was original too, and in no bondage to conventions.

For a Sheffield concert, he once secured a seat in the orchestra. When it was over and everybody was going out, the grand piano—a fine instrument—proved too great

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a temptation ! The orchestra was empty and he stepped down and began to play. At once the disappearing audience took seats again—for of course his touch was exceptional. But when he found everybody stopping, he stopped too.

School gave place to University, and through it all the inward life was deepening. Not that the Frasers ever said much about spiritual things. They were brought up to read the Bible and go to church regularly. James became organist at a small Methodist Chapel, where he also attended a Class Meeting and taught in the Sunday School. But there was an influence deeper than these through all those formative years, an influence that told on life. The reality of prayer and the strength it gave could not be questioned by the thoughtful boy in that St. Albans home. There were trials in the life of the mother he so deeply loved that he could not fully understand, but he did see and know the source of her strength. Sacred to that son was the sense of an Unseen Presence, when his mother came from the place of secret prayer, renewed again and again in the peace 'that passeth understanding.'

CHAPTER III

THE REAL ISSUE

CHIEF among the enjoyments of school and college days were the vacations in Switzerland, when Fraser and his cousin, Aleck Bourne, went off on walking tours together. They were perfectly matched as to age and tastes, and still the busy doctor in Wimpole Street recalls the thrill with which they set their faces toward the snowy heights. 'There can have been few such close and enjoyable friendships,' he writes, 'as that between Jim and me.' And they were in the first flush of youth, when

'The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn ;
Morning's at seven ;
The hill-side's dew-pearled ;'

and it is easy to say and feel

'God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world !'

Together they tramped the passes, explored the glaciers, climbed glorious peaks and sailed the tranquil lakes—taking photographs, meeting with adventures and drinking in health and happiness.

But there was more than this. The mountains appealed to something in Fraser that he hardly knew was there—a love of solitude, and instinctive response to the high, the difficult, the forbiddingly inviting. His inward attitude was the very reverse of the easy-going, 'I wish all the world were downhill !' The heights called him. In climbing, in conquering through long endurance, he found himself in a new way. He possessed the mountains and the mountains possessed him, by the sternness of their demands, the richness of their rewards.

Tramping with his guide some years later, over more

than Alpine heights on the western frontiers of China, he wrote :

‘Long grass, enormous boulders, rocks of every size, streams and high mountains were all that was to be seen anywhere . . . and the mist rolled in upon us in drizzling rain. We only met one man all day, for the upper slopes afford food and shelter to none but leopards, wolves and bears. This lofty, scrubby, rocky, wet, wild country—how I just revel in it !

‘But the mist which hid everything below hid all above and around us too. Peak and plain were alike invisible. And the grand, soul-stirring SILENCE of these mountains ! After our arduous climb, hour after hour (myself just in my element and perfectly happy !) we reached the summit, or rather the pass, for of course no mountain road ever goes over a peak. It was a wood—silent but for our footsteps on the wet, rotten leaves, and the occasional spat, spat, of big drops of water falling on the soft, spongy ground. Wet, silent, lonely—not even the call of a bird—it must have been some ten thousand feet high : and most of the year covered with snow.

‘Then came the steep descent on the further side, hands and feet alike in use as we clambered over mossy tree-trunks and through brushwood. For a long way nothing was to be seen above or below but mist. Then suddenly (you only look up at intervals when negotiating such a path), my breath was almost taken away by seeing all the mountains of Tien-tan and beyond, as well as the plain far down below, clearly outspread before me. Such a magnificent view, wide and sweeping, made me pause awhile to take it in :—range upon range of dark mountains, swathed in cloud, and in the far distance the forbidding mass of the Salween Divide, barring the way like a solid wall. Down, down, down, every now and again stopping to take in the grandeur of the scene, until almost sundown, when we reached the Lisu village of Shui Chen, wet, bedraggled and weary—but I, to use Millicent’s phrase again, “perfectly happy” !’

There had been unconscious preparation, back in those Swiss summers, for the far more strenuous mountaineering that was to come. For in ways that often pass unnoticed, God fits His instruments for the work He has in view.

Fraser was little thinking, however, of the call that was

at hand. Just twenty, he was looking forward to his last year at the London University. His course in engineering had been difficult, but he was well up in his work, as it proved when he graduated with distinction. Bright prospects were before him, for he loved his profession and did not lack promising opportunities for its exercise. The goal was in sight ; the ambition of years almost attained. He would soon be in a position of independence.

And it was just at that crisis, one of the most important in life, that the young man was unexpectedly arrested. From what little things the greatest changes often come ! A thought, a word by the wayside, and we are challenged with possibilities undreamed of before. In Fraser's life it was a little paper-bound book, price twopence, that brought the challenge—a little book with the strange title, 'Do Not Say,' given him by a fellow student.

'Do Not Say' ? Why, as he read, he found that the attitude of mind called in question was the very one he was himself taking, had all along been taking, if not consciously, yet by the whole tenor of his life. True, world conditions were far from what they should be. That now, in the twentieth century of our Christian era, the vast majority of mankind should still be in ignorance of the one and—according to the Word of God—the only way of salvation was surely to our discredit. But that was a matter for ministers and churches to consider. His call was to engineering—a splendid profession and most important to his fellow-men.

Yes, that had been an honest attitude, but now he became conscious of responsibility as never before, responsibility for the eternal welfare of others. The writer of the little book, himself a China missionary, put the matter, somehow, in a new light. His simple, honest appeal went straight to the heart of things. As man to man he questioned, 'Is it right ? In the sight of God, in view of the realities of eternity, is it right ?'

'A command has been given : "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature". It has not

been obeyed : more than half the people in the world have never yet heard the Gospel. What are we to say to this ? Surely it concerns us Christians very seriously. For *we* are the people who are responsible. No one else is responsible. The angels are not responsible. God has not told the angels to preach the Gospel to the Heathen. Again the unconverted are not responsible. They have much to answer for, but not the neglect of the Heathen. God does not expect unconverted people to carry His glad tidings to the Heathen. He expects His disciples to do it.

‘The privilege of carrying the saving message has not been granted to others. The charge has been entrusted exclusively to us. What then can we say if our Master returns to-day and finds that, after nineteen centuries, more than half the world is utterly unevangelized ? “The Gospel to every creature”—a plain command. Millions who have never heard it—a simple fact. What are we going to say ? . . . What indeed ! I for one am utterly at a loss to conceive what we can say. After puzzling over this question, casting about in all directions to lay hold of something we might reasonably urge as our excuse, I am obliged to give it up ! If our Master returned to-day to find millions of people unevangelized, and looked, as of course He would look, to us for an explanation, I cannot imagine what explanation we should have to give.

‘Of one thing I am certain—that most of the excuses we are accustomed to make with such good conscience *now*, we should be wholly ashamed of *then*. . . . Ah, we do not think what it means that our brothers and sisters, so easily accessible, are perfectly able to understand the message of God’s redeeming love, and so greatly needing it, are being left in millions to perish.’

And among those multitudes were men, women and children who would believe, to their eternal blessedness, if he went to them.

And then the Man of Galilee, the Master with the pierced hands and feet passed by. ‘Jesus, looking upon him, loved him,’ and said, ‘Come, follow Me.’ That was all. But who, having seen that look, does not know that it was enough.

It does not take long to change the course of a life, if the power at work comes from above, if it is high enough

and goes deep enough. Fraser's call to missionary service was not primarily a call to China, but a simple, unreserved consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants it done. He commands it. He gave Himself for me—kept nothing back. He asks for my fellowship in service, my life, my all.

‘Here, Lord I give myself away—
‘Tis all that I can do.’

And in that act, the young man handed over ‘not the latch key but the master key’ of his whole being. Once for all he accepted the leadership—nay, more, the *ownership* of the Prince of Glory Who for him had died upon the Cross. That Cross was taken as his highest privilege, his most binding pledge. ‘Crucified with Christ’ became so real that in his measure he, too, could say, ‘I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.’

Sacred between God and the soul are such experiences. All that even the mother knew was that Jim's life was changed in the most thorough way. He, himself, looked upon it as his conversion. If he had been a Christian before, it had been a divided allegiance. Now, the claims of Christ took the first place—to know Him, to please Him, to be wholly His. And this brought joy such as he had never known before. Always strong and purposeful, there was now a new control and fellowship that satisfied the heart.

‘He did not talk much about it [Mrs. Fraser wrote] but I have seen his face shining when he came down from prayer. He said it was that book which made plain to him his path of duty.

‘Of course, the sacrifice was a real one. He must have known that he had good prospects. He could not but feel his power. But he turned from it all without reserve to consecrate his life to God. Conversion should be a real giving of ourselves, should it not? When that takes place, the Holy Spirit fills the heart and there is joy.’

The new ownership soon showed itself in genuine concern for the welfare of others. A tramp came to the

door one day. Jim opened it, and not only supplied his needs, but before long had him on his knees in the garden, seeking the Friend 'that sticketh closer than a brother'. Some visitors of his own age had come up to London, and he was showing them the sights. They wanted to see a play at the Hippodrome. He left them there, declining to go in, but arranging to meet them again when the entertainment was over. Meanwhile, he asked to be guided to anyone whom he could help. His kindly way opened people's hearts and he soon found that one man to whom he was talking was actually penniless and hungry. After providing him with a meal, Jim found a quiet place where they could be alone and in the simplest way led him to Christ. He heard from the man afterwards that he was going on happily as a Christian.

After taking his degree in London—B.Sc., Engineering, with honours—Fraser turned from the work he loved to give himself to definite preparation for the life before him. Though only twenty-one, he lost no time in applying to the China Inland Mission, and when accepted, went at once to the headquarters in North London for special training. The year he passed with other young men at Newington Green gave him opportunity not only for Bible study. Daily attending the noon prayer meeting of the Mission, he came to know its leaders and many of the workers at home on furlough, and was able to judge of the practical outworking of its faith and principles. All he saw and heard confirmed his desire to work on inter-denominational lines, without stated salary, avoiding debt in any form and making no appeals for money. He was encouraged by the experience of the Mission in his conviction that Mr. Hudson Taylor's words expressed a great and unchangeable reality :

There is a living God. He has spoken in His Word. He means just what He says and will do all that He has promised.

What need then for anxiety when it stands written, as to temporal supplies of every sort : 'Seek ye first the

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THE REAL ISSUE

kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you ' ? Had it not been so for more than forty years in the experience of the Mission which, though numbering over a thousand members, had never been in debt nor had an overdraft at the bank ?

It was no little strength and comfort to young Fraser, both then and afterwards, that his parents gave their hearty consent to the step he was taking. One precious compensation for the parting that drew near was the new and enriched relationship between mother and son. Neither of them had anticipated this. It was one of the glad surprises that come all along the way to those who follow the Lord fully. In this connection Mrs. Fraser recalled :

After Jim's conversion, we had such deep spiritual fellowship. He was a great help to me. We shared spiritual experiences. Indeed, he became my teacher. My progress had been gradual through the years ; he seemed a mature Christian right away. He had so completely given himself to the Lord that he could be filled with the Spirit. He emptied himself—and so the Lord could fill him.

To part with such a son was a heartache that only such mothers can understand. Yet it was a willing sacrifice. ' Jim, Dear, I am the happiest woman in London to-day,' she wrote in the little note he carried with him. And it was joy that continued, just because the loneliness was for Jesus' sake.

I could not pour the ointment on His blessed feet, as Mary did—but I gave Him my boy.

And is He not infinitely worthy ?

CHAPTER IV

MOUNTAIN MEN

J. O. FRASER was standing in the doorway of a shop in the busy quarter of a Chinese city not far from the frontiers of Burma. The tall figure looked well set-up in the gown of the scholar and the friendly eyes scanned the passers-by with interest. Situated on a main trade route, Tengyueh was a place of call for caravans from far and near. Not a few nationalities mingled in the streets and inns of its south suburb, and tribespeople in their distinctive dress added colour to its markets. As ships from distant ports give mystery and meaning to home harbours, so these shy but stalwart children of the mountains, whether Shan, Kachin, Lisu or Tibetan, brought suggestions of the Great Beyond, across the near-by ranges.

It was to them especially the young missionary's thoughts tended as he entered upon his life-work. Round him in the city, people were within hearing of the message, but up in those far-reaching mountains thousands upon thousands were waiting still for the words of life that were so long in coming.

But see, a group of strangers sauntering down the busy street—could they not be brought in to hear the Good Tidings? Fraser was soon beside them, but only when they responded to his invitation did he realize that they were not Chinese coolies, as he had supposed, but Lisu tribesmen from the mountains. This was quite a thrill, for he was specially anxious for such contacts. But a greater surprise was in store. For hardly were the four men inside the preaching-hall than with one consent they went down on their knees, knocking their foreheads on the ground before him, in token of the greatest respect if not worship. Bewildered for the moment, Fraser managed to raise them and tried to turn their thoughts to the One Who alone is worthy of worship. But they understood little

Chinese and he could speak no Lisu. He gathered that they had come from a place six days' journey to the north, where tribesfolk were many. No, they could not read. But they took the tracts in simple Chinese that Fraser offered, hiding them carefully in their girdles as of great value. What they were really thinking it would be hard to say. Why was this Foreign Teacher kind to them? What was it he so much wanted them to understand? Attracted, yet in doubt, they made for the street before long, but not without urging their new friend to come out and visit them in the mountains.

Encouraged that they should have any wish to see him again, Fraser fell back upon his one Lisu sentence, 'Cho ma cho'. 'Is that so?'

'Cho ma,' they responded emphatically. 'It is, it is!'

At the time of this encounter, Fraser had been rather more than a year in China. Six months at the men's training centre of the Mission had given him a good start with the language, and his designation to the far-western province of Yunnan had come as an answer to many prayers. For even before reaching China he had been drawn to work among the tribespeople of that region, so desperately in need of the Gospel. In the whole province, up to that time, there were only five mission stations, a week or two's journey apart, and Tengyueh, the most westerly, had been occupied by Mr. W. Embery only twelve months previously.

Recently married, after seven years in China, Embery had brought his bride to anything but attractive surroundings. Part of a Chinese house was all he had been able to secure, a separate building on a Chinese courtyard, but damp and rat-infested. Happily, Mrs. Embery, a trained nurse, was as true a missionary as her husband, and five years in China had given her a good hold of the language. The women of the city came in throngs to see her, the only 'foreign lady' being a great curiosity, and her influence over them was, in those early days, the most encouraging aspect of the work.

Not a corner being available in the mission-house, a room had been taken for Fraser in the same part of the south suburb. The place being a better sort of inn, he was able to have a measure of comfort and quiet for study. The room, some twelve feet by fourteen, was up a little stairway, private to himself, and over an empty space he was able to use as a store room. A few articles of furniture were supplied by a local carpenter and, well content with his accommodation, Fraser set to work with his Chinese teacher, going over to the Emberys for meals.

From hours of study, it was a relief to plunge into the tides of life about him, especially on market-days, when many tribespeople mingled with the cheerful crowds. The quarter of a mile to the Emberys' quarters afforded opportunity for friendly contacts, and had brought Fraser into touch with his first Lisu acquaintance. This young mountaineer had even ventured to accompany him to the mission-house, and had been so interested that he promised to return next time he came to the city. But many market days went by, bringing only disappointment, and not until Fraser ran into him unexpectedly on the busy street did he learn the reason for his non-appearance. The young man had been really in earnest, but on leaving the mission-house had been held up by a Chinese of some importance who demanded to see the book he carried. This had to be handed over, for the Chinese are the ruling race, and the Lisu was angrily rebuked for having anything to do with foreigners and told that he must on no account read so bad a book ! This had effectually scared him away, giving Fraser his first experience of the opposition to be expected from overlords, whether tribal or Chinese.

Meanwhile, from the east of the province, tidings were coming of a work of grace among the despised tribespeople that no opposition could restrain. Begun through the conversion of a poor Miao leper, thousands of his own and other tribes were turning to Christ from the grossest immorality and demon worship. Mr. A. G. Nicholls, an Australian member of the Mission, had followed up

the work with so much devotion and success that it was spreading over a wide territory, and the Lisu part of it had to be handed over to a welcome colleague from England, Mr. G. E. Metcalf. Fraser had been appointed to Yunnan in order to prepare himself to join them, when his knowledge of Chinese should be sufficiently far advanced to permit of his taking up another language. Meanwhile, their correspondence could not but suggest the thought : if God is pleased to work in saving power among the tribesfolk in the east of the province, why not among those of the west also ? But no one was seeking his Lisu in the Tengyueh district ; no one ever had sought them. Well he knew that to start out as a solitary pioneer was a very different thing from joining others in a successful campaign. But the Spirit of God was working, as he recalled long after, in conversation with the writer :

I was very much led out in prayer for these people, right from the beginning. Something seemed to draw me to them ; and the desire in my heart grew until it became a burden that God would give us hundreds of converts among the Lisu of our western district.

Little was said about these thoughts and prayers. Fraser's was a nature that took things deeply, and while this 'fresh spiritual adventure', as he felt it, had a strong appeal, it was 'almost too sacred to speak of, except between the Lord and myself'.

So the daily routine of study was faithfully kept up. It was monotonous of course—the noisy inn, the busy streets, a glimpse of home-life at the mission-house, Chinese clothes and Chinese food in purely Chinese surroundings, and back to his books again. But Fraser was intent on the language. It fascinated while it almost appalled him. Two peaks of one great mountain, it seemed, as he wrote from the inn.

This mountain is called, The Chinese Language. It is very steep at first, but gradually seems easier as you go up. Then, just when you feel you are getting on, another peak comes into view, rising up higher than the first, but all part

of the same mountain. This also has to be climbed. It is called Chinese Thought and Modes of Expression. You had been told about it before you began to scramble up the first mountain, but you did not see it then. And the first glimpse shows how far it is above you.

And all the while the young missionary was eager for communication with those about him. He went with Mr. Embury to the street chapel and nearby villages, but suffered from the experience common to new-comers, that of being practically dumb and deaf as well, to all but their immediate circle. Members of the missionary's household became adept at interpreting his halting phrases and he was encouraged to find, before long, that he had made out the drift of their remarks. But not so those who have little contact with foreigners. Shut in thus to himself, the spiritual life is apt to flag. Unless a close walk with God is maintained, discouragement replaces early zeal and consecration, and the decline begins that means loss of joy and power.

Realizing the danger, Fraser set himself to watch and pray. Through his letters we find him rising early in the inn, for quiet over his Bible. He longs to know it better, and is reading every book in regular course, not once but seven times before passing on to the next. Prayer is more and more vitally necessary. When the inn wakes up there are endless distractions, but out of doors he finds quiet places. These become his prayer-haunts, whether the hidden gully, the half-deserted temple or the open hillside. Gradually he has prayer-resorts for all weathers, some of them often frequented. And the grand old hymns of the Church become increasingly valued, hymns that have expressed the soul's aspirations and longings through the ages. Breadth of outlook was necessary to him—room for God, whether in nature or in spiritual realities. And most of all he is depending upon the personal presence of the One Who said, 'Lo, I am with you alway.'

'What is Christian experience,' wrote an eminent theologian who humbly walked with God, 'what is

Christian experience but the secret history of the affection of the soul for an ever-present Saviour?'

Secret, steadfast, ever-growing 'affection of the soul', let that have the first place, in practical reality, and there will be no drifting or decline.

One of the things Fraser most dreaded, in these early days, was loss of time and strength on side issues. He saw that 'the good' may indeed be 'the enemy of the best'. This applied in his case to correspondence that was not really necessary, to much photography, social intercourse with other foreigners, and even to language study.

I am trying my best [he wrote] to get hold of a good colloquial knowledge of Chinese, but it will take a long time—I am only at the beginning yet. This is more important, I feel, than to become a learned Chinese scholar, for after all the chief thing is to talk in a way easy to be understood. Mr. McCarthy told us of a missionary, years ago, who was extraordinarily accomplished as a Chinese scholar, but whose own servant could not understand him in everyday matters! There certainly is something fascinating about the study of literary Chinese—which must go hand in hand with work on the colloquial—but I imagine it would be easy to be too much taken up with it.

Pencil and notebook at hand, he was always taking down words and phrases used in conversation about him, whether he understood them or not. 'Jot it down,' was his motto, 'and then ferret out the meaning, with dictionary and teacher, and learn it off by heart.'

I have taken down several hundred phrases in this way. The temptation is to be content to use words which *nearly* express your meaning, but not *quite*. . . . For instance you learn the Chinese for 'this is badly done', and might make it do duty for clothes not washed clean, a room not properly tidied up, a picture not hung straight, a piece of meat half-cooked, a matter unsatisfactorily settled, etc., etc. But the Chinese make distinctions in these things, as we do in English.

A poverty-stricken vocabulary was a confession of neglect of duty to this keen, painstaking student, with the

result that he became one of the best Chinese speakers as well as scholars in the Mission.

Young as he was, only twenty-two at this time, he had learned the importance of faithfulness in seemingly trivial duties and of making the most of present opportunities. An earnest letter on this subject, written amid the discomforts of a very poor wayside inn, on one of his first journeys, reveals some of the elements of his own self-discipline.

It has come home to me very forcibly of late that it matters little what the work is in which we are engaged ; so long as God has put it into our hands, the faithful doing of it is of no greater importance in one case than in another. . . . The temptation I have often had to contend with is persistent under many forms : ' If only I were in such and such a position,' for example, ' shouldn't I be able to do a great work ! Yes, I am only studying engineering at present, but when I am in training for missionary work things will be different and more helpful.' Or ' I am just in preparation at present, taking Bible courses and so on, but when I get out to China my work will begin.' ' Yes, I have left home now, but I am only on the voyage, you know ; when I am really in China, I shall have a splendid chance of service.' Or, ' Well, here in the Training Home, all my time must be given to language study—how can I do missionary work ? But when I am settled down in my station and able to speak freely, opportunities will be unlimited ! ' etc., etc.

It is all *IF* and *WHEN*. I believe the devil is fond of those conjunctions. . . . I have to-day, to a limited extent, the opportunities to which he has been putting me off (not that I have always yielded to these temptations), but far from helping me to be faithful in the use of them, he now turns quite a different face. The plain truth is that the Scriptures never teach us to wait for opportunities of service, but to serve in just the things that lie next to our hands. . . . The Lord bids us work, watch and pray ; but Satan suggests, wait until a good opportunity for working, watching and praying presents itself—and needless to say, this opportunity is always in the future. . . . Since the things that lie in our immediate path have been ordered of God, who shall say that one kind of work is more important and sacred than

another? I believe that it is no more necessary to be faithful (one says it reverently) in preaching the Gospel than in washing up dishes in the scullery. I am no more doing the Lord's work in giving the Word of Life to the Chinese than you are, for example, in wrapping up a parcel to send to the tailor. It is not for us, in any case, to choose our work. And if God has chosen it for us, hadn't we better go straight ahead and do it, without waiting for anything greater, better or 'nobler'?

More than this, he found the need of checking in himself the tendency to chafe against trials which lie in the path of duty.

We often say, 'I am looking forward to this, that or the other. Have we any right to be so dissatisfied with our present condition, which God has ordained for us, that we hanker after something in the future? I can hardly see that we have. There is one great exception—we are to look forward with earnest expectation to the coming of the Lord. But we have to be patient even in this. And to look for our Saviour's appearing is a very different thing from hankering after enjoyments of which we hope to partake some time ahead. . . . Why should I, in the hot, close, rainy season at Tengyueh, long for the dry months when things are more pleasant all round? Didn't God intend me to put up with the discomforts of heat and mildew? Why should I look forward to the time when I shall be able to speak Chinese more freely? Didn't God intend me to serve an apprenticeship in learning the language? Why should I look forward to a little more time for myself, for reading, etc.? Though it is the most natural thing in the world to have such thoughts, I feel that they are not at all scriptural. There is more of the flesh about them than the spirit. And they seem to be inconsistent with the peace of God which, it is promised, shall guard our hearts and our thoughts through Christ Jesus. . . . The apostle Paul said that he had 'learned', in whatsoever state he was, 'therein to be content', implying that he had reached that attitude through discipline. And I suppose it must be so with all of us; the natural tendency is to be always straining after something in the future.

The resolution with which Fraser lived in the present was rewarded when the great day came of his first attempt

at preaching in the street chapel. After little more than nine months in China, this was quite an ordeal. He prepared carefully, but when he faced his audience the written pages were largely discarded. Thoughts and feelings somehow found words that went home to his hearers. He was well understood, Mr. Embury assured him, and from that time took part regularly in the meetings. That this work was taken seriously is apparent from the study he gave to it.

In preparing my address, I first went through the Acts of the Apostles and some other passages, comparing them with a view to finding out the actual Gospel we are bidden to preach. . . . The result was very instructive to me. I had never imagined the Gospel was so simple. Why, Peter and Paul both preached the Gospel in words which would not take one minute to say !

And I found out that there are just four things which seem to be essential in preaching the Gospel.

1. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ—no theological explanation needed.

2. The *resurrection* of Jesus Christ—most important of all. The Gospel was never preached without this being brought in.

3. Exhortation to hearers to *repent* of their sins.

4. Promise to all who believe on Jesus Christ that they will receive *remission* of sins.

Beyond these four points others are mentioned occasionally, but they are not many. . . . In teaching Christians, it is quite another matter. To them we are to declare 'the whole counsel of God', as far as they can receive it. But the Gospel as preached to the unsaved is as simple as it could be. I should not care to take the responsibility of preaching 'another Gospel'.

Armed with all these important truths, Fraser was not slow in attempting his first evangelistic journeys. We find him twice on the road, alone with a friendly coolie, before he had been fifteen months in China ; and these journeys led, as it proved, to rich results, though there was little promise of it at the time. For they were stiff pioneering, without the aid of fellow-workers, foreign or Chinese,

because (with the exception of Mr. and Mrs. Embury) there were none.

Crossing the Tengyueh plain by the main road to the east, Fraser's first journey soon brought him to range after range of mountains on his way to Yungchang (now called Paoshan), the city of his destination. On this journey he was crossing two of the great rivers which, rising in Tibet, wind their long course to the sea through western Yunnan and Burma. The lesser of these, the Shweili, was beautiful in its deep, wooded valley, entered the first day out from Tengyueh. Beyond this, majestic indeed, was the Salween Divide, surmounted after a long toilsome ascent in steadily falling rain. The inns at night were very rough, but the poor food and poorer accommodation were made up for by the beauty of the mountains rising on every side. From the pass, eight thousand feet above sea level, it was a long descent to the Salween itself, whose mighty gorges were to cradle some of the richest results of Fraser's life-work. Little could he anticipate as he crossed its turbid waters, the triumphs of the Gospel he was to witness among the wild, neglected tribes, far up its winding course. Staying at night among the Black Lisu of the Divide, he could not but notice that they seemed even poorer and dirtier than his Tengyueh tribespeople. But they were kindly and brought him eggs with their coarse food, as they sat by their smoky fires.

The fourth day of the journey dawned bright and clear, with glorious views of 'mountains, mountains, mountains' on the east of the Divide, as they descended to the Paoshan plain. To Fraser's surprise, the city was far larger than Tengyueh, and scores of villages seen on the far-reaching plain told of a comparatively dense population. Entering by the south gate, they had to walk quite a long way up the broad main street before coming to the place of inns. There they found a 'comfortable inn', as Fraser called it, large enough to accommodate some sixty people.

It was really more like a barn than a guest room. However, I got a straw brush, swept the worst of the dust off everything and settled down for a few days.

The room had the advantage of being upstairs, so that the visitor could receive any callers with more hope of quiet for conversation. And not a few came to see him. Among them was a Mr. Wang, a silversmith, who invited Fraser to dinner in his shop on the main street and gave him the use of his premises for preaching and bookselling. But first a quiet Sunday was spent outside the city wall, to avoid curious crowds while preaching and distributing tracts. As a new experience in evangelism, Fraser found it most encouraging.

Coming to a couple of men minding cattle, I sat down with them, near a small stream. To my question, 'Have you heard the Jesus Doctrine?' they answered, 'No, tell us about it.' So I told them the Gospel story as clearly as I could. They listened well and asked questions. A few passers-by stopped and sat down, so I had to begin over again. More and then more joined us, until I had told the same thing four or five times over and about a dozen people were listening. When the sun came out we all adjourned under a tree . . . and I went on. Whether they understood all I was telling them I cannot say, but they listened well and seemed as interested and friendly as could be. In getting up once I ripped my gown, and one of them ran home for a needle and cotton and mended it for me. I was preaching to them for about an hour and a half, and then two of them came on with me to lead me to other places where I could find people to talk with. . . .

Entering the city again in the afternoon, a man in a teashop saw me distributing tracts and called me to come in. He gave me a cup of tea and asked to see my tracts. A crowd soon gathered and I preached to them as I had been doing all morning. The man who had called me in seemed fairly well educated. He read the tracts and listened to all I was saying, evidently understanding a good deal.¹

The next two days were as busy as could be, for Mr.

¹ This may have been Mr. Chao Ho, a tanner, who showed a special interest in the message. He came again and again to hear more about Jesus, and was indeed the first convert Fraser had the joy of winning in Paoshan.

Wang fixed up a stall in his open shop-front behind which Fraser sat on a high stool, hour after hour, surrounded by a changing crowd. Scripture portions, calendars, pictures and tracts, including translations of Spurgeon's sermons, were eagerly purchased, and the willingness of the people to hear all he could tell them moved him deeply. So did the view of the city as he had seen it on Sunday, when he climbed a little hill to rest under a pagoda.

Paoshan was to be in a special sense his own among Chinese cities, for he had the privilege, through repeated visits, of founding the living Church which is witnessing there to-day and which treasures, as well it may, his last resting-place on those very hills—for it is there he waits the resurrection morning. With straitened heart Fraser had looked out upon it all for the first time.

It was a lovely day [he wrote] and I had a clear view of the plain in both directions, as well as of the city. Of course, no missionary has ever lived there ; and the whole plain, with a population of perhaps 100,000 is without the light of the Gospel. . . . I believe God would be glorified by even *one* witness to His Name amid the perishing thousands of Paoshan.

It does seem a terrible thing [he continued from Teng-yueh] that so few are offering for the mission field. . . . I can't help feeling that there is something wrong somewhere. Surely God must be wanting His people to go forward. Does not the Master's last command still hold good ? . . . As one thinks of even our corner of the world here in Yunnan, there seems a strange discrepancy between its huge districts, large towns, unreached tribespeople, waiting for the workers who do not come, and the big missionary meetings at home, the collecting and subscribing, the missionary literature published, etc., etc. And the need is the same, if not greater, in other parts of the world. Hundreds of millions of people who have never yet had the Gospel definitely brought before them—and a mere handful of missionaries sent out from the home countries to evangelize them !

How glad he was to be where he was, with life before him, lonely and discouraging though the work must have

been at times. On the second of those journeys, long days were spent in preaching and book-selling in another district, south of Paoshan and equally unreached. There, a little boy of six, unknown to Fraser, got hold of a copy of Mark's Gospel in its bright, attractive cover. Carried over the mountains to his home at Hsiangta, it was to fall as seed into good ground—but not until years later was the young missionary to find and rejoice in the harvest.

CHAPTER V

MISSIONARY IN CHARGE

It must have seemed almost too good to be true when, some months after these journeys, Mr. Embury came in from the market at Tengyueh with a young Lisu who was willing, it appeared, to take the Foreign Teachers to his home in the mountains. He lived in Pleasant Valley, some twenty miles north of the city, and would return in a fortnight's time to act as guide and carry their load. Fraser's desire to come into closer touch with the mountain people had never lessened, but there had been several disappointments—when the way seemed opening.

The matter is in the Lord's hands [he had written]. If He wants me to go He will send me. It would be very unwise to attempt to rush things or force a door which He has closed. But we shall see. God has done great things for us at the other side of the province, and we cannot but hope that He will work effectively for the tribespeople here as well.

But again, when the time came, the Lisu guide did not appear. They could only assume that he, too, had been frightened away by the threats of unfriendly Chinese. Fraser did not say much about it, but even the servants realized his disappointment, and it was with satisfaction that the cook appeared, a month later, bringing with him another tribesman who was ready, then and there, to escort the missionary to his village.

It was a May morning, almost a year from his arrival in Tengyueh, when with no little interest Fraser took the road leading past the waterfall and into the western hills. Crossing the first ridge with its famous temples, he soon found himself on an upland plain backed by higher mountains. The Lisu country at last! How eagerly he looked for Pleasant Valley, the hamlet to which they were going. Though not expected, his guide assured him they would be welcome; and so it proved when, toward

evening, they reached the hollow, climbed the fence surrounding the dozen or more houses and came to the open doorway of the home in question. Some excitement seemed to be going on, for, as Fraser made out later, the family was in the midst of betrothal festivities. His arrival only added to the cheerful bustle, and soon straw mats on which to spread his bedding were dragged up to the fire in the middle of the hard earth floor. A meal of rice, eggs and cabbage followed, eaten with chopsticks and basins, and far on into the night there was talking and laughter round the smoky fire. Lamps were not lighted, for they had none, but chips of pinewood lay ready for use out of the circle of firelight.

His first days in a Lisu household were very memorable to the young missionary. He knew already that they were lovable people, but was hardly prepared for the natural way in which they made him one of themselves. It was taken for granted that he would join them at the big feast, the day after his arrival. This happened to be Sunday, and how he longed to give them something better than drunken revelry! But to them it was a great occasion. Preparations were prolonged, and Fraser had time to take in all the details of the situation. The dress of the women struck him as picturesque and becoming—dark blue tunics of common hemp, made into rough cloth, girdled at the waist and reaching to the knees, striped with brightly coloured bands of the same material, and decorated with a profusion of white shells and other ornaments. A scarf of the same material covered the head, reaching to the shoulders behind, while bare feet and legs completed the ensemble. By no means shy or embarrassed as Chinese girls would have been, these Lisu maidens joined the group that chatted with their foreign guest. The men wore the dress of poorer-class Chinese, blue hemp knickers and short jacket, with the addition of rough cloth leggings to protect them from the mosquitoes, leeches and brambles of their native hills.

One thing that delighted the crowd was the discovery

that the stranger who did not know their language could make pencil and paper speak it! The Chinese, who looked down upon them, had always said that Lisu was a jargon that could not be written. And of course they were right regarding their own complex characters. But Fraser was busy at intervals taking down by means of the English alphabet such words as his musical ear could distinguish, securing a vocabulary of about four hundred phrases. These he read to the onlookers, whose amazement and delight knew no bounds. Laughter comes readily to the Lisu, who are as easy to please as children, so that the dark, smoke-begrimed rooms resounded with merriment, while they waited for the food preparing elsewhere.

By the time the feast was spread I was mighty hungry. Evening had fallen and I had had nothing to eat all day but rice and cabbage for breakfast. So they gave me some food before they actually started themselves—rice and *shan-chi* meat, a sort of mountain goat. This was all they had for themselves, except home-made wine, of which they drank copiously. . . . There were about fifty at the feast and they sat on boards on the ground in a sort of oblong, the rice and meat being on boards in the centre. . . .

The meal was not a sober, ceremonious sort of business, but more like a family party with plenty of jollity. I don't know who the betrothed people were, but they did not figure specially. After the feeding part (I am afraid the drinking went on all night) there was a bit of a break, and I could not make out any order in the proceedings. It was like the game of croquet in 'Alice in Wonderland'! I went inside and sat with about a dozen others round the big log fire. One man was recounting an old Lisu legend in a sing-song voice, and the rest would break in with a sort of chorus. I could not understand any of it.

Before long I was told that they were ready for the dance, which would be kept up till daylight. What sort of dancing it was to be, I had no idea. My host told me that I could go back to his house whenever I liked, but evidently thought I would wish to stay and see it through.

For a time Fraser sat there in the smoke and firelight, watching one of the strangest sights he had ever seen. The 'dancing' proved to be a crude, childish affair—

men and women young and old, holding hands in a ring, just swayed to and fro with a peculiar sort of motion, two together on the right foot, then two together on the left, to the accompaniment of weird music. One who seemed to be a leader would sing a phrase alone which was replied to in chorus, the swaying being kept up in a sort of perpetual motion. The strangeness and confusion of the scene is Fraser's chief recollection.

I was in a corner almost unnoticed. Drinking was going on all the time, while men and women were gobbling, shouting, laughing—some standing up, some sitting down, some going here and there, some outside, some inside, not a few in gaudy-coloured clothing—the setting being a dirty old room in a Lisu house, everything smoked and black, huge grimy grain-bins here and there, a dog or two running over the earthen floor, and all long after dark, in an aboriginal village in south-west China.

Seeing that it was no time to turn their thoughts to anything better, Fraser went out into the night, where the thatched cottages, empty and silent, stood on either side of the mountain stream, and made his way to his host's dwelling.

The scene of the festivities was anything but attractive the following morning. Some of the revellers, still drunk, were lying flat on the ground ; others were hanging about, 'eating, drinking, talking, and doing nothing in particular'. They were in no mood to listen to what Fraser had to tell them, and he was making up his mind to wait when a diversion occurred, giving him a better opportunity. A man from another village was seeking him. He had come over early from Trinket Mountain, six miles away, to bring the Teacher to a home where people were eager to learn to read Chinese. Hoping to return in a day or two, Fraser gathered up his belongings and was soon on the way with his new guide.

Through narrow wooded valleys the track climbed westward until it emerged on a mountain slope seven thousand feet high. The surroundings were magnificent,

higher peaks enclosing a little plain to the south, from which lofty passes led, still westward, toward the frontier of Burma. And in that remote and beautiful solitude Fraser found a surprising welcome. For the place to which he was taken—the best in a hamlet of only seven houses—proved to be the home of the very man whose failure to turn up at Tengyueh, some weeks previously, had caused so much disappointment. A copy of the Gospel of Mark in Chinese which Fraser had given him, soon produced by the family, led to the discovery of the son's identity. The young man was not at home at the time, and when he returned from his work at night hardly knew how to face the unexpected guest. Meanwhile Fraser had made friends with the father and other relatives, including two older brothers, and learned that it was fear of the threats of Chinese neighbours which had robbed him of his promised guide.

So it was at Trinket Mountain with the Koh family that Fraser's dream of living in a Lisu household as one of themselves came true for the first time. And how thrilled he was over it all! Sleeping on the ground at night near the log fire, and without provision save the rough fare his hosts pressed upon him, he had his initiation into Lisu ways and hospitality. For a whole week he stayed on, finding a real response to his message. When the sons were out at work he had good opportunities with the rest of the large household—sisters, daughters-in-law, the old people and children. This surely was a happy beginning to the work he so longed to see develop. True, his Chinese was very limited and he could speak no Lisu, but the simple hymn and prayer they were learning helped to fix essential truths in their minds by constant repetition, and they never seemed to tire of singing.

Over there on a dusty shelf at the back of the room were the objects used in demon-worship—a bowl or two in which food could be offered, an incense burner, a dry bunch of leaves regarded with awe as a special haunt of the spirits, and the characters for Heaven and Earth, on

red paper, which in Lisu homes take the place of idols. Furtive glances turned in that direction from time to time, as the talk and singing proceeded, until at last, without any urging from Fraser, a wonderful thing happened. After some consultation in Lisu which Fraser could not understand, the father and sons (four of them) made it clear that they wanted to pray to the one true God and to believe in Jesus. So the demon-shelf and other things were torn down and thrown into the fire, Fraser watching for the first time the burning that to him meant so much. He was keenly conscious of how little he had been able to impart to his Lisu friends of the precious truths of the Gospel, but a beginning had been made and he was greatly encouraged.

‘It was all very happy and nebulous,’ he wrote. Yes, both happy and nebulous !

In the weeks that followed, he was surprised that none of the family came to visit him in Tengyueh, as he had hoped they would. He was eager to return their hospitality. But the rainy season had set in, when mountain tracks were almost impassable, and he was too much pressed with language study and new responsibilities to do more than remember them frequently in prayer.

For it was not long after his return from Trinket Mountain that Fraser found himself unavoidably promoted to the position of missionary-in-charge at Tengyueh. He had by this time abandoned his cheerless quarters in the inn, and moved into the enlarged mission premises. The old rat-infested house the Emberys first occupied had been replaced by a much-needed chapel and guest hall, behind which a semi-foreign dwelling had been added on part of the landlord’s property. Clean and quiet, with upstairs rooms opening on a wide verandah, it was a change indeed !¹ Facing west, two windows in Fraser’s room

¹ That these missionaries were not living in luxury may be judged from Fraser’s first letter to his mother from the new home, in which he remarked that his total expenditure while in the inn had amounted to about £30 per annum, and he was not minded to increase it in the changed circumstances.

The Lord sends me more than enough for my needs, and I shall see how I can best give back some of my money in His service. I feel the need of being economi-

looked out toward the mountains beyond which lay the Lisu uplands where he would fain have been. But on their nearer slopes the Temple of the Winds, famous for its idolatrous pilgrimages, told of needs close at hand. Five hours a day, Fraser was still giving to study.

I do not weary of it for a moment [he wrote at this time]. Every new character I learn, and still more every colloquial expression, is so much more ground eagerly taken possession of. I do not think I have ever been so absorbed in any line of study, not even parabolas !

He was taking increasing part also in guest-hall work, street preaching and regular services in the chapel, greatly appreciating the fellowship with his senior colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Embery. And then, when he had only been in China two and a half years, circumstances arose which left him alone, the only missionary in that extensive Tengyueh field.

Had it been possible [he wrote] for someone else to go to Tali, the Emberys would not have been asked to do so, but the shortage of workers is so great that no other arrangement could be made. . . . As far as matters here are concerned, it means that I am single-handed and must remain so indefinitely. I expect Mr. McCarthy will be coming along to stay with me for a time, perhaps next month. I have, however, the responsibility of looking after our comparatively large premises, as well as the much weightier responsibility of preaching the Gospel alone now. So it is no small load which has fallen on my shoulders.

Reading between the lines, one cannot but see how much he felt the parting from his friends.

I went out with the Emberys seven or eight miles, to see them off . . . and scored a triumph by the way ! For I carried the baby some distance up the long hill, and she fell asleep on my shoulder. So now I can really say I have put baby to sleep.

Brave and steady was the spirit Fraser brought to his

cal on principle, but there is certainly no need to stint myself. I would not be burdened with much money on any account, except to do as John Wesley did—live on £28 a year and give all the rest away !

new task, but from intimate letters to his mother it is evident that he was often at an end of his own resources. Housekeeping details were new to him, and so was the management of servants whose spiritual welfare he was earnestly seeking. It was one thing to take prayers every morning with the cook, a married man of forty, and the houseboy, a nice enough youth when not provoked, but to still the tempest when quarrels arose was quite another. It was a pleasure to receive callers in the guest-hall when they came at convenient hours, but to be always ready to set aside other claims and make the most of such visits was not easy.

I feel, somehow, that my best opportunity for Chinese study is gone for ever [he wrote after a few weeks alone]. Interruptions, visits and attention to details absorb a good deal of my time. Not that I deplore this ; on the contrary, I am very glad to be launched into full work as a missionary. It is what we come to China for. But I am finding out that it is a mistake to plan to get through a certain amount of work in a certain time. It ends in disappointment, besides not being the right way to go about it, in my judgment. It makes one impatient of interruption and delay. Just as you are nearly finishing—somebody comes along to sit with you and have a chat ! You might hardly think it possible to be impatient and put out when such an opportunity is given for presenting the Gospel—but it is. It may be just on meal-time, or you are writing a letter to catch the mail, or you were just going out for needed exercise before tea. But the visitor has to be welcomed, and I think it is well to cultivate an attitude of mind which will enable one to welcome him from *the heart* and at any time. 'No admittance except on business' scarcely shows a true missionary spirit.

And not only so—I have been feeling lately that this personal work is quite as important as preaching. To have a man come to see you at your own house and be able to talk with him plainly and directly about his soul's welfare, what could be better ? . . . I feel that there is more force in an appeal under these conditions. . . . Of course preaching to crowds must be done, but it is not the only way, in Scripture or out of it, of bringing men to Christ. It may seem a strange thing for a missionary to say, but I feel that if God has given me any spiritual gift it is not that of preaching.

I know my own clumsiness and so on very well—but the Lord has always helped me in this one-by-one work, and He is giving it to me here.

Interesting details follow in many letters about inquirers with whom Fraser was in touch, each one being commended by name to his mother's special remembrance in prayer. More and more he was coming to count upon her as a fellow-worker in this way. Prayer had previously meant much to the writer, but now he was realizing in a new way his entire dependence for spiritual results on a power not his own. With his former Class Leader at home he sought to share the burden :

It seems a big responsibility to be the only preacher of the Gospel within a radius of about a hundred and fifty miles. . . . I feel my weakness very much, yet the Lord seems to delight in making His power perfect in weakness. May I ask you then to remember me specially in prayer, asking God to use me to the salvation of many precious souls.

I am feeling more and more that it is, after all, just the prayers of God's people that call down blessing upon the work, whether they are directly engaged in it or not. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God Who gives the increase ; and this increase can be brought down from heaven by believing prayer, whether offered in China or in England. We are, as it were, God's agents—used by Him to do His work, not ours. We do our part, and then can only look to Him, with others, for His blessing. If this is so, then Christians at home can do as much for foreign missions as those actually on the field. I believe it will only be known on the Last Day how much has been accomplished in missionary work by the prayers of earnest believers at home. And this, surely, is the heart of the problem. Such work does not consist in curio exhibitions, lantern lectures, interesting reports and so on. Good as they may be, these are only the fringe, not the root of the matter. Solid, lasting missionary work is done *on our knees*. What I covet more than anything else is earnest, believing prayer, and I write to ask you to continue to put up much prayer for me and the work here in Tengyueh.

It was well, perhaps, that Fraser could not know that it would be three full years before the return of Mr. and Mrs. Embury, and that for more than half that time he

would be alone in the work. An early visit from his superintendent and friend, the Rev. John McCarthy, was no little cheer, but only four months later the veteran missionary passed to his reward¹ and Fraser was more than ever isolated. His interest in the work was so keen that he could truly write, once and again, 'I have never been so happy', but it was happiness that was not dependent upon outward circumstances. Some of whom he had the brightest hopes went back in spite of all his care; indifference and opposition often made his out-door work difficult; and his inability to do anything for the women who had been interested in Mrs. Embury's day was often a burden. 'Propriety' would not allow them to attend the meetings in the absence of any woman missionary to receive them. Once, but once only, he was persuaded to disregard convention. Wedding festivities were bringing many guests to a nearby house and some of the ladies begged their hostess to take them to the chapel to hear the preaching.

Could they come? Well, it is not supposed to be the right thing, you know . . . but old Mrs. Li and our landlord's wife were about and could look after them—so, not liking to turn people away who want to hear the Gospel, I consented.

There were a dozen women in this gaily-attired group, besides many babies and children. Fraser took John iii. 16 as his text, finding it necessary to be very direct and simple.

I told them the Gospel story [he wrote] and one or two incidents in our Lord's life, including His blessing little children. They listened attentively, and Mrs. Li said that they understood me very well. I believe that the Lord was with me, giving me 'a mouth and wisdom'—I should never have much of either, otherwise.

It is not easy to stick to one's subject (in a point by point sense) on an occasion like this. I am reminded of that irregular preacher at home who was accused of wandering from his subject. He replied that, whether he stuck to his

¹ Mr. McCarthy died of malarial fever in the capital of Yunnan, on June 20, 1911, thirty-four years after entering the province as its first Protestant missionary.

subject or not, he thanked God that he stuck to his *object*, which was to bring men to Christ. I hope I shall never lose sight of *that*.

Among the encouragements of those lonely days, Fraser frequently referred to the interest of Mrs. Li, just mentioned, who had been Mrs. Embery's servant and friend. Well on in years, she was able to come to the Sunday services and to do the little laundry work that Fraser needed. With a confirmed opium-smoker for a husband, her life had been full of hardship and suffering. Of her eleven children, only one had lived to grow up, and he, too, did nothing but smoke opium. His unhappy wife was some help in keeping the home together, but the poor mother had no hope in this life or the next until she found the Saviour. To watch her growth in grace was an increasing joy. Within a year of the Emberys' leaving, Fraser was able to write of her as a bright Christian.

Listen to what she says : ' I used to be anxious and worried about all these things, besides being angry and resentful at the way I am treated, but it is not so *now*. If I begin to feel that way I just turn to God, and He brings back peace to my heart.

When I exhort her to pray, she replies, ' Yes, I *do* pray. I am continually thinking about and praying to God as I do my work.'

Just a poor, ignorant woman earning her living by washing clothes, despised and jeered at by many and cruelly ill-treated by her husband, yet daily trusting all to her Saviour and praising her God ! She nearly cries sometimes when she tells me her troubles, but as a rule she is bright and cheerful.

That he was able to do so little for his Lisu friends was one of Fraser's trials at this time. Of the Koh family, about whom he had been so much encouraged, he heard almost nothing. One of the sons came in for eye medicine, and brought sad news of poverty and sickness in the village. Crops had failed and the dreaded spirits were cruel. He told of the death of a neighbour, a very sick man whom Fraser had visited several times. It was a

comfort to know that he had remembered some of the Good News.

He used to talk about it sometimes, they tell me. Whether he had any real grasp of the truth, however small, or whether it was more a confused impression, I cannot tell. He seemed quite intelligent in spite of his suffering condition, when I talked with him. If the Emberys had not had to leave, I might have gone up again and seen him before he died. I was wanting to go.

To help young Koh and others from the mountains, Fraser called in the cook, who had come out brightly as a Christian and whose Chinese was more fluent than his own. The joy of hearing him put the Gospel so clearly strengthened the young missionary in the conviction that the best way of reaching outsiders was through the Christians themselves, whether tribal or Chinese. His patient Bible teaching was bearing fruit.

Beyond the mission compound Fraser was now a familiar figure in all parts of the city and suburbs. The preaching-shop had been given up in favour of quieter meetings in the new chapel, but open-air work was continued regularly with the help of coloured pictures and Gospel posters. Notable changes were coming in public thought and feeling. The 'new learning' in the schools and Western methods in military training were much in evidence. The revolutionary doctrines of Sun Yat-sen were permeating the student class especially and events were moving steadily toward the fall of the old régime. Questions were asked of the young missionary and subjects raised for discussion unheard of before. One gentleman called upon him to talk over Socrates and Aristotle, while others came to improve their English. The active part Fraser had taken in subduing a dangerous fire in the city put him in a new light, and his increasing fluency in Chinese secured better attention.

Still, street preaching was no easy matter, and it required courage to keep on day after day with no one to stand by

him. Sometimes, in the evening, the cook could be spared to help.

It is dark [Fraser wrote of such occasions] and, just as at home, people are at a loose end and wander about with nothing much to do. I get an old stool and stand on it while the cook holds the lantern. . . .

If there is one native institution I do like it is the 'tea-shop'. You sit down sociably with others round a grimy table and drink your fill of milkless, sugarless tea, leisurely cracking melon or sunflower seeds. . . . Tea-shop people nearly always seem friendly and let you preach or give tracts to their customers. After nearly having a fight with one man before I could induce him not to pay my tea-money (about the eighth of a penny) I found that the proprietor would not let me pay either!

That these opportunities were made the most of is evident from many a letter. More than ever the young missionary was longing to see men turn to the living God.

I should like you continually to pray [he wrote in October, 1911] not only for the salvation of outsiders but for blessing on those who have definitely accepted Christ. . . . I want to be downright in earnest *myself*, and to be filled with the Spirit.

'I want an even, strong desire,
I want a calmly fervent zeal,
To save poor souls out of the fire,
To snatch them from the verge of hell,
And turn them to a pardoning God
And quench the brands in Jesus blood.'

It was his last letter before the Revolution.

CHAPTER VI

BANISHED TO BURMA

THE outbreak of hostilities was announced to Fraser, the only missionary then in south-west Yunnan, by the following surprising letter :

To Mr. Fu, Pastor of the Mission Church at Tengyueh.

October 27, 1911.

We respectfully inform you that we have chosen this day as propitious for the overthrow of the present dynasty and the setting up of an independent China.

We are at the same time apprising all your fellow-nationals in Tengyueh of the fact, and beseech you not to be alarmed. We will without fail protect you and your property. There is no need for you to send telegrams to any place, either in China or abroad. Please rest assured that you will be quite safe where you are. You will not be molested by anybody.

(Signed by) The Upholders of China as an Independent Country.

Fraser's only fellow-countrymen in Tengyueh were the British Consul and the Head of the Customs Service with their staffs, so with them he proceeded to take counsel. The situation proved to be far more serious than 'the Upholders of an Independent China' had indicated. The whole country was seething with rebellion against the Manchu Dynasty, and foreigners as well as Chinese were soon to be overwhelmed by the brief but successful Revolution, which made the cities of the Yangtse run with blood.

At the Consulate, Fraser was urged to go down to Burma for a time, and it was well that he did so, for Tengyueh became a storm-centre. Finally the Government troops got out of hand, sided with the rebels and murdered their own leader. But there had been a reign of terror meanwhile. Fraser had done all he could before leaving to provide for his Chinese teacher and the cook who remained in charge of the mission premises. It would be easy for them, in case of need, to escape the attention which would

have been focused upon himself; so supplying them with all the money he could spare, he relieved them of the anxiety if not the danger of his presence.

And now began for the young missionary an experience which, though trying at the time, resulted in an enrichment of faith that made it well worth while. Arriving in Bhamo after a trying journey of eight days, Fraser went straight to the C.I.M. mission house, counting upon a welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Selkirk, whose hospitality he and Mr. McCarthy had enjoyed some time previously. But the place was silent and deserted. The Selkirks had been obliged through ill-health to go home on furlough, leaving only the caretaker in charge. In Fraser's position this was serious, but he found instructions in writing that any visitor who needed them should make use of the few stores left in the cupboards. These, with the little money he had in hand would, he hoped, tide him over until his next remittance, already overdue, could arrive from Shanghai. But would it arrive at all? With communications disorganized all over the country, was it likely that a letter containing a money order would reach so remote a place as Tengyueh and be forwarded safely over the turbulent borderland to Bhamo? No, it was anything but likely—but Fraser committed the whole matter to God in quiet and expectant faith. No one else knew his position; and it was against his principles to borrow money or go into debt of any kind.

Setting to work at once among the Chinese resident in Bhamo, Fraser found plenty to occupy his time. He was still wearing Chinese dress and the distinctive *queue*, which was not generally discarded until the final success of the Revolution. In the Chinese quarter of the city there were the usual tea-shops, in which Fraser could mingle freely with other guests.

Yesterday I went into one of them [he wrote] and purposely refrained from any attempt at preaching. I just sat down on a bench with others, paid a halfpenny for a cup of tea and started cracking pine-seeds like the rest. If only you could

see a tea-shop of this class you would think an East End lodging-house clean and comfortable in comparison. Presently I offered tracts to all in the place, and went on drinking tea and cracking pine-seeds. Soon the guests were chatting with me, asking lots of questions. As many of these were about the Gospel, I had my opportunity quite informally.

Exiled and lonely as he was, Fraser greatly appreciated a kindness showed him by a Burmese Christian woman the first Sunday he was in Bhamo. Coming out of church with her husband, she greeted the young stranger of whom she had heard, and put a little packet into his hand. It proved to be five silver coins—rupees, worth between one and two shillings each. These she asked Fraser to accept, as she had heard of the troubles in China and feared he might be in need.

My first thought was to decline it [he wrote, telling his mother of the gift] but she was so evidently sincere about it that I ended up by taking one rupee, not to hurt her feelings, and returning the rest. . . . Only a little incident ; but it cheered me ever so much to think of such kindness from a Burmese Christian.

It was not long before the supplies he had in hand began to give out. Visits to the Post Office proved only disappointing. No mail had come from China, nor was any expected under the then conditions. Registered letters especially would be unlikely to reach their destination. This, to the Post Office officials, seemed the last word, but not so to Fraser. Never before had he been faced with such a test, completely cut off from any one who knew of his position. Yet he was kept from anxiety as to the issue. Ps. xxxvii. 3-5 took on new meaning.

‘Trust in the Lord and do good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord ; trust also in Him ; and He shall bring it to pass.’

Matters reached a crisis when payment became due to a coolie who had worked for Fraser in necessary ways

for a full month. Now, he realized, the Lord's deliverance must be near—for had He not said, 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another.' He was subsisting himself on very little save the stores left in the house, but his coolie must be paid at the right time if debt were not to be incurred.

Needless to say, Fraser was much in prayer about the matter. On the day in question he felt guided to go to the Post Office again, for the burden was sore upon his heart. To his relief the official seemed pleased to see him. Yes, a mail had just come in from Tengyueh bringing one letter, one only. There it was—a registered letter addressed to himself, which had come safely all the way from Shanghai to the far west of China, and over the borderland to Bhamo—just in time !

It was a further remarkable answer to prayer that Fraser was enabled to get one of the enclosed drafts cashed that very day, through a Chinese friend in the Custom's Service. So the coolie was paid, and the young missionary, alone in a strange land, went back to his empty house to pour out his heart in thanksgiving.

I have since heard [he wrote to his mother] that the money was paid in full in Tengyueh, to the firm here which advanced it to me. I have told you all this because it is the most direct interposition of God in providence which I have yet experienced ; and has done not a little to strengthen my faith. No one here knew my situation. You can understand how very careful I am as to speaking of such matters. . . . The Lord, I believe, permitted the trial just to show me how He could deliver me out of it.

Shortly after this, another letter arrived which, to Fraser's surprise, also contained money. It was from his mother in England, now a widow and in comparatively straitened circumstances. With a grateful, loving reply, Fraser at once returned the draft, saying :

It is literally true that you need it, Mother, more than I do ; for the Lord has not forgotten me but has abundantly supplied all my need—even though affairs out here are so upset at present.

Another happy experience which made this absence from China memorable was a visit to a station of the American Baptist Mission among Shan and Kachin tribespeople. Setting out on New Year's Day through jungle country in unaccustomed heat, Fraser arrived to find the missionary absent on a preaching tour, but the local Christians all the more ready to show him hospitality. From the second day of his tramp with the letter carrier, who could speak Chinese, the jungle had given place to mountain ranges dividing Burma from his own province of Yunnan.

Here the views [as he wrote] were really magnificent. In open spaces one could look out over great sweeps of the Irrawaddy valley, a vast area of jungle. . . . The winding road was full of interest. For the first time I saw monkeys, good big ones, jumping about among the trees. A green parrot found here can be taught to speak . . . and there are gorgeous pheasants—exquisitely beautiful birds.

But it was the welcome of the Namkham church leaders and the reality of fellowship with them in spiritual things that made the visit one long pleasure. On the hills above the plain were Christian villages, both Shan and Kachin, which Fraser was able to visit, and in the station itself he found evangelists, school-teachers and others eager for quiet talks over the Word. Young as he was and hampered by having to speak through interpretation, they felt and responded to the sincerity of his prayer-life, faith and devotion, while he was greatly cheered by their love and prayers. Mr. Sam Bwa, Head of the High School, and his wife cared for him more like a son than a foreign guest, and the whole experience was a happy foretaste of the fellowship yet to be his among his own tribespeople in not distant years.

Before leaving I spoke a few words [Fraser wrote] to my host's family and household and had prayer with them. I really did feel sorry to leave them. . . . When I had finished, Mrs. Sam Bwa and others were nearly crying.

You can hardly understand until you come into touch

with them what simple, warm-hearted people these Shans and other Christians are. Sam Bwa told me that I could be of help to them even if I could *say* nothing. . . . The mere fact of your coming to see them, showing yourself genuinely *pleased* to sit with them in their houses, attend their services, share their food and generally make yourself one with them is enough to endear you to them. If I sing or pray in Chinese, they cannot understand a word—but that makes no difference! They like me to do it. They do not judge you by the learning or eloquence of your ‘discourse’, but by what they see of you personally. If they see that you love them and like to be with them, they love you in return.

And it was love that showed itself in practical ways as Fraser long remembered. For when his load was being packed for the return journey a shower of good things began, including twenty eggs, a roast chicken, two pieces of cooked beef, a packet of tea and one of sugar, as well as biscuits and a drinking mug—most of which Mrs. Sam Bwa herself provided. She had not failed to notice how little the missionary had with him and, knowing well the hardships of the road, she planned to improve matters for his return. So a little pillow found its way in with other gifts, and an embroidered shoulder-bag to hold things for handy use. More than this, the letter-carrier was charged with the loan of enamelled plates, a knife, fork and spoons, to supplement Fraser’s chopsticks. And it was all done with a simplicity that called no attention to the givers.

I think I can see her now [Fraser wrote to his mother] carefully packing all these things into the courier’s baskets, just as you would have done it yourself. I almost felt like sinking through the ground at such kindness! . . . After this, they all trooped out to see me off, including the boys and girls from the school. At the brow of the hill leading down to the Namkham plain we shook hands once more. Some of the old folk from the Shan village said to me several times, ‘We will pray for you.’ When I tried to tell Mrs. Sam Bwa how grateful I felt for all her kindness, she made no reply but turned her head away to hide her tears. Dear old soul! Of all the people who have been good to me out here, none has been so like my own mother. Mr. Sam Bwa then struck

up : ' God be with you till we meet again.' We all joined in the first verse, and they stood and watched us for a while as we set out for the plain.

On the way back to Bhamo, Fraser stayed a night among Kachin Christians and spoke through interpretation in their little chapel.

Afterwards, we all sat round the log-fire. Talk about your ' Grand Hotel ' ! I had rather sleep in a simple, homely place like that, among such people, than in the grandest of hotels at home. But our Kachin friends did not stay on indefinitely. They said I had walked a long way and must be wanting rest, which was thoughtful. So they went away and left us in silence, with the fire dying down. I turned in, and soon fell into a sound sleep beside the dull red logs.

CHAPTER VII

LISULAND AGAIN

It was not long after this that the way opened for Fraser's return to Tengyueh, and glad enough he was to be in China again after four months' absence. He had been not a little concerned about the Christians, few in number, whom he had had to leave amid the upheaval of the Revolution. Outward order had been restored after the inauguration of the Republic, but Tengyueh with its mixed population and commercial activity was a ferment of new ideas. Still the only missionary in the city and district, Fraser was thankful that his prescribed course of language study was almost completed, for there were many calls to other work. A Bible Class for young men was claiming his attention, and several, though not themselves Christians, were seeking his help in starting a Y.M.C.A.

I have at last finished my six sections [he wrote in July] and a load is off my mind. It is the consummation of three and a half years of study. . . . What a perfect ocean of knowledge Chinese opens up to you, when you have been at it a few years. If I were to be mainly engaged in work among Chinese-speaking people (rather than the tribes) I would never give up the study of this language, spoken and written, as long as I live.

Another world of living interest was opened up to him in the coming of a fellow-worker who proved to be a typical American. Well was it that Fraser's mind was hospitable to new ideas, for Carl G. Gowman was fresh from a responsible position in the head office of Henry Ford's motor works in Detroit, and from a full course in the Moody Bible Institute. Fitting in admirably with his senior missionary (as to age, senior by only five days), Gowman was such a 'live wire' that Fraser's outlook was considerably brightened. Those summer days (Gowman

arrived in August) saw them down at the river for a good swim before six o'clock, when they had Morning Prayers with the household. Gowman had seen Niagara, but was quite enthusiastic over the Tengyueh Falls. He was still more impressed with the beauty of the mountains, and soon became interested in the tribespeople who frequented the markets.

More than this, Gowman was engaged to be married, and a new interest attended the arrival of mails from other parts of the province; for his prospective bride was at Tali, with Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Hanna, only eight days' journey away. The rule of the Mission with regard to all new workers, both men and women, that they must be in China two years before marriage, worked some hardship in this case, for the engagement had already been prolonged on account of college and Bible studies. But the bride-to-be was as truly a missionary as Gowman himself, and saw in the waiting-time a needed opportunity for becoming adjusted to the climate, language and ways of the people.

He was a bright, delightful companion, just the one I was needing [Fraser wrote of this new colleague]. He caught on to my interest in the Lisu, and joined me in prayer for fresh openings among them. I was more burdened about these people than anything else in the world, though the duties of the station, the claims of Chinese study and the upheaval of the Revolution had kept me from further contact with them.

A visit from a young tribesman, almost a stranger, seemed to come as an answer to these prayers. He was from the Lisu village of 'Six Family Hollow' and brought with him a surprising gift—a live silver-pheasant, caught in the mountains. Unsuspectingly, Fraser accepted the beautiful bird whose brilliant plumage would attract visitors to the compound, only to find that it opened the way for an equally surprising request. The youngest son of the Tsai family was about to be married, and 'Number Five' had come, in a word, to ask the loan of ten dollars

for wedding expenses. Ten dollars ! And the missionaries had made it a rule not to lend money.

About to decline, Fraser was arrested by the silent suggestion, 'Why not ask guidance about it?' Excusing himself, he went straight to his study and spread the matter before the Lord. The result was perhaps the greatest surprise of all ; 'Old Five' returned with the ten dollars, to the rejoicing of the family, and Fraser received an urgent invitation to the wedding.

Always hospitable, the mountain people excelled themselves on this occasion in doing honour to their foreign guest. Slender bamboos were cut and plaited into matting for the walls of an addition to the Tsai family homestead. The roof was well thatched with grass and the indispensable hole prepared in the middle of the earth floor for the fire. Plenty of logs were gathered, as well as pine-chips to take the place of lamps at night. Furniture was superfluous, save for a few wooden stools, and straw mats were provided on which to spread the bedding and whatever else their visitors might bring.

When the time came, the bridegroom himself arrived with his 'best man' to escort Fraser, Gowman and the baby-organ (specially requested) to the scene of the festivities. It was a charming spot amid high hills and surrounding mountains, not far from the villages Fraser had visited some two years previously. Gowman was disappointed to find that the hamlet was small—only three families, two of whom were Chinese—but that one Lisu household, as it proved, was the pivot upon which a great movement was to turn.

Arriving several days before the wedding, Fraser was able to make friends with his hosts, including daughters-in-law and children, before the general hubbub began. He soon discovered that the old mother was very much the head of affairs. Left a widow with land as well as children, she had secured help by marrying a good farm-hand. The family had prospered through her unusual strength of character, until now they were taking a wife

for the sixth and youngest son. Busy as they were, Mother Ts'ai found time to sit by the fire now and again, listening to the talk of her foreign guests. She was interested in the prayers and singing in a way that revealed real hunger of heart. Needless to say, Fraser made the most of his opportunity, both before and after the bride arrived. Of the wedding itself he wrote in some detail.

The bridegroom looked fine, something like a Highlander in full dress, but neither he nor the bride figured largely in the proceedings, save as waiting upon other people. . . . The only real ceremony was when the girl actually entered the house. Brought from her own village by about twenty of her relatives, she and other girls had had to stand at a little distance from the bridegroom's home for some time. Then her mother-in-law and another old dame went down and escorted her, one on each side, up the steps and into the house. There was a bridesmaid with her too. Just as they were going in at the door, four shots were fired by muskets of a William the Conqueror type, this being *the* moment of the whole occasion.

After this, there followed a whole lot of drinking in an orderly kind of way, which seemed to be drinking the health of the new couple. Two people came forward at a time, each took a big bowl of their native wine (made from glutinous rice) made a low bow, which was returned by the officiating people, bowed round to a few others and then drank it all, returning the empty bowls with another low bow. The bridegroom and his best man stood nearby all the while, bowing every time the others did. This went on for a long time. It was not as monotonous as you might think, for other guests were walking about, chatting and laughing all the time. . . . Along with the bowls of wine, a lump of cold pork was presented to each one. We took our pieces like the rest (though not the wine, by previous arrangement) and were supposed to eat them. Fancy taking a piece of fat pork in your hands ! Gowman, I believe, ate his, but they brought me a plantain leaf in which I wrapped mine.

Two nights and days were given up to the revelry that followed, about a hundred guests having assembled. With the usual ring-dancing Fraser was already familiar, but on this occasion the bride's relatives led off with new

steps, including a sort of clog-dance in which she took part.

Three girls, one boy and a man stood in a line [as Fraser wrote], the girls with their arms round each other. Further away was another boy, the bride's brother, with a kind of guitar, and beyond him another man. They all faced the same way and, without turning, just kept step to the music. I should like you to have seen it! The dress of the girls beggars description. Indeed, all the women wear gorgeous dresses on occasion. . . . Some of them look very handsome. Gowman took a photo of four—two facing one way and two another, so that you can have both back and front views. They go in for very loud chequerwork, with large squares of all sorts of colours. They have big head-dresses too, and a great variety of beads, bangles, necklaces, bracelets and what not!

As the confusion increased, more and more of the crowd becoming intoxicated, Fraser asked a middle-aged woman whether she thought so much drinking was a good thing.

'Oh, yes,' she said, surprised at the question, 'it's more fun when you get tipsy!'

It was not possible to do much under these circumstances but talk to changing groups round the baby-organ. Fraser had brought hymn-sheets written out in large Chinese characters, and as both he and Gowman had good voices they were able to sing and explain the 'Old, old Story,' in a simple but effective way, hour after hour. It was a relief to the Tsai family no less than to their visitors when the last wedding guests departed and they could gather in the living-room at night, the great occasion over and only cheerfulness within. Snow had fallen on the distant Salween Range and the tang of winter in the air made them seek the fireside—dogs, chickens, children and all—despite clouds of smoke till the logs burned red. Then, with the baby-organ in the circle round the glowing embers, they sang hymns and choruses and talked over the Good News far into the night. Mother Tsai had many questions to ask, and Fraser was glad

that his Christian cook was with them to help, making clear to her mind the great truths she was drinking in for the first time.

For a whole week the missionaries stayed on after the wedding, visiting other villages in the daytime, including one where Fraser found an empty house which fitted in with his desire to visit the district frequently without being dependent upon hospitality. Up there at 'The Valley of Ease' the Headman of some twenty Lisu families showed no little interest in the Gospel. One longer expedition was made to Trinket Mountain, to revisit the Koh household of whom Fraser had not heard for some time. It was disappointing to find only the old father at home. He was glad to see his missionary friend again and wanted the party to stay all night, but he was suffering so much from his eyes that it seemed kinder not to prolong the visit. Fraser had already been absent from Tengyueh for ten days, and Gowman was none too well after his first experience of roughing it in the mountains. So a last night was spent at Six Family Hollow, to confirm the Ts'ais in their new-found faith and show them how to bring all that was in their hearts to God in prayer. They did not know how to pray in Lisu they said, but Fraser explained that the Lord understood Chinese quite as well as their more familiar language. So they parted, cheered to think that they would often meet in the city.

How clean and spacious the mission-house looked, for all its simplicity, when Fraser and Gowman returned to Tengyueh! And they had come back to new and heart-moving experiences. Years of faithful seed-sowing had borne fruit at last, and the time had come to inaugurate a Christian church in that south-west corner of China. Tengyueh was to witness its first baptisms, and though the number to confess Christ was not large, they were precious trophies of His grace.

The spirit of it all was very beautiful, as it comes out in letters written at the time. One can almost see the quiet

stretch of the river near the falls, where the water was a convenient depth and an arched bridge provided a place, just above, where onlookers could stand and hear every word. The four to be received included Mrs. Li, though she was not baptized until Mrs. Embery returned. Three men went down with Fraser into the river, a cultured teacher taking his place gladly beside the Christian cook and Tang the water-carrier, 'a humble soul who loves the Word of God'.

It all went off without a hitch [Fraser wrote of that Sunday¹]. After the baptism I stood where I was in the middle of the river and preached to the onlookers on the bridge. . . . It struck me afresh what a beautiful and simple ceremony it is—God's open air and God's flowing water seemed far more fitting and natural than any baptistry indoors.

At the Communion Service afterwards, Mrs. Li joined the others in remembering the dying, never-dying love of Christ at His table. The care of this little flock and of his beloved Lisu filled Fraser's heart in those days, but not to the exclusion of the crowds in the city streets. Open-air work was no easier than it had been, but he was more than ever conscious of the deep inward compulsion, 'Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel'. He writes of this so naturally that one can see the true missionary impulse, born of the Spirit.

When utterly disinclined to go and stand up on a stool in the street and preach to an indifferent crowd, I have felt an inward urging which I could not resist. It is like so much pent-up Gospel inside you, which must have outlet. Last week, on Friday, I was prevented from going out as usual to preach, and tried to satisfy myself with the resolve to do so next day instead. But on Saturday the very same thing happened, and by the time for the evening prayer meeting I had let another day go by without this witness. But I felt just as ill at ease as could possibly be. All my peace of mind was gone . . . and I was impatient for the meeting to be over.

When it ended, I could stand the conflict no longer, but

¹ April 20, 1913.

had to go out on the main street, late though it was, get up on a form and give my message to the people. This done, I was as happy as could be ! . . . It is a fine thing to have God call you to work with Him, isn't it ? But finer still, I think, to have Him make you do it.

CHAPTER VIII

A CHALLENGE

'THESE Lisu ! I cannot get them out of my mind,' Fraser had written shortly before the baptisms at Tengyueh. If he could but have doubled or multiplied himself, it would have been more possible to meet their need and make the most of other opportunities. As it was, he was thankful that the rains did not hinder his Lisu from coming in from the mountains. Often on market days they would turn up at the mission-house, sure of a welcome, and bringing news which their missionary was eager to hear.

I enjoyed the evening they stayed here immensely [he wrote early in April]. Their simple ingenuousness attracts me tremendously. They take you into their confidence as if you were an old friend of the family. The boy who married while we were up there learnt a new hymn this time, one of Pastor Hsi's, which they like very much. This brings their repertoire to the grand total of three. They religiously rattle through these hymns every evening (!) by way of evening prayers, after which all the family stand up to pray. They tell me they can pray in Lisu now. On Sunday evenings (dear, simple souls !) they try to have an extra special kind of service. There is nothing very much extra that they can manage, but anyway, they sing a little more than usual, and try to make out what the hymns are all about. Crude, isn't it ? But I wonder if the Lord is not just as pleased with their simple, groping attempts at worshipping Him as with our elaborate services at home ? 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.'

'Old Six' as the bridegroom is called, stopped in the middle of learning this hymn with me.

'I say, Teacher,' he interposed, 'it has been fine since we became Christians ! The evil spirits don't get after us now, like they used to.'

They say that most of the Lisu up at the Valley of Ease are waiting to see if anything happens to our Tsai family. If not, many of them want to be Christians too.

This fear of demons Fraser was finding to be a great reality among the mountain people. Evidences of it were always cropping up. An older brother of the bridegroom had told him of one occasion soon after the wedding, when they were all much alarmed. They were talking about the hymns they had been singing, and the old father, looking across at an incense bowl still on the shelf, said timidly :

‘ Well, what of *that*—if Jesus is our Saviour ? ’

‘ Take it down,’ responded the others. ‘ We have no more use for it.’

The suggestion was forthwith acted upon. But, that very night, the old man began to suffer from a strange, unaccountable pain in his back, which spread to the whole body. All the family were up, trying such remedies as they could think of for his relief. At last, toward midnight, someone said :

‘ Why not pray to God about it ? ’

This they did, and soon in the little home in the mountains there was peace. The pain passed away, and by daylight the old father was himself again. ‘ Such an experience’, as Fraser wrote, ‘ goes a long way toward strengthening their faith. But the fear still lingers that the demons will get at them, if not propitiated as they always have been.’

Perplexed himself by such happenings, the young missionary could only assure his Lisu friends that the Lord Jesus, Who died for our sins, is indeed exalted over all principality and power and every name that is named. As we put our trust in Him, we need have no fear, even of demons. But there was much that he also had to learn. One need that pressed upon him was that of closer contact with the mountain people through a knowledge of their language. So he sought to be more out among them, and set himself to master Lisu as he had Chinese. Happily his heart was in the matter. He loved the rough and tumble of pioneer journeys, the hardships of gipsy-life, and above all the response of open hearts to his message.



THE BORDERLAND BETWEEN YUNNAN AND BURMA



A LISU SHANTY
Life on the perpendicular



TWO LISU CHRISTIANS IN HAPPY MOOD

Of one place he visited with Old Five at this time we find him writing :

I had a good time at Little River. It is only a tiny village of six families, the simplest people you ever saw. We were there for four days. I had the luxury of a room to myself—oh, no, not private ! Privacy is a thing almost unheard-of out here. The ' walls ' of these houses, made only of bamboo laths, let in more than the free, fresh air ! . . . People come around you all the time, asking endless questions, wanting to see your things and spitting their red betel-nut all over the floor. You think it is blood when you first see it. But I do not mind even this. I think I like almost everything about them but their spit ! They are just like children and you love them as such.

Picture the scene—the friendly group round the fire, the merry jests and laughter, the women with their babies, girls in gay colours and old people, often dirty and ragged, the flow of chat on many matters and the lively curiosity about their guest. Of course, they could not understand his being twenty-six and unmarried. They wanted above everything to see an English woman. One of them had once beheld such a being and readily retold the story. She had gone down with her vegetables to Tengyueh as usual, and was there on the market-place when two foreign men passed by with a lady between them. What care they took of her, giving her a seat when they themselves were standing ! That was fine. How strange and wonderful her dress was, and what a small waist she had ! That was fine too—and shining eyes round the fire were turned upon Fraser. They seemed to feel his loneliness, and soon were offering in all seriousness to help him find a mate. The situation could be remedied, though his own country was so far away. They would act as go-betweens (quite indispensable) and arrange for him to wed ' just the finest Lisu girl to be found anywhere ! '

The genuine kindness of it all touched the young missionary and opened the way for more important matters. Putting up his hymn sheet, he soon had them singing, and Old Five held their attention with an earnest

Lisu presentation of the Gospel. How it rejoiced Fraser to hear this man witnessing and praying in his own language ! Day after day it went on, until the boys and girls had the hymns by heart and older people were consulting about building a chapel in their village, as they all wanted to become Christians. There, on the hillside above the hamlet, stood the demon-shrine that held them all in awe.

It was a poor, wretched little place [wrote Fraser] with a thatched roof and open on all four sides. There were no idols in it, for the Lisu are not idolaters. In fact, there was nothing in it but a rough shelf on which they put offerings of food when the spirits came and harassed them. Old Five and I inquired whether they would be willing to give this up. After consultation, they said they would give up anything which was inconsistent with their becoming Christians—so we could do what we liked with the shelf. So Old Five and I went up . . . and it did me good to see him wrench it from its place and fling it away, crying, ‘What have we Christians to do with fear of demons !’ I wrote an inscription in Chinese on a small cross-beam, above the place the shelf had occupied, to make their change more definite.

A leader was then appointed to conduct morning and evening worship, Old Five being careful to explain that the true God, to Whom we pray in the Name of Jesus, is able to understand Lisu just as well as Chinese.

‘I say, Teacher,’ called an old body in parting, ‘what shall we do when we go out on the mountains to see about our cattle and do not return at night? Can we pray anywhere?’

Fraser took time to explain to her that the God we worship is the very One Who made all their mountains and valleys—the Great Father, with Whom we can be at home anywhere.

It was hard to leave Little River and, as he returned over the hills, the missionary’s heart went out in prayer for these new friends. He was bound for Trinket Mountain, the district in which he had first tasted Lisu hospitality, to look up the Koh family of whom he had not heard for

some time. The surroundings were beautiful as ever, from the steep ascent to the village, but there seemed a change in the familiar homestead. The old father was cordial in his welcome, but the household was reduced in numbers and the place looked poverty-stricken. The third son, when he came in at night, was not lacking in hospitality, and the big room soon filled up, as before, for evening prayers. But the old atmosphere was wanting, as Fraser keenly felt. Before long, indeed, it became evident that there was opposition.

Koh Three [he wrote] seemed to have something against what we were saying. There was quite a little controversy going on for a while, but as it was in Lisu I could not understand much of it. All I gathered was that something had happened to the family since I came among them.

Next day all was made plain; for on their way to Pleasant Valley, Fraser sat down with Old Five in a quiet place to hear all he had to tell. The Lisu was more than ready to unburden his heart, and a strange, sad story it was.

He said that when I was up there the first time, the Kohs believed all I told them and decided to pray to God and to the Lord Jesus. At that time there were four sons living at home. Not long after, the youngest son fell ill. In accordance with my teaching, they prayed for his recovery—some of them, at any rate, seem to have done so. But the sickness, only became worse. Apparently they continued praying, though whether they resorted to any of their old ways, I cannot tell. The boy continued to sink—until, in desperation, they felt that something else must be done. So they stopped praying and sent for a 'diviner' who told them that the illness was due to 'spirit seizure'. He told them what to offer to appease the spirit—pig, fowl, or whatever it was. They offered it, and from that time the boy began to recover.

But that was only the beginning of the story, and Fraser was little prepared for the sequel. Things went smoothly for a while, but the storm broke before long.

Koh Three is a timid, mild kind of youth [Fraser continued]. You would never expect anything unusual or

violent from him. But one evening he and his younger brother 'went mad'. He got a big winnowing basket and beat it as if it were a gong, raving all the time and scaring everybody. Then these two scrambled up on to the *chia-t'ang*¹; raving like madmen. To his aged father, Koh Three shouted: 'Come along here and worship me (koto) or I am going to die.'

The younger brother began to stuff his mouth with rice—only done when people are at the point of death, to give them something to eat in the next world. Frightened out of his senses, the old man went up and made humble obeisance before his sons. They continued raving. Then Koh Three seized an incense bowl made of earthenware, shouting in demoniacal fury:

'I will show you earth people whether I have power or not!'

Whereupon he flung it violently on the ground and it did not break. After this paroxysm had passed, the younger brother was very ill again. In spite of all they could do, he gradually sank and died.

Later on, another brother, Koh Two, went out into the fields one day and in anger for something or other scolded his wife, upon which she went back and committed suicide, by taking opium. After this, Koh Two ran away and has never been heard of since. All this has happened, they believe, because they forsook the worship of the spirits and turned to God and Jesus.

'Do you remember,' Old Five questioned, 'what a big family it used to be? There seems nothing left of them now.'

And when I realize the point of view they take about such things, my wonder is not that they have been in seldom to see us, but that they come at all.

It was a crucial hour in Fraser's experience—face to face, as never before, with the stark reality of demon-power.

Thinking over the whole matter [he added] it almost seems to me that it is explained by Luke xi. 24-26.² After a life-

¹ Long narrow table occupying the place of honour, below the ancestral tablets.

² When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

time of service to the Evil One, these people tried, in a blundering way, to break free and worship God, through Jesus Christ. Then came the trial of their faith. Satan raged. He got his knife into those who dared to question his authority in his Lisu kingdom. He was successful. Old habits and superstitions got the better of feeble faith. . . . His rebels gave him back their allegiance. First, then, for the candy, to show what a kind master he is—the boy got better ; then with sevenfold fury for the whip ! And he gave them a time of it.

In spite of these convictions growing upon him, Fraser was still slow to believe that demon-possession can be as real to-day as when our Lord was upon earth. And yet, why not ?

You may call it imagination if you like [he concluded] but from the Scriptures we know that Satan is ' the god of this world ' now, as much as ever he was. ' The whole world lieth in the evil one.' The thing which made it so painful to me was that the Lisu, in their ignorance, put all the trouble down to their attempt to become Christians, instead of the very opposite, their reversion to demon-worship. And the finishing touch, to me, was the way it shook the faith of Old Five to hear about it all.

And still deeper testing was to follow. It was early summer and the mountain people were so busy that Fraser had returned to Tengyueh and was giving himself to the city work. For some weeks no one had come in, even from Six Family Hollow. And then Old Five appeared with heavy tidings.

I cannot tell you all of it [Fraser wrote in sorrow] but the evil one has been terribly busy. The result is that the Tsai family, with the exception of Old Five, have gone back to their old life and superstitions.

While I was away, their eldest grandson was taken ill with fever. A little quinine would probably have put him right, but instead of coming to us for medicine, as I had arranged in case of need, they listened to their neighbours and called in a wizard. It was the spirit, he told them, outraged by the pulling down of that bunch of leaves, who had come to take his revenge. Thereupon they put up a big bunch of leaves again and promised to sacrifice a pig to the spirits.

This they will do as soon as they can afford it. Down came the hymns, the coloured tracts, etc., and the Christian books were put away. They have stopped singing and praying.

Of the whole family, Old Five only seems to hold fast. The others have made a complete renunciation, at any rate for the present. They do not object to his still being a Christian if he likes, but they are going to bide their time : perhaps later on, if it seems safe, etc. This, of course, is Satan's argument. I cannot tell you how I feel about it—you must use your imagination. But I am going to pray for them as much as ever. Will you ?

This was the reaction shared with the mother whose understanding he could trust : '*I am going to pray for them as much as ever. Will you ?*'

CHAPTER IX

A DECISION

How often the work of God seems to hang by a single thread ! but that thread will hold if it is in God's hand. More was at stake than even Fraser realized at this time. He was thinking in tens, God was thinking in thousands. He was cast down and yet upheld ; ' perplexed but not in despair ' ; sorely tried but ' not forsaken ' .

I have no further news from Six Family Hollow [he wrote to the one whose prayers meant so much]. We must just do our patient best to repair the damage done by the false step they have taken. I very, very much hope that they may be won back soon. Quite apart from the damage to themselves, this sort of thing does a lot of harm to the cause of God among the Lisu. I should desperately like to see the foundation of a real work among them before I leave.

For one element of his trial was that he knew that his opportunity in that field might be drawing to a close. He was still designated for work among the Miao at the other side of the province and, when the Emberys returned from furlough, might be called to the relief of the reapers there, who could not overtake the harvest. His own seed-sowing, meanwhile, seemed fruitless.

They tell me [he continued] that the people at Little River, who were so responsive when I was there, have gone back too. They say that after I left a lot of them fell sick, so they all veered over to their demon-worship again. Whether this is wholly true I do not know. If it is so, may God forgive them, for they know not, or can hardly know, what they do.

Meanwhile a letter was on its way to the General Director of the Mission telling of Fraser's recent visits to Six Family Hollow and other places. He was almost sorry, now, that he had written of encouragement, for his tendency was always to understate rather than paint

too bright a picture. But the cheering aspect of the work had also been true. The death of Mr. McCarthy having left the province without a superintendent, it was necessary for the young missionary to send his reports to Mr. Hoste direct. Was he conscious, in the darkness of those hours, of the upholding of Mr. Hoste's unfailing remembrance in prayer?

Carl Gowman, with increasing experience, was a helpful companion in those days. Always bright and cheery, he was the more so in the prospect of his approaching marriage. The two years of preparation over, his bride would soon be on her way to join the bachelor household. The women Christians eagerly anticipated her coming, and there was much to do and plan. Another element that relieved the situation was the visit of a young Karen from Burma, recently set apart as a missionary to the Lisu and other tribespeople. Though only twenty-three, Ba Thaw was an experienced Christian and a man of education. He had travelled widely, spoke excellent English, and had begun to translate hymns and a simple catechism into the Lisu language. Best of all he was prayerful and spiritually-minded. Little wonder that his coming seemed providential and was made the most of for the Tengyueh Christians. More than this, Old Five and other Lisu inquirers spent some days with him in the city, after which they escorted him to their mountain-homes on his return journey. There he was used of God to help the Tsai family and others to see how they had been misled, so that before he left for Burma things were more hopeful.

And then a letter came from Mr. Hoste that opened the way for further developments. Always ready for advance, he suggested that Fraser should follow up his recent work by making an exploratory journey to ascertain the number and location of the Lisu and other tribespeople throughout his district. Could it be then, after all, that the young missionary's hopes and prayers were to have fulfilment? Eagerly he embraced the opportunity, leaving results with

Him 'Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.'

But such an exploration was more easily planned than carried out. It meant serious census-taking as far as the Burman border, west and north to begin with, and later through the wild Kachin country to the south. Fraser was cut out for a pioneer. He loved the freedom and strenuousness of frontier life, the silence and simplicity of the wilds. But even his endurance was to be tested by the six weeks of strenuous exploration that lay before him. For the region was almost unknown as far as Europeans were concerned.

Starting from the already familiar district of Trinket Mountain, he travelled Lisu fashion, walking in sandals and burdened with as few belongings as possible. Old Five, his only companion, was able to carry their slender outfit, consisting chiefly of literature for distribution and blankets for the night. Fraser wore Chinese dress after his own pattern, usually dispensing with a gown. Jacket and breeches of dark blue cotton, well tucked into socks of the same material, provided some protection against voracious leeches, mosquitoes and other pests. Cold and hunger they expected to face at those high altitudes, remote from markets or shops. A kind of mountain rat or weasel afforded a feast at times, and when a Sunday could be spent in some larger village, eggs and even pork might be found. As it was the rainy season, swollen streams had often to be crossed, some of them on submerged planks or 'bridges' that called for the nerve of a tight-rope walker. At other times it was a case of ploughing through mud fully a foot deep, but on mountain trails it was 'clean mud, very different from the filthy, slimy, dark green stuff, round cattle pens and pigsties' in many a village at night. The blinding smoke of log fires was not unwelcome on these occasions. But Fraser loved it all, or 'almost all!' Coming in from one long day on the heights, in view of ranges mightier than the Alps, he wrote of 'sitting

down in that poor little place among utter strangers, thousands of miles from home and several days' journey from the nearest European, warming my wet clothes and looking out on a silent world of mist, rain and mountains, feeling just as happy as could be—even thrilled with pleasure to think of it !'

But smoky fires, Lisu hovels and mountain grandeur only formed the setting for the human contacts of those days. Fraser knew already that the Lisu were light-hearted people, but his first visit to the Tantsah district impressed this trait unforgettably. More than a hundred Lisu families were congregated in the villages of that little upland plain, and he was glad to be detained by their rough and ready welcome.

People were in and out all day [he wrote of this hospitality]. In the evening we had splendid services. The room was jammed to overflowing—men, boys and women with their breast ornaments, beads and babies, all squeezing in to listen. Attention was often rapt and response hearty.

'Yes, yes,' they would break in, 'we all want to be Christians !.

Then, after the meeting, there would be a veritable Babel—a crowd round the table, trying to read our Chinese Gospels, another round the fire, all laughing and talking away. . . . To add to the confusion, someone would bring out his guitar and get up a dance ! And I would fall asleep at last, dead tired, with more people round the bed examining my mosquito curtains.

But it was not all merriment in that Tantsah district, even among the Lisu, for it was there Fraser came across a cruel manifestation of demon power. He was more and more impressed with the sinister meaning of what we dismiss as 'animism', with its seemingly childish observances. 'The things which they offer to idols, they offer to demons', was written by inspiration long ago, and the same dread power is found to-day behind even the worship of sticks and stones. In a village to which Fraser was taken in that district, the local priests had established

a custom that held the people in awe. At times 'a great spirit' was said to descend, which had to be propitiated to avert disaster. This was done by sharpening a dozen or more swords until they were like razors, and fixing them to poles so as to make a ladder of upturned blades. Several men were meanwhile prepared by mystic performances, including abstinence ('perfect purity') and bathing for three days. Great excitement was worked up, and when the time came the victims, stark naked and with unearthly mutterings or shouting, ascended the ladder on their bare feet.

They all tell me [commented Fraser] that no man so 'prepared' is ever injured, though they frequently suffer from fear beforehand. They say too that no one 'unprepared' would dare attempt it, for the blades would just about cut his feet in pieces. When at the top on a kind of platform, they look down with glaring eyes and in unearthly tones give messages from the spirit. At times they make a huge fire also, in which they burn iron chains until red hot—then in some kind of paroxysm they pick them up and throw them round their shoulders. In this case also they say that no harm comes to them. You might suppose that onlookers regard the whole thing as a kind of entertainment but this is far from the case. They all say that they wish they knew how to get rid of the burden; but they *must* do it, whether they want to or not. Last year, only one man was found 'pure enough' to go through it. I saw this man's father and the little home up on the mountain-side where they allow themselves to be drawn into the diabolical vortex.

'The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.' To read of such happenings, as we do in the shelter of a Christian land, is very different from being under the actual oppression of demon-power 'where Satan's seat is'. What that oppression can be, only those who have known it by experience, and have found its darkness lift and pass away at the Name of Jesus, can fully understand.

The joy of telling of the Great Deliverer to those who had never heard was quickened, here and there, by the

response of prepared hearts. Talking with a few men in a poky little shop one day, Fraser was surprised by the entrance of a bent and suffering woman who addressed herself to him. She had caught the drift of his preaching out on the village street, and ventured in with the question : ' If idols are false and cannot help us, *what then is true ?* ' Very simply, Fraser told her of the living Saviour, and how to put her trust in Him. It was a joy to hear her say, as she left him, that her heart was now ' ten-tenths at peace '.

' Teach me to pray,' was the plea of another, the busy keeper of an inn who had listened while serving her guests. She, too, seemed to grasp the way of salvation, and went over and over the simple prayer Fraser taught her. It was still dark the following morning when she came to him as he was preparing to leave the inn.

' Tell it me again,' she said earnestly. ' There will be no one to teach us when you are gone, and I do want to remember how to pray to Him.'

From the far north of his district—where great rivers come down from the highest tableland in the world—Fraser returned by the Kachin country, to see what access could be gained to that tribe also.

They are the wildest people round here by a long way [he reported]. Inveterate robbers, their hand is against every man and every man's hand against them. Dirty, unkempt, ignorant, everybody despises them. They are savages and only not cannibals.

Yet the way was open, and with his Lisu companion Fraser was able to approach their villages, though not without danger. The first Kachins they met were a ferocious-looking group, crudely armed, seated round a fire by the wayside, decocting opium. With quiet friendliness, Fraser and Old Five came up and joined them. There was some excitement and loud talking, but not knowing Kachin they could only make out from the

Chinese interspersed that it was a question of 'taxes'. And that might mean all they had! Happily, at this juncture, another Kachin appeared who seemed to have influence and was soon chatting with Fraser in Chinese. He had been in the service of a British official down in Burma, and in friendly asides enlightened the rest as to their visitors. After this, they were permitted to proceed without molestation.

'But Teacher,' said Old Five anxiously, 'what if they rob us of our things further on?'

'Just let them take them,' was the quiet reply.

'But what would you do without money?'

'Trust in God to help me. He would not let us starve.'

And this confidence was genuine. Far from robbing them, however, the Kachin received them into their strange houses at night and treated them with real if rough hospitality—so much so that Fraser's love for the Lisu was shared with their despised neighbours from that time forward, to be as truly returned before long.

It was from a full heart Fraser wrote his fourteen-page report of this journey. He had explored only the northern half of his district, but he had seen or located some three hundred towns and villages with a population of over ten thousand Lisu, not to speak of still more numerous Kachin, on their barren uplands, and the wealthier Shan occupying the hot, low-lying plains. It was a great appeal—'souls for whom no man cared'.

The hope that he might be able to remain on and devote himself to this district moved the young missionary deeply. Yet his confidence in the judgment and prayerfulness of those at the head of the Mission withheld him from pressing his own point of view. He knew that Mr. Hoste had the whole field to consider and, while burdened about the needs around him, he sought to leave the issue in Higher Hands and to a greater Love.

It was not to be wondered at that, in the weeks that followed, a time of physical reaction set in. Even Fraser's

powers of endurance had been severely tested. Ulcerated feet and legs from the attentions of an unfriendly dog, in addition to leeches and other pests, laid him up for weeks, while recurring fever sapped his strength. Under these conditions he had to fight against depression, and occasional visits from his eager, loving mountain-friends were a great help. Market days generally brought some of them.

This evening Old Five has come in again [says an October letter]. . . . He brings good news of his family. They all seem to want to stand firm now, with the one exception of his elder brother. They have thrown away that bunch of leaves they put up some months ago and have 'prayers' again every evening. And he tells me that the sick people I prayed for at Little River—and for whom I have prayed ever since, hoping very, very much that they might be spared—have both recovered. We have been talking over our recent trip together and how the Lisu gave us ready hearing everywhere. . . .

And last but not least, Old Five himself seems to be holding fast and growing in grace, so that he has played the part of an angel in banishing the gloom from my spirit. Like Paul, refreshed by the coming of Timothy with good news of the Thessalonians, I too can cry after a season of despondency, 'Now we *live*, if ye stand fast in the Lord.'

If it had been hard to wait for Mr. Hoste's reply, to take it when it came as from the Lord was harder still. For, to Fraser's surprise, the facts reported had not modified the Director's point of view. Mr. Hoste still felt that the prior claim was among the Miao at the east of the province and that Fraser should repair as soon as possible to Sapushan, the field of his first designation. The disappointment was too deep for words, and yet—

I was not staggered by unbelief [he could say, recalling that painful experience]. I did not know what to make of it, for God had given me such a burden for the Lisu, and a growing conviction that He was leading. So I just went on praying about it—as much and as happily as before—though a good deal perplexed.

So the autumn days drew on, bringing the long-expected wedding. The arrangement was that, on the return of the Emberys, Fraser should leave with the bride and bridegroom who were also to take up work in the east of the province. The preparations for the great occasion can be better imagined than described—the first European marriage in Tengyueh. It had to be in that city, as there was no foreign Consul any nearer to Tali, though it meant an eight days' journey for the bride with her Chinese escort. Before dawn on November 28, Gowman and Fraser were hastening across the plain¹ to meet a sedan coming down the Tali road with a tired traveller. But weariness was soon forgotten. The transfer to the bridal chair they had brought, with its four bearers and red silk hangings, was soon accomplished. A mile or so from the city, Mrs. Li and a number of others were waiting to receive the bride, in the absence of relatives or indeed any foreign woman. It must have been a surprise to see her looking so young and happy—no sign of the regulation tears! But she made 'a splendid impression', as Fraser noted, and won their hearts right away by her bright friendliness. There was only time for a belated breakfast and a quick change into her wedding gown, before they had to go to the Consulate. The Chinese marriage ceremony and feast came next, followed by a short journey to the hills where arrangements had been made for a perfect honeymoon.

Left alone in the mission-house, Fraser awaited the return of his senior missionaries. They had been away three years, memorable years which had seen the inauguration of the Tengyueh church and of a spiritual movement among the Lisu. And now—but is it ever in vain to wait upon the Lord in quiet trust? The single thread that seemed about to break was still in His hands.

After the wedding but before the Emberys could arrive, the unexpected happened. Fraser did not know that

¹ It was the first time Fraser had used a sedan chair, and he frankly did not like it; but from the Chinese point of view it was *de rigueur*.

behind the scenes God had been moving. The leader of the Miao work, in conference with Mr. Hoste, had generously approved of steps which changed the situation. The result was a telegram to far-off Tengyueh. Once and again Fraser read it, before he could take in its meaning. Yes, it was from Mr. Hoste, and it said in substance :

‘ If you feel distinctly led to stay on for Lisu work, I would not press your going to Sapushan.

A week later the Emberys had been welcomed home and were in charge once more. The house was full and busy, for it was the Christmas season. Fraser, in search of quiet, had gone out that winter night to one of his prayer-haunts in the city, a deserted temple to which the priest in charge always welcomed him. He was not unaware of the serious nature of the decision before him. To go east, to a work in full swing by the blessing of God, would be the easier pathway. But love held him to his needy field. ‘ The love of Christ constraineth us.’

I walked up and down in the moonlight [he said to the writer years later, when his ‘ Lisu children ’ were numbered by the thousand]—I walked up and down, praying aloud in the silence, until prayer was turned to praise. There was no longer any question. Committing myself to God for whatever might be His purpose, I decided to stay on in my Tengyueh field.

CHAPTER X

POWERS OF DARKNESS

AND now the first thing was to strengthen the spiritual base of the work. Called to a forward movement, Fraser realized not only his dependence upon the Divine Leader but upon the support also of fellow-believers, one with him in Christ. He might be the hand reaching out into the darkness, but not a hand cut off and thrown ahead of the body. The vital union must be maintained. He was about to start on an exploratory journey to the Lisu of the Upper Salween, a district till then wholly untouched by missionary effort, but before doing so he felt he must give expression to a desire which had long been growing.

I know you will never fail me in the matter of intercession [he wrote to his mother in January], but will you think and pray about getting a group of like-minded friends, whether few or many, whether in one place or scattered, to join in the same petitions? If you could form a small prayer circle I would write regularly to the members. But more of this anon.

It was the first suggestion of a fellowship which was to become in a very real sense the power behind his work. For the mother at once responded, prayerfully seeking friends to act with her in the matter. Even before Fraser could return from the Salween, she was able to write of one and another feeling definitely led to work with him in this way for the Lisu of the Burma border. It was a small group at first, but very real, as Fraser soon realized, and the encouragement of their prayers was timely. For the journey to the Upper Salween proved afresh the sternness of the task.

Happily in this undertaking Fraser had not been alone. Joined by his nearest missionary neighbours, Mr. Geis

and Ba Thaw of Myitkynia,¹ he had also the help of Major Davies' newly-completed map of Yunnan and Mr. Forrest's report of an exploration in the Salween district, published by the Royal Geographical Society. But even so, the ordeal was serious enough. Setting out in winter to avoid the rainy season with its landslides and slippery mud, the party encountered stormy weather at high altitudes. Mr. Geis, though nearing fifty, proved to be 'a splendid companion, full of life and fun'. But let imagination fill in the following notes, made in a talk with Fraser over their experiences.

Spent the night on the top of a range ten thousand feet high, after two days with no human habitation. Darkness came on and snow began to fall. Our Lisu made a sort of booth for us. Morning, snow thick on the ground, obscuring the track. The Lisu, wet through, shivering with cold. Had to find our way over the pass. *K'u teh liao-puh-teh* / (extremity of suffering). Ba Thaw stubbed his foot, leaving blood-marks all along the way. He had never been in snow before. No food till late in the afternoon when (below the snow-line) we could make a fire. Saw armed robbers, but they did not attack us. Scenery magnificent. I enjoyed it after a fashion.

The two following weeks were spent in the Black Lisu country, travelling up the gorge of the Salween. Little could the pioneers anticipate the work of God that was to spring up in that 'wild, inhospitable region', or that Fraser would one day be revising the whole New Testament in Lisu, on those mountain-sides, amid a Christian community numbering thousands. As it was, they found it difficult to get into touch with the people because of the great difference in dialect. Even the Lisu who had come with them could hardly be understood, and it was only Fraser's excellent Chinese that carried them through.

North of Luchang, where Government officials and a

¹ The Rev. J. G. Geis, of the American Baptist Union, was in charge of the most northerly mission-station in Burma. With Ba Thaw, his valued Karen helper, he was working among the tribes bordering on Fraser's district in Yunnan. From the tropical jungles of the Irrawaddy to the more than Alpine heights of the Salween was a change of scene indeed!

Post Office were found, the road was increasingly perilous—sometimes a mere ledge across the face of a precipice, the river winding like a green ribbon far below. Branches of trees were stuck in cracks here and there to steady passers-by, while great stones, dislodged at a touch, might come down on the pathway carrying all before them. Yet hamlets were to be found wherever a water-supply was available, broad planks covering the earthen floors in dwellings of a log-cabin style. As their object was to gain impressions of the people rather than the country, our travellers turned back some three days north of Luchang. They had seen enough to convince them that the Lisu of the district were sufficiently numerous and distinct in language and customs to require missionaries of their own, whether tribal or foreign. A people waiting, accessible and in desperate need of the Gospel—it was a call indeed, though they could see no way at the time to meet it.

What a number of earnest, spiritually-minded Christians there are at home [Fraser wrote on his return to Tengyueh] and how correspondingly rich are the prayer-forces of the Church! How I long for some of this wealth for myself and the Lisu here. Yes, I have had it in measure already . . . but I should very, very much like a wider circle of intercessors.

Our work among the Lisu is not going to be a bed of roses, spiritually. I know enough about Satan to realize that he will have all his weapons ready for determined opposition. He would be a missionary simpleton who expected plain sailing in *any* work of God. I will not, by God's grace, let anything deter me from going straight ahead in the path to which He leads, but I shall feel greatly strengthened if I know of a definite company of pray-ers holding me up. I am confident that the Lord is going to do a work, sooner or later, among the Lisu here.

It was at 'Little River' that Fraser made his home that spring, 'a village on a very steep mountain-side', as he wrote. 'A foaming river roars along two thousand feet below, and the mountains all around run up to over

eleven thousand feet.' His room in this beautifully situated hamlet was not much to boast of.

It is really an out-house made of bamboos and thatch, all tumbling to pieces. But it has not come down on top of us yet ! It leaks badly, but Old Five has patched it up by putting plantain leaves over the rotten roofing. The floor is as usual plain earth trodden hard, and there are a lot of old bins, baskets, logs and things cumbering the ground. But such as it is I am very comfortable in it and do not hanker after anything better.

The ' comfort ' consisted chiefly in his books, for he had gone to the lavish expenditure of about two shillings for coolie hire, to bring some of his treasures, including study books and his Greek Testament. He had also an enamelled plate and mug in his outfit, a few tins of condensed milk, some of cocoa and ' all the bedding I want, instead of the irreducible minimum '. His hosts supplied the ordinary food they had themselves, and Ah-do (Old Five) was there to help in various ways. A bath could be obtained by a descent to the swift, turbulent river, involving a climb of two thousand feet back again. As far as externals were concerned, he felt himself well off for a prolonged stay, if not exactly ' in clover '.

It was along another line that he was tested at this time, and that more and more seriously. In the ardour of his faith he had taken it for granted that God's time had come for the blessing he longed to see among the Lisu. Now that he was giving himself wholly to them, they would surely respond and gather round him in larger numbers. They would appreciate his learning their language and be eager to hear more of the Word of God. But, in reality, the very opposite was the case. The people at Little River were hospitable and friendly as before, but showed no added interest in spiritual things. At Six Family Hollow he was always welcome, Ah-do's old mother being specially real in her love for the Saviour. A few others, scattered in three villages, gave evidence of a change of heart, but beyond that the work seemed to have come to

a standstill. Where was the great and growing interest? He had been so happy in the expectation that the walls of his Jericho would soon fall down.

'We thought it was the seventh day of our compassing,' he recalled long after, 'but it was only the first.'

The children of the hamlet loved him and were full of fun and curiosity. Indoors or out they hung about him, watching his every movement and trying to help in his studies. To tackle a language not reduced to writing was proving a tough job. It was pioneering in a new realm; and without books or teacher, Fraser welcomed the interest of the children. They never tired of repeating words and phrases till he had them written down, tones and all, for his musical ear insisted on correctness.

It was not lack of interest in his surroundings that led to the depression of spirit that now began to assail him. He did not know at first what to make of it. Was he lonely in that isolated hamlet, remote from contact with the outside world? Was it the poor food that left him under-nourished? Was it the struggle with the language, or the deadlock in the work? Rain and mist in the mountains might be depressing; but as the days and weeks wore on, he realized that there were influences of another kind to be reckoned with.

For strange uncertainty began to shadow his inward life. All he had believed and rejoiced in became unreal, and even his prayers seemed to mock him as the answers faded into nothingness. '*Does God answer prayer?*' loomed larger and larger as a tormenting question. 'Does He know and care? Your faith, your expectation—what is the outcome?' In his solitude, depression such as he had never known before closed down upon him. Was he really right in the course he had taken? Five years in China, and so little to show for it! Was there anything after all in his burden of prayer for the Lisu? How he dreaded the coming of some letter in a tone of sympathy—'Perhaps you have been mistaken,' or 'Are you sure you are in the will of God?'

Deeply were the foundations shaken in those days and nights of conflict, until Fraser realized that behind it all were 'powers of darkness', seeking to overwhelm him. He had dared to invade Satan's kingdom, undisputed for ages. At first, vengeance had fallen on the Lisu inquirers, an easy prey. Now, he was himself attacked—and it was war to the death, spiritually. No one knew about it or imagined what the lonely pioneer was facing; that in his extremity he was even tempted, and that persistently, to make an end of it all. No one, did we say? Then how was it that succour reached him just at that time and in the very way to help him most? For it was then, when the rainy season was at its dreariest, that a messenger came from Tengyueh with letters and papers, one of which brought him light. Someone, strange to say, had sent him a copy of *The Overcomer*, a magazine with which Fraser was unfamiliar. Its appearance in the poor little shack in those Lisu mountains was surely timed by Omnipotent Love! for it set forth the very truth needed in that strange conflict, and 'the truth shall make you free'.

The fact that came home to Fraser, as he pored over the welcome pages, reading and re-reading every word, was that Satan is indeed *a conquered foe*. Christ, our risen Lord, has in very truth 'bruised his head' upon the Cross of shame. 'Having put off from Himself (through His death) the principalities and the powers, He made a show of them openly, *triumphing over them in it*.' This he had held before, as a matter of doctrine. Now, it shone out for him in letters of light that victory is ours. Satan had desired to have him—determined, as he realized, upon wrecking him as a missionary, then and there. No words could tell what the long struggle in the dark had been. But now the Mighty Victor took him by the hand. What other Voice could have said as He said it—

"Triumph thou because of Me?" Overcome, overcome, "Even as I also overcame."

Long years before, in the life that seemed far away,

Fraser had responded in obedience to the claims of that Glorious One Who, for him, had died upon the Cross. Now, in the Lisu mountains, he responded again and yet more deeply to the liberating power of the same Cross. 'They overcame him (the great enemy) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.' There, in that poor shack, the victory was won that was to mean life to thousands. The rest Fraser told long after, as far as words could tell it, in conversation with the writer.

I read it over and over—that number of *The Overcomer*. What it showed me was that deliverance from the power of the evil one comes through definite resistance on the ground of The Cross. I am an engineer and believe in things *working*. I want to see them work. I had found that much of the spiritual teaching one hears does not seem to work. My apprehension at any rate of other aspects of truth had broken down. The passive side of leaving everything to the Lord Jesus as our life, while blessedly true, was not all that was needed just then. Definite resistance on the ground of The Cross was what brought me light. For I found that *it worked*. I felt like a man perishing of thirst, to whom some beautiful, clear, cold water had begun to flow.

People will tell you, after a helpful meeting perhaps, that such and such a truth is the secret of victory. No : we need different truth at different times. 'Look to the Lord,' some will say. 'Resist the devil,' is also Scripture (James iv. 7). And I found it worked ! That cloud of depression dispersed. I found that I *could* have victory in the spiritual realm whenever I wanted it. The Lord Himself resisted the devil vocally : 'Get thee behind me, Satan !' I, in humble dependence on Him, did the same. I talked to Satan at that time, using the promises of Scripture as weapons. And they worked. Right then, the terrible oppression began to pass away. One had to learn, gradually, how to use the new-found weapon of resistance. I had so much to learn ! It seemed as if God was saying :

'You are crying to me to do a big work among the Lisu ; I am wanting to do a big work in you yourself.'

And this aspect of truth opened up more and more. The enemy does not retire at the first set-back. Some time later, Fraser was much tried by the persistent

recurrence of evil thoughts. It almost came to be an obsession.

These thoughts were present with me [he said himself] even when I was preaching. I went out of the city (Teng-yueh) to a hidden gully on the hill-side, one of my prayer-haunts, and there voiced my determined resistance to Satan in the matter. I claimed deliverance on the ground of my Redeemer's victory on the Cross. I even shouted my resistance to Satan and all his thoughts. The obsession collapsed then and there, like a pack of cards, to return no more.

James iv. 7 is still in the Bible. Our Lord cried we are told 'with a loud voice' at the grave of Lazarus. He cried 'with a loud voice' from the Cross. In times of conflict I still find deliverance through repeating Scripture out loud, appropriate Scripture, brought to my mind through the Holy Spirit. It is like crashing through opposition. 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'

Another attack of the enemy at Little River came through the serious illness of Ah-do, the Lisu friend and companion from whom Fraser had hoped so much. His personality and gifts fitted him for leadership, and he had always been keen about making known the Gospel. But Ah-do was stricken down with what seemed like typhoid fever. Fraser did his best to care for him in those primitive surroundings, but the high temperature and delirium, with the fear of what it would mean to the work should he not recover, distressed him very much. Mental symptoms persisted even after he had been taken to Tengyueh for medical treatment. Prayer was answered and Ah-do's life was spared, but for a long time he was quite unlike himself.

It is painful for me to see him in this condition [Fraser wrote to his mother]. He has a peculiar expression at times, such as I have never seen in his sane moments—sometimes a worn, harassed look, like a suffering old man, sometimes a dull, hard aspect of defiance. These uncanny moods of his are distressing. . . . He needs prayer, be sure of that—and I have not told you all that has been going on in my mind about this trouble.

Ah-do was to have accompanied Fraser on a journey to Tali, to meet one of the leaders of the tribal work in the east of the province. This was out of the question now, and it was doubtful if he would ever be the fellow-worker Fraser had longed for. But comfort was at hand in this trial also, for just as he was setting out on the eight days' journey a mail arrived from home, telling of the definite formation of his Prayer Circle. This greatly cheered the way, so that he could write in cold and rain from an utterly wretched inn :

When things seem to go wrong, I try to keep my mind in the attitude of Rom. viii. 28, and my heart in the attitude of Phil. iv. 6, '—good wings on which to rise' ! ' All things work together for good to them that love God ' and ' In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning you.'

Time would fail to tell of all the help Fraser received from the visit to Tali and intercourse with Mr. Metcalf, who had come two weeks' journey to meet him. Much was to be learned from this quiet, gracious man whom the Lord was using among the Lisu of the eastern district. His experience was generously made available to the younger missionary, whether regarding language study, methods of work or spiritual effectiveness. And in that city, beautiful for situation, they had good times together, enjoying the snow-capped mountains with their outlook over the far-reaching lake and distant ranges, and refreshed by the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Hanna and the Chinese Christians. On his return journey, Fraser was further encouraged by definite answers to prayer with regard to the important city of Paoshan. Five years previously he had found a hearing for the Gospel there, on his first evangelistic journey, but no one had been able to follow up the work. Now he was prospered in renting a shop on the busy street, in which he preached every evening through the month of August to more people than could be crowded in, many standing outside the open front to listen. It was a joy to be using his Chinese again and to

have part in the opening of Paoshan as a permanent mission-station. For the work thus begun was carried on by a devoted Chinese evangelist, the expense of renting and furnishing the preaching-hall having been met by a gift from Mrs. Fraser through her son—‘the very first preaching-hall’, as he wrote, ‘in this large heathen city.’

And so renewed in vision and courage, Fraser came again to his main task. Five strenuous weeks were spent in visiting both the Kachin and Lisu villages in which he was already known and making friends in a number of others. Everywhere the feeling seemed to be the same—the little places must take their lead from the larger centres.

‘If the people of Tantsah would become Christians,’ was the refrain, ‘we would all turn with them.’

It seemed clear that Fraser must have some sort of home from which to carry on settled work, and after much thought and prayer this upland plain with its considerable Lisu population was decided upon. So to Tantsah Fraser went in the early autumn, as the rains were giving place to clear, cold winter. And cold it was up there, six thousand feet above sea level! But the forests supplied abundant fuel, and the headman of the Ts’ai family with whom Fraser had stayed before was warm in his welcome. A two-roomed shack to himself supplied all that was needed of comfort. Ah do was with him, recovered from his long illness and, with more than forty villages within easy reach, Fraser felt well in touch with his work. Living on their own level, wearing everyday Chinese garments and eating food they themselves provided, he was open at all times to the family and neighbours. Language-study filled all spare moments, so that to his Lisu friends it must have seemed, as long ago to Rutherford’s flock at Anworth, that ‘he was always praying, always preaching, always visiting, always catechizing, always writing and studying’. Though making progress with the spoken language, he was keenly feeling the need of books from which to teach the inquirers. This decided him at length

to go down to Myitkyina to settle with Mr. Geis the much discussed question of a Lisu form of writing.

But before leaving Tantsah for several weeks, Fraser felt that he should call together the chief Lisu of the district, to discuss their willingness or otherwise to receive him and his message. After hours spent in talking it all over, the majority said that they would like to become Christians, if Fraser would stay on with them and be their teacher. A simple meal together ratified this conclusion and sent him happily on his way to Burma.

After six years in that remote corner of China, it was a relief to exchange the crudities of pioneer life for a brief touch with the comforts of civilization. British Government outposts were found as soon as the border was crossed, and from six thousand feet high it was a glorious descent to the plains of the Irrawaddy. On the way Fraser's spirits were rising. The beauty of Burma fascinated him and, unflinching as he was in enduring hardness when necessary, he had not lost his capacity for enjoyment. Several nights in Kachin hovels prepared him for a stay in passing at the Government rest-house at Sadon.

You could not wish for a better place [he wrote to cheer his mother], so roomy and comfortable ! You have it all to yourself and feel quite lordly. I have had a sort of light European meal which was nice . . . and a hot bath too, and feel altogether aristocratic ! One enjoys things by contrast, you know. Excuse all this trivial stuff, dictated by the exuberance of the moment !

Full of interest were the two weeks spent at Myitkyina, in the large mission-compound and among the Lisu of the jungle villages. Mr. Geis and Ba Thaw gave themselves to collaborating with their guest in working out a Lisu script and preparing an enlarged catechism. This accomplished, Fraser was eager to return to his promising field at Tantsah, where the prayers of years seemed about to be answered. Of the charm of Burma he wrote before leaving :

The air is balmy, the sunsets are rich and beautiful—the evening colours in the sky and on the hills are wonderfully soft, reflected from the lake-like surface of the Irrawaddy. I look up from this letter to a fine extensive view of wooded heights, bathed in the sunset glow, stretching perhaps sixty miles in some directions, abounding with sharp peaks and lofty ridges. Burma, beautiful Burma !

Six days' journey lay before him, up and up to the rugged frontiers of his adopted country. It was good to be facing Chinawards again, though rumours that reached him from the first day out were not encouraging. Bad news travels fast, and it appeared that his friend and host at Tantsah was in serious trouble. Reports were vague at first, but Fraser's apprehensions were increased as the journey proceeded, until at last messengers appeared who begged him to turn aside and on no account return to Tantsah. This, of course, he could not consider, but it was with a troubled heart he came again to his Lisu headquarters. He had been away barely a month, but the enemy had been busy. The situation is best explained in his own words.

The very day I left for Burma the Chinese of Tantsah who outnumber the Lisu began to circulate wild stories about me. . . . They said that I had come to the district with the intention of making it over to the British Government for money, and that Mr. Tsai was my accomplice. Also that Tsai's going with me to Myitkyina to buy salt was a blind ; his real purpose was to fetch the load of money the British Government was paying him ! Some of them were for confiscating his house and property right away. Milder counsels however prevailed and they agreed to wait until his return.

When he got back, they held what could only be called an intimidation meeting. They summoned Tsai and all the Lisu who had eaten the meal with me that day . . . and after much argumentation made them sign an agreement that they would on no account turn Christian or allow me to come and live among them ; otherwise they would have their homes and property confiscated. Tsai, as a kind of leader, was made to stand the cost of a meal for all present. The Lisu, overawed and alarmed, gave way

entirely, and sent to me, like the Gadarenes of old, and besought me 'to depart from their borders' (Mark v. 17).

One comfort in the sorrow of it all was that, as far as Fraser could judge, the attitude of his Lisu friends was not unfavourable. It was simply that they dared not receive him, or become Christians, in face of the opposition of their Chinese neighbours. If Fraser could obtain permission from higher authorities to return and live among them, they would like, he gathered, to do as they had said before he left for Burma. The really vital thing, however, was not this hopeful element, but the way in which Fraser reacted to the whole situation.

If such a thing had happened a year ago [he wrote to his Prayer Circle] it would have driven me down to depths of depression. I have given way to discouragement, dark discouragement, far too much in the past. Now I know rather better, and thoroughly agree with the assertion, 'all discouragement is of the devil'. Discouragement is to be resisted just like sin. To give way to the one is just as bad and weakens us as much as to give way to the other. God has wonderfully sustained me through this trial, and to Him be all the praise when I say that not for one instant has it disturbed my peace or radiant faith in the risen and ascended Lord. . . . God has enabled me to trust Him more than ever before, to rejoice in Him more than ever before, and to believe more than ever before for a work of grace among the Lisu.

CHAPTER XI

A FRUITFUL INTERLUDE

BEFORE leaving Burma, Fraser had, unconsciously to himself, been prepared for this very situation. For years he had been praying for a spiritual ingathering among the Lisu. For this he had lived and worked, regardless of cost. For this he would endure any hardness. With the deepening of his own spiritual life, faith had grown and become more definite. He had come to see that what was needed was the liberation of whole families from bondage to demon worship. The clan system was so strong that, unless the elders approved, the family altar and sacrifices would not effectively be done away. So it was for the turning to Christ of whole households, men, women and children, that he prayed with increasing longing. And then, down at Myitkyina, a crisis had come. In the home of Mr. and Mrs. Geis he was renewing his strength in quiet times of thought and prayer when he became conscious that God was speaking to him in a special way. Praying for his Lisu, that hundreds of families might put away their demon worship and turn in faith to Christ, the thought came with conviction :

‘ You have been asking for this long enough. When are you going to believe that your prayer is answered ? ’

The difference between asking and receiving shone out with startling clearness. The burden became not so much the condition of the Lisu as his own lack of faith in dealing with God about them—the faith that *obtains* mercy and *finds* grace to help in time of need.¹

‘ Now, ask in faith ’, came the urge of the Spirit. There and then the vital change was wrought.

I knew [he wrote not long after] that the time had come for the prayer of faith. Fully conscious of what I was doing and what it might cost me, I definitely committed myself

¹ Heb. iv. 14-16.

to this petition *in faith* (hundreds of Lisu families for Christ). The transaction was done. I rose from my knees with the deep restful conviction that I had already received the answer.

So great was the change in his own outlook that, even before leaving Burma, Fraser had written to the members of his prayer circle :

The Lord has taught me many things lately in regard to the spiritual life. In fact my own spiritual experience has undergone some upheavals during the past twelve months. Not the least important thing I have learned is in connection with *the prayer of faith*. I have come to see that in past years I have wasted much time over praying that was not effective prayer at all. Praying without faith is like trying to cut with a blunt knife—much labour expended to little purpose. For the work accomplished by labour in prayer depends on our faith : ‘According to your faith,’ not labour, ‘be it unto you.’

I have been impressed lately with the thought . . . that people fail in praying the prayer of faith because they do not believe that God *has* answered, but only that He *will* answer their petitions. They rise from their knees feeling that God will answer some time or other, but not that He has answered already. This is not the faith that makes prayer effective. True faith glories in the present tense, and does not trouble itself about the future. God’s promises are in the present tense, and are quite secure enough to set our hearts at rest. Their full outworking is often in the future, but God’s word is as good as His bond and we need have no anxiety. Sometimes He gives at once what we ask, but more often He just gives His promise (Mark xi. 24). Perhaps He is more glorified in this latter case, for it means that our faith is tried and strengthened. I do earnestly covet a volume of prayer for my Lisu work—but oh ! for *a volume of faith* too. Will you give this ?

Prepared in this way for the shock which had awaited his return to Tantsah, Fraser was enabled, as we have seen, to stand his ground unshaken. It clearly was wise to give time for the opposition to quiet down in that neighbourhood, and after consultation with Mr. Embery, he decided to go on ‘a Lisu hunt’ in another direction.

A small incident it may appear—to occupy an interval with an evangelistic journey—but could the outcome have been foreseen, the young missionary might well have regarded it as one of the most important developments of his life. He was thinking only of the unreached Lisu in a district visited five years previously, on his first evangelistic journey, but One Who had been watching over seed sown at that time in ‘good ground’ saw that it was ready for harvesting. So to a waiting soul He guided His waiting servant.

It was early in February when Fraser started on this itineration, a six weeks’ journey to the south-east of Tengyueh. Many were the Chinese towns and Lisu homesteads visited, and the diary Fraser kept is full of graphic touches. He never let a day go by without preaching somewhere—in the open air, in tea shops, in Chinese inns at night or by Lisu firesides. As it was early in February (the Chinese New Year season) there were plenty of holiday makers about.

Small market, but very good time in the evening [is one brief entry]. Preached by moonlight, standing on a big high table in the street, with a smoky lantern. Unusual attention.

But the waiting soul was not there.

Strong though he was and accustomed to mountain climbing, Fraser found the long stages, poor food and disturbed nights pretty tiring. On the seventh day of his journey he came to the city of Longling, on the southern reaches of the Salween Divide, a district in the bend of the great river where it turns westward into Burma. From this place he did not follow his former route, but left the main road to find a Lisu settlement of which he had heard. The town of Hsiangta lay on this track over the mountains, and was reached too late at night to admit of his going further. New Year decorations were much in evidence and promised good audiences next day, but Fraser was tired physically and needing spiritual refreshment. So the following morning, instead of plunging at

once into the work awaiting him, he slipped out early with his Bible and found a quiet place where he could be alone for a time. Such seasons were needful to him. Without them he could not have continued in a life so taxing and devoid of outward help. And there at Hsiangta, as his journal shows, he was specially cast on God.

Spent the day mostly in Bible reading and prayer, alone on the mountains. Felt I needed it. Asked God to give a blessing in the evening—my first visit to the place. A stranger in a strange land, I knew no one at all.

With this sense of loneliness still upon him, Fraser re-entered the town, hungry no doubt but spiritually strengthened. The prospect was none too hopeful, for a theatrical company had taken possession of the market-place, but the performance was not yet due to begin and Fraser soon had a crowd round him. His accordion and singing aroused interest and, though there was some opposition, a hundred or so listened well as the evening shadows gathered about them. Earnestly Fraser reasoned with them of the one and only way of salvation, inviting any who wished to hear more to follow him to his inn. Then, as his custom was, he closed his address by drawing in the net. Would any of his hearers respond to the love of God by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour?

Immediately a hand shot up, and a youngish man stepped forward with manifest eagerness.

It was quite impossible in one interview to satisfy the hunger of that seeking soul, though it lasted far into the night. Moh Ting-chang had much to tell, and it was with wonder that Fraser learned it was from his own hand the little book had come that made him long for light. He had never heard the name of Jesus until five years previously, when his son went down as usual to the great Shan plain, ten miles away, to sell the cakes for which his father was famous. For Moh was a pastry-cook and a

specially good one. The boy had one of his cousins with him, and they came in for an unusual experience. The market-place at Mangshih was all excitement, for a white-faced foreigner had come and was actually giving away, not selling, attractive-looking books to all who said they could read. The boys, of course, could not ; but in the scramble to get the pamphlets, some fell to the ground, and were quickly picked up and hidden in their long, loose sleeves. Carried back up the mountain that night, they were produced in the pastry-cook's shop at Hsiangta, and thus Moh had come into possession of his treasured copy of St. Mark's Gospel.

For a treasure indeed it proved to be, opening to him a whole world of new thought and feeling. The thing Moh could not account for was the response of his own heart to the One Who moved and spoke through its pages. Why was he so drawn to this great Teacher Who must have been more than man ? Why did His sufferings and death seem to have something to do with himself ?

Years passed on, in which Fraser had little suspected the work that the Spirit of God was doing in that remote spot. And now he was face to face with the man to whom he had unconsciously been the bearer of Glad Tidings. How full Moh was of eager questioning, and how unwilling to let his new-found friend go on his way the following morning ! But word had been sent ahead that Fraser would be at a certain group of Lisu villages that day, and the people were expecting him.

'Come back, come back soon and be my guest,' urged Moh as they parted ; an invitation which was gladly accepted.

Turning southward from Hsiangta, Fraser had plenty to think over as he tramped the lonely mountain road to seek out this Lisu settlement. His face was now set toward a region never before visited by a preacher of the Gospel—one vast expanse of mountains stretching away to the frontiers of Burma and Siam, occupied by a large population of Shan, Lisu and other tribesfolk. He was turning

the first page of a new chapter in his experience, though as yet he little dreamed of the answer he was to see in that very region to his prayer of faith.

Tasiaoho was the hamlet at which Fraser was received that night with characteristic Lisu hospitality—cheery folk crowding in to keep him company round the big log fire. His hosts set before him the best they could provide and would not hear of payment. Best of all, they listened with lively interest to all he had to tell, singing over and over again the simple hymn he taught them and learning by heart a few sentences of prayer.

‘Go further south,’ they urged, when they found they could not keep him. ‘In all those mountains beyond, you will find many Lisu.’

This, Fraser had decided to do and, explaining to his new friends that he would still be some weeks within reach of them, he shortened his first visit so as to return to Moh Ting chang as soon as possible.

It was something of a shock, on being received into the home behind the pastry-cook’s shop, to find all the implements of idolatry and ancestral worship still there and in use. Wondering greatly, Fraser said nothing about it, while fitting in to the family life. Moh’s welcome was unmistakable. He had prepared an upstairs room for his guest and, laying aside business claims, spent every moment with him, even sleeping on the floor beside his bed at night—the height of Chinese courtesy. But how, Fraser questioned with himself, could he still be burning incense to that prominent brass idol?

As the next day wore on, Fraser felt increasingly assured of the reality of Moh’s conversion and spiritual life. They went through the catechism together, talking fully over each question and answer. This brought up the matter of idolatry, but still Fraser made no direct application, waiting for God to work. At length, in the afternoon, Moh was so manifestly eager to follow Christ in all things that his new friend quietly called attention to the worship of ancestors and idols in his home. Faced with this issue,

Moh frankly confessed that he had not dared to touch these household gods. It was a serious matter. He feared for his family—his aged mother, wife and children. With full understanding, Fraser suggested that they should go to God about it, asking Him for strength to do the right thing and for His protection from all the powers of evil. Never could Fraser forget the prayer that followed, the first outpouring of a new born soul in broken words and deep reality. He, too, prayed and Moh was strengthened.

When we rose from our knees he went straight to the stand where there was water and a basin, took a cloth and was about to approach the family altar, when again he hesitated.

‘Come over here and let us pray once more,’ I said, seeing the conflict.

We did so and that settled it. Without a word he removed the strips of red paper with the characters for Heaven, Earth, etc., also the incense, paper-money, and the idol. Without a word he burned them. I had never seen it done before in so summary a fashion. Later, Moh said more than once :

‘If I have done right, I shall have good dreams to-night !’

Needless to say, my first question in the morning was as to know he had slept.

‘Good dreams, good dreams !’ he answered heartily.

And I could see that he was set at liberty.

That very day, Moh was preaching with Fraser in the market place, and the news spread all over the town that his idol and ancestral worship had been discarded.

I never knew a braver man in his witness for Christ [Fraser added later]. Persecution assailed him from all sides, just because he was so bold and bright. He has had his ups and downs, but never has denied his Lord.

It made it easier when Fraser had to leave the district a month later, to be able to say to the Lisu who were interested and would have kept him :

‘Come to Mr. Moh on market days or at any time. He will teach you more about the Lord Jesus. And he will write to me for you, if you decide to become Christians and want me to come over again and help you.’

CHAPTER XII

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

IT was in the loft of a headman's house in the lower part of the village that Fraser made his home on his return to Tantsah. Opposition had died down and better quarters were in view, but all through that spring and early summer he shared the dusty attic with its original occupants, the rats. If the arrangement left something to be desired, it had also its advantages. Between the loose boards of the floor, smoke and smells came up from below, but so also did the cheerful clatter of family doings—a lively lesson day and night in the language he was eager to master. As to the outside environment :

The scenery [he wrote] is magnificent. The little plain is surrounded by thickly wooded hills, while to the north the rocky peak of Clear Tooth towers above the whole, some 12,000 feet high.

Here then he found himself again among the people he loved. With no servant of his own, he shared the family meals at quite irregular hours. Cooking over the log fire was certainly primitive. Rice, cabbage and potatoes usually appeared for the 'paying guest', with sometimes eggs, pork or sinewy chicken. A basin and chopsticks supplied household equipment, the mud floor serving as a table, supplemented by a few low stools and straw mats of many uses. But Fraser was by this time accustomed to the simplicities of Lisu life. On the best of terms with the children, he did not object even to the incursions of the farmyard, as donkeys, fowls and pigs sought shelter from the cold at night in dusky corners and extensions of the living-room.

Give me Lisu converts [he wrote that summer], and I can truly say I will be happy even in a pigsty !

But that was just where the trouble lay. Interested and friendly as they were, his Lisu host and neighbours

could not be called converts. Fraser had come back from his journey with renewed hopes and a wider outlook. The conversion of Moh at Hsiangta had quickened his faith in the power of the Gospel, and the Lisu population of that south-eastern district had opened a new vista to faith and prayer. How he longed to see a movement of the Spirit of God, both there and in his present field !

It was fear that kept his Lisu neighbours in bondage, fear which he knew was not unfounded. He was learning that only in a close walk with God and a life of prayer could the powers of darkness be overcome, either in himself or around him. It did seem as if some specially sinister power of evil held sway in Tantsah and the neighbourhood. In his loneliness, Fraser was often conscious of the opposition of unseen foes and fell back with increasing thankfulness upon the prayer-co-operation of his small but growing circle at home. The relationship was a close one, for he wrote to them all individually (they numbered only eight or nine at this time) and received letters telling of their detailed interest.

Sometimes, too, he went down to Tengyueh, where the sympathy of his colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Embery, was unfailing. After months up in the mountains without seeing another European, the change to their happy family life brought just the relaxation needed. The children were a joy to him, and Mrs. Embery still recalls the hunger of his whole being for music. Before they could get him to take a meal or even a cup of tea, he would sit down at the baby-organ and play and play, if not interrupted, for hours. Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin—without a note before him—what music he brought out of that little instrument, and how revealing it all was !

From Tengyueh, this summer, he wrote to his Prayer-circle of the matters most upon his heart.

About twelve men at Tantsah have professed their intention of being Christians. Of these, few or none come regularly to the services, nor do I know of any who have definitely



A LISU VOLUNTARY EVANGELIST, BELOVED OF HIS FLOCK



A BIBLE LESSON ON A LISU VERANDAH

renounced demonolatry—*i.e.* of those who are responsible members of their families. The 'strong man' has not yet been bound, if I may put it so. The majority of the people are too afraid of their demons to turn to God as yet. Still, God is leading me onward and I am quite hopeful. I do not intend to be in too much of a hurry, and yet I will cry to God for a blessed work of grace among the Lisu as long as He lends me breath.

More and more he was coming to depend on prayer, as did the Master Himself in His earthly service.

If two of you shall agree . . . [he added later] I feel, even when praying alone, that there are two concerned in the prayer, God and myself. . . . I do not think that a petition which misses the mind of God will ever be answered (1 John v. 14). Personally, I feel the need of trusting Him to lead me in prayer as well as in other matters. I find it well to preface prayer not only by meditation but by the definite request that I may be directed into the channels of prayer to which the Holy Spirit is beckoning me. I also find it helpful to make a short list, like notes prepared for a sermon, before every season of prayer. The mind needs to be guided as well as the spirit attuned. I can thus get my thoughts in order, and having prepared my prayer can put the notes on the table or chair before me, kneel down and get to business.

One month later, Fraser was writing again to his praying friends, this time from a place of his own at Tantsah. One big, bare room with a mud floor, trodden hard, afforded more privacy than the loft though little more of comfort. Carried over the mountains to Tengyueh by his Lisu henchman, the letter may help us, too, in praying as Fraser did 'the prayer of faith'.

Tantsah.

October 9, 1915.

My dear Friends,

The Scriptures speak of several kinds of prayer. There is intercession and there is supplication, there is labour in prayer and there is the prayer of faith; all perhaps the same fundamentally, but they present various aspects of this great and wonderful theme. It would not be unprofitable to study the differences between these various scriptural terms. . . .

Speaking generally, however, there is a distinction we all know ; it is the distinction between *general* prayer and *definite* prayer. By definite prayer I mean prayer after the pattern of Matt. xxi. 21, 22 ; John xv. 7, etc., where a definite petition is offered up and definite faith exercised for its fulfilment. Now faith must be in exercise in the other kind of prayer also, when we pray for many and varied things without knowing the will of God in every case. I may pray much in this general way, for instance, about the European War, but I cannot offer much definite prayer, as I do not know the purposes of God sufficiently well to do so.

In *general prayer* I am limited by my ignorance. But this kind of prayer is the duty of us all (1 Timothy ii. 1, 2) however vague it has to be. I may know very little, in detail, about the object of my prayer, but I can at any rate commend it to God and leave it with Him. It is good and right to pray, vaguely, for all people, all lands, all things, at all times. But *definite prayer* is a very different matter. It is in a special sense 'the prayer of faith'. A definite request is made in definite faith for a definite answer. Let me pass on to you a few thoughts that have been in my mind the last few days on the subject of the PRAYER OF FAITH.

Take the case of a Canadian emigrant as an illustration. Allured by the prospect of 'golden grain' he leaves England for the Canadian West. He has a definite object in view. He knows very well what he is going for, and that is wheat. He thinks of the good crops he will reap and of the money they will bring him :—much like the child of God who sets out to pray the prayer of faith. He has his definite object too. It may be the conversion of a son or daughter ; it may be power in Christian service ; it may be guidance in a perplexing situation, or a hundred and one other things—but it is *definite*. To consider the points of resemblance between the cases of the prospective Canadian farmer and the believing Christian :

1. THE BREADTH OF THE TERRITORY

Think of the unlimited scope for the farmer in Canada. There are literally millions of acres waiting to be cultivated. No need, there, to tread on other people's toes ! Room for all—vast tracts of unoccupied land just going to waste, and good land too. And so it is with us, surely. There is a vast, vast field for us to go up and claim in faith. There is enough sin, enough sorrow, enough of the blighting influence

of Satan in the world to absorb all our prayers of faith, and a hundred times as many more. 'There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.'

2. GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGES EMIGRATION

Think also of the efforts the Canadian Government are making to encourage emigration. All the unoccupied land belongs to it, but settlers are so badly needed that they are offered every inducement—emigration offices established, sea-passages and railway fares reduced and grants of land made free! And God is no less urgently inviting His people to pray the prayer of faith; 'ASK—ASK—ASK'—He is continually saying to us. He offers His inducement too: 'Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.' All the unoccupied territory of faith belongs to Him. And He bids us to come and occupy freely. 'How long are ye slack to go in to possess the land?'

3. FIXED LIMITS

Yet this aspect of the truth must not be over-emphasized. Blessed fact though it be that the land is so broad, it can easily be magnified out of due proportion. The important thing is, not the vastness of the territory, but how much of it is actually assigned to us? The Canadian Government will make a grant of 160 acres¹ to the farmer-emigrant, and no more. Why no more? Because they know very well that he cannot work any more. If they were to give him 160 square miles instead of 160 acres he would not know what to do with it all. So they wisely limit him to an amount of land equal to his resources.

And it is much the same with us when praying the prayer of definite faith. The very word 'definite' means 'with fixed limits'. We are often exhorted, and with reason, to ask great things of God. Yet there is a balance in all things, and we may go too far in this direction. It is possible 'to bite off', even in prayer, 'more than we can chew'. There is a principle underlying 2 Cor. x. 13 which may apply to this very matter (see R.V. margin).² Faith is like muscle which grows stronger and stronger with use, rather than indiarubber which can be stretched to almost any desired length. Overstrained faith is not pure faith, there is a mixture of the carnal element in it. There is no strain in the

¹ One-quarter of a square mile, i.e., half a mile each way, length and breadth.

² 'According to the measure of the province (limit) which God appointed to us as a measure. . . .'

'rest of faith'. It asks for definite blessing as God may lead; it does not hold back through carnal timidity, nor press ahead too far through carnal eagerness.

In my own case here (at Tantsah) I have definitely asked the Lord for several hundred families of Lisu believers. There are upwards of two thousand Lisu families in the district altogether. It might be said, 'Why do you not ask for a thousand?' I answer quite frankly, because I have not faith for a thousand. I have faith—or I would rather say I believe the Lord has given me faith—for more than one hundred families, but not for a thousand. So I accept the limits the Lord has, I believe, given me. Perhaps God will give me a thousand; perhaps, too, He will lead me to commit myself to this definite prayer of faith later on. Someone has said that the Lord promises us bread, but He gives us bread and butter. This is in accordance with Eph. iii. 20: 'Above all that we ask or think.' But we must not overload faith: we must be sane and practical. Let us not claim too little in faith, but let us not claim too much either. Remember the Canadian emigrant's 160 acres. Consider, too, how the Dominion Government exercises authority in the matter of location. The Government has a say as to the *where* as well as the *how much* of the emigrant's claim. He may not wander all over the prairie at his own sweet will, and elect to settle down in any place he chooses. Even in regard to the position of his farm he must consult the Government.

Do we always do this in our prayers and claims? Do we consult the Heavenly Government at the outset, or do we pray 'the first thing that comes?' Do we spend much time waiting upon God to know His will, before attempting to embark on His promises? That this is a principle upon which God works He has informed us very plainly, in 1 John v. 14, 15. I cannot but feel that this is a cause (not the only cause) of many unanswered prayers. Jas. iv. 3 has a broad application, and we need to search our hearts in its light. I read a testimony of Dr. Stuart Holden's, not long ago, in which he said that one of the greatest blessings of his life had been his unanswered prayers. And I can say the same in my measure. Unanswered prayers have taught me to seek the Lord's will instead of my own. I suppose we have most of us had such experiences. We have prayed and prayed and prayed, and no answer has come. The heavens above us have been as brass. Yea, blessed brass, if it has taught us to sink a little more of this ever-present self of ours

into the Cross of Christ. Sometimes our petition has been such a good one, to all appearances, but that does not insure it being of God. Many 'good desires' proceed from our uncrucified selves. Scripture and experience certainly agree that those who live nearest to God are the most likely to know His will. We are called to be 'filled with the knowledge of His will' (Col. i. 9). The 'secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant'. We need to know more of the fellowship of Christ's death. We need to feed on the Word of God more than we do. We need more holiness, more prayer. We shall not, then, be in so much danger of mistaking His will.

The wonderful promise of John xv. 7 is prefixed by a far-reaching 'if'.¹ I wonder if that verse might not be paraphrased: 'If ye abide not in Me and My words abide not in you, do not ask whatsoever ye will (for) it shall not be done unto you.' Perhaps if we examined ourselves more thoroughly before God we might even discover, in some cases, that the whole course of our life was not in accordance with His will. What right would a man have, in such a case, to expect his prayers to be answered? But is not this the fact with regard to much 'good Christian work?' 'Get your work from God' is a needed injunction. How often Christian leaders make their own plans, work hard at them, and then earnestly ask God's blessing on them. How much better, as Hudson Taylor felt, to wait on God to know His plans before commencing! Much Christian work seems to have the stamp of the carnal upon it. It may be 'good', it may be successful outwardly—but the Shekinah Glory is not there.

Now all this applies to the prayer of faith. We must have the assurance that we are in the right place, doing the right work. We must be sure that God is leading us, when we enter upon specific prayer. It does not follow that because a thing is the will of God, He will necessarily lead *you* to pray for it. He may have other burdens for you. We must *get our prayers from God*, and pray to know His will. It may take time. God was dealing with Hudson Taylor for fifteen years before He laid upon him the burden of definite prayer for the foundation of the China Inland Mission. God is not in a hurry. He cannot do things with us until we are trained and ready for them. Let us 'press on' then (Phil. iii. 12). We may be certain He has further service, further burdens

¹ 'If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'

of faith and prayer to give us when we are ready for them. And *He* will lead. Abraham would never have been a pattern of faith, if he had remained in Ur of the Chaldees. Nor will we ever have a faith worth calling faith unless we press forward in the footsteps of Him Who said, 'Follow Me'.

4. THE CLAIM ENDORSED

Turn to the emigrant again. He has come to an agreement with the Canadian Government. He falls in with their terms; he accepts their conditions; he agrees to take over the land allotted to him. So he presents his claim at the proper quarter, and it is at once endorsed. Could anything be simpler? Nor need our claim in the presence of God be any less simple. When we once have the deep, calm assurance of His will in the matter, we put in our claim, just as a child before his father. A simple request and nothing more. No cringing, no beseeching, no tears, no wrestling. No second asking either. The parable of the unjust judge was never meant to teach that we are to wring an answer by main force from an unwilling God. One real asking is enough for a life-time.

In my case I prayed continually for the Tengyueh Lisu for over four years, asking many times that several hundreds of families might be turned to God. This was only general prayer, however. God was dealing with me in the meantime. (Of course I do not mean to suggest that anyone else would necessarily be led along just the same line. Does God ever deal with two different people in exactly the same way?) Then near the end of November last year (1914) when staying with Mr. and Mrs. Geis down at Myitkyina in Burma, this same petition came to me as a definite burden. You know how a child is sometimes rebuked by his parents for asking something in a wrong way—perhaps in the case of a child, for asking rudely. The parent will say, 'Ask me properly'. That is just what God seemed to be saying to me then: 'Ask Me properly.' As much as to say, 'You have been asking Me to do this for the last four years without ever really believing that I would do it: now ask IN FAITH.'

I recognized the burden clearly. And it was an actual burden: it *burdened* me. I went to my room alone one afternoon and knelt in prayer. I knew that the time had come for the prayer of faith. And then, fully knowing what I was doing and what it might cost me, I definitely committed myself to this petition *in faith*. I 'cast my burden

upon the Lord'. I rose from my knees with the deep, restful conviction that I had already received the answer. The transaction was done. And since then (nearly a year ago now) I have never had anything but peace and joy (when in touch with God) in holding to the ground already claimed and taken. I have never repeated the request and never will: there is no need. The asking, the taking and the receiving, occupy but a few moments (Mark xi. 24). The past can never be undone, never need be redone. It is a solemn thing to enter into a faith-covenant with God. It is binding on both parties. You lift up your hand to God, perhaps even literally; you definitely ask for and definitely receive His proffered gift; then do not go back on your faith, even if you live to be a hundred.

5. GET TO WORK

To return once more to the Canadian farmer. He has put in his claim; the land has been granted; the deed made out and sealed with the Official seal. Is that the end then? No! only the beginning!

He has not attained his object yet. His object is a harvest of wheat, not a patch of waste land; and there is a vast difference between the two. The Government never promised him sacks of flour all ready for exportation—only the land which could be made to yield them. Now is the time for him to roll up his sleeves and get to work. He must build his homestead, get his live stock, call in labourers, clear the ground, plough it and sow his seed. The Government says to him in effect, 'We have granted your claim: now go and work it.'

And this distinction is no less clear in the spiritual realm. God gives us the ground in answer to the prayer of faith, but not the harvest. That must be worked for in co-operation with Him. Faith must be followed up by works, prayer-works. Salvation is of grace, but it must be worked out (Phil. ii. 12) if it is to become ours. And the prayer of faith is just the same. It is given to us by free grace, but it will never be ours till we follow it up, work it out. 'Faith and works' again. They must never be divorced; for indolence will reap no harvest in the spiritual world. I think the principle will be found to hold in any case where the prayer of faith is offered, but there is no doubt that it always holds good in cases where the strongholds of Satan are attacked, where the prey is to be wrested from the strong.

Think of the children of Israel under Joshua : God had given them the land of Canaan—given it to them (notice) by free grace—but see how they had to fight when once they commenced actually to take possession ! Then again think of Daniel (Daniel x. 12, 13) : his prayer was answered the very first day he offered it ; but that was only the signal for a twenty days' battle in the aerial heavens ! Satan's tactics seem to be as follows. He will first of all oppose our breaking through to the place of a real, living faith, by all means in his power. He detests the prayer of faith, for it is an authoritative 'notice to quit'. He does not so much mind rambling, carnal prayers, for they do not hurt him much. This is why it is so difficult to attain to a definite faith in God for a definite object. We often have to strive and wrestle in prayer (Eph. vi. 10, etc.) before we attain this quiet, restful faith. And until we break right through and *join hands with God* we have not attained to real faith at all. Faith is a gift of God (Rom. xii. 9) ; if we stop short of it we are using mere fleshly energy or will-power, weapons of no value in this warfare. However, once we attain to a real faith, all the forces of hell are impotent to annul it. What then ? They retire and muster their forces on this plot of ground which God has pledged Himself to give us, and contest every inch of it. The real battle begins when the prayer of faith has been offered. But, praise the Lord ! we are on the winning side. Let us read and re-read the tenth chapter of Joshua, and never talk about defeat again. Defeat, indeed ! No, Victory ! Victory ! Victory !

2 Sam. xxiii. 8-23 is a passage along this line which has been meat and drink to me the last day or two. Verses 11 and 12 contain all I have been saying in a nutshell. Please read them. Let Shammah represent the Christian warrior. Let David represent the crucified and risen Christ—and note that Shammah was 'one of the mighty men whom David had'. Let the 'plot of ground' represent the prayer of faith. Let the lentils, if you will, represent the poor lost souls of men. Let the Philistines represent the aerial hosts of wickedness. Let 'the people' represent Christians (may be good people) afflicted with spiritual anæmia. I can imagine what these people were saying as they saw the Philistines approaching and ran away :

'Perhaps it was not the Lord's will to grant us that plot of ground. We must submit to the will of God.'

Yes, we must indeed submit ourselves to God, but we must 'resist the devil' too (Jas. iv. 7). The fact that the enemy

comes upon us in force is no proof that we are out of the line of God's will. The constant prefixing of 'if it be Thy will' to our prayers is often a mere subterfuge of unbelief. True submission to God is not inconsistent with virility and boldness. Notice what Shammah did—simply *held his ground*. He was not seeking more worlds to conquer at that moment! He just stood where he was and hit out, right and left. Notice also the result of his action and to whom the glory is ascribed!

6. PRAYING THROUGH TO VICTORY

I repeat that this does not necessarily apply to every kind of prayer. A young Lisu Christian here is fond of telling an experience of his a few months ago. He was walking through the fields in the evening when his inside began unaccountably to pain him. He dropped on his knees and, bowing his head down to the ground, asked Jesus to cure him. At once the stomach-ache left him. Praise the Lord! And there are no doubt multitudes of such cases—simple faith and simple answers. But we must not rest content with such prayer. We must get beyond stomach-ache or any other ache, and enter into the deeper fellowship of God's purposes. 'That ye be no longer children' (Eph. iv. 14). We must press on to maturity. We must attain to 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ', and not remain in God's kindergarten indefinitely. If we grow into manhood in the spiritual life we shall not escape conflict. As long as Eph. vi. 10-18 remains in the Bible, we must be prepared for serious warfare—'And having done all, to stand'. We must fight through, and then stand victorious on the battle-field.

Is not this another secret of many unanswered prayers—that they are not fought through? If the result is not seen as soon as expected, Christians are apt to lose heart, and if it is still longer delayed to abandon it altogether. You know the name they give to places in England when the building (or whatever it is) is abandoned when only half completed—So and so's 'Folly'. I wonder whether some of our prayers do not deserve the same stigma. Think of Wembley Tower: I have never examined it closely, but from a distance it looks as if a good beginning had been made. Luke xiv. 28-30 applies to prayers as well as towers. We must count the cost before praying the prayer of faith. We must be willing to pay the price. We must mean business. We must set ourselves to 'see things

through' (Eph. vi. 18, 'In all perseverance'). Our natural strength will fail : and herein lies the necessity for a divinely-given faith. We can then rest back in the Everlasting Arms and renew our strength continually. We can then rest as well as wrestle. In this conflict-prayer, after the definite exercise of faith, there is no need to ask the same thing again and again. It seems to me inconsistent to do so. Under these circumstances, I would say let prayer take the following forms :

(a) A firm *standing on God-given ground*, and a constant assertion of faith and claiming of victory. It is helpful, I find, to repeat passages of Scripture applicable to the subject. Let faith be continually strengthened and fed from its proper source—the Word of God.

(b) A definite fighting and *resisting of Satan's host* in the Name of Christ. I like to read passages of Scripture, such as 1 John iii. 8, or Rev. xii. 11 in prayer, as direct weapons against Satan. I often find it a means of much added strength and liberty in prayer to fight in this way. Nothing cuts like the word of the living God (Eph. vi. 17, Heb. iv. 12).

(c) *Praying through* every aspect of the matter in detail. In the case of my Lisu work here I continually pray to God to give me fresh knowledge of His will, more wisdom in dealing with the people, knowledge of how to pray, how to maintain victory, how to instruct the people in the Gospel, or in singing or in prayer, help in studying the language, help in ordinary conversation, help in preaching, guidance as to settling down somewhere as a centre, guidance about building a house (if necessary), guidance as regards my own arrangements (servant, money, food, clothes, etc.) help and blessing in my correspondence, opening for the Word and blessing in other villages, for leaders and helpers to be raised up for me, for each of the Christians by name, also for every one of my prayer helpers by name. Such detailed prayer is exhausting, but I believe effectual in regard to ascertaining the will of God and obtaining His highest blessing.

I would not ask anyone to join me in the definite prayer for the turning to God of several hundred Lisu families, unless God gives individual guidance to do so. Better offer prayer in a more general way than make a definite petition apart from His leading. I should, however, value highly the prayer-co-operation of any who felt led to join me in it. What I want, too, is not just an occasional mention of my work and its needs before the Lord, during the

morning or evening devotions, but a definite time (say half an hour or so?) set apart for the purpose every day, either during the day-time or in the evening. Can you give that time to me—or rather to the Lord? . . .

About a fortnight ago I baptized two Lisu women at the little village of Six Family Hollow—the wives of the two young Lisu men I baptized last January. I have now baptized six Christian Lisu altogether, all from that one family. It was my painful duty only the next day, however, to exclude one of these, a man named Ahdo, from church fellowship, for an indefinite period. He is the man who first introduced me to the Lisu in his home and in many of the surrounding villages, and until the end of last year he acted as my preacher and ‘helper’ when with me. It appears that he has been continually, during the past few years and until now—not only in his own village but in other places where he has been with me—breaking the seventh commandment. The Lisu are a very immoral race in any case, but in spite of his Christian profession he has been even more sinful than most of them. Such things will go on sometimes, almost indefinitely, no one but the foreign missionary being ignorant of them. I had made inquiries about his character, but had not learnt anything. I baptized him with his younger brother and both parents last January, but he has not been with me since then. I am glad to say, however, that he seems quite penitent and never attempted to deny it. We must pray for his restoration. I have no other special news of the work, just now. I am thinking of visiting that village (Six Family Hollow) again in a few days, as well as other villages.

Hoping to write again next month and with earnest prayers for you all,

Yours in the Lord’s service,

J. O. Fraser.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SWORD-LADDER FESTIVAL

WHILE still giving time to the study of the language, Fraser was out on the road a great deal, if mountain paths and tracks almost lost in the jungle could be called by that name. In tiny hamlets over the Burma border, he had the joy of seeing several families turn to the Lord, and from south of Tapu Pum—a frontier giant eleven thousand feet high—invitations began to reach him from districts as yet unvisited. Yet the trial of his faith was great as month after month went by and the larger ingathering he was prayerfully expecting seemed as far off as ever.

Six Family Hollow was always a bright spot, because of the steadfast faith of Mother Tsai and most of her family.

The old man is nearly seventy [Fraser wrote just after the New Year] and his wife is over sixty. Her two sons and their wives all believe and have been baptized, though the elder of the two has had to be disciplined, as I mentioned before. As far as I can see, he is turning over a new leaf. They have been Christians, now, for three years and seem to grow in faith and courage. The old lady is the firmest of all. It is probably owing to her that they are now believers. When they first turned Christian, they underwent some severe trials for a time, and very nearly fell back. They had considerable sickness, and were taunted by their neighbours, Chinese and Lisu, with having offended the demons and incurred their wrath. Everything seemed against them, but the old lady held on, and they finally pulled through. She has a very practical faith and can tell you of many answers to prayer.

As an instance, she tells you that her pig (a most valuable possession) has run away three times, but has come back every time in answer to prayer. When a pig runs away to the mountains it is almost sure to stay there. Up here, people do not keep them in sties, but let them roam in and around their houses for whatever they can get, for all is grist that comes to the mill of a Chinese pig. Mrs. Tsai has a sense

of humour, too. Her pig has a peculiar habit of leaning its head on the side of the trough, shutting its eyes and grunting a little while before eating. So she tells the people that *even her pig* knows how to pray !

Not far from the Tsai home were three other families of whom it was encouraging to hear. They, too, had become Christians, and Fraser lost no time in going over to see them at Bamboo Hut and Artemesia Plain. Mr. Fish of the former hamlet proved to be half blind. He had suffered much pain in his eyes and had made costly offerings to the spirits without effect. At last he grew desperate and determined that, as the spirits would not help him, he would renounce them all and turn to the God of his Christian neighbours.

So he actually took a sword [Fraser wrote] and chopped down his family altar, refusing to burn any incense or paper-money, though it was the Chinese New Year. He had heard the Gospel previously, but this is the first case I have come across of a man definitely discarding idolatry on his own initiative. I did not visit him till nearly three months after that, during which time he had gone down to my colleague, Mr. Embery, and obtained some eye-lotion, and was quite relieved of the pain. I stayed three days in his home, and found him, his wife and children, as well as his old father and mother, singularly whole-hearted in their determination to worship God.

A cheering answer, this, to Fraser's prayer for whole families to turn to Christ, among the mountain people !

This case [he continued] has been noised abroad throughout the district and has made a favourable impression. The only thing many of the people are waiting for is to know whether it is *really safe* to throw the evil spirits overboard and turn to Christ. It is important to pray for those who have already turned Christian, that their faith and constancy may be equal to all tests. and that the Spirit's power for the healing of sickness may be with them. For a man to turn Christian and then be smitten down with sickness, at once discredits the Gospel in the eyes of the Lisu.

The two families at Artemesia Plain were not quite so

out and out, but Fraser felt that they, too, would hold on, by God's blessing.

Mr. Fish of this village is an opium-smoker, but he intends to break it off, if we will help him. He says he is not afraid of 'house demons'—*i.e.* the Ancestral Spirits worshipped in the central room of every home, Lisu as well as Chinese—but only of the 'outside demons'. He cleared his home of demonolatry without demur, while I was there, but said that the proof of the efficacy of the Gospel will come in the warding off of evil influences while out on the hills. Evil spirits are believed to lurk in certain spots, and when anyone passes their lair they may attack them, causing severe pain in some part of the body. I assured him that the Lord Jesus is able to protect all who really put their trust in Him, and he said that he would 'give the Gospel a fair trial'. I stayed with the family two or three days and taught them to pray.

From that little mountain-home Fraser's thoughts must have turned sadly to a very different experience met with some weeks before. He had had high hopes of a group of inquirers in a place near Tantsah, where that far-famed 'Sword-ladder Festival' was held from time to time. The demon-priest of Cold Horse Village had not sought to hinder his influence among the people, though refusing, himself, to have anything to do with the Gospel.

'No,' he said, 'it is impossible for me to be a Christian. The gods have entered right into me, and I belong to them. You may exhort the other people of the village. If they turn Christian, well and good; but I cannot.'

He had even invited the missionary to come to the next 'great occasion', when he was to wash his hands in fire and mount the ladder of swords. This brought Fraser to the village early in 1916 full of hope for a number of inquirers, both there and in the nearby hamlet in which he was hospitably received. But it proved to be a plunge into abyssmal darkness, not only as regards the manifestations of demon-power, but in the suffering of his own spirit.

Hundreds of people were gathered, as he wrote, in and

around the temple where the spirits were to be propitiated for the protection of the district. A fellow-missionary had come up from Tengyueh, the first European Fraser had seen for three months, and together they moved among the excited crowd watching the proceedings.

The sword-ladder had about three dozen rungs and was fixed vertically. It stood right out in an open place and was some forty feet high. The evening before the ascent, the 'devil-dancer', a man of over sixty years of age, was supposed to 'wash' his hands and feet in a fire of red-hot cinders. Goby and I went to the temple to witness this. There was a whole lot going on. Sacrifices were being offered to some hideous-looking idols, including one of two chickens which the devil-dancer killed by biting through their necks with his own teeth. . . . With the beating of drums and gongs, they were trying to work up some kind of frenzy, but with only partial success. At length the devil-dancer emerged from the temple and just swept the red-hot coals about with his bare hands and feet. . . . We both noticed, next day, that his hands showed signs of being burnt.

This, despite the fact that he was supposed to be immune from harm, either from sword or fire. The formidable ladder proved also to be more or less of a deception—for while some of the swords could have sharpened a pencil, many had lost their edge. Still, to climb it was a feat which neither Goby nor Fraser would have cared to attempt.

The old devil-dancer did not emerge from the temple till about 2 p.m. (next day) and, after more incantations, proceeded very slowly to ascend the ladder. After more talk and carrying-on at the top, he slowly came down again. Then two others, younger men, went up and down again. A woman also very nearly did so. She has, as they say, fits of demon-possession in her home, and was to be cured by mounting the ladder of knives through the power of her 'god'. But she, apparently, could not get hold of the inspiration necessary, so after carrying on in a wild kind of way for a while, she gave up the attempt.

The excitement, meanwhile, was intense—the faces of the people expressed the horrid fears that kept them in

bondage. It was hardly to be wondered at that in ground so overgrown with tares the good seed Fraser had been sowing should fail to take root. The whole experience impressed upon him afresh the need for truly supernatural power in meeting such conditions. With a bleeding heart he wrote to his prayer helpers at home, pleading for deeper fellowship in the work to which he was called, the always costly work of redemption.¹

I was very severely disappointed, he wrote, about the attitude of the Lisu of that district to the Gospel. They received the Word with joy at first, as they so often do. Several announced that they were going to turn Christian, one old man and his son seeming specially earnest. Then the spirit of fear seemed to possess them, and one by one they dropped off, until no one would take a stand at all. We had to leave them as heathen as I first found them. It was a very painful experience and seemed almost to stun me for awhile.

Goby left him the next day ; and from his loneliness at Tantsah, Fraser wrote to his prayer partners of the deeper experiences into which he was being led. The record of Hannah's grief and faith in the opening chapter of first Samuel was speaking to his heart.

How much of our prayer is of the quality we find in this woman's 'bitterness of soul', when she 'prayed unto the Lord'? How many times have we ever 'wept sore' before the Lord? . . . We have prayed much, perhaps, but our longings have not been deep as compared with hers. We have spent much time upon our knees, it may be, without our hearts going out in an agony of desire. But real supplication is the child of heartfelt desire, and cannot prevail without it ; a desire not of earth nor issuing from our own sinful hearts, but wrought into us by God Himself. Oh, for such desires ! Oh, for Hannah's earnestness, not in myself only but in all who are joining me in prayer for these poor heathen aborigines !

And is there not sufficient reason for such earnestness ? We have our Peninnahs as surely as ever Hannah had and

¹ Ps. xlix. 8 ; Heb. ix. 11, 12 ; Eph. i. 7.

as God's saints have had all down the ages. David's eyes ran down with rivers of water, because the ungodly observed not God's law (Ps. cxix. 136). Jeremiah wept with bitter lamentation, because of the destruction of the holy city. Nehemiah fasted, mourned and wept when he heard of the fresh calamities which had befallen Jerusalem. Our Lord wept over it, because of its hardness of heart. The Apostle Paul had 'great sorrow and unceasing pain', in his heart, on account of his brethren according to the flesh (Rom. ix. 2).

Yes, and *we* have our 'sore provocations', or should have. How else ought we to feel when we see all the ungodliness and unbelief round us on every hand. Would a light-hearted apathy become us under such circumstances? No, indeed! And I want you, please, to join me—or, rather, share with me—in the 'provocation' which is daily with me in my work among the Lisu. Let the terrible power of evil spirits among them be a provocation to *you*. Let their sinfulness, their fears, their pitiful weakness and instability be a provocation to *you*. Ask God to lay the burden upon you, and that heavily . . . that it may press you down upon your knees. My prayer for you is that God will work such sorrow within you that you will have no alternative but to pray. I want you to be 'sore provoked' as I am.

Such a state of mind and heart is only of avail, however, as it is turned into prayer. Desire, however deep, does nothing in itself, any more than steam pressure in a boiler is of use, unless it is allowed to drive machinery. There is a spiritual law here. A strong spiritual desire does harm rather than good, if it is neglected. . . . An earnest desire in spiritual things is a bell ringing for prayer. Not that we should wait for such desires. . . . We should pray at all seasons, whether we are prayer-hungry or not. If we have a healthy prayer-appetite, so much the better; but if this appetite be unnoticed or unappeased, a dullness will come over us and we shall be weakened in spirit, just as lack of sufficient food weakens us in body. See, in 1 Sam. i. 15, the way in which Hannah dealt with her God-given desire. Her soul was bitter, and she 'poured it out' before the Lord. Blessed bitterness! but it must be poured out.

CHAPTER XIV

'WHO TEACHETH LIKE HIM?'

BEFORE the writer lies a largish brown book, bound in half-calf, and bearing signs of much use. It is heavy, a hundred and fifty substantial pages, ruled with faint lines and filled almost to the end with small, clear writing. A line a day is all that is given to most of the entries, and there are few blank spaces. Only one line a day—the amazing record of Fraser's missionary activities—beginning at Tantsah with the New Year, 1916, and abruptly ending at Paoshan, twenty-two years later. 'Thirtieth anniversary of sailing from Tilbury' is almost the last entry, a few days only before his swift translation to higher service.

Life became too full, as time went on, for any record save the barest facts; but in the Tantsah period, the opening pages of the Journal are rich in revealing thoughts and experiences. Here we company with Fraser in his loneliness; tramp with him on his preaching tours; share his inner life amid joys and sorrows, and enter into the deeper communings of his heart with God. Truly, 'the place . . . is holy ground.'

And the journal adds meaning to the correspondence he kept up so faithfully with his mother and the praying friends she gathered round her. For she was the heart of his Prayer Circle; the one who originated and tended it with all a mother's love. She lived, toiled and suffered with her boy, so far away, and when he was hard pressed in his Lisu trenches, instead of worrying she gave herself the more to prayer and getting others to pray.

As the Prayer Circle grew, Fraser was distinctly conscious of a change both in himself and in his surroundings. A new spirit of expectancy began to stir within him and there seemed new power with his message. This made him long for more such prayer-help, and in his practical way he set

[1916. ÆT. 29-30.]

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to work to obtain it. Writing to thank the members of the Circle for their ‘faithful intercessions’, he continued :

You will know how, sometimes, a passage of Scripture comes to one with such insistence and such an obvious application to present circumstances, that one can hardly doubt its being a direct message from God. It seems as if God’s word to me at present comes in a passage from Isaiah, which spoke to me powerfully a few weeks ago and still seems to ring within me : ‘Enlarge the place of thy tent . . . spare not ; lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes. *For thou shalt spread abroad on the right hand and on the left.*’ Is. liv. 2, 3.

Knowing as I do the conditions of the work, its magnitude (potentially), its difficulties and the opposition it meets with, I have definitely resolved, with God’s help, to enlarge the place of my tent ; to lengthen my prayer cords and strengthen my intercessory stakes. I have, that is to say, resolved to make a forward movement with regard to the Prayer Circle.

Up to that time his occasional letters about the work had been forwarded from one to another, round the group of eight or ten prayer-helpers. Now, at his own expense, he was to send a separate copy to each one, as well as taking steps to add to the membership.

I am persuaded [he wrote in this connection] that England is rich in godly, quiet, praying people, in every denomination. They may not be a great multitude as far as numbers are concerned, but they are ‘rich in faith’, even if many of them be poor and of humble station. It is the prayers of such that I covet more than gold of Ophir—those good old men and good old women (yes, and not necessarily old either) who know what it is to have power with God and prevail. . . . Will you help me, prayerfully and judiciously, to get some of these to join the circle? . . . The work for which I am asking prayer is preaching and teaching the Word of God, pure and simple. . . . I have no confidence in anything but the Gospel of Calvary to uplift these needy people.

How much Fraser’s heart was in this work comes out in both letters and journal. Oh, those endless journeys over the mountains, tramping round his districts, new and old ! How widely he scattered the precious seed, how fervently

he watered it with his prayers. Of one journey on the Burma border there is no record save in pencilled notes to his mother :

In this poor, mountainous part of Burma, the people put up very rough shanties. . . . They live practically—sit, eat and sleep, on their earth floors. . . . For a bed, they lay you a lath-mat, just next to the fire in the centre room, on which you spread your bedding. So you lie only about one inch from the ground. And the people, often a whole roomful of them, are much interested in the process of dressing and undressing. . . . They give you little or no privacy if they can help it, from the moment you enter the village until the moment you leave it. Bathed in dashing mountain stream, among the big boulders. Less tired in the evening : preached and talked to the people.

But in those tiny, hidden hamlets, overshadowed by mountains eleven thousand feet high, there was a response to the message Fraser brought that made it all worth while.

At the village of Six Families [he wrote] put to stay in a Black Hole of Calcutta, called a house. Good time preaching in the evening. As this was not one of the places to which I had been definitely invited, I was preparing to leave in the morning when my Lisu helper came along to say that the villagers were asking us to stay on, as some of them wanted to turn Christian. So of course I stayed. I am at their beck and call whenever they want to turn to God. More preaching in the evening.

Quite a little is involved in this 'turning'. First a good talk with the family round the fire, explaining the meaning of the step they are taking. Then prayer with them all, standing up, followed by the removal of all objects used in demon worship. This takes quite a while. . . . All that will burn is thrown on the fire, and we have a fine old blaze. The joy of seeing this done is second only to the joy of baptizing.

At Chop River, the Bear family also gave cause for encouragement—an old lady with her son, his wife and three children.

A delightful family [Fraser continued]. None on the whole trip turned Christian more whole-heartedly. The son made a clean and bold sweep of all demonolatry, both

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inside and outside of the house, leading me round to see that all was O.K. Someone suggested that it would do to remove only the things used in spirit-worship, leaving the shelf for other purposes.

'No, no !' he exclaimed. 'We will get rid of the whole lot while we are about it.'

His young wife, an unusually bright, intelligent woman, plied me with all sorts of questions about the Gospel.

But such joys were none too frequent. The reaping time had not yet come for the lonely pioneer, and his hopes for Tantsah especially were far from being realized. Yet he had no liberty about moving to another centre. For five months, from January to May, he held on, waiting for guidance ; and turning the early pages of the Journal one is awed to see the depths of soul-exercise involved, the height, length and breadth of his prayers. To himself, his experience at this time seemed full of failure, chequered with defeat. And in a sense, it was. But to those who knew him in later years it goes far to explain the spiritual level on which he lived, so unconsciously to himself, a plane many of us know little about and never reach. In these long-closed pages we see him climbing, undeterred by the cost.

Tantsah.

January 1, 1916. Must watch against getting up too late, these intensely cold mornings. The indwelling Christ is my successful weapon against all sin these days—praise Him !

Sunday, January 2. . . . An earnest desire to save souls is on me, but prayer is rather unstable. I must regain my equilibrium in the prayer-life. I must maintain, also, my abiding in Christ, by prayer without ceasing (silent), which I am now finding blessedly possible. Rom. vi is not now my weapon, so much as John xv.

Tuesday, January 4. Finished Finney's Autobiography : much help received from it. Finney's strong point is the using of *means* to an *end*. My own leading is not a little along that line also. I do not intend to be one of those who bemoan little results, while 'resting in the faithfulness of God'. My cue is to take hold of the faithfulness of God and USE THE MEANS necessary to secure big results.

Saturday, January 8. Prayer out on the hill, from noon

till about 3.30 p.m. Much drawn out for Lisu work generally.

Sunday, January 9. . . . Discussion with Ku's family about his removing the 'family altar', as well as the betrothal ceremony of his son, to-morrow.

Monday, January 10. . . . Nearly all the Christians away at Ku's betrothal ceremony (where there would be drinking and dancing, etc.). I spend most of the evening in prayer. Nothing will give me lasting joy on this earth, now, but the salvation of large numbers of Lisu. To hear of Lisu 'turning' anywhere, or even intending to turn, rejoices me in a way that nothing else does.

Sunday, January 16. Not a single one to Service in the morning. . . .

The walls of Jericho fell down 'by faith' (not the faith of the walls, though!). Of all the instances of faith in Heb. xi, this corresponds most nearly to my case. But not faith only was necessary; the wall fell down after it had been compassed about for seven days. Seven days' *patience* was required . . . and diligent compassing of the city every day too—which seems to typify encompassing the situation by regular, systematic *prayer*. Here then we see God's way of success in our work, whatever it may be—a trinity of prayer, faith and patience.

Tuesday, January 18. Prayer, to-day, rather on general than particular lines; patience the chief thought. Abraham was called out by God and went in blind faith; when he got to the land of promise, he found nothing but a famine—much like me with the Lisu, these two years. But Abraham, or his seed, possessed the milk and honey of the whole land, later on. God's time had come for Abraham, but not for the Amorites. God's time has come for me, but not, perhaps, just this month or this year, for the Lisu.

Am impressed, too, that I do not yet know the channels which the grace of God is going to cut out among the people here. Hence general prayer has its place, until God's plan is revealed a little more fully.

Fraser, it appears, was assailed at times by the uprising of what he calls 'fierce impatience' with a very trying helper, a man from whom he endured not a little rudeness and inefficiency. He was usually able to control any manifestation of annoyance, but the inward perturbation left him with a deep sense of defeat. For he did know by

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experience the meaning of victory in Christ, which is so much more than outward self-control.

‘How *can* thee be so calm and pleasant?’ exclaimed a young Quakeress, seeing the way an older lady responded to great annoyance.

‘Ah, my dear,’ was the quick reply, ‘thee doesn’t know how I boil inside!’

It was just that *boiling inside* from which Fraser sought deliverance—sought and found it in the blessed fact, ‘I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me. The indwelling Christ is my successful weapon against all sin’ was increasingly his experience in the details of everyday life. ‘Claim more; claim victory,’ he quoted from a book he was reading at this time¹; ‘I do not mean ask God to give you victory, but claim His victory to overshadow you. When in the thick of the fight, when you are the object of attack, plead less and claim more on the ground of the blood of Jesus Christ.’ But the conflict was real, for the Journal continues:

Tuesday, February 1. Prayer in the afternoon for about three hours, but not enough grip or intelligent method—as if I have arrears of prayer to make up.

Thursday, February 3. Depressed after defeat this morning, from which no real recovery all day (last day of the Chinese year).

Friday, February 4. No meal till 2 p.m. Thoroughly depressed about state of work in Tantsah. No one to count upon in matters demanding an earnest spirit. . . . The evil one seems to have the upper hand in me to-day, as well as in the Christians. Fighting between Gu and Ku in the evening, also between Adu and O.S. Ku off to the dances. Several visitors during the day. . . . A little prayer in much distress of soul, on top of hill. Feel much inclined to ‘let Ephraim alone’. . . . But just here I am torn between two alternatives—for I seem to have no leading to leave Tantsah, any more than the Lord had to leave Jerusalem (Luke xix. 41). . . . My prayer is not so much, ‘Lord, lead me somewhere else’, as ‘Lord, give me a solid church, here in Tantsah’.

Saturday, February 5. Yesterday’s attack of depression and

¹ ‘Wilderness Conflict,’ by S. D. Gordon.

defeat almost got over, but not quite. Such times are not easy to recover from, I find. Enabled in large measure, however, to adopt the attitude of combined common-sense and restful faith. The two O.S.'s came in this evening, with whom useful talk, as also with Ku. Still much distressed, however, over the condition of things. . . . The majority of Christians have gone in for whisky-drinking.¹ . . . The outlook here in Tantsah at present seems less hopeful than at any time since I first set foot in the place.

I am not, however, taking the black, despondent view I took yesterday. . . . The opposition will not be overcome by reasoning or by pleading, but by (chiefly) steady, persistent prayer. The *men* need not be dealt with (it is a heart-breaking job, trying to deal with a Lisu possessed by a spirit of fear) but the powers of darkness need to be fought. I am now setting my face like a flint: if the work seems to fail, then *pray*; if services, etc., fall flat, then *pray still more*; if months slip by with little or no result, then *pray still more and get others to help you*.

Sunday, February 6. . . . B. and Va announce that they will become Christians, if their parents will allow them. . . . Four young men say they will follow Christ, whatever happens. . . . I adopt an entirely new attitude with them for the first time, concealing my earnest desire beneath a calm, almost indifferent exterior. I now think that this is the best way after all. . . . It will give them more confidence.²

Tuesday, February 8. Mo La P' turns Christsian in the morning. Gu, Va and T, all at his house. . . . Full of joy and praise!

But there was fighting, drinking and dancing that New Year season even in 'Christian' households. The dancers came up to Fraser's courtyard one night, and he awoke to find people in his room and revelry going on outside.

¹ Customary at the New Year season.

² 'If you wish to make headway among these Lisu people you must let them take the initiative to a large extent,' Fraser wrote the following day to his Prayer Circle, 'carefully avoiding the least suspicion of pressing, urging them to turn Christian. Such a thing as pressure or even earnest exhortation on the missionary's part tends to create fear and misgiving. They are, one and all, friendly to the missionary (many even warmly so), but they are excessively timid, and like very small children have to be coaxed (if at all) with extreme care. They are possessed with a spirit of fear—fear of demons, fear of the Chinese, fear of me, because of what the Chinese tell them. Very many of them are afraid that I am going to *compel* them to turn Christian, as well as compel them to do other things (*e.g.*, pay taxes to me!), and nothing reassures them more than to insist that they are free to be Christians or not as they please.'

An evangelistic trip took him away for a time, and before long he was able to write :

Cloud seems to have lifted considerably—perhaps because prayer-burden fought right through. . . . After much pressure, even agony, in prayer for Lisu souls, enabled to break through into liberty, and to pray the definite prayer of faith for signal blessing among the Lisu during the next few months. . . . Real, prevailing prayer, for the first time for a week or more, and well worth the travail that led up to it. . . . Much peace and rest of soul after making that definite prayer, and almost ecstatic joy to think of the Lisu Christian families I am going to get.¹

And yet, this was almost immediately followed by the distressing experience at the Sword-ladder Festival, when every one of the promising group of inquirers went back to demon-worship as we have seen.

Quite crushed with sorrow for a while [is the entry for March 13], whence an effort helped me, outside the village—and a straight-out, right-from-the-shoulder prayer against Satan restored faith and peace. The spirit of depression had to be entirely driven away, for victory.

A suggestive entry follows :

March 14. The question now remains whether I intend really to consecrate myself to the Lord, or to compromise.

¹ 'Perhaps you will wonder why I say *families*. It is because only when the responsible members of any particular family turn to God that the household idolatrous implements may be removed, and until that is done the real commitment has not been made. A definite committal of some kind is of the first importance among these people. If a man turns to God but shrinks from burning the bridge behind him by discarding his idolatrous utensils, he will as likely as not slip back again into his old life. But if he once removes all idolatry from his home you may feel fairly certain of him afterwards. It is seldom that a man who takes this step reverts to demon-worship again; strong as is the hold demonolatry has upon the people, one such blow seems to break its power for ever. When these tribespeople turn to the Lord *en famille* it does not necessarily mean that every member of the family is wholehearted about the matter—indeed this is seldom the case—but it does mean that the responsible members of the family turn from Satan to God with a definiteness otherwise lacking. When, accordingly, I speak about so many Christian "families" I mean families where those responsible have removed all vestige of demonolatry from the home. Much, of course, remains to be done after this, but you feel that you have, in a sense, already landed your fish when this step has been taken, and you thank God for the haul. In some cases a younger member of the family will turn Christian while the others hold back; he cannot then tamper with the household demonolatry. He may be quite sincere, and of course you receive him, but, as I say, such converts are apt to be unstable. At present I have a total of about ten families, in five different villages, who have turned to God.'—Letter to Prayer Circle of February 7, 1916.

Was he recognizing afresh that only a deeper work of grace in ourselves can enable us effectually to strengthen others? 'For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' Compromise is so easy! A slackening off, hardly conscious to oneself, it may be, and of which no one else for the time-being is aware. But how it tells in the long run!

March 15. Last night's compromise continued until this morning, with distressing turmoil in consequence. Not enabled to take the crucified position till mid-day. A wasted morning as a natural result. . . . Oh, I am myself needing far, far more prayer these days!

Two days later he was writing with reference to one who was causing anxiety.

O Lo Si here in the evening. . . . After he left, was enabled to strive for him in prayer, with the result that I now hear of his re-decision to be a Christian. He must be held on to in faith, however. Much helped by Mrs. Penn-Lewis's bringing out the point, 'say to this mountain'. Was enabled to say, this evening. Retired, strong in spirit.

In his loneliness, Fraser was helped at this time, as often before, by articles in *The Overcomer*. Quotations made toward the end of March show the lines on which he was thinking.

March 20. Each time your spirit goes under and faints in the testing and trials which come to you, you lose mastery over the powers of darkness, *i.e.* you get below them instead of abiding above them in God. Every time you take the earth standpoint—think as men think, talk as men talk, look as men look—you take a place below the powers of darkness. The mastery of them depends upon your spirit abiding in the place above them, and the place above them means knowing God's outlook, God's view, God's thought, God's plan, God's ways, by abiding with Christ in God.

You may be so entangled in the things of earth that your spirit cannot rise above them. The devil knows this and pours earthly things upon you to *keep you down*, so that you go under and not over when the battle comes.

Rom. viii. 11. You must know the quickening of the body to a very great extent if you are to be able to endure

the conflicts of this present hour. Your natural strength would go under, so God 'quickens your mortal body' to make you able to endure what no flesh and blood could endure and live. One of the temptations in the spirit-warfare is when the body begins to flag, to say 'I must give up', instead of casting yourself upon 'God that raises the dead' and can quicken the mortal body to endure and triumph in and through all things.¹

Eph. vi. 10. Oh how we need STRENGTH, for often we can hardly hold our ground !

In every battle there are crucial spots. Get near and stay near to your Divine Chief until He turns and points them out. And at those points face and force the fight. And though the conflict be keen, though defeat seems certain, though the battle should continue for hours, for days, for months, even for years, yet *hold on*, HOLD ON ; for to such Jer. i. 19 is written : 'They shall fight against thee but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to deliver thee.'

The aim of Satanic power is to cut off communication with God. To accomplish this aim he *deludes the soul with a sense of defeat*, covers him with a thick cloud of darkness, depresses and oppresses the spirit, which in turn hinders prayer and leads to unbelief—thus destroying all power (instead of seeing Heb. xi. 1).

Any position you have really taken with God's help, *may be re-taken at once by faith* after a temporary lapse.

It is one of the most subtle wiles of the foe to get us occupied with superficial and surface concerns (*e.g.* book-selling, language study, running mission-stations, report-writing, correspondence, account-keeping, building, repairs, buying things, reading, etc., etc., J.O.F.). The enemy is delighted to have us so occupied incessantly with *secondary and trivial concerns*, as to keep us from attacking and resisting in the true spirit of the conflict. **WEIGH THESE WORDS.**
J. O. F.

Times of defeat are frequently noted in the Journal, and traced to their true cause. 'I am needing more form and order, more diligence, definiteness and despatch in my prayer life', he wrote at this time. 'Laziness' in spiritual things he found to be one of his chief causes of failure, and he was startled to note how quick the enemy

¹ Rom. viii. 11 and iv. 17.

was to attack when he was off his guard, and to gain ground not in himself only, but in others. One experience of this kind, which caused much painful exercise of mind is faithfully recorded in the Journal.

It had been a day of failure and slackness of spirit. He had tried to pray as usual, but had been baffled by listlessness and wandering thoughts—‘no grip’, he wrote, ‘no power’; only a sense of sliding down and beating the air, the cause of which must be ‘mercilessly investigated’. But efforts at recovery had only left him the more conscious of defeat. Matters came to a climax in the evening, and some of the inquirers came in for Bible reading and prayer. They were three of the most hopeful, his Tantsah inner circle, but that night they did not seem themselves. The experience that followed was so humiliating that we confine ourselves to Fraser’s own notes, made at the time :

A very definite sense of spiritual weakness—aggravated, no doubt, by further defeat in the evening with Ku, Va and O.S. The latter seemed almost as if possessed by a laughing demon, so entirely foreign to his usual demeanour ! Insane giggling during study, followed by a burst of laughter (the first I remember here, from any Christian) as soon as I commenced to pray. Va follows him, more or less. I stop praying and burst out at him in carnal anger which quite fails, from almost every point of view. But I feel quite incompetent to deal with it ; unequal to the situation ; master neither of myself nor anyone else. Feel weak, lazy and semi-passive ; have lost my grasp of things. O.S.’s unnatural flippancy seems only a reflection of my own condition. *Almost feel as if a demon were laughing at me through him* because of my powerlessness, defeat and spiritual inertia.

REFUSE, however, to be discouraged, but get down on my knees at once and ‘get right with God’. I have had many such experiences (failures) before, but have made the mistake of giving way to depression instead of calmly investigating the cause of things. This time, however, the thief is not going to escape. . . .

Formerly, it used to take me a few *days* to recover from such defeat. Then, when I began to know better, it took a few *hours*. But now I know even that to be too long, and

only allow a few minutes for complete recovery. The sooner the better, and there is no time-limit. (1 John i. 9.)

The lessons learned from this experience were unexpectedly practical. Seeking the explanation of his defeat, Fraser came to see that it was due to physical as well as spiritual causes. He had confined himself too much to his room—the only place in which he could count on privacy—and had neglected exercise and the mental balance of good hard study. Loneliness and the pressure of surrounding darkness had driven him to his knees too exclusively. The laws of nature are also the law of God ; and he had to learn that ignorance or forgetfulness of either the one or the other does not save us from the penalty of breaking them. 'First that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual' began to take on new meaning. 'I now think,' he wrote quite simply, 'that a long healthy walk was indicated, or wholesome Lisu study, rather than the "knee-drill" I practised with such signal failure.'

I will still continue to test before God this new-found explanation, but a practical rule I may well go by is this :

1. Do not imagine that success and blessing in the work are absolutely conditional on one's spending a few hours daily on one's knees, with unfailing regularity. Cast-iron methods in spiritual matters are never free from objection. Let regularity be tempered by Spirit-guidance, even in such matters. For example, one's mind or body may be genuinely tired and require a little relaxation. Also, one may have prayed a thing through a day or so previously, and now have simply to hold on in expectant faith. But it is more than probable, when there is no liberty in spirit, that a change is needed, or a spell of study, as I have found.

2. Always remember, 'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also'. 1 Cor. xiv. 15. Let the spirit and the understanding work in about equal proportions. First, think over the needs, taking into account any consciousness of spirit-burden. Pray, tentatively, along that line, asking God continually to *focus* your prayers. If, after covering such ground in prayer, no 'grip' comes anywhere, it is probably best to close down at once. Do

not be in a hurry to do this . . . but don't press on in the energy of the flesh.

With regard to I (above), do not press it too far. The more prayer (in a sense) the better, however many hours every day it may demand : but God must lead. PRAY AS MUCH AND AS LONG AS EVER GOD WILL LET YOU.

These conclusions were justified, as he records, when the next week opened with 'a general state of defeat and weakness, *cured as if by magic by setting to and doing some honest work.*'

Yes, PASSIVITY, or call it by an uglier word, LAZINESS is the cause of half my defeat. I need never be defeated, as I know quite well. Victory all the rest of the day. This bears out what I have been learning. . . . When you are weak and feel unable to free yourself from the power of sin—just up and sing a song, or shout a determined note of defiance against the enemy ; then roll up your sleeves and do some good Lisu study. Lack of this spirit brings defeat. Moral : TRY TO FIND GOD'S BALANCE BETWEEN PRAYER AND WORK.

'Temptation again overcome by virile activity,' he continued the next day.

Oh yes, we Christians need never be overcome ! One weapon at least will always be found to work, if others fail. . . . 'When we are defeated there is a *cause*. We should not pass it over as inexplicable. Cast about to find the cause, *with the help of the Holy Spirit*. Then put the thing away, and avoid it in the future.' . . .

Spent most of the morning in prayer, very peacefully—drawn out especially for O Lo Si, or against the powers of darkness, rather, that hold him back. This prayer continued in power until, apparently, fought right through. . . . Rest of the day in Lisu study, thoroughly wholesome. Friday's lesson is being still further burnt into me. Yes, God teaches all right.

That was at the end of March, and early in April he was able to write :

To-day saw the biggest victory since ever I set foot in Tantsah. O Lo Si's demonolatry came down. Ku S. very helpful. . . . Oh, to learn more about co-operation with

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God in all things ! This is coming home to me, now, as never before.

Turning from these arresting pages, we leave a spirit on its upward way.

'My soul thirsteth for Thee . . .

My soul shall be satisfied . . .

My soul followeth hard after Thee . . .'

Ps. lxiii. 1, 5, 8.

Three stages of experience, successive yet ever present—thirsting, satisfied, following hard after our Upholding God.

CHAPTER XV

THE LETTER NEVER WRITTEN

BEFORE leaving Tantsah that summer to visit a new district on the Burma border, Fraser came to a decision which cost him not a little. The lack of converts in any number in his Lisu work weighed heavily on his heart. Whatever the reason, it seemed as if God's time had not yet come for the answer to his prayer of faith. What should he do? Was it right to stay on, waiting and praying, when workers were urgently needed in other, more fruitful fields? The outcome of much thought and prayer was that he decided to write to headquarters, cost what it might, and offer to go elsewhere for a time, if Mr. Hoste approved. But first, this evangelistic journey must be made in response to recent invitations—a journey which led to unexpected developments.

For in this district under the shadow of Tapu Pum, even Fraser's powers of endurance gave way. Coarse food and Lisu cooking did not trouble him, but in that lofty region there was little or nothing to be had, just then, but the poorest of red rice, without even turnip or cabbage to help it down. Fraser did his best, and so did the village folk who welcomed him. As long as he could hold out, he responded to their eager interest—teaching, singing, explaining the Glad Tidings they had never heard before. But after a week or so, the coarse food simply would not go down. His digestion went on strike. Illness supervened; and in a state of semi-starvation he had to make for Tengyueh as best he could. There, in the care of Mr. and Mrs. Embery, he rallied after a time, and was at hand to meet a demand that arose for help on the Chinese side of the work. A visit had to be paid to the city of Paoshan and, having been the pioneer in that district, Fraser was the one to undertake it.

The four days' journey, once so formidable, was more

like a pleasure trip after the rigours of the Lisu mountains. It was a joy to be preaching in Chinese again and to see the influence of the young evangelist in charge of the work.

Chao is really a splendid fellow [Fraser wrote to his mother, whose gift had led to the opening of this city]. He lacks in education and in scriptural knowledge, but has such an earnest spirit and the heart of a shepherd in looking after the converts. He has also a kind of shrewd wisdom in dealing with people. . . . I sometimes refer to you, in speaking of prayer for the work, and Chao and his wife wish to be remembered to you.

After some weeks spent with the inquirers, three of these were baptized and a Communion Service held for the first time in Paoshan. Before leaving the city, Fraser had the joy of seeing a Buddhist leader come out boldly for Christ, breaking her vegetarian vow. On the return journey a detour was made to re-visit Moh Ting-chang, the cake-maker at Hsiangta. What a joy it was to be in his home again and find him matured in spirit, though enthusiastic as ever !

Moh is a remarkably earnest Christian [he wrote on that visit]. It is a treat to stay with him and see the way he witnesses for Christ down in the shop. He is the kind of man who takes the aggressive in a bright, happy-go-lucky way, . . . arguing with much ingenuity.

Just now I am writing at his table in a big, upstairs room, littered with all sorts of things—for order and neatness are not among his virtues ! There are three beds, just the usual planks laid across a couple of forms and covered with straw mattresses. On the floor are big earthenware jars as high as your wrist, piles of firewood, bales of cotton brought from Burma, stores of fruit, and all kinds of odds and ends. Moh is watching me write and is asking all about you :

‘Is your Mother a Christian too What is her venerable age ? And can she read, like Mrs. Embury ?’ etc., etc.

The persistent opposition of his own mother had been one of Moh’s biggest trials in leaving all to follow Christ. She was an opium-smoker and lived with his brother, so that the younger son’s change of faith did not materially affect her. She keenly felt the social disgrace, however,

brought upon herself and all his ancestors. In vain he explained the message of Redeeming Love and all that it meant to have a living Saviour. No, he was bewitched and casting off the family !

‘ Take me up, then, and throw me into the river,’ was her bitter retort. ‘ But no, you need not even do that :— I will jump in myself ! ’ And in such a mood she might indeed have done so.

With all his brightness, Moh deeply felt the alienation of his family, and Fraser’s fellowship was so welcome that for a whole week he would not let him go. To his visitor, the hours spent in prayer together were no less helpful, in view of the uncertainty of his own immediate future. Out on the hillside, or in the barnlike room over the shop, they strengthened one another’s faith.

‘ Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him whate’er betide ;
Thou’lt find Him in the evil days
Thy all-sufficient strength and guide :
Who trusts in God’s unchanging love
Builds on the rock that nought can move.’

Autumn tints were already glowing on the Tengyueh ranges when Fraser set out again for his Lisu home. One more journey round the familiar district to see if everything was as barren as before, and then the letter must be written upon which he had decided at Tantsah. His heart was heavy, facing all that it would mean to leave his well-loved work, even for a time. He knew that he had prayed ‘ the prayer of faith ’ for his tribespeople. He knew the blessing so definitely asked, and received, would be given. But as of old, the promise was delayed in its fulfilment. He must be willing for God’s time as well as God’s way—‘ even God, Who quickeneth the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were ’. In his Journal there is a brief entry for the Sunday before he began this trial journey :

October 8. Service in the morning : I spoke on the Holy Spirit. In the afternoon—defeat. Evening, after service,

shouting victory in gully (outside the city). Never knew Jas. iv. 7 to work better.¹

It was in this spirit, then, that Fraser left Tengyueh with two companions, a Lisu and his son having come from Tantsah to help him. Travelling westward, in the direction of Tapu Pum, they came the second night to a village in which the missionary was well known. Talking and singing with the usual crowd round the log fire, he was careful to avoid any appearance of urgency in giving the message so near his heart.

'I have taught you the truth,' was now his attitude. 'It is all here in the book of God. It is for you to decide what you will do about it.'

Next morning he was preparing to take the road again, when his companions ran in hastily.

'Teacher, wait a little! This family want to turn Christian, if we will help them.'

Wonderingly, Fraser gathered them together and explained more fully what it meant to 'turn to God from idols'. He had learned that anything short of the complete destruction of all implements used in spirit-worship did not count as making room for Christ in heart and home. That was the dividing-line; once crossed, faith could take possession in a real way. So it was with thankfulness he found that his hosts had come to the point of really making the clearance that meant so much.

It was a good beginning, but what shall be said of the days that followed when no fewer than seven families destroyed their demonolatry amid scenes of rejoicing. It seemed too good to be true!

'Oh yes,' Fraser was tempted to think, 'just this place or two! But it may end here.'

Travelling grew rougher as they neared the Burma border, and the Kachin huts at night were deplorable, but the joy of finding open hearts continued. Only the briefest Journal entries remain to indicate what happened,

¹ 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you' (James iv. 7).

but the writer well remembers Fraser's face and voice as he recalled, years later, the moving story. At Melting Pot, high in the western mountains, ten families destroyed all traces of demon-worship, even pulling down the spirit shelf in the little temple perched above them. Further on, Fraser and his companions came in pouring rain to Cypress Hill, where their stay included the eighth anniversary of his landing in China. That was a week of wonders, for no fewer than fifteen families turned to the Lord, burning every vestige of demonolatry. And so it continued, though not without opposition from the great enemy.

'Teacher, come quickly,' was the call in one Kachin village, when five neighbour families had turned from demon-worship, with bonfires in home after home.

'Why, what is the matter?'

'The devil is raging—trying to destroy my son!'

This was only too true, as Fraser found when he followed the distressed father. The young man was so violently possessed that he could hardly be restrained from throwing himself into the fire. United prayer prevailed, and before long the power of the Name of Jesus brought deliverance.

In the midst of these experiences, Fraser wrote to his mother :

Please excuse pencil again . . . under the circumstances in which I am now living. The one and only form this Lisu family possesses is not quite six inches above the ground. They never go in for *chairs*—no such luxury ! and this family has not a table either. They have nothing whatever raised above the ground level, unless it be the cooking 'range', and I sleep just two or three inches above the earth floor. All around me, or around the log fire rather, are Lisu, Lisu, Lisu ! The good woman of the house is sitting next to me, with such a quantity of beads and ornaments as would give you neckache to wear. A couple of girls near by are watching me write and half-a-dozen boys on mats round the fire are learning to read the Lisu catechism. They are all interested in my writing, but I tell them to get on with their books.

But I am not going into further detail about the 'comforts' of this Lisu home, high up amid mountains and forest, as the most important thing is that my good host and hostess "turned Christian" this morning, removing all sorts of things used in their former demon worship—bits of stick, pieces of paper and much other trumpery—burning the whole lot in their centre-room fire. They turned quite whole-heartedly. They told me that they had long prayed to the spirits to give them a child, but without result, and asked if they might now pray to the true God for a son. I remembered the experiences of Sarah, Rebekah, Hannah and Elisabeth, and recommended them to go ahead. But they insisted that I must pray for them too. My prayers, they were sure, would be more effectual than their own!

Two other families in the village 'turned' at the same time. Altogether on my trip so far (not quite a fortnight) fifteen families have burned up all their idolatry and turned to God, from four different villages. . . . I never, now, try to *persuade* the Lisu to become Christians. . . . I find that they are quite unstable and unsatisfactory unless they 'turn' with all their heart. When they really do this, I go round to each home and gather the family for a good long talk, explaining the step they are taking. Then we all stand and I pray with them, after which they go around chopping and tearing down all sorts of things and piling them on the fire. . . . They seem glad to make a clean sweep while they are about it. The boys rather enjoy seeing things smashed up (boy-nature, you know!) and help to ferret out suspicious objects. When they have swept the place clean—soot, cobwebs and all—they take me to the next house where people intend to 'walk the way of God', as they put it.

Early in November Turtle Village was reached, which was to become the centre of Fraser's Western District. Here twenty-four families were ready to declare themselves Christians. Thirteen of these destroyed their demonolatry in one day; and Fraser remained on for two weeks, teaching and encouraging the converts. By that time calls from a new district turned him southward, where, in the mountains above the Burma Road, an even more remarkable response was met with. When only Mottled Hill and adjacent villages had been visited, Fraser could write of 'forty-nine families out of fifty-nine' which

had 'broken down their demon altars and turned Christian'.

Faced with such a situation, the lonely missionary was in difficulty. The year was drawing to a close. He had been itinerating already for more than two months and was feeling the strain of constant teaching and preaching in crowded hovels, round smoky fires, on the poorest of food and with little sleep at night. He loved the work and the people, but badly needed a let-up. And there was all the rest of his wide field to care for—right up to Tantsah, eight days' journey away. Scores of new believers needed teaching; and the older centres could not be neglected, if Christian leaders were to be raised up. What could he do! How respond to this new opening? The joy of harvest is not without its cares, and Fraser could only look up for divine guidance.

'Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking I will hear.' The need called loudly. And what was the thankfulness with which Fraser found the promise then and there fulfilled, and in the very way he could most have desired! For in an out-of-the-way village, most unexpectedly, he ran up against no less a friend than Ba Thaw—Ba Thaw himself, in Lisu dress, up from Burma, visiting among his scattered flock. The joy and surprise of both may be imagined, and the thankfulness with which Ba Thaw listened to the story Fraser had to tell. Yes, he would come, if Mr. Geis approved, and stay among the converts Fraser was so loath to leave. He would do his best to shepherd them and spread the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

It was a wonderful provision, for as it proved, Ba Thaw remained on for months in that southern district, following up and deepening the work. But first of all, he accompanied Fraser to Tengyueh for Christmas, joyfully carrying the tidings of this movement among the tribes for whom they had prayed and worked so long.

A hundred and twenty-nine families won to Christ—representing fully six hundred people—rich fruitage of the

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THE LETTER NEVER WRITTEN

journey which might have ended so differently ! And the letter Fraser had dreaded was never written.

‘ Thou on the Lord rely,
So safe shalt thou go on ;
Fix on His work thy steadfast eye,
So shall thy work be done.

Far, far above thy thought
His counsel shall appear,
When fully He the work hath wrought
That caused thy needless fear ! ’

CHAPTER XVI

'I SENT YOU TO REAP'

'Just back from my Lisu trenches,' wrote Fraser from Tengyueh that Christmas.

I have been trying the last few nights to make up arrears of sleep. While at Husa (Southern District) I think I did not get to bed before 2 a.m. for ten nights in succession. . . . We are now enjoying our usual winter weather—clear skies, dry roads and brown, withering grass everywhere. This is *the* time for itinerating, so I am due for the road again, after a needed rest behind the firing line. I must re-visit all these new centres with as little delay as possible.

But a higher wisdom planned otherwise. A few weeks in his Northern District, when he went as far as Tantsah and had the joy of seeing definite turning to the Lord, both here and at Cold Horse,¹ and Fraser was laid low with appendicitis. Happily he was back in Tengyueh when the attack came on. The Indian doctor at the Consulate pressed the need for an operation, and this, together with letters from Mr. Hoste urging a visit to the coast, decided Fraser to undertake the journey. It would mean a long absence, just when it seemed that he could least be spared. But a second attack after he set out, and a night of agony alone in a Chinese inn, made it sufficiently plain that the operation was necessary. This was successfully performed at the Shanghai headquarters of the Mission, and the quiet days that followed brought welcome opportunity for rest and prayer.

If I were to think after the manner of men [he wrote to his Prayer Circle] I should be anxious about my Lisu converts—afraid of their falling back into demon-worship. But God is enabling me to cast all my care upon Him. I am not anxious, not nervous. If I hugged my care to myself instead of casting it upon Him, I should never have persevered

¹ The village of the Sword Ladder Festival.

with the work so long—perhaps never even have started it. But if it has been begun in Him, it must be continued in Him. Let us all who have these Tengyueh Lisu on our hearts commit them quietly into His hands by faith. 'He will perfect that which concerneth' us—and these Lisu converts too. And then let us give thanks for His grace to us and to them.

When God sends His servants to reap, such a time of special waiting upon Him is all to the good, even if it seems to intrude upon the urgency of the task.

Those were revealing days that followed, not to the convalescent only, as he came into touch with the staff at Headquarters and with fellow-workers from many parts of the field. The Mission at that time numbered about a thousand members, stationed in fifteen provinces, and there was much coming and going in the Home on Woon-sung Road—place of arrival for new parties and base of supply for the interior. Here Fraser met with many known only by name before, and became himself a personality of no little interest. When he could be persuaded to talk about his experiences, or pour out his rich stores of music in informal social hours, impressions were made that resulted in helpful friendships through after-years. Especially was this the case in personal touch with Mr. Hoste, who had succeeded Mr. Hudson Taylor as leader of the Mission, and whose practice of giving hours, daily, to prayer for all aspects of the work greatly appealed to Fraser. Both then and afterwards, it was among the most cherished privileges of his life to join in those intercessions, and to learn through hours at a time spent on their knees what actual praying may mean in the life of one bearing great responsibilities. Mr. Hoste's impressions of the young pioneer were also revealing, and had much to do with the unexpected developments of his later service in the Mission. Of all this, however, Fraser was unconscious. He only rejoiced in renewed vigour, a strengthened prayer-backing and the companionship of a prospective fellow-worker as he returned to Yunnan. To his Prayer

Circle he wrote from Shanghai commending this young American to their interest.

I have just met Mr. Flagg who is to be my colleague at Tengyueh, temporarily and perhaps permanently. His home is in Boston, U.S.A. He is a graduate of Harvard University, and has taken the course of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. He is twenty-seven years of age, physically strong, and keen to get to work. He has been engaged in city missions and street-preaching in New York, Boston and other places, and is whole-heartedly for evangelistic work. . . . I expect to see him develop into a fine worker, and am sure we shall pull well together.

The long journey to West China, by sea and overland, provided Flagg with varied opportunities of coming to know his senior missionary. He found Fraser to be as human, natural and resourceful as he was spiritual—essentially a man among men. Crossing the uplands of Yunnan they visited the tribal districts, north of the capital, to which Fraser had first of all been designated. Hundreds of Miao and Lisu Christians welcomed them, and after inspiring days with the Gowmans and Mr. Porteous, then in charge of the work, they struck out across country for the west of the province. Unaccustomed to horseback riding for days and weeks together, Flagg could only wonder at Fraser's easy handling of the situation, including rough mountain ponies and dangerous tracks.

Up hill and down dale [wrote Fraser to his home-folk], you never tire of it in beautiful Yunnan. . . . I do all my travelling now on horseback . . . and have become so used to it that I do not care where I ride, so long as the horse will take it. In many places the road is literally as steep as your staircase and very broken too. Flagg declares that I would ride down the steps of the Washington Monument in Boston! Only to-day, my pony actually turned a somersault. It was in a place where the 'road' runs between banks only a foot or so apart, and he had hardly room to walk. With unusual thoughtfulness he gave me notice by falling right forward with his head on the ground. I got off over his head, and he plunged and kicked

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around until, somehow, he was lying on his back with his head where his tail had been ! His neck was twisted in such a strange way that I wondered whether he was going to get up again at all. But he *did*, after more kicking and struggling, and began to eat grass as if nothing had happened. (Have you noticed how nonchalant horses can be ?) Neither he, nor I, nor the Chinese saddle were any the worse ; so I put on my right sandal which had dropped off, got on the animal and went on reading my Chinese newspaper as before.

All along the way, Fraser was at his one absorbing employ. Whether in Chinese inns at night, on city streets or with fellow-travellers by day, he lost no opportunity of making known the Glad Tidings. He enjoyed preaching in Chinese, especially to the Christians where any were to be found, and was conscious of added power in his testimony. Of this he wrote to his Prayer Circle upon reaching Tengyueh :

If I am sure of anything, it is that your prayers have made a very real difference to my life and service. In preaching in the various centres visited, I have experienced power and blessing not known in former years. My chief request is always for prayer for the Lisu, but much blessing and help have come to my own life as well.

Growing with his work was indeed the story of the next few years. Outwardly it was a time of much pressure—travelling almost incessantly, caring for hundreds of new believers. Inwardly there had to be a constant re-girding with 'the whole armour of God', to stand against the wiles of the devil and be ready always for advance as the Lord might lead.

So far as I know [Fraser continued in the same letter] my Lisu work was undertaken at His bidding, which gives me confidence in asking your continued prayers. All our work needs to be, (1) In accordance with Scriptural principles : (2) In agreement with the inward witness of the Spirit : (3) In harmony with the providential working of God in our circumstances. Thus we shall have assurance within ourselves of His guidance, and shall find doors opening before us without our having to force them. Inward

and outward guidance will correspond as lock and key, and we shall be saved from rendering service which, to Him as for us, is second best.

And so the young pioneer came again to all the joys and conflicts of the work he loved. Winter was drawing in, and after more than seven months' absence he was eager to see for himself how prayer had been answered, especially for the converts it had been hard to leave in his Southern District. Down the familiar Burma Road he travelled, following the river from Tengyueh to Bhamo, until the plain was reached where the mountains stand back to the east, full of Kachin as well as Lisu villages. There he had left Ba Thaw, the friend so providentially met almost a year previously, and from whom he had not heard in the interval. Ba Thaw had already returned to his post in Burma, but as Fraser climbed to Mottled Hill and re-visited place after place so much upon his heart, he found the young Karen pastor warmly remembered and his work in evidence.

The people here [he wrote] so took to him and he to them that he remained more than four months among them. . . . The result is that not only have the converts been greatly helped and strengthened but others have been won. So I have come back to find fifty-one families in this district, instead of forty-nine, all standing firm as far as demon-worship is concerned, and thirty-six additional families of Lisu converts in places I have not previously visited.

This young Karen is quite an exceptional man. He dresses like the Lisu, lives among them as one of themselves, and wherever he goes is greatly loved. He is a better speaker of Lisu than I am, and is more capable in the shepherding of young converts. He is thoroughly spiritual, and I have no better friend among the Christians, tribal or Chinese, than he.

Following up Ba Thaw's work, Fraser now gave himself to getting into touch with the Christians throughout that part of his field. And most interesting work it was, though attended by hardships which even he found to be

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severe. Living in the mountain shanties that had entertained Ba Thaw, he, too, wore Lisu dress and made himself one with his hosts. From Mottled Hill, high on the ranges, he went round to all the neighbouring hamlets, and down to larger villages and markets in the plains, led on southward, ever southward, to the Burma border and beyond. Two months and more found him alone on this journey, but first of all he made a considerable stay at Mottled Hill, where a new undertaking was in progress.

For up there, high above the Burma Road, the first place of worship was being built to the true and living God—first to be put up by the Christians themselves at their own charges, in the whole of western Yunnan. It may have been Ba Thaw’s influence that encouraged them to this step, so soon after discarding their demon-worship ; at any rate, they were freely giving land, labour and materials to make a chapel larger and better than any of their own dwellings. The roof, of course, was of thatch, the walls of bamboo matting, and the floor of earth trodden hard, to be covered with rushes to seat the congregation. For light, as winter was drawing in, resinous pine-chips were provided, and a big flat stone on the platform on which to burn them. It was all beautiful and seemly from their point of view, and the opening ceremony, as Fraser described it, was ‘ a full-dress occasion ’. From hamlets far and near the Christians came—over a hundred crowding into the clean, newly finished chapel, while interested onlookers stood outside.

It was not easy to get these new converts to understand regular and reverent worship. In fact, as Fraser wrote to his Prayer Circle, their apprehension of Christian truth was of the most elementary kind. They just knew that they had turned to God from demon-worship, and that JESUS was the Saviour they now trusted. The prayer most often used by beginners at this time was :

‘ God, our Father,
Creator of heaven and earth,
Creator of mankind,

We are Your children
We are followers of Jesus.
Watch over us this day ;
Don't let the evil spirits see us ¹—
Trusting in Jesus,
Amen.'

Singing was from the first a great attraction, though, as Fraser wrote to his mother,

If you were listening outside, you might think some kind of comic drama was going on ! It does not take much to amuse the Lisu—such merry, jolly kind of folk.

Singing lessons were always looked forward to, and Fraser took no end of pains to train the younger people especially. He tells of one occasion when in a room full of people he was going over a new hymn with some young men and boys with musical voices. Girls, gay in feminine attire, were grouped behind him, to some of whom he turned, inviting them also to learn the tune he was teaching. This led to a bashful withdrawal, so precipitate that one of those addressed tripped over a doorsill and fell backward into an inner room—tinkling chains, ornaments, bangles and all—nothing left to be seen of her but two bare feet over the wooden sill. This, of course, increased the giggling and general merriment. 'Such is singing instruction,' he concluded, 'among the Lisu !'

But the hymns impressed their spiritual lessons. 'Jesus loves me, this I know', was usually the first favourite, followed by one of Ba Thaw's own translation, 'I've wandered far away from God', with its frequent refrain—'Now I'm coming home'. Already two Christian lyrics of many stanzas were taking shape—one outlining Old Testament and the other New Testament history. These conveyed Scriptural truth in simple rhyme, easy to learn and to remember.

Sometimes Fraser was startled to find how unawakened was the consciousness of right and wrong among these new

¹ The idea being that if the demons *catch sight* of any one, they attack him. Hence the continual effort to outwit the evil spirits and evade them.

believers. The Government had set out on a nation-wide campaign against the growth and use of opium—very general in tribal districts. Quite openly, the Christians of Mottled Hill told of the way they had resisted this interference with their liberty. Troops were coming into the mountains to pull up and destroy the ripening corn, but the Kachin, especially, took up arms to fight them. After preparing their knives and poisoned arrows, they held a prayer-meeting to ask the help of God. And prayer had been wonderfully answered, they naïvely assured their missionary, because the soldiers never came, and they had been able to make more money than usual out of their opium crops !

Happily Fraser understood his mountain children, and had behind him not a few praying friends to share the long patience and soul-exercise that spiritual parentage involves.

They know my position [he wrote to his Prayer Circle], and I am telling them plainly that I cannot baptize anyone directly connected with the growth, use or sale of opium. Still, we must, I think, have broad enough sympathies to recognize genuine *faith*, even when it is accompanied by an almost untutored conscience. We must remember how, among ourselves, John Newton never had a conscience against the slave traffic¹ but 'enjoyed sweet communion with God', as he tells us, even when on his slave-raiding expeditions.

There is such a thing as exercising *faith for* others [he had written from Shanghai a few months previously). When others are weak and we cannot be with them in person, God may be calling us to stand with and for them in spirit. He is able to quicken into life the very feeblest spark of desire for Him, or to use for their blessing the smallest amount of truth they may have apprehended. Indeed I have seen this before now, among the Lisu. They may know, often, what we call next to nothing ; yet, if in any measure the grace of God is in them, they remember the little they do know, and it seems to sustain them. . . . Let us all be imbued with the spirit of the Apostle who, though he had never seen the

¹ Rev. John Newton (1726-1807), author of many well-known hymns, including 'How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds'.

Roman converts, truly longed after them, that he might 'impart unto them some spiritual gift', and so far from absolving himself from responsibility, felt himself to be *a debtor*, 'both to Greeks and barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish'.

Outwardly Fraser's work at this time was making progress; the cost, however, went far deeper than daily hardship and every kind of discomfort. Almost desperate at times from lack of privacy in crowded hovels, he would go out on the mountain-side alone to fight the inward battles with the powers of darkness without which no captives of sin can be delivered. The opening of that first chapel was a time of great rejoicing, quickly followed by one of these times of testing. For Christmas Day was spent at a village near the Burma border, where the heads of thirteen families met to discuss whether or not they should turn Christian. To Fraser's great disappointment, the decision was against it, influenced chiefly by two old men of whom he had hoped better things. How he had prayed for them and now his discouragement was correspondingly deep! He simply had to be alone for waiting upon God and that afternoon went over to K'ama, a neighbouring hamlet, where he found a little empty room that he was able to secure for the time being. And there the Lord met him. It was through the record of Jehoshaphat's experience with the Moabites that renewal of faith came to him.

'The battle is not yours, but God's. . . . Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you. . . . Fear not, nor be discouraged: to-morrow go out against them; for the Lord is with you.'¹

Challenged in this way, he gave himself to prayer, alone in that little empty room. His Journal records that, about midnight, he was enabled to commit the whole situation to God, as it affected not one but several neighbouring places.

¹ 2 Chron. xx. 15-17.

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Seem distinctly led [he wrote] to fight against ' principalities and powers ' for Middle Village. Have faith for the conversion of that place, and pray as a kind of bugle-call for the hosts of heaven to come down and fight for me against the powers of darkness holding these two old men [names given] who are hindering their villages and perhaps three others [names given] from turning to Christ. Have a good time of fighting prayer, then sleep in much peace of mind.

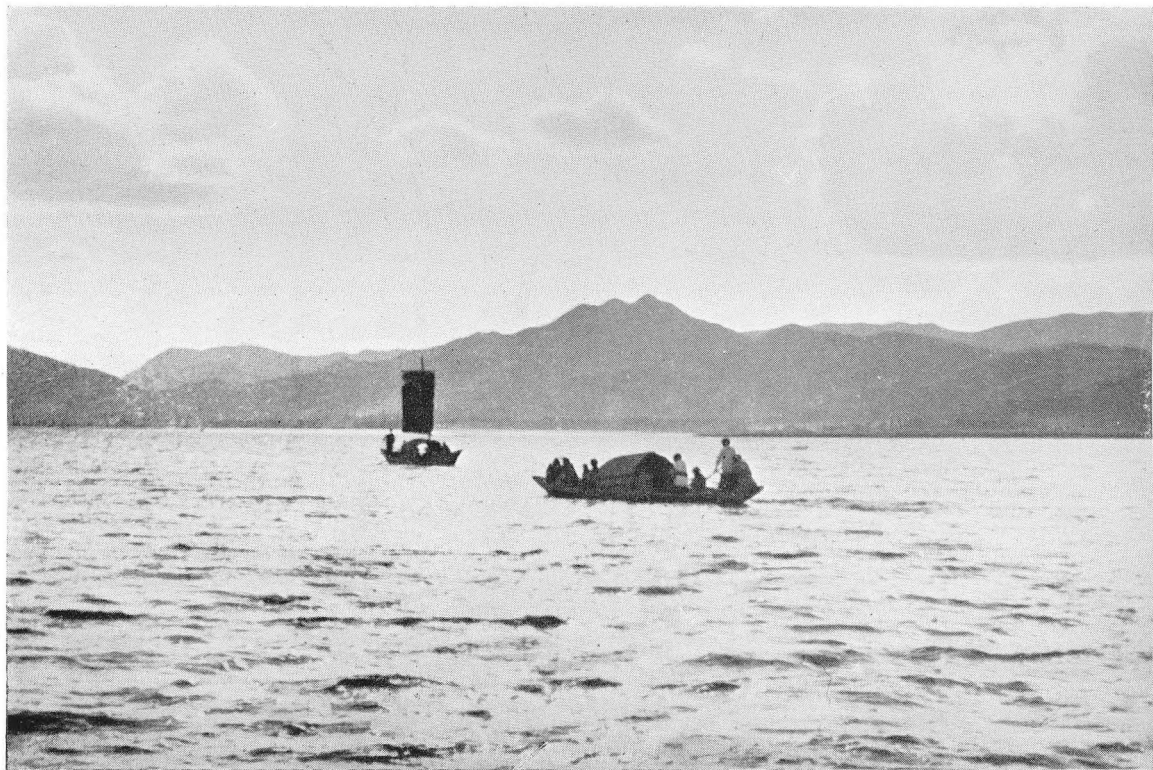
Next morning, early, Fraser was in the home of old La-ma-po, who lived at Kama, and in a long friendly talk persuaded him to a better mind. Together they went over to Middle Village, where the leaders were much more responsive. A wonderful day followed, for eleven out of the thirteen previously undecided families turned to the Lord. ' Victory, just as expected—hardly striking a blow ! ' Fraser noted with thankfulness.

Next day was even more encouraging, for at Kama and in another village twelve more families were brought in. But deeper lessons had to be learned. Not so easily is the great enemy displaced. His counter-attack was swiftly made, for at a place called Haitao the day ended in defeat. Late that night Fraser went to his knees again, alone on the mountain-side, near Kama. There he prayed as before, even claiming Haitao for Christ as he had Middle Village. But the result was painfully different.

Going over early to Haitao the next day, he took old La-ma-po with him. Perhaps that was the mistake, or it may be he was too confident, as he came to feel later. For bitter disappointment awaited him. Not only was the attitude of the village coldly antagonistic ; old La-ma-po showed his true colours by turning utterly against both the missionary and his message. The defeat was complete, and at first Fraser could not understand it. Deeply distressed in spirit, he went back to the little room at Kama, and there again the Lord met him.

Find considerable peace [he wrote] in just leaving the whole matter of these villages in God's hands. But the rebuff of spirit has been very severe, and I shall walk more humbly before the Lord—yes, and before Satan too, after this.

But the end was not yet. 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' Meeting some bright, steadfast Christians from his Mottled Hill district a day or two later, Fraser thanked God and took courage. And within the following week, twenty new families turned to the Lord, and he was more than busy teaching the rejoicing converts. In all, during that Christmas and New Year season (December 1 to January 10) no fewer than fifty-six families made open confession of Christ, south of Mottled Hill where that first little chapel had been opened.



THE LAKE AT TALI, WESTERN YUNNAN



‘NO USE FOR A HORSE IN THIS KIND OF COUNTRY’

CHAPTER XVII

LOVE AND PATIENCE

It was Christmas Day, a year later, when the first Christian festival drew together village leaders from all over Fraser's wide field. Bachelor hospitality was taxed to the utmost when they came trooping in to the mission-house at Tengyueh, from Tantsah on the north to the Burma border on the west and south.

Much of the year had been spent in itineration, for to direct evangelism was now added the pastoral care of more than two hundred families. These were scattered in remote hamlets hidden among the mountains, or nearer Chinese market-towns, less difficult to reach. Riding on horseback where he could, Fraser still had plenty of 'roughing it' and weary climbing. But nothing daunted him.

I have been out just over a fortnight [he wrote on one of these journeys] and am in Water Bowl Village, where I have fifteen Christian families. . . . I expect to be about two months yet on this itineration before returning. . . . When once in Lisu country, one seldom needs to travel more than fifteen miles a day, as the villages are within a few miles of each other. The hills are big : a day's journey will sometimes consist of a descent of three thousand feet to a plain, and then a similar ascent up the other side. But the cross-country roads are like ladders sometimes, and you have to ford streams, or jump precariously from rock to rock, and venture over crazy bridges. Sometimes you cannot even see the road before you, but just take it on faith. I have no use for a horse in this kind of country. The hills are such that 'no one with any moral sense would ride up, and no one with any common sense would ride down'.

Yet he could add, 'I enjoy few things more than tramping round these hills . . . and always like travelling days better than stop-over ones.' Some of the stop-overs were full of interest, however, as a February letter to his

mother tells in unusual detail. It was a wedding that detained him, nothing less than the first Christian wedding in his southern district. After accompanying the wailing bride with her relatives to the bridegroom's house, Fraser was pressed to act as master of ceremonies. This brought up the question of whisky drinking, the main difference between a heathen and a Christian marriage being that drunkenness was not a feature of the latter. Fraser had to be very insistent on this point, for the Chinese saying was all too true, 'for a Lisu to see whisky is like a leech scenting blood'.

As a matter of fact [he wrote regretfully] most of these new converts waver on the whisky question when it comes to weddings and funerals. In this case they had brewed one big jar of whisky—ten times that amount would have been needed had they done it 'properly'—and had hidden it away in someone else's garden. . . . I got wind of it through one of the young men who searched the village for any of the abominable stuff still remaining in their houses. . . . The younger people of both sexes will as a rule heartily support me in my temperance crusade. They are the Radicals; the old people the Conservatives! In this case I got them to mix a lot of pig's food with the contents of the jar, to make it undrinkable.

At another village they told me of a big jar of whisky in a family which was just preparing for a betrothal feast. They badly wanted me to stay for the occasion, but I threatened to go away at once unless they consented to destroy the stuff. Finally the owner agreed and gave me the pig's food to mix with it. Their 'whisky' is not liquid, you know; it is just a mass of fermenting rice—the liquid is drawn off through a tube. I do not now destroy it all, as it is a pity to waste what is really a good fattening food for pigs, and I do not tip it out on the ground either, as pigs are worse drunkards even than the Lisu, and will drink themselves to death if you let them. One mixes bran, etc., with it—then they can feed it to the pigs at leisure, but would not touch it themselves. A novel form of temperance crusade, is it not!

But to return to the wedding. The only ceremony Fraser went in for was public prayer when the bride

arrived, before she entered her new home. There was too much noise and excitement for anything more, save the indispensable hand-shaking. Still standing outside the house, all the company shook hands first with the bridegroom, then with the bride half hidden from view.

The bridegroom came along and offered a big hand with a big smile on his big good-natured face [Fraser continued]. In European weddings, the bride always looks 'charming', doesn't she? At least, so the papers say! No doubt the bride looked charming on this occasion too. But Lisu custom permits her and two bridesmaids to satisfy their bashful instincts by covering their heads and the upper part of their persons with a felt rug. She was told, however, to give me her hand. So a 'charming' feminine hand appeared from under the rug, and I shook it heartily. Then a way was cleared through the crowd, and the big felt rug moved slowly into the house, with the three girls under it. Once inside, they made their way to the inner room and disappeared from the public gaze, not that there had been much to gaze at before—she was so, so, so bashful, you know!

At that stage in the proceedings, before the bride could reach the house, a strange excitement broke out. Everybody started pelting everybody else with carrots, potatoes and other root-vegetables—a kind of snowball fight, with vegetables instead of snow! Fraser was taken by surprise and did not know what to make of it.

They told me all about it afterwards [he commented] and I had to veto it for a Christian wedding.

'These roots are hard and might hurt,' I protested.

'Oh yes, they do hurt, if they hit you,' was the reply.

'And you seem to throw hard!'

'Yes, just as hard as we can!'

Of course the older people do not do much at it—it is chiefly the young bucks of the crowd. 'It is fine fun,' they tell you, 'and we don't keep on long.'

'But, surely, you do not pelt the bride?'

'Oh yes,' they laughed, 'it only makes her run into the house all the quicker!'

Reluctant though he was to interfere with established customs, Fraser realized that this one must be abandoned

when he discovered that it had its origin in demon-worship.

The idea was, originally, to drive away the evil spirits, and to make the union propitious—though they do not seem to think so much of that, now, as of the sport of the thing. When I told them (perhaps unwisely) of our custom of throwing rice or confetti after the bridal pair, they at once jumped to the conclusion that it must have been, originally, for the same purpose !

Of one thing Fraser was increasingly conscious on these itinerations, and that was the need for a deeper work of grace among the Christians themselves. They were easily upset by rumours,¹ because they had so little hold on spiritual truth. Yet, what was to be done? With over two hundred families to care for in widely scattered hamlets, his own visits were necessarily few and far between. If only they could be taught to read and provided with suitable literature, a new understanding might be awakened which would lead to better things. So far, they were quite indifferent to anything beyond the first elements of Christian truth. If believing in the Lord Jesus meant protection from evil spirits and deliverance from the punishment of sin in the after-life, what need of anything more? It was hard to get them to observe Sunday or to see the need of regular meetings at all. Of these conditions, Fraser kept his Prayer Circle fully informed, making no attempt to disguise the facts, or the concern they caused him.

I am not painting a dark picture [he wrote early in the new year] ; I only wish to tell you the real position of things as candidly as possible. In some ways they (the Lisu converts) are ahead of ordinary church-goers at home. They are always hospitable. They are genuinely pleased to see me when I go to their villages. They are sincere, as far as they go ; we see very little among them of the ulterior motives commonly credited to 'rice Christians'. They

¹ A rumour widely circulated at this time was that Fraser was an agent of the British Government, and that everyone of military age who joined the Christians would be conscripted and sent to fight in the European War. Not a few who had given up demon-worship went back to it for protection from this supposed danger.

will carry my loads for me from village to village without pay . . . and give me hospitality. But with the exception of a few, very few, bright, earnest young people, there are not many who wish to make any progress or are really *alive* spiritually. Most of them cannot be tempted away from their warm fires in the evenings (these villages in the mountains are very cold in winter) to come together and learn a little more, even though I am in a nearby house which also has a fire !

I have often in time past given way to depression, which always means spiritual paralysis, and even on this last trip have been much downcast, I admit, over the state of the people. When at a village near Mottled Hill, a month or more ago, I was much troubled over all this, but was brought back to peace of heart by remembering that, though the work is bound to be slow, it may be none the less sure for all that. My mistake has too often been that of too much haste. But it is not the people's way to hurry, nor is it God's way either. Hurry means worry, and worry effectually drives the peace of God from the heart.

Rome was not built in a day, nor will the work of building up a strong, well-instructed body of Lisu Christians, in the Tengyueh district, be the work of a day either. Schools will have to be started when the time is ripe. There will be need of much visitation, much exhortation, much prayer. It will not be done all at once. The remembrance of this has cast me back upon God again. I have set my heart upon a work of grace among the Tengyueh Lisu, but God has brought me to the point of being willing for it to be in His *time* as well as in His way. I am even willing (if it should be His will) not to see the fullness of blessing in my life-time.

It was one of the older workers in the Mission, and one of the most helpful, who said to newcomers, speaking of 2 Thess. iii. 5, R.V. : 'The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.'—'*Now that will do for China !* If you have the love of God and the patience of Jesus Christ, that will do for China.' But the letter we are quoting was written by a young man, strong and eager, learning lessons in the school of hardship and loneliness. A thinker, a student of the ways of God with man, he was arrested by the patience as well as the power

of infinite Wisdom and Love. 'The God of all patience' was making Himself known to this ardent soul as One Who 'worketh for him that waiteth for Him'.

Preparation, delay and growth [he went on] are characteristics of God's working both in history and in nature. Scripture and the facts of nature meet, when James, exhorting us to patience, says : 'The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being *patient* over it.' The same principle applies to our own spiritual lives, and to our labour in the Lord. A mature Christian is not the product of a day or a month or a year either. 'It takes time' said the late Dr. Andrew Murray 'to grow into Christ.' We must strike our roots down deep in the soil of the Word and be strengthened by long, long experience. It is a slow process, and it is right that it should be so : God does not want us to be spiritual mushrooms. It is true that in the Lord's work there is a place for haste—the King's business requires it (there is a right and a wrong haste), and there is assuredly a place for diligence, for earnestness. James Gilmour said he 'did not think we could be too earnest in a matter for which Christ was so much in earnest that He laid down His life'. You know it was said of Alleine that he was 'insatiably greedy for souls'. While it is day we *cannot* but be up and doing to the limit of the strength which God supplies. But the element of corroding care will enter into Christian work if we let it, and it will not help, but hinder. We cannot fret souls into the Kingdom of Heaven ; neither, when they are once converted, can we worry them into maturity ; we cannot by taking thought, add a cubit to our own spiritual stature or to anyone else's either. The plants of our Heavenly Father's planting will grow better under His open sky than under the hothouses of our feverish effort : it is for us to water, and to water diligently, but we cannot give the increase however we try. An abnormally rapid growth is often unnatural and unhealthy : the quick growth spoken of in Matt. xiii. 5 is actually said to be a sign of its being ephemeral.

In the biography of our Lord nothing is more noticeable than the quiet, even poise of His life. Never 'flustered' whatever happened, never taken off His guard, however assailed by men or demons : in the midst of fickle people, hostile rulers, faithless disciples—always calm, always collected. Christ the hard Worker indeed—but doing no more, and no less, than God had appointed Him ; and

with no restlessness, no hurry, no worry. Was ever such a peaceful life lived—under conditions so perturbing?

But we also, as He, are working for eternity and *in* eternity (eternity has already commenced for us): we can afford then to work in the atmosphere of eternity. The rush and bustle of carnal activity breathes a spirit of restlessness: the Holy Spirit breathes a deep calm. *This* is the atmosphere in which we may expect a lasting work of God to grow. Let us take care first of all that it *is* a work of God—begun and continued in God—and then let us cast our anxieties, our fears, and our impatience to the winds. Let us shake off 'dull sloth' on the one hand and feverishness on the other. A gourd may spring up in a night, but not an oak. The current may be flowing deep and strong in spite of ripples and counter-currents on the surface. And even when it receives a temporary set-back from the incoming tide of evil, we may yet learn to say—as Jeremiah once said under the most distressing circumstances—'It is good that a man should hope and *quietly wait* for the salvation of the LORD.'

The immediate task before Fraser that summer was the completion of his translation of one of the Gospels, that the Lisu converts might have in their own language some portion of the Word of God. He had already made a beginning, and now as the busy farming season almost put a stop to teaching in the villages, he went down to Myitkyina to avail himself of Ba Thaw's efficient collaboration. This brought him in for a happy occasion; for Ba Thaw was about to be married, as Fraser found, to 'a sweet little Karen Christian girl'. Received with hospitality by the American missionaries (and later by the Ba Thaws in their own home) Fraser worked on month after month, through the great heat, to finish not only St. Mark's Gospel, but a simple dictionary and primer, and an enlarged Catechism with a number of new hymns. He was eager that the Lisu Church should be a reading church—lovers of the Book, founded upon its teachings and able to impart them to others. With the co-operation of the American missionaries—who were working among Lisu on the Burma side of the border—he also perfected his script for the language, reducing it to the simplest

form of writing, so that his manuscripts were ready for printing when he returned to Yunnan.

Rich with the spoils of summer, and refreshed by contact with fellow-workers, Fraser set out for the highlands of Yunnan. Once before he had climbed that mountainous borderland to meet bitter disappointment awaiting him at Tantsah, and even now he could not but be concerned as to the state of things he should find among his large and scattered flock. Coming first to his western district, it was at Pangpieh (Turtle Village) that Fraser found himself for the week-end, and the welcome with which he was received soon set his heart at rest.

When I left Turtle Village last [he wrote to his Prayer Circle] there were fourteen families of Christians, now there are twenty-one. When I left Water Bowl there were twelve families . . . now there are nineteen. When I left Redwood Spur there were nine—now there are twenty. . . . And this in spite of the fact that they have practically had no help of any kind for months. I hear that Melting Pot and Cypress Hill are the same as when I left them. They tell me that in the former village they have built a chapel (I have not seen it) where they hold regular Sunday services.

In Turtle Village one of the elders of the place, a good old man, was seriously ill for many weeks. But he and all of them held on in faith and prayer, and he pulled through. These people are great believers in faith-healing, and such an experience strengthens their faith considerably. Altogether I think they have increased in strength as well as in numbers since I was last here.

Their faith in this connection was unexpectedly tested during Fraser's visit, but perhaps it was a needed lesson that prayer is not always answered just as we would have it. Fraser was glad that the loss was his, not theirs.

The Sunday I was at Turtle Village [he continued in the above letter] my horse fell and it died the next morning. As soon as it was seen to be ill, the people came and asked me to come out and pray—for that is the first thing they think of in such cases. (Did I tell you of a group of dear little Christian Lisu girls I saw standing in front of their

pigsty at Cup Village, last March, with hands over their eyes, *praying for the new-born litter of pigs?*) I confess I hesitated at first, not being used to just that way of doing things. But the people seemed surprised.

'Aren't you going to pray for your horse?' they questioned.

So I went with them. We stood around the animal as I placed it in God's hands for life or death. Next morning I was glad I had done so while it was still living.

Before leaving Turtle Village, Fraser had the joy of baptizing twenty-five, mostly young people, of whose faith in Christ there could be no question. To him as well as to the Christians it was a day of great rejoicing. Here is the picture :

Each one promised solemnly, not only to trust in the Lord Jesus for his whole lifetime, but to abstain from any connection with heathen worship, from whisky-drinking, immorality, opium-smoking or cultivation, and to observe the Lord's Day. I enjoyed the occasion immensely (I always enjoy a baptismal service) as we went down to their village stream that summer morning, separated the men to one side and the women to the other, on the river bank, and commended them all to God in prayer, under His open sky. I then immersed them, one by one, in the swiftly running water, just below a thick plank bridge. Will you pray that they may be kept true to their promises?

That first Christmas festival, when it came, was an advance upon all previous experiences. Often had Fraser been the guest of Lisu hosts ; but now, fifty or more were to receive his hospitality at one and the same time ! In lives that had so little contact with the world beyond their scattered hamlets, it was a great occasion. To them Tengyueh, with its city-wall and gates, was a metropolis indeed, and the simple mission-house a place of marvels. The men were put up on the premises, the women at Mrs. Li's nearby ; 'and didn't they enjoy it !' Christmas Day was the climax, with the united service in the morning (Chinese as well as Lisu), 'sports' in the afternoon, when Flagg and Fraser appeared in a new light, and then the

crowning feast with more than eighty guests ! But every day was one long enjoyment.

You would have been interested to see them when they first arrived [Fraser wrote to his Circle]. Very few had even been in the city before. When they came to our house (we let them roam all over it) the girls, going round in a bunch from room to room, kept up a continual, involuntary murmur of admiration and delight. It was like heaven to them ! The men took things more calmly. Men with their big swords, gay satchels, chimney-like stockings and bare feet ; girls with coloured turbans, tassels, beads, necklaces, rings, bangles and other ornaments—I wish you could have seen them ! . . .

Every day, after Morning Prayers, I had them all in our chapel, teaching them to read the Script. . . . In the evenings I took them in singing. Besides 'Jesus loves me' and 'I've wandered far from God', which they knew already, I taught them, 'God be with you till we meet again' and one or two other hymns. They sang so well that Chinese from the street would come in and sit and listen.

One day our new Consul came round to call on us with the retiring Consul, Mr. Eastes. The Lisu all came crowding round them in the sitting-room and outside, making all sorts of remarks and even feeling their clothing ! We explained to the Consuls that they must not mind, as our guests had little idea of the proprieties.

'I should say not,' replied Eastes, taking it all in good part, 'there is a fellow behind me stroking my back right now !'

CHAPTER XVIII

BLOOD OF HIS OWN

IN the midst of his itinerations of 1918 Fraser had come to a spiritual experience which cannot be passed over. Back in Tengyueh that summer he was laid up with a badly infected foot. This gave opportunity for quiet and reflection, glimpses of which appear in his Journal.

No one with any experience of the conditions under which he was working will wonder that in the crowding, dirt and discomfort of Lisu homes, Fraser found it difficult to maintain the standard of spiritual life, which alone could satisfy him. Perhaps the wonder was, rather, that he could not content himself with a lower level, or take refuge in excuses. To be alone for prayer, he had to go out on the mountains, or wake up at night when all around him were asleep. After long days of travelling, preaching or teaching, he was weary and apt to sleep on until the household was stirring. Mist and rain at chilly heights often kept him indoors, with no chance of quiet for waiting upon God. This made it only too easy to lose the sense (though not the fact) of the divine presence, and drift into a state of spiritual weakness and defeat. Yet, how was the situation to be met?

Thinking much [he had written in a Kachin hamlet near Mottled Hill] of Stuart Holden's saying: 'I do not believe that any man is made victor save by blood of his own'—'resisting unto blood, striving against sin'.

Words easily misunderstood, yet how deep their meaning! 'An easy-going, non-self-denying life,' as Hudson Taylor put it, will never be one of power.

So often, as to-day [Fraser continued] I have been unwilling to shed my own blood, so to speak, and have trusted in Christ alone—arm-chair trust, which has failed.

As fail it must. For in this sense it is indeed true that 'the thing we do not do for ourselves, God cannot do for us'.

'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me', discloses the blessed partnership which alone secures victory.

It was drifting that Fraser dreaded most of all—slackness in spirit, sloth, prayerlessness, leading to defeat under trial.¹ Well he knew the meaning of the Master's word, 'Men ought always to pray and *not to faint*'. He, certainly, found it to be a choice between the one and the other. For him, the 'good fight of faith' lay right there. Such a life as his was only possible as it was inwardly victorious, 'renewed day by day'; and that meant the constant exchange, by faith, it is 'no longer I' that live—the weak, ease-loving, oft-defeated I—'but Christ liveth in me'.

But the real Christ-life leads to the Cross, and the Cross does not get comfortable. Blood of our own must attest our faith in the precious blood of Christ, if we are to share and to show forth the victory of the Cross. What else does the application to ourselves of that great faith-chapter in Hebrews mean, with its record of those who endured 'as seeing Him who is invisible'?

Wherefore . . . let us run with patience the race that is set before us, *looking unto Jesus*, the author and finisher of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame. . . . Consider Him that endured . . . lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet *resisted unto blood*, striving against sin.

Arm-chair trust has no place in this battle and victory, as Fraser was proving. 'Shrinking from the Cross' was often his experience, but from his Journal we gather something of his following on to deeper fellowship with his Lord.

August 23. Considerable spiritual recovery. . . . Enabled, practically, to clasp the foot of the Cross.

¹ 'The whole cause of my defeat these two days,' he had written previously, 'is weakness of spirit. Under these conditions, any text you take fails to work. The spirit must be continually, constantly maintained in strength by unceasing prayer, especially against the powers of darkness. All I have learned of other aspects of the victory-life is useless without this.'

August 26. Thirty-two years old to-day. Quite conscious of Mother's prayers. I am sure she is praying for me. Splendid time of prayer alone in my room. Enabled to get to the Cross and remain there. Have peace and rest of spirit. Preaching on the street in the evening.

August 27. The Cross is going to hurt—let it hurt! I am going to work hard and pray hard too, by God's grace.

August 28. Reading through Thomas Cook's *New Testament Holiness*.

September 1. Yesterday evening, prayer out in gully.

And a week later, when he was about to set out on long itineration :

September 9. Reading Jowett's *Passion for Souls*. Very definitely and decidedly take my stand on 1 John i. 7.¹—Jesus Christ my Cleanser from all sin. Full of peace and blessing all the rest of the day. In the evening a Hohch'en man (Lisu) signified his willingness to accept Christ and came round for talk and prayer.

September 11. Am proving 1 John i. 7 true, these days. Faith becomes as natural as breathing. During the first few years, I put forth too much self-effort with James iv. 7.² which, perhaps, has no connection with *inbred sin*, but with the fight (offensive) against Satan's kingdom in the world. In any case Thomas Cook's book has been a great help to me.

September 12. My weapon these days against sin and Satan—or rather, sin alone—is *the love of God*. How can we do despite unto the spirit of grace? 'The love of Christ constraineth us.'

September 16. Extracts from Jowett's 'Passion for Souls':
'The Gospel of a broken heart begins the ministry of bleeding hearts.'

'As soon as we cease to bleed we cease to bless.'

'We must bleed, if we would be ministers of the Saving Blood.'

'St. Catherine's prayers were red with sacrifice, and she felt the touch of the Pierced Hands.'

September 20. We should take up the whole armour of God before the 'evil day' comes, so that when it does come we may be able to stand. We need to strengthen the defences during every lull in the battle.

¹ 'If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

² 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'

Four days later, he was in the villages again, rejoicing in the Lord.

It was Hudson Taylor who wrote in the same spirit :
‘ There is a needs-be for us to give *ourselves* for the life of the world. . . . Fruit-bearing involves cross-bearing.

“ Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.” We know how the Lord Jesus became fruitful—not by bearing His Cross only, but by dying on it. Do we know much of fellowship with Him in this ? There are not two Christs—an easy-going Christ for easy-going Christians, and a suffering, toiling Christ for exceptional believers. There is only one Christ. Are we willing to abide in Him, and so to “ bear much fruit ” ? ’

CHAPTER XIX

A NEW CALL

It came at last—the call, ‘Come over and help us’—from that group of Lisu far to the south-east of Tengyueh, whom Fraser had met five years previously and left in the care of Moh Ting-chang. Often had Fraser thought of them and prayed that the seed sown might take root in their hearts, but little or nothing had come through, to encourage such hopes. It was Christmas-tide again. The year had been marked for Fraser by greater liberty in his own spiritual life, in the midst of labours more abundant in all his districts, especially among the Kachin.

To this wild and lovable people his heart was drawn increasingly, difficult though it was to gain a footing among them. More numerous than the Lisu, especially in Fraser’s southern field, they were also more primitive—dirty and degraded outwardly—and more aggressive. Living in larger communities, they were armed with old-fashioned guns, as well as daggers and swords, and made their own gunpowder. Repeatedly Fraser was fired upon, in passing through their villages, though when he showed no fear, opposition usually gave place to friendliness. Robbed on journeys by Kachin highwaymen, he was even chased by one of them, ferociously drunk, with a drawn sword, from which only fleetness of foot saved him. Yet there was a frankness and warmth of heart about them that made the missionary covet Kachin converts for his Lord. That the attraction was mutual, in some cases at any rate, would appear from the fact that all Fraser’s dexterity was needed to escape the matrimonial intentions of one chieftain who was bent upon making him his son-in-law !

But though drawn more into touch with the Kachin at this time, most of the year was spent in caring for the Lisu Christians in his widely scattered villages. Many were

standing firm in the faith, though others caused grief by turning back to demon-worship. At Mottled Hill for example, Fraser was met by a double sorrow. The leader of the church there was a young Lisu of great promise. Fraser loved him, and looked forward to his development as a much needed fellow-worker. During his absence in Burma for translation work with Ba Thaw, however, the young man died in an epidemic of influenza, and that was not the worst of it. For a heathen wizard in the district turned the occasion to his own advantage.

He gave out [Fraser wrote] that he had seen the soul of this young man all by itself—*i.e.* neither in heaven nor in the place of their departed ancestors—holding a hymn book that I had given him and weeping. Hence Christians do not go to heaven, but it is all a hoax—Q.E.D.

The orphaned child of this same man was taken ill not long after the father's death, and they said that the spirit of the father had come back to 'bite' (attack) his own child. Do not imagine that the converts hear these things with a superior smile as we might. No, they take them very seriously.

Many of the converts turned back [he added in another letter], and even those who did not, have more uneasy misgivings on the subject than they acknowledge, to me at any rate.

Sympathy with their point of view did not keep Fraser from feeling keenly their defection. After some weeks in his northern district, he was constrained to write to his Prayer Circle a letter which reveals a conflict and victory that all true missionaries will understand. It reveals also the upholding that came to him through the prayer support of these faithful friends in the homeland.

Broadly speaking God seems to have restrained the hand of the Evil One; and my colleague, Mr. Flagg, thinks it a miracle that after only two or three days' teaching, in some cases, so many of the converts have stood firm, against all the temptations they have had to face.

I cannot insist too strongly on my own helplessness among these people apart from the grace of God. Although I have been now ten years in China and have had considerable

experience with both Chinese and Lisu, I find myself able to do little or nothing apart from God's going before me and working among them. Without this I feel like a man who has his boat grounded in shallow water. Pull or push as he may, he will not be able to make his boat move more than a few inches. But let the tide come in and lift his boat off the bottom—*then* he will be able to move it as far as he pleases, quite easily and without friction. It is indeed necessary for me to go around among our Lisu, preaching, teaching, exhorting, rebuking, but the amount of progress made thereby depends almost entirely on the state of *the Spiritual Tide in the village*—a condition which you can control upon your knees as well as I. Sometimes I feel that a village is 'grounded'—I do not mean in the sense of 'rooted and grounded' but in the sense of a boat grounded at low water! In such a case one can no more get the people together—*i.e.* to hold together and strengthen each other—than one could roll dry sand into a ball. They will be cold and unresponsive, and weeks or even months of teaching will not do much for them. Their 'prayers' are not answered as when the power of the Holy Spirit is with them. I repeat: one feels powerless to help in such cases, except to do all that is possible and then commit them to God.

Or to change the figure, the preaching of the Word of God in these Lisu villages is rather like vaccination. You insert the serum and the people are duly inoculated. But the result is different with different people and villages. In some the 'vaccination' is successful: the people go ahead in numbers and grow in faith. In other cases the 'vaccination' *does not take!* and the people revert to heathenism or to indifference. Does this apply to us also, on *our* plane and in *our* sphere? Have not *we* been inoculated by God's all-sufficient grace through the risen Christ (Rom. vi. 1-14) against *sin*—that deadly small-pox of the soul? And what has been the result? Has it *taken*—in your life? in mine?

'It is easier to get Israel out of Egypt than to get Egypt out of Israel,' Fraser went on in this connection: yet he could not but touch upon the brighter side which meant so much to him. For, as in the Interpreter's house, though the enemy may pour water upon the fire to extinguish it, there is One Unseen Who continually supplies the oil of His grace to trusting hearts.

I do not want you to think I am discouraged about my Lisu work [he continued]—far from it! I want you to know *the truth*, that is all. Much of what I say would probably apply to many places in the mission-field from which come rosy and optimistic accounts of the work—quite rightly, for it has that side! So has mine! and I am full of hope and am really sanguine about it. I have quite a number of Lisu who are honest and faithful as far as they go, and some who are especially warm-hearted and earnest. They are hospitable people, generous, and comparatively guileless. Moreover, it is only right that I should say that we missionaries make our mistakes at times. We are not always wise in what we say and do. Also I am quite aware that whatever difficulties we may meet in our Lisu work, there are difficulties in *all* Christian service. I rather suspect you have them also at home. . . . It was Dr. Dale, I think, who said that we may change our difficulties in Christian work but we can never escape them. I, for one, thank God with all my heart that I am just where I am and in the work I am now in.

Some of the Lisu converts—chiefly the younger people—are just splendid. They are the ‘heres and theres’—the ones and twos—who will always give us most joy in our work for the Lord anywhere. A boy of eighteen who was with me for over a month last winter was of this kind—always bright and helpful. He would pray aloud every evening before going to bed and was so fond of hymns that a missionary passing through our station at that time called him ‘the singing boy’. He is a hard worker and a splendid reader and writer. Two other young men from his village accompanied me for a fortnight some time ago, carrying my loads and helping me in every way. When they went back home they refused to take a single farthing in return for their work. One man in my southern district stood firm in his village when all the rest turned back. I visited his village, in the first instance, only because of his pressing invitation. Everyone there would testify to his being a total abstainer and keeping his family also from drinking liquor. No better testimony could be given of him than that he brings up his family to be of the same spirit as he. He could have given his eldest daughter—a bright, warm-hearted girl—in marriage to a fairly well-to-do family, but rather than give her to heathen people he got a much poorer young man, but a Christian, for her. It is a joy to meet that

family : they all have that charm which comes from whole-heartedness and absolute sincerity.

One interlude came in this year of pastoral visitation, when news reached Fraser that the beloved Pastor Ting Li-mei (well known as 'the Moody of China') was in Yunnan with the first party of the Chinese Home Missionary Society, and that he desired to see something of the tribal situation in the west. This was an opportunity not to be missed, for Pastor Ting was a man of prayer, as well as one of the most spiritual leaders of the Church in China.

Ting Li-mei's arrival at Tengyueh, that summer, was well timed, as far as the beauty of the scenery was concerned, though the frequent rains brought him in for a taste of discomforts to which his missionary companion was more seasoned. But Fraser found him ready to face every hardship, and the Chinese Christian who had come with him from Kunming was a Greatheart of the most practical kind. Fraser's description of him will call to mind not a few others to whom their missionary friends have equal cause to be grateful.

Pih is simply splendid . . . not much of a preacher, but a quiet, unassuming man of moderate education, willing to do just anything. Always there, when there is any drudgery or hard work to be tackled, he seems to find a way out of every difficulty, making things easier for everybody. You don't notice him much, but—like the boy's definition of salt as 'the thing that makes the porridge taste nasty *when there isn't any*'—he is the kind of man who makes things difficult for you, when you haven't got him !

Those were memorable months to Fraser as well as to his companion as they travelled together first through the Lisu country, and afterwards visiting several of the stations in western Yunnan, to hold conferences for the Chinese Christians. Ting's appreciation of the beauty of Fraser's mountains was no little joy to the latter, though their point of view somewhat differed as to the homes and habits of the people. Ting Li-mei had never seen such

poverty and squalor, and would have fared badly as regards food, but that Fraser had brought stores with him such as he never carried for himself. But the joy of finding little Christian communities in those remote mountain hamlets more than made up for all that was involved in reaching them.

One night they were overtaken by darkness before they could reach their destination on the way to Turtle Village. 'Dog-tired', as Fraser put it, they were stumbling along 'the dark and ghostly pathway' through the woods, when they heard sounds of singing, and recognized a sweet, familiar hymn. A little further on they came to a house Fraser had never seen, and found it to be the new chapel at Water Bowl in which the Christians were gathered for evening worship, praying and singing in the dark because they could not afford oil for their tiny lamps, except on special occasions.

A Sunday spent at Turtle Village gave opportunity for Pastor Ting to speak (by interpretation) to the Christians, of whom there were over a hundred. That his heart was drawn to them was manifest, but he did ask Fraser whether he might venture to exhort them to a little more cleanliness in their persons and habits. This was done as tactfully as Fraser could wish, and to his personal enjoyment !

On the fellowship of those days we must not dwell, save to give one picture of what it meant to the often lonely missionary to have a companion so human as well as spiritual in his outlook. After leaving Turtle Village, he took Ting and Pih up a neighbouring mountain from which a wonderful view could be obtained.

The frontier of Burma was only a few miles away [he wrote] and we could see right down to the Irrawaddy Valley and Myitkyina plain. Ting had never travelled far outside his own country. But he is one of those people I try to emulate who find something interesting, something to be pleased about, just everywhere. If it is not the scenery, it is the costume of the people ; if not that, it is some new plant or tree or animal never seen before, or some interesting local custom or legend.

Up on the top of this range, he hit on a very peculiar tree—the most peculiar he or I had ever seen. It actually had six different varieties of leaf! One, and perhaps two, were parasitic growths, but not the others as far as we could see. It was fine to see the almost childish delight with which he gathered a specimen of each kind of leaf, and put them with some berries he was already saving. So pleased was he with the new things and scenes, that he suggested that we might have prayer together and thank God for it all. So, there and then, we three had a little prayer-meeting, sitting on a big rock on that great, high, cold mountain overlooking Burma.

Indeed, it was in connection with his prayer-life that Ting Li-mei's company was most helpful. Very familiar became the sight of the little book drawn from his pocket at any leisure moment, to remind him of all those for whom he had undertaken to pray daily.

I was sorry to see him go [Fraser wrote after the parting]. He is a faithful intercessor. Every day, on his horse, you will see him reading by the hour from his leather-bound pocket-book, in which he had a long list of names of Chinese and foreign friends. He remembers them all before God in silent prayer.

It was at Tali that Pastor Ting left Fraser's escort, after three months of fruitful labour together; and there Fraser welcomed the coming of one who was to mean even more as a fellow-worker and friend. The real crises of life often come without observation; and that meeting between the pioneer missionary among the Lisu of western Yunnan and the new arrival who was to be in so real a sense their apostle was unmarked by anything of special significance. Fraser only saw a young recruit of whom he wrote: 'I got to like Cooke immensely. . . . You can love him as a younger brother.' And Allyn Cooke recalled his impressions, long years after, in conversation with the writer:

Fraser seemed young and strong physically. He was very sociable, for an Englishman (Cooke was from the United States). He spoke Chinese fluently, just like the people,

though when occasion required he would use scholarly language. In his travelling outfit—home-made and kept for the road—he was sometimes taken for a coolie or even ‘a foreign beggar’ ! But he always had the dress of a teacher with him, and at his destination would soon appear, to the surprise of strangers, as ‘a perfect gentleman’.

And what a fellow-traveller he was ! Well do I remember his thoughtfulness and unselfish care of others. He was never in a hurry, and would stop and talk with people on the road, always ready to do a good turn. He was kind to the animals, the coolies, the inn-keepers. And he was so practical ! The pack-saddle was too heavy ; he designed another. The new chum was unused to riding on the top of the load ; Fraser insisted on his using the only foreign saddle. It was always the same—he was used to local conditions, he would explain, and did not mind them.

When we reached Tengyueh, I came to know more of his spiritual life and was much impressed by his talks from the Word. He took me to some of his prayer-resorts outside the city, and I found that he fasted often, in a quiet way, before preaching. The influence of his life only deepened as time went on. Indeed, everything that I have as a missionary, I owe to Fraser.

The two had hardly reached Tengyueh before a call came from some Kachin Christians who were badly needing help. They were connected, not with Fraser, but with the American missionaries over at Namhkam in Burma ; but as the latter could not speak Chinese, they had taken the long journey to find Fraser and bring him to the scene of trouble. The call appealed to him, backed as it was by urgent letters from the missionary friends he valued. For months he had been praying for some way of access to the Kachin of his own district, some definite opening among these people so much upon his heart. Could this be the beginning of the answer ?

It was a stormy time that awaited Fraser with the returning messengers. The opposition of the Kachin chieftains was formidable, and some of the Christians had barricaded themselves in their houses to fight for their homes and lives. Blood had been drawn on both sides, and it was some time before Fraser could bring about a

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John 3.16 in Western Lisu script.

J. O. Fraser.

C. I. M. Yunnan.

Nov. 24. 1935.

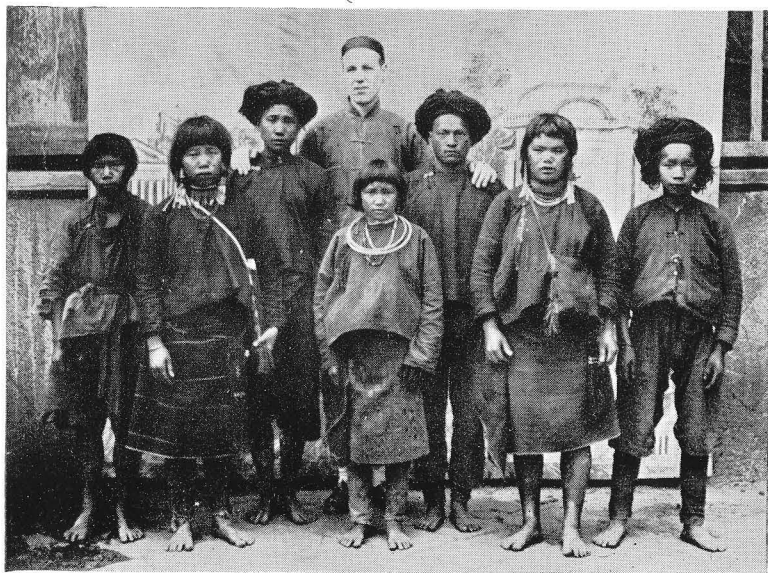
JOHN III. 16, IN FRASER'S LISU SCRIPT



PASTOR TING LI-MEI AND HIS ESCORT, J. O. FRASER



CHRISTIAN GIRLS AT THE HARVEST FESTIVAL, TURTLE VILLAGE



THE FIRST GROUP OF ATSI KACHIN INQUIRERS

truce, so that matters could be discussed more calmly. Finally, however, prayer and patience prevailed, and he was able to negotiate a hopeful peace.

Meanwhile he had been seeking to draw out the sympathies of the Christian community and their pastor for the thousands of wild, unreached Kachin, up in his own district. He could not, himself, speak the Atsi language (a form of Kachin), but they could. Would it not be possible to send some of their number as missionaries, now that this trouble was over, to the Atsi villages of Pangwa, half-way to Tengyueh, where hundreds of Kachin were settled. A rumour had reached him that some among them wanted to hear the Gospel—but how could they, without a preacher?

The suggestion went home and, not long after Fraser had left, the Christians of the Longch'uen Valley set apart two of their number to go and test possibilities at Pangwa. They were good men, kindly and prayerful, and God used them.

Fraser, meanwhile, was on a four months' tour of his district in other directions, leading up to the Christian festival at Turtle Village. What a wonderful time it was—the first big rally of rejoicing Christians among the mountain people! Hundreds came in from north, south and west, from the wide field watered so faithfully by Fraser's prayers and tears. They brought their own provisions, enough for several days, and offerings as well to present to the Lord. It was a Harvest Festival and big Camp Meeting all in one, with singing and rejoicing that could be heard afar. And the biggest joy, to Fraser at any rate, was the arrival of the new contingent from Pangwa—twenty or more Atsi young people, waking up to the meaning of their new-found salvation. There they were, with the Kachin teachers from Longchuen—dirty and shabby enough, with rough unkempt hair and the timid alertness of wild creatures, yet with an eager wistfulness to enter into all that was going on and to belong to the people of the true God.

And there, in the midst of that memorable gathering, came the call that was to open to Fraser new and wider fields of usefulness. How little he had expected it just then, or could realize all it was to mean ! It was only a postcard from Moh Ting-chang, the pastry cook of Hsiangta ; but the way-worn missive carried a message that went straight to Fraser's heart. It came from the Lisu of that district who had not been ready, five years before, to turn from demon-worship to the living Saviour. But they had remembered Fraser's promise. The spiritual tide was rising, and over the mountains, four days' journey, they now sent the plea :

‘Come back again and help us—we want to become Christians.’

And strange to say, Fraser could not go.

CHAPTER XX

'GOOD GROUND'

FRASER was perplexed. Before him lay Moh's postcard with its urgent invitation. Around him were the happy crowds gathered for the Christmas festival, including the group of newly-won Kachin who had come to take him back with them to their settlement where many more, they told him, were ready to turn to the Saviour. How he longed to go at once to the Hsiangta district, in response to Moh's appeal! But here were duties and opportunities that could not be set aside. Was there anyone who could go in his place? Flagg was shortly to be married, and had a long journey to take in another direction. Cooke was there, it was true, having left his books and teacher at Tengyueh, to bring the mail and give what help he could. But he had been only a few months in the district and as yet knew little of Chinese and nothing at all of the Lisu language. The call to Hsiangta might lead to great things. If only Fraser could go himself! And then the thought of what it might mean to his young colleague decided him. He would ask Cooke to go, with the best Lisu he could find to accompany him, and would trust God to work through them. So the little party set out on their four days' journey to the east and south, wondering what had led to this new development.

Moh had not given any explanation. But the truth was, it transpired later, that he himself had been doing what he could to deepen the interest of the 'Cold Country' Lisu, who had heard the Gospel from Fraser five years previously. Moh's conversion at that time had been followed by steady growth in the Christian life, and he had made the most of the occasional visits of the tribesmen to the Hsiangta Market. There they loved to foregather in the pastry-cook's shop, sure of a welcome, and eager to hear more of the One they were beginning to regard with special interest.

For the Lisu, all through that Burma borderland, had a sort of king-mentality, as Fraser had already discovered. They cherished vague longings for the teacher and deliverer they expected, who would bring books in their language and good news for their people. Moh listened with no little interest to their talk of this looked-for leader, and made the most of the fact that in Lisu the name of Jesus was almost identical with that of their own tribe—‘Jesu’ and ‘Lisu’ having exactly the same tones. *Jesus of the Lisu*—was He not their Coming One?

But the tribesmen were undecided. Material things had more weight with them than spiritual, and it was not until Moh struck another note that the appeal went home. The photograph of Flagg and Fraser in tribal dress, taken at their first Christmas gathering in Tengyueh, had reached him. There they stood, large and lifelike, complete in every detail of Lisu attire, from turban to bare feet and leggings. Taking up the photo he handed it to his visitors.

‘Here is your Lisu king,’ he said, ‘and he has books for you and much good news.’

The tribesmen gazed in wonder. Yes, it was Fraser, some of them remembered him. But he had not been in Lisu dress when he came to their villages. Now it all looked different! Could he indeed be their Lisu king? That picture decided the matter, for after talking it all over with their people at home, they hastened back to beg Moh to write for them, asking Fraser to come at once and help them to turn Christian. But their ideas as to this turning were very hazy, as Cooke and his companions were to discover.

It was just before the Chinese New Year when the little party reached Hsiangta, and Moh was too busy in his shop to go with them to the ‘Cold Country’. An escort soon appeared from Tasiaoho however, and, under the guidance of Paul, the stalwart son of the ex-wizard, they set out for his home. At a market-town on the way they stopped to pick up a store of provisions for the New Year’s

feast. That was to be expected, but Cooke was concerned to see them load up with gallons and gallons of whisky, also bought and paid for. What could this mean, if they were preparing to become Christians?

Warmly received in the villages (four in number), although he was not in Lisu dress, Cooke was soon at home by the smoky fires, winning in his quiet, kindly way the confidence of his hosts. In spite of preparations for the New Year's feast, he and his helpers had good opportunities for pressing home the importance of making a clean cut with all idolatry and demon-worship, drunkenness and opium-smoking, in turning to the Living God. Paul was able to speak Chinese, in which language Cooke had made some progress, so that they could talk things over to some extent.

'Yes,' he explained, 'we want to turn Christian. But we must worship our ancestors once more, to send them away respectfully, and offer sacrifices to the demons, that they may not injure us. And there is this whisky—which of course we must use up.'

More and more the young missionary was distressed as he saw preparations going on for the regular idolatrous feast. There in the middle room with its log fire on the floor, the spirit-shelf was being dressed with new red paper, the incense bowls made ready and the food spread out before the ancestral scrolls and dreaded demons. Could it be that the family was about to worship as usual, with all the accompaniments that were so degrading? For Cooke and his Lisu companions knew well what it meant—the orgy of feasting and drunkenness—seeing who could eat the most fat pork and other dainties, and drink the most whisky, until men and women alike were utterly debauched. How they dreaded the dancing and singing that went with it all, and the drunken sleep that followed the night of dissipation! And all this in the home where they had had such happy hours, talking and singing of better things.

At last when all the family, old and young, gathered

and went down on their knees before the spirit-shelf, and began to bow and knock their foreheads on the ground in worship, Cooke was overwhelmed with grief and disappointment.

‘I sat there weeping as I watched them,’ he said to the writer, years later, ‘thinking that they were not going to turn after all.’

‘Why do you weep, teacher?’ broke in the voice of Paul, who alone had noticed his deep concern.

‘Because you are sinning against the true and living God.’

‘But do you really care so much?’

‘Care? How can I but care for your poor lost souls?’

Something struck home to the young Lisu’s heart. Something opened his eyes to see, as he had not seen before. Preaching had not done it. ‘We must drink the whisky we have bought,’ had been his attitude. ‘We must feed our ancestors and demons for another year, or vengeance will come upon us.’ But now—

‘Do not weep, do not weep,’ he cried. ‘We will pour out the whisky! We will truly turn, as you have taught us.’

Then and there the scene was changed. With one accord the whole family followed the lead Paul was giving. Soon the spirit-shelf was torn down—the food put to other uses; the basins and incense-holders smashed and all the twigs and trumpery used in vows and worship thrown on the bonfire lighted in the courtyard.

Neighbours ran in to see what was going on. Whisky flooded the pig-troughs and overflowed the ground—yes, the whisky they loved above all else! Soon the pigs were reeling drunk, but the rejoicing people were sober. Never had there been such singing, such gladness!

Paul led the way to the spirit-tree [Cooke continued]—just an old stump, too big to cut down. Incense and bowls for food stood on the shelf attached to it. He broke the bowls, tore out the shelf, burning everything that could be burned. A little hut stood near by, with incense for spirit-

worship. They tore it down and carried it all to the bonfire.

'Now come to *my* house! Come to *my* house!' the neighbours began calling.

We went with Paul, and throughout the village the same scenes were repeated.

What a day it was! 'Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' God's hour had struck, nothing could stay the incoming tide. Cooke and his Lisu lads were 'small enough and weak enough for God to use'. They inspired no fear, aroused no suspicion, and wherever they went the movement spread. Within the next two weeks, thirty families in that neighbourhood had come out boldly for Christ; and when Cooke had to return to Tengyueh to continue his studies, the two young Lisu remained to strengthen the converts and carry on the work.

Fraser meanwhile, knowing nothing of all this, had had a similar experience among the Atsi Kachin of his own district. The welcome he received at Pangwa was a big surprise, the whole community turning out with drums and music to do him honour. The Kachin evangelists from the south had done their work so well that little more was needed to decide forty families to become Christians. Settling down among them, Fraser began at once to learn Atsi, making such progress that within a month he was preaching his first sermon in the language of this once unfriendly tribe, for which he had prayed so long.

The joy of bringing the Gospel in all its saving power to such darkened hearts helped him to bear the poverty-stricken conditions, dirt and squalor of their way of life. He found them to be a strong, independent people, harder to influence than the Lisu, but more fearless and steadfast after they became Christians. But the work and privations so told upon him that he had to take a brief respite in a not distant market-town, where a dilapidated Chinese inn afforded what seemed to him, by contrast, as good as

' a holiday at the sea-side ' ! His graphic picture of this Chinese market with its abundance of good things (written to cheer his mother, especially) can only be glimpsed in fragmentary quotations, if space is to be given to a more important letter. Of the scenes immediately around him, he wrote :

For lodging only, including firewood and water (also an inn coverlet—ahem—if you care to use it) we pay twopence a day each. . . . We borrow our pots and pans from the landlord—this is thrown in with the twopence. The Lisu I have with me go out each morning to buy the food. . . . Sometimes I go myself—and you might smile to see me with a basket of vegetables in one hand and a string of cash in the other, or a bit of fat pork dangling from a slip of bamboo, walking along the roughly paved street of the market between the thatched stalls of the vendors. But I take a positive delight in doing just what the Chinese do. They boil the rice first (I must learn how to do this, you know) over a gipsy fire against the wall of the inn-passage. When it (the rice) is done they put the lid on and kind of roast it by the side of the fire while they boil the vegetables. The latter they first chop up with their big knives, then fry—then pour water on and boil. This method of frying and boiling makes the stuff tasty as well as well cooked. There is an angry fzh-zh-zh-zh-zh when they pour on the water, and sometimes a flash in the pan.

When all the stuff is cooked they reach the bamboo table down, put the basins, bowls, chopsticks and ricepot on it. Perhaps the landlady complains that we are making her table all black by putting the rice-pot down on it : if so, we go and get a piece of rough Chinese paper to put under it. I say grace in Lisu and we set to. You needn't pity me living on ' Chinese food ' such as you can get at a place like this : it is as delicious as it is nourishing. Flagg, who has just passed through here on his way to Tengyueh from Bhamo, said I was looking well though I have been living on native food for over three months. I am likely to go on living on it for another month or more yet too. During all this time I have not tasted foreign food of any kind—no bread, butter, porridge, milk, tea, coffee, cocoa, or sweet things, nor do I have any particular desire for them. In Lisu and Kachin villages I rather feel the lack of fruit, but down here you can get pears of a sort, persimmons, bananas, pine-

apples, etc., at present. I have tasted as good bananas here (seven a penny) as I have ever had at home. . . .

It is market-day to-day and the street is just beginning to hubbubify. You can see no less than seven races each with its own distinct language—Chinese, Shan, Palaung, Achang, Lisu, Jinghpaw Kachin, Atsi Kachin. I would make race No. 8, wouldn't I? You can tell all of these races apart—except the two tribes of Kachin—by the dress of the women, and the women are most in evidence on these markets in this part of the world. They bring in all sorts of produce carried either in two baskets by a pole over the shoulder, or else in one on their back, dump it down by the side of the street, sit there and wait for buyers. . . . The shopkeepers put their stuff outside the shops on stalls, displaying a hundred-and-one different kinds of foreign and native articles—lamps, lanterns, kerosene oil, mirrors, scent, woollen socks, boots, shoes, quinine and patent medicines, soap, pocket-knives, handkerchiefs, pencils, etc., etc., together with a lot of cheap jackery, frippery and frupperty, janglery and banglery, around which you commonly see the maidens and youthful matrons of the various tribes—their hearts entirely set on it all, and with a big-eyed 'wish-I-could-afford-to-buy-it' look on their faces. . . .

If you were to see the Kachin women and girls, you might pronounce them the wildest specimens of humanity you had yet met. You might even be as afraid of them as they would be of you! The Kachin is a straightforward, blunt kind of individual, without any of the twists and turns of the Chinese. He does not always appear to be saying, 'I wonder what that foreigner has up his sleeve, anyway.' The Kachin girl is the most in evidence, for the men do not go to market much, and the older women not so often as the younger. You are free to chat with her anywhere and everywhere: she looks at you straight in the face with an expression of mingled indulgence, delight, and amusement, as you try to stumble out your meaning in broken Atsi. She is an impulsive, demonstrative creature: you can just watch the progress of her thoughts, for she does all her thinking on the outside of her face.

Last market day I met some Lisu from the Upper Salween on the street. They were carrying tremendously heavy loads of betel-nut to sell. 'Come up to our village and teach us,' one of them said—his village is about sixteen days' journey away. 'We will give you food—rice and pork—as much as ever you want.' Though he meant it sincerely, he was too

busy to do more than just invite me. *That* district *must* be evangelized, but I want to find suitable natives to go first. A pretty little Lisu girl, petite and pleasant, asked me if I didn't remember her. It turned out she was from Mottled Hill, from a family who were formerly Christian, and now married into a heathen village near here.

'Do the people in your village want to study the Christian books?' I asked her.

'I don't know; you had better ask them,' she said.

'Do you want to?' I continued. 'Yes, *ever* so much!' she replied with as bright a smile as shyness would permit. Of course the younger people cannot do as they like: they have to obey their elders.

So much for the market: it is at its height now as I write—people haggling over petty little bits of prices and beating each other down by tenths of a farthing at a time.

But very different were the thoughts that were chiefly occupying Fraser's mind—for it was from this comfortless Chinese inn that he wrote to his Prayer Circle with special urgency. Recent experiences had deepened his conviction as to the vital part God has assigned in the work of His Kingdom to intercessory prayer. Repeatedly he had had occasion to notice the difference between people and places that had been much prayed for and those that had not. In the former, half the work seemed to be done already, as if an unseen ally had gone ahead to prepare the way. This made him not only persevere in prayer himself, whether he felt like it or not, but impelled him to induce and encourage Christians at home to pray. He longed for a larger Prayer Circle behind his Lisu work—sent maps of all his districts, wrote personal letters to the members, answered questions, sought in every way to make the needs real to his prayer-helpers. Great was his pleasure when one lady wrote that she was praying daily for the demon-priest of the Sword Ladder Festival, and when another said that the Lisu were so real, through his letters, that it seemed to her as if they were living 'just across the street'. That was what he wanted; and in his much-needed breathing spell in this noisy market-town, he got to grips with his prayer-supporters about it,

urging arguments and pleading the momentous issues involved.

There are many things I wish to tell you about [he wrote]. I want to give you as good an idea of the people, their habits, their dress, their food, their language, their ideas, their peculiarities, as I possibly can. I want to tell you all about my plans for the self-support of the work—a subject on which I feel very strongly indeed. But I want to distinguish between temporal self-support and spiritual self-support. The former is eminently desirable and practicable, the latter is almost impossible for, perhaps, generations to come.

They—the Lisu and Kachin converts—would be easily able to support their own pastors, teachers and evangelists by well-advised cultivation of their own ample hillsides, and it is *fitting* that the mountains should bring forth supplies for the needs of those whose feet are beautiful upon them ; but *spiritually* they are babes, and as dependent upon us as a child upon his mother. They are dependent on us out here for instruction, guidance, organization ; but they are dependent on the home churches in England and America in a deeper sense, for spiritual life and power. I really believe that if every particle of prayer put up by the home churches on behalf of the infant churches of the mission field were removed, the latter would be swamped by an incoming flood of the powers of darkness. This seems actually to have happened in church history—churches losing all their power and life, becoming a mere empty name, or else flickering out altogether. Just as a plant may die for lack of watering, so may a genuine work of God die and rot for lack of prayer.

One might compare heathenism with a great mountain threatening to crush the infant church, or a great pool of stagnant water always threatening to quench the flames of Holy Ghost life and power in the native churches, and only kept dammed up by the power of God. God is able to do this and much more, but *He will not* do it, if all we out here and you at home sit in our easy chairs with our arms folded. *Why* prayer is so indispensable we cannot just say, but we had better recognize the fact even if we cannot explain it. Do you believe that the Church of God would be alive to-day but for the high-priestly intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne ? I do not : I believe it would have been dead and buried long ago. Viewing the Bible as a record of God's work on this earth, I believe that it

gives a clear, ringing message to His people—from Genesis to Revelation—**YOU DO YOUR PART.**

Have you ever thought it strange that God allowed nearly eighteen centuries to pass before opening the gospel door to more than half of the human race—India, China, and Japan ? Though the church cannot shirk responsibility for the fact, I still believe God had a purpose in it. I believe that He tried the evangelizing of the heathen—if I may reverently say so—many times in former centuries, but His church did not rise to the occasion : she was too encumbered with error and corruption, too powerless, to nourish the children to which she gave birth ; and such sporadic efforts as were put forth by earnest men in past centuries to form churches in (what we now call) the mission-field never resulted in anything live and permanent. At the time of the Reformation, she, the Church was only just beginning to come to her own, and it was not until after the Evangelical Revival of the eighteenth century that God, as it would seem, deemed her fit and strong enough to bear and nourish children in the midst of the great heathen systems of the world. It is rather striking, to me, that Carey's departure for India, which we regard as the birth of the modern missionary movement, took place just two years after the death of John Wesley, the central figure of the great Evangelical Revival.

And now, the mother-church of Protestant countries is well able to nourish the infant churches of the Orient, not only in regard to men and money but also in regard to a steady and powerful volume of intercessory prayer. Applying this to the work among the Tengyueh tribespeople, I feel I can say that you, and those God will yet call to join you in this work, are well able to sustain the spiritual life of the Lisu and Kachin converts, as well as to increase their number many-fold. And just as I feel that God has waited until the home church attained strength enough to nourish her children—before giving her her present large and growing family in the mission-field—so, it may be, He has been preparing *you* for the unseen and spiritual parenthood of these infant Lisu converts here, however many thousand miles separate you from them.

You may perhaps say : ' Do you get the *converts themselves* to pray as they ought to ? ' This is a very natural question and I can best answer it by saying, yes—and no. I get them (or try to get them) into the habit of prayer, but it is only the cry of the babe they utter, not the strong pleading of the adult. They only know how to pray with anything

approaching intensity when they or their friends are sick and their prayers in such cases seem to be remarkably effectual, but they know nothing of pleading for the salvation of souls. Unfortunately it is not many, as yet, who see that it matters much whether others are saved or unsaved. Their prayers are almost entirely selfish, just as a baby's cries are. One does not think hardly of a baby for that reason ! Moreover I can go farther and say that large numbers of converts do not realize what salvation means, even for themselves. More will do so later on, given time, instruction, and something in the nature of a revival ; but at present their knowledge is very elementary and their attainment small. They have not yet grown to military age in this spiritual warfare ; they are babes in God's nursery, not warriors in God's army. But *you* have centuries of Christianity behind you, you have had a Christian education, Christian influence, an open Bible, devotional helps, and many other things to help you in your growth to spiritual maturity. So now you belong to those of full stature in Christ who are able to 'help . . . with power against the enemy'. The vast difference between you and them is that you are 'grown up' in Christ, while they are babes and sucklings ; and the work of pulling down Satan's strongholds requires strong men, not infants.

They—the Lisu and Kachin converts—have their difficulties, of course, and sometimes persecutions, but in speaking of their present inability to fight in this spiritual warfare, I mean warfare in a purely spiritual sense. I will not labour the point : you will see from what I am saying that I am not asking you just to give 'help' in prayer as a sort of side-line, but I am trying to roll the *main responsibility* of this prayer-warfare on you. I want you to take the BURDEN of these people upon your shoulders. I want you to wrestle with God for them. I do not want so much to be a regimental commander in this matter as an intelligence officer : I shall feel more and more that a big responsibility rests upon me to keep you well informed. The Lord Jesus looks down from heaven and sees these poor, degraded, neglected tribespeople. 'The travail of His soul' was for them too. He has waited long. Will you not do your part to bring in the day when He shall 'be satisfied' ?

Anything must be done rather than let this prayer-service be dropped or even allowed to stagnate. We often speak of intercessory work as being of vital importance.

I want to prove that I believe this *in actual fact* by giving my first and best energies to it, as God may lead. I feel like a business man who perceives that a certain line of goods pays better than any other in his store, and who purposes making it his chief investment ; who, in fact, sees an inexhaustible supply and an almost unlimited demand for a profitable article, and intends to go in for it more than anything else. The DEMAND is the lost state of these tens of thousands of Lisu and Kachin—their ignorance, their superstition, their sinfulness ; their bodies, their minds, their souls ; the SUPPLY is the grace of God to meet this need—to be brought down to them by the persevering prayers of a considerable company of God's people. All I want to do is, as a kind of middleman, to bring the supply and the demand together.

CHAPTER XXI

'A HUNDREDFOLD'

It was some weeks after Cooke's return from the 'Cold Country' before the sequel to his visit became known, when one of the Lisu companions he had left behind turned up in Tengyueh, eager to find Fraser, with a long order for Gospels, hymn-books and catechisms.

'But who are they for?' was the natural question.

'Why, for all the converts in our Christian villages.'

'All the converts! Are they then so many?'

'Yes, scores of families! And more are coming in.'

It then transpired that the young messenger would have come before but that he and his companion had so many inquirers on their hands that neither of them could be spared. Now the need for books was urgent, and he had left everything and taken the six days' journey, alone, to procure them.

'But the inquirers cannot read, as yet.'

'Oh, yes, we have taught them!' came the eager answer. And many of the younger people can write as well.'

And so the vision dawned upon Fraser and his colleagues—a work of God, a new development, almost apart from their own efforts, yet the answer to and fruit of years of prayer. With what joy the remembrance came to Fraser, then and after, of his 'prayer of faith' in Burma, five years previously!

I believe it was January 12, 1915, that I was definitely led to ask God for 'several hundreds of families' from the Lisu. Some may say, 'Your prayer has at last been answered.' No! I took the answer *then*. I believed *then* that I had it. The realization has only now come, it is true, but God does not keep us waiting for *answers*. He gives them *at once*. Daniel ix. 23.

How wonderful it was now to listen as, bit by bit, the

young Lisu told his story ! After Allyn Cooke had left the Hsiangta district to return to Chinese study, the converts themselves went on with their joyous testimony even beyond their own clan. It was the middle of the New Year season, the one general holiday of the year ; people were more or less at leisure, and the dry, sunny days made it easy to be out of doors. From village to village and from house to house the Lisu lads (‘ teachers ’ they now called them) were escorted as interest spread. For the turning of the Fish family when Cooke was there was only the beginning. It was the surrender, the test case so to speak. Paul, who had come out then so strongly, continued to take the lead, and the Lord used the Lisu lads from Tengyueh as if they had been mature Christians. Wherever they went, there was blessing.

It is marvellous—the people God uses ! [commented Allyn Cooke, recalling it all]. Before long the new Christians were able to teach others, and so the work went on and on. They sent in to Tengyueh for loads of books, the money for which had been paid to leaders out there, appointed by the two who had been with me.

Fraser was eager, of course, to see for himself just what was going on ; but it was some time before he could be free to revisit the district, and then it was by way of a route he had not taken before. For he found it necessary to go down to Rangoon to see about the printing of their Lisu literature. The work was being held up for lack of Gospels, hymn-books and catechisms, for which people in the new district were clamouring. He could not leave Tengyueh until the return of Flagg from his wedding journey, but as soon as the latter was established with his bride in charge of the city work, Fraser set out on the sixteen days’ journey, taking with him Cooke, whose eyes needed skilled attention.

The Rangoon business completed, Cooke returned to Tengyueh by what is now the Burma Road, but Fraser struck across-country to the east, reaching the China border where the Salween makes its great bend round the

Hsiangta district. There, to the north of him lay the scene of the new spiritual movement, but Fraser's thoughts were focused upon a nearer point just then—a village only a few miles away, across the river and up the mountain rampart beyond. About that place he had been burdened in conscience for more than five years, on account of a lost opportunity at the time of his previous visit. Hastening homeward after a long absence from Tengyueh—a messenger having been sent to find him—he had been stopped by a Lisu woman at her door in that particular hamlet.

"Where are you going, stranger?" she inquired with the easy friendliness of the mountain people.

'Just going on up north.'

'And what is your business?'

'I am a preacher.'

'A preacher! What's that?'

'I tell about the Good News,' he replied in passing.

'But stop, if it is good news, and tell us about it.'

'I am on a long journey and cannot stay.'

'But you *must* stay!' she persisted. 'What is the use of being a preacher, if you have not time to preach?'

The shot went home, but Fraser hastened on. A lost opportunity—how he had regretted it! He had prayed about the place for years. Was he, now, to have another chance?

The ferry came and Fraser crossed the river, but the Lisu who was carrying his load would go no further, and he was stranded on the northern bank until another could be found to take him on up the mountain. Waiting there hour after hour, he was interested in two men who came down to the shore he had just left and seemed to be calling for the ferry. They were very persistent, shouting for a long time, but he could not hear what they said. The river was wide, and no one paid any attention. It was not until months later he discovered that it was for the foreign teacher they had been calling, sent from a group of Lisu villages to bring him back with them that they,

too, might hear his message. For the breath of God was stirring hearts all through that remote region, so long without the Word of Life.

Somewhere in the mountains before him, Fraser was expecting to run across his two young evangelists in the midst of their work, and it was no little joy to find them in one of the first stopping-places above the Salween. How much there was to hear and to ask ! They had already been some time in that very locality, which little as they realized it then, was to become the chief centre of the new movement. Quite a number of villages on these mountain slopes were already more or less Christian—and, yes, that place about which Fraser seemed specially interested was among them. The woman who had called him was the wife of Pa Tsong-si, both of whom were among the first to believe, and just beyond their hamlet lay Sinchaiho, the larger village to which Fraser was soon taken. Between the two places he must have passed the ridge—silent then and unaware—on which the central station of Muchengpo was soon to stand, shedding broad beams of light, both near and far. Of this part of the journey he wrote to his prayer-helpers :

I wish you could have been with me as I went from village to village, to have seen the royal reception they gave me ! And you would have shared in it too. What with the playing of their bagpipes, the firing off of guns, the lining-up of all the villagers, men and women, young and old, to shake hands with you (they use both hands, thinking it more respectful) you have a feeling of being overwhelmed—an 'overweight of joy'.

In that district and in the 'Cold Country' further north, Fraser stayed on for weeks—indeed there was no getting away until he went down with fever, through overstrain, and had to return to Tengyueh for a time. 'The people,' as he put it, 'were all tumbling over themselves in their earnestness.' They could not learn enough or read enough, or above all sing enough, by day and night,

with their 'Elder Brother, No. 3'.¹ It was the rainy season, but in spite of frequent downpours, often wet through and weary, Fraser tramped from hamlet to hamlet, living on just the food the little homes could provide, sleeping on a bamboo mat at night by some log fire, with all the household round him, and scarcely ever out of a crowd by day. It seemed as if the people never left him, the young folk especially, who would go on singing the hymns he had taught them, long after he had fallen into uneasy slumber. There seemed no limit to their vitality and friendliness. 'Almost the whole village would stay with one all day long, crowding the room to suffocation round the fire.' And many were the hearts the Lord opened.

Some things specially please me about this new Eastern district [the above letter continued]. In the first place, the work was practically begun and has been almost wholly carried on by the Lisu themselves, however raw and poorly trained. They have not only passed on the little they know, but have taught others to teach in their turn. So many of these young people and children had learned to read and write, in an elementary way, that I was flooded with little notes and have not yet found time to read them all.

Another matter for thankfulness is that the proportion of Christians to heathen is so large. In some vicinities scarcely any heathen families remain. This is a great advantage, as it considerably lessens temptation and complications. Last but not least, practically all the converts agree not to plant opium. This will pave the way for baptisms and the formation of churches in due time. . . . They want to have a large gathering at Christmas. Will you pray that it may be a time of much blessing—as also the Christmas we hope to celebrate again at Turtle Village?

'If all this is not an answer to prayer,' Fraser urged, 'what is it?'

Up to the present I find that in this new district alone there are over two hundred and forty families professing to

¹ Fraser had two older brothers, so to the Lisu he was not 'Elder Brother' only, but 'Elder Brother Number Three'—a more cumbersome but, from their point of view, more courteous appellation.

be Christian. The total number of converts in the districts previously worked, of which I have sent you maps, is over one hundred and eighty families of Lisu and more than twenty families of Kachin. So there are now, in all, about four hundred and fifty families of tribespeople for whose teaching and shepherding we are responsible. This represents over two thousand people, young and old, for the average family out here numbers about five persons.

‘Rejoice with me,’ he briefly concluded, ‘and pray on for them all, in every phase of need you can think of.’

CHAPTER XXII

THE END IN VIEW

THE mission-house at Tengyueh was a very different place now that bachelor housekeeping was again exchanged for the life of a family. Mrs. Flagg was a great acquisition, not only to her husband—now in charge of the Chinese side of the work—but to Allyn Cooke, whom she relieved of household cares, and to Fraser, whose letters frequently refer to her efficiency and kindness.

Mrs. Flagg came from Buffalo, U.S.A. [he explained to his mother] expecting to go straight into work in the interior of China, but being an expert accountant she was asked to remain in Shanghai, to give help in the Treasurer's department of the Mission. . . .

After six years in that important service, she is now tremendously glad to be set free for this inland province, and we are tremendously glad to have her. She knows but little of the language as yet, but she is quick and capable and will soon be able to make herself understood.

Mrs. Flagg was also an excellent housekeeper and made the best bread Fraser had ever tasted in China. But her helpful spirit meant far more to the sometimes lonely pioneer.

She is certainly very kind to me [he continued] and does not at all encourage my going out to live among the Lisu. She wants me to stay on here (as headquarters) and to make me as comfortable as possible. *Now* she is your friend for ever, is she not !

But Fraser's point of view was different. He saw in the new arrangement the opportunity he had long desired of leaving the station and Chinese work entirely to his colleagues and going out himself 'to live in the wilds'. He wanted to be more in touch with his Lisu and more completely to share their life. And this desire was realized some weeks later.

It was a poor little home to which Fraser was welcomed, in the heart of his western district. Turtle Village, lying six thousand feet up in the mountains, was almost entirely Christian. A little house of bamboo matting was placed at his disposal, with a thatched roof, a hollowed-out fireplace in the middle of the floor, and a bamboo bedstead, table and stool of Lisu manufacture. At the back of the room a long broad shelf was fixed up for him—consisting of a coffin-plank, borrowed for the purpose—on which to dispose of his belongings, consisting chiefly of a few books, medicines and stores, such as cocoa and milk and a tin of biscuits sent as a gift from Ba Thaw's young wife in Burma. For Ba Thaw, again generously spared from Myitkyina, had come up to give help in the translation of a second Gospel which was urgently needed. The bamboo shed was divided into a central and two side compartments, one of which was the kitchen and the other the bedroom.

Here then, in much thankfulness, Fraser made himself at home with young and old, entering into all the life of the village. He had a real love for children and welcomed their informal visits; they ran around him at all hours, learning when they must keep quiet not to disturb his work.

Seated at his rickety table one day that summer, Fraser was writing to his prayer-helpers, when he heard whispers and the shuffling of little feet outside his door. Timidly at first, six or seven children appeared, and the charming sequel was incorporated in his letter.

The leader of this afternoon's party wanted a piece of soap. Now a piece of soap for one means, of course, a piece for each and all, so I suggested that she might wash her hands with my soap and basin, both on the low shelf behind us. The desire to be clean is such a laudable one that we must not discourage it, must we? So she prepares to start in, but her hands being innocent of previous washings, she is a little in doubt of the *modus operandi*, and looks at me inquiringly. There is some lather in the soap-dish and I tell her to use that first, whereupon she scrapes some up gingerly and spreads it on the back of her left hand—just as you would

spread butter on a piece of bread. No, I tell her, she must *rub* it in, not just spread it on, so she tries again. However, it soon seems evident that a practical demonstration is necessary, so after washing my own hands to show her the approved method, she starts in again. She warms to her work this time, and washes both hands and face with rather more vigour, more splashing, and more blowing than I thought I had included in my demonstration. However, there is nothing like erring on the right side, is there?

Of course by this time all the others have discovered that the thing they desire more than anything else in the world is to wash *their* hands too. They never thought of it before, but sometimes discoveries are made on the spur of the moment, you see. So very soon they are all squatting around the little galvanized iron basin, not without some edging and pushing—to say nothing of differences of opinion as to who ‘had the soap first’—and are revelling in their newly found amusement. As there were not more than two or three tumblers-full of water in the small basin to begin with, and as their hands were scarcely snowy-white when they came in, the colour of the water when they have been at it five or ten minutes need not be described. Some of them seem to think it necessary to present their hands to me for inspection after washing. One very small boy comes along with such a solemn face (washing is a very serious business, you see) and holds both hands out in mute inquiry. . . . So I smile approval, pat his head, and back he toddles to the basin as solemnly as he came.

Of course they all succeed in getting their sleeves wet up to the elbows, and part of their tunics and dresses wet too. Moreover, they do not seem as anxious to remove the soap from their hands and faces as they were to put it on. They smell of soap for hours afterwards, and go about with soapy-shiny faces. One little girl comes to present herself for inspection and I seat her on the stool beside me. She is not at all afraid, but looks up out of the tops of her eyes with a kind of awe, as if I were a mile instead of a foot or two above her. It is a pure pleasure to get children’s confidence, is it not? They finish their hand-washing, as you might guess, by spilling all the water on the floor—a touch of nature! but we will not blame them.

Little Miss Kung, about ten years old, was one of Fraser’s chief friends in Turtle Village. Introducing her, he wrote :

She has big brown eyes, round and full like a deer's, a bright face and an eager childish smile. She has her head shaved (like all other Lisu girls and women) except for a circular patch about four inches across at the back of her head, the hair of which is plaited into a short *queue*. She wears a cloth cap on her head which we might call a rainbow-cap (for it must certainly contain nearly all the colours of the rainbow!) on the top of which is fastened a little tuft of fur about four inches long. Her dress is held together by a pattern-woven cloth belt about two inches wide, and her apron, which is separate from the dress, comes down nearly to her feet. I wish you could hear her eager childish prattle: you would realize two things—first that these children are not lacking in quick intelligence, and secondly that they are just flesh and blood children like ours in England. How she will chatter! These children live such natural lives; they know all their hills and valleys by heart, know the names and habits of all the animals, birds and insects to be found there, as well as all about the trees, shrubs, etc., etc., found on their hills. They will sit and make necklaces of red berries, or plait bracelets out of wild grass while they tend cattle. And she will talk about these and many other things. She will tell you all the affairs of the village—how So-and-So lost something, and then his mother scolded him, at which he got sulky and ran up and slept in the hut on their buckwheat field, then how his sister saw him and told his uncle, what the latter said and then what someone else said, and how they had a quarrel about it, etc., etc., etc., all of which details do not interest me half as much as the charming vivacity of the child who is telling them. She will close her periods by looking straight up into your face with an eager smile as much as to say, '*Isn't* that interesting?' Then she will suddenly look serious and gaze off into space for a moment's reverie—just as you see eager, demonstrative children do at home—but her reveries only last about two seconds, after which she will suddenly start up again on a new tack, as bright and eager as before. And so she prattles on.

She can write a little, though she usually contrives to get her n's and s's the wrong way round. Once when I was sitting at my table writing to one of my prayer members it struck me to ask her (she was standing at the other side of the table watching me) to put her name at the head of the sheet. She complied with alacrity, and was just going to write when she suddenly pulled herself up and said, 'I haven't yet asked God to help me,' whereupon she bowed

her head on the table and asked God to help her write her name ! I think I can see her now, with her head in her hands, her rainbow cap on, and the tuft of fur flapping noiselessly forward on to the table in front of her.

To win the love of the children was one of Fraser's chief joys in his Lisu wilds, but he did not often succeed with the very little ones. 'They usually give me a doubtful, suspicious look,' he confesses, 'and then decide in the negative.'

Such was a tiny little girl at Water Bowl Village. She was about two years old, but only able to walk by holding on to the bamboo partition as she went round the room. She would not come to me. But, do you know, she could sing 'Jesus loves me' with scarcely a false note ! I could hardly believe my ears, for she was little more than a baby. I could not but recall the words, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.' Did you ever wonder why God has set so high a value on the praise of little children ? . . . Whatever the reason be, their praise is 'perfected', and we can never go on better than perfect, in spite of all our poetical and musical sophistications ! Oh, yes, we grown-up people know a great deal, or think we do ; we may indeed do many things in God's service better than children can. We may preach better, we may pray better ; but there is one thing we shall never do better than children—and that is to praise God better. For there is no sweeter music in the ears of our Heavenly Father than His praises sung by the innocent lips of a tiny little child.

There was something about the singing of the Lisu converts that brought Fraser himself no little pleasure. He rarely mentioned, even to his mother, any sense of privation in his strangely primitive surroundings, but the hunger for music, real soul-stirring music, was always there.

Cooke is musical [he wrote at this time], not in the disappointing way some people are 'musical', but with real taste and feeling. He has a good violin . . . and puts his soul into his playing in a way that makes it a pleasure to accompany him. But a harmonium is a poor thing to accompany a violin, much more so a 'baby organ' such as mine ! . . .

When I dip into real music, I often have the feeling that a part of myself has been more or less undeveloped—I do not mean in regard to execution, but in regard to general musical education and soul-culture. Not that I would have my life different in actual practice, if I had the choice of making it so. One has sometimes to prune a tree in one direction, that it may develop better in another. But if I ever dream, and I do sometimes, of golden ages and existences, the golden age to me is that of a century ago more or less, and the golden existence the swim of the musical world in Continental *conservatoires*. I dream of bathing my soul in the creations of Beethoven, Mozart and other great masters ; of drinking in opera-music ; of living in the world of the Rubinsteins, Sarasates, Paganinis, and the great singers. I know very well that all this never is, nor can be wholly satisfying, and I deliberately relegate it to its own place. It is not and I do not wish it should be more to me than dreams. My natural longings, however, go out in that direction.

So he loved the singing of his young Lisu and took great pains to train them in a method of his own, by which they could read simple music and even copy out new tunes for themselves. The value of hymns was so great in imparting truth and developing Christian experience that, with Ba Thaw's help, he constantly added to their supply of both original hymns and translations. Two special favourites set forth Bible history in many verses, easily remembered by reason of their tunes and rhymes. These two long hymns of the Old and New Testaments were eagerly learned and sung by the young converts, and went far to supplement the fragmentary portions of Scripture as yet available.

The days at Turtle Village were largely devoted to the translation of a second Gospel, that of St. John, and to thought and prayer over the practical problem of self-support in the growing Lisu church. How easy it would have been to slip into the too-frequent custom of paying out of foreign funds the larger part of the expense incurred in the work ! But the more Fraser lived in touch with the people, the more he was convinced that they were really

able to do for themselves all that was necessary. And he did not regard them as Christians of another type from himself. The greatest joy and privilege of his life lay in service and sacrifice for the Lord he loved. Fellowship with Christ was indeed precious in the realm of spiritual gain and gladness, but fellowship with Him in suffering brought yet deeper revelations of His love. Were these spiritual children, for whom he so truly travailed in birth, to be denied their right to this deeper fellowship? Were they to be debarred from free, self-propagating life as believers? Was the Lisu Church to become a parasitic body, dependent upon foreign money and control? Not so did Fraser envisage the situation. As he looked out upon the problem of the mountain people—the need and darkness of tribe after tribe throughout that great borderland—he saw the possibility of a growing, indigenous Church, unfettered by foreign funds and methods, carrying the Name of Jesus far afield by its own zeal and devotion. He saw voluntary, unpaid preachers, guided by the Spirit of God, going out in faith to make known the Gospel, which was indeed Good News to them, and attesting by self-sacrifice the reality of their love to the Saviour. He saw in a word, saw in faith, the blessed possibilities so largely to be realized in the Lisu Church, by the grace of God. And for *that* Church, beloved of his soul, he was ready to deny himself as all wise parents must, ready to endure and to let them endure, that they might ‘grow up into Him in all things’.

But it was not easy. The extreme poverty of the mountaineers was always there before his eyes. Was he not sharing it—living for months together in their primitive homes? No aspect of their hard, bare life was unknown to him. Yet he loved them well enough not to make their way as Christians too easy, or a one-sided receiving. The joy of giving must be theirs too; and there was much they could give. So Fraser did not pay the young men who volunteered to carry his loads from village to village. When chapels were needed, he did not take the initiative,

but left it entirely to those who would use them. The principle he inculcated was that those who enjoyed the benefit should bear the labour or expense. He let them pay for their Gospels and catechisms, note-books and pencils, which came to be in great demand as the young folks learned to read and write. He let them supply the food for their Christmas festivals and the oil for lighting the chapels at night. He refrained from paying the voluntary preachers who went out from time to time ; even the two young teachers still working in the eastern district he left to the care of the warm-hearted converts over there. How much easier it would have been to go ahead and do things at his own or Mission expense ! But no : he held on in the apostolic spirit, ' I endure that they may obtain '.

In this connection Fraser had written to his prayer-helpers a few months previously :

One thing about which I am much exercised and want to ask your prayers is the matter of self-support. I could write much more than you have time to read on the subject, but, will at least say this—that the Lisu converts, if wisely organized for the purpose, are well able to support their own evangelists and teachers, and to put up their chapels, schools, etc., without the help of a single penny of foreign money. Quite at the beginning of things it may be best for us to help them out somewhat, but I regard the entire self-support of the work as a goal to be reached as soon as ever possible. . . . It is not at all pleasant for us missionaries to insist on such poor people giving for the support of their work, when we are wealthy by comparison. It has nevertheless to be done, unless we want them to become parasite Christians.

On my last journey I was up against the problem in the village of City Hill. A young man, one of the converts, wished to join me in order to learn as much as he could while helping in evangelistic work among the heathen Lisu. As he could be of considerable use to his fellow-villagers on his return, I put it to them that they might help his wife and children while he was away. I calculated that five rupees a month (6s. 6d.) would be sufficient to provide for the family, and as he was willing to give eight months to the work, a sum of forty rupees would be needed. It would have

been far easier to provide the money from my own funds, but I had determined upon principle not to do so. On broaching the matter to them, the converts said they would think it over and give me an answer the next evening.

The result was that next evening the villagers announced that they were prepared to give two annas (2*d*) per family, not per month, but for the whole time the young man would be away—a total of one rupee for the eight Christian families, no doubt expecting Fraser to give the remaining thirty-nine.

There was a time [he continued] when I should have been chary of pressing the subject any further, with people living in such poverty. But I know the Lisu better now, and so proceeded to give them a good round reproof for suggesting such a meagre contribution. They did not much like it, naturally enough, and some of them grumbled and argued against me vigorously. But I stood my ground.

I pointed out that they were proposing to give to the work of the Lord, Who had given His life for them, just about one-sixtieth part of the money they usually spent on tobacco and betel-nut. I reminded them that there was more than one among them who had not yet broken off opium, and that a single opium-smoker would burn away enough money during eight months to meet the entire need! They could not deny that for a single marriage they would spend eight hundred times the amount they had suggested each family should give—if not a thousand or two thousand times as much!

‘Yes,’ they argued, ‘but we *have* to get wives. That is a necessary expenditure.’

‘Very well,’ I answered, ‘if you think so little of preaching the Gospel, perhaps it is not necessary for the young man to go at all.’

And there I left the matter, begging them to reconsider it. The lad himself was disappointed and so was his young wife, a nice, true-hearted girl, who really wanted her husband to go and learn more. I myself felt saddened, more than any of them, and made it a special matter of prayer that they might be brought to a better state of mind and heart.

That evening they seemed to have come round a little, and eventually they made the following arrangement.

Three of the eight families concerned promised to take the wife and two children into their homes and support them for a month at a time. Two other families gave a rupee each (1s. 4d.) outright. This amounted altogether to a contribution of seventeen rupees—instead of one. It was not all they could have done, by any means ; but not thinking it wise to press the matter further, I paid the balance of twenty-three rupees myself. I made it quite clear, however, that I did not want them to give anything at all, if they did it grudgingly.

‘No Teacher,’ they instantly replied, ‘we are *glad* to give.’

How different a spirit from the evening before ! The Lord had been working in the meanwhile.

It was on prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit that Fraser was learning to depend more and more. None other could reveal the joy there is in service and sacrifice for the Lord Jesus. He longed to see the Lisu Church a missionary Church from the beginning, and spared neither prayer nor effort to make it so.

Now is the time [he wrote from Turtle Village this summer] to commence self-support among my Lisu, now while the work is still in its formative stage, and I want you to pray very earnestly that it may go forward on wholesome, self-sustaining lines.

‘Do not be afraid of burdening the people,’ was advice which had sounded strange to Fraser some years previously. ‘It does them good,’ went on the experienced and truly devoted missionary.

The advice was needed [Fraser continued in the above letter]. We do not consider ourselves rich as compared with other Europeans out here, but we are rolling in wealth compared with these poor tribespeople, and are tempted to feel mean, burdening them in any way. But I am convinced that we ought to do it, and really the people themselves expect us to. So I let them carry my baggage on their backs from village to village, sometimes as far as twenty miles, and never offer payment. They do not expect it, any more than they expect to be paid for the hospitality I always accept when staying among them. They *expect* to do these

things for their foreign teacher, as for their own evangelists. Would I then be doing them a kindness to encourage a mercenary spirit where there is none to begin with?

As to paying converts to preach the Gospel, Fraser had reason to feel that for the foreign missionary to do so was 'a vicious system' and fruitful in grievous results.

It is the line of least resistance [he commented], but is something like the broad road that leads to destruction. No! far better let our work go slowly, and tread the narrow way of self-support. We shall never regret it. . . .

What I want to see everywhere is the spirit of SACRIFICE for the Lord Who bought us with His blood—a desire to prove not what we can *get* but what we can *give*—and my heart burns as I write it.

It was just like Fraser to apply to himself even more rigorously than to others this principle of self-support. He had long wanted to earn his own living in China. rather than receive funds from the Mission to which he belonged, and after correspondence with Mr. Hoste on the subject, at length obtained permission to accept a teaching post in a Government school for boys at Teng-yueh. In return for teaching English for two hours daily, from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., and on Mondays from 1 to 3 p.m., he was to receive a salary of \$80 a month, equal at that time to about eight pounds sterling. To make his position perfectly plain, he retained for his personal use only as much of this salary as would have come to him normally in C.I.M. remittances, placing the remainder to Mission funds. For these sums (paid in whenever the notice of a remittance came to hand) Fraser received regular receipts from Shanghai.

This will avoid the imputation of my making money on the side for myself [he wrote to his Prayer Helpers], and yet I shall have the delightful feeling of earning my own salt—working for the right to be a missionary, so to speak—and shall also have extra money to put into the printing of Lisu books, which is costly, hospitality to Lisu visitors, etc. It will tie me down somewhat, of course, except for the summer vacation in July, but I do not mind that just at present. I

want to do literary and training work, which can be better managed here than elsewhere.

The arrangement worked well as long as it lasted, for Fraser enjoyed his relations with the Chinese headmaster and staff, and won the respect of the boys, some sixty of them, ranging in age from sixteen to eighteen. The work left him free from 9 a.m. for other occupations, of which his hands were full, for he was getting out a Handbook of the Lisu language, at the request of the British Government in Burma,¹ besides teaching a group of young converts who desired to be home missionaries, and completing with Ba Thaw's help the translation of the Gospel of St. John.

Another engrossing interest at this time was the study of agriculture to which Fraser had been drawn by his eagerness to help the Lisu to improve their farming methods and to earn a little money. Careful investigation of local conditions had assured him that much might be done along this line. From a well-known naturalist and other Europeans in the district he had learned the possibilities of soil and climate, and was collecting seeds of various crops likely to do well round his Lisu villages.

By the by [he wrote to his mother], do you remember my telling you of Forrest, the botanical expert who has spent some years in Yunnan, collecting specimens of orchids, rhododendrons, etc.? He has just been here again, and

¹ This valuable Handbook was published by the British Government at Rangoon early in the following year (1922). It consisted of three parts. First, there are a few introductory pages on the origin, distribution and customs of the Lisu, who seem to have migrated, originally, from Eastern Tibet to their present location along the China-Burma border. The second part is the Handbook proper, beginning with a table of sounds and going on to grammar and syntax. The third part is an English-Lisu vocabulary, representing years of patient observation and study at close quarters with the people.

'You have no idea,' Fraser wrote to his mother at this time, how difficult it is to systematize a thing which has never been systematized before—in the whole history of the Lisu race, especially when you have learned it simply by ear, picking it up! It is impossible to force it into a European mould. You cannot make the grammar, for instance, fit in with the framework of an English or Greek grammar. Chinese and Kachin handbooks give the best suggestions, but there are so many things peculiar to the Lisu language that you have, more or less, to work out your own *system de novo*.'

The result was a most useful and presentable volume of 108 pages, which reached Fraser before he left Yunnan on his first furlough.

I have been pumping him for all the agricultural information he could give me. . . . He had been a farmer in Scotland and a fruit-grower in Australia before taking on his present work, besides which a man could hardly be a botanist and know nothing of agriculture, could he? I am glad to find that some of my own conclusions, derived from reading and inquiry among people of this locality, are not far out.

Forrest says that much of the red soil of this plain and district is loam, not pure clay, and that there is a considerable amount of the same kind of soil in England. He says that the large waste area to the N.W. of our plain could be made to grow wheat, potatoes and other things, if properly handled, but that this soil lies in pockets of volcanic rock, which come near the surface in places. He thinks that sugar-beet would grow well in it, but no native here has ever heard of such a crop—though sugar is even more expensive than at home.

Rare orchids and other flowers found their way to the mission-house from this interesting Mr. Forrest. Rhododendrons were his speciality, and he would wax eloquent over great sweeps of hillside just one mass of gorgeous colour.

Would you not like [Fraser questioned] to be able to go out for an afternoon's walk and gather as many orchids as you could carry? Those we now have are a rich orange-red colour. We have hung some on tree stumps and some from a suspended bamboo gutter. Wonderful things, are they not?—clinging wherever you place them and drawing all their sustenance from the air.

Strangely enough, it was only the second week of Fraser's engagement in the Middle School when tidings reached him of a new movement of the Spirit of God out in his eastern district, which before long was to supplant both school-teaching and agriculture in their claims upon him. It was Lao-luh, the leader of the two young Lisu Cooke had left behind, who came in to Tengyueh in a sorry plight. He was suffering from an ulcerated eye that badly needed attention and was shabby and wayworn from his long journey. But he was also overflowing with gladness as the bearer of good tidings.

Listening to all he had to tell, Fraser was carried back in thought to the banks of the Salween and the day he had crossed it, coming from Rangoon the previous summer. While waiting for a coolie for the next stage up the mountains, he had noticed two Lisu come down to the river on the Burma side and call, as he supposed, for the ferry. But they could get no answer, and finally turned back and disappeared. He had not forgotten them, and now heard the unexpected sequel. For Lao-luh had just come from these villages across the Salween, bringing with him two of many tribespeople over there who were earnestly inquiring about the way of salvation. They had sent for the Lisu lad of whom they had heard, and he had gone willingly from village to village and home to home, telling all he knew of the saving power of Christ. The joy in that remote region was great as demon altars were destroyed and whole households turned from darkness to light. Lao-luh, indeed, was overwhelmed when more than a hundred families had declared themselves Christians and were asking for books and further teaching. All he could do was to hasten back to Tengyueh, a week's journey over the mountains, to find Fraser, and at the same time seek help for his eyes.

More and more, the interest of both Mr. and Mrs. Flagg had been drawn out to the Lisu side of the Tengyueh work, and he was happily at liberty to return before long with the messengers. Fraser deeply felt the call of the new development, and though tied for the time by his teaching work, took upon his heart the burden of these seeking souls. He, no less than his colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Flagg, felt that the time had come when they should remove their centre to that eastern district and follow up as fully as possible the manifest working of God. Meanwhile, Fraser turned to his praying friends at home with a deep sense of his own insufficiency. Here is the letter to his mother, written as he thought matters over.

My young Lisu helper arrived in here three days ago (on April 11), and reported the 'turning Christian' of over



FLAGG (*left*) AND FRASER (*right*) IN LISU DRESS



A GATHERING OF CHRISTIAN LISU ON THE SALWEEN RIVER, TAKEN FROM THE ROOF OF THE CHAPEL

a hundred families in a new district just across the Salween. The movement is still spreading there. Lao-luh only came in because of a very painful eye (ulcer on the cornea) which we are trying to cure. He says that there were many more invitations from other villages which he had not had time to accept.

Imagine what it is to have between five and six hundred families (representing some three thousand people) looking to you as father, mother, teacher, shepherd, adviser, etc. etc. It is a big responsibility.

Compared with mass movements in some parts of India and Africa, Fraser realized that his task was compassable, yet it was great.

You know [he added] that, rightly or wrongly, I went in for big things when I took up tribes work : and I do not regret it. I believe that to a large extent we get what we go in for with God—only sometimes we have mistaken ideas as to how it will come about.

CHAPTER XXIII

LOVE'S ENDURANCE

FRASER and his colleagues were facing a new situation. Spring had come and with it the stirring tidings from beyond the Salween, and now, early in May, permission from Shanghai had reached them to move out and make their home centre in that south-eastern district. Funds were in hand to build a simple bungalow, sufficient for their needs, and plans they had long been making could now be put into execution. To his Prayer Circle Fraser turned instinctively as he thought of all the help and guidance that would be needed.

It seems increasingly clear [he wrote] that God is pointing us down to this new field, rather than to the older districts of which you have particulars already. The number of converts in this Eastern district is still increasing. A hundred and fifty families have already turned to God this year, which, added to the two hundred and fifty of last year, makes a total of about four hundred households gathered in during the past sixteen months. Our western, southern and northern districts combined have barely half this number, nor are the converts as promising. So we feel distinctly led to place our home-centre among the Eastern Lisu . . . and shall have to work the other districts chiefly through native evangelists. . . . After all these years of what I feel to have been guerilla warfare, we are to have a permanent mission-station right among the people. For this we have long been praying, and at last the way seems open. . . . You will join us, will you not, in praying over all phases of this new development.

There were seven voluntary Lisu preachers in the new district by this time, and Fraser was anxious to give them much-needed teaching. For this purpose he arranged with the Head of the High School to lengthen his summer vacation to include the whole month of August. Ba Thaw was still with him for translation work, so they went together and conducted a regular Bible School at Sinchaiho

—the first of the great gatherings for which that locality (Muchengpo) was to become famous.

And what an enthusiastic, happy crowd it was, in the bamboo chapel on the mountain slope, high above the river ! For two full weeks the meetings continued, morning, noon and night. Such fellowship had never been known in Lisuland before. If at times the unaccustomed students showed signs of weariness, a hymn or chorus quickly restored interest, and singing seemed to fill all intervals.

Coming and going, the home of Moh Ting-chang at Hsiangta was open to the traveller and on the return journey Fraser was specially thankful for it. He had not been well for some weeks, but put it down to the damp heat of the season. Was this also what caused his uncertainty about a detour he wished to make on his way back to Tengyueh ? Moh and Ba Thaw were hoping to accompany him to the town of Mangshih, down on the great Shan plain, where the copy of Mark's Gospel had been picked up which led to Moh's conversion. But the more Fraser planned for the journey, the more he felt uncertain about it. Difficulties of all sorts cropped up, and at last he felt sure that he was being guided to return home at once. A week later, in Tengyueh, he knew the reason. He had resumed his classes at the High School and, though far from well, was teaching as usual when he suddenly collapsed with what proved to be a serious attack of typhoid fever. For weeks his life hung in the balance, for malarial complications caused repeated relapses, but by the middle of October he was able to write to his mother :

I have any amount of things to be thankful for ('Count your blessings !') and the first is that I just got back to Tengyueh in time. I calculate, now, that if I had gone down to Mangshih, the fever would have caught me two days' journey away from here, with no place to stay at, no one to look after me, no proper food or facilities for nursing in such serious illness. As you know, I have scores of times put to the test the simple plan of waiting upon God for guidance in

perplexity, and have never yet been disappointed. Decisions so made have invariably proved to be wisest and best.

The kindness and care of his colleagues had been beyond telling.

Flagg came down from Paoshan specially to look after me and has been nursing me ever since. Mrs. Flagg moved out of their own room (the best in the house) to put me in it. They have given me the use of anything and everything they have. . . . I am wearing Flagg's dressing-gown as I write this. Naturally I feel very grateful to them, and I am sure you will too.

This almost fatal illness, and the fact that he could now leave his work in competent hands, decided Fraser to apply at last for furlough, long overdue. His English teaching was not resumed, but the translation of St. John's Gospel was completed with slowly returning strength. Then came the move to the Cold Country, and the Lisu home Flagg had prepared with willing help from the local Christians. Bright autumn days were before them, and Fraser was eager to be back in his itinerant work again. Hundreds of converts were looking forward to the Christmas festival which would have to be celebrated in the new centre as well as at Turtle Village.

But again the unexpected happened. The grassy uplands of the Cold Country proved too exposed for the convalescent. The unseasoned boards of the mission bungalow let in the wind almost as freely as the bamboo walls of the chapel, and after the second Sunday (when Moh Ting-chang came over for the services) Fraser went down with a sharp attack of pleurisy. Recovery was slow, retarded by painful swelling of the lower limbs, which made walking out of the question. Christmas Day was spent in bed instead of among his Lisu children, who felt for the first time the shadow of coming separation.

Fraser was now in his fourteenth year in China. The rugged strength and endurance he had brought to his task were perceptibly failing, but not so the brave spirit. His heart went out not only to the hundreds of converts

round the new home and across the Salween River, but to the Lisu of all the regions to the north, and other unevangelized tribespeople right out to the Tibetan border. This ensured a response to the request of a pioneer missionary on the Upper Mekong (twin river to the Salween) for a couple of Christian Lisu to come to his help. Mr. Lewers was alone up there, three weeks' journey to the north of Fraser's field. He had as yet little knowledge of the language, and there were tens of thousands of Lisu to be reached.

Spare two of these evangelists, at such a time, to go so far away? A smaller soul could not have faced it; but Fraser had grown with his work, grown into a leader of wide vision and great though humble faith. 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,' applied surely to this situation. Two of his best voluntary helpers were found willing to go without payment of any kind, leaving their farms and families for an indefinite period, to face hardship and danger for love of Christ and in obedience to His command. And Fraser let them go, and gathered strength through waiting upon God to go on in the work without them.

And now began another long itineration before he could leave for furlough. Flagg had gone up to the Mekong to escort the Lisu evangelists, and Mrs. Flagg with little Ruth—not yet a year old, but a fast friend of Fraser—would have to be alone for six weeks at least, several days' journey from the nearest Europeans. Bravely she faced it, that first woman missionary to the Lisu, and the converts rallied round her, including Paul, his family and neighbours, in the spirit Fraser recalled when he said some years later :

The Christians of three out of four of these Cold Country villages have been among the most satisfactory we ever had—so loyal, so hearty, active and intelligent.

God will reward them [he wrote at the time]. . . . I think of one or two men, leaders in nearby villages, who have

done almost everything they could possibly do for us, refusing any payment, and who say :

‘ Teachers, we ought by right not only to do what we have done, but to support you in food and clothing as well.’

They remind me of what the Apostle Paul said of Aristarchus, Mark and Justus (Col. iv. 11)—‘ men that have been a comfort unto me ’.

So Mrs. Flag was well surrounded in her husband’s absence, and would not hear of Fraser’s journey being delayed. Two objects were before him now. In the first place there were many cases of real or supposed persecution to look into, in the villages throughout this eastern district, and troubles to settle among the Christians themselves ; and then beyond, across the Salween, were hundreds of new converts waiting his coming, who had never yet seen a missionary. It was the middle of February when he left the Cold Country for Mangshih and the great plain stretching southward, and summer was well advanced before he came back, having had little if any news of his colleagues or of the outside world for three and a half months. ‘ I never made a more needed journey,’ he wrote on his return, though the cost to himself had been great.

It was a new experience, on this itineration, to find himself a travelling magistrate as well as missionary ; but there seemed no escaping the double role.

I do not relish these affairs [he wrote to his Prayer Circle]. Too often a wrong spirit is manifested by the converts themselves, when trouble of any kind arises ; and quite frequently the right is not all on one side. There are, of course, some cases of pure persecution, where the converts suffer undoubted injustice. In two of the cases I have had to attend to, the sufferers told me that, in *their* opinion, the best way to settle the matter would be to get their swords, go in a body, and kill their persecutors ! It is not easy to teach them to love their enemies.

Yet these same young converts were so loving and hospitable to their missionary, with all his Christian ethics, that Fraser found it hard to pass on and leave

them. A Chinese shop-keeper in the market-town of Chefang undertook to post a letter, sometime, somewhere, for the passing traveller; so standing at his counter Fraser wrote in pencil to his mother, giving some details:

The people I have been staying with at Palien the last few days are so very kind and hearty (Lisu converts, I mean) that it is a pleasure to be in their home. You love them and hate to leave them. . . .

One of the cases we have investigated was that of the kidnapping of a Christian girl by a heathen Lisu. We went to 'rescue' her (I and my Lisu) over across the Salween, but it turned out a kind of fiasco, for when we found her she did not want to be rescued after all! So we had to leave her—and this after walking I do not know how many hours by night with a lantern, to surprise them before they could run off with her again. We must have walked thirty miles each way. The matter was settled by the payment of a fine.

But as a rule, young women who had been abducted were only too glad to be set free again.

A case has just come up [Fraser was writing a little later] which I am having to settle. A Christian girl was run off with by some heathen of the same locality. They tried to get her to recant and consent to be the wife of a heathen man, but she stuck to her guns bravely—and being afraid of getting into serious trouble with us, they let her go again. But, returned or not returned, we cannot let our girls be abducted with impunity and are taking the matter up. The Christians are very indignant about it.

Many of the 'cases' to be settled were across the river among the most recent converts, and there also Fraser found the same warmth of heart and welcome. The custom of hand-shaking had come even to these villages, and men, women and children would flock out at his approach, line up on both sides of the pathway and greet him with singing—each one in turn gripping his hand in both their own, often with eyes shut and teeth clenched in their earnestness. They were so glad to see him and to have someone, at last, to teach them more about how to be saved from the power of demons and the fear of death.

But over here, across the Salween, Fraser found himself faced by conditions more trying than any he had previously met.

The country is poor and barren [he wrote]. The mountains are high and rocky, and the poverty of the people terrible. Many, if not most of them, are in rags and tatters, and the dirt of the hovels in which they live makes it a trial to the flesh to be amongst them.

Yet these were the homes he shared, day and night, for the next two months. The frequent rains of the wet season made it difficult to be much out of doors, but with all their poverty the people had already built eight little chapels which were put to good use. Two hundred and more families in forty villages—how was Fraser to help them all? To make the most of his time in the district, he arranged to hold a Bible School in a central place, and invited all who could to come together for half a month of teaching. This was a new thing indeed, with all the thrill of a festival for these backward people, and willingly they gathered about him, making their own arrangements for food and shelter.

Of course, it was all primitive in the extreme. The bamboo chapel might be full for a meeting, inquiries yelled from outside would be answered in the same strident tones by those within, and if a herd of cattle were driven by, the whole audience would stampede to the door and out on the hillside to take stock of them, leaving the teacher, meanwhile, waiting with what patience he could muster. But it was a beginning in placing these new believers on the rock of revealed truth. It made them feel that they were people of the Book—and many of the younger folk became eager to learn to read and write.

Fraser, too, was learning. He had been inclined to be impatient, at first, with the extreme ignorance and backwardness of the people. They were so taken up with externals, rules and regulations as to how to be a Christian—whether, though not growing opium himself, one might work for a heathen on the latter's opium fields ;

whether pickled beans might be eaten (they are pickled in liquor); what to do when your son is engaged to a girl in a heathen family who insist on liquor being given at the wedding; whether you may wash clothes or hunt game on Sunday, etc. etc.

And their slowness in learning to think for themselves! Question and answer might proceed a little way—for example:

‘Who were the sons of Adam and Eve?’

‘Cain, Abel and Seth,’ for the lesson had been carefully taught.

‘Good! Now who were the parents of Cain, Abel and Seth?’

‘Don’t know. It isn’t in the Catechism.’

Impatient with them? [Fraser wrote]. Well, now, let me whisper to you—yes, I am afraid I do get a little impatient, sometimes. But then, remembering the dense ignorance these people have been brought up in, the absolute lack of Christian nurture or advantages of any kind, one feels sorry to have ever been impatient with them. And they mean so well, too! You see them sitting there—men, women, boys and girls—in all their dirt, poverty and ignorance; you remember One Who was never impatient, never harsh, even with sinners and outcasts, and your heart melts to them again. You have a new understanding of what it means, ‘He had compassion on the multitudes, for they were as sheep having no shepherd.’

Yes, Fraser was learning. The food that was all his mountain hosts could give him, at this time, was so poor that there were days when he simply could not eat it. It would not go down any more. Then he had to fall back on his old plan of starvation—going without food altogether, until hunger compelled him to eat just what they ate. And yet, comparing the conditions of comfort and civilization down on the plains—in the Chinese cities with their culture, where Christ was not wanted nor His truth received—he could rejoice in ‘coming right away up to these mountains, amid the rocks, mists and forests, to find ourselves in little Lisu chapels of bamboo

and thatch, put up by simple Christian folk for the worship of God'.

The people are perhaps shivering through their rags [he continued later]. They are poor, dirty, ignorant and superstitious, but they are *God's gift to us*. You ask God for spiritual children, and He chooses them out for you. You shake hands with the brothers and sisters and mothers He has found for you, and sit down with them, the boys and girls all around you if possible. For I would far rather teach Lisu children to sing 'Jesus loves me, this I know', than teach the integral calculus to the most intelligent who have no interest in China.

In this spirit Fraser came very near to these new believers. Going with them, after the Bible School was over, to many of their villages, he wrote :

I have never, I think, travelled with people whose company on the road I have enjoyed more than these Lisu converts. They are so obliging, so good-humoured, so simple-minded and so easily pleased. They simply never grumble at hardships. They will perhaps get drenched in a heavy downpour of rain, get little but dry rice to eat at the end of a long day's journey, but still seem as happy as ever, to judge by the peals of laughter you hear from their smoky camp fires at night. . . .

When you have been with them so many days—chatting, walking, eating, living and sleeping with them, you feel when you come to shake hands and say goodbye that you know them better and have helped them, imparting to them something of yourself.

Fraser was much impressed, at this time, by the thought that 'not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called' to follow Christ.

For if two things stand out clearly in my mind [he wrote after this journey] they are firstly how 'foolish' and 'weak' our new converts are, and secondly that God has *really* chosen them. 1 Cor. i. 27, 28 is fulfilled before my very eyes ! If you could come out here and see how useless mere preaching and persuasion is among these people, you would understand this better. One feels so helpless in face of their ignorance and need ! But the Lisu work in our present district, with

over two hundred families on either side of the Salween River (*i.e.* four hundred and more families in all) has been spontaneous from the beginning.

They will take you to a village you have never set foot in or even heard of before, and you will find several families of converts there, some of whom can read and write after a fashion, and a chapel already put up ! They just teach one another—inviting converts over from neighbouring villages for the purpose. They just *want* to be Christians, when they hear all about it, and just turn Christian, missionary or no missionary. Who put that 'want-to' into their hearts ? If they are not God's chosen, God's elect, what are they ?

CHAPTER XXIV

LOVE'S REWARD

BUT Fraser's strength was giving out. Rumours that had reached him across the Salween made him anxious to get back to his colleagues, and great indeed were the changes he found. For the Flaggs were no longer living up in the Cold Country. A serious earthquake had taken place there, leaving Mrs. Flagg with an overstrained heart which could no longer bear the altitude of seven thousand feet. They had therefore moved down to Muhch'engp'o, two thousand feet lower and more in the centre of their eastern district, where to his surprise Fraser found them when he came up from the river.

Hardly could he believe his eyes! There, close to the spot where the wife of Pa Tsong-si had hailed him, the first time he passed that way, there a new settlement was springing up—right on an inviting, lower ridge, running out into a great circle of protecting mountains. The level site had often attracted him, and now he found it a very hive of activity, for the local Christians had come to the help of the missionaries and were doing all in their power to make the new place habitable. And to Fraser's joy he found that they were doing it voluntarily, without payment of any kind, in a spirit of loving indebtedness.

The people have been most kind [he wrote]. They have put up a bamboo and thatch house for us, just like their own, only rather larger—without asking a penny in payment. They have also fixed up a garden (we can occupy as much land here as we desire). They have ploughed up the ground and are digging it for us. They have put up a goat-house, kitchen and sleeping quarters for the servants, and have dug a trench a mile long to bring water to the place—all without a farthing of payment. In fact, I do not know that we have paid anything since we came. They are still bringing us presents of eggs and vegetables.

More than this, the Christians were cutting wood and putting up a fence all round the mission-station.

Here we are on a ridge [Fraser continued] protected on both sides by the slopes of a big deep valley, covered with forest. . . . The vegetation is luxuriant and the effect superb as the clouds roll up over the hill-top or hang suspended half-way up the mountains. I like it here : we all do. The Flaggs are thinking of putting up a permanent home next dry season. . . . After a shower such as the one just over, the streams rise high. I can hear the roar of the river down in the valley below us, as I write. But the weather is wonderful for crops and gardens. Things seem to spring out of the ground almost as by magic, for the soil is fertile. Ferns and grass grow luxuriantly, and the trees are high. We are hoping great things from our experimental garden, having planted seeds from India and America, as well as yours from Letchworth.

And best of all, they were in the midst of the people, centrally situated, close to the largest of their chapels, the one at Sinchaiho which had come to occupy a place all its own in the work. For it was half-way down to the river in the valley (a tributary of the Salween) where in a quiet place the baptisms were held. Some hundreds of believers had already confessed their faith in Christ at this spot, and Sinchaiho was becoming the natural centre of the Lisu Church.

Here, then, Fraser made his home with the Flaggs in the new mission bungalow, while the Christians from all sides gathered about them. Even from across the Salween they came, as Sunday by Sunday Fraser led the large gatherings on the levelled space round the house or down in the Sinchaiho chapel. They were memorable days—especially the Sunday when he witnessed the baptism, amid scenes of great rejoicing, of two hundred and forty more believers. He did no baptizing himself, standing aside in favour of the colleague to whom he was handing over the care of all the work. But his joy was as great as the long travail of soul that went before it had been

deep. It was of this time he wrote : ' I never was loved so much in my life before.'

Looking back over the years of his Lisu work, Fraser was growing impressed with the large part that praying friends had had in it all. His chief desire in going home on furlough was that he might make personal contact with every member of his Prayer Circle and be greatly prospered in adding to their number. Some time before he had written to them a letter which fully expressed his mature thought, both as regards the work and their part in it. With sincerest humility it began :

Perhaps I ought to apologize when writing to you on the prayer life, for most of you are older Christians than I am and have longer and perhaps deeper experience of it than I have. At the same time I have opportunities to observe the working of prayer that some of you have not, so you will forgive me if I try to pass on thoughts which have come to me in connection with my work. . . .

He then went on to speak of a promising centre in his field, a place where he had himself spent much time teaching the Christians, where through various causes the work had gone back and was now discouraging. And among those who had reverted to heathenism were two or three of the best instructed young people in the district, certainly the best readers and writers. While this caused deep sorrow and led him to revise his methods, it emphasized the fact that it is not human instruction or influence that we have to depend upon, but the grace of God working in the heart.

Some missionaries question whether my methods are the best. They feel that I am trying to cover too much ground, and that it would be better to go in for ' intensive work ' as it is called. . . . What is the use, they wonder, of spending two or three days in a village and then going on elsewhere and leaving them for perhaps a year? What can you expect of them? Why, they know practically nothing! Yes, I admit that it is not ideal. I believe in instructing my converts as much as anybody. Yet I can show numbers and

numbers of Lisu Christians, with no more knowledge than two or three days' instruction could impart, standing firm *with the grace of God behind them* (that is what makes all the difference), trying in their blundering way to observe the Lord's Day, to pray and to sing—while those you give weeks and months of attention to, in other places, fall away.

Instruction, especially in the Scriptures, is a splendid thing. It is necessary, essential, if a man is to grow in grace. We are to be '*renewed unto knowledge* after the image of Him that created him'. Paul prays for his converts that they may be filled with *knowledge*. Knowledge is good, wholesome, needful. If a man is already a Christian, knowledge—spiritual knowledge—will help to establish him. I intend to do all I can to impart spiritual knowledge to my converts. I do not despise secular knowledge either. It is, I believe, a help rather than a hindrance to the apprehension of spiritual truth. But it is possible to over-emphasize almost anything, however good it may be. That the Apostle Paul believed it possible to over-emphasize knowledge, his first letter to the Corinthian Church shows, in more than one passage. They say that '*knowledge is power*'; but this, I feel, needs to be qualified. In the spiritual realm it is certainly not true that knowledge always imparts power to keep a man from falling away.

As a matter of fact, much knowledge has no life-giving power in it at all. I really believe it is possible to preach dead sermons—full of good, orthodox truth, but dead because the power of the Holy Spirit is absent. I believe it is possible to read a dead Bible, for the same reason. There is no magical charm about the letter of even God's Word. Apart from the power of God's Spirit, the best instruction we can give our converts is as dead as the dry bones of Ezek. xxxvii. With the '*breath of God*' breathing upon it, it may become as powerful as '*the exceeding great army*' the bones were turned into. The power came from the breath of God, not from the dry bones. The dry bones were all right, but they were absolutely useless without the breath of God. And so is education, teaching, instruction of any kind out here on the mission-field, if it is of the dry bones variety. Some people go so far as to say that the problem confronting the church on the mission-field is fundamentally an educational one, and too many put that belief into practice. It seems to me like constructing costly artillery, firing big shells—and doing no damage to the enemy. And I can imagine Satan laughing up his sleeve.

Then follows a yearning plea for prayer, much prayer, more prayer for those emerging from spiritual darkness into the light of life. How Fraser's heart went out for these babes in Christ ! that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened they might ' grow up into Him in all things '.

I used to think [he continued] that prayer should have the first place and teaching the second. I now feel it would be truer to give prayer the first, second and third place, and teaching the fourth.

For these people out here are not only ignorant and superstitious. They have a heathen atmosphere all about them. One can actually feel it. We are not dealing with an enemy that fires at the head only—*i.e.* keeps the mind only in ignorance—but with an enemy who uses GAS ATTACKS which wrap the people round with deadly effect, and yet are impalpable, elusive. What would you think of the folly of the soldier who fired a gun into the gas, to kill it or drive it back ? Nor would it be of any more avail to teach or preach to the Lisu here, while they are held back by these invisible forces. Poisonous gas cannot be dispersed, I suppose, in any other way than by the wind springing up and dispersing it. MAN is powerless.

And here comes in the place of prayer, intercessory prayer, even at a distance.

For the breath of God can blow away all those miasmatic vapours from the atmosphere of a village, in answer to your prayers. We are not fighting against flesh and blood. You deal with the fundamental issues of this Lisu work when you pray against ' the principalities, the powers, the world-rulers of this darkness, the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies ' (Eph. vi. 12).

I believe that a work of God sometimes goes on behind a particular man or family, village or district, before the knowledge of the truth ever reaches them. It is a silent, unsuspected work, not in mind or heart, but in the unseen realm behind these. Then, when the light of the Gospel is brought, there is no difficulty, no conflict. It is, then, simply a case of ' Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord '.

This should give us confidence [he urged] in praying intelligently for those who are far from the Gospel light.

The longer the preparation, the deeper the work. The deeper the root, the firmer the plant when once it springs above ground. I do not believe that any deep work of God takes root without long preparation somewhere. . . .

On the human side, evangelistic work on the mission field is like a man going about in a dark, damp valley with a lighted match in his hand, seeking to ignite anything ignitable. But things are damp through and through, and will not burn however much he tries. In other cases, God's wind and sunshine have prepared beforehand. The valley is dry in places, and when the lighted match is applied—here a shrub, there a tree, here a few sticks, there a heap of leaves take fire and give light and warmth long after the kindling match and its bearer have passed on. And this is what God wants to see, and what He will be inquired of us for : little patches of fire burning all over the world.

How truly this had been the case in his own experience, we have seen ; and Fraser was the first gladly to acknowledge the efficacy of the help of his Prayer Circle. It was for the continuance of their intercessions on the part of his colleagues, Mr. and Mrs. Flagg, he now pleaded.

It had been a sore trial to him, some months previously, when Allyn Cooke, on his marriage with Miss Leila Robinson, had been appointed to Tali to relieve Mr. and Mrs. Hannah who had to go home on furlough. The station was a central one and could not be left without missionary supervision, but Fraser had so hoped that the Cookes would come into the tribal work. Prayer and thought had reconciled him to the situation, however, and he was thankful for the co-operation of Ba Thaw, and the American Mission to which he belonged, in the care of the Tengyueh Lisu, when he had to leave. He had planned to re-visit many of the old centres in the west, on his way to Rangoon, but was able only to take in the Atsi Kachins at Pangwa and the district of Mottled Hill, spending a Sunday in each.

It had been a hard parting, when Fraser set out from Muhchengpo to pay a farewell visit to Moh at Hsiangta. But there a glad surprise awaited him, ' a token for good ' as he went on his homeward way. For Moh had kept

his recent mail, and there was a letter from Lewers on the Upper Mekong, telling of the work of the Lisu helpers Fraser had spared from his own field to go to one still more needy. He had missed them ; but great was the joy now with which he heard of the blessing of God upon their labours. More than a hundred families up there had already turned from drunkenness and demon-worship to Christ, and the missionary wrote begging Fraser to come and help them with the many inquirers.

The Lisu Church a missionary church already ! And for himself how great the reward—‘ never loved so much in my life before ’. But more precious even than the love of thousands who, through him, had come to know the love of God was the deeper fellowship with that dear Lord Himself, Whose call he had obeyed in all the freshness of youth.

Truly—He that loveth his life shall lose it ; ‘ but whosoever shall lose his life, for My sake and the Gospel’s, shall save it ’ unto life eternal.

THE PRAYER-WARRIOR

At this point in the narrative the writer suffered a severe loss of sight, which compelled her to curtail the remaining chapters considerably. In semi-blindness she is proving "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

No home on earth have I,
No nation owns my soul ;
My dwelling-place is the Most High,
I'm under His control.

No spot on earth I own,
No field, no house be mine ;
My self, my all I still disown,
My God, let all be Thine !

Into Thy gracious hands
My life is ever placed :
To die fulfilling Thy commands
I march with bounding haste.

With Thee, my God, is home ;
With Thee is endless joy ;
With Thee in ceaseless rest I roam,
With Thee can death destroy ?

With Thee the east, the west,
The north, the south are one ;
The battle's front I love the best,
And yet—' Thy will be done !'

Commissioner Railton
of the Salvation Army.

MARRIAGE AND WIDER MINISTRY

AFTER a furlough of almost two years, Fraser returned to China *via* North America. His chief concern at home had been to call forth prayer for the neglected tribes of south-west China. In meetings throughout Britain and across the States and Canada he was much used of God. One abiding result was the formation by General Mackenzie of the Prayer Companionship of the Mission, which now numbers over three thousand members. Fraser's appeal for definite, intelligent prayer—real partnership in the work—led to the grouping of those members in circles of ten, each group to surround one individual missionary and his work with prayer support and detailed interest.

Returning to Shanghai in September, 1924, Fraser was faced with one of the greatest and most unexpected trials of his life. Eager to be back among his beloved Lisu, he was quite unconscious that the leaders of the Mission had other thoughts for his future. A serious situation in the province of Kansu, north-west China, called for firm and judicious handling. Fraser's personality and experience fitted him to deal with it, and no one else was at the time available. The Lisu work was comparatively well cared for—though the Flaggs were at home on furlough—Mr. and Mrs. Carl Gowman with the Allyn Cookes being in charge at Muchengpo. Blessing was still spreading from that centre, where more than a thousand Christians were longing for Fraser's return. What it cost him to leave them and turn away to other service, words could never tell. 'Yunnan was my first love, my Rachel,' he said long after; 'but Kansu became my Leah.' For the wider fruitfulness of his life grew out of that painful experience.

So, for the next three years the North-West claimed him instead of the Burma border—and more contrasted

spheres could hardly be. But Fraser came to love the great wide spaces, the bracing desert air and mountain ranges, the nomad peoples of the Gobi and Tibet. He responded to the strong, northern character of the Chinese and Moslems of the cities, and the opportunities that came to him through educational and Bible-teaching work.

Visiting all the stations of the Mission in Kansu and many in Shensi, he came to know their problems at first hand. It was a time of great and increasing difficulty. A threatening wave of anti-foreign feeling was sweeping over China which led to the general evacuation of Europeans and Americans from all but the treaty ports. Missionaries had to come down to the coast by Consular orders, and their lives as well as those of other foreigners were in imminent danger. Fraser and his fellow-workers in Kansu were shut up to a perilous journey by raft down the Yellow River, and it was largely due to his leadership that they were brought safely through the attacks of bandits and danger of sandbanks and whirlpools by the way—especially after the tragic drowning of the most experienced member of the party, his beloved friend and fellow-worker, Dr. George King of the Borden Memorial Hospital at Lanchow.

From that time on, Fraser was more and more drawn into the central executive of the Mission. This meant being a good deal detained in Shanghai where office routine and correspondence could not but be a sore trial to his spirit. But there was also the urgent call for faith, prayer and endurance at the very heart of the Mission.

When at last Fraser was set free to return to Yunnan it was as Superintendent of all the C.I.M. work in that province. That journey back to the west was a pilgrimage indeed—a coming home after five years of heart-hunger. And little as he expected it, it was a home-coming in another sense, as he was to prove. For only a few days before his arrival in Kunming (the capital of Yunnan) another traveller had reached that city at the close of a longer journey. Knowing nothing of Fraser, she had come

out from England as a missionary to join her parents at Kunming, the Rev. and Mrs. Frank Dymond of the United Methodist Mission. Talking with a fellow-worker soon after his own arrival, Fraser heard of these happenings, and the name of the young lady impressed him—Roxie Maud Dymond. Immediately a quiet voice said in his heart :

‘That is your wife—the one I have prepared for you.’

For to one who had never sought his own had indeed come God’s best earthly gift. He was no longer to be what he had once called himself, ‘the loneliest man in China’. Disparity in years—for she was a young student fresh from college—was lost sight of in a union of heart so deep that it made them one in all their outlook.

But before this friendship could ripen, Fraser spent a year in visiting all the stations of the Mission in both eastern and western Yunnan. This took him back to his own loved Lisuland, on the Burma border. And he did not go alone. Younger workers were coming to the province. He had brought the Harrisons and John Kuhn with him in January, 1928, and now in March returned to Haiphong to meet the Fitzwilliams and Castos and bring them round by sea to Rangoon, and *via* Bhamo to Tengyueh. Having settled in the young couples to study the language, he set out with the Lisu escort that had come down from Muchengpo to fetch him. Back over the familiar road they travelled to Moh at Hsiangta, and finally to the big welcome at Muchengpo.

Many were the changes during his five years’ absence. First the Allyn Cookes had come, when the Flaggs went on furlough, and with their loving hearts had nurtured the growing Lisu Church. Then the Gowmans themselves had returned to the Tengyueh district, bringing all the experience they had gained in tribal work elsewhere during the interval. Gowman had great energy and a wide outlook. He found the Lisu converts just ready for missionary developments. He encouraged them to reach out to the regions beyond, organizing bands of volunteer

preachers to go in all directions, exploring possible openings for making known the Glad Tidings. In this way the Gospel had spread, eastward and northward to new fields, reaching even to the valley of the Upper Salween, which Fraser had visited with Mr. Geis and Ba Thaw long years before.

To hear of these developments now was wonderful, and to be in the missionary gatherings at Muchengpo, when the Christians came together to read letters from and to pray for their absent volunteers. Fraser stayed three full weeks among them, before going on to Paoshan to join the Paynes and celebrate the inauguration of the Paoshan Church.

Reaching Kunming again in the spring, his duties as Superintendent took him down to Shanghai to attend the Quarterly Meetings of the central Council of the Mission. He was there for Easter, with its many opportunities of fellowship with others in special meetings, as well as personal interviews with leaders of the Mission and hours of prayer and conference with Mr. Hoste.

The result was that when in April he set out to return to Yunnan, it was with a large party of new workers for that province, including four Sisters of the Vandsburger Mission going to join the pioneers of that Society to whom the C.I.M. was ceding a portion of their Yunnan field.

Marriage when it came that autumn (October 24, 1929) brought only a crowning blessing to the life so fully out-poured for others. There was no provision for home or outward comfort, the bride being more than willing to join her husband in his journeyings throughout the province. He was due to visit the western stations, so they set off after a few days on the strenuous two weeks' journey to Tali. By this time there were new developments on the Burma border that took them south to the tribal region and introduced Mrs. Fraser to her husband's former field. Christmas at Muchengpo was a great experience, for in addition to meeting all the hundreds of Lisu Christians who gathered for the Services, there



THE BRIDE, ROXIE MAUD DYMOND



THE C.I.M. HEADQUARTERS IN SHANGHAI, UP TO 1931

was the largest group of foreigners which had as yet assembled in the mountains. The bride had to make the acquaintance not only of Mr. and Mrs. Gowman and their children, but of the two young couples from Tengyueh, the Castos and Fitzwilliams who had joined them.

The Cookes had by this time returned from furlough, but they were six days further on, over the mountains, at the newly opened station of Fuhinshan, to which the Frasers continued their journey. A Bible School was in progress when they arrived, so that at once they were introduced into stirring scenes. A thousand Christians formed the family Mr. and Mrs. Cooke had taken over with the new centre, and the house perched high on the ridge overlooking great distances, was the centre of much activity. Fraser at once threw himself into all that was going on, reminding Allyn Cooke of the old days at Turtle Village, except that now he was 'a very happy bridegroom'.

Too soon a fortnight fled away and the journey had to be resumed, but it was now a more serious matter. For the Frasers were still eastward bound, and beyond Fuhinshan there stretched a wide expanse of territory without any mission station. To face it alone would have been to Fraser an everyday experience, but to take his young wife with him thirty-five days' journey across to the Red River was quite another matter. It was an exploratory journey that had to be taken, however, in the interests of the work, and there was no hesitation.

Out in that wide territory so devoid of Christian witness there were many cities of importance, besides countless towns and villages passed as day succeeded day. 'In one place,' wrote the bride, 'the people brought out an old stool on the hillside for me to sit on, while they crowded and crowded round the first white woman they had ever seen.' It was a foretaste of what lay before her with her husband through the years.

In East and West [she wrote, looking back upon many journeys] we travelled among Lisu, Lahu, Liti, Miao, Nosu,

Kopu, Laka, Palaung, Woni, Kachin, Wa, Lolo and Shan,
apart from Chinese.

Back in Kunming, after coming up from the Red River through the field of their colleague, Mr. Allen, they had a couple of months to give to correspondence and other duties before setting out for Shanghai to attend the June Council Meetings (1930). Then followed a whole year during which Fraser's duties detained them at the coast in executive work. The birth of their first child took place in March, 1931, so that she was more than three months old when they returned to Yunnan for their next period of service.

This included a visit to the Upper Salween, where important developments were taking place. Carl Gowman was gone from Muchengpo, his lamented death having deprived the work of a great leader; but others were being raised up to strengthen the Lisu evangelists who were penetrating further and further up the gorge of the Salween. From the city of Paoshan, on the east, Mr. and Mrs. Payne had come to their help, living with them for months at a time in nothing but a small tent at Pine Mountain, their first settlement. There a number of Christians had gathered, and the evangelists had gone further afield with the Glad Tidings. The Paynes, broken down through the severity of these pioneering experiences, had been obliged to go home on furlough when Mr. and Mrs. Fraser came west again, desiring to see for themselves something of this new field. The journey out to the Salween was incredibly hard, but leaving little Catherine with Mr. and Mrs. Booth who had succeeded the Paynes, they set out. With some of the Lisu pioneers they traversed the mountain passes and dropped down into the mighty canyon of the river, making their way painfully northward to Deer Pool. Here a Sunday was spent with the first group of Christians gathered out on the Salween, Fraser speaking to them in their Lisu language. The next Sunday found them at Pine Mountain, staying in one of the homes, or hovels, of the village clinging to the mountain

side. But there were Christians to rejoice their hearts with promise of a coming harvest. Over three hundred gathered at the mid-day Service and could scarce disperse at night for the joy of having the Teacher come to them who could speak in their own tongue.

Three months later, after the birth of their second child down in Burma, Fraser settled his family in at Muchengpo while he himself went northward on needed visits. In an ordinary Chinese inn, at the town of Chenanso, he was taken ill and could go no further. Happily there was a lady missionary there with some knowledge of nursing, who when she saw that the illness was serious, sent for young Mr. Charles Peterson from the nearest C.I.M. station. Week succeeded week, and still the traveller did not return to Muchengpo. They heard at last that he was down with typhoid fever. Then, taking the baby with her, Mrs. Fraser went up to find him—the five days' cross-country journey giving time to prove the wonderful keeping power of the peace of God.

Two weeks later, this illness, which had lasted two months, was brought to an end by the coming of trusty friends from Muchengpo to carry the patient back over the mountains. It soon became evident that furlough was needed, after Fraser's second long period of service—nine years on the field—and letters from the General Director in Shanghai urging this point of view decided them to go home without delay, *via* Rangoon. Before doing so, he wrote the following letter to the author of these pages who, with her husband, was in Kunming at the time.

Mr. Cooke, now on the Upper Salween, has just sent an S.O.S. for more volunteer evangelists from this district—fourteen days' journey away—as they have more and more families turning from demon-worship all the time. You will be interested to know that for the very first time in the history of this work we are about to send out three young women to teach in the villages near here. They are aged 16, 20 and 21. They have volunteered together, and seem to be so thoroughly in earnest that Fitzwilliam and I and the local

deacons have decided to give them a trial. . . . We are placing them under the direction of one of the regular Lisu evangelists and his wife. . . .

I would like you to have seen them come into my study so bashfully and girlishly—two of them only on the excitedly whispered persuasions of the boldest of the three. And they all sat there for some time, mildly squirming before saying what they had come about. But they were so evidently in earnest. Perhaps you will pray for them sometimes. Their names are Tabitha, Sarah and Ruth. . . .

You will know, doubtless, that Lisu work is entirely self-supporting. All the money for our regular evangelists, with their food and the food for their families, is provided by the Lisu themselves, from their harvest festival offerings. The volunteer evangelists are not paid at all, nor their families; but they are fed by the people in the villages they stay at. The work is largely self-governing also. All important matters are settled by the deacons of the whole district, at their annual meeting each December. There is also an Annual Meeting of the deacons of this district . . . usually presided over by our ordained Pastor Paul. This often partakes of the nature of a legislative assembly! They make rules, take minutes of the meetings, etc., whether the missionary is there or not.

I would love you to hear our Lisu singing. Mr. and Mrs. Cooke, our missionary musicians, have always taught them to sing in parts—and they do, with no organ either. It is really *inspiring*, and has often brought tears to my eyes. . . . I have heard very few congregations at home, either in England or America, whose singing is so inspiring. They themselves love it. How you would like to go to bed on Sunday night to the strains of some sweet hymn tune which they are still singing, and in parts, in one of their homes in the village near by!

Oh, how I love to hear them sing, 'When my life-work is ended, and I cross the swelling tide!' I must not seem to boast—but I know one poor missionary heart that has swelled with emotion and praise, listening to the hearty and tuneful singing of these aborigines of the Burma-China border.

FULFILMENT AND TRANSLATION

It was a very happy furlough that Mr. and Mrs. Fraser spent together in England and North America. Reaching London and Letchworth early in February (1934) the spring and summer lay before them, and after a period of rest in his mother's home Fraser bought a car to take them from place to place for their many meetings. All too quickly the summer sped, bringing many helpful contacts with friends from Bristol to Aberdeen, as well as periods of rest and family reunion. One of these was to celebrate his mother's seventy-ninth birthday—that dear mother whose prayer-life meant so much to her son, and continues to this day.

Christmas was spent in North America, on the return journey. Well does the writer remember the arrival of the little family in Philadelphia—the strong, genial personality of the father, the sweet quiet dignity of the mother and charm of the children, aged ten months and three years old. Many were the hours of conversation on that visit that left the writer in possession not only of the main facts of the story told in these pages, but with so much of the strong, bright, prayerful spirit of the man himself that their going on across the Continent left a blank not easily filled.

It was March when they arrived in Shanghai, eager to return to their loved field before summer, but long delay awaited them. The situation in Shanghai was such that Fraser's presence was more needed there than in Yunnan. One of Fraser's sayings that remained with one, was that 'there is, as it were, the flame of a burning bush in everything that is a work of God'. That flame was there, burning in his own life all through the months that followed, when—restricted largely to office work—his heart went out in prayer especially for the young workers

of the mission, with whom he was corresponding all over the inland provinces.

There was one break in the absorbing claims of his position when, in July, he went up to the province of Shansi, to take part in the Yutaoho Convention. In that lovely valley, on the banks of the stream that turned the wheels of mill after mill, the summer community was gathered. They occupied the millhouses, let to them for the season, and met whenever possible in the open air. Mr. and Mrs. Houghton had come up from Szechwan to take part in the Conference, which he ¹ addressed in the morning, Fraser taking the evening meetings. The blessing given, in answer to prayer, on their united ministry was so great that the testimony meeting at the close was prolonged until well after midnight.

Mr. Gibb had just been appointed that summer to succeed Mr. Hoste as General Director of the Mission, and by the end of the year Fraser could again be spared from Shanghai. In his Journal for the last day before sailing for Hong Kong, he recorded the fact that made it significant: 'November 21, 1935. Walked with Mr. Hoste in the morning to Kiaochow Road Park.' It was Fraser's last walk with the beloved leader to whom he owed so much.

Christmas in Kunming was the cheery season that marked the home-coming of the missionaries' children from the far-away school at Chefoo. Once a year, as many of the parents as possible would come to the city to spend the too-brief holiday with their boys and girls—crowding the houses of the Mission to overflowing. Mr. and Mrs. Allyn Cooke were down this year from the Salween to receive their sons, and incidentally to welcome the Frasers. Before the parents scattered, they arranged for three days of devotional meetings, following the return of the children on their long journey to Chefoo. Fraser, with his own dearly loved little ones, could understand the hearts of his fellow-workers at such a time, and entered

¹ Now Bishop Houghton, the General Director of the China Inland Mission.

into the meetings with special sympathy. Most of the speaking was left to him, and none who were present would ever forget the depth and tenderness of his messages. His subject was The Holy Spirit—Whose personality, presence and power came home to some of his fellow-workers as never before.

‘He spoke about a life in the Holy Spirit,’ wrote Mrs. Cooke, ‘as a blessing we should claim. He showed how in life after life, in the Old Testament, *an added blessing* was given, lifting it to a higher plane. So there is ever new and deeper blessing for us, as we definitely receive the Holy Spirit. It has been so with me since then—daily victory that I never knew before.’

‘It was Fraser’s zenith,’ wrote another. ‘He was a Spirit-filled man.’

And then, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, he set out from that conference with wife and children, to go back with the Cookes and Mrs. Fitzwilliam to their remote tribal districts in the south-west of the province. Mr. Fitzwilliam was there already, prospecting for a new centre among the Kachin, who were much on Fraser’s heart. To open up work amongst them, he and Mrs. Fraser were keen to settle for a time right in a Kachin village as a centre. Mrs. Fraser longed for the opportunity for definite work herself and, in addition to Chinese in which she was proficient, was ready to learn Kachin by living right amongst the people. The full story of this development we cannot enter upon now. Fraser himself summarized it in a letter to the writer when absent from his family on Superintendent’s work :

Mrs. Fraser and the children are with the Fitzwilliams. It would interest you very much to see them all living as they are in a bamboo house, single-storied, with a bamboo floor and thatched roof. They have a large garden in a most beautiful spot on the mountains, with Kachin villages all round (also Lisu, Palung and Chinese) and the plain of Chefang some six miles below. Longchiu in itself is an Atsi-Kachin village, about ten miles from the border of Burma. . . . The headman and all his family are Chris-

tians, also several other families . . . making about ten in all. It is a small beginning, a door ajar rather than wide open, yet sufficient to give us a good entrance.

I will not go into detail as to how the Lord seemed to make the way plain before us—how we found the framework of a house exactly the size we had wished, all ready waiting for us ; how it was in the best yet unoccupied site in the village, belonging to the Christian headman, who at once granted us permission to use it and live there ; how we prayed-in the thatch for the roofing (we were too late to get thatch in the ordinary way) ; how the Christian Lisu in the village of Palien, three miles away, came and roofed our house without the cost of a penny ; how we got the carpenters and finished all the necessary work in an unusual spell of fine weather, just before the rain set in, etc. etc. All this is the romance of missionary life to those of us who are in it, small details though they may seem.

All through the summer, this little home was Fraser's headquarters, he and his family occupying one of the side rooms and the Fitzwilliams the other, while the central space formed the living-room for them all. Once he came back from a journey to find Mrs. Fraser and the children quite alone among the people. His fiftieth birthday was spent with them in these surroundings, where his knowledge of the Kachin language came in so usefully. When, after four months, the family were called to Paoshan, Mr. and Mrs. Fitzwilliams remained to carry on the work.

And now a congenial task had to be taken up. Mr. and Mrs. Cooke, who had been gradually completing the translation of the whole New Testament into the Lisu language, had finished their long undertaking and were ready for a final revision.¹ It was to help in this work that the Frasers had moved to Paoshan, and he was now ready to join them on the Upper Salween. Moses, their Lisu translator, was there. It would mean a long task and one for which quiet was needed.

¹ 'It is more than an interesting circumstance,' Fraser wrote to his Prayer Circle, 'that the entire cost of the publication of our Lisu New Testament (over £100) is being borne by the freewill offerings of the Chinese Christians of Manchuria. We shall need God's wisdom and grace as we complete the work. Will you join us in prayer for His blessing on our labours?'

Much had happened on the Salween since Fraser and his bride had been there, five years previously. Soon after that visit, the Cookes had been transferred from Fuhinshan to Padé (Oak-flat) to follow up the work of the Lisu evangelists who were reaping a harvest of precious souls. A year later they had to move still further up the great canyon, a week's journey to the north, to the district of Luda, where the converts already numbered over a thousand. Mr. and Mrs. John Kuhn had come to Padé, so that the Cookes were free to devote themselves to the more remote field, where the Christians were suffering much persecution. Conditions had improved by the time of Fraser's second visit and the Cookes were in the midst of a large and growing work. They had been joined by young Charles Peterson, who shared with Fraser his two-roomed shack near the simple mission-house.

Here, then, in the winter of 1936, Fraser found himself engrossingly engaged with these beloved colleagues on the task of revision. Years of work had been put into the translation, by themselves and others, and unnumbered prayers were reaching their fulfilment. Meanwhile, the fellowship of that little group among themselves was most precious.

Fraser was at his best. 'He was in splendid health,' Peterson recalls, 'able to do a long day's work and enjoy it.' Morning Prayers were very helpful times when he would bring thoughts from the Word, fresh and spiritual. He was always that way. Whenever he went to a station, he had messages from God for everyone who was prepared to receive them.'

Our home life [said Mrs. Cooke] was greatly enriched through his coming. He had read widely, and his conversation was rich and varied. He would sit, between whiles, and play on our little organ—Chopin's Polonaise and treasures from Beethoven—bringing such glorious music out of it! The Lisu would crowd in to listen.

And one thing that impressed me as the months went on—he had such wonderful control over every part of his life. He was completely master of himself. He not only wanted to live a self-denying life, enduring hardness for Christ's

sake, *he could do so*. To bring his life up to his highest thought seemed to be quite natural with him. And he was so practical about it.

His correspondence, for example, was very heavy. I have known him to sit up all night, answering letters. He would not let it interfere with regular hours of revision work during the day. When the mail came in, he would put the letters to be answered into envelopes addressed to the senders, and keep them on his table ready for attention.

He was very sociable [put in Mr. Cooke]. When he wanted to write letters or study, he would come down and do it with us, rather than stay up in his room alone.

No matter how busy he was [Mrs. Cooke went on], he never cut short the morning time of family worship. He would often continue with us in prayer and Bible study until nine or ten o'clock. Mr. Cooke and I were alone with him for awhile, before Peterson and Carlson joined us, but Mr. Fraser was just as willing to impart his precious messages to us as to a large company. How we did enjoy them, for we had been long away from such ministry in our own tongue.

Hymn-singing was always part of these times of worship. Mr. Fraser always chose the grand old-time hymns, and seemed so in his element—playing the little organ and leading us in song. His favourite hymn was: 'The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,' and he would announce it by saying, 'Let us sing a hymn written three thousand years ago.'

But it was in work together on the New Testament that these friends chiefly enjoyed one another. Fraser was argumentative. He liked nothing better than a good tussle over some point under discussion, always in a perfectly friendly spirit. He said of Moses, their collaborator, that what he did not know of Lisu tones and grammatical phrases was not worth knowing; and his own knowledge of Greek was scholarly. In the open air, on the verandah of the mission bungalow, they would sit and work in the sunshine, moving indoors to the fireside when the altitude of six thousand feet brought a chill into the air.

Oh, what fascinating work it is (Fraser was writing one midnight, not to miss the regular mail to his mother). How I love Bible translation and Bible teaching—and how both seem to water my own soul!

[1934-1938. ÆT. 48-52.] FULFILMENT AND TRANSLATION

From early in November until after Christmas, this was the order of the day, and then the exigencies of correspondence brought them down to Padé, a week's journey nearer to their Post Office.

The Kuhns, left in charge at Padé, had had to take furlough by that time, so that the house was empty and able to accommodate Mrs. Fraser and the children as well, who planned to come up and join them for the last month or so. This was a great joy to Fraser who was devotedly attached to both wife and children. Before he knew that they were coming he had written to his mother :

I would love to see my babies again—if only for ten minutes ! It is a real denial for me to be away from them, *for they will never be the same age again.* I do not want them to grow older ! I want them always to put their *little* hands in mine when I walk with them and I want them always to prattle to me.

It seemed strange that just at that juncture an accident should have been allowed to happen that cut them off from their accustomed source of supplies. All their stores coming up from Burma were kept at the rail head, in the house of a trusted business friend, waiting the arrival of messengers sent to fetch them. What was the distress with which they learned, shortly before leaving Luda, that the house had caught fire and its contents been burned to ashes. All their supply of coal, oil, as well as groceries and other provisions, was cut off without warning, just as they were expecting a considerable addition to their numbers ! But a moment's reflection assured Mrs. Cooke that it must be among the 'all things' that work together for good to them that love God. Faith, at any rate, did not fail ; and wonderful were the ways in which they were helped and carried through.

People began sending us things [Mrs. Cooke recalled]. Butter, tea and other stores seemed to hold out. We found that we could get some things locally. And Mrs. Fraser, when she came, brought supplies, knowing nothing of our special need.

It was touching to see the joy of that family reunion.

Fraser changed the subject at Prayers that morning, and took the beautiful story of Ruth, her love for Naomi and how they came into the line of David's ancestry.

We took our chairs out of doors, into the sunshine at the back of the house. They sat together, those two lovers—I can see them yet.

Fraser had given much time to prayer during all those months on the Salween. Week by week he took one or more Services with the Lisu, who loved to hear him speak in their own language. And when Mrs. Fraser came, leaving the children in Mrs. Cooke's care, she would go up with him to the chapel where they spent hours together, waiting upon God.

The completion of the Lisu New Testament was a crowning joy in Fraser's life. All through the years of work upon it, he had been in close correspondence with the Gowmans, Cookes and others who had taken part. He had watched its progress with the keenest interest, doing all he could to forward it, and now rejoicing with the large company of Lisu Christians who were longing for its appearance.

It was a joy to him also to arrange for a series of conferences in the following year, when Miss Anna Christensen came again to Yunnan.

Miss Christensen came in the spring of 1938 [Mr. Peterson wrote] with the hope that God would bring blessing to the Chinese Church. This was granted. Souls came into a new relationship with God; wrongs were righted; sin confessed and many received assurance of the new birth. Great blessing came also to the Lisu who heard her. Of the four hundred who attended the meetings in Paoshan, the number who understood Chinese was small—possibly only Job and the Shepherd and Titus. But Job's heart was greatly stirred. He was certainly 'born again' before that time, but the truth had not gripped him. After that it was different. He returned to Padé, and during the April Bible-study week urged all the Teachers to make sure that they had the new birth. The blessing did not stop there but was carried into the Rainy Season Bible School. During that time the evening Services for an entire week were concentrated on that subject and each of our students was

required to take it in the practice preaching class. Their hearts were full of it, and through them the blessed truth has been taught throughout all the Padé district.

Six days southward of Paoshan, blessing came to the Lisu at Menga (where Mr. and Mrs. Payne were stationed) through another of Miss Christensen's missions. There were at least thirty Lisu there, and all of them received help. Teacher Luke's experience is typical. After hearing a message on covered sin, he got a huge piece of paper and made a list of all the sins he had ever committed, as far as he could remember. Then he wrote at the bottom :

'But I have confessed them all to Jesus. He has forgiven them and washed my heart. I know that I am born again.'

Through these meetings blessing was carried to most of our southern Lisu districts, and more than six months later our Lisu are still speaking of Miss Christensen and the blessing they received at the meetings she conducted.

By that time Fraser and his family were again settled at Paoshan. More and more his heart was drawn out in prayer. He had found and rented a room in a Mohammedan neighbour's house where he could be alone for prayer—just a bare attic room, unfurnished, with no window, but with a few boards that could be lifted out to let in light and air. There were many coming and going in the mission-house, and he would go over to his rented room before breakfast and sometimes remain there in prayer for hours. Mrs. Fraser wondered.

'Is there any special burden on your heart that you could share with me?' she inquired.

'No,' he answered tenderly, 'just the many and great needs of the Mission. And I want to be wholly occupied with my Lord Jesus.'

After that, a few days only of most serious illness—and on September 25th, 1938, the call came: 'Come up higher.'

'That mortality might be swallowed up of life.'

FAREWELL

YEARS before, when Fraser first came to Yunnan, he had taken an evangelistic journey to Paoshan, then called Yungchang. It was his first preaching trip, quickly followed by another in the same general direction, and remarkably enough each resulted in a friendship which was a strength and blessing to the very end of life. The first was with Chao Ho, the friendly tanner of Paoshan ; the second with Moh of Hsiangta, though that developed later. The Gospel picked up in the crowd, which led to Moh's conversion, was carried to him by his little nephew at that time.

And now, in the desolation of her bereavement, it was this long-tried friend in Paoshan who came to Mrs. Fraser's help. Chao Ho could never forget an act that had touched him deeply in a time of sorrow—when, at his Christian mother's funeral, Fraser had taken the place of a filial son, wearing full mourning and walking beside him, next to the coffin. For well-nigh thirty years they had maintained an unbroken friendship, and now it was Chao Ho who came forward to give expression to the loving sympathy of all the Paoshan Christians. During the last day or two of Fraser's illness, they had come in sorrowful succession to see him—kneeling for a few moments at his bedside in silent prayer. And now their hearts were one in the desire to show due respect to his memory.

And so it came about that Paoshan witnessed a memorable procession on the day of the interment. A single figure in white (the garb of deep mourning) walked immediately in front of the coffin through the streets of the city—Chao Ho having claimed the privilege of acting as chief mourner. One of the young missionaries present wrote : ¹

For long, Paoshan Christians and others have asked and

¹ Miss Winifred Embery, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Embery of Tengyueh, who as a child had been Fraser's little playmate.

wondered about a Christian funeral, so we all felt that the arrangement should be a worthy example and glorifying to God. Silk banners were given, bearing texts of Scripture in velvet or embossed gold paper, such as, 'For ever with the Lord', 'I am the Resurrection and the Life', and 'His works do follow him', etc. Beautiful wreaths of flowers had been made, also a red silk banner in the form of a cross with the words, 'He bore our sins in His own body'. And in place of the usual photograph of the deceased on its stand, a cross of red and white flowers was framed in an archway of greenery.

The day before, in the chapel full of flowers, a memorial service had been led by Mr. Chao, who told many touching incidents of love and faithfulness in Mr. Fraser's life, during the many years in which they had known each other, often working together through times of difficulty and persecution. Many present signified their desire to yield themselves afresh to the Lord, to carry on the work of the Gospel. Mr. Chao closed by applying in a Christian sense the words of Sun-Yat-Sen: 'Comrades, the Revolution is not yet completed—we must put forth strength.'

The following morning fifty or sixty Christians preceded the coffin, as it was carried out. We had to pass through city streets on our way to the West Gate, and the silence and respect of those in the procession seemed to inspire quietness among the onlookers. Mr. Chao had insisted on wearing the white of the chief mourner, as the 'Son' of the deceased. He told us that Mr. Fraser had done the same at the funeral of Mrs. Chao, his mother. It certainly was not an easy thing to do in the streets of his own city.

Ground had been secured for a cemetery on the hills outside the West Gate, and there they laid him, overlooking the plain that had been the last scene of his labours, as it was almost the first.

But the farewell that comes nearest to our hearts was that earlier one, when the Lisu from the Salween River who had come down with young Peterson and Christianson had to go back, carrying the sorrowful tidings. They had been just in time to help with the last days of nursing, and had almost witnessed the passing of their beloved leader and friend. They had borne him afterwards to the chapel on the mission premises, where a simple service

had been held. The prayers were in Lisu, the hymns sung were in Lisu, the love and tears were from Lisu Hearts—a little company of the thousands drawn through Fraser's life into the love that is eternal.

About the arrival of the news at Padé on the Salween, Mrs. John Kuhn wrote a little later :

After the first shock, there was a desolate feeling, as regards *human* fellowship, that there was no one now to work for. 'How Mr. Fraser will enjoy hearing about this,' was always a first reaction to any joy or blessing. . . . There was no one else on earth who had such a complete knowledge of the details of our problems, no one who could share so perfectly in our joys and sorrows.

And he never disappointed us in the sharing. He was more than Superintendent to us, he was our missionary ideal, a continual rebuke, challenge, and stimulus to maintain at any cost the apostolic methods of missionary work. His brilliant gifts, united with unfailing humility and a sympathy motherlike in its tenderness and thoughtfulness, made him our refuge at all times of perplexity and need. And to win a smile of approval from him was worth any extra effort. It is one thing to be praised by a person who has no experience of your task ; it is quite different to win a 'well done' from one who is himself a master in that very line of things. We have lost a great stimulus, as well as an indispensable counsellor. I say 'indispensable', for we still feel that way. Life can never be the same to us, without him.

But 'life does not stop for heart-ache'. Away to the west, eight days' journey from the mission-shanty on the Salween, many Lisu were waiting, waiting for the Word of Life. Once and again they had sent over the mountain ranges to beg for teachers ; once and again Christian Lisu had responded, 'biting their way through the snow' of the pass eleven thousand feet high ; and now there was a little company of believers at Kumu, longing for a visit from the missionaries. John and Isobel Kuhn were ready to face the perilous journey, when arrested by the shock of their great loss.

But what could be more in keeping with Fraser's own life and spirit? 'My heart is on it,' said the young Lisu woman (Homay) who was to accompany Mrs. Kuhn, 'I can hardly wait to start for Kumu.' And so said the other volunteers—six men, ready for all the rigours of the way and for evangelism at the other end.

So they set out, asking nothing but the joy of carrying the Name of Jesus further afield into the darkness—but not before they and the other Christians at Padé had themselves contributed no less than twenty dollars toward the cost of preparing their beloved leader's last resting-place.

LOOK ON THE FIELDS

SOME ten million people, separated into perhaps a hundred tribes in south-west China, form the field that still calls for pioneers such as J. O. Fraser. 'The present opportunity is great. Owing to the opening of communications in the west, these people are easier of access. The Chinese Government now has at length begun to interest itself in the welfare of the tribes, and schemes are afloat to make their lot easier. The Burma Road runs through the heart of tribal territory. Planes from India sweep overhead on their way to Chungking. The old isolation is fast disappearing. Shall the messengers of Christ be less alive to the immense and present opportunity?'

The China Inland Mission is working among Chinese and Moslems as well as on behalf of the tribes. Its missionaries represent many denominations as well as nationalities, all united upon a simple faith basis, trusting God for the supply of their needs without recourse to appeals or collections for raising funds. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you,' the promise upon which Hudson Taylor founded the work almost eighty years ago, has been tried and proved ever since, and even in these days does not fail.

Of the nine hundred members of the Mission still on the field, seven hundred are in Free China, carrying on their work in hospitals, Bible Schools and direct evangelization. Of the remainder, nearly two hundred in the occupied provinces are confined in Concentration Camps—prisoners of war, prisoners of Christ, to magnify His grace under trials we can little realize. The Headquarters of the Mission, formerly in Shanghai, were providentially removed to Chungking, capital of Free China, before this internment took place, so that Bishop Houghton, its General Director, with two of the Field Directors and other members of the central staff, are able to carry on the

work of all departments, including that of financial supplies.

A recent meeting of the China Council at Chungking brought together the Superintendents of most of the provinces in Free China in which the Mission is working, to confer over plans for consolidation and post-war advance. The need of the unreached tribes of the West pressed heavily on their hearts. Even now steps are being taken to reach the 'Independent Nosu' of Szechwan, a large and powerful tribe, hitherto inaccessible to the Gospel. Prayer is earnestly requested for this undertaking, for the Christian Church and its leaders connected with the Mission (now numbering 125,000) and for its staff of workers, faced to-day with conditions of unparalleled difficulty.



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THE BURMA ROAD
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A decorative scale bar labeled "Miles" with markings at 0, 50, and 100. The bar is horizontal and has a wavy, ornate design above it.

N.B.

