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FROM HIS HAND
TO OURS



MISSIONARIES IN POKHRA, 1959

FROM HIS HAND TO OURS

*Being an account of the work of the N.E.B.
until 1959*

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Edited by the Field Literature Committee

INTRODUCTION

LOOKING back over the years, how gracious His Hand has been, how protective and strong. From that Hand, we, His servants, have received a bountiful provision for all our spiritual and temporal needs; by that Hand we have been led safely onwards. We have come to realise more and more our utter dependence on Him, that of ourselves we have nothing and are nothing. As our insufficiency has been brought home to us, so has His All-sufficiency; for every emergency there has been His enabling, for every problem the answer.

In this book we have sought to write an account of how the Lord has led us in the outworking of His Purpose for this part of the Vineyard. We have seen His Mighty Hand at work, and to Him we give all the glory and all the praise, for He alone is the 'Wonderful One in counsel, the Mighty One in operation.'

THE LAND OF PRESENT OPPORTUNITY.

Foreword by the Rev. GEORGE B. DUNCAN, M.A.

TO every Christian with any interest at all in the missionary task of the Church, the land of Nepal has for long spoken of a closed door. In my own earlier years I was familiar with the challenge of this closed door through my knowledge of the work initiated by my cousin, Dr. Cecil Duncan, at Raxaul Hospital on the borders of Nepal. But now the door that was closed has at long last been opened, although for how long is uncertain, not only in view of the fact of the close proximity of Nepal to the world of Communist China, but also in view of the political instability that seems to mark the whole political scene in Asia at the moment.

Among those seeking to commend the gospel of Christ in this land of present opportunity are the members of the Nepal Evangelistic Band, among them some members of one of my former churches. Reading through this book, as I have done in its manuscript form, one cannot but sense that this work has the authentic and apostolic note running right through it. Here there are to be found, hardship to be endured, grim conflict with spiritual forces of darkness, the faithfulness of God, the power of the gospel to transform lives, and above all, the sense of the desperate need of those living without Christ and deprived of all that He can do not only in the life of the individual but also in the life of the community for its truest well-being.

I would commend this book as one that should be read by everyone who wants to know something about the progress of the gospel in this land so recently opened to the gospel. It is my earnest hope and prayer that the reading of the book will lead not a few to identify themselves in fellowship with the work with all that this will entail in the way of intelligent prayer and practical support. It is surely a vital matter that while the door remains open, no opportunity should be lost to reveal Christ and to proclaim Christ as the Saviour from sin and the giver of life more abundant to these people who for the first time are hearing the good news that Jesus saves.

CHAPTER I

NEPAL—THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE

‘Where other lords beside Thee
Hold their unhindered sway,
Where forces that defied Thee
Defy Thee still today,
With none to heed their crying,
For life, and love, and light,
Unnumbered souls are dying,
And pass into the night.’

(Frank Houghton).

APPROACHING the southern border of Central Nepal, the traveller from India leaves the train at the railhead town of Nautanwa, and then on foot, borrowed truck, or ramshackle bus makes his way over the four miles of rough road to the Nepal border. Here the road suddenly deteriorates, as if to warn newcomers that civilisation with its comfortable and free communications is being left behind, and the remaining mile or two to the airstrip at Bhairawa beggars description with its bumps and dust. The uninitiated would scarcely be able to tell however that the border had been crossed. A small sign by the road side is easily overlooked, and without a local guide even the tiny customs shed further on might be passed by in one’s anxiety to reach the aircraft. Those plains of India which for so many days had moved endlessly past the train windows, seem even now to be stretching on unbroken into the distance, while the bazaar of Bhairawa, although inside Nepal, has the shops and stalls, the bustle and the airs of India. But rounding a corner and avoiding some oxen and a crowd gesticulating by a vegetable stall the traveller approaches the airfield. And although the dust of the road deepens as if determined to fill his shoes with a last tangible reminder of the plains, at the airfield itself Nepal seems to emerge slowly, perhaps shyly, but unmistakably.

Arranging tickets, luggage and the formalities of air travel is much the same as in any Eastern air line. One meets the usual vagueness, the shrugging of shoulders, the breakdowns, the unforeseen incidents which delay planes by an hour or a week. But here one is liable to be faced with extraordinary occurrences which could only happen in Nepal. A former

airline had only one plane and at times no money to pay for petrol, so services were often most irregular. Now the Nepal government has taken over and after initial difficulties have been overcome, a reliable air service has been provided. The airfield is flooded however for three months during the monsoon and goes out of commission. Freight piles up in sheds awaiting the reopening of the service and meantime would-be passengers have to trek in over the hills. Even in good weather there is no certainty of the plane's arrival for the pilot himself may not know of his movements until last minute take-off instructions are received. Riots and threatened violence have been known when the pilot seemed reluctant to take off because of clouds, for hot-tempered Gurkha soldiers travelling to or from leave are in no mood to be delayed by trifles such as bad weather. With such uncertainty in mind one waits, while luggage is carried out and dumped on the edge of the airstrip. Looking towards the north for the first sight or sound of the plane, one's attention is caught, gripped and held fast by the hills—dark, purplish, shadowy, low in the distance, almost unreal and yet filling the horizon from west to east. One realises that the impossible has happened. The vast plains have ended and there to the north, some sixteen miles away a new land begins.

The plane takes off with surprising smoothness and is soon climbing to pass over the foothills. Before long the landscape becomes formidable with jagged rocks, precipices, gorges, chasms, steep hills and twisting rivers, all thrown together in apparent confusion. But slowly details appear, a road winding round a hillside, rice fields, a village, an isolated thatched house—and the harshness is softened by these little homes and the evidences of man's handiwork. As the plane flies on northward, one's thoughts turn to the land beneath. This country, so long closed to the outside world and its influence, what is it like?

Geographically, it is about the size of England and Wales, roughly rectangular, with a length from west to east of over 500 miles and a breadth of over 100 miles. With Tibet on its northern border and India to the south it knows the extremes of cold and heat experienced by each of these lands while racially it has had considerable influence from both. The northern third of the country in its whole length is made up of the Himalayan mountains while along the southern rim is a strip

of flat, hot and wooded plain called the Terai. Between these two widely contrasted areas are the convoluted and twisted hills which make up the largest part of the country and on the slopes of which the majority of its people are found.

At the last census the population numbered over 8,200,000, and of these only 193,000 were living in the capital city of Kathmandu. All the others live in villages scattered thickly throughout the hills and Terai. Little rough tracks run from village to village, and hillside to hillside, while between the hills each gorge-like valley contains a river or stream, all flowing together in an intricate network which drains south to the great rivers of India. Each hill of any size is terraced from top to bottom by fields, the work of centuries in detail and thoroughness. The many tribes which form the Nepali people live in these hills—Magars, Gurungs, Tamungs, Puns, Limbus, Rais, Doteeyals, Sherpas and many others. These all mingle in the bazaars with the town-dwelling Newars and with the Thakalis and Tibetans from the north and the occasional Indian from the south. It can be imagined how racial characteristics, customs, traditions and religious ideas have been evolved out of such a mixed background, producing a final result of which the origin is scarcely traceable today. Although the official religion of Nepal is Hinduism, those living in the northern areas are mostly Buddhists, while there is definite mingling of the two religions in many of the shrines and temples of the larger centres. Small communities of Moslems are also found but they are a minority.

The language spoken and understood throughout most of Nepal is called Nepali (formerly Gurkhali) but tribal languages are also used, especially by the women, who scarcely ever travel far from their own village. For instance a group of Gurungs may be walking along the road. They speak the Gurung language amongst themselves, but the men-folk, on meeting a Nepali man of another caste, will use the Nepali language. The women may not understand this unless they live near a larger village with a mixed community, and have had an opportunity to learn Nepali as well as their tribal tongue. Many of these tribal languages have no written script, but all who can read learn the official Nepali script, because this is used in all printed matter and correspondence. Brahmins also use their

ancient language, Sanskrit, in which most of the sacred Hindu writings are preserved.

The official attitude to Christianity has never been clearly defined but would seem to be one of fear and suspicion of its teachings, yet with a readiness to accept all the benefits which it brings. Such an attitude of hostility to outside influences has governed Nepali politics for generations. For many years no foreigner was allowed to live or work inside the country, the few exceptions to this being favoured travellers and Legation officials who had nevertheless little or no freedom outside their compound walls. As a result Nepal came to be regarded in travel books as a land of mystery and oriental splendour, whose people, happy in their isolated hills, carried on their age-old customs and traditions under a protective but benevolent monarchy. This however was far from the truth.

The door was fast closed to Christian work and influence. No Nepali Christian was allowed to live in the land much less hold property. Ancient laws guarded the national religion, in the complex pantheon of which the King himself was regarded as a divine incarnation. No one was allowed to change his religion. Satan had strongly entrenched himself behind a religious system which involved such things as land, with its ownership and inheritance rites which concerned every department and detail of life, and a highly developed caste system with proud Brahmins at its head. The simple villagers who seemed to the passing traveller to be so happy, and who smiled so readily for his camera, were bound fast in a system unimaginably strong in its grip upon their bodies, minds and spirits. Fear of disease, death, ghosts, evil spirits and the wrath of the gods haunted them. With all the changes which have come to Nepal none of these chains have been removed. To those who have been able to see below the surface it is clear that all the rites, prayers, 'pujas' sacrifices and priests of this age-old Hinduism can do nothing to bring its followers peace or joy or assurance of salvation, but only lead them deeper into darkness and fear.

Naturally hot-tempered the readiness of these hill people for fighting proved of great assistance to Britain in two world wars, and many served and died courageously in the front lines.

The fearsome Kukhri has always been the Gurkha's main standby in battle. Satan's weapons also were innumerable in his war upon their souls. Bound by a religion in which death is regarded fatalistically, they might perish in landslides, fires, fighting or epidemics. They fell into rivers or over precipices or from trees. Their children succumbed to disease from dirt, uncleanness or neglect, while their women suffered untold agonies in unrelieved childbirth, general ill-treatment and overwork throughout their lives. Malnutrition, tuberculosis, malaria, leprosy and a host of other diseases stalked through the land like giants seeking victims, ridiculing the simple and useless village remedies.

In 1846 the Rana régime came into power establishing an autocracy of the most medieval kind, under the disguise of government. The head of the Rana family became prime minister and all government offices and influential posts were given to relatives. Such was the Ranas' power that they controlled the King himself, who became virtually a prisoner in his own palace, and certainly a puppet as far as leading the country was concerned. Even the national finances were in the prime minister's hand, for him to use as he liked. With such unlimited power and wealth at their disposal the Ranas built huge palaces, ornately furnished with imported treasures. They gathered fantastic harems and large households of slaves. Their word was law and any opposition met with violent punishment or bloodshed. Many scenes of carnage unspeakable were reported from those days. The conditions of the common people resembled those of the English Middle Ages, but in Nepal they had not only to contend with filth, overcrowding and semi-starvation but were forced to contribute by money or labour or produce to the swelling purses of the Rana overlords. A strictly kept curfew cleared the streets after dark. The blame for the present backward state of Nepal and of its people must be laid very largely at the doors of these Ranas. As a result thousands of Nepalis left their country and settled in Northern India, Burma and sometimes even further afield. It has been stated that following this migration over three million Nepalis were living in the Indian states of Bengal and Assam in the years before the Second World War.

But in 1950 general dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in Nepal reached its peak. Increasing contact with the outside world had been forced upon the people during the second world war, and what many of them saw in other lands or heard from visitors to their own land served to increase their resentment of their oppressors. Matters came to a head at the end of the year when a revolution took place. The Ranas were removed ignominiously from power, many fleeing to India, and in the following year a democracy was instituted in Nepal to be under the guidance of a freely elected government and the King. God's Hand was at work. Those who had been praying for this closed land for many years saw the long-shut doors begin to open, and sensed the power of the Hand that was now beginning to break the chains and shackles which had for centuries bound the Nepali people. For we know 'the most High Ruler in the Kingdom of men' and is working out His purposes for those who are yet without knowledge of Him. His purpose for the Nepali people is surely their deliverance from all that has held them captive for so long.

Following the revolution changes began to take place. For the first time there was talk of voting for all adults. Men began to take an interest in their own country's affairs, and to seek for its development and enrichment. Foreign aid was accepted, technical advisers with their materials coming in to help, advise and train the people. An air service was established to link up the capital with India and with important inland centres in the west and south. Passengers and freight could thus be easily transported in an hour over hilly terrain, to cross which would take many days hard trekking. Roads, hydro-electric schemes, school and engineering projects were all begun and a full-scale five-year plan embracing these and many other activities, educational, medical and social, was launched. New laws were passed giving the people greater freedom and when Nepal took its place as a member of the United Nations in 1956 it seemed that the country would at last move towards a true and strong democracy.

In this transition period of outwardly rapid and intense change, however, the mind and thought of the people moved at a much slower rate, and apart from the general atmosphere

of freedom the Christian observer might have noticed little to mark the revolution which had taken place. Nepal still frowns officially on Christianity and refuses to follow the example of her neighbouring Hindu state, India, in recognising Christians as a community. Each mission beginning to work in Nepal has been compelled to accept rigid and sometimes harsh conditions of service and as the years have gone on, these have only increased in severity. But in the following chapters it will be seen how, in spite of the restrictions and impositions of successive governments, the blessing of the Lord has been upon the labours of his servants, to the establishing and building up of His Church.

While the N.E.B. has mainly been engaged in and around Pokhra, other missions have begun in and spread out from the capital Kathmandu, and these two centres differ greatly. Apart from the fact that both are in wide valleys Pokhra is a rural area as compared with the heavily populated city which forms the capital and seat of government. Kathmandu today is not large as western cities are reckoned. It has its crowded older parts, with narrow streets and red-bricked houses of three or four storeys. A newer shopping centre represents the modern section, but the promise of glass windows and shop counters (both novelties here) is belied by the limited range of articles for sale and the conservative attitude of the shopkeepers towards new ideas. A bank, a cinema, a general post office with a new shiny red post van all point to 'progress' and the large number of cars, jeeps and lorries to be seen on the streets indicate improving communications. Modern hotels cater for the increasing tourist traffic which is made possible by the air service to India linking with the main world air routes. Passing along the main street one can see Singha Durbar, the huge palace now the government headquarters, and further along past the largest parade ground in Asia, the equally imposing palace in which the King and the Royal Family live. Tree-lined streets provide coolness while high brick walls give privacy to the large houses and former Rana palaces now used as flats, offices, training schools or private houses. Schools and colleges give education to the growing number of literate young people, the best of whom may go to other countries to complete their training.

In Pokhra, however, the impression given is that of a country district in which the very air is fresher. It is much more backward than Kathmandu, indeed in many ways might be reckoned as primitive. It is a small town of perhaps 10,000 people but with many outlying villages which increase the overall population about three-fold. Most of its people are engaged in some kind of agricultural work, tending cows, buffaloes, goats and a few sheep or caring for land on which the staple crops of rice, maize and millet are grown. The Newars and Thakalis are the traders of the area, keeping shops in the bazaar, while Brahmins might be found in any capacity—shopkeeping, farming, teaching, in the temples or in local government offices or just idling about, supported by their families.

To Pokhra come village people from near and far bringing articles for sale such as eggs, rice, flour, straw mats, and larger bamboo mats. Vegetables and fruit are always scanty, but in their season bananas, oranges, a kind of pear, pineapples, tomatoes and cucumbers are to be obtained in the bazaar stalls or from vendors on the road. But the poorer village people cannot often afford luxuries such as these, and they try to be as self-supporting as possible. A small strip of land, and a buffalo or two will provide a family with food and drink for most of the year, because well-tilled land can produce two or more crops each year and the grain so obtained can be stored up to last until the next season.

Life for most people is hard and full of backbreaking toil. The land is cultivated with centuries-old implements and every kind of work is done slowly and laboriously by hand. Oxen are used to help in ploughing and large families come as a team to rice planting and harvesting. In a backward community such as this the people have no means of developing their minds with the result that many from the villages are dull and slow in apprehension, only showing intelligence when involved in arguments about farm work or money. Very few native crafts have been developed and one can scarcely ever meet a skilled technician or a craftsman producing anything of value. Local products and materials, unless imported are usually of poor design and quality. In the villages only a small number can read, so social intercourse with long rambling conversations

supplies the usual means of passing spare time. With this background it can be seen how new ideas are so slow of taking root and germinating in the minds of Nepali people, especially when so few of them realise how backward they really are. Indeed they are a naturally happy-go-lucky race, quick to laughter or anger, like children in their habits and unable to give their attention to any one thing for very long. Accepting without question what their forbears have done and passed on to them, they regard new ideas and suggestions with extreme suspicion and relent only if later these are clearly proved to be of value. Dirt and filth, overcrowding, flies, disease, death—all are accepted with a fatalistic attitude which reveres the age-old Nepali ways and customs, but proves so hazardous to their own health and strength, and so exasperating to those anxious for their welfare. Their very helplessness and inability to see beyond the immediate needs of the moment render them easy prey to anyone desiring to exploit them. But on the other hand they are intensely loyal to those who help them.

There is another side to the picture. Kathmandu must contain the largest number of temples relative to its size in any Hindu city of the East. One can visit areas where almost every second building is a temple, and while to the tourist these are architecturally and photographically things of absorbing interest, to the Christian they are but signs of the deep spiritual darkness in which the people of this land are plunged. Each temple has its idols and images, usually smeared with colour and surrounded by fading flowers and leaves from previous offerings. Most are so horrifying that the Western mind can scarcely conceive them to represent gods. Many are probably demons carved over the temple doors and interior in order to frighten away evil spirits and hostile gods. To these far from beautiful creatures come the people of Nepal with their pitiful handfuls of rice or flowers, pleading that the vengeance of the gods might be placated, and they themselves be given peace and prosperity.

A visiting technical expert from the West once told the writer that he disapproved of Christian missions because they interfered with the natural dignity of man. He had forgotten that his own country would not have reached its present high position

in world affairs without the pioneer work of early Christians. But a more convincing answer is perhaps to be found in observing those who prostrate themselves before these creatures of stone and wood in the streets of Kathmandu. It is hard indeed to see the 'natural dignity of men' in these fear-haunted people. But visit a small Christian church in Nepal where a few come together to worship the one true God and see the light in their faces, see their upright bearing as they sing of a God of love who is pure and righteous and who brings to them through the Lord Jesus Christ a joy and peace never before experienced. Then it is that the true dignity of man is fully realised.

The Bible gives a picture which is as true of Nepal today as it was of the heathen nations of long ago:—

'Their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.'

—(Isaiah 2. 8).

We may note that an alternative translation of the word here rendered 'idols' is 'nonentities.' The idols which receive the gifts and worship of millions are *as nothing*:—

'They have mouths, but speak not;
Eyes have they, but they see not;
They have ears, but they hear not;
Neither is there any breath in their mouths.
They that make them are like unto them;
So is everyone that trusteth in them.'

—*Psalms* 135. 16-18.

This last verse shows the snare into which all idol worshippers fall—they are like their idols and become more so as years go on. The idols themselves are lifeless shapes, but behind them and their worship is the power of Satan, deluding the minds of the worshippers, keeping them from knowledge of the true God and ensnaring them so deeply that eventually they become like their idols, helpless, hopeless darkened in mind and heart and understanding. Christ came into the world that the eyes of these people might be opened and that they might be brought 'out of darkness into His marvellous light.' Christian missions may have the disapproval of some, but they only exist to fulfil the Lord's commission to go and take that message of light to those who sit in such darkness.

The Hinduism of Nepal seems to do nothing to help its followers in improving their lot or in the suffering of conditions which they are powerless to change. It seems rather to be divorced from reality and practical everyday affairs, even though its actual ritual absorbs so much of the people's thinking and has penetrated into every part of their lives. Many of them are zealous in their devotion to the gods and the prescribed rites of worship, bathings, anointings and the like, but however deeply they enter into their religion, the further they seem to be from finding true joy, real holiness of life or assurance of salvation. Indeed they have no knowledge that any prayer of theirs is ever answered. How could they, bowing before a carved idol whose face shows, if anything at all, merely utter indifference to their requests and their offerings? Most shrines are provided with a bell to be rung in order to wake up the sleeping god inside, and we hear those bells being clanged continually at special festivals. The writer has heard two men bowing before a stone idol no bigger than a brick, and repeating incessantly for over two hours, the pathetic words, 'O Lord, take this offering. O Lord take this offering,' and this in the very early hours of the morning before dawn had broken. One can imagine how soul destroying such worship must be—for ever giving and giving to these idols and receiving nothing in return. But of course that is Satan's way the world over. He demands all and yields nothing. He may entice with promises at the beginning but once a soul is within his power he turns an implacable face and shows how fiendishly cruel and relentless a taskmaster he is. And the Nepali people have been in his grip for centuries.

What is this Hinduism which so absorbs the life of these people? Some glimpses have already been given of its power and effects, but to indicate briefly its main features the following simple account can be given. The Hindu believes that the creator of everything visible is the god Brahma, who is now no longer worshipped as his work is finished. Associated with Brahma are two other gods worshipped by millions today, Vishnu and Siva, the first kindly and the second terrifying, also known as 'the Destroyer.' Vishnu appears in the world from time to time as incarnations in various forms, two of the most

renowned being Rama and Krishna, the chief gods of the majority of Nepalis. We hear their names often being taken and even little children sing songs about them. All these gods with many others figure in the Hindu sacred books, which are mostly collections of myths, folk-tales and legends, very few of which are elevating while many are positively evil by Christian standards.

Although these gods are worshipped in the idols which they are supposed to inhabit, the idea of 'god' remains as a rather mystical philosophic conception, which may have some meaning for the scholar, as the ultimate all-pervading reality, but which cannot be understood in the slightest by the unlearned mass of the people. Their minds are unable to get beyond the idol and to them therefore the idol becomes god and the ritual of its worship all-important, indeed sacred. So sin to the Hindu comes to be disobedience to their sacred rites or infringement of caste rules, rather than sin in the Christian sense of moral offence against God such as indecency, untruth, cruelty and so on. Caste itself, which has assumed such monumental, even sacred importance in the eyes of all Hindus, began in a primitive colour bar between fair and dark-skinned races, but later developed to provide a separate caste for almost every occupation and status in Hindu life. The castes are quite separate in every way and are regarded as different as the many species of animals. Just as a cat is different from a dog, so is a Brahmin (priestly caste) different from a dherzie (tailor caste). The two castes could never marry, intermingle or even eat together. In Pokhra we see men bowing down in the street to do obeisance to the feet of high caste Brahmins, who casually distribute the blessing they are reputed to hold. When people have to eat out of doors they turn their backs on others so that their food is not defiled. Caste is rigidly observed here in Nepal and when one becomes a Christian (equivalent to an outcaste) and eats with other believers, for example in church feasts, then a highly significant step in breaking with one's old ways has been taken.

Hindus hold that in life there are good deeds and bad deeds which are all weighed up at the end, and the balance of merit or demerit accruing must be worked off in the next life or in-

carnation, the status of which is determined by the amount of merit gained. Such a belief is easily held to explain misfortunes, sickness, poverty and even caste differences, and this together with a low moral conception of sin, leads to indifference, pessimism, callousness and hopelessness. The philosophic Hindu aims at finding a way of release from an endless cycle of rebirths into the ultimate goal of 'absorption into the nothingness of the heart of the universe,' and even this is only for the favoured few. But the simple villager has not even this mystic end in mind as he worships the idol in the temple. His Hinduism is coloured by belief in and fear of evil spirits which haunt him and keep him in terror of what they might do to him. And nowhere in his religion is there any word of a loving Saviour Who has come to save His people from their sins and Who lives to indwell their hearts by faith leading into a life more abundant.

But none of this darkness below the surface is apparent as the plane in which our traveller has left Bhairawa now begins to circle round for its landing in Pokhra. A long flat field here constitutes the airstrip, a few tattered sheds the office and customs. Two soldiers with heavy batons keep back the thronging press of carriers anxious to secure loads, while the plane taxis in and comes to a stop. The noise of the engines dies away, leaving an unfamiliar silence. Stepping out on to the grass one finds oneself right in among the hills, because although Pokhra is a valley, the distance from side to side is never very great. And there up to the north only fifteen miles as the crow flies are the startlingly white snow peaks of the mountains, a glorious picture against the blue of the sky and unbelievably high seen from so close a viewpoint.

It was to this place, to a country with such a background as has been described that the first Christian Mission came in 1952. Scenically beautiful though it is, with every vista a photographer's dream, there yet lies over this land the murk of heathen darkness. But high above, like the unchanging mountains, shine the eternal truths of God, hidden from sight by dense clouds of ignorance, blindness and sin, waiting for His hand to dispel the gloom and reveal them in their fulness to the hearts and understanding of the Nepali people.

The following chapters will tell something of the darkness

met, the difficulties found and overcome, and above all the wonders wrought by the hand of the Lord, using a small, weak and unknown mission to carry out His purposes in proclaiming these Truths to a people long without hope and 'without God in the world.'

CHAPTER II

THE BEGINNING OF THE MISSION

IT was Christmas time in 1932 and a young missionary was returning from Gorakhpur to Ludhiana in the Punjab. As the train moved slowly out of the station, she sat spell-bound gazing at the magnificent sight of Annapurna catching the rays of the early morning sun. It spoke of such purity and strength and it was the work of her Heavenly Father. She was stirred to the depths of her soul not for this fact only but because she knew that that mountain was in Nepal, the land to which she had been called.

As her heart went out in longing for its people, a voice said so clearly that it might have spoken aloud in the carriage, 'Whom shall I send? Who will go for Us?' (*Isaiah* 6. 8). 'Oh, Lord,' was her instant reply, 'send me, please, please send me.' She went back to Ludhiana with this never-to-be-forgotten experience filling her thoughts and on 1st January, 1933, in her reading for the day came the promise which was to give such assurance through the long years of waiting, 'The land whither ye go to possess it is a land of hills and valleys.' (*Deut.* 11. 11).

I was not the only one looking Nepal-wards at that time. A year or two before this, the same promise had been given to Miss Hilda Steele and soon we were to hear God's call to work together. In 1936, while we were both at home we paid a visit to Kells in Eire, where much prayer went up for the future of the work. It was during one of these times of fellowship that God started to give His pattern for the work. There was to be a 'band of men whose hearts God had touched' (1 *Samuel* 10. 26). During the next sixteen years, the Lord called one here, one there until there was a group of men and women chosen by Him to enter the land and form the nucleus of the Church in Pokhra. The name of the Mission was given also at that time. It was to be called the Nepal Evangelistic Band. Later one of our Nepali colleagues pointed out that while we were in India it might be advisable to use the word 'Nepali' rather than 'Nepal' for fear of antagonizing the Nepal Govern-

ment, and so until 1959 we have been known as the Nepali Evangelistic Band. With the introduction of the new Constitution, however, and now that we are in the land, we have for the first time taken the name given us by the Lord so many years before in Eire.

In November, 1936, Hilda and I returned to India this time to work together in Nautanwa, a small town four miles from the southern border of Nepal through which thousands of Nepalis pass yearly. It was from Dr. Harbord that we had first heard about this strategic place. She had lived there herself and when in 1935 she was invalided home she offered it to us as a centre for work. We were very inexperienced for such a place; we knew a little Hindi and still less of the Nepali language and we had no colleagues. On arrival in Nautanwa we started house-hunting. After looking at several houses, each one less suitable than the last, we eventually decided to take one at the end of a 'terrace.' It possessed a tin roof, which made it like an oven from April to September! Privacy in our new home was most difficult to obtain, for instead of a proper front wall the builder had constructed a lattice work of strips of iron through which many dark eyes would look. There was no window, and if the door was left open to give more light, anyone and anything might walk in—children, patients, dogs or hens. Whenever it rained the tin roof leaked badly and we had to run upstairs—remembering to duck our heads because of low doorways—roll up our bedding and put it where the leaks seemed less numerous! If it was windy the roof flapped, and if it was at all stormy the house rocked and we retired to our ground floor! Yes, there were certainly disadvantages in our first house in Nautanwa!

We purposed opening a dispensary, so in the large front room with its mud walls and floor we rigged up shelves upon which we set a noble array of bottles; there were cough mixtures and dyspepsia mixtures; pills and powders. Packing cases were converted into cupboards to hold still more bottles, and yet another one was made into a desk for the doctor. All was ready and one morning we opened the doors—and no one came! The Nepalis in Nautanwa were conservative folks and were in no hurry to try our treatment. The boys on the other hand

were delighted to have us in their town and decided we should run a school for them.

'We are not teachers,' we explained to them.

'That wouldn't matter,' they declared.

'But we haven't any books,' we said rather feebly.

'Books!' they cried, "you can get heaps of books in Gorakhpur!'

It was no good! There seemed to be no adequate reason why we should not acquiesce to their request except for the important fact that we were quite untrained. The school was opened and continued until 1940. When the school bell rang, along came the scholars, running, laughing, jostling each other just as they do the world over. We started with prayers and there seated on the floor in front of us would be rows and rows of boys, studious ones, and lazy giggling ones, and solemn, clever and stupid. After the Scripture lesson they would divide up into their classes. 'How much did they learn?' Educationally it was not a great success but from amongst these boys, there were a few who heard and obeyed the Lord's call to rise up and follow Him.

It was through the boys eventually that the work in the dispensary began to get busier. They would bring an ill brother or grandmother, mother or father, and in this way we made friends with the families and gained an entrance into their homes. As the medical work increased the hours of the school had to be changed from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., which meant we could give the whole morning to the patients, while on Saturday, Nautanwa's bazaar day, we remained open all day for the village people. There were calls also from distant places, the names of which we did not always know, nor did it occur to us that some of them might be bogus. Although we had no colleagues at this time the Lord had provided us with a Hindu Nepali cook and many times she saved us from making serious mistakes. When men appeared at the garden gate—she would not allow them any nearer the house—she would go out to interview them herself.

'What village did you say?' The name would then be repeated.

'Well, well,' she would exclaim, 'how strange! Why! I've been living here for twenty-four years and I've never

heard of that village before. If you want my two Miss Sahibs to come with you, please bring a car and we will go. There will be Rs. 10/- for them and Rs. 5/- for myself.' As there is only one so-called motor road from Nautanwa, going northwards to Nepal and south to Gorakhpur it would have been difficult for them to comply with her request, but it was the look on her face which settled them and we never saw such men again. Village life in India has its own rules of conduct and many were the lessons we learned from our cook. She was unstinting in the service she gave us and it has been a great sorrow that, although in the early years she came near to the Lord, so far as we know, she died an unbeliever.

After we had been working in Nautanwa for two or three months, a call came to visit a patient over the border in Bhairawa. This caused us such excitement we might have been going to Kathmandu itself! We filled a bag with medicines and all the equipment we thought we might need; we took a picnic meal to delay our return and accompanied by the cook off we went by car into the land! Bhairawa is six miles from Nautanwa by road and in those days the first four miles to the Nepal border were atrocious, making it anything but a joy ride. That day, however, we were quite oblivious of any discomfort! As we entered Nepal, there were the same rice fields stretching east and west as far as the eye could see; the same dusty vegetation and dark mango groves; and the same groups of houses huddled together occupied by Indians, but there was a subtle difference in that all this land belonged to Nepal and northwards up in those ever-beckoning hills were the Nepalis to whom we had been sent. After we had seen the patient and had had a long talk with her, we went back to the car to eat our meal and pray that the day might soon come when we would be allowed to continue along the road to Butwal and from there up into the hills on foot.

Shortly after this a Rana General did ask us to treat one of his daughters while they were in camp in Butwal. In those days this General lived in Tansen, twelve miles beyond Butwal up in the hills, from where he governed West Nepal. During the winter months, accompanied by various members of his family and many servants he would come down to shoot tigers and leopards in the wooded terai country and it was then that

he would send for us to treat any patients in his household. For the next twelve years we continued to pay many visits to that family and although the land was closed to the Gospel, the Lord gave us some wonderful opportunities amongst them as the following account taken from *Hills and Valleys* will show.

‘One day some ladies—relations of the General came to the Dispensary. We gave them medical treatment and suggested they should return in a week. This they did and at the close of their second visit we heard our cook saying ‘These Miss Sahibs have some very good lantern slides, if you would like to see them we could show them to you at 7 p.m. this evening.’ In those days she missed no opportunity of preaching the Gospel. As our Nepali was ‘non est’ at that time, she had to do the speaking and that evening, when the official came with his retinue, though nervous at first, she soon lost herself in the wonder of the message she had to proclaim. As the picture of the Lord Jesus dying on the Cross was shown, she said, ‘Here is the only Sacrifice for sin; He became our Sacrifice; He offered Himself and it’s foolishness to shed the blood of goats and fowls to take away sin, it can do nothing for you.’ ‘It’s not foolishness, it’s sin,’ was the official’s reply. That man possessed copies of God’s word, and we believe in some dim way he had believed on Christ, for a year later, when we were visiting patients in Nepal we found out that he had taught his daughter-in-law about the Lord. That girl gave us a marvellous opportunity to witness to a little company of the elite of the land by asking us to tell them of ‘our Jesus.’ As each point was explained, she would say, ‘Oh, yes, I remember my father-in-law told me about that,’ and then turning to the assembled ladies she said, ‘There are books in our language about this, we have some.’ The picture of Christ on the Cross was then shown them but before anything could be explained, she broke in with ‘Yes, Jesus died . . . but not only for you, for us too.’ With very full hearts we replied, ‘Not for us only, for you too.’ Since then we have only seen her once, when we were called to visit her daughter who was dying of pulmonary tuberculosis. Did she ever accept Christ as her Saviour or did her sorrow turn her heart away? Who can tell?—but she has ‘the Books’.

Three years had elapsed and although we were still living in

our rented house we had been able to buy an acre of land in the face of considerable opposition. Through the generous gifts of some of God's servants in the homelands, money had been lodged in the Bank earmarked for a new house, and in January, 1940, one of God's servants in India started to build for us. He gave us more than five months of his valuable time to supervise the work.

For the next twelve years we lived in that house and even now although there are no permanent missionaries stationed there it is essential to the work to have it as a base, where those going and coming from Pokhra can spend a night and where goods can be stored. In the large room which was once the dispensary, Sunday services are held by the Nepali couple living and working in Nautanwa. They maintain a witness in the town as well as forwarding mail, stores and drugs.

1939 had been a year of advance but not only in Nautanwa. 'Spare not . . . lengthen . . . strengthen . . .' Why was this command given to us? 'For thou shalt break forth on the right hand,' so reads the verse. In July of the previous year we had been to Assam for our holiday, hardly realising how the Hand of God was directing our path and how He was leading us to break out on the right hand. In pre-war days some 2,000 Gurkhas were stationed in Shillong and there were about 2,000 resident Nepalis as well. We saw the possibilities of the place but having no Nepali workers at that time we could not attempt to meet the need beyond remembering them in prayer. By September war was declared, and at the end of the month we were given our first Nepali colleagues, Daniel and Martha Pradhan. They joined us for the winter work in Nautanwa going up to Shillong in July, 1940. This led to the opening up of work in that area. It was a very small beginning but 'Who hath despised the day of small things?' (*Zech.* 4. 10).

By the close of 1940 three more workers were added to us—a young Christian Tir Bahadur (now working in the Kathmandu valley with R.B.M.U.) and David and Premi from Raxual. We were then a band of two married couples, a single evangelist and our two selves, and it became possible to have excellent work amongst the resident population of Nautanwa, as well as touching the multitude that passed through the Town. Many hundreds of Gospels were sold monthly and many contacts

were made with people in the land. Workers met the midday train each day, and in the evenings lantern talks were held in the open-air. On Sundays there were regular services, both for adults and children; all were well attended and much interest was shown. Advance at such a time? Why, yes, if God so plans it; but such an advance will not go unchallenged by the Enemy of souls. Late in 1940 a Sanballat was sent into our midst in the form of an official who was actively anti-Christian. His position enabled him to bring pressure to bear and he succeeded in closing our boys' school and did his best to stop the Sunday services too. He organised Hindu religious meetings at the identical time of our services, and ordered all the Nepali people to attend them. He failed, however, and was obliged to hold his meetings on Thursdays instead of Sundays. Opposition was increasing but there was blessing too. On the last day of February, 1941, four Nepali boys after testifying to their faith before a gathering of local Nepali men and women were baptised in a little river outside Nautanwa. Two of them, Philip and Daud, are still with us. It was a wonderful day for us and as we stood on the banks above the river it seemed as if all nature herself was hushed to listen and Heaven was watching with joy too deep for words.

The year 1942 opened with the Japanese infiltrating into Burma. Was it wise then to go to Assam again? Would it not be better to go elsewhere? One Thursday we prayed for 2,000 rupees as a seal that it was God's plan for us to advance in the evangelisation of the Nepalis in Assam. Three days later money cabled from England arrived in India—not the 2,000 for which we had prayed, but 2,662 rupees (£200). Once again God had given the 'over and above' and with this assurance we confidently made plans for the future.

Early in May, the Nepali members of the Band set off for Assam and after a brief visit to Kalimpong, we followed them. When we reached Shillong we found Martha dying of typhoid and a week later she went to be with the Lord. We had scarcely recovered from the shock of her death when Premi started running a high temperature. She made no progress while under treatment in her own home, so she was admitted to hospital, where she received every care and attention. Very slowly the fever began to go down, and after her temperature

had been normal for some days it was diagnosed as typhus, a rare disease in India. A very thin, white, delicate-looking Premi came back to us but we were most grateful to have her at all. She was no sooner back in her home, however, when she showed signs of acute pulmonary tuberculosis. The x-ray showed active disease which was spreading. Were we still to lose her? Or would she be more or less an invalid all her life? Our hearts were heavy in those days. The Civil Surgeon gave a poor prognosis unless she came into hospital for special treatment. These were the days before streptomycin and all the modern drugs. By this time she had four small children, the youngest a delicate child not yet two. Their home was on a main road and military traffic was heavy. We knew Premi would fret so much in hospital that the treatment there would do her little good. We therefore looked after her in her home and constant prayer was made to God for her. Slowly the cough left her, she began putting on weight, her cheeks filled out and a little colour returned. A year later a second x-ray was taken, and the improvement was so remarkable that the Civil Surgeon called it 'miraculous.'

That year was one of much testing but it marked the beginning of the Church in Shillong. Turning again to *Hills and Valleys* we read of a Nepali family who lived near the workers. The man and his wife were taught regularly by David and Premi and when there was no doubt as to the reality of their faith, they were accepted for baptism. The day fixed for the service was bright and sunny. We were early in the forest damming up a stream to make a deep pool, and by the time the Christians had collected, the water was clear and sparkled in the sunshine. Overhead was a lofty cathedral of trees, through the branches of which we could see the blue of God's Heaven, while all around the cool green of the forest spoke of His peace and rest. Standing by the pool with his face radiant, Samuel told in a ringing voice, of what the Lord had done for him; after which he was baptised. Before he left the pool he was followed into the water by his wife, whose demeanour bore testimony to her peace of heart.

These two were the 'first-fruits' of the work there, but later others were to follow. For several years David and Premi

stayed on in Assam and when they left Samuel was chosen to become the Pastor of the Church.

Down through the years God had indeed been calling out a 'band of men (and women) whose hearts He had touched'. In the Autumn of 1950 the 'gates', closed for so long, began slowly to open. A revolution broke out in Nepal which resulted in the overthrow of the Ranas, the Prime Minister's family, and the instating of the King—before only a figure head—as the country's ruler. The new Prime Minister had lived for many years in India and was progressive in his thinking. In collaboration with the King, he and his Cabinet planned to improve their country by opening it up to outside influences and by availing themselves of the advice and help from other lands. It so happened that the first British Ambassador to Nepal and his wife were known to us and in February, 1952, we were invited to visit them in Kathmandu. As we travelled first in the narrow gauge railway from Raxual, then by bus and finally on ponies, it seemed as if the whole journey was a dream and sooner or later we would wake up.

From the 8,000 ft. Chandragiri Pass on the southern rim of the Kathmandu valley we looked down for the first time on the twinkling lights of the capital. We could see the dark outline of the northern boundary and the high mountains beyond. As we hurried down the path to the motor road below many were the thoughts and prayers that passed through our minds. Was the long time of waiting really over? Would we be allowed to open a hospital in Pokhra? From several sources we had heard about this town, situated in a wide valley 100 miles north-west of Kathmandu. To the Nepalis living in the surrounding hills it was well-known for its cloth shops and it was a place where many important paths crossed. An excellent centre for medical work, we had been told, and the help we could give was much needed. Buddhi Sagar, one of the Nepalis who had been converted in India, had come from Pokhra and from him we learned more. The Lord made it abundantly clear to us that this was where He would have us go. Through the kindness of the British Ambassador interviews were arranged with various ministers including the Prime Minister. All were so friendly that we were quite unprepared for the note which was handed

to us on the last evening of our stay, stating that although we might visit Pokhra we had no permission to settle there permanently.

The King's plane was put at our disposal and the next day we flew over with our friend the Ambassador and several Government officials. As we landed for the first time in Pokhra it was not the surging mass of the people on the airstrip nor the grandeur of Annapurna with its amazing Fish-Tail peak which arrested us, but the Lord's near Presence and His unmistakable reiteration that we would return to this very place to work for Him. In the afternoon the plane went back to the capital, leaving us alone in the hills to spend a few days in Pokhra before trekking southwards to India. Buddhi Sagar had accompanied us on our visit to Kathmandu and now he had the joy of showing us his own home town and we met some of the local authorities. During that all-too-short week-end, we walked mile after mile claiming the promise given long ago to Joshua, 'Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon that have I given unto you.' Wherever we went we told the people that we would soon return to live amongst them. Sure enough in April negotiations began once more and letters passed to and from the capital. After what seemed to us maddening delays word finally came to us in November that we might proceed to Pokhra. We had been told that there was to be no proselytising but that on the compounds where we lived and worked we might 'serve and worship God according to the dictates of our consciences.'

In 1947 the Lord had sent us out our first European colleague and during the following years others had been added to us, so that by 1952 there were six missionaries ready to go into the land while a married couple remained for the time being in Shillong. With the six missionaries, five Nepali Christians and nineteen coolies made up the first party which started on 10th November, 1952, to trek northwards into Nepal. November is a good month in which to travel in the hills. The monsoon is over, so the rivers are not in spate and the days are fresh without being unduly cold and short. The Lord had chosen the best month for us! How much better to leave the choice with Him! There were four ranges of hills to cross and several rivers to ford, accommodation at night was not easy as Nepal does not possess the dak bungalows that are found



PATIENTS AT GREEN PASTURES

in India, but day after day we drew nearer to Pokhra, until on 18th November we found ourselves looking down into the valley once more. It was a bright, sunny morning and there confronting us in all their majestic grandeur were those giant mountains, Daulagiri in the west, the twenty-mile long Annapurna range facing us, and the Manaslu group and Ganesh Himal in the east. The lower foothills forming the northern rim of the valley were pale green in the sunlight with dark blue shadows, their contours intersected in several places by smaller valleys. We could see many villages nestling on their slopes and the ground was well cultivated in contrast to the main valley, where the villages were few, and unless irrigation is possible much of the land has to be left as pasture. The largest river, the Sheti, meaning white, is fed by the glacier waters of the Fish-Tail; it is swift and dangerous. As it enters the valley to the N.W. corner it is flowing 150 ft. below the surrounding country but by the time it has reached the southern boundary it is 300 ft. below the surface. From where we stood it appeared as a gash in the ground, so narrow was its passage. Pokhra town, hidden for the most part by trees, straggled along the western border for several miles.

It had not been possible to make arrangements beforehand for a house and we were faced straightaway with the problem of where to go. We knew of a so-called Guest House but on contacting the caretaker he told us he could not allow us to take possession without the sanction of the local Governor and that he was on leave in Kathmandu. Was it by chance that the Governor came over in the King's plane that very day for two hours' fishing and we were able to meet him and get the necessary permission? With thankful hearts we moved into our new abode, a barn of a house boasting not a stick of furniture but at least it was a roof over our heads. When the coolies had been paid, we found we had only Rs. 15/- left. Here we were then, shut in by hills with no possible contact with the outside world unless one of us trekked out again, but we were shut in with God. That night we reminded Him that we only had a little in hand but that it was nothing to Him to meet our need.

The next morning we were surprised to have a visit from a Westerner. He had come over from Kathmandu for a few

days and was returning that morning. He told us he had been given a packet for us but that if he did not meet us he was to take it back with him. Amazed, we took the envelope and, thanking him, bade our friend good-bye. Inside we found Rs. 400/-! 'Who is so great a God as our God?' This gift from His hand to ours as we started to serve Him in Nepal, confirmed to us afresh that we were in the centre of His will and that He was planning each step for us.

The following three days were spent house-hunting but they proved quite fruitless. There were no suitable empty houses in Pokhra which we might rent—all were occupied—so at Buddhi Sagar's suggestion we decided to build some temporary huts of bamboo and thatch on his field, a mile outside the town. Once again we began medical work and it was there that we had our first dispensary. Patients flocked to us in those early days and we saw anything up to 180 in a morning. In the evenings there were often visits to be made to the town and from time to time there were village calls. It was while we were on one of these that we first walked over the site of the present hospital. We had come to the end of the bazaar road and there in the extreme north-west corner of Pokhra valley before it narrowed into the Sheti gorge was the old parade ground. Beyond it, in a series of small plateaux, one below the other, the land dropped to the river 150 ft. below, while towering 20,000 ft. above it stood Fish-Tail that Matterhorn-like peak of rock and snow, part of the Annapurna range.

What an excellent place for a hospital. It was just outside the town and would therefore be away from the noise and there would be no danger of fire. This is a real danger where so many of the houses have thatched roofs and there is no fire brigade. And yet it was but a step to the first shops. Later we came to realise what a God-given site it was when in the hot weather we benefited from the breezes from the river and the bazaar was oppressive with heat. The temperatures of course cannot be compared with those in India but they can rise to 100° in the shade.

We applied to the Governor for permission to erect thatch huts on the edge of the parade ground but he had dreams of building a house and 'law courts' for himself on that land and had no wish to see us there. Finally, after several interviews,

we were given permission to stay there temporarily. A most suitable field on a slightly lower level was offered to us for our living huts. It was surrounded by a stone wall which gave us the privacy we needed.

In March, 1953, we moved lock, stock and barrel from Buddhi Sagar's field to Jung Bahadur's Parade ground and we have been there ever since! Squatters have rights the local Governor was to find out to his annoyance, and knowing the place had been given us of the Lord we politely refused to go to any of the sites which he offered us.

Since then prefabricated aluminium huts have replaced those of thatch and bamboo. The first two were erected in May, 1954, there were another three in 1955 and a further two in January, 1960, which gives the hospital four wards, two male and two female to hold 40 patients, a theatre block, maternity unit and out-patients' department.

Not only did the medical staff, both European and Nepali increase through the first seven years, but others came in to help with the building of huts and houses until there was quite a Christian community in Pokhra.

In Nepal there are many suffering from leprosy and the plight of these poor folk had long been in our hearts. On the trek up we had passed a Government Leprosarium and had promised we would return to help them. This was not the Lord's will however and He showed us we were to have a colony for them in Pokhra. After trying for years to procure a plot of land, eventually in January, 1957, we were able to buy about fourteen acres and the first patients were admitted in September of that year.

Two years later the inmates of the Government Leprosarium began to be visited by the staff of the Tansen Mission Hospital and are now receiving regular treatment as well as the message of God's love.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE MISSION

IN the beginning of the work, no organisation was necessary beyond a friend at home to send out the monthly prayer letters and to forward gifts to the field. This friend, with two others, formed the 'Home Committee.' By 1945, however, it was necessary to have a wholetime Secretary-Treasurer, the other committee members remaining the same. Ten years later the work in Britain had more than trebled; a treasurer was therefore elected to ease the burden of the Secretary; a further two members were added to the committee in 1957 and another addition was made in 1958, bringing the total up to seven.

Under the new Constitution, the Home Council consists of not less than seven members and is to be responsible for candidates, to organise deputation work and forward the work of the Band at home. In addition to this Committee, a Council of Reference was formed in 1957 to give help and advice whenever necessary.

On the Field, as the Band began to grow, the first Constitution was drawn up in 1940 and registered in Lucknow. The Band at that time was composed of Nepalis and the two original missionaries and the administration was of the simplest. In India there was to be an Executive Committee, to promote the objects of the Band composed of five members, three chosen from the Band and two from the Advisory Council. This Council of seven were to meet at least once annually to consider the report of the year, the statement of accounts and future plans. The object of the Band was stated to be 'to establish the kingdom of God among the Nepalis,' the character of the Band to be 'unsectarian and undenominational,' and the members were to have 'no guarantee other than the bounty of a Heavenly Father.'

As the numbers of the missionaries increased, it became evident that the first Constitution was inadequate and in 1958 it was revised and enlarged. In the following year it was registered in the United Kingdom. In it the Band is declared to be Evangelical, Interdenominational and International, whose Executive Committee now known as 'the Field Council'

is the highest Executive Authority and is formed of the Leader, five senior members—those who have served one term—and a junior member. It is responsible for the general administration of all work on the Field and to exercise control over all personnel. The financial policy remained the same.

The Band will work in Nepal for as long as it is the Lord's will for it to do so, but the Church will remain. We have sought for many years to show the Christians what a privileged position is theirs and how it is a far greater honour to be a member of the church than of the Band. With this in mind and because it has often proved inadvisable to give indigenous people missionary status, under the new Constitution Nepalis are not eligible for membership of the Nepal Evangelistic Band. They are, however, our colleagues and this is how they are described. They are 'those Nepalis who are full members of the Church and have heard the call of God to work with the members of the Band as colleagues in Hospital, Leprosarium, Farm or other departments.'

In 1959 the Lord sent us our first Australian colleague and the Australian Auxiliary was formed. As a result prayer groups have been formed and interest in the work is extending.

Long ago God said to one of His servants 'See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee on the mount.' We have waited before Him for the pattern of this His own work, and believe He has revealed it to us.

CHAPTER III

THE CHURCH

I WILL build My Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Long ago, this was the Lord's promise to His disciples and now, even in Nepal it is being fulfilled.

After being closed to the Gospel for centuries, the country opened its doors to Nepali Christians at the end of the 1950-51 revolution, and they were allowed to live and hold property in Nepal. Pokhra, in the centre of Nepal, was first visited by Nepalis of the N.E.B. early in 1951 and in the following year Buddhi Sagar, whose home was in a village nearby, came back to settle there with his wife. In the Autumn of that year—1952—five Christians accompanied the first missionary party to trek in from India. There was Prem, then a boy of 19 who had just left school and now wanted to work amongst his own people, also Yacub who had heard the call of God to return to his own country. While serving as a soldier in Kashmir, he had been given a Gospel. This had prepared his heart and when he arrived in Nautanwa, the Christians found him ready to receive Christ as his Saviour. Rebecca, his wife, was not so sure that this was the right step to take, but eventually she too gave her heart to the Lord. Another member of the party was Priscilla, whose 'husband' was also a soldier. She had been sent to Nautanwa while he was on active service, and it was there that she heard the message of salvation. With her whole heart she responded to the claims of Christ and He has been able to lead her from strength to strength. The fifth was the son of one of the Nepali Christians. He had made no profession of salvation before he came into Nepal and stayed but a short while. It was not a mature group whom the Lord chose to take the Light into this kingdom of darkness as four of them Prem, Yacub, Rebecca and Priscilla had only been baptised in December, 1951, and yet how often the Lord delights to use the weak and the foolish to fulfil His purposes.

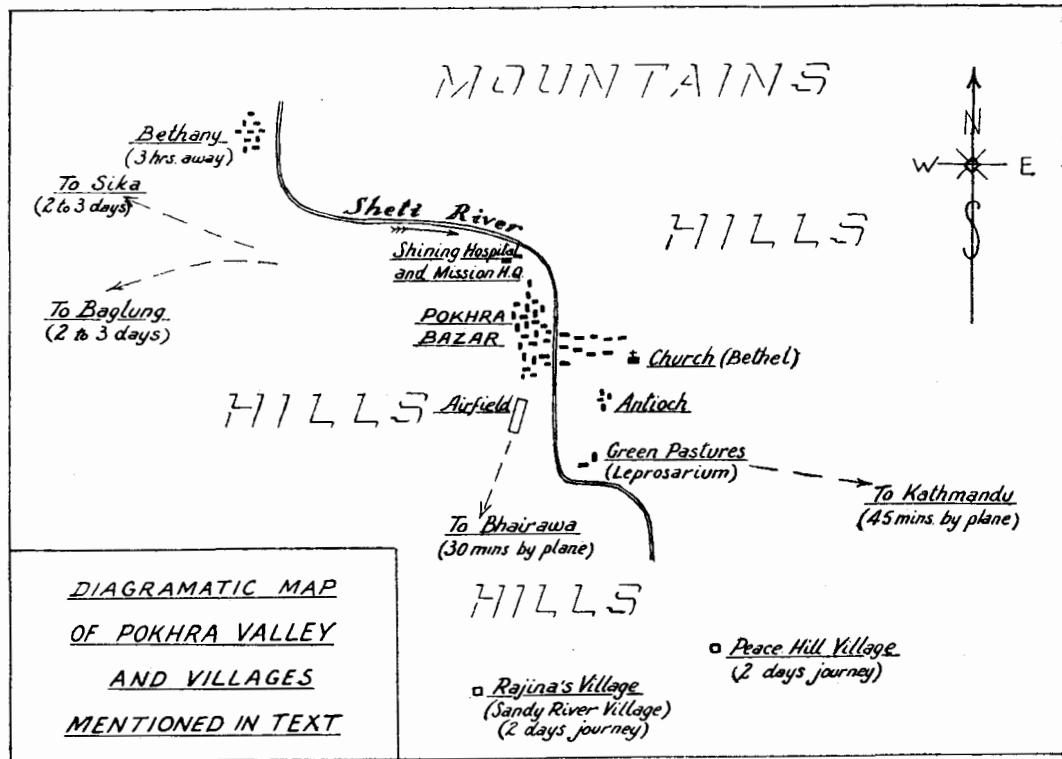
As the months passed by, more and more Nepali Christians came up from Nautanwa to join these in Pokhra. There was Pastor David with Premi his wife and their family, Noah and Hannah, Daud and Philip, and others. Pastor David and Premi had been colleagues since 1940 and had been used to lead many

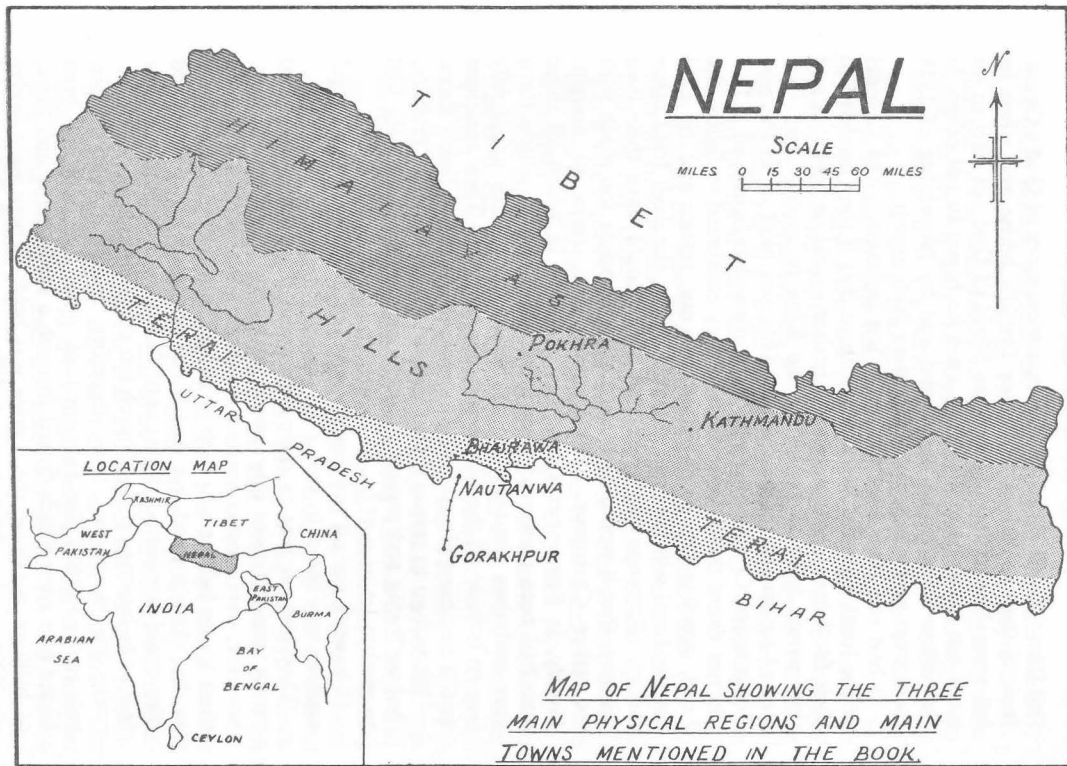
to the Lord. Noah and Hannah had been converted in Shillong, Assam, in 1948, while Philip and Daud were two of the first four boys to be baptised in Nautanwa in 1941.

In the early days, the Christians met on Sundays on the missionaries' compound but from 1954 the services began to be held on Buddhi Sagar's land three miles away in the shade of a clump of bamboos. As the congregation increased, however, the shade became inadequate and it was decided to build a simple church of bamboo and thatch. This was finished and dedicated in March, 1955, but was replaced four years later by a stone and brick building which could hold double the number of worshippers. The planning, erecting and expense were entirely undertaken by the Church. There was now a little nucleus of Christians, they even possessed a church building, but where were the new believers? 'Go and make disciples' had been the Lord's command to them and yet nearly three years had gone by and no one had given themselves openly to Christ. Day by day prayer went up for those living around them, the men and women of the town and those in the villages scattered over the hillsides, prayer that whole families, groups of families, and even villages might come into the Kingdom, and that in each group God might single out a leader.

Unknown to them the Holy Spirit had been working in the heart of a man in a near-by hamlet. He had been seeking peace for some time, peace with God, the knowledge that his sins had been forgiven and that he was right with his Maker. He looked at the sadhus, the so-called holy men of Hinduism, and wondered if they possessed the secret, could they help him? No, he thought they have no peace in their faces. Then should he leave his home and seek peace in other countries? He became more and more restless, he had no desire to work nor to eat and he could not sleep. One day as he was working in the fields with a number of other people he began thinking aloud. 'How can a man have peace with God?' he blurted out.

'You should go to the Christian farmer,' declared the women next to him, 'he knows the way.' Lucius' face lit up with interest and he plied her with questions but the answers were all the same, 'You must go to the farmer, Buddhi Sagar, he knows.' Early the next morning before it was light Lucius was on Buddhi's doorstep. He explained why he had come,





and then listened eagerly to the matchless story of God's Grace. Buddhi then took him to Pastor David's house and when he left several hours later he had the Word of God not only in his hand but in his heart also. At once he began to tell others in the village of what he had found and by November of 1956 there were nine ready to confess their faith openly.

It had not been easy for these first believers. The Colonel of the local regiment had warned them that if they persisted in their foolishness, their land and houses would be forfeited and they would have to go before the King to explain why they wished to change their religion. This was bluff as in the new Constitution Christian Nepalis were allowed to hold land. This did not daunt them, however, and they continued to follow the Lord, standing on the promise 'Fear not, rejoice and be glad for the Lord will do great things.' Then the devil tried other tactics. Someone suggested that they should have their own services, that it would be better not to associate too much with the other Christians. This attack, too, came to nought. Finally, in September a law was proposed in which all those who had been converted were to be fined, sent to prison for a year and then returned to the Hindu fold. This apparently was to include all the Christians old and new. Their reactions would not have pleased the Government had they heard them.

'We will go to prison if that is their wish,' declared Priscilla, 'but we'll sing and preach so loudly all day long that they will be glad to let us out!'

'I haven't got all my fine money yet, I'll have to save up,' another was heard to say.

They had no fear in their hearts and if to follow the Lord meant imprisonment they would go gladly. The missionaries, however, were most concerned for them. Was it right to expose these young believers to such an ordeal? A friend visiting them at that time pointed out that if the proposed law was ratified they could not disobey it but until then these new believers were free to be baptised if the Church felt they were ready.

On 8th November, 1956, therefore, shortly before the law was to be ratified, the baptism took place. A pool had been found in a river which flowed through a small gorge and there, in brilliant sunshine, the service was held. There were twelve candidates, nine from Lucius' village, now called 'Antioch,'

and three others, Miriam, the first nurse trainee, and Timothy and Lois, now working in Green Pastures, the Leprosarium. Because of the uncertainty of the future and also because these were the first to obey the Lord's command from amongst the local people, it was a particularly hallowed time. All those gathered there were allowed to experience a little of the joy there is in Heaven over one sinner repenting.

The day came when the law was to come into force or be disannulled—and nothing happened. Several days went by and then the missionaries were told that his Majesty the King had vetoed the law, which meant that the new believers were free to live on in their home to serve the Lord. Great was the rejoicing.

Amongst the nine in Antioch was a man called John. From time to time members of his wife's family came to visit them and one day Dhanraj, John's brother-in-law, turned up. He was a witch doctor who had even gone to Tibet to learn how to exorcise evil spirits. John spoke to him of the Lord and of the wonderful peace He gives. There was no peace for Dhanraj in those days, the evil spirits whom he had tried to master had mastered him and he kept asking more and more questions. 'I don't really know any more,' said John, 'but if you can stay a day or two our 'Guru' is coming on Wednesday to teach us from God's Word.' When Pastor David arrived he was introduced to a man with an extra long Hindu caste look and somewhat wild appearance. For a while it seemed as if Dhanraj would soon give himself to the Lord but the devil fought hard to keep him back. Once again he returned to the sacrificing of hens and gave up reading the Bible and praying. A tremendous burden was given to the Church for this man and they held on for him in prayer.

In May, 1957, John became ill. He was admitted to the Shining Hospital but died a week later. His wife, Lover of Godliness, was young at this time, but she refused to cut off her hair as Hindu widows do, and she did not wail uncontrollably. 'John has gone to be with the Lord,' she told everyone. The antagonistic element in the village disagreed and told her that John was unhappy and his soul had found no rest, it was wandering about. That night an evil spirit was seen in the village and these men declared it was John.

'It was never John,' declared his widow vehemently, 'if it had been John he would have come to me.' It so happened that Dhanraj was then in the village. He pondered over his sister's triumphant faith and it made a great impression on him. It must be true, he said to himself, my sister knows the truth and she has been given peace even at a time like this. Before long he had yielded to the Lord and accepted from Him that wonderful gift of new life and forgiveness of sin. The next time there was a baptismal service, Dhanraj was one of the candidates. With characteristic fervour he now started to follow and serve the Lord as he had once served the devil. Wherever he went he spoke of His Master, with the result that just over two years later there was a little group of twenty-five men and women asking for baptism. Pastor David with members of the Church committee visited them to teach and examined them. Finally, eight were passed for baptism and this took place on 20th December, 1959. This marked another milestone in the history of the Church as it was the first of such services to be held in a village. The place chosen was near the little grinding mill which Dhanraj and his father had made. In a fold of the hills where a stream comes tumbling down noisily to join the Sheti River in the valley below, the small stone house had been built on a plateau cut out of the hillside. Gathered there on that cold December day were the new believers and enquirers and a small company from Pokhra. The stream had been dammed up to make a deep pool and mats had been placed near it. The eight new believers sat in front and were questioned by Pastor David concerning their faith and whether they intended to follow the Lord wholeheartedly. Then Pastor David, with Philip to help him, went into the pool and one by one the candidates were baptised. It was a time of deep joy and gladness. The Lord Who, several years before, had founded the Church in Pokhra was now drawing men and women to Himself in the villages beyond and small daughter churches were beginning to be established.

The Holy Spirit is certainly speaking to many in these days, but souls are not easily won nor do they continue to follow the Lord without much testing. One of the eight who had been baptised on 20th December recanted before the end of the year. He was the only believer in his village and a Communistic

element there made him turn his eyes away from the Lord to the difficulties of the path ahead of him. There is also a group in *Peace Hill* (see Chapter 5) who are seeking the Lord but at present they, too, are afraid to confess openly. Some are certainly fearful, but there are others who 'cannot but speak the things which they have heard.' The Lord has His witnesses in Pokhra bazaar as well as in the district and, as a result of their testimony, families are coming to them to hear more. Undoubtedly there is a widespread hunger for the Word of God. May the Church be ready for this day of opportunity.

How all-important is the Church, how vital to the Lord's purposes and how precious to Him? 'Christ loved the CHURCH and gave Himself for it.' The N.E.B. has been sent into Nepal to be her hand-maiden and to encourage and strengthen her in every way possible. The Church is the 'living building, the building that will remain, while the Band is merely the scaffolding, necessary for the time being but not permanent.' With this in mind it was decided in April, 1959, that the Band should only consist of Westerners and at the same time the Church should undertake Pastor David's support. To help them through the next five years, they would receive a grant which would decrease every six months, until in 1964 it would cease altogether. The Church is already self-governing and self-propagating and the time is fast approaching when it will be self-supporting as well. All evangelistic work has of necessity to be in their hands, such as ward services and village tours, the teaching of enquirers has long been undertaken by them. New believers are taught and passed for baptism by the Church Committee and baptised by the Pastor. Afterwards if any disciplinary measures are necessary they are responsible to take action.

Any young Church has 'growing pains'; there are ups and downs, times of great encouragement and times of disappointment. How few there are, whatever their background, who go consistently forward. What long patience the Lord has had with His Church, how tenderly He watched over her. 'I, the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.'—*Isaiah* 27. 3. Whatever the future holds for the Mission, the Church has been established and will continue.

'I will build my Church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.'

CHAPTER IV

MEDICAL WORK

THE SHINING HOSPITAL

BEFORE eight o'clock on a clear sunny morning one can usually see a group of patients gathered around the out-patient block of the Shining Hospital waiting for the doors to open. They sit on the grass chatting over their complaints and illnesses, and hearing from others, who have attended before, just what happens once they get inside.

'You sit in there,' says an old man, 'and the doctor examines you. Then you go over to the other side for your medicine.'

'But do I have to come again?' asks a soldier, apparently anxious to leave quickly.

'Well, you may get all your treatment at once, or you may have to come every day for injections, like me!' replies a third, holding a bandaged arm carefully.

'Yes, I want an injection!' says another man, obviously from a distant village. 'I'm very weak and my blood is not pure.'

But they fall silent as a new patient, seriously ill, is carried to the door, and they watch sympathetically as the two bearers lower the basketwork chair, gently place it on the grass, and sit down to mop their hot faces.

'Where have you come from?' one asks.

'Oh! from far—two days journey,' replies one of the bearers.

The first old man says, 'I'm from the bazaar just here, and it is easy for me to come, but you have lots of trouble in getting here, haven't you?'

'Yes,' says the bearer, 'the road is long and rough, so we hope that our patient will be admitted to hospital as he has been ill for a long time.'

'They'll admit him,' replies the knowledgeable old man; 'there are a few empty beds in the ward. I've seen them.'

'Well,' says the bearer, 'last time I came, with another relative there were no empty beds and we had to stay in the bazaar.'

'Yes, that does happen from time to time,' exclaimed another; 'sometimes there are a lot of patients, even lying on

the floor between the beds. But look up there—two new wards are being built and soon there will be beds for anyone who comes.'

Just then the staff arrives, the doors swing open, and those who have been waiting outside rush in to secure a seat near the doctors, women in one building, men in another. The day's work in the Shining Hospital has begun.

The N.E.B. has always used medical work as its main method of reaching the people. For sixteen years a dispensary was run in Nautanwa, contacting many Nepalis who either lived there or were travelling through. When the Band moved into Nepal in 1952, it was primarily for medical work. Government permission to enter the country had been given specially to 'the staff of Dr. O'Hanlon's hospital.' All knew that such permission had only been granted at the human level, because the Nepali government wanted for its needy people such medical help as was offered and it was prepared to accept Christian medical missions, so long as the Christian message could be restricted. Stringent conditions were therefore laid down which forbade open preaching, although it was agreed to allow freedom of worship on the mission compounds. Some say that if a missionary is not allowed to preach, how can he or she fulfil the Lord's commission. The N.E.B., however, felt that there were other ways of making the Gospel known and that in this land, closed for so long to Christian influence, the first years of work within its borders would best be occupied in learning the ways of the people, breaking down age-old prejudices against outsiders and trusting to Christian love and life and personal work to reach the people's hearts in a way that preaching might not do.

Most of the Band members from Britain were medically trained. These, with some Nepali colleagues, formed the small group which entered Nepal in 1952. They came to Pokhra and settling on a piece of land about a mile to the south-east of the bazaar, opened a dispensary. Patients flocked for treatment from the first, showing how valuable this medical work could be in giving intimate contacts with the people, and making friends with them. Those temporary arrangements, however, were not maintained for long and in 1953 a move was made three miles north to an old military parade ground just outside

the north end of the bazaar. A piece of this ground, smooth and grassy, with a fine uninterrupted view of the mountains, was rented, and on this the Shining Hospital began to grow.

The first buildings again were temporary, built of the usual bamboo with thatched roofs, and used for out-patients and an operating room. A simple hut for in-patients and their attendants was added later in the year, and then in 1954 it was decided to use prefabricated aluminium buildings erected on a concrete and stone foundation with a strong wire and girder frame. The materials were obtained in India and flown into Pokhra, an erecting crew from the manufacturers coming in to carry out the actual setting up of the buildings. That year, two such units arrived and were soon in use for out-patients and mid-wifery cases. It was at this time that a party of Gurung women came down from their village home high in the hills, and when asked if they could see the hospital from their own houses they replied, 'Yes—we often sit and look down at the house that shines! That is why we came down to see!'

Later, 'The Shining Hospital' became the official name, but from the first our prayer was that it would shine to the glory of God, and draw many from their dark villages to His light.

The following year, 1955, saw the arrival of three new buildings which were to serve as male and female wards and an operating theatre block. This completed the hospital as it was in 1959, with the exception of smaller stone walled sheds in which the patients' food is cooked and an isolation hut which were added later. As might be expected there were difficulties in those earlier days. Office and administrative facilities were non-existent, the matron having her office in her own bedroom, while all official business and correspondence was carried on along with the general mission affairs. A tiny laboratory was squeezed into part of the store room and an equally small private ward was housed next to the midwifery block. But the arrangements worked well and during those first years an average of 17,000 out-patients were seen each year.

Patients who come for treatment are examined in the two out-patient rooms. Dr. Watson sees women one by one in her small consulting room and then sends them down to the treatment room for medicines and dressings. She is helped in this by Priscilla, the old Nepali Christian woman, who keeps the

unruly crowds in order, sends them in to the doctor when ready and generally gives out as much Gospel teaching as 'medical' advice in the few moments she has with each one. In the treatment room Sister Hepworth, with a Nepali helper, is at work giving out medicines and putting on dressings. As well as this, however, they have to give laborious explanations of how and when each dose should be taken, of what to eat and what not to eat, and must reply to a dozen further questions which each patient asks, probably not once but several times.

The men are attended to by Dr. Turner in another larger room in which the dispensary is also incorporated. Here Prabhu Dan, the Nepali dispenser, is to be found receiving prescriptions and money, and giving out small packets of tablets and ointment as well as injections. This young man is one of Pastor David's sons and has had training for his work from several of the missionaries. He is, however, not as efficient and thorough as we would like, his mind being more often on football than on medical matters, Christian witness taking a very poor third place. He has had many solemn interviews and warnings, and over the years has been the subject of much prayer but so far with little real change in his life. Coming into contact with so many patients, he could be a source of much blessing, if his heart were wholly given to the Lord.

The Nepali hospital watchman 'chaukidar,' called Yacub, lives in a little thatched house next to the outpatient department, and is available at night to call the doctor or nurse if an emergency arises. During the day Yacub helps in dealing with the male patients and often acts as courier by taking mail and messages for us. A member of the Church committee and one of the elders, he has a responsible position, and is friendly with many young people in the bazaar. He has numerous opportunities of talking with patients and relatives, but in the last year or two he has many times been far from bright spiritually, showing little or no hunger for the things of God. His, too, is a life which the Lord could use mightily but for some reason there seems to be little blessing in these days for Yacub or for those with whom he comes into contact.

Each day's group of out-patients, during the short time they spend in hospital, meet one or more of these three Nepali Christians, Priscilla, Prabhu Dan or Yacub. For many, it is

their first glimpse of Christianity so it is clear that what they see and hear as they are treated could have a lasting influence on them. It can be understood, therefore, how much prayer is needed that these three Christians should be bright witnesses for the Lord, and also how Satan continually tries to hinder them. We remember the verse, 'If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost' (2 Cor. 4. 3), and if we consider the fact that again in 1958 over 17,000 out-patients were seen, we can understand how important to the work of God are the lives of these three Nepali servants of His.

From the out-patients, those who are more seriously ill or who need special treatment, are sent up to the wards. The men are received in the male ward by Prem Masih, our senior male nurse, who officially admits them as in-patients. Women are sent to their own ward, where Sister Raddon, with two young Christian Nepali nurses, looks after them. In the wards we meet patients from far and near, with all kinds of illnesses and injuries. Nepal is a subtropical land, its people, by reason of climate and situation, being subject to diseases of both tropical and temperate regions. The prevalent diseases are, in the main, caused or aggravated by poor living conditions; overcrowding, complete lack of sanitation, together with ignorance of basic principles of health, hygiene and preventative measures. In addition, the people have a deep-rooted almost fanatical belief in strict dieting as a therapeutic aid of great value in the treatment of disease and prevention of complications. Thus, on the appearance of certain symptoms, they will avoid supposedly incriminated articles of diet such as meat, sugar, milk and eggs. This is a recognised custom which everyone practices, no matter the duration or severity of the illness. Although in some cases this might be laudable, for most people it means loss of the very items of food which they need for maintaining strength and resistance, with the result that many come to us considerably and unnecessarily weakened. So we find that the first question our hospital patients ask us, after receiving treatment, is, 'What must I not eat?' Religious observances probably play a large part in this, especially amongst the Brahmins and the Newars, who, being strictly orthodox in their Hinduism, would rather suffer than eat a prohibited article of food. A great part of our time and practice is occupied in explaining

the folly of this custom and in persuading patients to resume a full diet.

Another problem in the wards is caste. As different castes cannot mingle or associate closely without 'defilement' of the higher caste and breaking of the strict caste rules, some of our most orthodox patients find difficulty in staying alongside others in the wards. All food has to be cooked separately for each patient, afterwards being eaten in the prescribed manner, without any 'defiling' shadow falling upon it. Following the practice adopted in many Indian hospitals we have from the beginning insisted on each patient being attended by a friend or relative of his own caste. This companion or 'sathi' cooks for and feeds his own patient and looks after him generally by night and day. In spite of this, caste quarrels sometimes arise. But on these occasions we very firmly state that in a Christian hospital such as this all are treated alike, and that those who wish to remain in the ward under our care must, for the time, forget their caste distinctions as far as possible. This usually brings peace, as the offenders see the logic of our argument!

After overcoming his dietary scruples and settling his caste feelings we are then able to proceed with the patient's treatment, after a few days of which our next problem is liable to arise. He has begun to feel better and suddenly wants to go home. He gives no consideration to the fact that the course of treatment has only recently begun or that an operation might be scheduled or that if he *does* go home his condition will only recur or deteriorate. To all our pleas, advice and even threats of dire consequence, he merely replies that either his 'sathi' cannot stay any longer or that his money is finished and he must return home for more. So off he goes. With some, this may be amusing, but in other cases it means real tragedy. If the patient is a little child with a severely burned leg, which, after long weeks of painstaking dressings, is beginning to heal nicely and show promise of a good result, and then the child is taken home before the completion of treatment, we know that with the neglect and dirt of the average Nepali home, the final result will be a crippling deformity for life. Many children taken home forcibly by harsh and callous parents for some petty or selfish reason must have died from such lack of foresight and care.

But the majority of our patients give us no trouble and are happy to stay as long as we feel necessary. Few actually thank us for helping them but from comments they make we can tell that they are grateful. Our real reward comes as we realise afresh that we are doing the Lord's work, and as we see His Hand of blessing upon all that is done for Him. We have seen that Hand outstretched to heal in many wonderful ways, we have experienced its skilful guidance as we operated, and we have sensed its touch of peace on the heart and mind when actual healing was not possible. Above all we have marvelled at its power as it has led one here and one there out of the ways of darkness into the paths of light.

Our prayer has always been that out of those who come to us day by day there would be some who, prepared by Him, would be hungry for the true God. Those who stay in the wards have an opportunity to learn of Him, as the Nepali Christians go there often to sing and talk of their Master. The nurses, too, in their intimate contacts with patients and relatives are able in quiet moments to explain the way of salvation and to tell what Christ has done for them. Booklets and simple gospel portions are given to those who show interest and a visit to the wards will often find someone reading of Jesus with real concentration. When such patients leave hospital to return to their own homes they often take these booklets with them and so, reaching home, can talk not only of the treatment which they received, but also of the Lord Jesus of whom they read and heard. Thus our Shining Hospital sends out little rays of light into the darkness far and near. How thrilling it is to realise that away in a distant valley where the people may never have heard the name of Christ, a gospel portion telling of Him is to be found in a certain house, to which a former hospital patient has returned!

The man himself, even though he may not have believed in Christ, can tell his friends and relatives the little he knows about Him. For who can tell when one with a prepared heart, one truly seeking God, will come along to read that booklet and to hear about Jesus. We can therefore follow these patients with our prayers as they set out for home, for we know that God's Word, which many of them carry with them in their packs,

'shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.'

In 1958, 537 patients stayed for varying periods in the wards and about thirty babies were born in the hospital. Each of these represents a family and a village which has thus been reached with God's word, even though we ourselves were unable to go there. The maternity cases are a special joy to us, because, as they themselves or their relatives tell us, before we came to Pokhra and before medical help was available to them, many of them died. Even now with the facilities we can offer them, fatalities occur, mainly because of delay in reaching hospital. With the inability to take quick decisions so characteristic of the East, the patient or her family thinks the cost would be too heavy, or they must send to consult a Brahmin priest, thus they deliberate for hours, sometimes days as to whether they should or should not go for treatment. Often they decide to wait yet another day to see if the patient will improve. When they eventually do come to Pokhra the poor patient may be quite exhausted or seriously ill through one complication or another. We look forward to the day when it will be possible to go round these villages teaching the people simple preventative measures and holding welfare and hygiene clinics for them. Our work hitherto has been almost entirely concerned with the treatment of disease, but the day will come when, with increase of staff and greater awareness of this need on the part of the people, we will be able to teach them how to prevent those diseases which still take such a toll of life and health in this land.

Many of the patients who come to us need operations, but here again we find that the problem is never so straightforward as in more civilised countries. First, we must explain to the patient and relatives the reason for the operation, why it must be done without delay, and why no other alternative treatment could be considered. Usually we then leave them to think it over for a day, after which time most are willing to have the operation. A few, however, refuse and go off home. Operating is done in the afternoons when outpatient work has ceased for the day and we have time in which to concentrate without the distraction of other duties. But, as in all hospitals, many emergencies are dealt with at night, when, instead of the bright

sunlight we use by day, we operate by the light of a kerosene pressure lamp, held over the patient or resting on a nearby box. When the patient has been brought in and all is in readiness we commit him and the operation into the Lord's hand together as a team seeking His help, guidance and blessing in what is to be done. Only a short time ago we learned from a new believer that her thoughts had first turned to the Lord some years ago, when she heard this prayer before her own operation.

We ourselves are always very conscious of the Lord's helping Hand on ours as we carry out these operations, many of which are far from easy, being complicated by delay in coming to us or by other factors. Perhaps, too, the condition found may be something which the surgeon has not met before, and in such cases he needs moment-by-moment guidance from the Great Physician. For instance two years ago a woman came to us, having crawled a three-day journey with one knee bent underneath her and the foot attached to her back by scars from a burn sustained as a baby seventeen years before. Both the knee and foot were grossly deformed and our first thought was that it would be hopeless to attempt anything. But looking to the Lord for guidance, we felt that we should do what we could, and so we arranged for the woman to be admitted for operation. Without experience or even text-book accounts of such a serious deformity we had to proceed step by step as the Lord led us, and at the first operation a few weeks later the thick scar which had been pulling and distorting the leg for so many years was cut away and replaced with healthy skin taken from the other leg. This allowed the knee to be straightened to a right-angle. Then followed weeks of dressings and treatment by the nurses, and a second operation to relieve some of the stiffness in the knee joint. During the exercises for the knee which were then given we realised that some of the muscles had become too short to allow full straightening, so a third operation was needed to deal with these. Our patient, by this time a great friend of us all, was then persuaded to start walking with the aid of a crutch and soon was quite mobile. She finally hobbled out of the ward, her knee weak but almost straight, and with her husband and tiny baby, began the long trek home. The couple were very poor, ignorant and low caste, but showed interest in the Gospel and we began to hope that they might believe. But in their

minds seemed to be the desire to stay on with us to find remunerative employment, and we hesitated to allow this for fear of making them dependent on us, and Christians, only to please us. So we let them go home, and although the husband has been back to see us once or twice there is no real evidence that either of them believes. But we know that our 'labour is not in vain in the Lord.'

This case is typical of many which we meet in the course of our work. They have long weeks of intensive medical treatment and hear the gospel, preached and sung, but only a few show a spiritual response. We know that one here and one there *did* believe, but the great majority remain apparently untouched. Does the reason lie with us? We constantly search our hearts to find out if this is so. Is it because God's Hand *is* shortened nowadays that it cannot save? Thank God we have evidence to the contrary. But perhaps our praying is not as it should be. Each patient really resembles a little Jericho. Are we content to pray for him once, and then pass on to something else, or are we prepared for the seven days of compassing, and for the persistence and faith which this implies?

While we rejoice that the Lord has given these many opportunities for usefulness, we are concerned about other needs which are as yet unmet. The chief of these is the problem of tuberculosis, for which we have at present no adequate solution. Patients suffering from this disease cannot, by reason of infectivity, be admitted to hospital, with the result that they have to stay in lodging houses and sheds in the bazaar for several months. Tuberculosis treatment takes well over a year to be fully effective, but although we keep medicine costs at a minimum only the richer patients can afford lodging expenses, food *and* treatment for this length of time. The poorer people therefore stay only for a few months, until their money runs out and then they are compelled to return home, usually long before the course of treatment had been completed.

For a few years now we have been feeling that the Lord would have us open a sanatorium on simple lines for such patients. It would be separate from the main hospital, but run by the hospital staff and its aim would be to provide facilities whereby patients could stay for the prolonged period necessary for successful treatment. Several possible sites have been in-

vestigated but none seemed wholly suitable until in 1958 our attention was drawn to the land immediately adjoining our hospital, but lying at a slightly lower level. After enquiring the price from the numerous owners, we felt it would be better to follow the directions of a previous government, and request the local governor for a grant of land for building a sanatorium. This was, therefore, done, and the governor was friendly and helpful, promising to do all he could. These negotiations are still going on but, although we have no official promise, we are full of faith that the Lord will give us the land in His own time. It would be large enough for two wards containing perhaps thirty beds, together with an X-ray and generator set, gardens for vegetables and, at the end a plot of land, for the doctor's house and nurse trainees' hostel.

The other need has already been mentioned—that of opening up clinics in bazaars and villages for the education of the people in the simplest ways of preventing disease, rearing more healthy children, caring for expectant mothers and looking after the sick. To be effective such a programme would have to be adopted on a fairly wide scale but only expanded very slowly, as the minds of the people unenlightened for so long, could scarcely absorb new teaching and ideas in one visit.

Perhaps enough has been written to indicate the main tasks which are now occupying our attention in the Shining Hospital. We could do much more if staff and circumstances permitted, but as in every aspect of the Christian life 'as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters . . . so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God.' He it is Who leads us into each day, gives us our duties and enables us to fulfil them to His glory and to bring forth fruit which 'should remain.'

NURSES

Having introduced the work of the Shining Hospital, we now describe certain aspects of our medical work. Miss Short, the Nursing Superintendent, writes about the nurse trainees.

Pokhra seems to be becoming quite a popular tourist centre these days. Apart from the splendour of the mountains around us there is not a great deal to see, so many of the visitors find

their way up to the Shining Hospital. It must seem strange to them to come across these aluminium buildings in such an out-of-the-way place, indeed they are one of the sights of Pokhara! Comments, too, are as varied as the visitors. Some are thrilled with everything they see and express themselves with such words as 'marvellous' and 'wonderful.' Some are less eloquent, while others find it difficult to think of suitable adjectives, although they do succeed in making us feel that perhaps, after all these years, we ought to have been able to establish a more conventional looking hospital than this one. But whoever the visitor and whatever may be the comment, it is hard to suppress a thrill of pride as one shows them round the hospital. Many of the visitors know nothing of a personal God and so of course cannot see His Hand in it all. But as we look at the buildings and equipment; as we see the wards full of patients and the nurses attending them, we know that all this is *God's* doing—and it is marvellous in our eyes.

For two or three years we had one Nepali only to help us in the medical work, and that was Prem Masih. He came with us from India in 1952 with a real desire to work in what was then only a dispensary. He had a little knowledge of English, and those of us responsible for training him had a little knowledge of Nepali—so working together was a mutual help, as far as language was concerned. His English improved tremendously and after a year or so we were able to give him his lectures in English. Due to many things, his training has been rather interrupted, but as a practical worker he is invaluable, and has become Dr. Turner's right-hand man in the male ward. Perhaps this prolonged period proved rather frustrating, or perhaps it was that the devil knew him to be the Lord's chosen one for this work and so did his best to hinder him. And maybe, too, we spoilt him in those early days when he was our only helper. But, whatever the reason, he was not one of the easiest people to train. How often we have cried to the Lord for wisdom to know just how to deal with him, and how wonderfully we have known the Lord giving, from His Hand to ours, all that we needed of grace, patience and wisdom—and discipline too. We ourselves had to learn so much too. We had to find out how completely different the Eastern mind is from the Western. Not one of us is a Sister Tutor and although we had helped to

train nurses in a practical way at home, the problems out here seemed so completely different. One cannot enforce discipline here as one would at home—from the cradle these people have never known what it is to obey. So we had to learn from sad and bitter experience something of their reaction to discipline. I remember so well doing the rounds one evening and discovering that Prem Masih had not been on duty—no temperatures had been taken, and no medicine or treatment given. What was one to do? He was not in his room and no one knew where he was. Later that evening I went again to his room and after calling several times he told me that he was in bed. I insisted that he come to the door to speak to me, and when I asked him where he had been and why his work was not done, he informed me that he had been playing football. He absolutely refused to go and do his work then, and I was at a complete loss to know what to do next. There were two other trainees then and I knew they would be watching to see what would happen. It is wonderful to know that one is not alone at such a time. We all prayed that the Lord Himself would show us what to do. It was obvious to us all that unless he apologised he should be suspended from his work, but none of us was quite prepared for his reactions when he was given this ultimatum! He came to the office next morning sullen and unresponsive. He refused to apologise, and when I told him that he need not come on duty again until he could assure us that he was fit for the responsibility, he was most rude. We had 'hurt' his mind, he said, and caused him to 'lose face,' both of which seem almost unforgivable in the East. It was more than a week before he finally came to us and asked to be allowed to go on duty again; but he *did* come, and we are so grateful that we have never had such a scene again. It did serve to remind us, however, of our utter dependence upon Him for every situation.

Miriam was our first girl trainee and started working in the Hospital in 1955. We first knew of her as a girl who was helping to build our huts, and we prayed for her because we had heard that she was interested in the Gospel. Some of us 'coveted' her to help us in the Hospital for she seemed such a clean, upright girl with a bright open countenance. Because her home was near she was always to be found on the compound with the Nepali women who taught her to read and write. We

were so pleased therefore when, after her conversion she came to us and, rather shyly, asked if she could serve the Lord in the Hospital. In those early days our main object of training was to make the nurse a real practical help, with the theory coming later. Miriam, with her bright intelligence, was quick to learn, and it was not long before she was handling a syringe as though she had been giving injections all her life. She has made a great contribution to the work in every way, for she who had so recently been brought out of such heathen darkness was radiant and fearless in her witness amongst the patients.

One of the problems that is facing us is what these nurses are going to do when they have finished their training here. There are no other hospitals in which they can work, and it might be that we are putting the temptation in their way to set up as quack doctors in some village or bazaar. With the Christians there will always be opportunities for service as we are planning to open dispensaries in the many isolated villages around. In 1956, however, we were desperately short of staff, and, thinking we would become a general training school, we decided to accept any candidates who were at all suitable. One such 'problem' who was accepted for training was a bright, round-faced smiling Hindu boy from the hills. For obvious reasons he was nicknamed 'Tubby'—a name which has remained with him so that even his father calls him by it. At the beginning of 1960 Tubby takes his final examination which will qualify him as an assistant nurse, but already news has filtered through to us of his private practice! A man who has been a patient many times was carried into the Outpatients' Department with a very painful, swollen knee. When asked why he had not come to hospital earlier he replied that Tubby had been giving him injections in the village, and had also aspirated the knee—with not the best results! One could not blame Tubby entirely; the people are 'medicine mad,' and anyone who can give medicine or an injection is very much respected. And the more that is charged for the medicine, the better the quality—or so the people think. There are many of these people around with that small amount of knowledge which is so dangerous. Recently, one such quack attempted to remove an enlarged goitre from a woman—an operation we would hesitate to do. Less than half-way through he panicked because he could not

stop the bleeding. It was not until five days later however that anxious relatives brought her to us in a very collapsed condition with artery forceps still attached to her neck and we were left to make the best of a very bad job. The man, incidentally, was jailed until it was known whether the woman would live or die. She lived, fortunately, and we afterwards learned that the man would have charged at least ten times our fee. Tubby, who is due to leave us soon, faces that kind of temptation. He is an excellent, reliable worker, and we long to see him coming to know the Lord as his Saviour, and so be able to continue working with us as a colleague, in every sense of the word.

In view of such problems we feel that we should not aim at becoming a large training school. At present we have neither the equipment nor staff to manage a full-scale training programme. With our eyes upon the needs of the villages beyond we ask the Lord to send us those whom He has chosen, so that valuable practical workers may be trained, and used to maintain a bright and shining witness in these dark places.

There is, too, the problem of accommodation. At present the girls live on the Mission compound while the Christian boys live in the top storey of Dr. Turner's house. Neither arrangement is very satisfactory and we look forward to the day when we will be able to have proper hostels for them. Even that will have its problems though, for the girls do not like the thought of communal cooking and eating. They prefer to cook for themselves and save money intended for food in order to buy more clothes. The boys, however, were never able to make ends meet and were glad to have someone to cook for them and to take care of their money. We pray for a Christian cook for the hostel as there have been several lately who for one reason or another have not proved very helpful. Quite a large sum of money was missing from the Doctor's room one day and we had cause to suspect the new cook, a young lad of about 17. When he was questioned about it he vanished and has not been seen since. The next was a Brahmin who, as a cook, was quite good. He said he believed in our God, but one would have been glad to have seen some evidence of it in his life. Things went quite smoothly with him for several months until one day the boys reported that his wife had run away from him during

the night and that he had followed in hot pursuit that morning. For a time the boys had to do their own cooking until one day we were introduced to 'Half-pint.' He is a lad of sixteen, very small for his age with a smile that would win anyone's heart. He is an orphan from Tubby's village and although he could not cook he said he would like to learn. We gave him a month's trial but he was not really very suitable. When we were approached by an elderly Brahmin who said he had cooked for Sahibs for years we were tempted to find other work for 'Half-pint' and give the Brahmin a trial. But I am afraid we will be looking for another cook before long. This one does not seem very fond of work, and cooking in these conditions is very different from cooking in some Sahib's kitchen in one of the big cities of India.

One afternoon it had been particularly hot in the theatre and we were grateful for the cup of tea afterwards. Being a member of the team that had fought hard to save the life of the little boy, I had been so conscious of the sense of unity, the team spirit, which had pervaded our little theatre during that difficult operation. Rejina had done particularly well, for it was the first time she had ever assisted the surgeons. To see her scrubbing up, donning gown and gloves, and later preparing needles and catgut under Prem's professional eye, one would have found it hard to believe that she had only been in the hospital a few months. Rejina, a round dumpling of a girl with two deep dimples in an ever-smiling face, started in the hospital in January, 1959. Previously she had helped us in the kitchen while learning to read and write, and it was during that time that she accepted the Lord as her Saviour. Although so young and new at nursing she has an air of quiet authority about her where the patients and their companions are concerned. From the beginning she has made it her personal responsibility to inspect bedding of patients about to go home, and nothing misses her eye. She loves nursing and is a joy to teach, although it is sometimes quite difficult to find answers to all her questions.

Most of the nurses work in the wards for several months before they actually start their theoretical training. To be starting lectures is a great joy to them, and something of which to be proud, for the majority of them have never been to school. They seem to find it difficult to know what to do with a pen, and

how my heart goes out to them as I watch them laboriously copying out their lectures. They put everything they have into it—hot, sticky fingers, nose and tip of tongue all coming into contact with the paper at some time or another, with the effort of concentration. With no proper lecture room we use the Women's waiting room of the Out-patients' Department. If this is occupied we have to find somewhere else, either the Matron's office or the theatre. In the waiting room the students sit on mats made from rice stalks, with benches as desks. At first this worked very well, but lately we have found it a little disconcerting to have one and another jump up during the lecture because they have been bitten by bugs in the mats. There seems to be a plague of these pests and nothing seems to have any effect on them. Recently a lecture called for much writing so we assembled ourselves in the operating theatre. Before beginning I could scarcely conceal a smile as I looked at the students, seated on anything they could find from kerosene tins to wooden boxes, none of which seemed quite to fit the student or table. Rejina, who is less than five feet tall, was trying to adjust herself to a seat much too low and a table much too high. Andreas must have seen me smiling at Rejina's predicament, for he, who had been experiencing great difficulty in getting his knees to fit his table, sprang up and offered her his seat. That is typical of Andreas—he is the perfect gentleman. He is a tall, straight, well-built boy of about twenty-four years, clean and tidy with never a hair out of place, and is always ready to come to anyone's assistance.

He and his younger brother Nathaniel joined us in 1958 and, like the rest of the trainees, had had little education, but wanted to serve the Lord in this way. At practical work they are excellent; so good in fact that one patient 'complained' that he had been bathed by them three times in one day. The male ward is always very clean and tidy. Most mornings one or other of the male nurses can be seen instructing the relatives of the patients how to sweep and clean the floor. This may seem strange, but our wards are not yet the shining, gleaming we sometimes visualise, and which can be seen in any hospital at home. The aluminium huts have stone floors—and not very even ones either. The beds, some iron and some wooden, leave much to be desired, and one can often see them up-ended

outside the wards with the nurses doing their best to get rid of the bugs. Mattresses and pillows are home-made and filled with straw. We have quite a bit of equipment in the hospital but somehow it never seems to be quite sufficient. Each patient's sathi sleeps on the floor beside the patient at night, and it means that the sathi's bedding, all the cooking utensils and firewood and often a live chicken are to be found under the bed. When the nurse, therefore, instructs the sathi on sweeping the floor he has to see that all these things are first put outside and the cleaning done properly.

The women's ward is not quite so tidy. That may be due to a number of reasons; perhaps the shortage of female nurses; or the women, who normally work very hard in their homes and fields indulge in an easy time in the hospital; or even as they would say, just laziness 'clinging' to them. Whatever the reason, the overall picture is often that of garments hanging up to dry; babies crawling and crying; women sathis idly sitting combing and 'delousing' each other's hair. And all this in addition to the usual 'clutter' kept on the floor. One night we were called up to see a patient. The floor was covered with sleeping forms wrapped in blankets, and it was with great difficulty that we picked our way from one end of the ward to the other. Dr. Watson, I am afraid, did not succeed. We heard a faint 'Oh, dear!' behind us and found Ruth herself sprawled upon the floor. She had tripped over a sleeping sathi who had not even woken up.

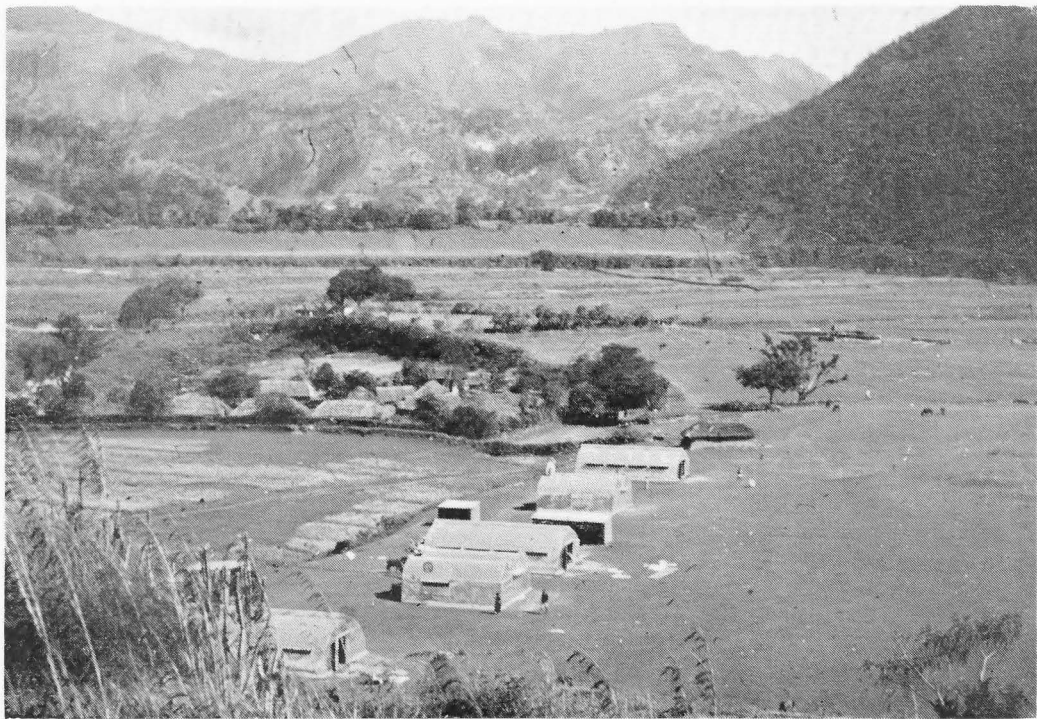
Nursing under these conditions can be very frustrating—and often is. But the Lord teaches us and shows us how best to use the material at our disposal, whether it be items of equipment or illiterate, ignorant, but by no means unintelligent, nurses. I remember so well reading Psalm 44 one day and being impressed by David's prayer in v. 11-12, 'Rid me . . . that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.' Ours is a tremendous task. Not only have we the privileges of training young people to be good nurses, but far more important, to be good servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that the Lord may rid *us* of anything that would prevent our spiritual sons and daughters becoming vigorous plants and polished corner stones.

VILLAGE MEDICAL CASES

While the account of the medical work has so far been concerned mainly with that carried on in Pokhra, the record must be completed by a description of the village calls which come to us from time to time and of the work in distant villages which these calls involve. Miss Raddon here writes about this part of the work.

Flying over the hills of Nepal one can see villages everywhere—little clusters straggling through valleys built across the tops of ridges—everywhere there are villages. Some of the houses are round in shape with thatched roofs and red mud walls; others are more solidly built of stone with slate roofs. In these villages live many thousands of sturdy, friendly, laughing Nepalis who have never heard of the Saviour. How can they be reached? The Church can send out evangelists, but as well as this the medical work offers a wonderful opportunity, for during the past seven years we have had many calls, and the Gospel has been taken to those who have never heard it before.

The majority of these village calls are to midwifery cases, where our help is sorely needed. On one occasion when we delayed to go we found later that the woman had died. There is much to be considered, however, before a decision to go can be made. The case itself is certain to be abnormal, requiring treatment that can be so much more efficiently undertaken in hospital. It also leaves behind a depleted staff to cope with the work in the hospital entrusted to them, and it will probably entail a hard strenuous walk to and from the home for those who are perhaps already overtired, and this might even result in serious physical exhaustion. It is not always possible for patients to be brought in to us during the monsoon, but even at other times so often their relatives will not make the effort, saying it is too far away and the road is too difficult. When we demur and say we cannot spare the time, then we are told it is not really very far away and the path is not too bad. Trekking through the cold weather is an exhilarating experience, whereas through the rains it can be dangerous and is generally hard going. Once, as two missionaries were on their way to a village during the wet weather they had to pass through a leech-



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infested forest after dark and found on reaching the house that one had received sixty-nine bites and the other a few less.

Such a call came to us one busy morning a few months ago. The wards were full to overflowing, and the out-patients' department a seething mass of people, with squalling babies everywhere, all wanting to receive their medicine and treatment before anyone else, and to crown it all it was pouring with rain. I was hurrying towards out-patients to give a hand when I was accosted by two rather harassed-looking men, who asked if we would come to their village which was only half-a-day's journey away, so they said. The patient had been in labour for several days and the baby was not yet born. What was the Lord's will? Were we meant to go? After further questioning we felt it was right that three of us with Yacub should accompany the men back to their village. We always take a Nepali colleague with us, not only to comply with the customs of the land, but because of the opportunities for preaching which present themselves in those out-of-the-way places, opportunities which we ourselves would not be allowed to take.

As we would have to spend a night in the village, preparations took a little longer than usual because, besides the medical equipment necessary, we would have to take bedding and food. For these treks we find packet soups and Nescafe most useful. A mug of soup and a slice of bread eaten on the road are delicious, and take a lot of beating. Everyone was out to wave us on our way, including the dog Goli who did so want to come. We set off with sticks in our hands, haversacks on our backs, wearing comfortable canvas boots which dry out quickly after wading rivers, accompanied by the men carrying the midwifery bag and bedding. The rain had stopped and it was a walk that filled one with the joy of His creation; there were beautiful orchids of all colours, sparkling rivers, still pools, wonderful views of the 'snows'; all this with the friendliness of the people made one forget the hardness of the way. The first obstacle was a bridge. To the traveller in Nepal this word conjures up various pictures in his mind. This one, however, was not one of the most terrifying kind, being composed of two bamboos thrown over the river with a small hand-rail attached. With my heart in my mouth I walked across then stood nonchalantly by as my colleagues followed suit. Their faces were a picture

as they negotiated the swaying structure, but at last we were all safely over. We continued steadily on for several hours until we reached the only stiff part of the trek, and looking up we saw the village bathed in sunlight above us.

Before starting up the side of the hill we fortified ourselves with coffee and a delicious piece of 'bomb' pudding, a name that goes back to our early days in Pokhra when we cooked without fat and everything was as heavy as it could be. Wearily we climbed the last part of the hill, but as we entered the village we were to be well rewarded for our pains. Stretching away into the distance as far as the eye could see was range upon range of hills, and the varying lights as the sun set were beautiful beyond words. The village consisted of about fifty slate-roofed stone houses cleverly built into the side of the terraced hill. The house to which we were going was soon reached and we were amused and touched to see the preparations that had been made for us. Some rickety chairs had been placed round an improvised table made from a tin trunk, on which was set a vase of some rather ancient artificial flowers, and last, but not least, a large plate of cucumber covered with flies. The problem of what to do with the cucumber was postponed as we were then ushered in to see the patient. She was lying in a stuffy room with no other light apart from the fire burning in the middle. This we managed to have removed but it was only after much searching that the relatives were able to produce a feeble oil lamp by the light of which we were to work. After examining the patient and finding all seemed well, we returned to the menace of the cucumber while waiting for some water to be boiled. Rather than offend them we began to eat a little, trusting the Lord to keep us from infection, but had hardly started when there was an excited cry from inside . . . the baby had arrived! Everyone thought we were wonderful. Why! the woman had been in labour all those days and we had come and hardly touched her and the baby was born. We tried in vain to assure them that it was nothing to do with us but to this day they are convinced it was our doing. Not all village cases are as easy as this one was. They often end up with a very ill mother and a dead baby, but this time all went smoothly and everyone was delighted.

Curry, rice and tea were served and we were soon making

our simple arrangements for bed. We rolled ourselves inside our sleeping bags after having caused much amusement blowing up the air mattresses. Soon we were listening to Yacub as he started to sing and preach to those gathered round. After a good night without bugs to bite us, as is so often the case, we woke in the morning to a breath-taking view of rain-washed hills and valleys, clearly seen from the verandah on which we had slept. Having made sure that the patient was comfortable we were soon on our way home with the joy of knowing that we had touched another village. But the burden on our hearts was uneased as we realised that there were still so many who have never had a visit from those who could tell them of the matchless and glorious son of God.

SOCIAL BRANCH.

Miss Bolt, our almoner, has been able to begin a new Social Branch this year and here she describes the work itself, how it began and what place it will occupy in the medical work in the future.

This year has seen the opening of the social work branch of the Shining Hospital. To the one who received from Him the vision for this work it has been a year of fulfilment, a year of revelation and a year of promise.

In 1953, at Radcliffe Missionary Training College, the Lord gave me a burden for the patients who, leaving hospital with the seed of the Gospel in their hearts, went back to their isolated village homes. This burden became associated with the promise of Ps. 37. 4-5, 'Delight thyself 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.' Three years later in Pokhra the desire to help these patients grew stronger, and these verses became the Lord's personal word to me, that one day He would make it possible for this work to begin. Now in 1959 has come the joy of seeing the fulfilment of this promise.

It has been a year of revelation of the skilfulness of His hands, for woven into the pattern for this work can be seen the threads of training and experience, the meaning of which was difficult

to understand at the time. There was a Hospital Almoner's training begun before the Lord called to the mission field, nine months at the Missionary School of Medicine, when He had called to the Shining Hospital; three years' housekeeping at Pokhra when He had called to Medical Social Work; and yet now, all these varying strands are making their own contribution to the design under the Hands of the wise Master Weaver.

It has also been a year of promise as the Lord has made known His purpose for this work. An Almighty Creator, God does not bring new work into being for the gratification of the one to whom the vision was given. And He does not lead along a path of His Divine making, merely that His children might look back and marvel. The Lord has said, 'I created . . . for my Glory,' and the words 'Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit,' came as a flood of spiritual light illuminating His purpose for this work; while John 11. 40 'Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God' has become the lodestar shining bright with promise over this newly opened path.

How will this social work fit into the wider sphere of medical work here? It will seek to make the same contribution as any Almoner's department at home. Illness often does not affect merely the sick person's body for the longer or shorter time that he is in hospital, but may include in its effects other members of the family, and the whole life of the patient after his discharge. In the same way, the illness of the patient may have contributory causes in the living conditions of the family as a whole, or the way of life of the patient himself. Thus the Almoner tries to see the patient as a member of a family and of a community. Her work begins with an interest in the patient's life before he reached the hospital, and does not end until he is re-established at home in as independent and useful a position as his physical state allows. The newly diagnosed Pulmonary Tuberculosis patient is not likely to stay for the tedious months of treatment if she is worrying about the family of young children she has left at home. The Almoner seeks therefore to gain the co-operation of other members of the family in order to make an arrangement which will leave the mother free for the necessary length of time. The woman whose heart is so weak that she can no longer do the heavy field work is helped to see that there

is work she can do which will make her a useful member of the family again. The household which has repeated outbreaks of dysentery is taught the elements of hygiene and cleanliness with regard to food and personal habits.

This is the usual pattern of the social work here, and it could be seen in essence in any Almoner's department at home. There are social problems here, however, which are peculiar to an undeveloped Hindu community. Take for example, the young girl with the infected eye condition, whose three-year-old daughter is the size of a few-months-old baby. She belongs to one of the highest castes in Nepal, and her husband has a field or two which he cultivates and from which he manages to earn a living. But he, along with most of the menfolk of this caste, regards his wife and child, especially a little girl, of less importance than the fields he wishes to purchase and for which he must save money. And so, instead of buying enough food for the whole family, he buys enough for himself ; and his wife and child eat if there is anything left over. If the family were wealthy all would be well, but as it is poor the wife and child are the ones who suffer. This is the kind of problem which brings one face to face with the age-long habits and way of thinking of people sitting in darkness. A little dried milk may help to alleviate the baby's immediate condition, but measures like this barely scratch the surface of these deeply rooted social evils. It seems that those in authority are themselves so bound by tradition that they cannot detach themselves sufficiently to see the injustice of these customs. We are seeking to contact the local headmen to interest them in the conditions of their people, and we hope that these contacts may help them to develop a sense of responsibility. One cannot but long and pray for the day when the women and children of these high castes will have equal rights with the men so that in circumstances like this it may be possible to insist upon the husband looking after his family properly.

There is, too, a complete lack of social services for the blind and deaf. On the other hand dwarfs, or the mothers of triplets, receive help from the Government. One asks the reason for this, and receives the reply that dwarfs are ordinary people who cannot do a full day's work, and that a poor mother cannot afford to feed three extra mouths all at once, and so it is right

that they should receive help: but as the blind and deaf are receiving punishment for sin, it would certainly not be right to help such 'wicked' people. We are, however, making enquiries about the possibilities of teaching a little deaf and dumb girl in the bazaar whose family is friendly and co-operative; and there is a young woman in the ward who would probably benefit from a course of training in a Blind school in India. We hope in these ways to be able to break down the suspicion by which these people are surrounded. Nepal is moving towards a liberal form of government and social organisation, and we pray that the Lord's children may have the opportunity to show forth the love of Christ by making known to local officials the needs of those whom He was ever willing to help while He was on earth.

This work often involves much visiting. In addition to these special cases, there are those patients to be followed up who showed an interest in spiritual things while they were in hospital. All these visits are made in company with a Nepali Christian who takes the opportunities of speaking which the Lord gives. We have already been encouraged by many such openings and we are praying that the seed may be watered so that according to his promise, the work may be fruitful to His glory.

In this year when the Lord has opened up the way for follow-up visits to former patients, it is interesting to find that those who have come to the Lord in the bazaar belong to families which have been contacted through the medical work, and have been visited by Christians in their own homes. There are now seven people in the bazaar who have made a stand for the Lord, and they belong to two families. The first is that of a wealthy cloth merchant, where the four young half-sisters, and one mother have come to the Lord. The four girls have been befriended and visited by our Nepali Christians and by missionaries who have taught them handwork and some English.

In the Spring of 1955 Taili, one of the sisters, was dangerously ill with a rare form of tuberculosis. For some time she was visited at home regularly by the medical staff, and it was through seeing God's healing Hand upon her that the family became interested in spiritual things. Several months after their conversion two of them were praying in the garden when they felt a touch on their shoulders. Startled, they looked round

to see who it was, but there was no one there. Again they prayed whereupon they saw a light and heard a voice saying, 'Don't be afraid. I will make a way out for you.' They knew it was the Lord and that one day He would make it possible for them to confess Him openly. They are still waiting for Him to fulfil this promise, for although they have refused to worship the idols in their home, and are known by their families and neighbours as Christians, their antagonistic older brothers will not allow them to attend meetings with the Lord's people, much less take the step of baptism. It is hard for us to imagine what this stand must mean for these girls. They are not allowed to eat with the rest of the family; they are still open to the taunts of their brothers and the other people in the bazaar, and yet they have stood firm and uncompromisingly. Their steadfast faith is miraculous evidence of the keeping power of the Lord, and we rejoice with them that now the elder mother has taken a stand also. The other mother is suffering from an incurable cancer, and we are praying that she, too, may come to the Lord before it is too late. This is an influential family in the bazaar and the open confession of some of the senior members could well be the encouragement that others who are as yet secret believers need. Among these are Esther and her sister who live opposite the girls. We are sure they believe in their hearts, but fear of grieving their families has so far held them back from making an open witness.

In the other family are John and Buddhimaya (Lover of Wisdom), who have a small shop not far from the hospital, and the Nepali Christians on their way to and from the bazaar have often stopped there to chat and 'gossip.' We first met Buddhimaya when she came to the hospital five or six years ago. Her life was saved on that occasion, and since then she often comes for medicine for herself or one of her four children. She had heard the Gospel, but although she was always friendly and grateful, no work seemed to have been done for eternity. But the seed had been sown, and it was watered by the prayers and friendly visits of the Nepali Christians. The Lord was watching over it, however, until His time came for it to burst into new life in Christ. The missionaries knew nothing of the work of the Holy Spirit in this life until one morning this year, into our daily devotional meeting walked a new, radiant

Christian. There could be no doubt about it! Her face shone with the joy of her salvation, and her eagerness to tell us of her new-found faith. Since then both Buddhimaya and her husband have shown a steady desire to go on with the Lord, and their witness in the bazaar has been fearless.

How enraged the Devil must be as he sees the pure light of Christ shining in the midst of these heathen homes. In the lives of John and Buddhimaya there has been a change from darkness to light, but countless others yet remain in ignorance and in tragic social conditions. It is amongst these that the new social work in Pokhra has begun.

REACHING OUT

Since the N.E.B. entered Nepal in 1952 the work here has of necessity been centred in Pokhra. Shortage of staff and the peculiar difficulties of life in this country confined us to the one area within which the Church, the hospital and leprosarium were all begun and grew up over the years. But whenever personnel and circumstances permitted small teams of workers responded to medical calls to villages far and near, and through these journeys we began to learn more about conditions outside our valley. Many of us became burdened by the needs of the untouched multitudes all around. We had each come to Pokhra with a definite and unmistakable call to bring the blessings of both the Gospel and medical help to the Nepali people. 'Were we doing all we could to fulfil this purpose?' We began to ask ourselves. As the medical work developed in Pokhra and as the Church grew stronger it became our prayer that the Lord would open up new areas to which men and women could go for Him.

Many times, from patients coming into Pokhra, or from travellers or members of expeditions, we heard of unrelieved sufferings of villagers in distant parts. Too far away even to be carried into hospital, they remained without hope of help until some degree of healing ensued or more often death brought relief. In this area only two or three dispensaries of the simplest kind are found. From two days' journey west of Pokhra to the Nepal border, to the north as far as Tibet, and several days'

journey to the south and east no medical help whatever can be found beyond simple village remedies which rarely cure and often merely prolong the suffering.

We knew, too, how many women in the furthest villages suffer and die in childbirth. The Nepali race is small in stature and reaches maturity early. The difficulty with which these small women have their babies can readily be imagined, as can the frequency with which complications occur. Strict religious rites govern their lives, actions and diet at these times, while those who touch or help them become 'unclean.' So often the men of the household have complete authority in every matter, especially in deciding whether or not to send for medical help.

'Another wife can easily be found,' they say, 'so why trouble unduly?' It was to combat this helpless suffering and bring light to these dark minds, that we were burdened to pray for new openings. We felt that the Lord would have us lift up our eyes afresh and look on the fields, and seek His will to know what steps could be taken to meet these tremendous needs.

After much thought and prayer, and with a definite sense of the Lord constraining us, a plan was drawn up in 1958, whereby the medical work could be extended both in Pokhra and out into the village areas around. We felt the urgency of the situation and realised that the time had come to begin to pray and prepare to 'go' and possess the land.

Consideration was given first to the methods whereby new dispensaries could be opened up, and it seemed that the best way would be to locate these at distances of two or three days' journey from Pokhra. The Shining Hospital is conveniently situated to reach a very wide area, and people living even a full day away can come to us without undue difficulty. But those further away find it hard to come when ill. Carriers to bring them in are often unwilling to travel far, or demand high payment which may be beyond the means of the poorer villager. Then, too, the patient's family may be a small one, and the absence of wife or husband on a long trip may mean that no one is left at home to look after fields or cattle or small children. Pokhra, moreover, is low lying (3,000 feet above sea level) compared with most of the hill villages, so tribal people are afraid to come down into the heat, where diseases lurk. All

these considerations seemed to indicate the two or three day distance as the ideal, in order to help the largest number of people for whom nothing was being done, and yet remain within reach of Pokhra. We would seek the Lord's guidance as to actual sites, for we know that He who gives the pattern, and leads in the way, will always show the places of His appointing for the carrying out of the work.

We would, where possible, aim at going to areas where the population would be most numerous and disease most prevalent. We envisaged a series of dispensaries like points on the circumference of a circle with Pokhra as the centre. Pokhra would be the headquarters and the base for the workers, and the supply of materials, equipment and drugs, with the Shining Hospital acting as receiving and consulting centre for medical and surgical cases. Each dispensary would be staffed by two missionaries, a doctor and his wife, or two nurses, assisted by two Nepal colleagues. These workers would be able to return to Pokhra every few months for needed rest and a relief team would, we hoped, be available for these occasions and for emergencies. The medical staff would be equipped to deal with most types of illness and also the leprosy in the district. Where there appeared a definite need any dispensary could be enlarged later to a hospital.

Our plan had as its basic concept the Nepali workers for each new centre being called out by the Lord for this task. Each Nepali couple would be sent out by the church, to be regarded as its own evangelists. In their hands would lie, at least with present government restrictions, the responsibility of sowing the Good Seed and of leading new groups of Christians. We felt, therefore, that from the outset we should make it a matter of definite prayer that the Lord Himself would choose out and burden Nepali Christians for this kind of work, so that we would not need to ask or invite them. They would then be missionaries sent out by the indigenous church to their own people, and on this basis we felt that God's blessing would be experienced to the full. These workers would be trained to be useful to the doctor and nurses in the medical side of each dispensary, and our nurses' training programme in the Shining Hospital would include their needs also.

As the first stage plan we felt that a series of five dispensaries

arranged strategically around Pokhra would be needed in order to meet the spiritual and medical needs of the districts concerned. We already had one or two actual sites in mind, but since the inception of this plan we have been clearly led to revise at least one of our ideas. For example our first thought concerning an opening at Baglung, later to be described, was that a dispensary would be suitable, but it afterwards became clear that the people of the town would only be content with a hospital. We do indeed look to the Lord for every aspect of the working out of this extension programme, for He who is perfect in knowledge never makes a mistake, nor need we if we only obey Him implicitly as He leads us on. In addition to the five dispensaries we decided it was essential to strengthen and build up the work at Pokhra to a limited extent, and also to develop our supply base at Nautanwa, on the Indian side of the border—the rail-head town from which our major supplies and drugs are delivered. We reckoned that for the dispensaries and the strengthening of our present centres a total of forty-six new workers would be needed, both European and Nepali. This need was therefore committed to the Lord. At that time we had no promised support nor had any new candidates arrived on the Field for over three years, but we knew from our own experience that if this was His work then He would supply all that was needed. So we began to pray afresh and we went on in faith. As if to set His seal on this work, the Lord led four new workers from overseas to apply to us within a few months. These four have since been accepted. Thus the Lord works.

The first step in implementing this programme was to survey each of the areas concerned during the cold weather months, when conditions were more favourable for trekking. The surveys were to give us an idea as to population figures, the types and prevalence of disease to be met in the various areas, and the willingness of local officials and others to have us. Prospective sites would be examined as to suitability for building, nearness to water supplies, and other factors, while the roads to and from Pokhra would need examination, as along these would have to come all materials and supplies.

A beginning was therefore made in February, 1959, when, after obtaining permission from the governor of the Pokhra district, Dr. O'Hanlon and Miss Raddon, with three Nepali

Christians to carry loads set out for Baglung. Miss Raddon here gives an account of the journey.

BAGLUNG

The journey from Pokhra to Baglung can be done by a swift runner in one day, but it actually takes us two to three days. The main road is rough and stony and at times is only a path winding up the side of a steep hill. As one walks it is necessary to ask all along the way if one is on the right road, as the little tracks all look so inviting—especially those leading down the hill!

We walked fairly steadily on that journey to Baglung but we dawdled when sudden enchantment held us—a rushing stream, a beautiful butterfly, a sudden glimpse of shimmering peaks brought into indescribable beauty by the rays of the setting sun; or a fat laughing Nepali baby lying gurgling and chuckling. Shadow and sunlight with so much beauty continually contrasted with the sinful ways of man. There was so much crystal clearness in all the scenery and yet such dirt and poverty in the villages. Our hearts were burdened as we walked past these windowless, airless huts, in which several people slept in one room, and existed in unsanitary conditions on a very poor diet. Gross darkness seemed to prevail everywhere and our hearts were more and more burdened as we walked. There were several calls to sick people on the road, but in many of the villages there was no illness, and one realised that in these places it must be the survival of the fittest.

Wearily we descended the last long hillside, hoping that we were nearing Baglung which, from the map, seemed possible. We had left the three Nepalis following while we pressed on in the hope that we would reach there that day, but we could see no sign of a big town anywhere. We approached a small village and in the first tiny shack sat a woman selling a few things such as matches, cigarettes and soap. She positively beamed at us as if we were old friends, but we had never seen her before. 'Oh,' she said, 'you've come!' as though she had been expecting us all her life. We sat down rather gingerly on the bench provided and asked how much further to go.

'Oh,' she said airily, 'very near. Only two minutes.' With high hopes and a new buoyancy in our step we set off, but two hours later the enthusiasm had somewhat abated as we still saw no sign of anything that looked like Baglung. We trudged through sand by the river for a long time, often looking back to see if the men were in sight, but in vain. We were so tired after a long scramble over rocks and a rather dangerous landslide that when we saw a house come into view we decided that we would stay there for the night. Reaching the village, however, we found the people were not very friendly and as there seemed an evil atmosphere about the place we went on a little further. Coming round a bend of the trail, we suddenly saw a fine suspension bridge, the other side of which towering cliffs seemed to rise straight out of the ground. As we watched we could see the tiny figures of men and women toiling up and down. This was obviously the road to Baglung, and as we stood there wondering whether we would tackle it or not, some people told us that at the top of this hill was the plateau on which the town was situated. It is a strategically important place through which pass main roads north and south, and east and west. Communications with the staff living out there will be difficult in the monsoon. There has been talk of an airstrip opening there and as God so wonderfully opened the air service for us here in Pokhra He can surely do it again, if that is His plan.

As we stood looking at the formidable cliffs I could not help thinking that this was a picture of Satan's tactics, these towering heights forbidding us to enter the place where he holds sway. However, as we prayed on the verandah of some friendly Brahmin's house where we were planning to spend the night, we were all conscious of the greatness of our God and of His limitless power.

The next day the crowing of the cock woke us to a dull grey morning, but that did not dampen our enthusiasm as we drank our tea and packed our things before assaulting this stronghold of Satan. Soon the men were ready with their baskets on their backs and we were off on the last climb of the journey, having bidden farewell to our landlady. All night we had shared the verandah with her ducks, and now, across the river, we could

see them in a pond standing on their heads, looking for worms. Just as we started the climb we were surprised by a wild looking man who begged for money, and then to our horror, we saw several caves rudely fixed up with bamboo matting, where people were obviously living. Looking at the man more closely we realised that he was suffering from leprosy and then the awful truth dawned on us that, because of this disease, the people had been turned out of their homes, and were living in these caves without treatment and without food, except that which they begged from passers by. The places in which they were living were fit only for animals, but there was nothing we could do, and giving all that we could we passed on. It was with heavy hearts that we started our climb again as we realised that even now, in this twentieth century, there was such unrelieved suffering. I had a momentary glimpse of all the comforts of the homeland and thought of many who would not let their dogs live in such conditions. But the King's business was calling and with a quick prayer for those poor people we went on our way. Halfway up the steep climb to the plateau we turned in to a quiet spot, and Lucius led us in prayer that God would take us in triumphantly, and establish His Church.

Suddenly we were on the top. The rain by this time was falling in a steady drizzle, and through the mist we could see the faint outline of the town straggling out over most of the large plateau. The whole area looked dreary and dismal as we walked towards the somewhat tumble-down house which, we were told, was the Governor's; *but* the Living God was leading us on, and in our hearts was the wonderful certainty of His Presence with us. The house had a large room downstairs which seemed to be the reception room as it had two dirty chairs and a rickety table placed in the centre. The guard, looking as though he had climbed out of bed, greeted us warily, as if he had never seen such specimens before, and I guess he never had! We asked if we could see the Governor and, after inviting us to sit down, he went upstairs. We took our seats, I rather gingerly, as the chair seemed too frail to receive my rotund form, but all was well. We thankfully sat in silence, each with her own thoughts on the wonderful leading of the Lord and wondering what kind of a reception we were going to have from the

Governor. A small group of curious children and adults gathered round. All was quiet except for the patter of rain on the tin roof. We heard steps slowly descending the stairs, and then towards us came a portly man dressed in a navy-blue overcoat, the buttons and belt of which were strained to the uttermost. Sweet, milky, lukewarm tea was served, and the letter that Dr. O'Hanlon had from the Governor of Pokhara was produced. There was a good deal of coughing and spitting and humming and hawing and we were beginning to despair of ever getting anywhere when a small Nepali man wearing a somewhat faded overcoat and woollen balaclava came into the room. Friendly, with a kind gentle face, and having an air of authority about him he took us under his wing, and at once things began to happen. Would the school be a suitable place in which to stay, we were asked. We had only to say what we wanted in the way of food and it would be provided, he said, but did not add that a large bill would also be sent. All of us, including the children, went to inspect the accommodation, but the Governor presumably returned to his bed for we saw him no more that day. The school was ideal, with a private room in which we could sleep, a room for the men to cook in, and a suitable room for the dispensary. This was easily partitioned off to give the doctor a little privacy for examining her patients. The people were friendly and although it was election time they did put themselves out to help us, with the exception of one man who sent us a huge chicken. It was already plucked and hanging in naked majesty over the fire when an exorbitant bill arrived. We unpacked, settled in and, after lunch, started on the real business of the day.

In our planning we had envisaged a dispensary in Baglung, but after seeing the place we realised that nothing less than a hospital would suit the people. The main object of the visit therefore was to find out whether the people wanted a hospital there and if so to look for a suitable piece of land; also to procure a letter from them requesting the Government's sanction for the project. After seeing a number of patients suffering from all kinds of diseases, we met our friend of the morning. He is a wealthy, influential man in the bazaar, and he took us out to see if we could find a possible site. We walked over the plateau in various directions and saw several pieces of land,

but none really 'clicked' until the last piece we were shown. It was a large enclosed field on the main road fairly near the water supply, and used for crops. At present we would have to buy it from the owners, but we are praying that as the people want the hospital so badly, they themselves will be willing to buy the land and give it to us. Tired as we were at the end of that day we were conscious that the Lord was leading us in a real and unmistakable way. I, personally, do not think that I have ever had such a definite consciousness of the Lord's actual presence with me.

The next morning, having slept fairly well, we were awake early, and after a time alone with Him we had some Bible study with the Nepalis. Soon the patients started to arrive and Lucius came to help us in the dispensary while Dhan Raj and Philip coped with the cooking of the meal. We were called to a patient, and this gave us the opportunity to see something of the bazaar itself. With its narrow streets and many cloth shops there is nothing remarkable about this important town in Nepal. A few vegetables are sold but were in poor supply. However, we were able to buy some good lemons which provided hot drinks for several nights to come. This first visit was rather spectacular. There was a young man in the house with a deep abscess which someone had tried to incise without success, merely causing great pain. With our anaesthetic we were able to open the abscess painlessly and a great deal of pus was released. It was all very dramatic and the people were duly impressed. The young man, also, was considerably relieved.

When we returned to the school we found an anxious-looking man waiting for us. Little did we realise that through this man we were to see the gracious seal of God upon our journeyings. He was of the Magar caste and for obvious reasons we called him Mr. Polite. His village was two hours' walk away and his wife had had a baby three days before, but the afterbirth was still retained. Could we go? The thought of the two hours rough walking was not a pleasant one and we decided that he must bring her to us. That afternoon, just as we were settling to have a rest, Mr. Polite arrived back more worried than ever and said that it was impossible to bring her in. We knew that

it meant death for the woman if we did not go, so taking Lucius with us, off we went. The beauty of that walk will not soon be forgotten. We walked along the top of a high cliff with the greeny-white ribbon of the river far below, crossed here and there by well-made suspension bridges. Suddenly, however, we left the path, and turning off at a tangent we descended into the gorge, the steep, rocky, rough path, threatening to send us plunging over at any moment. It was here that Mr. Polite earned his name as he was so solicitous for our safety, and kept imploring us to be careful, and to watch our feet and not to look over the edge as we walked. Reaching the bottom we found a rushing, tumbling river such as one finds in the Highlands of Scotland, and then the track started steeply up the other side. As we climbed we realised how impossible it would have been to bring Mrs. Polite to us; the road was far too steep and dangerous. At last the top was reached and after a walk over the rice fields for a mile or so we found ourselves at the foot of the village. Arriving at the house we were ushered into a dark room where the patient could be dimly seen on the floor. Having given the necessary treatment we sat down on the verandah outside while the inevitable tea was being made. A crowd of about fifty people, many of whom had probably never seen white women before, soon gathered and stood around talking and laughing. The children, the same the world over, were showing off and trying to make us laugh. Then it happened. An elderly man came up to Lucius and asked him outright if he was a Christian. We learned that he had heard the gospel many years before while in the army, and was hungry to hear more. Lucius, a born evangelist, was thrilled and besides being able to talk to the man, produced a gospel from his pocket and left it in the man's hand. He at once opened it and began to read eagerly. The hills around Baglung are covered with villages, but God lead us to just that one in which was living a man whose heart had been prepared by His Holy Spirit. So we believe He will lead us in the future to those villages where there are men and women who have been prepared by prayer and the working of the Holy Spirit to receive Him and His salvation. Tired, but triumphant, we returned to Baglung and after a time of thanksgiving we celebrated, by eating the famous, if rather tough chicken.

On our last morning we again visited our influential friend in the bazaar to see if we could get from him the letter to the Government, and were delighted when he produced a scroll over a yard long with the signatures of fifty-three leading citizens who were anxious that we should open a hospital there. It was amusing to see several thumb prints of those who were unable to write their names. This was our crowning triumph and we left the town in lovely sunshine with Dhaulagiri towering over the end of the valley, and a sense of joy and satisfaction in our hearts. This was pioneering for Christ's sake, and privations, tiredness and stiff joints are forgotten at such times in the overwhelming joy of the privilege of serving Him Who gave up everything to come to save us.

We decided to go further south on our way back to Pokhra, and as we approached Philip's village, where we planned to stay a few days, the countryside assumed a much steeper and more rugged aspect. It was interesting to have the altimeter with us to enable us to measure the thousands of feet we climbed and dropped in those few days. Words are inadequate to describe the breath-taking grandeur of the countryside that unfolded before us as we walked. The villages were precariously perched on the sides of the terraced hills, the fields far below looking like cleverly made patchwork quilts. Ravines, little knolls and jutting ridges, together with deep gorges and rushing rivers, went to make up the scenery we saw that day.

Philip's village was perched high on the side of the ridge, with a piercing wind blowing straight into the house, and very little shelter. We spent three nights there staying with Philip's uncle, and the evenings were thrilling as the people gathered to hear the Gospel. These meetings went on for two or three hours, Philip, Lucius and Dhan Raj, taking it in turns to preach. Sometimes as many as sixty gathered to listen, and we two missionaries would sit in the background sometimes dozing as the meeting went on and on. Dr. O'Hanlon had bowed her head in prayer at one stage, and an old lady who was sitting nearly in her lap leaned over and said sympathetically, 'Is sleep coming?' Oh! these lovable people, how one's heart goes out to them in all their need. Watching those intent faces in the flickering light of the oil lamp one saw a hungry look on

some, and indifference on others, while they listened to the earnest words of our brothers speaking of Christ. This was a hard village and there seemed no response to the message faithfully preached. The visit over we were soon on our way back to Pokhra, thankful for all the opportunity that had been given, but again conscious of the real and desperate spiritual need of the people around us.

This first party had therefore surveyed Baglung and the road to it from Pokhra. North of Baglung was another area to which our thoughts had been led. Its main centre was a village called Sika (Seeking Village) lying at the foot of the Himalayan giants Annapurna and Dhaulagiri. A district of high hills, with rough paths as the only roads, it was quite untouched by the Gospel (we thought) and completely out of reach of any medical help. In the winter of 1958 we had received from Sika an invitation.

Chandra Bahadur (Mr. Moon), a fine tall farmer of the Magar tribe, had come to the Shining Hospital in December, 1958, bringing his ill wife over the difficult three-day journey for desperately needed treatment. But she was beyond the possibility of cure and died after a few days. While with us Chandra told us an amazing thing. Some years before, two soldiers had come to his village and had preached the Gospel of Christ. Who they were or what happened to them he could not tell us, but those two had sown the living seed in that remote place. Chandra had been struck by the message and had continued to remember it and to think about it ever since. So he was very glad and eager to learn more while staying for a short while in Pokhra. Before he finally left for home he asked that someone might go out to his village to teach him more, and also to survey the village and district to see if it might be possible to open a dispensary there, so that other sick people might receive medical treatment before their condition became too serious.

For some months this man and his village remained as a burden on our hearts. We longed to go out and take Chandra

the help he had pleaded for, but we were short of staff and the busy medical work in Pokhra absorbed all our time and energies. Dr. O'Hanlon's party thought at first that they might try to return from Baglung northwards and come round by Sika, but this proved impossible. A second tour was therefore planned after their return. The Hindu festival of Holi and our own Easter celebrations made it necessary to postpone the trip for some weeks, but finally on 30th March, 1959, Dr. Turner, with Yacub, and 'Lazarus' as carrier, set off for Sika. 'Lazarus' is a Brahmin, employed then as a water carrier, who seemed at first interested in Christianity, and we trusted that the trip would prove an opportunity for him to learn more. Dr. Turner gives the following description of the tour:—

Yacub and I, with 'Lazarus' to carry the main load, set off at 8 a.m., after a prayerful send-off by the others. The morning had begun with rain and cloud obscuring the hills, and while packing I had wondered if the weather would really let us leave that day or whether the departure would have to be postponed yet again. But the sky cleared a bit and off we went. Each of us had a good load, and I soon found that I had overestimated my carrying capacity. The other two, being used to loads, went along at a great pace, but later I was able to readjust things, to *my* satisfaction at least. Our road lay north-west out of the Pokhra valley called 'Suikhet,' meaning 'the needle valley,' owing to its length and narrowness. Here we met up with a fellow-traveller also carrying a load, and Yacub was soon in conversation with him, leading the talk to that which the man needed most in life—the salvation and blessing of God. Halfway along the valley we stopped to rest at a teashop, and I changed into lighter clothes.

Meanwhile Yacub had hopped up on to a pile of stones to explain a simple salvation booklet to a number of people, including our companion of the road. Suddenly an awful thought struck me. I had a good quantity of medicines with me, together with injections, syringes and other articles, but had I brought any needles for the syringes? Feverishly I searched among the medical items and at last found two small needles in a light first-aid set—not the ones I had planned to use, but adequate for my work, and enough to save the trip

from being a failure medically. I went on, lighter in heart, and with a lesson learned for the next trip. Leaving our 'needle valley' at its head we struck off to the left up a steep hillside and, after a hot, strenuous climb, reached the village at the top where we cooked our lunch.

Refreshed, we went on, still climbing, to pass over a kind of watershed ridge, which we reached in the late afternoon in heavy rain. A nearby house afforded shelter. It was desperately poor, with the family continually quarrelling amongst themselves as they prepared their evening meal. A little baby was crawling about neglected and unobserved, until it finally fell on to the fire in the centre of the room. Fortunately, it was snatched up quickly before any harm resulted, but I understood then how many of the serious burns we have had to deal with in hospital are caused. The rain eased off as we descended to our first night stop, and passing an encampment of north-bound Tibetans on the way, we reached a village called Lumle. Here we found 'comfortable' quarters in a 'batthi'—a wayside teashop which puts up travellers for the night. We shared the room with several children, two goats, a few chickens, and two baby rabbits, but in spite of that slept fairly well.

During the night it grew cold and a strong wind blew in from the gorge below us, straight through the flimsy bamboo door. Thunder began to echo among the surrounding hills and by morning rain had come with a threat of a stormy day ahead. Leaving Lumle we went down a gentle slope to a bend in the path and there spread before us was a tremendous panorama of high hills, frowning darkly as the grey-black clouds lay heavily on their summits. 1,500 feet below us the Modi river rushed swiftly past on its descent from the Fish-Tail mountain, and after sheltering from the rain awhile we climbed down to the river. As we breakfasted by the riverside the sun came out, enabling us to continue the rest of the day without further delay.

Our path then lay up a side valley following the course of another river, and all day long we climbed slowly up, first on one bank and then crossing over to the other. Several halts were made to give out medicines and do simple treatments as we went through roadside villages. We welcomed these opportunities, not only for the rest and easing of our loads which they allowed, but also because at each stop we could speak

to the people and learn more about the road and the district, and the kind of diseases met locally. The narrow track, in places almost non-existent, led up along steep hillsides, across landslides and up through woods until it crossed a very shaky bamboo bridge over a narrow river gorge and left us in high spirits at the village of Ulleri, which was spread out on the hillside at an elevation of 6,000 feet. Another 'batthi' gave us facilities for cooking and also 'shelter' for the night, but the cold and rain coming through the leaky roof and well-ventilated walls made it necessary for us to wear all our warm clothes, even though we slept round the dying fire in the middle of the floor. We were rejoicing, however, because Yacub, sitting at the fire after supper, had been able to explain and sing the Gospel to several fellow-travellers, as well as to the 'batthi' owners, and one at least had appeared deeply interested. It happened that he was a landowner from Sika itself, and was able to tell us more about the place.

On the third day we were due to reach Sika so an early start on a bright, crisp and invigorating morning found us climbing the hill above Ulleri, heading north-west again. We entered a forest region—dense trees and bushes for over three hours—the lower parts being damp and mossy underfoot, but higher up showing lovely rhododendron trees of all shades of red, pink and crimson, which caught and refreshed the eye. In the woods we passed a Tibetan donkey train, an old man urging on the reluctant beasts in front, while a tiny boy, hardly able to walk, toddled manfully along, bringing up the rear. Then a clearing among the trees revealed a few houses, giving us a chance to cook a meal, and thereafter we climbed to the top of the pass at 8,500 feet, and began a long slow descent down the other side, marvelling at the new vistas opening up with each bend in the path. And so we came to Sika that afternoon.

It lies amidst high hills, a village of scattered houses and farmsteads perched 2,000 feet above the Gharkhola river. The opposite hill is very steep, with an almost verical wall facing Sika, and after, a few minor summits seem to merge into the snow line of a subsidiary of Annapurna. The view was breathtaking. To the west Dhaulagiri shone out, massive and white against the blue sky. Mountain after mountain carried the gaze entranced over the entire range, and it was

difficult to tear one's eyes away and bring one's mind back to the immediate task on hand.

Straight away we found a shopkeeper who had considerable influence in the village, and, after explaining our reason for coming, we were soon installed in a disused single-roomed building which had originally been erected as a shop. Here we spent over two days, seeing patients, finding out all we could about the people, the village and the district, and assessing as fully as we could its suitability for a dispensary.

The people were most friendly to us and eager that we should go to live and work among them. They offered us a piece of land free of charge and promised help of all kinds. Apart from nearby hot springs, which are reputedly 'health-giving,' they have no medical help whatsoever, and as the road to Pokhra is long and difficult, few sick people attempt the journey. We realised that a dispensary in Sika would provide facilities for people from a wide area. It was possible to count at least twenty-five villages on neighbouring hillsides, and we learned that many others lie further off. A day's journey to the north brings the traveller to an entirely new area called Thakola, the seat of another race of Nepalis, the Thakalis, who are mostly Buddhists and, being traders, extend their contacts and influence to the Tibetan border. The main path to Thakola runs through Sika, and we found that all the Tibetans who travel south each year to trade in Pokhra and southern Nepal use this route. Moreover, for centuries Nepalis from many areas have been going north laden with rice to exchange in Thakola for Tibetan salt, which they take back to their villages, and their path also brings them through Sika. Even we, with our limited understanding of the present and the future, could see how a dispensary located in such a place, with its varied contacts, could be used of the Lord, both medically and spiritually, to bring the Light into a dark corner of the earth.

We were not able to find Chandra until our second day, as he was fully occupied during the day-time driving his cattle up to the high hillsides for grazing, and returning with them at dusk. Then, in the evening, he would have to look after his children who had been in the hands of a neighbour all day. But that night he came with a friend, to our little room, and after a cup of tea together, Yaçub began to tell them the Christian

message. They listened attentively, Chandra asking questions from time to time, and it was evident that the man had a genuine but simple faith in Jesus but no real knowledge of Him or of the Christian way. We sang hymns which attractively illustrated the teaching, and during one hymn the village schoolmaster slipped in and sat down to listen. This man had been to us several times for medicine for his boys. An ex-army pensioner, like many of the fine men in the village, he drilled his pupils with military discipline and seemed keen for their welfare. I had thought that there was a real wistfulness in his face, and was glad when he came in that night and sat beside Chandra. Yacub explained it all once again to the schoolmaster, and I remember the fourth—the landowner who had listened so well to the message back in Ulleri. Had the Lord chosen these four as the nucleus of His church in this place? I asked Him to put His hand on them all, to lead them into believing faith and then keep them, for they would be many months without further teaching. Before they left that night Yacub gave to each of them a few booklets and, to Chandra, a copy of the four gospels.

There was something about Sika which drew one. Naturally attractive in its beautiful surrounding, clear mountain air, and helpful, kindly people, it seemed to call forth prayer in a way which made me feel that God had a plan and purpose for this village. One morning, after seeing several sick people, I had gone out for a wash in a nearby spring, and then had made my way up the hill behind our little house. Sitting there in the warm sunshine, I could see many of the houses of Sika and the surrounding villages spread out below. Prayer for the whole village and district came easily and I committed to Him the work, the future here, the four who had heard the Gospel—all the possibilities of a growing church, reaching out even further into the surrounding hills, with its message of light and healing.

Next morning we had to leave, as we were due back in Pokhra, and had yet to complete our survey of the district. Chandra came early to say farewell, bringing a gift of some food for the road. He was much moved as he shook hands and asked us to pray for him, and to come again to his village as soon as we could. So we left Sika reluctantly, but full of praise to God

who had led us there, and assured us that something had been begun which would go on to bring forth fruit to life eternal.

The last stage of our trip was to survey the road between Sika and Baglung and thus link up with the previous survey. This took us a day-and-a-half, travelling along the rough banks of the great Kali river which runs southwards from near Tibet. Along here pass countless pilgrims on their way to the shrine of Muktinath in the far north, seeking salvation from the 'sacred idols' there, on the ground of the merit of their long pilgrimage. We passed scores of them—old people labouring along, stumbling over rocks and up steep hillsides—holy men covered in ashes—women wearily leaning on their sticks to rest their loads—and many others. They seemed to represent Nepal itself, in its quest for God; so deeply religious and yet on a hard and difficult road which leads only to disillusionment and despair. It was hard to pass them by, knowing that they were on such a road, but what could we do? Thus we came to Baglung, and after two further days, to Pokhra.

At the time of writing we have been unable to return to Baglung or Sika. Formal requests from the two communities for our help have been sent on to the Government and we have officially applied for permission to go there. Only recently a reply was received, stating that the Government itself hopes to open a hospital in Baglung, and also that Sika is considered too small a place to merit our attention. We have, however, re-applied, and our hearts are full of faith that what God has purposed, He will carry through, and no device of man or Satan can prevent the advance of His Kingdom. These are only two areas out of many which are in our hearts. To the west and to the north and far to the south there is no witness to Christ, and no one to help those in extremes of suffering. But the light has begun to penetrate the gloom, and our eyes are upon the Lord Who is revealing His plan for those areas, and also preparing those who will go there for Him.

CHAPTER V

GREEN PASTURES LEPROSARIUM

GREEN Pastures . . . a place of quietness and refreshment, of rest for the weary, hope for the hopeless, food for the hungry, of restoration of body and soul; a place where the paths of the righteous are made plain for His Name's sake—all this the Good Shepherd is giving us here, and day-by-day we see this well-loved Psalm become real and up-to-date as we live at Green Pastures Leprosarium in Pokhra.

Our land is four miles south-east of the Shining Hospital, just across the river from the airfield and about two miles from the Church. All around are the green and blue hills, and to the north the long stretch of high mountains. We have a magnificent view of these and are never tired of 'snow-gazing,' always discovering something new of beauty and interest as we see them in different lights and seasons. The whole panorama is quite breath-takingly lovely. When we boast to our visitors of having the most wonderful view of snow mountains in the world, they look somewhat incredulous but generally admit to the truth of our claim after we have dragged them out of bed at about 5 a.m. to see the sunrise. 'How amazingly near and high they are,' is often the comment as they sip their cups of tea and then jump up to take another snap.

From our earliest days in Pokhra we had tried to find some land suitable for a leprosarium. The first site shown us had actually been used many years previously for a Government leper asylum, but the buildings were now in ruins and the place overgrown with weeds. The owner had bought it from the Government for a sum equivalent to £2 10/- and now quite cheerfully offered it to us for £1750. In disgust, we began to look elsewhere. Over a year later, when we were slowly making our way home after yet another fruitless search, someone said:

'I wonder what has happened to the man who wanted £1,750 for his land?'

No one could tell, but the very next day that man came to us to inquire if we were still interested. He was now asking a much more reasonable price, and as the Lord had sent us a gift ear-marked for leprosarium work, we entered into negotiations with him and soon were able to buy the land outright.

On this plot our buildings were begun and it was to this land that the first group of patients came.

From the beginning one of the special prayer requests had been that God would choose and send each patient and that they would mix happily together. We pictured many of these people finding some difficulty in settling down to institutional life after years of wandering and begging, of being chased from place to place, or living alone in the jungle. God has wonderfully answered this prayer, and from the start there has been a happy family spirit for which we praise Him.

Early in 1957 an old Brahmin woman and a young Thakur man arrived in Pokhra. They had been driven out of their homes and villages and both were weary and hopeless. The man decided that he would go on to the Government Leprosarium, a three days' trek over the hills to the south, but first they both visited the Shining Hospital. There they were told there was hope for them if they would attend regularly. So they camped in a travellers' shelter not far away. They were completely destitute and the medicine could not have its full affect because of their poor general condition. The Hospital gave them a small allowance for rice, but this proved insufficient for their needs. One day, when the man was seen smoking, the sister asked him why he did it when he had so little money. 'Well, Missahib,' he said, 'I am so hungry that it helps me to forget my hunger.' Attending out-patients at that time there was also a teenage orphan girl in much the same circumstances, and an older man who had been receiving treatment for some time, but seemed to be getting no better. At last, feeling quite desperate, he told the sister he could bear it no longer, and that he was going to throw himself into the river. She begged him to be patient, and promised him that there would soon be somewhere for him to live. And so, because the need was urgent, temporary buildings were erected together with a small hut for the missionaries. These now provided accommodation for some 30 patients, and serving them there are three helpers and two missionaries.

Timothy and Lois had felt called to help in this work when it started. They came from a Brahmin family living in a village some two days' journey to the south-west. As a boy, Timothy had had his fortune told by the village priest, who foretold that

he would change his religion. He thought nothing of this at the time as the mere idea was to him quite impossible. Some years later he contracted leprosy and the first of his two wives left him. He had heard of the Shining Hospital so came with Lois, his second wife, and stayed nearby for treatment. Not having much money they asked for work, and as the missionaries' water carrier had just left, Lois was given the job. It was not long before they were listening to the Gospel message, and it appealed to them both. One night, several weeks later, Lois dreamed that she saw the mission compound full of light while she and Timothy were outside in the darkness. In the light there seemed to be someone beckoning to her. Next morning she told her husband that they must ask to be allowed to live on the compound. This was granted and they continued to learn about God's way of Salvation. Drinking in the message they soon came to know and to love their Saviour, the Light of the world. They were in the first group who fearlessly confessed their faith in baptism during the Autumn of 1956. They have since become out-castes to their relations, and when they go home they are not allowed to enter the house, nor can they eat with the family, but have to sleep and cook outside on the verandah. Timothy's mother and brother, however, quite often come down to see them, and Timothy and Lois lose no opportunity of passing on the Good News. When the village priest met them they did not greet him in the special way he considered was his right, that is getting down on the ground and touching his foot with the forehead. He was angry about this, but Timothy said 'for years you kept us in the dark, but now we have found the Light and can worship no one but the true God, and His Son Jesus Christ.' It is lovely to see the big change in them, and to watch them developing into respectable Christians.

The other Christian worker was Simon, a boy who had originally come to the Mission school in Nautanwa in 1936. After this he was lost sight of for many years but reappeared in 1948 with a desire to follow Christ. He was found to have early signs of leprosy and was admitted to a Leprosarium. Returning to Nautanwa three years later he gave a bold testimony to Christ and was baptised. After some Bible training he came up to Pokhra, first to help in the garden, and later to assist the

missionaries in running the newly-opened leprosarium. He took on the supervision of work in the fields and for a time gave a lead in Christian witness.

He seemed, however, to be of a somewhat restless nature, never able to continue for long at any one occupation. In addition, he had a very quick temper, which more than once led to difficulties amongst the patients and other workers. Finally, after a period of some months of most unsatisfactory conduct, he had to be dismissed from the Church and Band, and he left Pokhra.

During the past year some of the patients have become true followers of the Lord Jesus, including the four mentioned earlier. The old Brahmin woman has taken the name of Lydia and, in spite of being in constant pain, she always has a cheerful greeting ready for us. In the Spring of 1959 she became seriously ill and prayed earnestly that she might be baptised before she died. She did not die, however, and God, answering her prayer, gave her the great joy of being one of the first patients who were baptised at Whitsun that year.

The young man who came with her is now Anand Das or Joyful Servant. He is a quiet, intelligent man who has had classes in Adult literacy so that he can teach others to read. He was one of the first to ask for teaching in the Christian faith and immediately began to show his acceptance of Christian principles in a number of ways. We had a poor little woman patient who was mentally sick, for whom there was very little we could do. Refusing to eat or drink she finally wasted away, and when she died we had the problem of how to bury her, as she was a Hindu. We informed the local authorities but received no help or advice. By evening we had to take matters into our own hands, and Anand Das was one of the three who stepped forward to carry the dead woman to the river where she was buried. This was a bold witness, for amongst Hindus it is most defiling to touch a dead body. It will be a long time before Anand Das is well enough to return to his village, and we hope to teach him and others like him, some trade by which they can help to support themselves here, and later on in their own homes. Shoes are a big necessity as so many of the patients here have sores on their feet which continually break down unless they can wear shoes. These are too expensive to buy,

and it has been suggested that one of the patients should go to one of the big Leprosariums in India and learn how to make the specially moulded shoes. Betty Bailey and the doctor were discussing this one day in front of the patients and told them about it wondering whom they could send. The next day Anand Das came and said that he would like to go. This was a surprise as shoe-making is low caste work. Anand Das is certainly a practising Christian; he has fully renounced his old religion and superstitions and is fearlessly obeying his Master.

We made one of the patients headman, following a custom prevalent in this country. Santu Mukhia is a Gurung, one of the soldier castes, a fine man, respected by everyone, and Betty's righthand man in running the affairs of the Leprosarium. She tells him each day who can do full-time work and who can only do half, and he apportions it out and keeps an eye on everyone. He has initiative and generally is helpful in the problems that arise. He comes fairly regularly to prayers and to the Sunday services taken by Pastor David. It seems he does believe in his heart, but that the cost of coming out openly and being baptised is too great. He has had a difficult time in his village, from which he was driven out, and when he goes back for a holiday, can hardly persuade the people to allow him to stay in his own home. They refuse to believe there is medicine for leprosy or that Santu will one day be well enough to return to normal life.

We have a number of ex-soldiers in our family who have served in the Ghurka regiments. Philip is one who contracted leprosy while in the army and so receives a small pension. This supports his family for half the year, and for the other half the produce from his little plot of land, together with his wife's earnings, are sufficient to keep them. A year ago Philip left to walk down to India for his pension. He returned some weeks later looking radiantly happy, and told us he had given his heart to the Lord while on the road. Before he left Pokhra he could not decide what response he should make to the Christian message. In his pocket he had a copy of *The Way of Salvation*, and this he read again and again until the light dawned in his heart and he knew the Lord Jesus had died for him to free him from his sin and fear. He, too, was amongst those baptised at Whitsun, 1959, and is steadily growing in

the knowledge of his Saviour. When Santu Mukhia was going away for a time we asked him who should act as headman in his absence, and he at once said 'Philip.' We asked him whether the other patients would respect and obey him as he came from a low caste, and Santu replied that they would. Philip is the leader amongst the Christians, but we were pleased when a non-Christian recognised his worth by his life and witness.

Goshen Singh and Saila are brothers; they are intelligent lads and clever with their fingers. Goshen Singh was sent to us from the United Mission Hospital in Tansen, three days' walk to the south of us. He settled in quickly and soon began to learn to read, and because he was so bright he was chosen to be taught the work of medical dresser. But he kept thinking of his younger brother away in a tiny hut alone in the forest, chased out of his home five years before. Finally, Goshen Singh told us about him and asked if there was any hope for such a bad case. We sent him off to fetch his brother, but it was several days before he returned because poor Saila was so weak and ill he could only travel very slowly. It took many months to nurse him back to some degree of health, and then when the ulcers in his mouth began to heal the tissues contracted and his mouth and throat became smaller and smaller until he could only eat and swallow with great difficulty. Our surgeon, Ruth Watson, operated on his mouth and he soon started to improve. Now he is a smiling sturdy lad whose job it is to look after the goats. Ever since he arrived, and even when he was so ill, he has occupied himself with making stools and other things out of pieces of wood and string. With an ingenious single bamboo needle and the wool from old vests and socks, and any other odds and ends he can find, he knits jaunty caps and scarves for himself and his friends. If he and Goshen Singh were taught carpentry we feel sure they could learn much which would be a great help to them when they return home.

Quite a few patients come from the Magar village of Peace Hill, two days trek to the south-east. One of them, an elderly woman named Mani, was found to be suffering from leprosy and tuberculosis, and for several months lived in Pokhra bazaar, coming regularly for the needed treatment. During this time she was visited frequently by one of her relatives on the Hospital

staff, whom God used to draw her to Himself. When Mani returned home she went with the light of the Lord Jesus in her heart. From time to time her husband came in for her medicine and he told us that he and several others were now believers as the result of Mani's witness. He said that they had given up all heathen practises and that they now had Christian worship in their home. As they only had one copy of the Gospel to read and the little which Mani could remember to help them, they begged for someone to go to the village to teach them. Two elderly Christian women from Pokhra therefore went on a teaching trek to the village. They returned full of the wonderful time they had had and confirmed all that we had heard of Mani's witness. The doctor had advised, however, that Mani should come into the Leprosarium for regular treatment. This she was unwilling to do for a while, but eventually she arrived, and from the beginning showed that she was a strong character, a real leader and a mother to the younger ones.

Early in 1957 Mani's niece, who had long had a hunger in her heart for God, heard her aunt tell of the Saviour and knew He was the One Who could meet her need. The story of how she found the Lord is told in the later chapter on Literacy work. She began her nurse's training and continued with it for eighteen months during which time she was baptised and is now called Rhoda. She, too, is with us at Green Pastures, as in March, 1959, it was found that she had early leprosy infection, probably contracted in her village. This was a terrible shock and a big test for her, but God has given her His wonderful peace and comfort, and now she has settled in and helps to carry out the treatment of the women patients.

Two other women from the same family have been admitted from Peace Hill, Chani, who came to us soon after we opened, and Rhoda's mother. Both are followers of the Lord and Chani was one of those baptised in 1959.

It soon became clear that, with the growth of the work and the need for grain, vegetables and other crops to help feed the patients, more land was needed. A large unused area adjoining the Leprosarium was granted to us by the local Government, to whom we had made application, and as this site was at a higher level and cooler than the original land, plans were made



SOME MEMBERS OF POKHRA CHURCH WITH THE REV. ALAN AND MRS. REDPATH

to build the living quarters and hospital on it. The first site was to be developed solely for agricultural purposes.

For the past two years we have been experimenting to see what will grow best. Maize does well and this is usually harvested at the end of July. The cobs are tied in bundles and stacked on bamboo poles ready for grinding into flour. The next crop is then planted straight into the maize fields, each seedling being put in by hand. It is a kind of millet which is made into a thick porridge and eaten with curried vegetables. Nothing is wasted in this country, even the leavings from the flour, and the husks and the stalks are stored for cattle and chicken feed. Sown sparsely amongst the millet is a third crop, a type of lentil. The way the people can hoe and harvest one crop without damaging the other is very clever. All these grains supply the patients at different seasons with one of their two daily meals. We are unable to grow rice because of our insufficient water supply—a commodity of which at present we are exceedingly short. When one of the staff of the Shining Hospital, spending the day with us, was asked if she minded washing her hands in water that someone else had used, she replied, 'Oh, that's alright, I'm getting quite accustomed to washing in mud at Green Pastures!' Among other things we grow peanuts, a little sugar cane which the patients love to chew, and various kinds of vegetables. Some of these are local ones like pumpkins and cucumbers, and some are new ones like the beans that Betty Bailey has grown. Betty has green fingers, and works hard and enthusiastically with the patients.

Water is our biggest material need and problem. Every drop has to be carried up 300 feet from a spring down by the river. The path is steep, rough and very slippery during the rains, and few of the patients are able to do the heavy strenuous work of water-carrying. As water must be brought up for the animals also, we often have to employ outside labour, which makes it expensive and precious. During the rains we try to collect every drop we can in our two 40-gallon drums. Our huts present rather a quaint appearance to anyone walking in at our gate, as we put out every receptacle we can find—red, blue and green plastic buckets and basins, watering cans, enamel bowls, flower vases and tins of every shape and size, to catch the drips from the eaves. Sometimes we get up at

night when there is rain after a dry spell, and run around emptying all the small containers into the big drums, getting thoroughly damp ourselves in the process. But it is well worth while when it supplies the animals with water during the next break in the rains.

Many suggestions have been made by engineer friends as to how this difficulty may be overcome, and at last we are beginning to see daylight on the subject. Detailed plans and estimates have been worked out for a deisel engine and pump, a small reservoir, pump house, tanks, pipe lines, etc., and through the generous gifts and practical help of our friends it will be possible to carry through this project.

Now for a word about the four-footed inhabitants of Green Pastures. Our livestock are a source of considerable anxiety, trouble and occasional amusement, but not, I'm afraid, of much profit to us so far. The buffalo, Josephine, and her calf caused quite a sensation when driven through Pokhra on their way to their new home with us. She was a magnificent animal of a specially good Indian breed; fat and well favoured, not like the lean and scraggy local beasts. Timothy and Buddi Sagar had been away three days in search of a good buffalo for us, and they certainly succeeded. Since then, however, her figure has suffered as no one here was used to looking after such an aristocrat. We did our best for her and fed her according to instructions, on mash, sugar and special grass, but evidently failed badly in one important respect. A man from her original village called to see us (or was it the buffalo he came to see?) and was horrified when he found we had not provided her with a mosquito net. Josephine also showed her disapproval of our treatment of her by letting her milk dry up months before we expected—quite a calamity as we needed it so badly. In fact we have had a series of tragedies with our animals. Goats have been taken and eaten by leopards in broad daylight, and our pony fell off a narrow bridge into the deep ravine below and was killed instantly.

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This glimpse into the work at Green Pastures Leprosarium would not be complete without a summary of the medical work

that is done for those suffering with leprosy. We have learned that this disease is common amongst Nepali people, who seem susceptible to it and often show the more severe and highly infectious forms. Our patients come from a very wide area, some have travelled far on crippled and painful feet to reach a place where medical care might be found. For the first few years, before the Leprosarium was begun, we held clinics in the Shining Hospital, and it was there that we first made friends with some who were later to be admitted to Green Pastures. They used to come with difficulty from their distant villages, and those who were especially weak or unable to walk far could not maintain the regular attendances needed for satisfactory healing. We longed and prayed for the day when we could admit the more serious cases, and great was the rejoicing when the leprosarium was first opened to receive its inhabitants. Even today, however, only a small proportion of those receiving treatment are in Green Pastures, as the clinics continue to be held in the hospital, and those who are not so ill, or who prefer to stay at home, have treatment as out-patients. About 200 attend in this way and the numbers increase each month as more and more new cases come for treatment. The new drugs for leprosy are very effective and a great advance on the older methods of treatment, but they are slow in action, demanding patience from both sufferer and doctor alike. Many who begin do not continue long and disappear from our clinics.

For those who are admitted to the Leprosarium new problems have to be faced from the start. They must accustom themselves to institutional life, to discipline and to set hours of work and rest. They have to live with other patients, perhaps of different castes, habits and types of disease. Above all, they must be prepared to spend many months or even years under treatment before being given the prized certificate of freedom from infection and fitness to return home once more. But in recent years the emphasis in leprosy work has moved away from the huge institutions of the past, housing patients who were admitted for 'life,' and now centres on a shorter term 'hospital' type of leprosarium which treats its patients for one to five years and then resettles them back in their own villages. During this time in the leprosarium they not only receive medical treatment, but learn to use weak and deformed hands once

more, being taught new skills, and in some cases new trades. When judged fit they spend holidays in their homes to accustom their families and friends to the idea that they are not to be shunned and cast-off for ever, but will one day be returning home to live and work again amongst their own people. In Nepal we are finding that it is not easy to overcome the prejudice, ignorance and superstitions of the past, and we are having to teach each patient and his family and often all the villagers about the disease, the possibility of cure, and the feasibility of allowing the patient to return home on discharge from the leprosarium. This educational programme involves trips to the villages, but as we are short of staff we have only been able to visit a few such villages to prepare the way.

One such trip was made in June, 1958, on behalf of a patient about to be discharged. With his two relatives as guides we set out with Dr. Turner at 5.30 a.m. The views in the early morning were wonderful and the air was exhilarating, but soon it began to get hot. We had breakfast beside a river which we had waded a number of times, and then began the stiff climb up over the southern range of hills, and so out of the Pokhra valley. On and on we went after being assured many times that we were nearly there. The village, however, proved to be sixteen miles away, with the result that we did not arrive till long after midday. Gerald Turner explained to the headman and others gathered together why we had come, and they promised to receive the patient back. Some weeks later, however, when he returned to hospital for his medicine, he told us that they had refused to allow him to live in the village but had built him a hut outside. This showed so clearly the deep-rooted fear of the disease, and we hope to develop and extend this important side of the work as more and more of the patients become ready for discharge.

And so, Green Pastures has become a place of new life and new beginnings for many ; of new hope and new strength, a place from where the Living Waters will flow to reach other thirsty ones in distant villages, as the Christians eventually return to their homes and families.

CHAPTER VI

LITERACY WORK

PEACE HILL, in the western hills of Nepal, is a Magar village of red-mud houses and small terraced fields spreading over a hillside to the ridge above. From it an elderly woman named Mani had come to the Shining Hospital. She was found to be suffering from leprosy and tuberculosis and for several months lived in Pokhra bazaar coming regularly for the needed treatment. During this time she was visited frequently by one of her relatives on the hospital staff whom God used to draw her to Himself. When she returned to her village, two days' journey from here, she went with the light of the Lord Jesus in her heart and a portion of His Word in her hand but as yet she could not read it.

As soon as she arrived home she told a young relative living in the house about her newly-found Saviour. This girl, later to be called Rhoda, had been seeking salvation by various means for a long time. The Lord had prepared her to receive His Word and as she listened to her aunt she knew the message was true. That night she dreamt that she saw Someone in White Who told her to go to Pokhra where she could learn more. Next morning she went to the headman to ask for his advice and being assured that she must obey the vision she came to the hospital. It was while she was being taught about the only God Who could give her salvation that she learned to read and write. By September of that year she had given her testimony at the end of a Church service and had asked for baptism. Just before Christmas her uncle came in from the village to say she must go back with him to claim her father's pension. She had no desire to leave the fellowship of the Christians and was somewhat fearful. It was pointed out to her, however, that as she was now able to read for herself, perhaps the Lord wanted her to go home for a short time as a witness. With her precious New Testament wrapped up in her bedding, away she went and came back several weeks later rejoicing in all that the Lord had done. Each day she had read a portion of God's word for herself and He had spoken to her from it. Then out of a full heart and with an illumined mind

she had been able to teach others, some of whom later came to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Rhoda had been a blessing to Mani, too, as the older woman was still unable to read and was dependent on others to hear more of God's word.

In Nepal only a few of the men can read. Now there are schools in many places so that the men of the future will have opportunities of learning which were denied to their fathers. Hardly any of the women are literate because they have to look after their husbands and children. Here also the caste system restricts education, because some of the women are not permitted to leave their homes. This is especially so in the Newar caste. Many cannot even make their own clothes as this would 'defile' them, being the work of a lower caste.

Perhaps it is difficult for us to imagine what it must be like to live at home with very little to do day after day. For the women who cannot read and do not have to work in the fields, there is nothing to occupy their minds and keep them from becoming stagnant and full of thoughts that are anything but uplifting. Have we ever stopped to think what we would miss if we could not read the Bible and other helpful literature which is available to us?

What about those who can read; is there anything for them? There are some books but these are steeped in Hindu mythology and so are by no means elevating. For the Christians, apart from the Bible, there are only a few small books and booklets concerning the Life of Christ and other subjects. In Miss Raddon's account of the trek to Baglung you will have read about the man who had heard the Gospel in the Army and was seeking the Lord. Who knows but that this man may be brought into the family of God because he could read and there was a Gospel to put into his hand. God's word can enter into many homes where even the national Christian cannot go. What a challenge this need brings to us for the production of literature and literacy teaching.

How is God preparing to meet this tremendous need?

One sunny autumn morning in England in 1953, two missionary candidates of the N.E.B. were talking of their future work, and discovered that although they were both nurses, God had given them a definite prayer burden for the increase of literacy in

Nepal and for the production of Christian literature. This would enable the Nepalis to develop their minds and broaden their horizons, helping them to be better citizens of their country and more usable in the Lord's service. Later God called Eileen Lodge and me for this task, and in 1956 it was started.

The first thought was for the immediate area of Pokhra, but what of those further afield? Then the word was given for this also, showing that God wanted us to go out to the people in the villages from which He was calling His church. 'And now behold, I loose thee this day from the chains that were on thine hands . . . behold all the land is before thee whither it seemeth good and convenient for thee to go, thither go.' With this word came the assurance that He would direct us as we waited on Him.

First of all Nepali trained workers were needed to conduct campaigns in the bazaar here and in the villages. In January, 1957, three such workers came to hold a three months' campaign in the village we now call Antioch. For one-and-a-half hours each day the new believers studied the art of reading. Much laughter was caused by the vocal production of the strange symbols on the paper before them. Some of the older ones said repeatedly, 'I am too old, I cannot learn,' but in time this fatalistic attitude was changed and God enabled them to make a great advance in their reading.

One of the results of this campaign was to be seen only a few months later. Bhaktimaya's husband, John, died, and she had to go back to her mother's home in 'Bethany' where there was no one who could teach her nor with whom she could have fellowship. During this time not only did her own faith stand firm but God used her witness to bring her brother Dhan Raj into His Kingdom. Through the previous months God had been preparing Bhaktimaya for going back to a heathen village by giving her the ability to read. The fact that she was the first woman in Antioch to read the Bible for herself, and understand reasonably well what she read, shows how wonderfully God works with each individual.

That year some classes were held in Antioch, in the bazaar, and on the Mission compound for a few who could come, as well as among the girls who had begun to train as nurses in the hospital. This teaching has continued and recently other

classes have been started at Green Pastures. So we go on experiencing God giving to us as He enables the pupils to learn and understand, and the teachers to teach. Owing to lack of Nepali workers it has not been possible to hold another adult literacy campaign.

During the early months of 1957 there were sufficient nursing sisters for me to be released temporarily for teaching, and I was asked to open a school for the children of Christian parents in Pastor David's house in Ramghat. At that time Soni and Maili did most of the teaching and my work was mainly supervision and the making of equipment. After five months Soni and Maili went down to India with their husbands, and I had to return to nursing in the hospital, so the teaching of the children came to an end. Since the school for 'Christian' children closed what has become of the scholars? The older girls who, because of work at home had been unable to attend regularly, have now lost the opportunity they had to learn. The boys go to the local Hindu school, but this is not a very satisfactory arrangement as the children have to attend on Sunday and so miss the morning services.

One of the first scholars in that school was Rejina, aged sixteen, whose father, Mani Raj, had been a Christian for some years. He brought her to Pokhra from Sandy River Village because Hindu relatives were urging him to marry her to a Hindu. This neither of them wanted. When she arrived she was a very shy village girl who covered her mouth with her shawl every time anyone spoke to her, but she wanted to take hospital nurse's training. As she was not old enough it was decided that she should prepare herself for this by learning to read and write. She had also heard her father read the Bible to the family and greatly wanted to do so for herself. Her father, having lived in India for some time, saw the advantages of being literate and wanted the same for his daughter. After about six months of patient plodding she could read the Bible with some understanding. Then as the Lord began to speak to her through His word His joy filled her heart. No longer is she shy and diffident, but deeply happy and satisfied in Him and is able to appropriate His word for herself.

What a different picture she makes compared with those who have no means of reading of the One Who can illumine

their hearts and minds. Rejina has also started her nurse's training and is now having lectures, the notes of which she could not read or copy had she not learnt to read and write. This year one of her Christian friends was found to have leprosy and the Lord gave Rejina words of comfort for her, and so He used her reading and understanding of His word to help another.

What is being done to produce literature for those who can read? Our aim is to provide books to help the Christians in their daily life and in Bible study. Eileen feels that God had called her into this work and she has translated one book on the Christian Walk and another on the Tabernacle, which are ready for printing. Prem Masih has begun a simple Bible Study book on 1 and 2 Corinthians. God has already provided us with a typewriter with the Nepali script, which makes our task much easier.

What pattern has God given for the future? The plan we feel God has given us is to have two literacy workers who have been called by Him for work in this area. As there is no one suitable whom we could send out for training it seems inevitable that such workers would have to come from Nepali communities in India.

This plan will bring an advance to a new era. People become interested in the Gospel and in learning to read. The literacy workers are then called to take a three months' campaign, during which time some would learn to read and write, and others receive further help. It would also be beneficial for the Nepalis assisting in the dispensaries to receive instruction from the trained personnel; these would then be able to continue teaching those still unable to read. It is hoped that during the rainy season when it is not possible to go out to the villages, the literacy workers would be able to translate and to produce more of the literature that is so sorely needed.

What of the children's work of the future? We have a vision for a Christian school where these children may be taught of the Lord as well as receiving an elementary education. As well as Nepali teachers a trained missionary will also be needed for the actual work and for supervision. Who can tell what a contribution such a school could make to the church in preparing potential leaders for the future?

As we have proved God's abundant giving in the vision, call and pattern for this tremendous task, we know that He will provide all that is needed for its development. His word to us at the moment is 'They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me.'—*Isaiah* 49. 23. May we walk step by step with Him knowing that as we go He will open up the way before us.

CHAPTER VII

GOD'S PROVISION

CAN God spread a table in the wilderness? Is our God really able to do the impossible? Can He do anything? The following chapter is a record of seven years of proving that He can do anything, that 'with God all things are possible.' He has not only supplied those living 'off the beaten track' with food, but He has paid their servants' wages; He has looked after their luggage and provided for their holidays. It has not only been the miracle of His giving but the wonder of His timing that has taught us thankfully to leave all to Him knowing that when the need arises there will be provision from His Hand to ours.

Everyone was very tired. They sat in a circle on their bedding which was spread out on the rough wooden floor, the hurricane lamps casting varying shadows on their faces. The six women with five Nepali colleagues set out eight days before from Nautanwa and had arrived at their destination, Pokhra, with great joy. What a weak band they were, but what an Almighty God they served. It was upon His promises they were resting that evening—promises of food, promises of money, promises of leading but, above all, the promise of His presence with them wherever they went. No one in the world knew that that day they would arrive, for although there were many praying as they journeyed northwards through the hills none knew how long it would take them to reach Pokhra. *But* God knew. No one knew that they had had much heavier expenses than they had anticipated and that their money was nearly finished. *But* God knew. So taking strength and courage from this wonderful fact they bowed their heads in prayer, committing the whole situation into His Hands, and then lay down and slept soundly on the somewhat uneven floor. At that time Pokhra had no air service, no Bank, and certainly no Post Office Savings. Humanly speaking there was no channel by which money could reach them and yet money was needed; it was needed for food, it was needed for the house they intended to rent. The next day they all arose with great anticipation in their hearts to see what God would do. It was a beautiful morning with the snow-covered peaks standing out against a

deep blue sky. Suddenly there was a cry of amazement as they saw a man coming up the path towards the front door of the house. He looked like a European—a rare sight in Pokhra in those days. With a beaming face he greeted them, and as he spoke they realised he was an American. He and his colleagues had come over from Kathmandu for three weeks, he told them, but were leaving after ten days as they had found living conditions in the town more than they could endure. From early morning till late at night their tents had been surrounded by a crowd of curious onlookers. He held out an envelope to the missionaries remarking that it was fortunate that they had arrived on the previous day because he was leaving that morning on the King's plane, and had been told by their British friends in the capital that if he failed to contact them he was to bring the packet back with him. But there he was and there they were, and in the envelope was the equivalent of £20. With wonder in their hearts, it seemed to that little group that the gift had come straight from His Hand to theirs. Think of the perfect timing. Think of the loving care. Imagine the joy that filled the hearts of the Christians as they realised afresh that the living God was with them. Can God spread a table in the wilderness? Praise Him, He can.

One of the wonderful things about the Heavenly Father's provision is that there are so often the little extras. Daily bread—but not only bread as the following illustrations will show. Chocolate spread, tinned fruit, fish, mars bars, barley sugar, milk and plain chocolate, golden syrup, and even chewing gum are amongst the things that have come from time to time, making the missionaries realise His care for them in all the details of their lives. On one occasion supplies had been short and now there was nothing left to eat and no money with which to buy anything. Was it by chance that an officer's term of service terminated that day and he found that he had several large boxes of rations left over? He sent a message up to the mission to say that he would be delighted if they could be used, and soon the boxes were being eagerly opened on the different compounds. We read in the last chapter of second Kings that the rate was a 'daily rate' and there they were, for all the rations were actually packed in one-day portions. Out came rice, sugar, cooking fat, as well as mars bars, chocolate and barley

sugar. Each missionary retired to her room with a packet of sweets and a heart full of thankfulness to her Heavenly Father.

There was also the time when one of the missionaries had a nasty attack of tonsillitis. The diet was poor, and one morning the sister nursing her said how she wished there was some fish which they could have cooked for her. They did not specifically pray about it, but who knows if there was not someone, somewhere, who said to the Lord: 'Dear Lord, I don't know what they need today but You do. Please supply that need.' He did, and that very day down in Calcutta the pilot of the Pokhra plane walked into the market and bought some fish. That evening in Pokhra there was a shout that the mail had come, and as the missionaries ran out of their huts they saw, to their surprise, that the coolie had a large box on his back. What had their Heavenly Father sent that day? There was an enormous fish surrounded by smaller ones packed in ice.

'Your Heavenly Father knoweth . . .'

It was 8th June, 1953, the monthly day of prayer, and in the morning the Lord had reiterated His Promise 'Thou shalt dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed.' The missionaries' hearts had been reassured that indeed He was in command and that He would supply all their needs. Later that day, as they were all about their different tasks, a message was brought up from the airfield to say that a large consignment of freight had arrived for the Mission and would they please send for it. There was much speculation as to what this could be as no goods were expected. Coolies were sent off post haste and soon there was great excitement as the first one returned staggering under the weight of a huge box, followed by another, and yet another. There seemed to be no end to these modern 'ravens' and as they dumped their boxes on the ground, the excited missionaries crowded round armed with all kinds of tools. There were tins of carrots, peas, plums, peaches and pears, besides jars of dried meat and quaker oats, amounting to 250 lbs. in weight. The whole gift had been sent by American friends who had visited the station a short while before.

On another occasion the housekeeper looked at the rapidly dwindling rice and lifted her heart in prayer that He would supply for the household over the week-end. Later that day

as the missionaries came out of their dining-room hut after tea, they saw an old Brahmin woman sitting on the ground. Perhaps some of them thought impatiently what a nuisance she was, that now they would have to stop and talk to her and there was so much work to do. Bent, haggard, dark and dirty, she called out to them as they came towards her, 'I have brought you a little present,' and there beside her was a fair-sized basket of rice. Little did she know that there was such a need and that she was one of the unexpected ravens the Lord was continually sending. Lydia is the old woman's name. Some time ago she had professed to love the Saviour but she lives in a terribly dark home and it would seem that the darkness has once more enveloped her.

Is God interested in the tiny details of our lives? Perhaps this account will show His care. A young missionary mother looked rather ruefully at the eggs she had in her hand. There was hardly enough for a meal. If only there was one more, but her money was finished. She went slowly upstairs and to her surprise she found a suka (threepence) on the floor and bent to pick it up. As she did so there was a call from the room below and a Nepali voice said, 'I have one egg to sell and it's worth a suka. Do you want it?' Greatly wondering at His goodness, the missionary climbed down the ladder-like stair and took the one egg from the old woman's hand. With a deeply grateful heart she thanked her Heavenly Father as she saw how it had come directly from His Hand to hers. It should be recorded that it is most unusual for a woman to have only one egg for sale.

Over and over again when supplies have been short they saw the Lord meeting their need. There would be no butter in the larder—butter would come from Kathmandu that day; no sugar in the morning for coffee and a fellow missionary would bring in a gift of sugar, not knowing that it was finished; fifteen rupees needed and the exact amount given ten minutes later. Up in the hospital there would be no bandages left and a large parcel would come full of bandages. Returning from furlough a missionary arrived during a time of shortage and brought with her 60 lbs. of cheese and 40 lbs. of marmite.

Can God spread a table in the wilderness?
Is our Father able?
Praise Him, yes,
For His Word endureth,
And as yesterday so His Word assureth,
Food for today.

—*Amy Carmichael.*

It has been wonderful to see how the Lord, while supplying so often in kind for the missionaries has sent in sufficient money for the servants. In April of this year, Priti, the cook, was due her fortnight's holiday. She told the housekeeper that she would like to go the second and third week. At the beginning of the month there had only been enough to pay her up to 15th April—salaries are paid in advance. Now another seven days' money would be needed; also money for a substitute unless the missionaries were to do the work themselves. Two days before Priti was to leave a gift came which covered what was owing to her, and the day she left a second gift arrived which paid the substitute for six days. On the sixth day Mrs. Panda—so-called because of her likeness to a panda in her white apron over her black clothes—came to ask if she would be needed any more. The housekeeper, without saying anything to her fellow-missionaries, decided that she would keep her on and trust the Lord to send the necessary money. That very day came the exact amount needed to cover the rest of Mrs. Panda's wages.

The Lord not only provides food for His servants, He knows a rest away from the work, often hard and exacting, is necessary and so He arranges for their holidays as well. A young married couple in Pokhra had been feeling their need of a break as the year had been a busy one with shortage of staff, and were full of gratitude when in answer to prayer a substantial gift came which they felt should be used in this way. Flying out of Pokhra—and there is no other means of transport—is an expensive procedure. Then followed a period of shortage, and eventually the day came when everyone had only a few rupees left. As they prayed the young couple felt that the sum of money put aside for their holiday should be shared with their fellow-missionaries. This proved to be His provision for many of them and they all recognised His Hand in the

matter. Nothing was said to the friend at home about it beyond saying that the holiday had been postponed. Before long a letter arrived from another friend with a gift, ear-marked for a holiday, free of charge, in a hotel in Kathmandu, as if to assure them that the Lord is no man's debtor. So the Lord provided for the fares through the money sent from home, as well as the time in the capital giving them a restful and refreshing holiday.

The wee children, too, are not forgotten by their Heavenly Father. One evening a little girl looked up into her mother's face and said rather wistfully, 'Oh! Mummy, I would like some chocolate.' But in Pokhra there is no chocolate, so the mother hugged the little girl and said, 'Well, I have none, darling, but you ask the Lord Jesus and He will send you some.' On the other compound the next morning, not dreaming of what was happening in the child's house, a missionary was getting ready to share with the married couples some parcels that she had had from home. She had received them several days before but had had no time to take them round. How thrilled that little girl was as she saw the parcel and found inside just what she wanted—chocolate!

There is also the story of the crate that arrived on exactly the right day. In March, 1956, the doctor and his family arrived in Pokhra from England, having had no news of a huge crate that had been left behind in Bombay to be sent on to Nautanwa. It contained household goods, furniture and furnishings, etc., that were greatly needed by the young couple to set up their home in some degree of comfort. They were due to spend a few weeks in Pokhra before proceeding to India for language study. Owing to difficulties with the plane service their stay lengthened to five or six weeks, but still there was no news of the crate. On 23rd April, en route for Kalimpong, they were once more back in Nautanwa in the heat of the plains, where they would have to wait until the missing luggage turned up. Finding there was no news of it, the doctor decided to go at once to enquire. He set off down the hot and dusty road on the mile walk to the station and went straight to the luggage office. Imagine his surprise and delight to find that the crate had arrived *that* day on the midday train and that he was able to take the contents straight away on three bullock carts. How

wonderful was God's timing. If they had not been there to receive it, there would have been sixty rupees (£3) a day to pay on storage dues. He knew and He planned and his children were greatly encouraged as they went on their way.

A further instance of God's perfect timing can be given. Not only are holidays needed, but after five years on the Field a furlough is necessary and this means added expense. A family was due to go home and a deposit on the passages had been paid to the shipping agents, but although much prayer had been made there had been no supplies to meet this need. The time drew nearer and nearer when the bill would have to be paid. What were we to do? Had God forgotten? How the devil delights to taunt us, especially at night, but how comforting and reassuring are the Lord's promises. Again and again He strengthened us with the word, 'Fear not, be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.'—*Joel 2. 21.*

In Kathmandu a visitor from Britain was preparing to go over to Pokhra. She had heard of the Hospital from a friend of hers and was determined to see it for herself. Unfortunately, she arrived on the very same day as the King of Nepal, when no-one could think or talk of anything except the Royal visit. She was first kept waiting on the airfield in Pokhra as the King's plane, coming from Bhairwa, was two hours' late; then it was impossible to provide her with any mode of transport to take her up to the hospital so she had to walk. Finally, the hut in which she stayed the night on the mission compound was not exactly luxurious. Unavoidable circumstances seemed to have made the visit anything but a restful one and we were afraid she would feel it had hardly been worth the effort. But God had sent her to us to be yet another channel of His gracious giving. As she was about to go she told us she wanted to give us £250, which more than met this pressing need for passage money. Three or four days later the shipping agents sent in their bill which now we were able to pay. 'Fear not, exult and rejoice! because Jehovah hath accomplished great things,' is Spurrell's translation of the promise we had been given. Indeed He had 'accomplished great things.'

The engines roared, clouds of dust flew into the air and the Pokhra-bound plane was on its way over the hills and valleys of Nepal, the last plane of the season, so the authorities said.

The two missionaries on board heaved sighs of relief to be on the final stage of their journey, but at the same time they were worried. In Lucknow they had bought a quantity of such necessary things as sugar and flour to keep the Mission supplied during the rainy season. Unfortunately, these stores had not arrived in Nautanwa in time to be brought up which meant that they would have to be left on the plains and, humanly speaking, would be spoilt. But God—what wonderful words for the believer—was in charge and He worked gloriously on their behalf. During the monsoon the airfield at Bhairwa becomes bogged and cannot be used, but that year, after the rains had apparently set in, there was a fine spell for two or three days and the airfield dried up. Once again the plane was able to fly southwards, later than in any other years, and all the goods were brought up in perfect condition.

Much more could be written of how God has provided for the needs great and small. There have been the large gifts for the hospital and its equipment; for the leprosarium and for fares home, as well as the none-the-less precious smaller gifts. One of the missionaries had been praying for money for some things she needed and was delighted when she received a gift of £11. The Lord, however, seemed to be asking her to give it to the Mission and, after several days, she decided that was what she was meant to do and gladly gave it. In the next post there was another cheque of £11 for her. Besides these, there has been a steady provision month after month, year after year, to meet the needs of an ever-increasing company of His children. Great indeed has been His faithfulness to us and we, too, can say:—

Rejoice and sing,
For bountiful is the supply
From Thine unfailing treasury,
Our God and King.

—*Amy Carmichael.*

CHAPTER VIII

HIS LITTLE ONES

HE shall feed his flock like a Shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.'

—*Isaiah* 10. 11.

'But surely you're not going to take those two babies to the back of beyond where you haven't even a proper house to live in?' Protests, questions, even entreaties, rose around the young couple as they struggled with the endless tasks involved in breaking up a home, handing over a hospital job and packing for life abroad in an unknown land.

Like the little mosquitoes she was soon to know so well, such questions whined fretfully in and out of the mother's thoughts. They were not allowed to disturb for long, however. As, at the tap of the conductor's wand the tuning up ceases, and all memory of the discordance is swept away by the surging glory of the Master's music, so was all the clamour of doubts and anxious forebodings by the well-loved words, 'When He putteth forth His own sheep, *He goeth before them . . .*' Once more the mother's heart rested in the tenderness of the Good Shepherd Who would carry those same little lambs in His bosom. Dear and cherished as they were, how much more infinitely precious were they to Him Who gave His life for His sheep?

Some of the questions asked at this period, however, were reasonable and practical. What about the children's health and their food, especially the tiny ones? With no guaranteed support how will you provide for them? How will you bring them up in such primitive conditions? What about the children's education?

We who have come out and lived with our families here under God's Hand have found many questions answered. We have also proved many times that the Lord Who led us into this work is the God Who is enough. He has never failed us. When we have cast all our care upon Him, He has always cared for us and our little ones. We cannot doubt that our affairs are in His Hands, when so often His timing has proved so perfect. Our daily bread has always been given us, sometimes in the most unlooked-for ways.

'I would like some pop-corn!' sighed a four-year-old as the family sat down for tea one day. 'I'm sorry, love, we haven't any,' mother had to say. Grace was said, and the youngster added, 'and please send us some pop-corn.' No sooner had they finished praying than a call was heard, and there in the doorway stood a little Nepali Christian boy. In his hands was a bowl of pop-corn. 'We're having this today, and I've brought some for you, too.' Sometimes the Lord seems to find a special joy in honouring the children's faith. One little boy at least took quite a personal view of Divine provisions. He countered the rebuke for eating too many special biscuits by announcing that 'Jesus sent that money for our holiday *and* to buy me biscuits.' The very fact that our children join with us in our thanksgiving and are learning, as they could in no other way, to look to Him, is only one of the blessings that come from His Hand at these times. As they grew older, the children took quite naturally to the local food and easily obtained items, even preferring that to the tinned luxuries that are sometimes on our shelves. This has been a tremendous blessing, but with tiny babies, finding the right kind of food in a place like Pokhra is a problem. When a little ten-weeks-old baby was brought to Nepal, the Lord not only undertook in the three days' journey across India, but continued to provide for her special needs during the following months. The bazaar sugar, damp and dirty, presented the first difficulty, but soon the parents were giving thanks for a large tin of clean, fine, white sugar, part of a visitor's gift. Later on it became obvious that baby would have to be bottle-fed, but dried milk was unobtainable. Just then the hospital received several boxes of baby milk, and the little one had her share. As no fresh vegetables were procurable she had to be weaned on rice with occasional meat or chicken broth. As baby showed a marked dislike for such food she ate very little, and her health soon became a matter for concern. Once again the Lord provided just at the right time. Some visitors left several bottles of sweet syrup. When this was added to her food she began to eat really well and was soon thriving.

Although the diet could be considered inadequate by European standards the Lord has kept all our children fit. With truly thankful hearts we continually praise Him for this, and for the

good supply of rich, safe milk and eggs and abundant sunshine which have all helped to make the little ones as bonny as if they had lived at home. We cannot but believe they have been the special care of the Friend of little children.

Along with food, clothing is usually counted as a basic necessity. We have been well supplied from year to year in various ways, and have never lacked. Apart from three or four months in the year, a single garment or so is often sufficient, so this is not an expensive item. Also, by living in a remote valley we benefit from the fact that there is no necessity to 'keep up with the Joneses,' an influence almost inescapable at home, where there would be the inevitable comparisons with the neighbouring children. As most of our little Nepali neighbours cheerfully wear the same two or three rags all the year round, our children's wardrobe is quite luxurious.

In this, as in every other matter, we have seen the kindness of our Heavenly Father. Sometimes our hearts completely overflow with rejoicing at His wonderful goodness, when a box arrives, lovingly filled by dear ones far away, with gifts for all. What excitement as we unfold, one after the other, things that are literally just what we wanted. What fun when a small recipient, somewhat confused regarding the senders, requests, 'Please ask *Auntie Grandpa* to send me some green ones, too.' One day when shopping a little one was very anxious for Mummy to buy some sandals: 'My shoes hurt me.' Unfortunately sandals could not be bought just then. A few days later, a parcel arrived from a relation in the homeland. To everyone's joy, inside were shoes *and* sandals.

The occasion when we have been supremely conscious of God's Hand upon us has been the arrival of the new baby, one of the most important events in the life of the family. When this takes place in a foreign land, with none of the material advantages of a modern welfare state, cut off from the various helpful factors usually welcomed at such times, such as the right kind of diet, comfortable transport, well-stocked shops and kind relations, one leans very hard upon Him.

One day, just before sailing, a mother's tumultuous thoughts about the unknown future in Nepal, centred on this very possibility. In that morning's post came this very lovely promise: 'He shall gather the lambs with His arm and carry

them in His bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young.' It is a delight to record how the Lord kept His word when a little one was on her way to join the Band in Pokhra.

At first complications appeared endless. Quite early on it seemed that a visit to India might be necessary. This would involve long journeys with the children, besides much expense and inconvenience in the middle of the rainy season. When it was known that the United Mission Hospital in Kathmandu could do all that might be required, some problems still remained. Finding several months' accommodation for the family, and also a cook and ayah for that time was difficult in a city like Kathmandu, while the cost of such a stay was considerable. In the most wonderful way each of these needs was met. A large gift came to hand on the very eve of departure. A satisfactory house with its own walled garden was found near the hospital. Not only was a good cook available but also a Christian ayah, who was a real help with the children. The kindness of friends and even strangers throughout those weeks was memorable, and as the little baby made a straightforward entrance into the world amidst all the care and comfort of the mission hospital, hearts sang with praise to God Who had so faithfully undertaken in every detail.

Even when settled in our own home, we face conditions unheard-of in more civilised areas and some will be asking: 'How do you bring up small children where arrangements are so primitive?'

It cannot be denied that in a house without amenities, where dirt and disease are more or less on the doorstep, the task does present difficulties. But it is just here, however cramped or simple our surroundings, where we have consciously striven to build a real home, with the Lord Jesus as its Head and Light and Centre, that we have felt quite certain of His loving Presence, protecting, guiding and, especially where the parents are concerned, strengthening and sustaining in a remarkable way.

As in other places, during the busy round of daily tasks, there are bound to be many moments when venturesome youngsters are out of sight and perhaps in danger. Some of the hazards are more subtle than those feared in the homeland, such as speeding traffic. Here, pleasant shady stone platforms where the children love to play under the pipal trees, are

favourite resting-places for every kind of disease-ridden traveller, including lepers and patients bound for the hospital. Nearby houses are rife with T.B., little playmates have infectious sores; well-meaning passers-by dig into greasy *petoukas* round their waists to produce a handful of something edible for the child who somehow finds it far more attractive than anything Mum has in the kitchen. A little further afield, but not too far for strong little legs, lie rocks, crumbling walls, dangerous paths, cliffs, gorges, and the rushing Sheti river. We have to keep a strict watch as rabies is not uncommon among the many dogs around us and there is a real danger of hydrophobia. Out on the *maidan*, there's always the fear that one of the big lumbering buffaloes might lose its temper. A little boy when only two years old, was actually tossed near his house, but with great thankfulness was found to be unhurt. The same little boy, at three, fell down the steep stairs from top to bottom, but once again came to no harm. Even on our own compound little bare feet run the risk of infected cuts, or worse still, tetanus. Hence the constant battle over shoes. A hundred potential dangers surround the crawling baby including the peril of unboiled water or milk or unwashed fruit, and even older children will put weird objects in their mouths. Amidst all these possibilities over the years, our little ones have indeed been kept by the power of God.

When illness has come we have felt His enabling and his nearness as we watched and prayed. One hot April a mother eyed the swarms of flies with more than usual disgust, for upstairs lay her baby just a year old, white and still in her cot, her chubby roundness worn pale and thin by a severe attack of dysentery. As the prayers of many hearts joined with their own, during those days of waiting, mother and father were very conscious of the Everlasting Arms. God blessed all that was done to bring the little girl back to health. Her strength slowly returned, the big brown eyes sparkled again and once more we praised the loving kindness of our Lord.

Although a typical reaction to the idea of bringing up a family in such an isolated outpost is sorrow at how much the children are missing, we have come to feel their lives are richer, in a different way, than they otherwise would have been. In this, too, we see God's Hand turning loss into gain.

Ignorant of many of civilisation's comforts, strangers to all the marvels of the 'space age' which dominate the child's world at home, our children find their joy and satisfaction in simple things; sticks, stones and tins become all that a vivid imagination wants them to be; rock, tree, and pool provide scope for a boundless energy which revels in scrambling over the countryside in all weathers. There is the excitement of gazing at the river as it dashes along, two to three hundred feet below ; of seeing it change into a foaming, milky torrent with the coming of the rains ; there is the interest of noticing the people working around us, ploughing, grinding, building, weaving, using the same methods they have done for centuries. The children's sense of wonder is just as surely aroused by their daily contact with the beauty and change of the living world at our door as by the intricacies of more mechanical amusements, or the passive entertainments so often found at home.

Perhaps most of all, their young minds are absorbing valuable impressions and experiences which might never come their way in a more civilized environment. Where standards of living are so much lower it may even be easier for them to understand the real values. Making friends as easily as children do, the colour of a person's skin or his way of speech becomes a matter of interest to them rather than a barrier to all contact. Because we cannot and do not wish to prevent their mixing with the people about us, it is possible for some of these impressions to be undesirable. Heathen ideas of morality are so vastly different from ours. But the Lord has promised to keep them and we trust His Word. We pray that in our homes that difference will easily be seen and that our children will find the Lord as real and precious to them as He is to us.

Already He is becoming the One to Whom they turn in any kind of trouble as a little brother and sister did when their dear little puppy was lost. A day passed and the little boy getting ready for bed was saying sadly, 'Jesus hasn't answered,' 'Let's pray again,' said Mummy and they did. Later that evening the wee brown bundle was brought back and two sleepy little children had the joy of thanking the Lord Jesus Who hears and understands.

A little girl will long remember the way He answered her special cry last Christmas. She, Mummy, baby sister and others

were coming back from their holidays in India. How lovely to be home with Daddy and her brother again, especially as Christmas was so near ! But here they were, stuck in Nautanwa, still a long way from Pokhra and the 'plane was not running. They were all waiting and praying but nò one as fervently as the little girl. Would they ever be in time for Christmas ? Might they even have to walk back ? They began to prepare for this. Messages flew between Pokhra and the military camp near Nautanwa. Then came the news. The trek was off but the 'plane might come next day. After a hurried re-arranging of loads all set off for the airfield. What a long day it was. Waiting, hoping and praying, they sat on. It was nearly dusk when the longed-for silver bird appeared in the sky and down in the watching crowd, a clear little voice rang out, 'Jesus heard us, He *heard* us !'

How such incidents strengthen their faith ! We are thankful that their childhood in Nepal provides our boys and girls with experiences which will deepen their trust in a faithful God.

Although at times mothers (and others !) may long for a little more room, a few 'mod. cons.' and labour-saving devices, even a level floor, days in Pokhra hold their share of amusement as well as frustration. Sometimes the best way is to let the frustration provide the amusement. The diversions which tend to interrupt the household chores are varied and unusual. They may include an anxious chase after a wandering buffalo seen disappearing through a gap in the fence, wearing an important item of baby's washing draped across its rump ! Or all is abandoned for a hectic search to discover what a certain little rascal has done with the water-carrier's *namlo*, the vital rope essential to her task of bringing the day's water supply. As we are never really happy when the children have been out of sight or sound for a while, a lengthy absence necessitates a hunt round the neighbourhood. Once one of the children was found in a little Nepali house, apparently entranced with a litter of new-born pups. When told it was time to come home he made the disconcerting reply, 'But I'm waiting for them to go back in again !' Quite often, an operation in the kitchen is completely held up while a missing cutter, clamp or even egg-beater is finally traced to the young culprit who absconded with

it and is now vigorously using it for some purpose of his own in the buffalo pool.

One aspect of life with children in faraway places is the irreplaceability of many things lost or broken. When one knows that the precious Pyrex mixing bowl, now lying in smithereens on the floor, was the only one ; that Pokhra bazaar will yield nothing in the line of western kitchen utensils which mysteriously vanish from time to time ; when one's son and heir drives out a stray bull by zealously smashing the descant recorder over its back, the temptation to take quite a tragic view of such childish mischief is great. Then, however, we must seize the opportunity to show the watching children just what really matters to us, as we learn with them to 'take the spoiling of our goods cheerfully.' For it is just as disappointing for them when the treasured toy, sent in a big box from England, is hopelessly lost, out on the wide common land around the house, an area regularly patrolled by all the little bazaar boys on the lookout for just such a find. How hard it is to enforce the rule 'no toys outside' when for months of sunny weather they are hardly ever indoors. Yet we have been surprised at how lightly they take the disappearance of favourite playthings. A bit of wood to sail in a muddy puddle quickly drives away grief over a lost ball. Living for the moment they are soon absorbed in each passing delight. Perhaps we have something to learn from their capacity to extract the fullest value from each fleeting day.

One of the main problems confronting every family living abroad concerns the children's education. As with everything else we took this to the Lord in our prayer. First a definite leading was given, followed by a sense of real assurance that this was what He would have us do for our school-age children. This was confirmed in various ways. In each case the final seal upon God's guidance in the matter came as it has come so often before when His followers seek to live by faith in Him ; just when it was needed the Lord provided the means to enable the plan to be carried out.

So day by day we have learnt to trust Him with every need, not only for ourselves but for the young lives He has given to us.

Sometimes days may bring shadows of failures and discouragement or even doubt. Some of the most effective moments in a great symphony are when the notes suddenly change from a haunting minor melody to the triumph of the major key. It is the contrast which provides the beauty. Life also has such moments and the missionary homes in Pokhra have known them too. But, whatever the key, however complex the variation, the themes remain unchanged ; dominating, challenging, uplifting ; GOD IS FAITHFUL : HE IS ABLE. Able to lead, able to keep ; able to cleanse, able to comfort ; able to strengthen and sustain ; 'able to do exceeding abundantly *above* all that we ask or think.'

CONCLUSION.

In Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Tucker's, book 'Gorkha', he writes thus of Nepal—'This buffer state is now tight up against a Chinese Communist Tibet and is one of the most tender of the frontier problems of the world.' Communism is so near with apparently nothing to hold it in check, but nearer by far is the Omnipotent Lord Who has 'placed the sand for the bound of the sea . . . that it cannot pass it and though the waters thereof toss themselves yet they cannot prevail though they roar yet they cannot pass over it.' Jer. 5. 22. Surely He has planned a reaping time now for Nepal. How long it will last, no one can tell, but it behoves each Christian who has any share in the work, either by prayer, or in service here, to 'redeem the time'—to buy up the opportunities.

In his final Bible Reading at the Keswick Convention in 1954 Dr. Scroggie said that 'the last thing will not be bombs but blessings.' In the hearts of those working in this land, there is a growing expectation of the blessing the Lord has in store for Nepal. The Lord is waiting to bestow it; the people, many of them, are ready to receive it, and the channel must be the Church. Is He looking in these days for more remembrancers, for those who will uphold this young Church as she seeks to follow her Master and take his message of salvation far and wide?

GLOSSARY.

- Sathi* : Companion.
Topi : Nepali hat.
Buffalo : Water buffalo of India.
Bazaar : Town centre.
Coolie : Carrier.
Pipal Tree : A large 'holy' tree of the fig family.
Petouka : Cloth sometimes ten yards long which is wound round the waist.
A Maidan : Flat, common land sometimes used as a parade ground.
Nemlo : A headband used by porters when carrying loads.
Caste Lock : A lock of hair from the crown of the head left long by which a Hindu hopes to be caught up to heaven.

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