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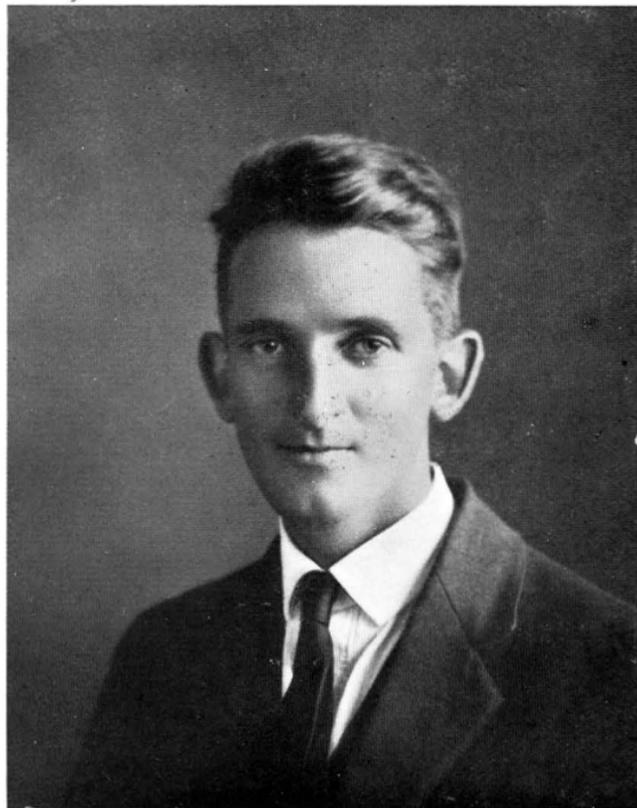
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*Second (large) impress.*

Tells of the experiences of missionaries of the Sudan Interior Mission during the Italo-Ethiopian war, and is a record of miraculous protection and provision. When war broke out the Society had fifteen stations staffed by seventy-five missionaries, and they all refused to abandon the people in their hour of need.

They offered submission and their services to the new Government, hoping that they would be able to continue under the Italian flag, but disillusionment soon followed, and events made it impossible for the missionaries to continue to respect the Italian Government. Italy is now squeezing out the last of the missionaries. The closing chapter contains moving stories of the native converts left to carry on a Christian witness whilst the missionaries seek other spheres of labour on the outskirts of Ethiopia.

“THEY LOVED NOT THEIR LIFE EVEN UNTO DEATH”



G. CLIFFORD MITCHELL



THOMAS DEVERS

In memory of Clifford Mitchell and Thomas Devers, who were murdered in the Arussi desert on May 9th, 1936.

# ECLIPSE IN ETHIOPIA

AND ITS CORONA GLORY

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## FOREWORD

THE greater part of this book tells of the experiences of our missionaries during the Italo-Ethiopian war, and is a record of miraculous protection and provision.

As we write these lines, Italy is squeezing out the last of our missionaries from Ethiopia, and we should be unfaithful if we did not give testimony as ministers of righteousness as well as of the Gospel.

During the seven years that our Mission was operating under the regime of Ras Tafari as Regent, and later as the Emperor Haile Selassie, we had every reason to believe that he was sympathetic to all efforts made for the social and spiritual enlightenment of his people. When the Mission proposed to establish a Leprosarium, His Majesty not only gave a beautiful site of five hundred acres just outside the capital, but contributed a substantial sum of money, laid the foundation stone, and was present later at the official opening.

Not unnaturally, Haile Selassie attributed the high principles that he found in the missionaries to the countries from which they came, and thus when he succeeded in securing the admission of Ethiopia into the League of Nations, he believed that she would be safe under its protecting Covenant.

When the question of slavery in his country was raised, he gave assurance of its termination within twenty-five years, and exerted every influence to that

end. As rapidly as he could, he introduced schools throughout the land, and insisted that the daily curriculum should include reading from the Gospel of John and the Psalms of David.

When the war broke upon the land, all missionaries, both British and American, were advised by their respective Governments to leave the country. The Sudan Interior Mission was by far the largest society in Ethiopia, having fifteen stations staffed by some seventy-five missionaries, but all of these refused to leave their work or to abandon the people in their hour of need. The missionaries' sympathy was with Ethiopia, and although they refused to enter into the political side of the situation, they offered their services for Red Cross work. During the whole of the strife, none of them appealed to their Governments for protection, and none went behind the barbed wire defences of the Legations.

Upon the entry of the Italian army into the capital, our leaders promptly offered their submission and their services to the new Government, hoping that they would be able to continue their work under the Italian flag. To individual Italians, our missionaries were indebted again and again for no small kindness; and in the first interviews with officials some assurance was given that the workers would be permitted to continue their philanthropic and Christian activities, while the State would conduct and control all the educational work. Disillusionment soon followed this prospect of liberty, and we learned that although Italy did not wish to alienate world opinion by issuing orders for the immediate expulsion of all foreigners, she would nevertheless, take other steps to enforce their departure.

First came the order expropriating for Government requirements our Headquarters and our Leprosarium, with its beautiful estate. It was understandable that the Italians should covet these ideal positions, but we expected that they would offer us other sites in exchange. However, there was no such proposal, and the next step was the order to evacuate all our stations outside the capital. In all this we were powerless to resist, although we placed the facts before the Foreign Offices in London, Washington and Ottawa, and sought their mediation.

A suggestion was made that our Governments at home should "reciprocate" (for that is a fraternal and peaceable word) and afford the same treatment to Italian subjects in our lands that Italy gives to our citizens in hers, but while Mussolini *acted* and expelled Protestant missionaries from Italian possessions, the other nations only *talked*. The British Government hinted at the possibility of some similar action in its territories, but what does Italy care about talk and hints, so long as she can pursue her policies unhindered? <sup>1</sup>

After the attempt upon the life of General Graziani in Addis Ababa, there was a wholesale massacre of thousands of men, women and children. Had the world been given the full facts of this slaughter of the innocents, no enlightened power exists whose conscience would

<sup>1</sup>The following is an illustration of effective reciprocity. It is reported that the American Government took early action after one of the Dollar Line boats was searched and held up in an Italian port. The next time the Italian liner, *Rex*, entered New York harbour, a group of American officials boarded her, and in spite of a fuming commander they proceeded to carry out a three days' search of the vessel. Notice was given that for every American boat held up in Italian ports, an Italian boat would be so treated in American ports. There has been no holding up of American boats since!

not have been shocked to the point of revulsion. Such happenings as this made it almost impossible for our missionaries to continue to respect the Italian Government, or even to hope to remain in the country and maintain an honourable neutrality.

Marshal Emilio de Bono's book, *Anno XIII*, also shows that from the Christian standpoint, Italy has forfeited all right to respect. General de Bono reveals that he was deputed definitely to plan the conquest of Ethiopia. He was given assurance that all the necessary costs would be met; that military roads would be built to strategic points; that arsenals would be erected, and that everything would be provided to enable the Italian armies to loose the forces of destruction upon a nation unprepared for war.

In the full knowledge that he was flouting international treaties and tearing into scraps the Covenant of the League, Mussolini planned and prepared for war, and actually set the date on which hostilities were to commence. The following are his own words in the preface to *Anno XIII*: "The equipment of Eritrea, in respect of harbours, roads, economic organization, and military strength, had to be multiplied a hundred-fold, and not by an indefinite date, but within a very brief space of time, specified and established almost as a dogma: October, 1935."

We do not think that anyone who reads de Bono's book, together with the Kellogg Pact and the League Covenant, both of which Italy has signed, can continue to place any confidence in Italian official utterances.

Alongside of all this, the influence of the Vatican and her Jesuit priests must not be overlooked. They have never forgotten the fact that, three hundred years

ago, they were expelled from Ethiopia for interfering in politics. Papal Rome's plans appear to have been made just as deliberately as those of political Rome. She had long since divided the territory ecclesiastically, and nominated her priests for the various appointments created.

Mussolini branded Ethiopia as being unworthy to rank with civilized nations because she still permitted slavery. Now, the Ethiopian people are a nation of slaves, and those who sought to bring them into the liberty of Christ are being forced out of the country.

In spite of this the S.I.M. has no bitter feelings towards the Italians; under its great Captain, the Mission still seeks to buy up every opportunity of making Christ known to them, to the Ethiopians, and to "all peoples," and it hopes that the new field being opened up in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan will enable some contact to be maintained with the land now shadowed by this "Eclipse."

ROWLAND V. BINGHAM.

*This record of the work of the Sudan Interior Mission in Ethiopia has been compiled from missionaries' letters, and, as far as possible, the original wording has been retained.*

# ECLIPSE IN ETHIOPIA

## CHAPTER I

### FIRST DAWNINGS

"They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."—*Isaiah* 9: 2.

THE story of the Sudan Interior Mission in Ethiopia really begins with Dr. T. A. Lambie, the field director. He was familiar with the country long before the Mission was started, for, as a member of the American United Presbyterian Mission, he had been instrumental in opening two mission stations in the west and a hospital in Addis Ababa. While the work at this hospital was being established, he had become deeply affected by the need of the peoples living in the southern areas of Ethiopia. These natives were for the most part pagans who prayed to demons and trees, and they had never even heard the Gospel story.

Dr. Lambie was very anxious that mission stations should be opened in this southern district, but when he approached the U. P. Mission Board, they felt unable to sanction any advance for a period of several years. In spite of this, the call to go and help these people was so insistent that Dr. Lambie felt it could not be denied.

At that time, he was brought into touch with Mr. Alfred B. Buxton and the Rev. George W. Rhoad, both

of whom were greatly interested in Ethiopia. After days of discussion and prayer, these three men felt convinced that God was calling them to launch out upon a new work for Ethiopia in dependence upon Him. Thus it was that Dr. Lambie resigned from the United Presbyterian Mission, and the Abyssinian Frontiers Mission was formed.

Before this work was initiated, however, the Abyssinian Frontiers Mission became united with the Sudan Interior Mission, which had been working in the Central Sudan since 1893. A great many candidates had been applying to the Sudan Interior Mission from New Zealand and Australia, but as the cost of the journey and the frequency of furloughs made it inadvisable to send them to West Africa, Dr. Bingham, the founder and director, had been looking for a new field in East Africa. When he heard of the newly-organized Abyssinian Frontiers Mission, he made arrangements to meet with the leaders and discuss the possibility of uniting forces. After many days had been spent in prayer, seeking God's guidance, the union was finally accomplished.

The day after Christmas, 1927, the first missionaries of the Sudan Interior Mission set foot in Addis Ababa. The party consisted of Dr. and Mrs. Lambie and their daughter Betty, the Rev. and Mrs. Rhoad and their son George, Mr. and Mrs. Rasmussen from Denmark, Mr. Cain from Australia, and Messrs. Ohman and Duff from America. When they started to make plans for opening mission stations amongst the tribes in the south, they found that circumstances had arisen which threatened to hinder this, if not to prevent it.

The Ethiopian Coptic Church was opposed to the entrance of missionaries, and raised every conceivable objection to the proposals of the Sudan Interior Mission. In vain, the leaders protested that they had no desire to attack or harm the Church, and only wanted to work amongst the Mohammedans and pagans. Other motives were imputed to them, and it seemed that they would never be able to obtain the permit necessary for starting the work.

The Regent, His Highness Ras Tafari, was anxious to help, and Dr. Lambie had several friends amongst those in authority, but all were disinclined to exercise their powers on behalf of the missionaries for fear of giving offence to the Church party, which was exceedingly powerful in the political sphere.

In spite of the apparent deadlock, the missionaries quietly went on with their preparations for a pioneer trek to the south, and prayed that God would make it possible for them to set out. Finally they obtained a permit allowing them to travel round, or as it was literally rendered "to take the air." It was not a very definite concession, but at least it enabled them to spy out the land. After three weeks' journey southwards, they reached the town of Soddu, in the Walamo province. They found that the Governor here was an old friend and patient of Dr. Lambie's, and he invited them to start work in his province.

From Soddu, the whole party went on to Sidamo, where the Governor was another friend of Dr. Lambie's, the very man who had invited him to come to Ethiopia in 1918. It is wonderful to see how God moves people about as if they were chessmen, in order to accomplish His purposes.

After a site had been selected in Sidamo, Mr. and Mrs. Rhoad and George, Dr. Lambie and Messrs. Ohman and Duff, returned to Soddu and began building the station there; while Mrs. Lambie and Betty, with Mr. Cain, who had felt definitely led to Sidamo from the first, stayed on at Sidamo and opened that station. The Governor built a large hut for them, which was a real refuge from the torrential rains. He was also very kind when Betty Lambie was seriously ill for three weeks, and sent them gifts of tinned fruits, honey and sheep.

“Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” These words became very precious to the three isolated ones at Sidamo, dwelling in a part of the country that was then truly dangerous, as the people were not yet under the control of the newly-appointed Governor.

Towards the end of 1928, a second party of missionaries arrived in Addis Ababa. With these reinforcements it was considered possible to open a third station in the Kambatta province, for which the Government gave permission. The Governor of Kambatta was kindly disposed towards the missionaries, but did not seem prepared to interest himself actively on their behalf, and told them that he could not force his people to rent them land for a mission station. However, God raised up an ally in the Governor's wife, who had been a former patient of Dr. Lambie's. She now sponsored their cause, and exerted every influence she could with her husband and with other officials. Eventually, a site was promised, and the missionaries erected their tents in preparation for the building of a third mission station.

Just when it seemed that peaceful progress could be made, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky came the news that all work must be stopped and that the missionaries must leave the interior! Dr. Lambie and Mr. Rhoad hurried to Addis Ababa, and had interview after interview with various officials, pleading for tolerance and permission to continue the work. In the meantime, the Acting-Governor at Soddu tried to bully Mrs. Rhoad and the other missionaries into leaving, but they bravely held on and refused to evacuate. The two men at the Kambatta station were ordered off the compound, and forced to rent a partly finished, two-roomed shack in the squalid little town of Hosseina, the capital of the province. Here they were practically kept prisoner, were jeered at and insulted, and were told that they could leave the town only on condition that they went straight to Addis Ababa. In Sidamo, Mr. Cain and Mr. Horn were expelled from their station, the Governor sending his soldiers to turn them out and providing his own pack mules to transport their goods to the capital.

The situation was critical. Could nothing be done to break down the opposition of the Coptic Church party? Some of the Government officials received Dr. Lambie and listened to what he had to say, but it did not seem that they intended to help. The missionaries spent much of their time in prayer to God, and, after weeks of anxious waiting, the attitude of the Government softened a little. Finally they were told that they could continue work in the Kambatta province, and that, if the Governors of Walamo and Sidamo agreed, arrangements could be made for medical work to be carried on in their provinces.

The Governor of Walamo was in Addis Ababa at that time. His attitude, which had previously been friendly, seemed to have altered, and it was obvious that he had been worked upon by the Church Party. Again and again Dr. Lambie interviewed him, but no satisfactory agreement was reached, for he wanted Dr. Lambie to promise that the missionaries would not preach in Christ's name, a request to which he could not accede. At long last the Governor gave way, the precious paper giving permission to stay on at Soddu was signed, and from that time the missionaries there were allowed freedom to continue with their work.

Just about this time there arose an opportunity to rent a site for a mission station from an Armenian, at Marako, in the Gurage province. He had secured this land some years ago, before it became illegal for foreigners to purchase real estate in Ethiopia, and he was willing to rent a portion to the Mission. The Sudan Interior Mission did not hesitate to take advantage of this offer and sent down three missionaries to establish a work there.

Permission had now been obtained to occupy three stations, and Dr. Lambie stayed on a little longer in Addis Ababa, to see if he could do something to get the missionaries reinstated in Sidamo. He made several appointments with His Highness, Ras Tafari, only in each case to have the appointment cancelled or postponed. The last one was for Sunday afternoon, and in the morning a messenger came postponing it to the evening. As he knew something of the secular nature of these Sunday evening functions, Dr. Lambie sent his regrets that he would not be able to be present.

During the following week he learned that the

Foreign Minister was very angry with him for refusing to attend, and that His Highness also was displeased. Naturally Dr. Lambie was very upset about this, but at the same time he felt that he had been right to refuse. A few days later, in considerable fear and trembling, he visited the Foreign Minister to see if he could not put things right. Fortunately that official's anger had cooled, and when he discovered that Dr. Lambie was leaving for the south the next day, he insisted that he must not go without seeing the Regent, and therefore made another appointment for him.

Dr. Lambie had a very pleasant interview with His Highness, who said to him: "You need not think that I do not love you as much as I used to, but I have been much troubled of late and could not help you as I wish, but if you will be patient and not seek much from me now, perhaps after a year's time I shall be stronger and will be able, I hope, to help you more."

Dr. Lambie expressed his gratitude and said that he had thought of asking for a friendly letter to the Governor of Sidamo. This Ras Tafari promised to give him, and the letter reached Dr. Lambie a week later while he was on trek in the south. It turned out to be a most imposing looking document, but the contents could have been interpreted with equal facility as favourable or unfavourable to the missionaries' cause. The Governor of Sidamo, when he had expelled the missionaries, had said that if they brought some little encouraging word from His Highness he would be glad to receive them again. It was true that he could, if he so desired, regard the letter as such, but on the other hand, if he wished he could equally well consider it as justifying his previous expulsion.

On their arrival at the capital of Sidamo, the Governor received the missionaries and entertained them to a luncheon banquet. They did not at once present the letter, but like Esther, invited him to luncheon with them the next day. Then on the day following, they presented the royal missive with its apparently uncertain meaning. As is customary, the Governor stood to read the king's letter. When he had finished, his face broke into smiles and he bowed in a friendly way, saying: "That is all I need, now I can make room for you."

God had thus opened a wide door into the Sidamo province, with its thousands of people, who had never heard of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Governor and his officials were, of course, adherents of the Ethiopian Coptic Church, but the native people over whom they ruled, and who outnumber the Amharas by ten to one, had never heard of the blessed Master, and had indeed, no name for Jesus, the Son of God.

From that time forward, under the blessing of God, the work of the Mission prospered. More stations were opened, new workers were sent out, and in a remarkable way necessary funds were provided. The headquarters of the Mission was established in the capital, and with the co-operation of the American Mission to Lepers, a Leprosarium was built just outside. By the end of 1933, five years after the first party entered the country, there were eleven stations and fifty-three workers. This rapid progress was surely an evidence that the original pioneers had been truly called of God, and that He was vindicating their faith in setting out in dependence upon Him.

## CHAPTER II

### GLEAMS IN THE NORTH

“Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.”—*Deut.* 2: 3.

IN June, 1933, Dr. Lambie approached His Excellency, Ras Kassa, Governor of Lasta Province in the North, and asked him if he would give some help towards the Leprosarium in Addis Ababa. His reply was that he would not give money for work in Addis as there were already so many medical agencies operating there. “But,” he went on, “if you will come up north to Lalibella and start work there, I will give you a site and other help also.”

Dr. Lambie had not the faintest idea of seeking such an opening in this interview. He came away almost dumb-founded at the greatness of the unexpected challenge. Entrance into any of the Abyssinian provinces is not easily obtained. But here was a great door and effectual opened. Was this Governor another “Man of Macedonia”?

He wrote home to Dr. Bingham, in Canada, and to the other Home Councils, telling them of this extraordinary opportunity presented to the Sudan Interior Mission. In spite of the many voices that sought to damp the enthusiasm aroused by this challenge, Dr. Bingham felt sure that God intended the Sudan Interior Mission

to preach the Gospel in Lalibella, and, as he was then planning a tour of the mission stations in Ethiopia, he decided to go with Dr. Lambie and explore the possibilities of this northern field.

On February 23rd, 1934, Dr. Bingham and Dr. and Mrs. Lambie, set out from Addis Ababa on their long journey to Lalibella, two hundred and fifty miles north.

There was a rough road of a kind for some distance, so they decided to send their caravan of mules ahead to the end of this road. The journey would take the mules four days, while they could overtake them by car in one day.

After being committed by the missionaries at Addis Ababa to their Heavenly Guide, they started off over the Entoto Mountain range by the crooked, precipitous, terrifying road. To the top of the mountain they knew the way quite well, but from there onwards it was a different story. The road was almost unmarked, save for an occasional line of stones and wheel tracks. Seldom indeed did a car pass over it.

Dr. Lambie had anticipated some difficulty, and had asked Ras Kassa what the name of the road was, and how to ask for it. He replied that the king's son had travelled by this road, and had been the first to pass that way by automobile, so that the road was known as the one along which the king's son had passed.

It was a hard day for even the stoutest Ford, and the going was so very difficult in some places that everyone except the driver got out and walked. Again and again they lost the main trail and found that they had taken a bypath or a cattle track that led to nowhere. Again and again they had to hail a shepherd or ploughman and ask directions. Sometimes they asked for

Monkey River, the rendezvous with their caravan, or for the road to Warilu, and they were looked at in dumb surprise or with blank stares, but to the question "Is this the road that the son of the king went?" they always got an answer. The reply would be, "Yes, you are on the very road he took," or "No; come I will show you his road," but they all knew. The world always recognises the road by which the King's Son went. That long, hard road that He trod alone—and it always knows when His followers are travelling the same road of sacrifice and of service, the road that led by Nazareth, and Sychar's Well, and Bethany, to Jerusalem and the hill without the city gate.

On and on they bumped, tired, almost despairing, asking their way. The sun sank in the west, the quick African night descended. There was no sign of a welcome tent to weary travellers. The wind blew chill over the mountains, yet still they pressed on by the road by which the king's son had passed.

Through the gloom appeared some pinpoints of light which brightened, and lagging spirits revived. At last they had reached their tent home, with its warm beds, camp fires, and bright lanterns. How their hearts went up in adoring praise! The road had led them right.

The road that the King's Son went always leads home. It may seem long and difficult, it may seem dark and dangerous, and yawning gulfs may be on every side. It may be beset with many perils, but He passed this way, and He goes before.

Up early the next morning, the little party started out again, and so travelled on for many days. This trek northwards was by no means uneventful. One day they had to cross an immense fissure, a veritable

“Grand Canyon” of Africa. It involved a descent of some four thousand feet, down trails which were at times so precipitous that they wondered that the little mules could find a foot-hold, and that the packs remained on their saddles.

Passing from the coolness of the mountain altitudes down to the sweltering heat of the Torrid Zone, they stood face to face with the beetling crags of the other side, higher by a thousand feet than the mountain steeps down which they had just clambered. It was well-nigh killing for the little mules, and for humans, both thrilling and exhausting to the limit. There were times when the mule path cork-screwed up the face of the cliff in such a way that they could see the string of the animals winding at half a dozen different levels below. At other times the path led along the very rim of precipitous cliffs—and the mule always prefers to keep to the edge! There is always plenty of room on that side of the path. Then there were places where the upward path was so steep that consideration for man and beast—not to say prudence—made it imperative to dismount, and yet as they reached the higher altitudes, the rarity of the air made them cling to the saddle from sheer exhaustion.

*En route* they passed the historic Magdala, that natural fortress where, seventy years ago, King Theodorus held captive the British Consul and a number of missionaries, who were ultimately rescued, in 1868, by the expedition under Lord Napier.

At last, on March 15th, 1934, the party reached Lalibella, not having met a single missionary during their four weeks' trek.

Lalibella is one of the most remarkable places in Ethiopia, or indeed, in Africa. It is renowned for its

Christian churches, which are amazing monolithic structures carved out of one great rock of red sandstone. Some of these churches are quite large, with windows and arched interiors of marvellous beauty, while crosses invariably decorate the roof. No one knows how old these buildings are, although it has been suggested that they were built by the Egyptians one thousand years ago, but the style of architecture is quite unknown to present day Ethiopians. One old monk, peering out from a little cave overlooking one of these churches, declared that Noah did the work immediately he came out of the Ark. Inasmuch as the said monk looked almost ancient enough to be one of the Sons of Noah, his testimony must be taken for what it was worth.

There are no less than ten of these churches, all carved out of one block of red sandstone, and in some of them services are still held by the priests of the Ethiopian Coptic Church.

The town of Lalibella itself is quite small for a place of such sacred importance, but thousands of pilgrims gather there each year for the Christmas festivities. Many of the pilgrims, or "kissers", as they are called, come from hundreds of miles away, and the hillsides are dotted with their tiny camps, so that at night the gleaming camp fires twinkle like stars on the mountains. Most of the kissers are very poor and come afoot, or with one poor ass to carry their few possessions. There are a few better-class ones, however, with mules and servants, and occasionally some lordly governor may come in with his retinue of hundreds, but most of the kissers are humble folk. From one church to another they go, and prostrate on their faces, they kiss

the threshold of the door. David said of Sion that he loved even her stones and dust, and one can only hope that it may be a like emotion that actuates the kissers. But how one's heart sinks at the futility of it—of the effort to establish a righteousness, when all is provided in Christ. These poor kissers know nothing of the salvation that is by faith in the Son of God, but they hope that St. Michael, St. Mary, St. George, and St. Gabriel, will intercede for them and save them. If they could but “kiss the Son,” if they could but see that worship is His alone, “that neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”!

The Sudan Interior Mission party stayed in Lalibella for several days exploring various possible locations, and finally they selected one a little way out of the town. This site was dedicated to the Lord, and the little company started on their way back to the capital. A week later they reached Lake Tsana. The banks of the lake were covered in many places with papyrus reeds, the reeds of Egypt. Here is another proof of the accuracy of God's Holy Word. “The paper reeds by the mouth of the brooks shall wither” (Isa. 19: 7). The paper reeds have indeed withered from the brooks of Egypt, so that there is not so much as one reed to be found in all the land, but here in Ethiopia, at the head of the Nile, they are still to be found.

A reed has a certain amount of strength. It is triangular in cross section and has a hard, smooth, green exterior sheath filled with a pulpy centre like the pith in a corn (maize) stalk. The centre has no strength. It is the outer sheath that, considering its light weight,

is strong, and if uninjured can withstand a considerable strain, but if bruised its strength is gone, for its strength depends upon its being intact, unbruised. Here is a poor bundle of reeds, half waterlogged, and unable to carry a single person across the water. It must be reinforced. Here are some reeds to tie with it—but no, they have been too harshly handled and bruised. Yet—perhaps?—yes, the very thing—do not break them, but contrive to fasten them to the bundle, so arranging them that the bruised places will come under the binding rope. In this manner it will be seen that the very bruise is an advantage, for it comes under the rope, enabling it to take a firmer grip and keep from slipping, so that a cunning workman will even take an apparently sound reed and bruise it at the point where the binding rope will come; but he will not break it. The bruising, whether by mishap or design, is made to serve the best purpose of the builder, and behold, there is a little ark of bulrushes on which to cross in safety.

“A bruised reed He will not break.” The loving Master Builder will make the bruising the occasion of blessing, but never, never, will He break. Bruising is His plan for blessing, and it enables His servants to safely carry the load that He entrusts to their shoulders.

When the party came to cross the Nile a little further on, they found there was no bridge and no ferry, but finally a grateful patient with one eye bandaged up, appeared in a little reed boat and laboriously took them across, a few at a time. It took four and half hours for all to cross, as the river is quite wide and a high wind was blowing. Few people would have liked to venture on that frail craft made of a few reeds tied

together, but all arrived safely on the other side, except two of the faithful mules, which were drowned as they swam across the river.

The missionaries continued to journey southward, and by making a very long trek each day they reached Debra Markos in the Gojjam Province. The new Governor of this district, Ras Imeru, a cousin of H.I.M. Haile Selassie, was an old friend, and he received them very kindly, entertaining them to tea. Dr. Lambie asked whether work could be done in Debra Markos, particularly for the blind. Along the streams in Gojjam there are thousands of willow trees from which the blind could be taught to weave excellent baskets, chairs, and tables. In the whole of this great country nothing was being done for the thousands of blind.

His Excellency, Ras Imeru, said he would be very glad if something could be done, and went even further by indicating a beautiful site which he would give if the Sudan Interior Mission would initiate this work.

The last lap of the journey from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa was made by aeroplane, and in the short space of seventy minutes, they flew over country that would have taken fourteen days at least to traverse by caravan.

While on this long trip they had seen hundreds of villages, without a single evangelical missionary, and Dr. Bingham felt that the Mission should attempt work in this Northern area. "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Funds were short and many would have advised "Do not go forward in this new venture. Wait until the present work is sufficiently established." From a logical view point

this may seem right, but if these principles had been applied in the apostolic days, would the Gospel ever have spread outside Palestine? If the foreign mission enterprise had halted until the Gospel was fully preached in Judea, it would not have spread so quickly to the uttermost parts of the world.

On arrival at the capital, Dr. Lambie secured an interview with Ras Kassa, and told him that the Sudan Interior Mission was prepared to accept his kind offer of a site, and would open a mission station at Lalibella as soon as the rainy season was over. The Governor, however, was so disappointed at the thought of any further delay that he offered the use of his own buildings there until the rains were over, if the workers could be sent on at once. Thus, after hurried preparations and a month's trek, Mr. and Mrs. K. Oglesby, Dr. H. I. Skemp and Miss L. Blair, R.N., arrived in Lalibella in June, 1934, to be joined a few weeks later by Mr. J. O. Luckman and Mr. S. Nystrom.

Full of hope and enthusiasm, the missionaries were to meet with opposition, discouragement, and one setback after another. When they tried to take possession of the mission site, they found that the promised property did not wholly belong to the Governor, and that the major portion was in the possession of native farmers and priests. Attempts were made to buy from these owners, but their hearts were filled with hatred for the missionaries, and they were as stubborn as long-eared mules.

During the months of waiting, while Dr. Lambie was negotiating with Ras Kassa in Addis Ababa for another site, the party of six occupied the residence of the Governor, making use of all available space in the

grounds for gardening, while they devoted the intermediate hours to study of the language.

Not only did the people of Lalibella refuse to sell property, but they went so far as to threaten all the farmers on the week-day market if they sold the missionaries produce, such as grains, chickens, eggs, goats, sheep, cooking oil, onions and limes. Also, when their servants attempted to purchase milk, the natives would not sell, saying that, since the buyer was a foreigner, the cow would cease giving milk, or her calf would die.

The priests and monks of the Ethiopian Coptic Churches in this place sought many ways to rid themselves of the "foreign devils," saying that although the missionaries called themselves Christians, they would desecrate the holy town of Lalibella, in which not even a white trader of any kind had been permitted to live.

After the dry season began, they sought to purchase wood for building the houses on the mission station. At first, none could be bought, since the priests had blessed all the trees in the name of Holy Lalibella, but the appearance of a few silver coins overcame the reluctance of the owners, and they gradually began to sell.

Christmastide drew near and found them still waiting upon the Lord for a mission site. In spite of the months of work that had been anticipated, the missionary band had had the experience of forced inactivity. Mr. Oglesby wrote home that they found the text in Isaiah 30: 7, "Their strength is to sit still," blessedly true. Nevertheless, there were some encouragements, and Miss Blair wrote of contacts made with women and children, which the Lord was pleased to bless. One

woman was wonderfully healed—certainly far beyond anything which the medicine which she received could have accomplished. She was told, while being treated, that she would probably never be much better, and that the medicine would only give temporary relief, but to the surprise and amazement of all she returned practically healed!

The children very quickly responded to a little kindness, and visited the compound frequently. They soon became interested and anxious to learn choruses and Scripture verses. Naturally, this aroused the antagonism of the monks and priests, and the poor children were threatened, whipped, and beaten, because they came to the Mission, and in consequence the Sunday School class soon dwindled down to nothing. However, this was only for a week or two, and then one after another they returned.

Since no satisfactory negotiations could be drawn up in Addis Ababa, Dr. Lambie felt it imperative to make a second trip to Lalibella, and he and Mrs. Lambie and Miss Berger, R.N., arrived there on January 22nd, just one day before the departure of the Vice-Governor, Ras Kassa's son. The same evening all the missionaries joined in entertaining the new arrivals and the Vice-Governor; and the latter seemed very much in favour of the missionaries remaining and obtaining land for a mission station.

Since the former land, which had been promised, was not available, the son of Ras Kassa showed Dr. Lambie another tract of land, all of which belonged to his father. It was then that they understood God's reason for withholding the other site, for the new one consisted of about sixteen acres of land, and had two

clear springs, providing a good water supply, which is of the greatest importance in this country. It was also located on the main mountain trail from Lalibella to Addis Ababa, and as compared with the former site, was much more desirable for mission work.

In Ethiopia, a deed cannot be drawn up at short notice, and although the Vice-Governor had the consent of his father to give the Sudan Interior Mission any of his property in Lalibella, settlement could not be made until final word was obtained from Ras Kassa himself in Addis Ababa. God had already given many victories over the forces of evil, but to gain this final one required much prayer, faith, and waiting upon the Lord. At the time it seemed to be an unnecessary delay for the busy Field Director, but God never makes a mistake. The Holy Spirit led Dr. and Mrs. Lambie, with Miss Blair and Mr. Nystrom, to make a trek to Sokota, a town four days north of Lalibella. This proved a great blessing, as the Governor of that province was very friendly and favoured the opening of a station there in the near future.

Even before Dr. Lambie returned from his trip to Sokota, final word was received by telegram that the property now belonged to the Mission, and many thanksgivings were offered to Almighty God for removing this last obstacle. A few days later Dr. and Mrs. Lambie, Dr. Skemp, Miss Blair and Miss Berger, returned to Addis Ababa, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby, Mr. Luckman and Mr. Nystrom, to carry on the work at Lalibella.

They began building immediately, on account of the approaching rainy season. Some wood had been purchased previously, but only enough for two small

buildings in which to live until the main dwellings could be built. Because of the scarcity of wood (only red cedar was available) it seemed best to build the other houses out of sun-dried mud brick. They now had need of workmen to puddle the mud, but God answered prayer and sent in the farmers from the countryside. Among the workmen were some deacons and priests of the Churches who had previously threatened any native who had anything to do with the white man, but, as is so often the case, religion ranked second to the dollar.

The missionaries had remained at the residence of the Governor for exactly one year, moving over to the new site on June 8th, 1935.

They still encountered much opposition in the town, and anyone who attended the services at the Mission was in danger of being excommunicated.

Towards the end of August a great uproar occurred in the market place, between the townspeople and the missionaries' servants, and when Mr. Nystrom and Mr. Oglesby rode into the market, some cried out "Kill them when they dismount!" Because of the imminence of war, many of the natives thought that it would be good to kill the foreigners before going to the front.

In the past months of opposition and frustration, the missionaries at Lalibella had already had many opportunities of proving the power of God. They were to have many more, and their faith and their courage were to be tested to the utmost in the ensuing months of warfare and internal unrest.

## CHAPTER III

### WAR CLOUDS

"If one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof."—*Isaiah* 5: 30.

IN 1934, in response to the request of Ras Imeru, Governor of Gojjam Province, the Sudan Interior Mission opened a station at Debra Markos. The Governor was particularly anxious that something should be done for the blind and the lepers in his district, and he granted a site for a mission compound at Wonka, a few miles from Debra Markos, where the missionaries occupied the deserted residence of the deposed Ras Hailu.

The pioneer missionary to this province was Mr. Simponis, and he was later joined by Mr. and Mrs. Davies, and Miss Jean Cable, the latter having been trained for work among the blind. Within a few months, however, Mr. Davies fell ill and had to return to Addis Ababa with his wife.

In October, 1935, the Governor ordered Miss Cable to leave the station, as there was a danger of war in that zone. On her trek south to Addis Ababa she was accompanied by two native carriers, and a little blind boy called Tulu, not to mention a horse, a donkey, a dog, and a sheep. When they came to cross the Blue Nile, Miss Cable had to be pulled across on an inflated

goat skin, while the carriers fired shots into the river to keep back the crocodiles! For three days Miss Cable and Tulu were separated from their caravan, and were left stranded without tents or food. They were forced to sleep on the frosty ground without blankets, yet the little blind boy endured all these hardships without a murmur.

In December, another party set out from Addis Ababa for Debra Markos. Mr. and Mrs. Glen Cain, Miss Cable, and Mr. Jack Starling. They had a large caravan with them, as they took nearly seventy mules to hand over to the British Ambulance Service.

There is always confusion on the first day of trek in Ethiopia, and this journey was no exception to the rule, for the missionaries became separated from their caravan, and on the first night of the trek they had to beg hospitality. Next day they came up with their men and mules, only to find that, in the interval, all Miss Cable's personal possessions had been lost or stolen!

On this particular journey to Debra Markos the nights were bitterly cold and windy. Often in the morning there was ice in the water pail and thick hoar frost on the tent fly, but during the day the sun was exceedingly hot. The trail wended its way northward, over vast plains, through fields of grain, up high rocky mountains, and across unbridged streams and rivers. Various incidents caused delay. A mule strayed one night and had to be looked for—but it had been devoured by a hyena! On another occasion a load disappeared, only to be discovered in a deep ravine in the Blue Nile valley.

They crossed the Blue Nile in sweltering heat, and then climbed for hours to the top of the canyon. News

reached them of trouble amongst the natives, and they were advised to travel slowly and put up overnight in native huts, rather than sleep in their tents.

When they arrived on the outskirts of Debra Markos, they were met by Mr. Simponis, who had been carrying on alone at the mission station. He surprised them with the news that civil war was brewing.

It was a test of faith to be faced so suddenly with danger, but God gave them the conviction that they should remain where they were and not attempt to flee by the road they had come. So they camped just outside Debra Markos, in a little hollow underneath an old fig tree, which had a clear spring at its roots. With two women in the party, it seemed reckless to remain where roaming bands might come down on them at any moment. However, it proved the wisest course, as the whole surrounding country rose in rebellion against the Ethiopian Government, all routes from Debra Markos were closed, and any attempt to escape would probably have proved fatal. The day after their arrival, New Year's Day, a revolution broke out between the Government soldiers and a rebel army, that had come in with the intention of taking the town out of the hands of the ruling Government. Many were killed and hundreds wounded, whilst panic broke out amongst the civilian population. The missionaries heard the terrific fighting and machine gun fire, and the next day they set up a rough building and sent out word that they would treat the wounded. The response was immediate. Without doctors and nurses, and with only a few simple medicines, they did their best for the hundreds of wounded brought to them. A big box of horse medicines belonging to the British Ambulance Service, and the small medicine

outfit from the mission station were all the equipment they had. Although they had no idea of it at the time, this Red Cross work was to continue for a full five months, and what a wonderful opportunity it gave them for Christian witness! Every day they tended those who were in need of help, yet never let them go before they had heard the old, old Story. Many of those who listened to the Gospel were shortly afterwards killed in battle. The thought that some of them died believing in Christ, strengthened the missionaries in their conviction that they had been right to remain in Debra Markos.

The rebel leader had taken up his position, with many of his men, on the Sudan Interior Mission compound, and two big battles were fought there. One of the Government soldiers who was fatally wounded on New Year's day was an officer named Tesfa. At one time he had been very ill at Soddu, in the south, and had for many days received medical attention and kindness at the mission station there. When he recovered he often visited the missionaries, and joined with them in reading the Bible. When they heard of his death, the missionaries could not but praise God that he had been shown the way of life through Christ Jesus while at Soddu, before he died in defence of his country at another Sudan Interior Mission station in the north.

Towards the middle of January the rebels were repulsed, and retreated from the town. At this time Mr. Cain and Mr. Simponis started to make daily trips to the mission compound at Wonka, and began to build a house there. The road was not at all safe, but they had a reason for risking their lives in this way. They were anxious that when the Italians arrived they

should find them living in a proper house and carrying on their work normally, for then, perhaps, the Italian Government would be more likely to allow them to remain. God watched over these two men, and they were enabled to make progress with the building. After a month's work, the first house was ready for occupation; but the Ethiopian Government, which was still in power, would not allow them to live so far away from the town.

During the trying months before they could get out to the station, the missionaries wandered about from place to place, hoping to keep out of the line of bullets. Frequent attacks on the town by the roaming rebel bands, kept them in constant suspense, and their tents gave little feeling of security from the flying bullets; yet they were kept and not forsaken, according to the promise of God in whom they trusted for protection.

One unusual incident served to remind them vividly of the text: "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." They had been for a long time without European food stuffs, and there was no hope of getting supplies from Addis, as all communications were cut off. Tea was one of the chief things they missed, for no amount of imagination can make Ethiopian milk and water an inviting substitute for a cup of tea. But even an Italian aeroplane can be used to supply the needs of the Lord's servants, and they were given a tin of tea that had literally come from the skies! Supplies for the rebel troops had been dropped from the aeroplanes, and one day when the Government soldiers were searching for the rebel leader, they came upon some of these stores, and found ammunition, machine guns, bully beef, sardines—and tea!

One day, Duftera Tefara, a blind priest from Markos Coptic Church, and a very intelligent man, came over to visit the missionaries and do some Braille reading with Miss Cable. After he had left, an Italian 'plane, the first one to come, flew over the town. They wondered if it would drop bombs, but instead, propaganda leaflets came down like snowflakes from the sky. These leaflets encouraged the rebels to go on with their fighting, and promised to bring them assistance. On his way home with his Braille copy of part of St. Matthew's Gospel, Tefara was stopped by soldiers, and accused of having received some secret code from the Italian 'plane. They took the book from him, and Tefara returned in a great state to persuade Miss Cable to accompany him, so that they might convince the officials that the Braille book was part of the Scripture in the Amharic language. To the amazement of the soldiers, the blind priest read to them the familiar Gospel words by means of touch.

A few days after this, six Italian 'planes flew over the town. This time they dropped bombs. The 'planes were flying very fast, and the missionaries had scarcely taken cover in a clump of trees nearby, when all the earth was shaken by the explosion of the bombs. The raid lasted just half an hour, but it seemed like an age. When the tornado of bombing was over they found that about one hundred mutilated bodies lay in its wake. Altogether Debra Markos was bombed four times. When bombers came over, the missionaries crawled into cover, and when they had passed, crawled out again and treated the victims as best they could.

After each bombing, there was a noticeable increase in the anti-foreign feeling, but the missionaries put on a

bold face and went about their business of treating the wounded, knowing that this would help most to keep the confidence of the people. Under such circumstances, it is comparatively easy to screw up one's courage for a few days, but it is quite another thing to keep it up for weeks and months on end. For five months these missionaries lived in an atmosphere of suspense. In the midst of shooting and bombing, they could never be certain that their last hour had not come. Their supplies had completely run out, and they were reduced to living on native food, and there was not much of that. They made frequent appeals to Addis Ababa for supplies, or for an aeroplane to get them out, and although Dr. Lambie did everything within his power, it was without avail. At least a dozen times a 'plane was promised, but never supplied. Then they asked for an escort, but the Government did not feel able to supply the contingent of soldiers needed to safeguard them on the journey to the capital.

In the early days it was possible to telephone, or send a wireless message from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa, but soon all communications were cut off. The last word they received from Dr. Lambie was: "We can do nothing for you, there is much trouble here. Trust in God."

When at last the Italian army came in and occupied the town, Mr. and Mrs. Cain and Miss Cable were able to return to Addis Ababa. They had no arms or escort, and their journey south led through a country bristling with bands of lawless men, who were robbing and killing the villagers. All the porters who had accompanied them in the northward trek had deserted, and the only carriers they could obtain were those of the very lowest class.

One day they were met out in the wilds by a notorious rebel and his men. He questioned them as to who they were, but when he saw that they had no guns, he let them pass without harm.

At the Blue Nile they had another remarkable experience. After descending the canyon for several hours, they met a man with a goat. This man had tried to cross the river the day before, but had delayed to do so as there had been a great deal of shooting. No white people had crossed that way for several months, for there was war between the natives of the provinces on either side of the river. The man told them that he had two friends waiting on the opposite bank to take delivery of the goat, if all were well. "Follow me," he said, "but first I must find out how the land lies." He cautioned them to be very quiet, and to wait before coming out into the open on the river bank. He gave some queer call, which was answered from the top of a rock some thousand feet above the river on the other side. He returned and told them to follow him. There were no swimmers at the usual crossing place to help ford the river, and they had to go at least a mile up the river before they found a shallow crossing. By the time they got there, they were beginning to fear that perhaps they were walking into a trap. However, they crossed in safety, following the Gojjam guide. The boys arrived at the opposite bank for the goat, and all together they made the strenuous ascent up the other side. It was quite dark before they arrived at the village above. The wind had risen and it was bitterly cold. When they reached the huts, the watchmen were very surprised that they had escaped detection, as machine guns had been placed among the rocks along the river bank,

manned by soldiers who were ready to shoot any white person who tried to cross the river from Gojjam. The missionaries had not met a single native soldier as they came up the pathway shown them by the boy with the goat. Then they knew that, in delaying the native guide, God had been working for the preservation of His own.

The roads to the capital were deserted, and they hurried onward from early morning till nightfall, accomplishing the distance in far less time than usual. The people were in such a state of terror that none of them could be persuaded to leave their villages to guide them on their way, but, in spite of all difficulties, they arrived safely at the Sudan Interior Mission headquarters in July.

A week later they were followed by Mr. Starling, while Mr. Simponis stayed on at Debra Markos in the hope of maintaining the work. This was not to be, however, for on July 20th, he was told by the Italian Government that all members of the Sudan Interior Mission were concentrating in Addis Ababa, and that the Debra Markos authorities were to send him to the capital.

Mr. Simponis could not do otherwise than fall in with these instructions, and so he sold such of the Mission property as could not be taken away, and also disposed of his own belongings, only keeping sufficient clothing to take with him in the 'plane which was to carry him to Addis. He put these clothes and the money he had received for the sale of goods, about £80, in a locked box. One night, a servant who had left his employ a few days before, relieved him of all his worldly possessions, money and all! It was naturally a shock to

Mr. Simponis to find himself left with literally nothing but the clothes he stood up in; however, God used this incident to show him that He was able to provide for him under all circumstances. A few days after this happened, a Greek merchant handed him a gift of 500 lire, about £5, and this provided for his immediate needs.

After waiting a month, he finally left Debra Markos on August 30th, bound for Asmara. The other passengers in the 'plane were an Italian general, two other officers, and five members of crew. The morning was cloudy and rainy, and when they reached Gondar the visibility became so bad that the pilot decided to return to Debra Markos. However, he could not find his way back, and after he had circled around for some time looking for it, the petrol ran out and they had to make a forced landing. They came down in a long plain of high grass which was a foot deep in water. Such places abound in hyena holes, and the fact that they had no accident in landing was another token that the Lord was caring for His own.

They were completely lost in the fog, and had no idea where they were. Mr. Simponis was the only one who could speak a native language, and so he was asked to go and see if he could find out where they were. As the plain was covered with water, he could not see where he was stepping, and several times he was soaked through falling down a hyena hole. When he had gone a little way he saw some natives on the hillside, and beckoned to them to come over. He greeted them in Amharic, and then asked them the name of their country. After several minutes questioning he discovered that they were in the district of Burrie Damot,

only ninety kilometres from Debra Markos, and in the Gojjam Province. They were very fortunate to have come down in a district where the people were friendly to the Italians, as otherwise they would almost certainly have been murdered.

The radio was soon set in operation, and in the evening they had word from Asmara that 'planes would be out looking for them in the morning. They had no food, except a few biscuits and corned beef, kept in reserve for such occasions. As there were nine of them to share these meagre provisions, they had to eat sparingly. Fortunately it was not long before the natives produced some eggs and boiled potatoes. They asked exorbitant prices for these, but the Italian general was naturally anxious to keep on the right side of the people, and so he paid freely.

On September 1st, 'planes came to search for them, but failed to find them; but the next day, to their great delight, they saw a 'plane heading straight for them. For three days, nine of them had lived and slept in a bomber which was standing in a foot of water, and the sight of relief was unspeakable joy. The 'plane circled over them and then dropped two tanks of petrol by parachute, also food, and money. Unfortunately the parachute attached to one tank did not open, and therefore the petrol was lost, and this meant that the relief 'plane had to go back to Debra Markos for more. It returned that evening and landed alongside. The difficulty came in the morning when the 'planes tried to take off. The engines were switched on, but to no avail; the wheels were firmly stuck in the mud. They got about five hundred of the natives to come and help, and by noon both 'planes had been pulled up the hill-

side. The relief 'plane took off, only to land at once back in the water! However, the bomber got away safely and returned to Debra Markos in twenty-two minutes. Thus ended Mr. Simponis' first experience of flying.

Two days later he was flown to Asmara. Here the Lord again revealed His faithfulness in providing for his financial needs, as the Italian general handed him a 500 lire note for his services as interpreter. A Greek Christian whom he met there, also gave him a 100 lire note, and so the next step was provided for.

From Asmara he was flown to Diredawa, and from there he travelled to Addis Ababa by train.

The missionaries from Debra Markos had all been exposed to many dangers and perils, but they had trusted in God and not one word of all His good promises had failed.

Eight months after they had met in Debra Markos they were all reunited in safety at Addis Ababa. They would never be able to forget the experiences of the intervening months. They had known fear, but not terror, and in their need, God had caused them to draw on depths of His grace that they would not otherwise have known existed.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE LIGHTHOUSE OF LALIBELLA

"I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes."—*Isaiah* 42: 6, 7.

BEFORE the war began, the American Consul warned the missionaries at Lalibella to evacuate the station, but they felt that they could not leave until they were certain that it was the will of God, since they had so definitely been called to serve Him there. Someone has aptly said: "The safest is the most dangerous out of God's will, and the most dangerous is the safest in God's will." The experiences of those at Lalibella and other places prove this to be true.

In October, 1935, the natives were making preparation for war. The big chiefs were enlisting soldiers even from Lalibella, ordering them to prepare food and provisions and to join the large division of the general army commanded by Ras Kassa. He was expected to pass through the town on October 24th on his way to the northern front, but owing to other arrangements, he took a less difficult road from Debra Tabor, and passed one day's journey to the east of Lalibella, where Mr. Nystrom went to bid him farewell according to native custom.

Sometime later, Mr. Nystrom returned to Addis Ababa to make arrangements for his marriage to Dr. H. I. Skemp, which took place on December 30th, 1935.

There was no bank in Lalibella and all the big chiefs had gone to the front, so that the missionaries had no means of cashing a cheque. The nearest bank was at Debra Tabor, six days' journey west, but as they had been without money for two months, Mr. Luckman and Mr. Oglesby decided to make the dangerous trip. They had full confidence in the promises of God and remembered the words of Livingstone: "Man is immortal till his work is done." They left on January 14th, encouraged by the words "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace." They made a forced march and travelled during the night hours, again reassured by the promise: "I will make darkness light before them and crooked things straight, these things will I do unto them and not forsake them." This was fulfilled in every way, for they made the usual twelve days' journey in just seven days, and avoided any attack by bandits who frequent that road.

Mr. Luckman was now also ordered to Addis Ababa. He secured his passport through the Acting-Governor, the son of Ras Kassa, and left on February 3rd, arriving safely at the capital.

About this time, the first war victim arrived at Lalibella from the northern front. Both of his feet were severely wounded by bomb shrapnel, and he had been brought on a mule for treatment at the mission station. His parents, who lived to the south, thought that the missionaries were allied to the Italians and immediately rushed him away to save his life. Day by day, from this time onward, the wounded came for treatment.

On February 12th they could plainly hear the firing of the heavy artillery, as the Italian army gradually advanced into the interior of Ethiopia, and it became obvious that Lalibella would soon be in the midst of

the war zone. The presence of the Lord was very real and precious to Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby in these days, and they were greatly comforted by the words: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe." "He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord."

The Italian war birds—observation, pursuit, and bombing 'planes—began to soar over the province in January, dropping papers to the natives and taking pictures of the landscape. Neighbouring towns were being bombed, and they expected to be attacked at any moment. On March 19th a 'plane appeared, flying very low in search of returning troops. Only four days previously, three native generals with several thousand soldiers had camped on and around the mission property, but had moved on just before the bomber arrived.

The number of wounded increased daily, and the climax was reached in the middle of March when as many as forty-two were treated in one day. Many of the wounded were victims, not of the war, but of their own countrymen, who attacked them on the road from the front and robbed them of everything, even their clothing. Much of this highway robbery occurred at Bilballah, one day's journey from Lalibella. One captain, who escaped with only his shirt and trousers, came to the mission station for medicine. A chief remained there one month for treatment for his wrist, which had been broken by the sword of another Ethiopian. Another man, who was the secretary of a big chief, escaped with a bullet lodged in his side, a bullet which had passed through and killed two men to his left. Many others, too numerous to mention, with bullets and shrapnel lodged in their temples, legs, arms, etc., were given first aid treatment and sent on to the nearest doctor.

In the middle of February, Mr. Nystrom and his wife, who is a doctor, left Addis Ababa with provisions and medicines, in an attempt to return to Lalibella before the roads became full of bandits. When they arrived at Dessie, their muleteers deserted, because of the rumours of highway robbers on the road ahead. As they were unable to secure other muleteers, and the Government officials later refused permission to travel further north, Mr. and Mrs. Nystrom were compelled to remain at Dessie; Mr. Nystrom was given charge of the Red Cross stores and his wife went to work in a small hospital. She and one nurse cared for over forty serious cases, and treated over two hundred a day in the clinic. Later Mr. Nystrom assisted the Dutch ambulance, but after six busy weeks they were forced to flee from Dessie. Just before the entry of the Italians the town became lawless, and robbery, shooting, and burning, were rampant. The Nystroms and other missionaries escaped at midnight by truck to Addis, having had to leave practically all their possessions as well as the supplies for Lalibella. Their servants followed them on foot with some of their belongings, and arrived two weeks later, telling of pitched battles with bandits along the way, and of hardship and danger of every kind, and yet not one of them had been injured. When the missionaries examined the loads brought in, they found that their servants had risked their lives to carry one whole case of beer, belonging to a reporter who had camped near them in Dessie, and also several boxes of old bandages, while all their own belongings had been left behind to be looted!

In February and March Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby sent two postmen to Dessie to carry news and bring back their own mail. Neither of them returned. It was then

that they realized they were cut off from the outside world, and entirely dependent upon God to meet their needs.

On April 14th, they had the honour and the pleasure of giving afternoon tea to the Emperor Haile Selassie, Ras Kassa and his two sons, and several other dignitaries. The Emperor purposely returned from the front by way of Lalibella, in order to worship at the churches there, which are held in the greatest reverence by all Ethiopian Coptic Christians.

The Emperor appointed Dejazmatch Wunda Wuson, the son of Ras Kassa, to be the Governor of Lasta Province, and he remained in Lalibella, taking up his residence in the "gibbie" (palace) where the missionaries had first lived on their arrival in the north.

Four days after the Emperor's visit, the Italians sent a pursuit and scout 'plane which searched the district for him. The next day four bombers appeared; one a monoplane, the others tri-motors. One of them circled so low over the mission station that the missionaries felt they had not many more moments on this earth.

They did not dig a dug-out, hoist a flag, or paint a Red Cross sign on the buildings, as they felt it would show lack of faith in the power of God. Their faith was vindicated, for the 'planes never flew over on the days when troops were there, and the station was never bombed. "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust."

On May 8th, an Italian observation 'plane dropped papers announcing the arrival of the Italian troops in Addis Ababa. The news came as a great shock to Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby, yet, as they had seen something of the terrible results of war, they could not but hope that it was now practically over. The Italian 'plane also

dropped a paper which asked them to display signs in order that the aviators might determine their nationality and the kind of work they were doing. This they did, and also sent a letter by runner to Sokota explaining their reason for being in Lalibella. A week later, they were visited by two more 'planes; sent by General Ettore Bastico. One 'plane dropped his reply to their letter, while the other dropped three parachute bags of food delicacies. How they appreciated this heavenly manna after having been without supplies for four months!

The next day the first Italian troops entered Lalibella, and an Italian flag was planted in the market place.

In June, Wunda Wuson made his submission to the Italian Government, and was immediately installed as Governor of the Lasta Province. A few days later he asked permission to live, during the rainy season, in the vacant house of Mr. and Mrs. Nystrom. Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby did not want to grant this request, but felt under an obligation to do so as he had been made the Governor of the province. In the meantime, he toured the various districts and installed his chiefs, with the intention of returning to Lalibella immediately before the heavy rains. At the beginning of July the Italian Government ordered him to go to Sokota, and from there to go to Addis Ababa by 'plane to be officially installed as Governor of the Lasta Province. This he refused to do. Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby hoped that as he was to go to Sokota he would not return to Lalibella, but at the end of July, one of his chiefs arrived to clean the Nystroms' house, and they were very disturbed at the thought that he would live there, not knowing of any reason why it should be permitted.

On Monday, August 3rd, he entered the house, and

in spite of their fears, the missionaries felt sure there was a definite reason for this.

The Italian officers stationed at Lalibella tried to persuade Wunda Wuson to accompany them to Sokota, but he excused himself by saying that he was not physically able to go. Meanwhile the country people were rising up in arms, as they thought the Italian Government was taking their Governor away. They made several attempts to fight the troops, but the Governor prevented them. For three weeks he lived in the Nystroms' house, and then moved back to his father's gibbie, as the mission station was in plain view of the Italian fort, a quarter of a mile away.

At dawn on August 29th, Captain Reguzzoni and his company left Lalibella for Sokota. A group of native soldiers, who acted without the Governor's permission, attacked them on the edge of the town. A little skirmish followed, with only a few casualties, and the captain returned to the Lalibella fort.

The firing of guns aroused the whole countryside, and the natives rallied to the Governor with their arms and weapons, intending to massacre the troops. Two Italian captains were in counsel with him when this mob appeared, but he bravely protected them and delivered them safely to their camp the next day. When the Governor refused the people permission to attack the troops, they became more incensed. A mob of two thousand then began to plead for permission to kill the two missionaries, saying that they were responsible for the coming of the Italians. The Governor emphatically refused saying: "Do not go to the missionaries, as they are my friends. I have lived in their house, and furthermore, some of my possessions are in store there. If

you take their things, mine will also become lost. First kill me, and then go and kill them." The mob subsided, and the majority returned to their homes, while others surrounded the Italian fort and tried all night and up till noon next day to take it, but they found the kuk-kuk-kuk of the machine guns too peppery.

Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby were now able to understand why the Lord had permitted the Governor to enter the Nystroms' house, for it had undoubtedly been the means of saving their own lives. That night, as the rifle shots echoed through the mountains, they wondered whether they were safe to retire for the night. Yet, as they read the words—"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep; for thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety", and "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night," they felt they could pillow their heads on these promises and trust the Lord to make them good.

Word came on September 4th that an Italian major and his battalion had arrived one day north of Lalibella. As the Governor feared that the Italians would take him by force, he arose at 3 o'clock the next morning and went by moonlight to attack them. In order to call in his countrymen to assist him, he fired his machine gun as he left the palace. They soon gathered and followed him without fear, believing the rumour that aeroplanes were now prohibited by the League of Nations. The battle took place and continued for three days. Major Cafaro and his battalion fought bravely, with a stone fence around a churchyard for their only protection. Airplanes were called by wireless to bring ammunition, food and bombs, but there was a very heavy fog, and it was not until the fourth day that the 'planes were able to come to the rescue. At the dropping of bombs, the Ethiopians scattered, and the Governor fled

to hide in the caves along the banks of the Tekazzie River. Shrapnel bombs were dropped all around Lalibella, some of them no farther than a quarter of a mile from the mission station, and, in the distance, liquid gas bombs left a large toll of dead and wounded.

By the end of 1936, Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby ran so short of supplies and of money that it became impossible for them to stay on at Lalibella without relief. They were most anxious not to evacuate the station, as they felt that if they once left, there would be little chance of returning. They prayed that God would show them what was His will, and finally decided that Mr. Oglesby should trek down to the capital for supplies, leaving his wife to hold on at the station. This decision to leave a white woman alone for weeks in such a wild and deserted place, would no doubt be condemned by many, but no one could fail to admire the faith and devotion to the cause of Christ which inspired the missionaries' actions.

Mr. Oglesby accomplished the journey south in safety, and after staying a few days in Addis Ababa, collecting provisions and medicines, he left on February 9th for the return journey.

It is sad to relate that Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby had not long been reunited in Lalibella before they were ordered to leave by the Italians. What they feared had now come to pass, and evacuation of the station could no longer be avoided. Most reluctantly, they took their leave, and started off on the long journey to Addis Ababa, where they arrived on April 20th, 1937, nearly three years after they had first gone to Lalibella. Those years had been full of incident, bringing the missionaries much sorrow as well as joy, and yet God had been with them in all their varied experiences, and had never failed or forsaken them.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MEN OF THE LAMP

“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.”—*Matthew 5: 16.*

IN October, 1935, war was no longer a dreaded spectre, but a ghastly reality. It swept across the country and found Ethiopia totally unable to tend her wounded, as she had no doctors or nurses of her own, and no medical equipment. There were some fifty medically trained men in the land, eight of whom were missionaries, but even if all of them had gone to the front they would only have been able to cope with a pitiful proportion of the hundreds of thousands of war victims.

Dr. Lambie had anticipated such a situation arising, and the previous summer he had visited Europe and America, and attempted to enlist the preparatory help of the Red Cross societies; but he had met with little encouragement. However, with the actual outbreak of war, the nations awakened to a realisation of Ethiopia's complete lack of medical resources, and many countries, including Britain, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Holland, and Egypt, rallied to her aid and sent out well-equipped ambulance units. Ethiopia did her utmost with the slender means at her disposal, and organized her own branch of the Red Cross, of which Dr. Lambie became the Executive Secretary. All missionaries with any medical

experience offered their services to the Ethiopian Red Cross and several units were formed and sent to the front.

Unit No. 4 was composed of Sudan Interior Mission workers, Dr. E. Ralph Hooper, aged sixty-five, and two young men in their early twenties, Allen Smith and Alan Webb, the latter having been in Ethiopia only a few weeks. Although not officially connected with the Ethiopian Red Cross, many other members of the Sudan Interior Mission did great service in caring for the sick and wounded. They undertook this work from humanitarian motives, also because they felt that their action would be an assurance to the Ethiopians of their love and desire to help in time of trouble, but primarily because, as they tended the wounded and the dying, they would have an opportunity of telling of the love of God and the saving power of Christ.

The Sudan Interior Mission unit was designated for the southern front, to assist the army under Ras Desta, the Emperor's son-in-law. After hectic days of packing, all their goods were loaded on two trucks and they set out, accompanied by two Red Cross orderlies and three servants. They little dreamed of the experiences they were to pass through before they saw Addis Ababa again. All through the ensuing weeks Death stalked them, varying his guise and method of attack, but ever present. Yet, the God who commanded deliverance for Jacob, thousands of years ago, is the same God to-day, and He manifested His power by preserving the lives of this brave band of men, and bringing them safely through the valley of the shadow of death.

The road to the southern front simply did not exist. The route led along mule tracks, over rocks, across streams, through long grass and forest. For

two days they made good progress until they approached the Bulbulla river. This was impassable and they were forced to make a detour of a hundred miles round Lake Abaya. Here they encountered innumerable swarms of flies, which made a noise like a motor car racing, and added to their discomfort as they ploughed in bottom gear through the thick grass and soft sand round the lake.

Eventually they became completely lost in the bush, and had to sleep amongst the mosquitoes—these having such a good meal that the party could scarcely get their helmets to go on again! In the morning, some Arussi Gallas volunteered to direct them to a road that was passable, and soon after, they came upon a stream in the forest where they were able to have their first real drink for thirty-six hours. It was certainly welcome.

Tragedy was averted by a very narrow margin, on one occasion when the two lorries were parked on the side of a hill, one behind the other. Dr. Hooper and Mr. Webb were stretched out under the first truck, trying to shield themselves from the blazing sun, and soon fell sound asleep. One of the natives, being in an inquisitive state of mind, went into the cab and started pulling levers. Before long he knocked off the hand brake. Back the truck went down the hill. Mr. Smith let out a yell, and the two sleeping men rolled out from under the wheels just in time. The runaway lorry now headed straight for the second one behind it, full of people. It seemed impossible to avoid a collision, but Mr. Webb was able to jump through the window and put the brake on again, and the danger was over.

Five days after they left Addis Ababa the missionaries reached Yerga Alem, in the Sidamo Province. Here they had to abandon the lorries, as the mountain trail

was impossible for mechanical transport. They remained at Yerga Alem for a week, making arrangements for the head carriers and mules necessary to carry their medical equipment and food supplies.

By slow and tedious degrees, they travelled on southwards until they reached Wadara, which was to have been the hospital base. Ras Desta, however, led his army on to Negullie, some forty-eight miles S.E. and so they went on to overtake him. Arriving at Negullie they found that the army had pushed on still further to the front! Negullie is in the Boran, a land of dry grass about four to five feet high, and dry as a bone most of the year round. Consequently the population is largely congregated around the few water holes and rivers. Camels have to be used almost entirely for transport in the Boran, for mules and horses die off like flies. Wild pig, ostriches, foxes, leopards, lions and giraffes, are all to be found here. As might be expected, the country produces a very hardy type of man and woman, as, in order to live, they must continually fight the forces of nature. They must be able to go without water, hunt and run by day, and be ever on the watch. The only way for the missionary to get into touch with these people is by sharing their life, and enduring these conditions, so difficult for the ordinary European.

The ready sale of Bibles and Gospels in this country is most remarkable. Comparatively few of the people can read, but all who are able read aloud, and a crowd quickly gathers to listen, the men often reading for two or three hours on end in the evening before retiring. These people also love an orator, and anyone who can tell a story well is sure of an audience around the fires at night. One story they never tire of is that of the Prodigal Son. It is wonderful to watch the expressions flit over their faces

and to listen to their grunts as each point makes its appeal and is clearly understood. There is a tremendous sphere of influence here for a native evangelist to wander from one water hole to another, telling the same story and returning periodically to a mission station to learn others.

Although Ras Desta had left Negullie, he had given orders that the missionaries were to be looked after, and a cow was killed for the Hakim—Dr. Hooper. It is rather a large undertaking to eat a cow! The liver was brought in and most of it fried for supper, but Dr. Hooper said he would rather not have any, and so the others were faced with the task of eating about 2 lbs. each! Immediately afterwards they were called to the house of the Fitarari and found a meal of injerra and wat prepared for them. "Injerra" is unleavened bread, made in pancake form, with rather a sour taste. "Wat" is made from ground red pepper corns, and might well be described as "Feu courant" for it is terribly hot and takes the back out of one's throat. For courtesy's sake they had to partake of these delectables; and, on leaving, felt decidedly queer! The next morning the Fitarari came to return the visit, having just had a big meal himself. However, he had to swallow half a big loaf that Mr. Webb had made, which was only half-baked, washed down with five big mugs of boiling tea. Hospitality can be a serious thing.

The largest house in Negullie was placed at the disposal of the missionaries, and they took up their quarters there, settling down to clinic work in the town. Up to that date Negullie had been bombed twice. The first time, forty-four bombs were dropped, and the second time, five large ones. As the missionaries sat peaceably in the house one morning, they heard a shout,

“the 'planes are coming!” and two bombers appeared in the sky, one circling over the forest and the other high over the town. Imagine how it feels to stand and watch a 'plane overhead, wondering whether a bomb is on its way down to you! On this occasion, however, only a few bombs were dropped which did no damage.

On Friday, December 13th, 1935, news was received that Ras Desta was expecting the unit to join him at Filtu, and camels were produced to take them over the waterless country which lay ahead. As darkness fell, the camels became restless, and one started snarling and bucking his pack off. Men shouted and screamed, the camels snarled and stamped, and suddenly there was a splintering crash as 70lb. boxes flew thirty feet, to land in the whirling chaos below. When order was restored at last, they found that one camel had bolted with its pack, and a second one which attempted to follow its example, had travelled too fast to take the bend through the gate and so made a new opening in the fence, and crashed into a tree, the branches relieving it of its burden and scattering tinned goods in all directions. Realizing that it was impossible to set out that night, the three men returned to the house and prepared for sleep. Strangely enough all of them had a distinct premonition that the 'planes would return the following morning.

They arose early and breakfasted. Presently a shout that the 'planes were coming brought them to their feet with a jump. Mr. Webb grabbed his helmet, and emulated the camel of the previous evening, finally diving under a small tree and lying flat in the shadow of its trunk. Almost overhead, five big Italian 'planes sailed serenely. Was this to be the end?

Committing himself to the Lord, he lay and waited.

Bing! Bing!—Bung! Bung! proclaimed the arrival of the bombs, and then fire, earth, huts, smoke, leapt into the air together. A second squadron of bombers followed on, dropping their cargo of hate. As the third flight came over, Mr. Webb hopped from his hiding place and ran for the forest a quarter of a mile away, covering the distance in record time!

Incendiary bombs were dropped in the town, but the flaming contents passed over their house to fall harmlessly in the courtyard. Neither Dr. Hooper nor Mr. Smith were touched, and none of their goods were even damaged. God had commanded deliverance.

They helped to put out some of the fires in the town, and then for seven hours they treated the wounded victims of the raid. They estimated the total number of bombs dropped in and around the town was one thousand—five hundred of which they actually counted.

That night they set out again in another attempt to join Ras Desta's army, but after travelling two miles, their guides bolted into the forest and left them stranded. The situation seemed hopeless.

One night the Swedish Red Cross unit came through Negullie on its way to the front, with five lorries and wonderful supplies of all kinds. The Swedes handed the missionaries some mail, and then hurried on down to the lines. Not many days later they were severely bombed by the Italians, with the result that is known the world over. Dr. Hylander was seriously wounded, and Mr. Lundstrom was killed. Mr. Lundstrom was known to the natives as the "man with the Bible," for in every spare moment he was found reading the Scriptures. He was shot through the mouth and tongue, and was unable to speak

in the short time before he died, but he motioned for a pencil and paper, and wrote, "Don't worry for me, I know where I am going and He will be there to meet me."

This terrible bombing of the Swedish Unit was investigated by members of the International Red Cross Society of Geneva, who considered that it was impossible to continue such ambulance work unless the insignia of the Red Cross was respected. Finally they recommended that the Sudan Interior Mission Unit should be assigned to Ras Desta's army, for as there were only a few members it would probably be possible for them to hide in a safe place during any bombardments.

Accordingly the missionaries once more set off for the southern front, the Swedes kindly giving them the use of their motor lorries. They left at 5 p.m. and drove on till midnight, when they snatched a few hours' sleep. On their way again long before dawn, they hid and advanced by turns, and eventually arrived near the front lines about 9 p.m. At this point they encountered a band of Amharas, who covered them with their rifles, thinking that they were Italians attacking from the rear. Had it not been for the timely intervention of an Ethiopian officer who accompanied the Unit, the missionaries would all have been shot. A few moments later they were greeted by Ras Desta, who, with his Military Adviser, Captain Frere, and about a dozen others, was fleeing northwards, as the Italians had that day wiped out practically the whole of his army. If the missionaries had arrived fifteen minutes earlier they would have run into the Italian tanks, and had they been fifteen minutes later they would not have been able to rescue this Ethiopian remnant.

Hurriedly they refilled the petrol tanks and reversed the lorries—this was the only spot for miles where

it was possible to turn! They dumped all their supplies, and the Ras and his party climbed on board. Within a few minutes the lorries were roaring back the way they had come, dodging boulders, curving round trees and rushing through river beds. By some miracle there were no collisions, the axles held, and the tyres did not burst.

The Unit was not bombed either travelling to or from the front, as the Italian 'planes were all employed in finishing off the Ethiopian army.

The Swedish Red Cross established another hospital and the Sudan Interior Mission unit settled down to do some useful work with them, but it was not to be.

One evening, Pastor Svensson and Captain Frere were summoned to appear before the Ras.

Just previously Mr. Webb had been reading in Hebrews 13: and had been deeply impressed by the fifth verse—"Be content with such things as ye have, for He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." It was no surprise to hear that they would have to leave at daybreak, as the enemy had advanced close to their present position. All that night they packed the lorries, and at daybreak drove them deep into the forest in preparation for flight. But it became impossible to travel by motor, and so they packed some of the valuables on camels, and took their departure about eight o'clock the next morning, riding on mules. As they left, they could hear the Italian lorry and tank engines approaching on the other side of the town. They had scarcely travelled two miles on the road before they heard the sound of bursting shells. They camped that night in the forest, one day's trek away from the enemy. Away again before the dawn, they travelled on till late in the afternoon, several of them walking in order

that the servants might put the heavy loads on the mules. For five days they walked, hearing that the Italians had sent a column along the road behind them.

A summary of those days must suffice. They drank from mountain and forest streams, ate native injerra and wat, and on one occasion ate raw meat rather than go hungry. They slept in the grass at night with only one blanket, and in the rain at that. Finally, climbing to 10,000 feet, they accomplished a journey on foot that no other white man had ever made except by mule. That night was bitterly cold, and the clouds drifted on the ground blotting everything out. Coming across a disused house, the members of the two ambulances, together with the servants, crowded in and slept front to back on the floor. That was an awful night. The fleas and lice walked up their legs and on other exposed parts, yet they were unable to scratch for fear of waking one another.

The next day they reached the hot plains in a state of exhaustion. Pastor Svensson and Mr. Alander, among the Swedes, were both seriously ill and unable to ride any further. Eventually the company reached the Sudan Interior Mission station at Yerga Alem, utterly worn out, and with all their possessions and equipment destroyed; yet they offered up heartfelt praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God for the wonderful deliverances granted to them.

A Red Cross 'plane was sent to take the two Swedish men to Addis Ababa, and Dr. Hooper was invited to join them. The experiences of the past weeks had been gruelling enough for a young man, let alone a veteran like Dr. Hooper, but nevertheless he finished up walking ten or fifteen miles a day. Soon after his return to Addis Ababa he was able to leave for home.

There were several Sudan Interior Mission missionaries at the Yerga Alem station. Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell and their baby, Mr. and Mrs. Roke, Miss MacGregor, Miss Pogue, and her fiancé, Mr. Devers. After consultation with Dr. Lambie, who came down by 'plane, it was decided that Mr. Devers and Mr. Smith should stay behind to look after the mission station, while the two families and the single ladies went to Addis Ababa for safety, Mr. Webb accompanying them to collect some clothes and supplies, with the object of returning with another doctor, and resuming Red Cross work with Mr. Smith.

In due course the party set off by lorry, and all went well until they arrived at the Mukky River, which was in flood and about five feet deep. For over three days they waited patiently for the stream to abate, and during this time ran out of food. At last they managed to push the truck through the river, the men transporting the ladies and the goods on their shoulders. Further on they found that the roads ahead were impassable, owing to the rains, but as they had reached the railroad, they were able to board a passing train, finally arriving in Addis Ababa, having taken eight days to travel two hundred miles.

At once Mr. Webb started to get a new Red Cross outfit together to return to Sidamo, and it was not long before Mr. Mitchell and he were retracing their steps back to Yerga Alem. Leaving Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Devers at the mission station, the two young men settled down to Red Cross work in the Sidamo Province, under Dr. Roberts, another Sudan Interior Mission doctor. Mr. Webb wrote, "Things are fairly peaceful save for frequent bombings!" There was plenty to do treating the wounded and the sick.

Early in May, they heard from Negradas Sehailie, later hanged by Ras Desta for communicating with the

Italians, that Addis Ababa had been taken. They were also told of the previous looting by the natives and the terrible days of shooting and uproar, and were advised to leave Sidamo and go to Soddu, in the Walamo Province, where there was a Sudan Interior Mission hospital. After praying for guidance in this matter, Dr. Roberts and Mr. Webb decided to go to Soddu, while Mr. Smith stayed behind to work with a Norwegian Red Cross Unit, operating in the Sidamo area. He was able to remain in Sidamo until the middle of July, when he left with a Swedish unit, which escaped southwards into Kenya.

Their journey was hazardous in the extreme, and such were their hardships in the desert that they almost gave up hope of succour. Mr. Smith's knowledge of the country and people was of great value, and he finally organized and led a final effort to secure help. They succeeded at last in reaching a British official who was able to give them the timely aid that saved the whole unit. For his services to the expedition, Mr. Smith was awarded a decoration by the Swedish Government.

Meanwhile Dr. Roberts and Mr. Webb set out to cross a brigand-infested desert, their only visible means of defence a couple of shotguns. Crossing a dry river bed where two native postmen had recently been murdered, they eventually arrived at the mission station in Soddu, their hearts full of praise to the Lord for His goodness in bringing them through to safety. Thus ends the story of the Sudan Interior Mission Red Cross Unit. Exposed to dangers of all kinds, its members had escaped death by starvation, thirst, accident, exposure, bombs and brigands.

Like the three men in the burning, fiery furnace, they could now say with certainty, "Our God whom we serve, is able to deliver us."

## CHAPTER VI

### PRESERVATION AMIDST DESTRUCTION

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."—*Psalm 34: 7.*

IN April, 1936, the Emperor had been defeated and his army scattered. The Italians had reached Dessie, two hundred miles from Addis Ababa, and were advancing rapidly. The Ethiopian Government was in a state of nervous apprehension, and the ministers had decided to transfer the capital to Gore, in Western Abyssinia.

A small army was sent towards Dessie to try and stop the Italian advance, but the soldiers never fired a shot. Instead, they beat a hasty retreat, and swelled the tide of refugees that was pouring into Addis Ababa from the north. Unspeakably dirty, hungry and sick, they staggered along in crowds. Many of them were homeless, and large numbers had ghastly, discharging wounds, weeks old.

The Ethiopian Red Cross and others did what they could to treat the wounded and feed the hungry. Every hospital was filled to the limit, including the Sudan Interior Mission Leprosarium, which had been repainted and made available for non-leper patients. Several of the missionaries put a little of their money together to provide food for the refugees, and they also started a

clinic with a doctor in charge, and several nurses to help. Mr. Glover had a rather trying experience one day when he was driving several patients to hospital in an ambulance. One man was shell-shocked and badly gassed, so Mr. Glover had him sitting up beside him in the driver's cab so that he could breathe better. This proved almost disastrous, for the man twice tried to climb out of the door. Next he was discovered hanging on to the hand brake for support, and then as they descended a steep hill, he slipped the gear control into neutral! Only by a miracle was an accident avoided. As they approached the hospital the man saw his brother, and stopped to speak to him. He had a sad story to tell: "Our brother has died at the front, and I am going to the hospital to die. Will you bring mother and sister to see me?" Then the two sobbed on each other's necks, and Mr. Glover tried to swallow the lump in his throat. This was only one of many similar scenes. Truly those were terrible days, and would have been almost unbearable apart from the sustaining presence of the God of all comfort.

Friday, May 1st, was the last day of the Ethiopian Government, although no one knew it at the time, and life went on about as usual. Two Italian aeroplanes flew over the city, but as they had been over every day that week no one thought much of it. In the afternoon Dr. Lambie visited the house of the Foreign Minister. His eldest son, a Cambridge graduate, was on the porch, with a new machine gun in his hands, symbolic enough of the hell that was to break loose the next morning. The decisions that were reached were not made public, but that night, half an hour after midnight, the missionaries at the Sudan Interior Mission headquarters

had the first appraisal of the cataclysm that was gathering its force.

They were quietly asleep in their beds. The sound of gunfire could be heard in the distance, but as there had been a good deal of it lately they were able to disregard it. Downstairs in her little crib, lay the two-year-old daughter of Fitarari Biru, the former War Minister of Ethiopia, a man in high favour with the king. At the father's request the Mission had looked after her almost from birth. Her Ethiopian nurse, a young widow and a devout Christian, was sleeping beside her. Suddenly everyone was startled from sleep by the violent honking of a motor car horn. Hastily putting on a bathrobe, Dr. Lambie went to the door to find Fitarari Biru, who announced that he was leaving on a special train with the Emperor, in an hour's time, and that he wanted his daughter and her nurse. He was going to Djibouti. They hastily dressed the baby, bundled up a few clothes, and off they went. Some time later, the whistle of the train engine announced that the Emperor and his principal ministers had made their escape from the doomed city.

The sound of rifle fire increased. Before leaving, His Majesty had thrown open his treasuries, household goods, and munition stores, and bade his soldiers take what they wanted. The soldiers and servants, who had not been paid for many months, needed no second invitation, and fought and killed each other for the richest loot.

The Sudan Interior Mission compound is about two miles from the centre of the town. The sound of rifle firing could be heard in the distance, but everything was quiet at first, in that neighbourhood, and so on Saturday morning Dr. and Mrs. Lambie started to go

to the Red Cross office as usual. Mr. Ostien was driving the car. When they came up to one of the principal streets leading to the centre of the town they realized that something was wrong. Crowds of people were leaving in great haste, and before they had gone much further the looting of shops began. Stores were broken into, and the streets were the scene of great disorder. Ghanotakis' shop, one of the principal general stores, was the first place to be broken into, and they met some of the looters running away with saucepans, bottles of foreign wines, whisky, and all kinds of loot.

The Lambies decided to return home, and they had just turned the car and started back, when a mob of about forty armed men tried to stop them, and menaced them with rifles. As the men seemed undecided whether to hold them up or not, they quietly pushed their way through and made their escape back to headquarters.

The mission compound is a large one. The two principal buildings on it are, the headquarters and mission hostel building, and Dr. and Mrs. Lambie's own house, which is three hundred yards down the hill. The stable and servants' houses are still lower down the hill in a different direction. As great crowds of people were passing the compound with loads of stolen goods, and shooting off their guns as they went by, it was decided, after a hasty council, that all the missionaries should seek shelter on the upper floor of the hostel, and do what they could to make some little defence with two rolls of barbed wire and a few sandbags. Altogether there were four men, fourteen women and two children. They had two shotguns and a rifle, but of course, did not intend to shoot anyone. They did, however, fire into

the air sometimes when they saw a particularly dangerous looking crowd approaching on the road just behind. On Saturday night, they heard that a certain Fitarari who was camped at the back of the hostel with his men, was only waiting until night to raid and plunder the mission station. Much earnest prayer was offered, and the missionaries felt assured that God was caring for His own.

The shooting that night was terrific, both distant and close at hand. The mob had found the Government ammunition stores. Most of the shooting was, of course, simply shooting into the air, although several times the whiz of bullets was heard. On Sunday morning the firing was intense. It was estimated that on Saturday and Sunday six hundred thousand shots were fired. It was like a grand (if ominous) Fourth of July celebration, and one of the worst features was that the mob had broken into the wine shops kept by Greeks and Armenians and had an unlimited amount of drink with which to inflame themselves.

About ten o'clock on Sunday morning, some of the returned soldiers and uniformed policemen from Addis Ababa tried to steal the mules in the mission compound. At this, some of the neighbours came to the rescue, and fired at the horse thieves. This drove them off, but they did succeed in stealing one horse, and three Red Cross mules.

There is a little stream not very far from the Mission that the people have to cross in coming from town, and here a body of desperate men held up little groups and forced them to give up their loot. The robbers were robbed by other robbers, and when they resisted they were often shot dead.

All that day, and in fact for the four days, thousands of looters and murderers passed just behind the house but did not try to come in. It was as if God had placed a wall of fire round about.

On Sunday afternoon, about 5 o'clock, four young journalists, armed with rifles and revolvers, drove out from town bearing a letter from the American Minister, His Excellency C. H. Van Engert. The letter had been written early in the morning, but the messenger was unable to get to the Mission, as he was menaced by armed men. The journalists told of the great disorder in the town, of the burning of the Post Office, and many of the best buildings, of the pillaging of shops, and of the death in the streets. The young reporters said that they were barricaded at the American Legation, and that most other American missionaries had gone to the British Legation, where they had a guard of well-trained Sikh soldiers with machine guns.

The American Legation was not so well supplied, but they had thirty men with rifles. The postscript of Mr. Engert's letter said that the advancing Italian army was reported to be ten to twelve miles from the city. The missionaries had never thought that they should pray for the Italians to enter Addis, but the disorder had been so great since the Ethiopian Government had left, that they all fervently hoped that the Italians would soon come—and bring some order out of the awful state of affairs.

Every day the missionaries tried to get news. When were the Italians coming; had they come or were they coming at all? No one knew, and they could not go to town. Great black columns of smoke billowed up from the city two miles away, and the looters

kept passing by in thousands. They were without positive news all day Monday, and on Tuesday morning they decided to try and get a messenger into the American Legation.

They succeeded in this, and got a reply from Mr. Engert, who must have been agitated when he wrote it, for he answered none of the questions, but simply told them not to go to town. They were much concerned about Mr. Rohrbaugh, who lived near the railway station, for they had been without news of him since early Sunday morning. The same messenger consented to try and get a note to him, but came back with the news that the house was locked and barred. He had been unable to get any response to knocking at the gate or shouting over the wall, and had found a dead man propped up in the gateway.

They were delighted when, about 11 a.m., two of the British Red Cross trucks appeared, commanded by Colonel Llewellyn, who was accompanied by Mr. d'Halpert, Mr. Dawson, Dr. Empey and six armed men. What a story they told of rioting, murder and looting! They brought the sad news that Dr. John Melly, the head of the British Red Cross, had been shot through the chest while picking up a wounded man in the streets of Addis Ababa. The men were astonished beyond words when they heard how few people there were at the Mission—only four men, with fourteen women and two children—and they were inclined to blame the Legations for failing to warn them or send any assistance, but the missionaries told them that their faith was in God, Who had given them wonderful promises, and that they were sure that He would watch over and deliver them.

Mr. Dawson and Mr. d'Halpert felt they should stay on the compound, and remained for the rest of that day and all night. About 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Mr. Rohrbaugh sent word that one of his men had been shot through both legs, and that he wanted him brought to the Mission. Not long after, Mr. Rohrbaugh himself arrived in his motorbike and sidecar. On the sidecar, he had two railway guards, who themselves had taken to looting, but with whom he had made friends, and who were protecting him at his house. Mr. Rohrbaugh told them at headquarters that he believed the Italians had entered, or were entering the town, as there was a great rumbling as of many trucks.

That evening they heard a distant rumbling, and the Italians actually did enter the capital, although the shooting was even worse that night than ever. In fact it was that night that the American Legation had such a hard time, and a few brave Americans beat off hundreds of looters.

During the four days of riot and bloodshed that followed the departure of Haile Selassie, the missionaries at the Leprosarium passed through very similar experiences to those at Headquarters.

On Saturday morning, they were busy attending their patients when a great mob appeared on the road below, and looted several Government ammunition dumps, which were within a few yards of the gate. Guns and bullets were free to all who wished, and immediately all the servants but two deserted to get their share, afterwards going off in bands to rob and kill. The next scene was indescribable. Shots were fired by the hundred in all directions. Three of the ladies who were living alone in one house on the compound, were

told by a soldier-patient that they had better flee, as all the foreigners were to die.

The missionaries were truly in danger of their lives, but the Lord implanted peace in their hearts, and they carried on with their work of caring for the wounded. At nightfall they all assembled together in the main house, around which they had put barbed wire entanglements. After supper, Mr. Nystrom and Mr. Lewis kept watch, while the others tried to get some sleep. An officer from Walamo visited them that evening, and he was accompanied by about thirty armed men who kept their rifles firing all night. One officer moved around the grounds with his machine gun, which snapped out its warning to the robbers in bursts of twenty-five to fifty shots. As it was dark he could not be seen, and thus the neighbouring people thought that the missionaries had several machine guns, and so were afraid to attack them. All the soldiers left early next morning, and as they went they stole a dozen blankets from the hospital.

Patients continued to be brought in on Sunday, and the missionaries felt they must go to the hospital to look after them, although it was risky to leave the house on account of the incessant firing. They had no servants, there was no one to draw water from the river, or cook any food, and with about fifty lepers and as many surgical and medical cases to look after, they were kept completely occupied.

There were several fights a few yards down the valley, between rival bands of robbers. Fierce shooting on both sides resulted in several deaths, and on one occasion three patients were brought into the hospital and had to be operated on, on the same day. Some

of these bandits brought their wives and children to shelter in the mission house, and probably the fact that they were there kept the missionaries from being attacked themselves.

For four days there was shooting all around. Bullets dropped through the roof, the bodies of dead and dying polluted the air, and hyenas howled round the house at night. Through all this time of horror God gave His servants the assurance that He was watching over them, and enabled them to carry on with their work, confident that nothing could happen which He did not allow.

On Wednesday afternoon it was possible to go into the town. The missionaries were appalled by the dreadful sights that met their eyes. The whole centre of the town was simply burned out, with the exception of the bank, Mohammed Ali's, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and one or two other buildings. (The Sudan Interior Mission bookshop was completely destroyed.) A horrible odour of burning and corruption hung over everything. Most of the buildings were completely gutted by fire, and the embers were still smoking, while the streets were a perfect litter of papers, broken bottles, filth of all kinds, dead mules, dead dogs, and corpses of men by the dozen. A more fearful spectacle could not be imagined.

The Italians had come in the day before, and throughout that day, with hundreds of enormous trucks and thousands of Eritrean soldiers. Every open space was soon filled with tents and motor lorries. A few Greeks and Armenians, who had lost everything by fire and looting, could be seen despondently threading their way through the smoking ruins of their houses or places of business. Of Ethiopians there

was scarcely one to be seen. The entrance of the Italians seemed to take all thought of resistance from their minds, and they were bent only on getting away.

The Italians soon began to bring order out of the awful chaos, and before a week had elapsed the bodies were buried and the streets largely cleaned up. It will take years to build up the city again, and one hopes that it may be built up in better and more enduring fashion.

The Italians and Eritreans had come a long, hard journey by trucks from the north, and they expected to be able to buy lots of things in Addis Ababa. They could have done so had they arrived five days earlier, but arson and pillage had done their work very effectively, and there was nothing left to sell or buy. The great stores at the railway station and customs house had suffered the same fate as the others.

Every day the missionaries at Headquarters used to read *Daily Light*, a book of selected Bible verses, and on May 1st, the day before the rioting began, and when there was a great deal of apprehension, they were comforted by these two verses: "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee," and "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Could anything be more definite and reassuring than that? On the eventful Sunday, the 46th Psalm came as the portion for the day—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble, therefore will not we fear. . . ." What a source of rest and peace these promises were during those four black days when terror reigned!

On Sunday afternoon, the Mission servants were all

very nervous and apprehensive, for there was little protection at the Mission, and almost no firearms. Some of the servants had wives and children, and it looked as if they would all run away. After prayer, it seemed that God gave Dr. Lambie some reassurance for them and a message, so he called them all together and said to them something like this: "You have all known me many years, and will witness if I have ever lied to any of you. Now hear me and witness that Our Heavenly Father has shown me that, if you will all stay here quietly, none of you will suffer harm. Be witnesses of my words all of you. This is a true word and God is witness of it also." The servants accepted Dr. Lambie's statement, which was indeed a true word, for no one who stayed on the mission compound had a single scratch or lost a penny. God mercifully kept all of them and theirs, for His promises are Yea and Amen.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE WAY OF ESCAPE

“Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses. And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.”—*Psalm 107: 6, 7.*

At the time of the upheaval in Addis Ababa, two young women were living alone at the Sudan Interior Mission station at Marako, a village some eighty miles south of the capital city. The married couple who had previously been in charge of the station had, for health reasons, left for furlough, and as there had been no one else to take their place, Miss Horn and Miss McMillan had asked permission to stay on there alone.

News of the disorder that began in Addis Ababa on May 2nd, did not reach Marako until two days later. As soon as the word came through that the Ethiopian rulers had left the country, every local official fled. Some three hundred prisoners, many of them murderers, were released, and the population indulged in a mad orgy of looting and killing. One of their first actions was to raid the customs house and cut the telephone line, thereby severing communications with the capital.

For the two white women alone on the mission station, the situation was perilous in the extreme. They had no protection of any kind, yet, in spite of the imminent danger, God gave them peace of heart and

they waited developments, confident that if it was His will He could preserve them from all evil.

As darkness fell on the 6th May, some fifty armed bandits came to the mission station. They stated that one of their number was sick. Miss Horn, who is a trained nurse, tried to find out what was the matter, but it became obvious that the request for medicine was a mere pretext for entering the compound. Almost at once the men crowded into the house, striking and kicking the two women. Resistance was impossible, and the missionaries meekly submitted to whatever indignities their brutal assailants chose to inflict upon them. Perhaps what hurt them most of all was to recognise amongst the mob several who were well known to them, and to whom they had preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In fifteen minutes the robbers had practically cleared the house, and destroyed or damaged what they could not carry away. Even doors and windows were wrenched off their hinges, and the house was stripped bare. The bandits then hurried off. For some reason they did not take the women prisoners.

The two missionaries were now homeless and stranded, and it seemed as though the end had come. Yet the Lord had not forsaken His children, and a certain Ato Dumbel, an Ethiopian of good family, came and urged them to accept the protection of his own compound. "For," he said, "the bandits will certainly return and kill you if they find you here." They hastily gathered up the few possessions that the robbers had overlooked (fortunately some essential things), and they went with Ato Dumbel to his place in the foothills.

Fourteen years ago, even before missionaries came to the Gurage province, Ato Dumbel was converted

through reading the Amharic Scriptures. Miss Horn wrote of him: "Ato Dumbel is a tower of strength. We knew him before as the scholar, and thought him more dreamy than practical. But no! He is a real, war-like Galla, realising to the full our danger and taking all possible precautions, yet inspiring confidence in all."

At first, Miss Horn and Miss McMillan lived in an empty hut on Ato Dumbel's compound; then, as fears and dangers increased, he brought them into his own anteroom. Later on, he built them a little shelter close to his own house, where they had a measure of privacy. Thus God protected their lives during the next three weeks; but only those who know from experience the kind of things that live in an African hut can fully appreciate the discomfort of those days of hiding.

They tried to send word to Addis Ababa, but the messengers were attacked and returned badly knocked about. Eventually they did succeed in getting a letter through telling of their plight and saying: "We praise God for the honour of suffering loss and bruising for His sake—and if we die, it is greater honour still. But life is sweet, and we would gladly live and serve Him, if that be His will. If you had been here you could not have saved us. God is with us and His will is best."

All around, the country was given up to terrorism. Bands of wild Marako horsemen descended on the surrounding villages leaving many dead in their train. One of the Armenians who lived near the mission station, and who had been very unpopular, was killed in cold blood. He begged for his life and offered the bandits money, but they told him they wanted nothing but his life, and hacked his body into bits.

After the third week, things became a little quieter.

Some of the natives ventured to graze their cattle on the plain, and others recommenced their ploughing. Many of the Christians visited the missionaries, and a few patients came for treatment, as Miss Horn had managed to save a small medical outfit. They managed fairly well for food, as they had brought a few supplies from the station, and were able on two occasions to buy some chickens and eggs. Ato Dumbel also killed a young bull, which supplied them with food for several days, as the meat kept good longer than usual in that climate.

Considering the shock of the experience through which they had passed, and the nervous strain of the following days, they kept in fairly good health, yet they could not help feeling sick with disappointment at the havoc that had been wrought, and at the behaviour of some of the professing Christians. One of these was shot quarrelling over loot, and another was the leader of the band who raided the station on the first terrible night. It is not surprising that they were tempted to feel that the work of six years had been destroyed in a single day.

They soon realized that those in Addis Ababa could do nothing to help them, and so Ato Dumbel himself began to plan their escape, voluntarily assuming the whole responsibility. He had a good deal of influence in that neighbourhood, and had friends and relatives in the villages between Marako and Addis Ababa. He himself made a secret trip halfway to the capital in order to make the necessary arrangements for their escort.

On June 1st, the missionaries set out, accompanied by Ato Dumbel and three of the mission servants who had remained faithful. All the way they were accompanied by relays of armed men. One local chief would send his soldiers to go with them half a day's journey

to the next chief, who in his turn provided another escort. They avoided the main routes and kept to back hill paths, but several times they encountered small bands of robbers who said: "Why should we not kill them, they are white people?"

A large armed force could scarcely have passed unmolested through this country, yet this small band somehow accomplished the four days' journey to Addis Ababa in safety. What a testimony to the keeping power of Almighty God! "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee."

All honour and thanks were given to Ato Dumbel for his courage and kindness, but the only reward for which he asked was that, if he were considered worthy, he might be baptized. As the missionaries talked with him they felt that he had been manifestly taught and prepared by the Holy Spirit, and this request was gladly granted.

Miss Horn and Miss McMillan had suffered many things in the past four weeks. They had been kicked and beaten, all their possessions had been stolen or destroyed, and they had seen the disappointment of so many hopes. Yet, in spite of everything, they arrived at their journey's end with this song on their lips and in their hearts:

"I love Thee, blessed will of God,  
And all Thy ways adore:  
And every day I live I seem  
To love Thee more and more.

Ill that He blesses is our good,  
And unblest good is ill;  
And all is right that seems most wrong  
If it be His sweet will."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SHADOW OF DEATH

“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”—*Rev. 2: 10.*

ON May 7th, 1936, Mr. Cliff Mitchell and Mr. Tom Devers left the mission station at Yerga Alem in an attempt to reach Addis Ababa. They knew that their loved ones in the capital, Mr. Mitchell's wife and baby son, and Mr. Devers' fiancée, must be in danger, and the two young men were naturally anxious to be with them and protect them. They set out with an escort of about twenty soldiers and decided to take the shortest route, across the Arussi desert, probably unaware that that part of the country was then infested with hordes of bloodthirsty natives.

On the afternoon of the 9th May, tired out with travelling from early morning, they were surrounded and attacked by some two hundred armed Arussi Gallas. Practically all the escort was killed on the spot. The two missionaries were speared to death, and their bodies dragged under the cover of nearby bushes. Although they were not given the tribute of Christian burial, yet they died in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection.

Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Devers were the first members of the Sudan Interior Mission to suffer martyrdom for

Christ's sake, and it is perhaps difficult to understand why they were not granted deliverance from such a death. The other Sudan Interior Mission missionaries escaped with their lives, why were these two men allowed to die? There seems to be no explanation, in the same way that it is not explained why God allowed Herod to slay James the brother of John, and yet sent His angel to deliver Peter from a like fate. The writer to the Hebrews does not explain either, why some, through faith, escaped the edge of the sword, while others, through faith, were slain with the sword. God's way may often seem mysterious, yet it is always perfect, and as Mrs. Mitchell wrote afterwards: "Though we cannot understand why a loving God should allow two such useful lives to be cut off in their prime, we must and gladly do bow to His perfect and good will. . . . When we enter into our Lord's presence, glorified and made perfect in His image, then shall we know and understand. . . . I am sure that a special sense of God's unfailing presence and infinite grace was their portion in that awful time of dire need, and great was their joy as they entered the immediate presence of the One they loved so well."

The following moving tribute to Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Devers was written by Mr. Allen Smith, who was the last to see them alive.

"I should like to tell you of one touching detail concerning Mr. Mitchell. During the twelve months previous to his Home-going, he had been working on the translation of John's Gospel into Gudgi (a Galla dialect). On the occasions when the Italian bombers visited Yerga Alem, Cliff never took refuge in our bomb-proof shelter without bringing with him his manuscript

of John and his Bible. I have seen him, when the 'planes were almost overhead, run into the house to fetch the manuscript, fearing that fire-bombs would be dropped and the precious papers thus destroyed. The work was almost completed when he left Yerga Alem, and he took it with him on the tragic journey to Addis.

"Cliff was one of that rare type in whom the humility and tenderness of the Lord are seen. There was a quiet, joyful look in his eye that betokened the fact that the Man of Calvary was often before him and that Heaven was not far away. He was loving in spirit and meek in heart, forgiving freely when, humanly speaking, forgiveness was not deserved.

"He lost no opportunity in making Christ known. I have heard him speaking of Christ by the bedside of a dying Darassa—to a company gathered in a Gudgi hut—before high Amharic officials—to Greek traders. He had a message that was positive, and its never changing theme was 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.'

"Tommy Devers was one of the joyful type. In some ways he reminded me of Peter. He was irrepressible, and bubbled over with the joy of the knowledge of sins forgiven, and of a Mansion on high where the King reigns in glory. Fearless of contradiction and delighting in opposition, I can picture him wanting to jump on a box in the streets of Toronto in order to proclaim Christ. No native ever heard an unkind word from Tommy. They loved him."

These two now behold the Lamb in His beauty and for them there can be no more sorrow, but for those left behind there is pain and heartbreak from the

sense of loss. Those who have passed through a similar experience will be able to feel with Mrs. Mitchell when she says: "There are times when one's faith is at stake, except that God graciously turns our eyes from the greatest sorrows in this life unto Him, the Author and Finisher of our faith, and we realise all that is entailed by the words 'My flesh and my heart faileth, *but God* is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever'."

"How bright these glorious spirits shine!  
Whence all their white array?  
How came they to the blissful seats  
Of everlasting day?

Lo! these are they from sufferings great  
Who came to realms of light;  
And in the blood of Christ have washed  
Those robes that shine so bright.

Now with triumphal palms they stand  
Before the throne on high,  
And serve the God they love, amidst  
The glories of the sky."

## CHAPTER IX

### THE EVACUATION OF GAMO

“If it had not been the Lord Who was on our side, when men rose up against us: then they had swallowed us up, quick, when their wrath was kindled against us.”—*Psalm 124: 2, 3.*

THE Ethiopian Government had always been reluctant to give any kind of written authority to foreigners, for in the past some foreigners had behaved unscrupulously towards the natives. Thus, although a mission station was opened at Shammah, in the Gamo Province, in 1934, the missionaries had never possessed a paper giving them permission to carry on work there. As in other districts, they had entered the field as the way seemed open, making friends with the natives and officials. As they quietly went on with their work they had gradually established confidence.

However, in October 1935, a new Governor was appointed to Gamo Province, and most of the Government officials with whom the missionaries had become friendly, left for the front. The new Governor did not come to Gamo himself, on account of the war, but sent his representative with a few men. This Acting-Governor, who had previously been a bandit, realised that as the Central Government officials were largely occupied with war matters, it was an opportune moment for him to fill his own pockets.

Early in 1936, Mr. Street and Mr. Trewin were taken

prisoner by a band of Amharas when they were on an itinerant trip from Shammah. They were beaten, pelted with mud, and mocked. Many charges were laid against them, ranging from aiding the Italians to propagating a false religion. They were taken to Chinchá, the provincial capital, and after twenty-four hours were released, but told that they might not do any more itinerating. A week or two later, when they made a trip from the mission station into Chinchá, they were again arrested, and were held until they had signed a paper agreeing not to leave Shammah. This was tantamount to being imprisoned in their own homes. A few days after, another group of Amharas came to the compound and again took the men prisoner, this time putting Mr. Street in chains. They were taken before the Acting-Governor, who ordered them to leave Shammah and move into Chinchá with all their belongings, including cows, donkeys, mules and horses. Mr. Street refused to do this, as he said that the women and children could not stand the altitude and cold of Chinchá, and that there was no suitable place for them to live. Towards the close of the second day they were once more released.

Several times the missionaries were told by their servants, on information obtained from the Acting-Governor's servants, that money would fix up everything, but they stubbornly refused to descend to bribery. As they had no written authority, which was constantly demanded, to remain in Shammah, and as they also refused to give money, it looked as if they would be forced to abandon the station.

As soon as the trouble started they had sent word to the station at Soddu, and also tried to send a message

to Addis Ababa. It sometimes took a week for a telegram to reach the capital, as there was only a single line telephone, which was often down in places, and the message had to be relayed through an operator every sixty or seventy miles. The Chinchu operator was, moreover, hand in glove with the Acting-Governor, and it was by no means certain that any message would be sent as it was given. Eventually the special runners whom the missionaries had despatched to Addis Ababa reached the Sudan Interior Mission headquarters, and by the end of February, the Acting-Governor had been reprimanded. From that time he gave no further trouble, in fact he became most friendly, and set himself out to please, telling the missionaries that they could go anywhere they liked.

In April, tribal wars broke out in Gamo with pent-up ferocity. Raids were made daily on cattle and grain. Children were torn from their mothers and taken off to serve as slaves. Hundreds of men and women were slain in the cruelty of heathendom. The missionaries' grief was intensified when they found that many of their neighbours and personal servants, who had repeatedly heard the Gospel message, took quite as great delight in slaughtering their fellow men and carrying off the spoils of war as those who had never heard of the Christ Who came to save.

In the middle of May, word reached them of the entry of the Italians into Addis Ababa, and of the pillaging of the returning Ethiopian soldiers. They heard rumours that the Amharas in Chinchu were making plans to attack them, and their servants became very anxious, and urged them to escape. They made preliminary arrangements with local carriers and muleteers

to leave for Soddu, but they received word from Mr. Ohman, the district superintendent at Soddu, that they would be wiser to stay where they were.

On May 19th, their servants told them that the Amharas were robbing the native treasury in Chinchu, and planned to come and raid the mission station the next day. They got further word from Mr. Ohman that he could not send them carriers, so they tried to arrange with some of the local ones.

Miss Bray had packed up her belongings and had just started off, but she had not gone more than a short distance when they saw six Amharas coming up the hill towards the compound, with their guns. Miss Bray turned back, and the Amharas promptly went through all her belongings and stole whatever they wanted. They marched Mr. Street around at the point of their guns, and took what they wanted from his house too. Then they demanded money. Fortunately the bulk of the missionaries' funds was hidden, and Mr. Street had only a little personal cash on him, which he handed to them. Finally they went away.

Immediately after they had gone the natives from round about came to the compound to commiserate with the missionaries. One chief offered to guard them that night, and settled down outside with some of his men. He was rather a suspicious character, and Mr. Street was a little doubtful of his good intentions, and rightly so too, for by 8 p.m. he had cleared off altogether. That night the missionaries all slept in the same house, and about 9.30 they heard a mob of people going into Miss Bray's house and the clinic, both of which they cleaned out altogether. They were there all night going through everything. They tried all the

medicines, and those they did not like they strewed along the path!

Next morning, while the missionaries were at breakfast, more natives arrived on the scene, many of them bringing their women with them to carry back the loot. There were some five or six hundred people in all, representing four different tribes. They rooted round all over the compound, destroying and plundering, but fortunately they left the house in which the missionaries were, quite alone. Probably no tribe dared to attack for fear of the others.

The missionaries were unable to get any carriers to go with them to Soddu, but when they heard that plans were afoot to steal Mr. and Mrs. Street's four children, they decided to pack up a few belongings on their mules and try to get away by themselves. They were just about to start off when about ten armed natives appeared. These were friendly neighbours, and they said that they would stay and guard the compound, and advised the missionaries to remain, which they finally decided was the best thing to do.

For the next week or two things were fairly normal, except for continuous pilfering by the natives. Mr. Street made several trips into Chincha and told the Acting-Governor what had happened. He promised that the things that had been stolen would be returned, and a number of them were actually given back, including some of the money.

There were still threats to steal the children, and this was the greatest cause for anxiety. Three weeks after the second raid, another band of natives descended upon the compound, and once more cleared out everything in Miss Bray's house.

Practically all their food supplies were exhausted by now, and it was quite impossible to get any more from Soddu or Addis Ababa. The garden yielded very little, but fortunately friendly natives provided them with grains, honey, and a little meat.

They had almost become resigned to living quietly on the compound in native fashion, when carriers and mules arrived from Soddu, having at last managed to reach them. They all felt that the Lord now meant them to leave Shammah, and so they packed up a few essential belongings and set out for Soddu. The four days' trip was comparatively uneventful, except that as it was the time of the rains, they were frequently drenched to the skin. The Lord watched over them, and they reached their destination safely on July 4th, 1936.

Some months afterwards, in a letter home, Mr. Street wrote the following words: "The experiences of the past have been at the same time the most trying, heartrending, and yet the most precious, of our lives. Many times we had little idea what the next moment might hold, but never once was there a trial or a difficult place, when His grace did not prove to be abundantly sufficient, and His overshadowing love a delightful reality. The anxiety of those days ploughed wrinkles and brought grey hairs. The experience was certainly not easy for the flesh, but as it is seen in the perspective of time, we would not want to change any part of it. The glorious outcome of it all is that we know the Lord the better, and shall for ever find it easier to trust in Him, and what heritage can compare with enrichment in Him?"

## CHAPTER X

### HOMELESS WANDERERS

"They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."—*Heb. 11: 38.*

THERE were two Sudan Interior Mission stations in the Kambatta province, Durami and Lambuda. When the war started, the missionaries at Durami were told by the Ethiopian Government to go to Lambuda, which was near the capital of the province, Hosseina, where they could more easily be protected. In all, there were six gathered at Lambuda—Mr. and Mrs. Couser, Mr. and Mrs. Phillips and their baby, and Miss Walsh.

On May 8th, 1936, word was received in Kambatta of the flight of the Emperor, and the tribespeople from Lambuda and other surrounding districts attacked Hosseina, with the intention of killing the Amhara rulers there. However, owing to their lack of co-operation and their desire for plunder, they were not able to complete their task that day, and before they could get another opportunity, reinforcements had arrived from Addis Ababa. The tide then seemed to turn in favour of the Amharas, who were now out for revenge, and plundered and burnt the houses of the natives.

About 1 a.m. on May 8th, the missionaries at Lambuda were awakened by their servants and a crowd of natives

with spears, who told them that the country was in an uproar. They advised them to pack up some of their valuables and give them to the natives to hide near their houses. The missionaries took their advice, and when they had disposed of their possessions, they left their servants in charge of the mission station and went to hide in some near-by woods until the evening. The next day they carried out the same plan. On the following day they saw great columns of smoke going up from the burning houses of the natives, and this warned them that the Amhara soldiers were approaching the mission station. They hastily packed a few things together and then left with their servants to hide in the hills. They had not gone far when a supposed messenger reached them from Fitarari Balacho, the chief official at Hosseina, with the news that one of the chiefs of the district had surrendered, but that peace terms would not be made with him until the white people were produced. The missionaries hastened back to the station, but found no one there. Their houses, however, had been left in a most terrible state, and the sight of the havoc that had been wrought in their homes brought tears to their eyes. The doors had been forced in, the windows were smashed, food stuffs were poured out on the floor, the organ and the typewriter had been bashed in, dishes and glassware were smashed to pieces, stuffing from the mattresses and pillows was strewn over the lawn, and everything of any value had been stolen or destroyed.

It appeared that some of the common soldiers had arrived at the compound and begun their work of destruction before Fitarari Balacho could get there to stop them. The missionaries did not fear the Ethiopian officials, but the ordinary soldiers had exhibited a very

decided anti-white feeling towards them on their trips into Hosseina, and they knew that they would show them no mercy if they found them at the mission station.

Realizing that it would be dangerous for them to stay on the compound, they left for the woods again and camped the night there. A few days later Fitarari Balacho sent them another message and asked them to meet him at the home of another official, Gerazmatch Tacutula, in order to discuss peace plans. When they arrived there they sent word to the Fitarari, and he came out to visit them and talk things over. He wanted the missionaries to go into Hosseina, but they did not want to do so, for food and water were scarce there, and the town was pervaded with the horrible odour of dead bodies. They asked, therefore, if they could not stay where they were, for, as Gerazmatch Tacutula's house was near to the mission station, they would be able to obtain supplies of vegetables from their own gardens. Balacho agreed to this, and after a little refreshment took his leave, committing them to the care of Gerazmatch Tacutula.

The next day there were rumours of a native attack, and Tacutula left hurriedly at midnight, giving the missionaries no opportunity to accompany him to Hosseina, and leaving them without any protection. Soon afterwards, a band of fierce Moslems and other native people raided the place where they were, and plundered all their goods. It was only by the goodness of God and through the intervention of a native chief that they escaped with their lives. This chief escorted them through hundreds of native warriors until they reached his home, which was on a hill behind the mission station. He provided them with some native food and gave them a portion of his big house to sleep

in. Their only belongings now were some blankets, food and clothes for the baby, and a horse and saddle.

After a few days they went to a place farther in the hills, where this chief had another home. They stayed there a month, and then, as they had great difficulty in finding food and water, decided to move still farther away from Lambuda to Sasakota. Many of the native Christians and some of their servants were in this neighbourhood, and so they were able to meet with them and have a little fellowship together.

They remained at Sasakota in comparative quietness until August 24th, when there was another surprise attack by Moslems and Indicuna. They were forced to flee for their lives and hide in the woods. The raiders passed close to their hiding place, beating the long grass with their guns as they searched for them. At one time they came within forty feet, and the missionaries committed their souls to the Lord, believing that before long they would be with Him. After describing this experience, Mr. and Mrs. Couser wrote: "We do want to testify to the wonderful grace of our God, which even in the hour of what seemed certain death, filled our hearts with a wonderful sense of His presence and peace."

The following week was one of very great strain. They kept hearing cries of distress from the natives, and all the time they were expecting a return attack from the Amharas and bandits. When an approaching smoke trail warned them that the Amharas were drawing near, they retreated once more into the hills, each with his or her pack of blankets and a little food. They spent that night at the house of one of their old servants, and went on the next day to another hut in the woods, where the

natives had made stockades for their cattle and tied their mouths to prevent them lowing.

The Amharas were still approaching and burning large areas, so the missionaries decided to go on to Fonko, a district near Hosseina, which was at that time enjoying a temporary truce with the Amharas. It was a long and dangerous journey. Part of the trail led over a slippery, muddy hill, which had a deep ravine on one side, and this they had to cross in the darkness. On and on they trekked, most of them on foot. All through the night they pressed on, and after seventeen hours they finally reached the house of a native Christian. The hardships they had endured and the weeks of living on native food, had weakened their bodies, yet once again God manifested His power and gave them the almost superhuman strength required to accomplish such a journey.

News of their plight had filtered through to the mission station at Soddu, and those there had asked Dejazmatch Makonnen, the Governor of Walamo, to try and do something to rescue them. His soldiers were then fighting with the Kambatta tribal people, and so he sent word that the white people were to be looked for, and a reward was offered to any soldier who would escort them to Hosseina in safety. Dejazmatch Makonnen was very angry when he heard that the Amharic soldiers had murdered a Catholic missionary near Durami, and he told the Kambatta officials that if anything happened to the Sudan Interior Mission missionaries they would be called to account for it. Thus it was that, on September 9th, the missionaries were invited into Hosseina by some of the officials who had been requested to hunt for them and afford them

full protection. They took up their residence in an empty shop in Hosseina and used the overturned counters for beds. The merchants were very kind to them and gave them some of their few remaining dishes and cutlery. The officials tried to make amends for their former treatment, and on the whole seemed to be very friendly. There were many threats and slurs against the white women from the common soldiers, but the Lord gave the missionaries grace to bear with the peculiarly trying circumstances.

After a few weeks of living there, they were escorted to the mission station at Soddu, where they had the blissful experience of eating a proper meal and sleeping in a clean bed. For many weeks during their five months' wanderings, they had had to sleep in native huts containing as many as fifteen people besides themselves. They had no change of clothes, and it was quite impossible to keep themselves free from vermin, yet through it all they were kept from any sickness.

Every day and every hour they were conscious of the Lord's wondrous love and care, and knew that it was only through His strength that they had been able to bear up under the long strain. Their experiences in the hills of Kambatta must, in some ways, have been similar to those of David when he was in the wilderness, while Saul was seeking his life. But as God preserved David, so He preserved them, and delivered them from the hand of their enemies; and with David they could sing:

“In God is my salvation and my glory,  
The rock of my strength and my refuge is in God.  
Trust in Him at all times, ye people,  
Pour out your heart before Him,  
God is a refuge for us.”

## CHAPTER XI

### INEXHAUSTIBLE SUPPLIES

"And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord."—*1 Kings 17: 16.*

THE main Sudan Interior Mission station in southern Ethiopia was at Soddu, in the Walamo Province, some two hundred and fifty miles south of Addis Ababa. There was a small hospital there, in charge of Dr. Roberts, and a large medical work was carried on. Life was never at any time monotonous, but during the war period it became dramatic.

One day early in May, 1936, Mr. and Mrs. Ohman were gaily galloping across the big plain near Soddu, when they suddenly heard a roaring sound. This grew louder and louder, and then, out of the clouds darted two silvery Italian aeroplanes, which came directly towards them. The plain stretched out on all sides without a tree in sight, and it was impossible to take cover. It was a clear day, and they knew that the airmen could see them plainly, but all they could do to render themselves less conspicuous was to get off their horses and walk beside them. The two beautiful war-birds, loudly humming, passed right over their heads. At that moment, the missionaries felt that their stomachs had turned to water, but the 'planes flew straight on to Soddu town and dropped their cargo of bombs there.

About a week after this incident, Dr. Roberts and Mr. Webb came in from the Sidamo Province, where they had been doing Red Cross work. They brought the news with them that the Emperor had fled and that Addis Ababa had been taken by the Italians. The missionaries immediately wondered what effect this news would have upon the Walamo natives, and how soon it would be before the Italians reached Soddu.

Not long after the fall of the capital, tribal warfare broke out on the borders of the neighbouring province of Kambatta. Many of the Walamo natives joined in, seizing the opportunity of capturing slaves and other spoils. Battles raged within twenty miles of the Soddu station, and the missionaries several times saw the victors pass along the road with their trophies and captured women. Some of the men would have as many as twenty women and children whom they drove before them as captives, and any that could not keep up with the rest were left by the roadside to die or be eaten by the hyenas. The warriors, who ran wildly up and down, would boast when they had killed a man, and crowds followed them along the road singing their praises. Those watching would stop the honoured men, and embracing them, give them each a bunch of grass. Such horrible and degrading scenes were only too common. This fighting and pillaging amongst the tribes north of Soddu continued for several months, until there was scarcely a native hut left.

About the middle of May, the defeated soldiers returning from war with the Italians began to reach Soddu. The missionaries had heard terrible tales of the atrocities that were being committed during the retreat, and they wondered what their own fate would be. The

mission station is situated on the main road to Gamo, and yet a certain band of soldiers who were bound for that province, unaccountably took a small by-road and completely missed the station. On two other occasions, armed men came down the road intent on murder and destruction, but they quietly left again without touching anything or harming anyone. God was protecting His own.

There were daily rumours of attacks to be made on the foreigners, and every night shooting could be heard near and far. Consequently the missionaries decided to barricade one of their houses, and they barred the doors and windows with timbers until the place looked like a fort. For three weeks they all gathered together and slept in that house at night.

They often wondered whether they should remain at Soddu or whether it would be wisest for them to try and get out of the country, in spite of the dangerous roads. They also had to decide what they would do if they were attacked by a band of soldiers. As missionaries of the Cross, would it be right for them to fight?

May 29th was their regular monthly day of prayer. In the morning, Mr. Trewin spoke from 2 Chron. 20 with especial reference to verses 15 and 17. "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still and see the salvation of the Lord with you, fear not nor be dismayed. Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's." These words seemed to give the missionaries just the guidance that they had been seeking. Mr. Ohman was the speaker for the afternoon session. He had not been present in the morning, so did not know what had been said, yet

he spoke from the very same verses! The missionaries then felt sure that this was the Lord's message to them, and were confident that He would deliver them.

About a month later, Mr. and Mrs. Forsberg came in from the station at Gofa, as Mrs. Forsberg needed an operation for appendicitis. During their stay at Soddu Mr. Forsberg was asked to address the missionaries. He knew nothing of the previous meetings, and yet he also took as his subject 2 Chron. 20: 15 and 17. This confirmed their belief that the Lord meant them to sit still and see His salvation, and from that day they made no attempt to leave the station nor did they plan to fight if they were attacked.

News reached Soddu that the missionaries at Gamo had been robbed, and so they tried to make arrangements for them to leave and come over to Soddu. This was not an easy task, as the roads were dangerous and no natives would attempt the journey to Gamo to fetch them. However, eventually men and mules were found, and they managed to escort Mr. and Mrs. Street and their family, and Miss Bray, back to Soddu station.

No little anxiety was caused to those at Soddu by the disturbing reports which were received continually concerning the missionaries in the Kambatta Province. They heard that they had been robbed of everything and were living under the protection of friendly natives. Later on, the rumour was that the women had been taken captive and that the men were killed. It was impossible to get into touch with them or to go to their rescue because of the tribal wars, and there was nothing that those at Soddu could do except to pray. With what joy and relief, therefore, they finally welcomed the party from Kambatta into their midst. They arrived

on October 7th, and what thanksgiving was offered to Almighty God for the wonderful way He had sustained them through all their wanderings and hardships.

As the months passed by, so their stock of provisions became depleted. In the ordinary course of events they would have had further supplies from headquarters in October, but it was impossible to get any as the roads were impassable.

In all, there were twenty-six missionaries and children isolated on the mission compound, yet in a marvellous way the Lord provided for their needs. The last mail from Addis arrived in February, 1936. It was providential that this included a large parcel of vegetable seeds. During the dry season, from October to March, gardens usually dry up from lack of rain; this year there were showers during the dry season, and consequently a plentiful supply of green vegetables.

Time went on, and no mail or money came through from headquarters, so those at Soddu gradually began to sell their clothes. When paying a visit to the Governor of the province, Mr. Ohman was asked somewhat jokingly why they were selling their clothing. He replied that they had to get money to buy chickens and eggs from the natives. When the Governor heard this, he immediately called a servant and ordered him to send the missionaries the finest ox in his herd. It had been specially fattened for his own use, and provided them with several good meals. In all, the Governor presented them with four such animals. Some of the Walamo natives also brought gifts of food, and although sugar and other things ran out or became scarce, not one of the missionaries ever went hungry.

In November their flour ran short. They knew that

there was a supply in the storeroom of a Greek merchant who had left Soddu months before and gone to Addis, but it was impossible to buy any, as his servant had no power to sell and they had been unable to get into touch with the merchant himself. The situation seemed hopeless, but they committed it to the Lord and prayed definitely that by some means He would supply this necessity. They had scarcely risen from their knees when the answer came. A native carrier had somehow managed to get through from Addis Ababa, and he brought them a letter saying that they could buy ten sacks of flour. "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?"

In the latter part of 1936 there was much sickness at Soddu, both amongst the missionaries and the natives. Operations had to be performed, and other medical problems arose which kept the medical staff very busy. One of the little native boys who was living on the compound died of hydrophobia. He had been bitten while playing with a dog belonging to Mr. and Mrs. Street's children. The dog had also bitten them the day before, but no one had taken much notice at the time, and it was not until the next day that it was discovered that the dog had rabies. The bites were immediately cauterized then, but of course, hours after they should have been treated. Hydrophobia takes from forty to eighty days to develop, and, on the fortieth day, Johannes went down with the disease. It was impossible to obtain any serum, and he died within three days. During his fits of madness he attempted the life of Mr. Webb, who was nursing him, and tried successively to club him with a stick, to cut him with a razor, and to spear him. One can imagine the terrible anxiety of Mr. and Mrs. Street during those eighty days

after their children were bitten, but in God's mercy neither they nor anyone else on the compound contracted the disease.

Towards the end of November, Miriam Street went down with scarlet fever. Five others also caught it, and three of the four mission households had to be quarantined.

This constant recurrence of illness made things very trying and difficult for Dr. Roberts, as his medicines rapidly diminished. Finally the clinic had to be closed down, but the natives could not, or would not, understand that there were no more medicines.

It is interesting to note that one of the last consignments to reach the station before it was cut off from outside help, consisted of a new operating table and twelve hospital beds. If it had not been for these, it is difficult to imagine how those at Soddu could have accommodated the numerous missionaries from the other stations who arrived without beds or bedding.

They continually expected the Italians to enter the province, but December came round and there was still no definite news of their whereabouts. Italian 'planes made several scouting trips over Soddu and would often fly low over the mission station. On one occasion, a small scouting 'plane swooped down and dropped a letter containing greetings for the missionaries. This made them apprehensive, as they knew that it would help to confirm the rumour that they were Italians. To the native there were only two kinds of people, Ethiopians and foreigners, and therefore anyone white must be an Italian. The Governor had previously been very friendly, but from this time forward he was suspicious. Suggestions had been made

at the headquarters in Addis Ababa that an Italian 'plane should be sent to Soddu to drop supplies for the missionaries. Those in charge very wisely refused to countenance this, and it was a blessing that they did, for if the 'planes had dropped any food and clothes for the missionaries, the natives would then have been certain that they were in league with the Italians, and would no doubt have massacred them all.

In due course the Italians sent word asking the Governor to surrender, so that they might enter Walamo peaceably, but he refused. Consequently, just after Christmas, three 'planes flew over the town and dropped bombs around the Governor's house and in the market place. They did little harm, but scared all the natives. The Governor insisted on fighting, and sent his soldiers out to do what they could. However, two more visits from the 'planes and a large number of bombs caused him to change his mind. White flags were hoisted all over the district, and on January 10th, 1937, he set out for Sidamo, the Italian headquarters, to surrender.

These three bombings stirred up a great deal of resentment against the missionaries, and the Governor was reputed to have given his men permission to rob and kill them. Again and again they were warned by friendly natives of plots to attack them, and, for three weeks after the bombings, they patrolled the compound at night, in case some revengeful Amharas endeavoured to burn the houses.

After the Governor had gone to Sidamo to surrender, there were many rumours concerning the arrival of the Italians. Each time the story proved to be false, and expectations were disappointed. On the morning of January 26th, however, the missionaries suddenly heard

the trilling cry which the native women give when anything pleases them: "Ill-lil-lil-lil-lil-lila." As they looked into the distance they saw a little green car approaching, followed by two other small cars and three trucks of Somali soldiers. The Italians had arrived! Yet, once again their hopes were partially dampened, for the cars merely drove through the town to the Governor's headquarters, and then went away again. Not until the next day did the actual occupation of the town take place. It was not at all spectacular, not a single shot was fired, and there were no aeroplanes circling overhead; but, with the honk of a horn and the squeak of brakes, out of clouds of dust appeared the first of some two hundred trucks.

The Italians entered Soddu exactly nine months after they were expected. Their arrival was a cause of much thanksgiving, as it brought to an end all the suspense and anxiety of the past months. Some of the officers were very kind to the missionaries and gave them supplies of food and medicines.

Mr. and Mrs. Forsberg were forced to flee from Gofa about this time, and reached Soddu two days after the entry of the Italians. They heard later that all their possessions had been looted and the station destroyed. Soddu was now the only remaining mission station in the south.

For many months the missionaries there had been threatened with danger and privation. Yet their experiences served to strengthen their faith in God, for they had proved that "the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy, to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE SHUTTERS OF ROME

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness.”—*Isaiah* 5: 20.

THE missionaries in the provinces of Jimma and Goma, in the south-west of Ethiopia, passed through experiences similar to those of other workers in the interior. Four missionaries were living at Qochi, in the Jimma Province—Rev. and Mrs. Piepgrass, Miss Schneck, and Miss Beam. As the compound was not very large, they were able to keep it well barricaded, and although the Italians bombed the town twice and there was a great deal of shooting by the natives, the missionaries were untouched. After these bombardments, the Amharas retreated into the neighbouring provinces of Goma and Limu, and on November 18th, the Italians entered the capital of Jimma peaceably.

Mr. and Mrs. Shank and their son were stationed at Agaro, in the Goma province, to the south-west of Qochi. On November 21st, Mr. Shank began to be troubled with pain in his appendix. As this continued, he decided that the best thing to do was to go with his family to Jimma, for from there he could be taken by 'plane to Addis Ababa for medical treatment. They had some difficulty in obtaining an escort to accompany them to Jimma, but eventually mules and carriers were

provided and they set out. In spite of the fact that they avoided the main trail and took the forest-covered route over the mountain, their journey was adventurous. At one time seven bombers flew overhead and went into action only a short distance away. Farther on, the missionaries passed close to some bands of Amharas who were retreating from Jimma, plundering and burning villages on their way. Yet, in spite of these and other dangers, the party from Goma eventually arrived at Qochi, tired out, but unharmed.

Mr. Shank was examined by an Italian doctor there, who told him that no operation would be necessary after all. Subsequent events, however, showed that Mr. Shank's illness had been a blessing in disguise, for shortly after, news came through that the Goma station had been plundered, and that everything had been stolen or destroyed. It is not difficult to imagine what fate might have befallen the missionaries had they been at the Goma station when that wild native mob descended upon it.

It is regrettable to have to relate that, by February, 1937, the number of Sudan Interior Mission stations in the interior had been reduced to three—Jimma, Soddu, and Lalibella. At the beginning of 1936 there had been fifteen stations in operation—two at Addis Ababa, two in the north, two in the west, and nine in the south. Within a year, ten of these stations had had to be evacuated.

Most of them were abandoned on account of the native uprisings, and the missionaries quite expected that they would be able to return and resume their work as soon as the Italians had restored law and order. They were able to visit some of these deserted stations,

and in one or two instances they made application to the Italian Government for permission to return to them.

Almost all the initial contacts between the missionaries and the Italian officials had been friendly, and in several cases assurance had been given that the Italians had no wish to hinder the work of the Mission. Gradually, however, it became clear that the attitude of the Italian Government towards Protestant missionary work would not be one of toleration, but of opposition. Little antagonism was shown towards individual members of the Sudan Interior Mission, but it was obvious that the Italian officials were under orders from Rome to bring about the departure of all missionaries. The steps they took to achieve their object were subtle. They were careful not to expel the missionaries arbitrarily, or to do anything which would enable the British or American Governments to take strong action.

In December, 1936, the Sudan Interior Mission was informed that a decree had been passed by the Italian Government declaring that their buildings in Addis Ababa were to be expropriated. This was the first official intimation of opposition, and came as a terrible shock. If the buildings were taken away and no alternative sites were granted, it would be impossible for the missionaries to remain at the capital. Representations were made by the Mission to the Italian authorities, to the British and American consuls in Addis Ababa, and to the Foreign Office in London, but it seemed that nothing could be done.

Mr. Cain and Mr. Duff, who had been left in charge of the work on the field, did all they could to get the decree rescinded, but without avail. It was not long

before the Italians began to evaluate the buildings, the first step towards expropriation.

The next development was in the south. At the beginning of March, Mr. Piepgrass was informed that the Sudan Interior Mission would be unable to continue work in Galla and Sidamo, and that all the buildings on the stations south of Addis Ababa would be expropriated by the Italian Government. At about the same time, Mr. and Mrs. Oglesby, in Lalibella, were told that they must leave their station.

Although the Italian Government had promised to co-operate in sending supplies to the mission stations in the interior, this was never done, which indicated that if the expropriation of properties was not sufficient to make the missionaries leave, other means would be found to remove them. It became plain that the Italian Government was pursuing a definite policy, and that nothing was to be gained by trying to fight it.

Steps were taken, therefore, to evacuate the missionaries from Jimma, Soddu, and Lalibella, the only three remaining stations in the interior. By the end of April all missionaries had been brought to Addis Ababa. A number were badly in need of furlough and left for home. They were practically forced to travel by Italian liners, and were not permitted to take any but Italian money out of the country, and then only a small sum equivalent to about £5.

On April 3rd, 1937, the Mission was saddened by the loss of Mr. Harry Glover, who died of pneumonia. The strain of his unceasing efforts to help the afflicted during the war months had so weakened his vitality that he was unable to fight the illness, and succumbed after five weeks of suffering. It seems that Mr. Glover

had had for some time a premonition that it might not be long before he entered the presence of Christ. He wrote home six months before he was taken ill and referred to the death of Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Devers, saying: "These are the first privileged to wear the martyr's crown in our Mission; but I don't doubt that there is not one of us who would not gladly be thus honoured, were it God's gracious will. . . . My text last month was—'Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit'." Within a year, three promising young lives were laid down in the service of Ethiopia—God grant that their sacrifice may yield a glorious harvest!

The missionaries remaining in Addis Ababa, were naturally kept busy in making arrangements for the closing down of the work. Agreement had to be reached with the Italian officials as to the value of the various properties; inventories had to be made of furnishings and equipment; and such personal belongings as were not required had to be sold. In winding up their affairs the missionaries realized, as never before, the strength of the ties that bound them to the people and the land of their adoption, and there were many heavy hearts at this enforced laying down of tools. How tragic the last eighteen months had been! The beginning of the war had meant the end of missionary advance. And now, in spite of valiant efforts to hold the ground already gained, the missionaries had been beaten back, and all territory was in alien hands.

## CHAPTER XIII

### LIGHTBEARERS OF THE FUTURE

“We were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: for now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.”—*1 Thess.* 3: 7, 8.

It cannot be denied that foreign missionary work in Ethiopia has been eclipsed, and that every effort is being made to shut out the light of the Gospel of Christ. In the last few months the achievement of years has been crushed; high hopes for the future have been dashed to the ground; and the messengers of Christ have been forced to retire from the field of battle.

It will never be known how much sacrifice, prayer, and striving, were necessary to establish that work that has been so suddenly cut short; nor how much pain and heartache its cessation has caused to those concerned. The powers of evil appear to be victorious and to carry all before them, yet God has prescribed the limits of their activity, and outside those limits they have no power.

The following incidents show that although the work may have been eclipsed by the shadow of Rome, it has not been without a corona of glory.

The missionaries at Jimma held special evangelistic meetings in August, 1936, about which Mr. Piepgrass wrote as follows: “In the midst of sorrow and bloodshed, we rejoice that the Lord is calling out some

Ethiopians for Himself. There has been strong opposition, but in spite of threats of all kinds, four were baptized to-day. After the baptismal service it was glorious to gather together around the Lord's table." This was the first baptismal service ever held in Jimma, and the four who were baptized were all converted Mohammedans, three of whom had borne a good testimony for over a year. Before the missionaries were forced to leave the station, they had the joy of baptizing four others. In May, 1937, when Mr. Lewis and Mr. and Mrs. Duff travelled to Jimma, under orders from the Government to value the mission property there, they visited some of the native converts in the neighbourhood, and were greatly encouraged by the way they were carrying on by themselves.

For months the missionaries at Soddu were confined to their station and unable to do any itinerating work, but in spite of this the Holy Spirit continued to work in the hearts of the people. The natives were impressed by the way the station and its occupants were kept from all harm, and they could not but ascribe their preservation to the restraining hand of God. The Ethiopian Christians faithfully proclaimed the Gospel message, and many were brought to the Lord through their efforts. There were forty-eight believers in Soddu when the missionaries left, but very soon after, another twenty-three members were added to the native Church, being baptized by their own countrymen.

In spite of the evacuation of the two stations in the Kambatta Province, the work of God has gone forward. Two of the boys who had befriended the missionaries when they were in danger, went over to the Soddu station and asked for baptism. As they no longer kept

the native feasts and fasts, and had given other proofs of their sincerity and desire to follow the Lord, their request was granted. The missionaries heard later that four other natives had been won to Christ through the testimony of these boys.

In the Marako province, the Christians continued steadfast in the faith, and conducted a weekly meeting on their own. Two men from this district went up to Addis Ababa in April, 1937, as candidates for baptism. They told the native Church there of the frequent occasions on which the Lord had preserved them from danger. Although they had been forced to fly for their lives, losing all their property and savings, they had managed to carry their Bibles with them, and after studying them in their days of hiding they had decided to follow the Lord wholly.

Representatives of seven different tribes attended the baptism of these two young men, and in each of those tribes there is now a nucleus of native believers.

Perhaps the most remarkable manifestation of the working of the Holy Spirit was at Addis Ababa. During 1936, four Christians had been baptized, the first ones from headquarters to take this step. These were all men, as no women had taken any definite stand. Being anxious to witness to their faith, these Christians had done a good deal of visiting and preaching in the villages. In January, 1937, they decided to hold a fortnight of special meetings in Addis Ababa. During the first week there was a gratifying attendance, and several of those present were obviously moved by the addresses. Throughout the second week, the services were taken by a young Ethiopian, named Ato Emmanuel. He was a member of the Swedish Mission and had taken a

course at the Bible Training Institute in Glasgow. His messages were full of power, and each day souls were added to the Church. Miss McMillan has written a vivid description of the last of these days of reaping.

“I don’t think I shall ever forget the last day of the mission. Emmanuel spoke on John 3, and in closing said: ‘There are a number of you here who have been saved. Now we are going to give you an opportunity to witness briefly to this.’ Before he had finished speaking, Waldie Yohannes, the head gardener, was out standing beside him, and with a radiant face told how for eight years he had worked for the Mission but had now truly received Christ. While he was speaking, Boolcha, a workman, had come up to stand with him, and I don’t think I have ever seen such joy and glory in any human face as shone in his as he spoke. No one had said ‘Come out to the front,’ yet numbers did so. Fifteen men spoke and several of the women, too. None of us had ever seen such a thing before out here—for this alone it was worth coming to Ethiopia. Everything was orderly and under perfect control, but the glory of God was seen and known. So ended the campaign. We have seen beautiful evidence of changed lives since. The cook here had been a Christian for several months, but, a few days after the mission was over, he was so completely broken up by the love of God, that he got down on his knees on the kitchen floor and poured out his whole heart in prayer to God, the tears meanwhile streaming down. He confessed sin and begged forgiveness of those he had wronged. The head gardener, Waldie Yohannes, has been calling the workmen together, telling them that it is like stealing not to put in full time at work. He has been coming early to

set them an example and has been so completely changed that our hearts are just thrilled."

Such stories as these show that the power of God is not affected by circumstances which to man seem most adverse. During the war period, the missionaries were again and again preserved from what appeared to be inevitable destruction. These deliverances made them vividly conscious of God's omnipotence, and the remembrance of their past experiences in Ethiopia encourages them in their belief that God will preserve the work which they have begun. They have been enabled to sow the seed, and having seen the first fruits of their labours, are confident that there will be a glorious harvest.

Though the great beacon light of foreign missions may soon die out in Ethiopia, there are many native believers scattered over the land, and they in their turn, like torches that have been lit at the beacon, will be able to lighten the dark places.

The responsibility of witnessing to the Lord Jesus Christ will rest entirely upon the shoulders of these Ethiopian converts, and recent events indicate that they will be subjected to much persecution. Ever since the attempt upon the life of the Viceroy, on February 19th, there has been a systematic endeavour to remove most of the intelligentsia of the country. Mr. Duff wrote home in March: "Those who have any connection whatever with missionaries are especially under suspicion; a great many of them have been imprisoned, and a considerable number executed or sent into exile. It seems that we endanger the lives of any with whom we may have close association."

There is no doubt that the army of Christ will have

many hard battles to fight in Ethiopia. It is small in numbers, its warriors are inexperienced, and now it has been deprived of its leaders. Only as it fights in the strength of the Lord will it be able to withstand the hosts of darkness.

Surely there are many Christians whose hearts go out in love and sympathy to their brethren in Ethiopia, and who would wish to help them. Humanly speaking there is nothing that can be done, yet the gateway to heaven in prayer is never closed, for no Governmental restrictions can prevent prayers being offered for the land of Ethiopia.

Mrs. Barton referred to this subject in a recent letter saying: "As we white workers are compelled to relinquish the task, we shall come to the place where we cannot even obtain news of these little indigenous churches. Without sensational answers to prayer, without encouraging reports, without photographs and lantern slides, can we and you go on through the years upholding them before the Throne of Grace? If we can, what a blessed reward will await us."

How impossible it is to estimate the value of intercessory prayer. Thousands will testify that burdens have been lightened, crooked places have been made straight, and defeat has been turned into victory, simply because others have prayed. Israel's victory against Amalek at Rephidim, did not depend upon the size nor the strength of her army, but upon the outstretched hand of Moses, for, when Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. In proportion as hands are uplifted in prayer for the army of the Lord in Ethiopia, so will it be sustained and strengthened in battle. Would that

all Christians would realize the powerful weapon they have in prayer, and that they would wield it on behalf of those who are in such sore need of help.

The problem of the future now arises for those missionaries who are prevented from devoting their lives to the service of God in Ethiopia. Having led them to that land, God has allowed them to be barred from it, and consequently they have now to find another sphere of service. That there is one prepared for them they cannot doubt, for God never shuts a door in the face of His servants unless there is another farther on leading to better things. The second door may be out of sight, and the path that leads to it may be rough and hard, but He will go before. Those who leave the past in His keeping, and follow Him on the next path He has chosen for them, always find that what has seemed frustration is but the means to fuller realisation of God and further opportunities for service. The ultimate consummation of God's purposes cannot be prevented, and there will always be progress, although it may not be along obvious or expected lines.

The Sudan Interior Mission is planning to start a new work along the borders of Ethiopia, in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, where there are many pagan tribes, as yet untouched by the Gospel. Six missionaries from Addis Ababa left for Khartoum in June, 1937, in order to make preliminary arrangements for opening stations in the autumn. It is expected that other workers will be able to join them within the next year, and as the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan is situated in East Africa, it will prove a suitable sphere for missionaries from Australia and New Zealand.

During the year 1936, the work of the Sudan Interior

Mission in Ethiopia was severely restricted. The exact opposite occurred in Nigeria, where there arose an unprecedented opportunity for expansion. For over forty years the great Moslem Provinces of Northern Nigeria had remained steadfastly closed to the Christian missionary; but in 1936, the walls of resistance began to crumble, and the messengers of Christ at last gained access to that dark territory containing some seven million souls.

These two recent developments in Nigeria and in the Sudan show that there is still much land waiting to be possessed. As God opens up the way, the Mission plans to enter these new spheres. Missionaries may be debarred from Ethiopia, but there are many other dark places where it is possible to show forth Christ, the Light of the world, and, not until the Church has availed herself of every opportunity of witness, can there be any lessening of her efforts to bring about the Kingdom of God. Not until the Great Commission has been fulfilled, will the followers of Christ have discharged their responsibility to God and to their fellow men. As long as the task remains unfinished, how can any refuse to hear the entreaty: "Son, go work today in My vineyard"?

"Can we whose souls are lighted,  
With wisdom from on high,  
Can we to men benighted,  
The lamp of life deny?  
Salvation, oh salvation,  
The joyful sound proclaim,  
Till each remotest nation,  
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