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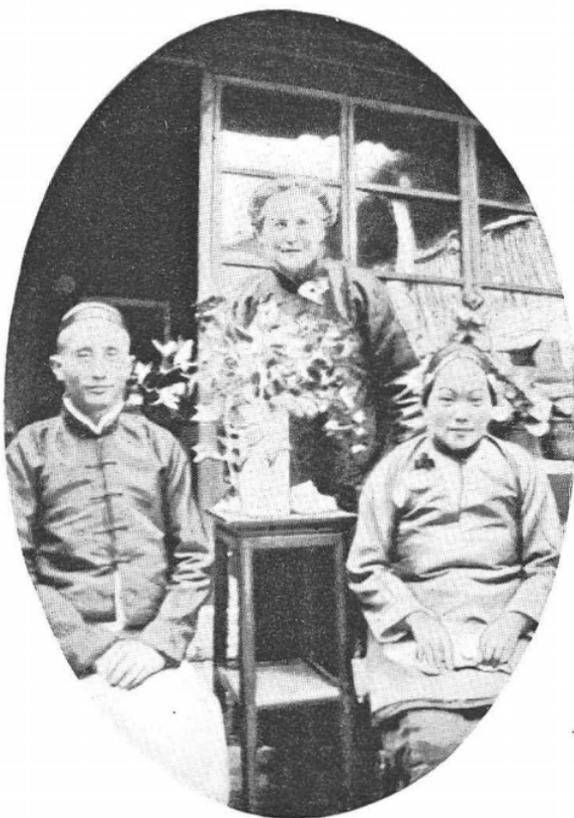


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LI YEN-TS'ING AND BRIDE.

Married Tuesday, March 14, 1922.

With Mrs. Howard Taylor standing behind.

This is the devoted Evangelist who voluntarily accompanied Dr. and Mrs. Howard Taylor when the Brigands carried them off. Please pray for him.

Frontispiece.

WITH P'U AND HIS BRIGANDS

By

Mrs. HOWARD TAYLOR

AUTHOR OF

"PASTOR HSI," "HUDSON TAYLOR IN EARLY YEARS," ETC.

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION, LONDON
PHILADELPHIA, TORONTO, MELBOURNE, AND
SHANGHAI
AGENTS: THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
4 BOUVERIE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4 . . . 1922

TO
THE BELOVED FELLOW-WORKERS
OF EVERY NAME
WHO ARE LABOURING FOR
THE EVANGELISATION OF INLAND CHINA
ESPECIALLY IN
ITS MORE DISTURBED REGIONS

PREFACE

IT may be that readers of this little book will be moved with pity for the sufferings it depicts—not our own, but those of millions in China to-day scourged by civil war and brigandage. It may be they will want to know how they can help to heal this “open sore of the world.” Among many ways, none is more effectual, we venture to think, than waiting upon God in prayer—steadfast, believing prayer in the name of Christ. There is no comparison between what man can do and what God can do. Shall we not wait upon Him, then, for this great country in which one quarter of the human race is slowly turning toward the light, sore pressed with problems to which Christ alone affords the solution, sick with sin, and wounded with sufferings He alone can heal.

And then, as those who really pray are those who help in other ways as well, we append a list of all the organisations at present engaged in the evangeli-

sation of Yunnan—the province which has proved such a hot-bed of civil war and brigandage. Words cannot tell what we personally owe to the love and prayers and practical help of these honoured fellow-workers of our own and other missions. One lingers over name after name with gratitude and love. If these pages may be the means of bringing help to any one of them, calling forth prayerful sympathy or the consecration of young lives to the service in which they are engaged, we shall be more than rewarded.

“Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already unto harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”

HOWARD AND GERALDINE TAYLOR.

CHINA INLAND MISSION,
GERMANTOWN, PHILADELPHIA, U.S.A.

“Brethren, pray for us.”

Yunnan province in S.W. China is about three times the size of England and has a population of twelve millions. It is mountainous and beautiful, the Switzerland of China.

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION

commenced work in 1877. Has at present twelve men in the Province and six single ladies.

At the Capital, Yünnanfu.

Mr. and Mrs. H. A. C. Allen.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Graham.

Miss A. M. Booth.

In the Tribal District, north of the Capital.

At Sa-p'u-shan : Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Nicholls.

At Sa-lo-wu : Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone Porteous.

At Ta-ku : Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Metcalf.

At Hsin-shao : Mr. and Mrs. H. Parker.

On furlough : Mr. and Mrs. C. G. Gowman.

At K'ü-ts'ing, two days east of the Capital.

Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Booth.

Miss D. Ballard and Miss I. A. Twell.

On furlough : Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Fleischmann.

At Ta-li, thirteen days west of the Capital.

Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Cooke.

Miss A. M. Simpson.

On furlough : Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Hanna.

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At Yung-chang, eight days farther west.

Miss A. Kratzer and Miss A. E. Hunter.

Among the Tribes-people in the far west of
the Province.

Mr. J. O. Fraser, at Tung-yueh.

Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Flagg, near Long-ling.

THE UNITED FREE METHODIST MISSION,
12 Farringdon Avenue, London, England.

With a large work among the tribes-people in the N.E.
of the Province, as well as among Chinese.

Senior Missionaries—Rev. and Mrs. Frank Dymond.

THE PENTECOSTAL MISSIONARY UNION
OF ENGLAND.

Senior Missionaries—Mr. and Mrs. P. Klaver.

THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

With church and hospital in the Capital.

Senior Missionaries { Dr. and Mrs. Neville Bradley.
Dr. and Mrs. Gordon Thompson.

THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN
ASSOCIATION.

Working in the Capital.

Secretaries—Mr. and Mrs. Watkins,
and Mr. and Mrs. Ware.

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THE CHINESE HOME MISSIONARY
SOCIETY.

Working in the Capital and in the city of Lufeng.

INDEPENDENT WORKERS.

Miss Cornelia Morgan, at Tsuyung.
Mr. and Mrs. Amundson, in the Capital.

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FRONTISPIECE.

MAP (*see pocket in Cover*).

CHAPTER I

CAPTURED

IT was a terrible moment when they sprang out upon us from their ambush by the roadside, a band of some twenty strong, armed to the teeth and the very embodiment of all we had been hearing about brigands in province after province. So it had come at last !

For three years we had been travelling in the interior, visiting centres occupied by the China Inland Mission. These journeys had taken us north, south, east and west—from beyond the Great Wall on the borders of Mongolia, and out to the mountainous frontiers of Tibet, then south of the Yangtze to the province of Kweichow and now Yunnan. Everywhere we had seen evidences of the new military activity, or fever, that possesses the land—smart officers in foreign uniforms, drilling of troops and abundance of modern arms and ammunition, to say nothing of the persistent efforts at bugling that tortured one's nerves while proclaiming the new infatuation with the war methods of the West. Everywhere we had heard of the

sufferings of the people from one of its accompaniments, the cruel and relentless brigandage that the authorities seem powerless to suppress.

And one could hardly wonder, dreadful as the situation is from all but the brigands' point of view. Thousands of unpaid soldiers see no other way of revenging themselves upon officials who have withheld their pay, and of lining their own pockets. The brigands of to-day are, in most cases, the troops of yesterday, and may be again the soldiers of to-morrow. It just depends upon who is in power for the moment, and how far he can satisfy his followers. But whichever way it is, the people pay the price. Deserters from the army, or armies rather, taking their rifles with them, easily form these brigand bands, and the country is at the mercy not only of contending political parties but of daring robbers, ever ready to throw in their lot with one side or the other, and meanwhile terrorising the people on their own account and fattening upon their unspeakable sufferings.

All this we had heard of again and again, and the experience of the following letter had become a sadly familiar one.

We are resting at a wayside hamlet for a few minutes. If only you could see the desolation! Two or three years ago, our fellow-traveller tells us, there were no ruined houses anywhere along this road (from Shensi into northern Szechwan). The villages were all prosperous, with thrifty farms and busy shops and inns. Now it makes one's heart ache and burn with indignation

to see the change. All down the village street one passes ruin after ruin—doors broken in, walls and roofs battered down, everything smashed or stolen and even the wreckage blackened with fire. As I write we are passing house after house in this condition—silent, gaping ruins of what once were homes. Many of the people are still living amid the desolation, sorrowful and poor-looking, but working hard to repair things a little. They do not complain. They seem to take it as inevitable. Many more are gone, never to return.

Tortured, killed, or held to ransom, what stories we had heard of the experiences of men, women and even children! Every plan that cruelty could devise seemed practised to extort money from those who might have it. And there was little to choose between soldiers and brigands, their power alike depending upon their being armed with modern rifles and revolvers.

But though in province after province we had been very near these marauding bands, we had never even seen a brigand until the day we fell into their hands. We knew about the capture of other missionaries, several of whom had been held for longer or shorter periods in the province of Yunnan. In the district we had just reached, Mr. Parker had been a prisoner for five long weeks before he made his wonderful escape from P'u Shu-ming.¹ How little we imagined that this very man had his people watching us as we neared the capital, Yünnanfu,

¹ For a full account of this escape, see *China's Millions* for March 1922, English Edition.

determined to "invite us," as they said, "to be their guests in the mountains, as Mr. Parker had gone away without saying Good-bye!"

We were not expecting special danger, though we knew things were far from peaceful and that the brigands were taking advantage of the political situation to try and obtain a favourable amnesty from the Government. Mr. Allen, our senior missionary in the district, had not been able to come out to meet us. The British Consul would not consent to his leaving the city. But this was, presumably, because he was Mr. Parker's father-in-law and the one person the brigands desired to have as their middle man. He had sent Li Yents'ing, his "prince of evangelists" as he wrote, to bring us safely into the city, and for two days we had been enjoying his care and companionship.

For what an escort he was! Whether getting us off at daybreak, rousing the chair-bearers, obtaining boiling water at unheard-of hours, propitiating the inn-people, cheering the caravan along the road or conducting services in the outstations we came to, where it was easy to see how the Christians loved him, he was a Greatheart indeed. Agile in mind and person, he would walk for hours beside my chair, asking questions about our experiences in the many places visited, talking over passages of Scripture—his New Testament always at hand—eagerly listening to thoughts on spiritual things, and pouring out story after story of conversions, deliverances and answers to prayer. He had much to tell

about the brigands, and it was somewhat blood-curdling at times to hear of people who had been ambushed, robbed and even killed in the very places we were passing.

“ This hollow is a special haunt of robbers,” he would say under his breath, or, “ The hills yonder are full of them. You may see them moving among the trees.”

But he always went on to assure us that we need have no fear, for they did not molest people who could show genuine proof that they were Christians.

As we neared the capital, however, even Li Yen - ts'ing became silent and preoccupied. We could see that he was concerned, though he did not recommend a military escort. We were travelling as usual without one ; not that we were unwilling for such protection, but that having been brought in safety through fourteen provinces it did not occur to us as necessary, so near the railway terminus at Yünnanfu. And strange to say, no one had advised us to take special precautions.

Little more than twenty miles remained of the long road, and we were full of expectation. For not only were there the friends in the capital to see and the work they are carrying on in more than forty outstations—northward lay that far-reaching Tribal District in which thousands of Miao and other mountain people are turning to the Light. How keen we were to be in the great gatherings, to meet the warm-hearted converts, to see the wonderful opportunities and the devoted workers ! Twenty

miles only—to-morrow we would be in Yünnanfu ! But the Lord had other plans. He was about to trust us with one of the greatest disappointments, one of the greatest blessings of our lives. And, like many another blessing, it came in strange disguise.

Much as we had heard of brigands, we never imagined they could be so alarming as the band that rushed upon us with wild excitement at that bend of the road among the trees. We had passed, only a few minutes previously, a Chinese merchant travelling in the opposite direction, with a guard of several soldiers. But they had gone their way unmolested. It was our party the bandits were waiting for ; and it was well we had no escort, for there would certainly have been bloodshed. It may have been fear that we were armed and would whip out revolvers to meet them that contorted their faces with such frenzy, or it may have been simply their way of striking terror to the hearts of their victims. And to this their attire contributed. Huge black turbans made their heads of fearsome size, and their leather doublets and broad girdles were formidable with cartridges, knives and swords. But the fury of the men themselves was the worst of all. One had never seen anything like it.

My chair was in front and I got out at once to meet them. Dr. Taylor did the same, and soon he and Mr. Li were in the thick of the turmoil, trying to explain who and what we were and to quiet the excitement.

“ We are friends, you know,” my husband said. “ When you are sick or wounded we care for you in our hospitals, and Mr. Allen is always ready to help you in any way he can.”

But words and arguments were not to much purpose, nor was it our belongings they wanted. The terror-stricken coolies were ordered to go on and carry our loads into the city. This seemed hopeful, and we were encouraged to think that Mr. Li's repeated statements would prove true—that they did not interfere with Christians.

In the confusion, my chief anxiety was for Mrs. Tai, an attractive-looking young woman who was travelling with us. I held her hand most of the time, for she was very frightened, and when things seemed quieting down a little, got her chair off and was going to mine, Mr. Li and others urging us to make haste into the city. But turning to see if my husband was coming, what was my surprise to find that they were carrying him the other way ! It was clear in a moment ; he was taken prisoner. His deafness, apart from other considerations, made me feel I could not let him go alone, though he begged me to do so when I gained his side. Finally, the suggestion that they might take him off in one direction and me in another — by no means improbable — induced him to consent to my accompanying him.

So it was together we faced the strange conditions that had come so suddenly upon us. And perhaps the strangest, most wonderful thing of all was the

peace that filled our hearts. It was not of our doing or trying. Who could, humanly speaking, have been peaceful, even happy, in such circumstances? Separated from our belongings, we had no change of garments, no food-basket, no bedding, nothing but the few books and papers and the rug and pillow we each carried in our chair. We were wholly dependent upon the brigands, wholly defenceless and at their mercy; yet, as the following journal-notes record, we were wholly free from fear.

We are in the hands of these wild outlaws it is true, with their guns and knives and fierce faces, but we *feel* not in their hands at all, but in the hands of our blessed, ever-present Lord. It is real joy and rest to know that He has permitted this. Our hearts are warm to these poor fellows too—these brigands. They begin to smile when they look at us. One of the leaders, marching by my chair, laughed right out when he heard me singing.

“She sings,” he exclaimed, “she is not afraid—she sings!”

Just now when a gun was fired, the sharp report brought a sudden thought of joy. What if a shot like that were to set us free from the body to be forever with the Lord! But perhaps our work here is not finished yet. How gladly would we serve a little longer, serve more prayerfully, more faithfully.

It is not an hour yet since we were carried off by the band. They came upon us on the main road, from behind bushes, firing their guns and one of the leaders brandishing his big curved sword, with shouts of frenzy and faces demoniacal in their expression. All was

turmoil and terror—at least they tried to make it so. In our hearts all was peace. . . .

And now we have turned into a big farm-house in a lonely hamlet. The people are silent and afraid. We have taken possession of the courtyard, where our captors are sitting round a long, low table. Howard is with them, and dear Mr. Li, who would not leave us, I have retired to a stone trough in the open stable. The brigands say they cannot release us, because they are responsible to the whole band. There are four thousand of them : only thirty came out on this business. They are P'u's men. We shall probably see P'u to-morrow.

We have just been writing to Mr. Allen ; the brigands wished us to do so. The poor people of this house are so afraid ! The woman was outside with me just now, and I asked her quietly whether her place had been robbed by the band. She put up four fingers.

“Do you mean that they have robbed you four times ?” I questioned.

She nodded emphatically, without a word.

So that is why they are not robbing here ; there is nothing left worth taking. Soon after they set off with us we had a glimpse into their way of doing things. We met some hapless travellers. I did feel sorry for them. Our band rushed on them with ferocious yells, rifled their belongings in a few minutes, taking all they wanted, and left them thankful, I expect, to have it over so quickly.

We are delaying here a long time, yet we have some distance to go I understand. They said something about our having to ride on horseback. Our poor chair-bearers are suffering from lack of opium, and are silent and frightened.

Here come a number of horses. I wonder whether we have been waiting for them. They have bedding thrown over their saddles in the usual fashion. I do not feel just inclined for a ride in the midst of this rough band ; but the Lord will give all needed grace.

Friday, Feb. 17.

It is sorrowful to see the fear and suffering of the people all along our way. The villages are like places of the dead—every house closed, people fled or hiding, and the few who are about, doing necessary work, so terrified and silent ! Hardly any one is to be seen in the fields, and there are no travellers on the roads. A reign of terror everywhere ! One sees it now that we are part of the band, so to speak, and travelling with them. The only relief is prayer—that our Almighty God will in some way, in His own way, bring peace to this tormented region ; yes, and bring deliverance to the brigands themselves, wicked as they are. Many of them want to leave this life, and cannot. No way is open to them. The Lord undertake for them, for us, and for the people.

How much we seem to have lived through since this time yesterday ! Our hearts are kept in perfect peace, truly overflowing with joy in the Lord and love to all around us. It is His doing, and so blessed an experience that, as far as we are concerned, the trial is well worth while. The Bible is living and real in a wonderful way, every part to which one turns speaking to one's heart. Prayer is indeed "without ceasing"—a continuous refuge and rest.

But I must try to write about what has been happening. After a long, long wait in that farm-house yesterday,

food was brought, and we were invited to eat with our escort. We sat on one side of the low table in the courtyard, they on the other. Howard, quoting the familiar saying, "It is to Heaven we owe our food," suggested giving thanks for the company. To this they readily consented. The leaders were at the table with us, the "Brothers" formed a group round a huge pail of rice on the ground. Our chair-bearers had been marched off to another house for their meal. For us, they had prepared their best—a basin of pork, thick chunks rather underdone, another of chicken cut up and stewed, head and feet all in together, and a third of the blood and viscera of the fowl, raw and the reverse of inviting. Happily, we were not helped to this dish, though it was right in front of us; and despite the guns and daggers and the unwashed condition of the crowd we managed to get on pleasantly and make a fair meal. We knew that we *must* eat, or we could not bear the strain. Then the horses were led out and the cavalcade started, Howard riding, I in my chair and Mr. Li sometimes riding and sometimes walking. The village people were so friendly before we left, poor things! Several women came out from closed houses, and I saw others peeping from their hiding-places as we were going off.

Immediately on leaving the hamlet, we plunged into a bamboo grove, off the road and up a steep hill. The path was scarcely to be seen, though later we followed various "small roads" in the open. On and on we went, not meeting a solitary soul, climbing higher and higher, until the outlook was extensive and beautiful. The sun was setting gloriously, but the wind was so strong that I could not write.

We thought they meant to travel all night, and we were so tired ! But soon after dark they told us there were only a couple of miles to go. Those were certainly long miles ! On and on we went, stumbling down steep places through rock-strewn woods, after lighting all the lamps we had on the crest of a hill. Ours was the only lantern, the rest were opium-lamps.

As we went along in the dark I could not but think what a " terror by night " these men must be—rushing into sleeping villages, shooting right and left and setting fire to houses if the doors are not immediately opened and everything given that they demand.

Alas, the fear in the hearts of the people ! We have just passed a farmer on the narrow path, pressed up against the bushes to let us go by, his eyes almost starting out of their sockets, and absolutely silent as if turned to stone. The few people we meet look at us without an expression of interest or pity. Whatever we might be suffering it is evident no help could be expected here, and one cannot wonder.

At last, by the light of our lamps, we stumbled into a silent village, where every door was shut. The band made straight for a large house which they seemed to use as their own. The courtyard was surrounded with two-storied buildings, the lower rooms being raised several feet above the ground and most of them open in front. One side was a sort of stable. Fires were soon burning on the ground, round which the brigands crouched to warm themselves.

We were told to go upstairs, which we gladly did ; but on reaching a large room at the top of the ladder-like steps we found that we were in the family bedroom. A man was still in bed, and two or three women looked

as if they were in some terrible nightmare. We tried to comfort them and explain the situation, and with Mr. Li's help partially succeeded. Poor things, they turned out of their room for us, the man getting up and carrying off his wadded quilt to leave us his far from cleanly bed. And we had no *iu-pu* to spread over it—the invaluable oiled sheet that, like charity, “covers a multitude of sins”!

Even so, we passed a peaceful night, sleeping on and off and filling the intervals with prayer and thanksgiving. Mr. Li shared the little bedding we had, sleeping on the floor beside us. We had no candle or lantern, no soap or towel and only one blanket to cover us, but how well off we were compared with the poor people of the place!

“Have they robbed you?” I asked one woman when we were alone.

She silently put up three fingers. “They have taken everything,” she whispered; “yes, three times.”

About midnight we were wakened—supper was ready. We had to hurry down, for the leaders of the band were waiting for us to “ask a blessing.” Strange scene as that unusual meal went on—glowing fires here and there lighting up the darkness, opium-lamps showing the faces of the smokers lying round them on the ground, the handsome red-lacquered table and our lantern gleaming on the ammunition belts and pistols of the men eating beside us, helping us in the most friendly way to bits of pork and ladlefuls of cabbage-water with our rice!

CHAPTER II

SEPARATED

IN the glorious sunshine of the following morning we were early on our way to meet the brigand General somewhere near his headquarters. Much depended on the interview. Would he liberate us, treating the capture as a mistake? This was still Li Yen-ts'ing's expectation. Would he treat us kindly? Or would he take a sterner line, to be revenged for the escape of Mr. Parker? Weariness and hunger were beginning to tell upon any natural resources of strength we may have had, but it was sweet to find that the inward sustaining did not fail.

In the course of the morning we came to a little town, silent and deserted, and found to our surprise a large company of brigands in the space before the temple. A young man in foreign dress, with a handsome overcoat, felt hat and brown leather shoes, seemed to be someone of importance. He produced a foreign visiting-card, which proclaimed him a *T'uan-chang* or Colonel—for these were more of our band, which is organised like a regular army. This

magnificent person mounted his horse, and said he would himself conduct us to the Commander-in-Chief. Of what followed my Journal must tell the story.

So to him we are now going. The way is long, up and up a valley through which runs a swift, beautiful river. We are near the water most of the time. This ought to be a populous region, for we have passed several large villages and another lies at the head of the valley in front of us now, but all is stricken with that same death-like silence. Some boys with a flock of goats have ventured out, on the other side of the river; and here is one peasant working in the fields. I wonder whether the "General" is in this little town we are nearing, or further back in the mountains?

No, the "Big Man" is some miles further on. We are stopping here for food. The people of the place seem friendly with our brigands, and quite a number, including women and children, have gathered around. They seem never to have seen a foreigner before. I have been making friends with the women, but they are too frightened and excited to listen much.

Our "Colonel" is here, resplendent, now that his coat is removed, with a band of silver round his chest, curiously made of half-dollar pieces connected with silver chains. The whole forms a belt for his heavy cavalry revolver.

Strange—they say soldiers are coming! Our band is greatly excited. Spies are going out, and the "Colonel" wants to hurry us on to horses, to get us away. No, he has changed his mind. Howard and Mr. Li are to send cards to the officer begging him not to fight, as

we should be the ones to suffer. They are writing now. The "Colonel" is another man—fierce, implacable. It is as if the tiger in him had suddenly sprung out. I heard him swear to Li Yen-ts'ing :

"If there is any fighting, these people will at once be killed. The soldiers shall never get them alive !"

Now a soldier has come in, or a brigand, rather, camouflaged as a soldier. I cannot quite make out whether the military are after us or not. This man says not ; but I heard Mr. Li ask, a little later, how many there were in the party. It is evidently pretty serious. But we are kept without fear. "Whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord : whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's." This perfect peace is wonderful, literally "garrisoning" heart and mind.

Later.

The scare about the soldiers is over, but it has shown how quickly our captors, who had seemed so friendly, might turn into merciless foes. We have had food, and are now going on six or eight miles to where they say the "General" is. We are still following the river up a narrow valley, scarcely more than a defile among the hills. Our dollar-belt "Colonel" is in front with his revolver—a gallant figure on his magnificent saddle, with the red flag—half a crimson blanket—carried before him. (Poor fellow, how little we thought that within a few days he would fall into the hands of those very soldiers, and his head be carried as a trophy into the city !)

Later.

In the sunset, we are coming down from a high ridge into a beautiful, wide valley, surrounded by mountains. There is a little lake down there, and such a far reach of open country! It looks peaceful and homelike; but it must be terror-stricken like all the rest, for this is the brigand's kingdom. We are to meet their leader down there, they say. The Lord give us grace and wisdom!

Everything is strangely deserted. Wide though our outlook is in every direction not a creature is in sight, only our fearsome company of about thirty men. Oh, it is a lovely spot! Lord, Who alone canst, restore peace, I pray Thee, to this suffering people, truly like sheep for the slaughter.

We have just passed a deep gully below the road on our right, filled with cattle herded closely together, with a few silent lads keeping watch. I and my chair-bearers were the only ones near enough to the edge to see them. Such a surprise in this deserted scene!

What lies before us in the little town we are coming to? *He* knows. "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord," came in one of my chapters yesterday, and to-day comes the precious word in the chapter following: "As for you, ye meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive." Gen. xlix. 18, l. 20.

7.30 P.M.

Well, we are guests to-night of the Hai family, in the most crowded little farm-house we have yet found in China. The one room is divided into several strips or corners, one of which we occupy, while just outside

the half-partition a fire burns on the earth-floor, round which our guard lie with their opium-pipes. On the other side of our corner, the family of nine or more are gathered round a low table, eating hungrily. They all stow themselves somehow behind the partition at the other end of the room, where the cooking goes on, the babies cry and the good mother shouts her admonitions. Everybody else will sleep how and where they can, mostly on the ground. So our dark, windowless corner seems a sort of sleeping-car luxury. We have a bed—oh, for an oiled sheet!—and the family rice-chest fills up the rest of the space, not forgetting what looks like a dung-heap at the end of the bed. It is not offensive, however, being a dry heap, and kept from spreading over the mud floor by big stones.

And here we are quite at rest, waiting for the momentous visit of "General" P'u Shu-ming, who has not yet appeared. Howard is trying to get a little sleep, having had a wakeful night. Mr. Li is sitting on a block of wood beside us, reading his Bible and sharing our flickering light—a bit of pith floating in a saucer of oil. I do not know where *he* is going to sleep. Perhaps on a mat by our bed, as he did last night. Our chair-bearers are in another house; there is positively *no* room for them here. Sometime, I suppose, supper will appear. Two basins of rice with a few scraps of pork and green vegetable, half cooked, is all the food we have had to-day. Yet I feel so well and not hungry! Lively conversation goes on all round us, and the baby is crying at the top of its voice. After midnight, however, things will quiet down. It was so last night in the big house.

Saturday, 7.30 A.M.

I have had to leave him—I have had to leave him !

“ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? ”

. . . “ More than conquerors ”—through Him, in Him alone.

2 P.M.

Just before midnight, last night, I was wakened by voices in earnest conversation outside our corner. Mr. Li was talking rapidly—urging, pleading—the main drift of it all being that we were no longer young and ought not to be made to suffer. I thought he was talking with the leaders of the band, and heard some one saying that we must “ eat bitterness,” and that I must ride on horseback so as to travel quickly back into the mountains. As we were waiting to see the “ General ” I did not attach much importance to the conversation, but realising that Li was troubled I prayed for him earnestly.

And then, to my surprise, our half-door was pushed open and several men came in. Mr. Li was with them. It was a little disconcerting, for I had loosened my hair and was partly undressed. I woke Howard, who sat up just as Mr. Li said :

“ General P’u has come to see you.”

A short, thick-set man with a big turban¹ and a dollar-belt under his foreign overcoat held out a grimy hand, shaking hands first with Howard then with me. At once all the talking I had overheard was explained. It was the “ Big Man ” himself who had been laying

¹ This is the brigand head-dress, and consists of yards and yards of silk or other material, usually black in colour, folded round the head until it appears to be of enormous size.

down the law, having come in the middle of the night, and it was with him Mr. Li had been pleading.

The interview that followed was far from reassuring. P'u said that he had reliable information that several companies of soldiers were advancing against him, one of four hundred men being only ten miles away. His wish was to treat us kindly ; but unless this advance was stopped we would have to suffer. And if there were fighting, our lives would pay the penalty.

The man himself was the most disquieting part of the situation, as I took him in while he was talking with Howard. For there was little of the soldier about him and nothing of the gentleman. He is an out-and-out brigand, a determined, relentless, animal-sort of personality, who would as soon shoot you as look at you. A desperado—and as we soon found, in desperate mood.

He had invited us, he said, into the mountains to help to settle their affairs with the Government. There were certain terms on which alone we should be released. These his Secretary would set forth in writing. We were to get up at once and write in English to the Consul, telling him the real state of the case. There was no time to lose. He had been lenient once or twice (referring to the escape of Mr. Parker and others), but this meant business. We should never leave his hands alive, unless his terms were agreed to. And when he had delivered his ultimatum he retired, disregarding my husband's arguments as completely as he had Mr. Li's pleadings.

I will not dwell on the rest of the night, nor on our feelings when, before the letter could be finished, the rough men of our new guard were hurrying us to put

our things together to set out for the mountains. It was then 2 A.M., and very cold. Li Yen-ts'ing was greatly distressed; they were beginning to make us "eat bitterness" already. But Howard was helped in talking with the men—as always, courteously and pleasantly.

"What will you do," he said, "if we become ill and cannot travel? For two nights we have hardly slept, and the days have been long and tiring. We will take a little rest now, and start at dawn."

To our relief and thankfulness, they consented.

We all lay down then and slept. Flashes of thought would keep coming over me as to what might be; but again and again "the peace of God that passes understanding" reasserted its control. I cannot say there was no fear, no struggle. We were cold and hungry and very tired, and I was humiliated to find how courage wanes under these conditions. But there is something better than natural courage. Isaiah 1. 4-7 kept coming to my mind; and thinking of Him Who endured to the end for us, one slept and waked and prayed till morning light.

And then a strange thing happened. As we were getting ready to set out for the mountains, Li Yen-ts'ing came in, and under the influence of some strong feeling said that I must go at once to the city. P'u had changed his mind and decided that this was the best course. I *must* go and press matters in the city, and Mr. Li would remain with Howard. Before we could reply, he laid his hand on my arm in his earnestness, and said that I must not refuse. Howard urged the same, speaking about our chair-bearers, the seven men for whose safety we were responsible. They would all be

allowed to go with me, and it would mean their deliverance from a situation in which we were powerless to protect them.

I cannot write about it. The duty seemed plain. But to go and leave my husband in such danger! The Lord gave grace for the parting, though the blinding tears would come—the first tears since we were taken.

So we left the hamlet in that hidden corner of the beautiful valley just as the brigands were saddling their horses to carry their prisoner back into the mountains. I was alone with the chair-bearers, and it was not until several miles lay between us and the band that they began to talk again and be more like themselves. As we speed on now, over the open plain, where the people are busy about their crops and that dreadful sense of oppression is gone, my heart is with the group winding their way up and down those lonely paths, and with one rider who, I know, is very weary. P'u may be with them himself. He told me he would not leave them.

“ I will take good care of them,” he said, “ do not be anxious.”

But Some One Else is taking care of His servant—and our hearts only desire His will. What a “ token for good ” it was that I met the soldiers, the detachment of four hundred, after being about three hours on the road! They were a fine company and so friendly and pleased to see me! Two officers were with them in immaculate foreign uniforms, very superior, intelligent men, to whom I explained everything. They were most unwilling to delay. They told me that other companies were closing in on the brigands from the north and other quarters, and that if they hastened on

they could soon surround them and bring the prisoner back.

“ But,” I said, “ you have come out to save him. It would not be much use to bring back a lifeless body ! ”

They asked many questions as to the numbers and location of the band, and finally agreed to return to the top of the hill, where they had a telephone installed, and await word from the capital. This was indeed an answer to prayer, for they were actually running when I met them and would soon have been in the valley in which we stayed last night. I told them that this hot pursuit would in all probability have cost my husband's life.

Later.

Ah, there over the plain rise the city wall and gate—beautiful against that background of blue-grey mountains ! But I am reaching it alone. And where is he to-night ? Both, both abiding in the Love and Care that never were more tender, more watchful than now.

CHAPTER III

A LONG NIGHT

DID ever home in China, or indeed anywhere, seem more beautiful, more restful than Mr. and Mrs. Allen's home in Yünnanfu that February evening? It was only a simple Chinese house with living-rooms round one courtyard, but the cleanliness and quiet, the absence of fear, the loving prayerful sympathy—how healing they were at such a time! Practical help, too, was immediately forthcoming. It seemed as natural to Mr. Allen to sit down and write a Chinese letter as to tie up a parcel or prepare the good things to send in it. And how eager they all were to provide for the captives whatever might make their lot easier on the mountains! Experience had made them wise, and many things I should not have thought of were kindly supplied by Mrs. Allen and her daughter, Mrs. Parker. Had they not had their own dear one for six weeks at the mercy of the brigands? Did they not understand just what it meant by day and night—the filth and vermin, the crowding and lack of privacy, the under-cooked rice and pork for every meal, the thirst and weariness,

to say nothing of greater trials. So the very first evening, parcels were made up and letters written after our visit to the British Consul.

And then began that long, long waiting amid alternate hope and fear, while we were finding out how powerless even the authorities were to deal with a situation that seemed to grow more and more difficult before our eyes. Politically the outlook was becoming desperate. The Provincial Government was tottering to its fall, and the Viceroy's days were numbered. Already he was in the field with his troops, seeking to withstand the advance of Marshall T'ang, the redoubtable foe from the south who was more or less in league with the brigands. The Acting Governor, Kin, had all he could do to keep peace in the city, and fight the awful scourge of diphtheria which was carrying off thousands. The brigand P'u had chosen the moment well to press for amnesty. If the Government could have trusted him and his band, they might have been received into the regular army. If they could have trusted the Government, they might have laid down their arms on the terms offered. But a dark story of treachery and blood lay behind it all, and could not be forgotten. So it was that we found ourselves between Scylla and Charybdis, or shall we say in the rapids, rather, sweeping onward to a Niagara? How near the impending revolution was we did not realise at first, nor the way in which it would be overruled to bring deliverance. We could only pray, "pray without ceasing," and work as if every-

thing depended on bringing the Government and P'u together.

Meanwhile, out on the mountains, the soldiers were pressing their pursuit of the brigands.

"It is the greatest comfort to think of you as safely in Yunnan," their prisoner wrote. "Many, many times have I been thankful you went when I asked you to . . . the first time in twenty-eight years that I wanted you away! . . ."

"I am very well, thank God, and entirely happy. One's whole heart and mind are at rest in Him. The day you left me, we only went a few miles to a cabin on a mountain top where we were to stay indefinitely. One was glad of a rest. But at 2 P.M. a shot was heard, and all was at once in a stir. A few minutes later we were off, and as we started a number of shots were fired not very far away. The men almost stampeded, thinking the soldiers were upon us. . . . We travelled fast—our few belongings on one horse and I on another. . . . Dinner at six was welcome: you remember we had breakfasted together about 7 A.M."

Pressing on that night and again the following morning they reached a clearing among fir-trees, high up, with a commanding outlook. It seemed a familiar camping ground, for there were booths in readiness—little more than semi-circular wind-screens open in front—before which huge fires were soon blazing. And there Dr. Taylor was handed over to a young "Lieutenant-General" who rode into the camp in great style on a beautiful little grey

stallion with a brand-new military saddle, and with heavy gold bracelets on his arms.

Well was it for the prisoner that this young man was what he seemed, "quite friendly," for he was none other than Chang Shao-wu, who had caused Mr. Parker untold distress. In cold-blooded cruelty he out-Heroded Herod, and his name was a terror to the band as well as to the country-side. Gladly would he have taken Mr. Parker's life, once and again, had not P'u restrained him, and to witness his dreadful deeds was the worst part of Mr. Parker's captivity. But, as he gradually discovered, there was a reason for this savagery. Chang had been taken not long before as a spy in the city, but saved his life by a daring escape from prison. In reprisal the soldiers sent out to his village murdered his wife and children, his brother and brother's wife, and completely wrecked his home. Brooding on such a tragedy, little wonder the young outlaw became reckless and revengeful. But time had softened his spirit, and little by little something yet more healing began to work in his heart.

Had it not been so our experiences might, humanly speaking, have had a very different ending. For the authorities in the city, regardless of our representations, decided on pressing military tactics, and refused to deal with P'u on any line but that of unconditional surrender. Soon a thousand soldiers, as the brigands heard and believed, were closing in around them. Two of their people had been caught, a local doctor and his son, and when

papers were found on the former, proving him to be a friend of P'u's, he was immediately executed. The young "Colonel" who had threatened our lives, the day after our capture was also taken by the military. His horse and modern revolver were valuable prizes, and his head was sent in to the city to show that the soldiers were doing something. Such doings, of course, maddened the brigands, and again and again things looked threatening for their prisoner. Had not Chang Shao-wu become his friend we might never have had a second letter from Dr. Taylor. As it was, the "Lieutenant-General" sent off Li Yen-ts'ing post-haste, at a time of special danger, to meet the soldiers and try to stop their advance. At first Li and Dr. Taylor were unwilling to part.

"No," they said; "if we must die, let us die together."

But when Chang insisted that it was the only hope of saving other lives as well as their own, the sacrifice was made and Dr. Taylor was left alone.

Of all this we knew nothing until a voice we hardly recognised was heard in the courtyard one early morning. Could it be Li Yen-ts'ing? Travelling all night he had reached the city at dawn, hoarse and strained with excitement and fatigue. For his interview with the officers of the relief force had not been satisfactory. He found that they were advancing upon the very place at which Chang Shao-wu had appointed to meet him

that night or the following morning. It was too late to stop them, for half the force had gone on already, and Li dared not return to this rendezvous, seeing that Chang would certainly conclude he had put the soldiers on their track. It was a critical situation, and though it meant leaving Dr. Taylor alone indefinitely, Li felt that he must report matters in the city.

Without waiting for breakfast, we took him just as he was to the Consulate, with the result that we obtained our first interview with the Governor that day. Waiting at the long Board table in the modern guest-hall, it was with some trepidation we went over our line of argument. The Governor could not speak English, and we had to converse with him in Chinese. Champagne and cigarettes were brought in, and I was quite able to understand how people might welcome them under similar circumstances. But we had something better, something of St. Paul's experience: "Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me and strengthened me."

Even more was that strengthening needed in the days that followed. For silence had fallen between us and the lonely prisoner—silence that it seemed could only have one meaning. Our interview with the Governor had been promising. He had said he would order the attack on P'u to be suspended, and had given us a letter stamped with his own seal to send out to the band, promising that their lives would be spared if they surrendered Dr. Taylor and laid down their arms. A young artist, one of Mr.

Allen's church members, had bravely volunteered to take the letter and remain in place of Li Yen-ts'ing. But whether he had found Dr. Taylor or not we could not tell. Several letters came back that we had sent by other messengers—came back unopened. Not a line or a word reached us for six days and nights from the time he was left alone—that time of special danger. Six days and nights—how long they can be when one is waiting, listening for news that does not come!

On the last morning, when we almost felt that any news would be better than none, a call brought me running to the front courtyard. Letters? No! A messenger? No! But some Tribes-people had come in—rough charcoal-burners from the mountains.

"They have seen him; it's all right," said Mr. Allen reassuringly.

Again the men told their story. Two days previously—on Sunday afternoon—they had passed a band of about sixty brigands. They were so frightened that they hardly dared look at them, but they caught sight of a foreign gentleman riding a white horse in the midst of the band. Yes, he was in Chinese dress, but they were sure he was a foreigner. He had a sun-helmet and looked no longer young. That was all—and we questioned and cross-questioned them to be sure of the story—but oh, it was as water to a thirsty soul!

"The men looked to me like angels," one wrote that day. "They could tell us nothing more;

nothing about P'u or the soldiers, save that firing was going on."

But our suspense in the city was a small matter compared with the loneliness of the captive on the mountains. He had no chance to send letters. Constantly moving from place to place, our messengers could not find him. He heard nothing of what was transpiring in the city, nothing of what the brigands were planning, and to learn what was going on about him could only watch the coarse and often cruel faces of the band.

Fleeing from the soldiers was their principal occupation, and this took them further and further back into the mountains. At one place they joined forces with two or three hundred more bandits, who had with them a whole train of peasant captives. On the whole, the outlaws were on their good behaviour, hoping to secure the better terms from the Government. They were confident that if they held their prisoner long enough matters would be arranged to their satisfaction. And they were quite prepared to hold him for six months or a year. So there was no looting that he could see, nor any torture of the village people to exact money.

After four days alone there was one outbreak that was terrible to witness. They were climbing to a fir-topped hill when a peasant who had been impressed to guide them was seen to slink away, afraid perhaps of being noticed by his fellow-villagers. Immediately the band concluded he had been leading them astray, though this Dr. Taylor

could not tell at the time. He only saw them run and catch the man, who was dragged back and beaten cruelly with the butt-end of their rifles. At last one of them fixed his bayonet and seemed about to finish him on the spot. By this time, however, Dr. Taylor's intervention prevailed, and the poor creature was taken to their camp and lashed to a tree with his hands behind his back. Without food or covering he was to be left standing there all night ; but after supper his fellow-prisoner obtained permission for him to have a basin of rice, and when he was tied up again it was in a less painful position. Later on the same friend took an oiled sheet and wrapped it round him, that he might have some protection from the cold March wind.

Sleeping himself near by, Dr. Taylor was unconscious of a stranger who came up quietly and sat down beside him under the trees. It was Ch'en Wen-an, who had volunteered to take the place of Li Yen-ts'ing and was the bearer of longed-for letters. Glad as he was to have found the band, it was almost with fear he waited for the sleeper to waken. What had been his experiences ? What would be his first words ? If he were suffering and downhearted, or pained at being left so long alone, what could the watcher do or say ? Just then the tired eyes opened.

“ Who are you ? ” was the smiling question.

And when he knew : “ Oh, let us praise the Lord together ! How good of you to come ! ”

Never could the young man forget, he told us,

the blessing of that hour. To find any one really happy and satisfied under such trying circumstances was a revelation, somewhat as the songs of Paul and Silas must have been in the Philippian jail.

And there was added joy next day, for another friend found them, a brother of Li Yen-ts'ing's, who had also come at the risk of his own life to keep Dr. Taylor company. Such love in Christ is indeed beyond price.

"We have just had evening worship together," Dr. Taylor wrote that Sunday, "and I trust it has been a time of blessing to us all. One is just living in prayer these days. . . . Everything seems going well, thank God, and my three nights on mountaintops have done me no harm. I am very well and very happy, though of course the unsanitary surroundings and crowding are often a trial."

And on the envelope he added: "No wind, thank God! Slept well all night and am refreshed. 'Lo, I am with you all the days,' is no vain promise, is it? I am kept in perfect peace."

That that keeping was a reality was still more evident as the long weeks went on. A visit from "General" P'u made it manifest that the brigands were not prepared to surrender on the Governor's terms. They had no confidence even in his written promise, and pointed to the fact that the soldiers were still pressing them, though he had said to us that they would be withdrawn. Matters could not go on like that, and P'u had drafted eight requirements to be forwarded to the Governor, with a

statement that unless the troops were actually recalled within three days Dr. Taylor would be executed without mercy.

How much there was in this threat he could not tell ; but it was evident that if serious fighting took place and some of the brigands were killed, even " General " Chang would be unable to protect him. To avoid a collision the band went off after P'u had left them, and for six nights in that stormy March weather they slept on mountain-sides, at an altitude of eight or nine thousand feet, with no roof over their heads. By a mere goat-track they went up a valley so steep and narrow that twice over the horse carrying the " kitchen " slipped and rolled down into the stream. Happily he and his load were recoverable, though they had to be taken a long way back to get on to the path again. No supper was to be had that night till 12 P.M., and it was hungrily they waited round their fires in the little clearing among the trees.

From one of these hiding-places their prisoner wrote :

You must not overestimate my trials ; I have much every day to give thanks for, especially dear Li, and for the friendliness, courtesy and cheeriness of the men. You know I love to see people cheerful. Then the weather has been a great mercy—comparatively warm and fine ! The shower we had last night hardly wetted our things. The diet too has done me great good, and so has the open-air life and horse exercise. I am sure you would see my figure improved !

Li Sheng-chü is just splendid—level-headed, a “good mixer” and so loving and thoughtful! I awoke to find him holding an umbrella so as to shelter us both from the rain at 4.30 this morning, crouching by my side. He had already spread an oiled sheet over me. And about the three days’ limit, he took pains to explain that this was only a threat to impress the Acting Governor. His brother would, I think, have taken it literally. . . . We have good times together in prayer and over the Word. Such a big blessing he is!

I am certainly in much more “rugged” health than when we were taken, and I have learned a health lesson of considerable importance—the benefit of being hungry for one, two or three hours several times a day. For me, a full basin of rice for breakfast any time between seven and nine, for dinner between one and four, and for supper between eight and eleven, with as much fat pork and greens as one cares for, and occasionally chicken, fish or bean-curd, is an ideal dietary. Tea, I take about once a day, at most twice, and not strong. As to trials: the suspense, opium fumes, crowding and vermin—from which I keep fairly free—and the monotonous loitering are among the chief. But God has, as always, been as good as His word: “As thy day so shall thy strength be.” One has not been tried more than one could bear; and the benefits are obvious. You see, I tell you both sides, and dear Parker can expand my brief categories from his own larger experience.

After a whole week in which he had not been able to undress or change his clothes, it was a comfort to return to the village where P’u had left them—a

favourite haunt of his—and to find letters and news from the city. And in reply he wrote :

It was good to hear to-day of the release of the ladies—one of them wounded though, I am sorry to say—and that the troops have been withdrawn to the capital. The men evidently feel these things to be answers to prayer.¹ So many of them want to turn over a new leaf, and "General" Chang is a changed man, utterly different from the person Mr. Parker describes—so kind and courteous and thoughtful ! He gives heed to the Word, calls for quiet when we pray, and given a reasonable chance I believe he sincerely intends to become a Christian and break off opium. From the first we have had audible thanksgiving before every meal, and Li and I pray together audibly at least twice a day, morning and evening. God is working, praise His name ! They have repeatedly told me that all robbery has been stopped since we were taken.

There was something very pathetic about the situation, which was as anomalous as it well could be—the hard-pressed Government, unwilling to make terms with the brigands and yet unable to deal with them in any other way ; the outlaws suffering for their crimes, and yet perhaps more sinned against than sinning ; the poor distracted people, relieved for the moment but not daring to breathe freely ; and we ourselves, feeling for all sides, conscious of the increasing friendliness of the

¹ They had heard the prayers offered daily by their camp-fires about these and other matters. The ladies were wives of brigand officers, taken as hostages by the soldiery.

men who threatened our lives, and praying for their deliverance as well as our own, though hope seemed to grow less and less.

For the reply of the Governor to P'u's eight requirements was merely a restatement of the old position—surrender, on the promise that a written pardon should be given to all who laid down their arms. The latter were to be purchased from the brigands at their full worth, and a duplicate of the written pardon would be lodged with the Provincial Assembly. It sounded all right ; but as everybody knew, you might as well ask a brigand to lay down his head as to give up his arms. Practically it meant one and the same thing.

But at this juncture an unexpected development took place. P'u had again arrived on the scene bringing with him his cabinet council—several so-called Secretaries, and six or eight responsible-looking men. Concerning this, Dr. Taylor wrote :

At our noon interview, when the leaders conferred together over the Consul's letter, the only ray of light was that they listened to what one had to say, and that when a fierce young Secretary shouted in my ear that I must write and tell " them " that they really wanted to *chao-an* (join the regular army), and that if " they " did not let them I should be killed ; and I replied courteously that of course they could kill their friend if they wished, but that it would not help the situation. P'u said kindly and reassuringly for the first time that they had no thought of killing me ; only if troops were sent against them he could not be answerable for the consequences.

I was kept free from fear, thank God, though it is painful for a deaf man to be discussed in this sort of corroboree.

It was an exciting time. A hundred and twenty to a hundred and forty brigands had gathered for the conclave, and the houses of the village were crowded. Something was disturbing the company more than their prisoner realised until one of the Secretaries came and gave him the surprising information that two men named Ch'en and Yang had been arrested somewhere, and that if they were returned he himself would at once be released. Released! What could it mean? The men had nothing to do with "General" P'u, the Secretary said, and it seemed strange that their lives should be of so much importance to the band. Dr. Taylor was inclined to think that there was nothing in it; that the Secretary was just making fun of him, or trying to get help for some friends of his own. He asked for the names in writing, and the young man pulled out his pocket-book and wrote as from his Commander-in-Chief:

Third moon, first day. In the city two men have been carried off, Ch'en and Yang. Let them be released at once and there is hope for Dr. Taylor: otherwise, he will be killed without pity.

And, strange to say, this proved to be P'u's message. For he came himself, and before a number of witnesses endorsed the promise. Five

names were subsequently added to the list, making a total of seven.

“If these people are set free you will be set free,” he said. “Now write letters, and send quickly into the city.”

After the messenger was gone it all seemed like a dream. Could it indeed be that deliverance was so near? Late that night, when his companions were sleeping or smoking opium, Dr. Taylor wrote in the crowded room :

The thing that happened to-day was certainly mysterious. One cannot but connect it with your fasting and prayer on Thursday, and the many who are remembering us before the Lord. . . . I need hardly say I sincerely hope the Consul may be prospered in securing the release of those people without much delay. That the band should be inclined to release me on such an exchange is indeed a miracle.

While awaiting the reply from the city, it was little wonder that there were alternations of hope and fear.

From San-kia, where they spent the rest of the week, he wrote :

Yesterday was a difficult day for us both. After breakfast I was feeling a bit seedy and inclined to be despondent—dear Parker will understand and so will you. This will never do, one felt. This is no time to be slack! So, at once, I sought grace and courage where they are never sought in vain. And I was granted complete deliverance.

Soon after our 2 P.M. dinner, dear Li Sheng-chü (God's good gift to me) came with a face like a thunder-cloud, hopeless, indignant, tried beyond endurance. I need not repeat what he said ; the substance was that these " Brothers " were beyond hope, not one of them would be saved ! Some one had told him apparently that there was no thought whatever of releasing me ; all they wanted was the liberation of their friends.

I suggested that he might be mistaken, saying that my own impression was that the promise was sincere and would be kept.

" Probably some one has been trying to tease us," I added. " Was it the fierce Secretary ? "

I think he nodded assent. I reminded him that you were all praying, as well as we. Then we turned to the Word and read promise after promise till he could smile again, somewhat wistfully, and peace of heart was restored. We have much fellowship together in reading and prayer day by day.

To-day, further to reassure him, we have been remembering that our confidence is in God—Almighty God—not man, and that keen and eager as we are for deliverance, God's time is best. " The Lord knoweth how to deliver " and when to deliver. We talked over Ps. 40 also: " I delight to do Thy will, O my God," and Ps. 18: " As for God, His way is perfect," and " He maketh my way perfect." Li is helped and so am I. Our Psalm for to-day, the sixty-eighth, is full of encouragement, is it not ? . . . Now, thank God, I am just about as happy, facing this uncertainty, as I was before. Of course I shall feel it for you intensely if there is further delay. But the Comforter is with you, even our Lord Himself ; the other Comforter also,

Who brings forth in us " love, joy, peace, long-suffering " and the rest.

As the days went slowly by, he could not but wonder at the delay. And we in the city could not but wonder too. The Consul had taken up the matter warmly, going at once to the authorities to ask for the release of the seven prisoners in exchange for Dr. Taylor. To our great thankfulness, he found he was just in time to save one of them, and another of P'u's people, both of whom were to have been executed that day. But they were not the two whom P'u most wanted. Strange to say, nothing seemed known of these men. The list was left with the General, but all the Consul could learn was that Ch'en and Yang could not be traced. This was disappointing news to send out to the mountains, the more so as Mr. Allen had received an anonymous letter urgently pleading for their lives. It all seemed mysterious, and the Consul pressed his investigations.

After a further conversation with P'u, who was restive under the delay, Dr. Taylor wrote :

Things look difficult. He would like to add to my ransom two more men, also two revolvers and a horse taken by the soldiers. But in the course of conversation he said : " If those seven people are released and I do not release you, I shall be *tui-puh-chu Shang-Ti* "—under the displeasure of God.

So I still think, if this can by any possibility be arranged, he will keep his word. You know how he

changed overnight about you, and that is characteristic of the man. But he *has* a sense of honour. . . . His proposal was to-day: "Let those people be sent to Ta-sao and we will send you there in exchange." Humanly speaking, it seems my one hope, and not such a faint hope either.

Alas, the writer little knew that a few hours earlier the two men P'u was so keen to save had been taken out to the city gate, by Government order, and deliberately shot. There was no disguising then how serious the situation was.

CHAPTER IV

REUNITED

THE execution of the two men we had pleaded for, and on whose liberation so much seemed to depend, had taken place publicly, and the band heard of it before the news could reach Dr. Taylor. It was not surprising that they should be exasperated. The only wonder was that they did not at once retaliate by "executing" their prisoner. Something stayed their hands. But with depleted exchequer and all hope of reconciliation with the Government at an end, they saw nothing for it but to return to brigandage. They would forthwith attack the prosperous town of K'o-lang, and their prisoner should go with them. Some urged that he should be put in front of the attacking party, so that he might be "accidentally" shot. Chang Shao-wu would not hear of this however, and told off a few men to keep him in the rear as they rode down from the mountains.

Long before daylight the brigands had been stirring. There were now two hundred and fifty in the company, and seeing that something unusual was in progress Li Shen-chü asked the reason.

“ We are taking K’o-lang to-day,” he was told, “ and you must help to arrange the ransom the townspeople will have to pay.”

It was a Sunday morning, and in anguish of heart, knowing so well what these men were capable of, he said to Dr. Taylor :

“ Burning they will burn and killing they will kill ”—meaning, we are powerless to prevent it.

What all this meant to the captive missionary the following extracts from his letters show :

I was overwhelmed with the horror of it all, and, as we rode toward the unsuspecting town, cried to God with groanings that could not be uttered to manifest His almighty and infinite love. And He spoke to me. On the way we passed a wild-rose bush covered with great white flowers, the first of the season, and what a message of comfort they brought ! And then I caught sight of an orchid so beautiful that I had to dismount to gather it. It was magenta and white, the waxy petals tinted with every shade from the palest mauve-pink to the deepest purple. It was the most exquisite blossom I ever saw.

“ God is near,” it said unmistakably, “ and God is love.”

Then we found that “ General ” Chang had given orders that we were to turn aside a mile or so above K’o-lang and wait in the woods. This was a merciful relief ; and there one gradually regained peace and poise, though suffering keenly. For we could see, across the valley, the burning of two villages near K’o-lang. The town itself was holding out. It had local militia well

entrenched, and with a protecting wall was keeping the bandits at bay. This was wholly unexpected on our side, and led to prolonged fighting. For two hours we waited in the clearing among the pines, in full view of the burning villages—seeing first the columns of smoke rising from house after house, then flames leaping up twenty and thirty feet high. The people had all fled; but half a dozen of the largest farm-houses in each village were burned in this way, to terrorise the town into submission.

From this clearing we moved down to "General" Chang's headquarters in a suburb near the town, where there was much coming and going and excitement. They were making no headway, and the affair was getting serious for the brigands. One just quietly prayed on. After we had been there some time, Chang ordered our little company out to a place a mile or so away. There my guard broke into a fine house, the best in the village, hammering with stones at the lock of the front entrance until it gave way. The place was empty, everybody having fled in terror; but we took possession and cooked and ate a meal. Then we set out again and climbed to the village high up among the mountains where we had spent the previous night. It was a hidden spot, and thither Chang and his men retired when they were finally beaten off by a successful sortie from K'o-lang.

The rest of that Sunday was spent in caring for the casualties, no easy matter under the circumstances. One of Chang's men had been killed and four were badly wounded, one at least mortally, I fear. He had a compound fracture of the thigh at the upper end, and it took a long time to dress the wounds and prepare and

pad four splints—one to extend from the foot to the arm-pit—and to bind them on without strapping or bandages. One just did the best one could for the poor fellow. I trust his homeward journey on a stretcher would be a good deal easier in consequence.

When darkness fell at length, it was not reassuring to learn from "General" Chang that the attack was to be renewed the following morning. "We must take the place," he said, and his hearers could well picture the vengeance that would be wreaked on its unfortunate inhabitants. Still, prayer had been so wonderfully answered already that they were encouraged to pray on, asking especially that Chang and P'u might be under the restraining hand of God.

Next morning they rose at dawn and had breakfast before setting out. Chang ate nothing and seemed very quiet. Expecting to return to K'olang, what was Dr. Taylor's thankfulness to find the cavalcade taking another direction. Even of Li he scarcely ventured to make any enquiries. Southward along the ridge separating two valley systems they rode mile after mile, until it was evident that Chang's plans were completely changed. The man himself seemed changed too. Meeting a large drove of pack-horses, his men flew upon them. The unfortunate drivers disappeared; the beasts stampeded, but were soon brought back, and thirty more brigands secured mounts to their great satisfaction. But when "General" Chang appeared they had promptly to resign them. He was very

angry, and ordered the animals to be at once restored to their owners. It was a courageous thing to do, for he was one man against a hundred or two; but no one questioned his authority, though they watched him with surprise. He had taken no breakfast. There was no dinner that day. And when supper came, after eleven hours without food, he ate very little. To his prisoner it seemed that he was purposely fasting in a contrite spirit, and his heart went out more than ever in prayer for him and the band.

Meanwhile, strange were the happenings that succeeded one another with dramatic rapidity in the city. A crisis had come in the struggle between the Military Governor, Ku, and his former chief, Marshal T'ang, that requires elucidation. The latter had been Governor of the province only three years before, and Ku had been his right-hand General. During his campaign against the neighbouring province of Szechwan, he had turned against T'ang, and with his army had joined the northern or Peking Government. On receiving a message from Ku that he was returning to Yunnan, and that his former chief might either fight or retire, T'ang decided to do the latter while he could carry all the Government treasure with him. He made good his escape with fifteen million dollars in gold, minted in his own mint, and fell back on Canton. Ku had then established himself as Governor of the Yunnan province, bringing from Szechwan the enormous wealth he had gained in loot. As a ruler he was

fairly successful, but he made one great mistake in his dealings with the brigands. Under T'ang, their chief leader in the province had been granted amnesty—a man named Yang Tien-fuh, young, gifted, and with a large following. Over twenty thousand outlaws had submitted with him, and they came and went in the capital as regular soldiers. T'ang had thus delivered the province from the worst ravages of the brigands, whom he hoped to bring more and more under military discipline, and who regarded him as their patron if not friend.

Ku was a man of a different type. He was decidedly not the friend of brigands, and regarded Yang Tien-fuh with increasing suspicion. To his surprise, the latter was put under surveillance, and for a month or more was kept as a sort of prisoner. Then he was invited to a mysterious banquet. The Governor was not present, and he could not understand the attitude of the officials and gentry who were.

“What is the occasion for this feast?” he finally enquired.

“Oh, we are inviting you to be our guest to-day, outside the West Gate,” was the heartless response—which meant that he was condemned to death.

“Put me on the 'phone to the Governor,” he demanded hoarsely.

This was done, and when he asked if what he had heard were true——

“Yes, yes,” was the uneasy reply. “They all tell me it must be.” And the Governor put down the receiver.

Outside the West Gate, Yang Tien-fuh was shot that day in cold blood, and his young wife when she heard of it took his place at the head of the brigand troops that made their escape from the city. Two men also resumed command who had been Yang's trusted leaders, one a General named Wu and the other our friend, P'u Shu-ming.

The latter was specially devoted to Yang Tien-fuh, whose sister he had married, and was to have been killed with him. But he was standing in his doorway when a troop of soldiers turned into the lane, and though he knew nothing of what had happened, his practised eye could tell that something was on hand.

"It may be me they are after," flashed into his mind.

Quick as thought he jumped the garden wall behind the house and hid in a drain. For two days and nights they searched the city to find him, but his hiding-place was safe, if obnoxious, and P'u escaped with his life.

Then, of course, brigandage was worse than ever—Wu in the south with Yang Tien-fuh's widow, and P'u in the north, doing all they could to harry the Government as well as enrich themselves at the expense of the people. The young widow, despite her tiny bound feet, rode at the head of the outlaws with a huge flag bearing the inscription: "To be avenged for the death of my husband." And avenged she surely was!

For Marshal T'ang was not inactive. Gradually

he had gathered an army together, and at the time of our connection with the brigands he was fighting his way back to the city of Yünnan. At first General Ku and his party poured scorn upon the effort, placarding the city with vituperous posters and fulminating against T'ang as "the friend of the brigands." But it was the brigands who were their downfall, for they flocked to the Marshal's standard. As the conglomerate army moved forward, consternation reigned in the capital, then almost panic. People were beside themselves, seeking a safe deposit for their valuables. Of course the brigands, if T'ang were successful, would loot the city; the only safety would be under the protection of foreigners!

So the Consuls and foreign residents were crowded almost out of house and home. The distracted wives of General Ku took refuge with the English head of a Life Insurance Company, who was already sheltering ladies and children related to T'ang's officers. Missionary homes were invaded in the same way—boxes full of money, jewels and rich clothing being piled up in every available corner, and whole families crowding into a single room with their servants and slaves. Whether the brigands would respect the homes of foreigners, if looting really began, who could tell? But it was useless to question the authorities.

"We are in the midst of a revolution," was all the answer we could get to some enquiry about Dr. Taylor's matters. "We are in the midst of a revolution; nobody knows what will happen."

At the last moment the Government had changed its tone with regard to P'u and his men, and seemed willing to meet them in a compromise that had been suggested. Perhaps they hoped, even yet, to keep them from joining Marshal T'ang. For some days we had been negotiating an arrangement by which P'u was to police the district of which he was practically king, undertaking to put down oppression and robbery and to make all roads safe for travellers, paying himself and a small force of his men out of the regular taxes. The rest were to be disbanded and go home, as they desired, to their farms and trades. But good as the project seemed, it was not to be carried into effect. Government officials were vanishing one by one, and Ku himself was face to face on the battlefield with the followers of the man he had treacherously murdered and with that vengeful banner.

Yet a definite consciousness that deliverance was at hand had come to me. A week earlier one had written :

How it goes to my heart that another night is closing in and you are still out there on the mountains ! It is one month to-day since we were taken. One whole month you have been under this strain and stress, herded together with the brigands—eating their food, breathing their atmosphere and never alone day or night. The Lord would never have allowed it if He had not some special purpose of blessing. He will not let us fail before that purpose is worked out. If it must take a little longer, we will draw the more deeply on His grace.

He is "able to save to the uttermost." We want Him to use us in this matter "to the uttermost," do we not? In some ways it means so much more suffering to you than to me, though not in all ways. But whatever it means, He will carry us through. I do indeed pray, as you ask, that on *no* day you may be tried beyond what you are enabled to bear; and together we shall yet praise Him.

It was a week of turmoil and excitement as the following extract from another letter tells:

Strange things are happening here. We are in the throes of revolution and the people are panic-stricken. The Consulates and all foreign homes are filled with refugees. Three ladies are in the room below as I write, one a wealthy woman or girl—only nineteen—whose husband is away from the city. Boxes of treasure are piled up in the storeroom across the courtyard. And so it is in all the mission-houses. How the people trust us at such times!

Information has just reached us that three thousand soldiers are marching on the city from the west, and are only ten miles distant. Marshal T'ang is still fighting his way up from the south. Reports are conflicting. Some say he has been held up at one point. The Consul thinks that this is the case; a place two or three hours away on the railway. In the midst of it all our hearts are kept in peace. The chief fear is looting by soldiers and roughs of either party.

To avert further fighting and the destruction of the city, the three Consuls—French, British and

Japanese—decided to go down the line, accompanied by a deputation of fifty members of the Provincial Assembly, to find General Ku and try to bring him and Marshal T'ang to a peaceful settlement. In the first part of their programme they were successful, General Ku being willing to come to terms, but from Marshal T'ang no answer was received to their telegrams, and the silence became ominous. Finally, the Consuls thought it best to return to the city, followed the next morning by their fellow-peace-makers, who were determined not to miss the last train. Of this we knew nothing, nor that one man had remained behind—one man who could not give up hope that something might be done to avert further bloodshed.

That very day it was, before the disappointed delegation returned to the city, that light had risen for me over the stormy horizon. Concerning this I wrote to my husband :

Early this morning I had a remarkable assurance in prayer that deliverance was at hand. After breakfast I mentioned it to Mr. and Mrs. Allen ; it was so definite. In the Psalm we had just been reading the passage came : " I will give thanks unto Thee forever, because Thou hast done it." "*Thou hast done it*"—and already I had had the assurance that our prayers were heard and answered, and that you would be with us very soon.

Yet never had P'u seemed more determined to keep his prisoner until their affairs were settled with the Government. Military uniforms to enable

them to police their district properly were the tangible evidence he required. Until these were sent out, Dr. Taylor could not and should not be released. And the Government was in the throes of dissolution and unable to consummate the matter. Of an interview with his captor Dr. Taylor wrote that very day, March 23 :

He was more cordial than ever and listened well, for the first time, to all I had to say. But alas, his decision was :

“ As soon as we can doff this dress and put on uniforms we will escort you into the city ” ; in other words, “ Wait till the Governor sends out our uniforms.”

But GOD has the last word. You and we are waiting upon Him. Naturally, dear Li was a good deal cut up, notwithstanding his knowledge of these men. But I was enabled to keep an unperturbed front, and even to be cheerful as P'u's guest at a big alfresco dinner which followed not long after. “ A God Which worketh,” while we wait and wait on Him ! So now I am just awaiting *His* decision and *His* time.

And what was happening down the line that day, where Dr. Gordon Thompson was on his way to meet the advancing army ? Before they returned to the city the Consuls had given him the flags of their respective countries and members of the Provincial Assembly had left him their cards, so that though alone he was not without credentials. As a doctor he had joined the would-be peacemakers

to see whether help could be given to the wounded, of whom there were many on both sides, and now he was impelled to go on in his apparently hopeless mission by the certainty that *in answer to prayer* God would open a way where it seemed impossible. How to proceed he did not know, nor how to get into touch with Marshal T'ang's forces. He could only wait and see what God would do.

At the city of I-liang, to which the railway had brought him, all was consternation because the advance guard of T'ang's army might be expected at any time, and there was sure to be looting and slaughter. General Ku had retired and the city was unprotected. The last train had left for the capital, whose gates would soon be closed because of the enemy, and no way of escape seemed left.

Full of concern for the distracted people, Dr. Thompson was thinking and planning how to help them, when to his surprise a train was seen steaming up the line, which proved to be a "special." It brought the private car of the Director-General of the railway, a French gentleman who was glad to obtain reliable information as to what was transpiring in the capital. An hour later, news was received of a curiously-clad army said to be streaming across the line some five miles to the south. They did not seem to be soldiers, yet there were thousands of them. Could they be T'ang's much-dreaded allies, the brigands? M. Chemin de Pontesse thought he would like to see. In his car, with the line clear behind them, it would be safe enough, and he offered

to take Dr. Thompson if he cared to accompany him. So the way began to open.

Yes, they were surely brigands—the huge black turbans, leather doublets, and knives stuck in their belts left no doubt as to that. And there were many of them, advancing like an army. Seeing his opportunity, Dr. Thompson asked M. Chemin de Pontesse to allow him to alight and make some enquiries of the nearest group. His request was acceded to, and alone, unarmed and unafraid, he approached the brigands. Their officer seemed friendly and answered all his questions. Yes, they were Marshal T'ang's vanguard; the army was coming on behind. They expected to be at I-liang that night and take the city.

Inwardly shuddering at the thought of what this might mean, Dr. Thompson asked how he could see their General.

“He is over there at Keo-kai,” they said, indicating a town not far away.

So to Keo-kai the private car was taken, or as near as the line permitted; and when Dr. Thompson left it again he was accompanied by the Director-General of the railway. Together they walked across the fields and made their way to the market-place, where an unexpected sight met them. The great space in front of the temple was one mass of men, some thousands, preparing and eating their midday meal, and the proportion seemed to be two bandits to every soldier. General Chang proved to be reasonable and courteous. He could not

delay the advance of his army, but he promised in writing that there should be no looting at I-liang. He would send messengers after his advance guard and to the city itself, to arrange for a peaceful occupation. Anything more than this would have to be referred to his superior officer, General Hu, who would reach the town in a few hours.

After a hurried return by train to I-liang to bring the good news, Dr. Thompson was soon back at Keo-kai, this time in his own "special," to meet General Hu. M. Chemin de Pontesse had kindly put the private car at his disposal, little thinking what an answer to prayer it was! From 8 P.M. till nearly midnight the English missionary and the young General talked matters over, the latter being just as anxious as the former to avoid further fighting and bloodshed.

"If you had not come out to meet us," he said earnestly, "these good arrangements could not have been made."

Dr. Thompson was to go back in his private car to I-liang and telegraph to the Consuls in the capital, through whom the answer of General Ku's Government could be transmitted in the same way.

"And now," said the soldier in parting, "you have given us such valuable help, is there anything we can do for you personally?"

"Well, yes, there is," was the quiet reply from a heart full of rejoicing. "My friend, Dr. Howard Taylor, is in the hands of P'u Shu-ming. He has

suffered not a little out there on the mountains. Could you give me an order for his immediate release ? ”

A quick look passed between the General and his Staff who were standing round. They evidently knew all about it.

“ The lady is not there,” remarked one of them. “ She was sent into the city.”

“ You deserve well of us, Dr. Thompson,” was the General’s reply. “ I will give you the order at I-liang to-morrow morning.”

And so it came about, two days later, when General Hu peacefully entered the capital—only regular troops with him—that Li Sheng-chü brought out to P’u’s headquarters a document which read as follows :

The English Dr. Thompson’s friend, Pastor Taylor, was taken by your soldiers a few weeks ago. With regard to our coming into the city, Dr. Thompson has given us much help. Will you therefore kindly liberate Dr. Taylor and escort him safely into Yünnanfu ? We must cultivate friendship with the foreigners : please, therefore, carry out this request. Let us hear of your welfare from time to time.

Written on the back of a visiting-card, and stamped with a pocket-seal, this communication was not sufficient to accomplish its object. P’u was most unwilling to let his captive go, and Marshal T’ang, as he reflected, was not yet in the place of power. “ A bird in the hand is worth two in the

bush!" So the grip, instead of loosening, tightened considerably.

They had come in nearer to the city by this time, and Dr. Taylor was eagerly waiting the word of release. It was a keen disappointment therefore, that Saturday afternoon, to find that he was to be handed over to the charge of a new guard. He saw his friend "General" Chang and the others who had become so familiar file off he knew not whither. Then, up the stairs there stamped some twenty strangers, brigands of the roughest type, armed with swords as well as guns and with any amount of ammunition. Dropping their bundles everywhere they took possession of the attic with scant regard to courtesy, and it was not easy just at first to be truly willing for all that this might mean.

Then, only half an hour later, "General" P'u himself appeared. He came up the ladder-like stairs, smiling and friendly.

"When will you go into the city," he enquired; "to-night or to-morrow morning?"

"I do not decide that matter," replied his prisoner guardedly.

"Oh yes, suit your own convenience! It shall be whichever you prefer."

"In that case, I will go to-night," was the prompt reply.

A second order had come, though the "General" did not say so, a much more impressive document, stamped with a red seal three inches square. P'u dared no longer hesitate. And so it came to pass

that as twilight fell the little cavalcade reached the city, to be delayed at the gate while the troops and allies of Marshal T'ang poured in—among them the widow of Yang Tien-fuh at the head of his brigands, who had just killed on the battlefield the unfortunate General Ku.

The next day was Sunday—March the twenty-sixth—and a day of rest and thanksgiving indeed it was! A week later, as if to complete the joy of our reunion, a little group of strangers came in from the mountains, the adopted mother and other relatives of Chang Shao-wu. They had walked some twenty miles to be present at the service. With tanned faces, picturesque peasant-dress and simple friendly ways, they called forth the sympathy of the city Christians, especially when they explained that they had promised "General" Chang to come and worship, as he could not himself be present.

"He is a Christian," they said, "and we want to learn the Doctrine."

"General" Chang's erstwhile prisoner was preaching that morning, and when an invitation was given to any who would decide to believe in and follow the Lord Jesus to rise for prayer, this woman and the two men rose in their places: and there was "joy in heaven . . . in the presence of the angels of God" as well as in our thankful hearts.

CHAPTER V

THE MAP AND ITS MEANING

THE next thing we knew about P'u and his brigands was that they were in the service of Marshal T'ang, pursuing the retreating forces of the late Government toward the west. On one of the main streets of the capital, outside the south gate, a huge flag announced the headquarters of "General Wu," the other bandit chief, who had returned with the widow of Yang Tien-fuh. So they were reinstated. But brigandage was far from at an end in the province, and Marshal T'ang had no easy task before him.

Our one contact with him before leaving for the Missionary Conference in Shanghai was interesting. He had enquired of the British Consul whether we were making any claims for compensation, and seemed perplexed on learning that we were not, and that we should probably decline any indemnity offered to us personally. Seeing that he would be relieved if something of this nature could be arranged, the Consul suggested that there could be no difficulty in making a contribution to the China Inland Mission, if he desired to do so. This met

the situation and gave opportunity for quite a little ceremony. First came the Governor's card, brought by a special messenger. Then a thick packet of notes arrived, six hundred dollars, with more cards and compliments. Finally, the Commissioner of Foreign Affairs appeared with profuse apologies that the Governor was prevented from coming in person.

"*Sin-k'u, sin-k'u,*" he exclaimed again and again : " You have greatly suffered, greatly suffered ! "

He was surprised to see us bright and well, and still more so that we had no complaints to make. His friendliness gave opportunity for telling of the peace in which our hearts had been kept, and of the joy of knowing the living God as our Father, a real Father, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. We spoke of Him as an ever-present Saviour and Friend, drawn on by the interest with which the Commissioner listened. Altogether it was an unusual experience, and ended with an unusual request. For when we asked him to convey our thanks to Marshal T'ang for his donation, a receipt for which would be sent him from the mission-headquarters in Shanghai, he said earnestly :

" There is one thing in which the Governor would be glad of your help. He instructed me to ask you to make known to your friends at the coast his intention to use every effort to pacify the province and put an end to brigandage. Please tell everybody, and ask them to believe that he is doing his best in this important matter."

To those of us who heard it, the request came as

a strong appeal for prayer, an appeal one is thankful to pass on. If only this heathen Governor, forceful and ambitious as he is, could enter into the new life that has come to General Feng, now Governor of Honan, and thousands of his Christian officers and men, brigandage and many other evils in Yunnan would soon be conquered. This is what China needs to meet her problems—lives changed from within by the only power that can transform, the power of Redeeming Love. Meanwhile, the condition in very many places is appalling.

Far from improving since we left the province, brigandage seems on the increase. Fresh robber-leaders have sprung up, and by ever worse excesses have made themselves a name. Of one of these, a man named Chang, Mr. Allen wrote in April :

He and about thirty followers met a thousand of Ku's men in a gully, scared them and captured four quick-firing guns. In the panic the soldiers gave over their rifles, about a thousand of them. An officer was killed and some hundreds of the soldiers joined Chang, who now has a following of about four thousand, nominally under T'ang. He is at Siao-kai-tsi, in the centre of the Song-ming-chow plain. His doings are execrable. Wherever he and his men go the local people have to provide for them. Then all, even the poor, have to supply money, the rich being mulcted hundreds and thousands of dollars. He goes further still—for he has a prison there, at Siao-kai-tsi, the finest mesh in the net. The oppression is perfect. Horses and mules are taken off also.

All this is going on a few miles only from the home of Mr. and Mrs. Parker among the Ko-pu tribe in the mountains—the home from which Mr. Parker was taken a few weeks after their marriage, by P'u and his band, in August 1921. Missionary work in China is costly in these days, in many parts of the interior. It means exposure to such risks, and to the even greater dangers of civil war. The strain upon not a few of our fellow-workers can hardly be imagined, unless one has faced similar conditions. For this reason among others we are thankful for the experiences that came to us in Yunnan, and thankful to have been enabled to tell of them in writing. The situation calls for practical sympathy and earnest prayer, the exercise of hearts in which the Holy Spirit is Himself interceding. For this day of distress in China is a day of wonderful opportunity—opportunity for proving the keeping power of God ourselves, and for making Him known in this real way to multitudes who turn to us in their extremity. It is surely a remarkable fact that, while eighty to a hundred members of the China Inland Mission are known to have been in imminent peril through brigandage or civil war within the last few years, only one of these, Miss Villadsen, has lost her life through violence. God is unto us still “a God of deliverances”; but while thankfully recognising His protecting care, should we not feel our responsibility to strengthen those who are at the front of the battle?

Think of what it means to parents with a little

child to pass through the ordeal told of in the following letter. The fighting took place after our deliverance, in a district we had previously visited, in the neighbouring province of Kweichow. Only the latter part of the account is given.

About eleven o'clock on the morning of the 31st (March) we heard what we took to be the setting off of fire-crackers outside the east gate of the city. We soon found, however, that it was something more serious than crackers, and that fighting had begun between Liu's army and a force that had been sent from the capital to meet them. Hard fighting continued for some time, after which Liu's men retreated inside the city and closed the gates. The others established themselves on several hills outside the wall, from which they were able to look down into the city—Anshuen lying in a sort of nest among the hills.

Fighting then continued in earnest, and we began to realise what warfare really is. Lead and steel bullets came whizzing about us from all quarters; we had to keep low down to avoid them. Reports began to come in of this or that civilian being killed or seriously injured, and our compound was soon thronging with refugees, women and children. The fighting continued like this all day and night, and it seemed awful to those of us who had never before had such an experience. We dared not venture upstairs, and had to sleep on the floor even in the downstairs rooms. . . . Next day brought no change. Fighting went on as hard as ever, the soldiers outside making a desperate attempt to get into the city, but without success. This went on for twelve days—more or less continuous fighting—only it became

more frightful when the heavy artillery sent from the capital began to get into action. The report of those guns outside the city sent a shiver through one every time they were fired, and very often bullets came dangerously near. One evening, while Mrs. Schlichter was in a room considered to be the safest in the house, a huge shot from one of these guns struck the verandah outside, not two feet from where she was sitting. . . . Several smashed into the bedrooms and other parts of the house. . . .

During this time we were exposed to other dangers than that of shot and shell, for General Liu had hired robber bands to help him, and there was grave fear of these men breaking out and looting the city. In fact they did begin, and it was only by prompt action on the part of the military that they were restrained. Several of the offenders were put to death in various ways, right on the public thoroughfare, as a warning to others. . . .

We thank God for the privilege we had of giving the Gospel to the refugees who were in our premises through all the fighting, and pray that the seed sown at that time may have fallen into good ground. The circumstances that had brought them in made them the more ready to listen, and not a few said they were sure it was our God who had preserved them all from injury. . . .

While praising God for His preserving care, we deeply felt for those who were not thus protected. Other robber bands, hired by General Liu in the neighbouring province of Kwangsi to come over and help him, arrived too late to be of use. While at Hingi, a city several days' journey from here, word was sent to them that the fighting was over—which meant, I suppose, that they were to return to their place. They were not to be

treated like this, however. So they locked all the city gates at Hingi, and commenced to plunder. They went over the city several times, to be sure that they had got everything of value, and then carried away with them several hundred young women and girls, whom they handled as so much baggage, tying them with ropes to their horses' saddles. They also captured members of some of the wealthy families in the neighbourhood, whom they are holding to ransom.

Poor China—cursed by the militarism in which she glories, with the largest standing army in the world and no power to restrain the greed and selfishness that are using it for her destruction, did she ever need our prayers and efforts more than in her present distress? Again would we emphasise it, *now is the day of our opportunity*. Doors are open to us on all hands. Whole districts seem ready to embrace the Christian faith; and while such mass-movements are fraught with danger to the Church they lay upon us a solemn responsibility as “put in trust with the Gospel.” Never have we seen fields white to harvest as they are to-day in Yunnan, in the districts north and south of the capital. The map prepared for this little book speaks volumes, if only its voice can be heard (for map, see pocket in Cover).

It tells of a wonderful work already accomplished, of an amazing advance made in the last ten years, and of openings that surely are the call of God to some who will read these pages. What shall we say of the fact that twenty of those cities marked as

black squares on the map are still without any resident missionary? They are all governing cities, and with the counties they control have an average population of a quarter of a million each. The C.I.M. field, to which most of them belong, includes also the mountainous district to the north of the map, scattered over with those coloured dots that represent the thousands of Tribes-people (aboriginal, not Chinese) who within recent years have "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God and to wait for His Son from heaven."

Sixteen years ago not one Christian was to be found where those dots appear to-day. The music of the Name of Jesus had never reached those far-off hills and valleys. Sunk in drunkenness and unthinkable immorality, the mountain-people feared and hated the demons they worshipped and the Chinese landlords who oppressed them, and knew nothing of any earthly much less heavenly friend. Then they began to hear of other Tribes-people, six days' journey to the east, who had found "the Miao King," as they called Him, the great Friend and Saviour. How wonderful the changes He had wrought! Glad tidings had come to the Miao people, and they wanted to know all about it. This was the beginning of the marvellous movement that has spread and is spreading from tribe to tribe across the field of this map, and promises to sweep on—"God's great prairie fire"—lighting up the darkness in which millions are still waiting.

But to return to the Chinese population of the

district and the C.I.M. work in and around Yünnanfu. Ten years ago we had only thirty-one names on the church-roll on that centre. It had always been a hard field, and the work was practically restricted to the capital. Now, in addition to the mother-church, there are no fewer than forty-two outstations, with thirteen hundred and fifty baptized believers, won—first and most of all—by unremitting prayer. Ten years ago there was only one Chinese evangelist associated with the missionary-in-charge. Now, Mr. Allen rejoices in a band of twenty full-time helpers, several of whom have wives who are earnest workers among the women.

Listen to what he says of one of these evangelists, a man with a large prayer-life and remarkable capacity for work. "For zeal, love, clear-headedness, faithfulness—at-it and always at-it—he would be hard to beat. He superintends the work up north: a poor preacher, but a great soul-winner. He has the nimblest of pens and enriches the Chinese Government by the stamps he uses, never letting more than two or three days pass without giving detailed news of the great things the Lord is doing. In his movements he is mobile as cavalry, but, with his companions, always goes on foot, rain, hail or shine, over such roads as were only known in pre-macadamised days at home. He not only works himself, but gets everybody else working."

The value of such a man is incalculable. Another of whom their missionary tells is "a great street-preacher, and never fails to gather a crowd. He has

a voice like a trumpet, is a good singer, and preaches Christ for all he is worth. He is young, fiery, a true labourer in the Gospel, thinks nothing of walking thirty miles, carrying a heavy book-bag and taking an hour and a half's service at the end."

Another is "no scholar but a true Greatheart, with a remarkable capacity for loving and serving others, linked with a real prayer-life. No distance is too long, no weather too inclement, no hours too early or too late, if only he can lead a soul to the Saviour, or in any way help those who have believed. The secret of his success is the patient, loving interest he takes in all who come within the circle of his influence. No matter how important a man may be, or how poor and ignorant, our preachers take it as a matter of fact that the Gospel is needed by all alike. These workers have their limitations, but they realise that the Gospel has no limitations. I have just copied out a list of two hundred and fifty names of those who have enrolled themselves as enquirers in the two cities in which Mr. Liang (Greatheart) is working, some from villages quite a long way off. Among these varied hearers will be many who will 'go on unto perfection.'"

Content to be poor, these evangelists receive small salaries and run big risks in their varied service. As we have good cause to know, they do not count their lives dear to them in following the Master. Can any privilege be greater than to work with such men in such a field? They are doing all they can, with but little training, to reach the

millions of their extensive parish. But think how much they need more help, more teaching, more workers, especially among the women! Here is a typical city in which one or other of them is usually to be found—Tong-hai, near its beautiful lake. It represents approximately a quarter of a million people, and is busy, wealthy and very idolatrous. Temples are to be found on nearly every street, from the city wall right up to the wooded hill which overlooks the lake, temple after temple, attracting great numbers of worshippers. The lake is surrounded by numerous villages and busy market-towns. Only ten miles away is another governing city, and five others dot that southern part of the map. What a sphere for a young missionary with life before him and a sacred ambition to preach Christ where He has scarce been named! Several of those five cities would make a centre from which a great work might be done among the Tribes-people in that southern part of the district, who are very numerous but have no missionary among them. Deeply heart-moving it is to hear of the work God Himself is doing in that region, a work of the Spirit which “many waters” of persecution and suffering cannot quench.

“If you want to go to heaven in anticipation,” Mr. Allen said in speaking of it, “just go to A-ko-i and see the love and joy of those dear Christians!”

Yet many of them have been robbed, beaten, and some even killed by their persecutors. A man called of God to that work would find a fruitful and hardly

touched field in the thousands and thousands of Tribes-people in that district, north, south and west of Ta-ko-tsu, where we have about a hundred and fifty baptized believers already. The work is calling for the worker. Is the Lord of the Harvest waiting for you to say, "Here am I, send me?"

Then, south of the great lake on which the capital is situated, what can one write of the populous plain around Peh-chen? Fully half a million people live within a day's journey of that busy market-town, not counting the Tribes-folk who come down freely from the mountains. Yet there is no missionary settled among them—no woman even, giving herself to the work to be done in those hundreds of villages where the women are accessible and friendly, just waiting to be won.

And so one might go on all over the district, and back to the Tribal region in the north, where the needs are even more pressing. If the fact that God has gone out before us and that men and women are needed to follow up the manifest working of His Spirit constitutes a call, surely there must be many whose life-work is waiting them in this sphere, whether they know it yet or not. Look more closely at the dots scattered over those mountains and valleys, right up to the Yangtze river and beyond. The different colours represent different tribes, more of which are continually stretching out eager hands to us with the cry, "Come over and help us." Four centres have been occupied north of Yünnanfu, and many more will be needed, for the Tribes-people

to be reached are numbered by millions. If you were the one missionary at either of these centres, with hundreds of Christians to look after, hundreds of children needing education and thousands of enquirers, what could you do but cry to God for Spirit-filled workers, men and women to share the arduous labour and its eternal reward? Every one of those dots represents a little light-spot in the darkness, one or more Christians among the vast majority yet unreached. Think of the need of missionaries qualified to train teachers for the schools that ought to be opened; missionaries to live among and uplift the women; missionaries to create a Christian literature, to send forth the Scriptures in languages never yet reduced to writing. Have you the gifts of physical strength and mental fitness that the Lord could use if consecrated to Him for this work—work angels might well envy?

Of one who was the first to preach Christ to the mountain-people of this region and is still the Apostle of the Miao tribe, represented by these red dots, a fellow-missionary of another society wrote from personal knowledge:

Loved and trusted by multitudes, despised and hated by many, cut off from the comforts and pleasures of civilisation, facing a thousand and one dangers, healing the sick, teaching the ignorant, comforting the bereaved, playing with the children, stamping out drink and opium, fighting the demon of impurity, showing a timid people how to be self-reliant and enterprising, and returning to his headquarters every few weeks like a man

who has been touching the very bedrock of humanity, Arthur Nicholls goes on his way little thinking what a hero he is, and counting himself repaid over and over again because the people love him. I wonder what the Master will by-and-by say to these brave workers ?

Then, running your eye once more over the map, think of the leaders needed—Chinese as well as Miao and Nosu, Ko-pu, Laka, and others—to supply this great and growing Church with pastors, evangelists and Bible teachers, both men and women. Could any privilege be greater than to train such workers ? And here let me share with you a hope that shines brightly, or shall I say a burden that presses heavily on some of our hearts ? How could the Lord of the Harvest make it more plain that a Bible Training School should be opened for this very purpose than by supplying the people to be trained, the premises in which to receive them and the Chinese head for such a school, a man spiritually earmarked for just that work ? Bible Schools there are in China that are closed for lack of students ; would-be students there are who have no building to meet in ; missionaries there are who would give almost anything for a spiritually-minded Chinese fellow-worker. If in Yünnanfu we have all three, how is it that the Bible School is a hope still unrealised ? Because—and will you take it on your heart in prayer ?—the missionary has not yet been found to supplement that Chinese fellow-worker.

Let me tell you a little about the latter. He was

an officer, high up in Suen Yat-sen's army. Converted in a distant part of China, he withdrew from Government service, and by a series of remarkable providences became connected with the C.I.M. in Yunnan. As a student he had spent several years in Japan, where he was carried away by agnosticism and philosophy, but his conversion had been a deep work of the Holy Spirit, and his subsequent experiences have prepared him for great usefulness. Two years in the Alliance Bible School at Wu-chow have fitted him to teach and help others, but though he is a scholar of no mean order and a man of an unusual prayer-life, he lacks certain elements of leadership which in a large work are indispensable. Meanwhile a little beginning has been made. Are you, perhaps, the one whom God has been preparing to take up this work with its far-reaching possibilities ?

“ But,” some one may say, “ you write as if the province were safe and peaceful, after telling of the awful conditions due to civil war and brigandage.”

Yes, it is well to be reminded that these are days in which we must count the cost. It always costs to have God's best, to follow the Master “ whithersoever He goeth.” But having counted the cost, can we not leave it all with Him ? He can and will open the way for any service to which He is calling. The privilege may still be ours of not counting any cost as great, if we may but “ know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings.”

To all eternity we shall be able to serve our blessed Lord and Master far better than we can down here. "His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face." But shall we ever be able to suffer for Him again? Shall we ever be able to sacrifice things that are "gain" to us, the highest, best things in our life, for love of Him? When the last tears are wiped away and sin and suffering are no more, shall we be able to face loneliness, poverty, danger, as we may now for His dear sake? To all eternity we shall share His glory, His riches, His throne. Only *now* can we share the deeper things—His tears, His cross. Would we really miss this fellowship for any little passing gain—nay, for the best, the very best the world can give? These things are nothing if not real and practical. Thinking over this map, praying over this map, what do they mean for you and me? ¹

¹ Compare, in Phil. ii. 4-8 and iii. 7-15, *the mind of Christ, the mind of Paul*, and the mind which it is promised shall be *in us*: "God shall reveal even this unto you."

THE END