A LIFE WORTH LIVING

MAUSOLEUM CONTAINING THE HEAD OF MA HUA LUNG, BEHEADED FOR LEADING A MOSLEM REBELLION AND NOW REVERED AS A SAINT.

PRAYING AT THE TOMB OF A MOSLEM "WALI" (SAINT), HOCHOW, KANSU.

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A LIFE WORTH LIVING

NELLIE BOTHAM

OF NORTH CHINA

By

HER DAUGHTER

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DEDICATED TO
THOSE OF THE NEW GENERATION
WHO ARE CARRYING ON

PREFACE

This is the story of the life of one who loved her loved ones intensely and depended on their love. Yet one after another left her, and in some ways it was a lonely life; but she had company, for she found true the promise she loved; "When thou goest it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light" (Proverbs vi. 22, 23).

The picture of the mule-litter, or *shansï*, as the Chinese call it, appears on the cover of this book by kind permission of The China Inland Mission.

CONTENTS

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CHAPTER I

BEGINNING LIFE

"LET's go to China!" exclaimed Annie, after a missionary meeting; and she and Nellie applied to the China Inland Mission, and went to China.

"Let's go to Tibet!" Again it is Annie speaking, but now Nellie says, "No! *I* was called to China."

Nellie Barclay became Mrs. Tom Botham and joined her husband in his travels over the new ground of the Sian Plain. Always she was with him, except when she found women eager for teaching which only a woman could give—then she stayed alone in a heathen city while he went on evangelistic tours elsewhere.

Thus all through life she followed, yet only to One Leader had she promised absolute obedience. He had said, "Follow Me," and

she was glad when those she loved were travelling the path before her, but her attitude to the deep, but less than deepest loyalties she showed in a sentence. "I joined the C.I.M.," she said, "because its principles are mine. If the C.I.M. principles were different, I should have to leave it."

Such a character cannot claim open recognition but Mrs. Botham did more for the cause of Moslem evangelization in China than can be seen until the day comes when she will certainly be amazed at the number of jewels in the crown which she will have to cast at the feet of the Leader she followed on earth.

Nellie's childhood would seem to those of a later generation to have been hard, but how many of the finest English women had a 'Victorian' childhood! 'Dear Papa' was an early memory, the small daughter sat on his knee and played as beloved little girls always have done. Other memories centred round two brothers, and then the thrilling advent of

a baby sister, all their small world being ruled by 'Mama.'

Mrs. Barclay was reserved to the point of coldness. Nellie remembered for the rest of her life one kiss "when it wasn't 'Good night' or 'Good morning'" which proved that "Mama really loves me." Later she realized the depth of love which had led to a strict avoidance of anything which might 'spoil' the children. Probably it was inability to express herself which led to misunderstanding and flares of violent temper in Ann Gundry as a girl, but her conscience allowed her to make no excuse for the temper. At the age of eighty, she confessed with self-reproach to her younger daughter that, at eighteen, she had, in a fit of temper, run away from home to marry Hugh Barclay (to whom she was already engaged with the full consent of her family). Her daughter laughed at the predicament of the young man when she flung herself at him, and she was relieved to find that the 'unforgivable' crime could be taken thus lightly!

Her sensitive conscience naturally led to a strict regime for her children. Cold morning baths, even if the ice had to be broken in winter, were, of course, *de rigueur*. Nellie also dreaded the cold hour of piano practice before breakfast, but such discipline probably helped her to accept the far harder life she often lived in China.

Nellie's spiritual life was hidden and intense. As she grew older she was expected to help in a Mission Hall to which they frequently went as children. Later, a friend joined the Salvation Army, and, mainly because it meant persecution, Nellie wondered if she should follow her, and she attended several of their meetings. "Can't you even clap for your Lord?" said an enthusiastic Salvationist to the quiet reserved girl once, the effect being to prove to her that, though one in spirit, their method could never be hers. Her friend considered the Salvation Army bonnet a sign of sanctification (apart from its real use in the sort of work they were doing) but Nellie found

that her ' worldly ' hat had cost less and stuck to it.

After applying to the China Inland Mission, she had the ' haphazard ' but excellent training of the days before Training Schools were usual. She never forgot being introduced, by an energetic deaconess, into a factory workroom with the words, " Speak to them individually or collectively ! " Later she stayed in Mr. Hudson Taylor's house for a time. All who knew him well have spoken of the humour which made the Founder of the C.I.M. so human and easy to live with. The twinkle in his eye, however, was not enough to prevent Nellie's distressed blushes when he said at the breakfast table, " I hear that Miss Barclay is giving us no choice about sending her to China." She had exclaimed the day before to his daughter Maria, " If I'm not accepted, I shall work my passage out to China," for money was not plentiful in the home in Wood Green and they had always been too proud to accept help from ' rich relations ' but funds

or no funds she knew that she was indeed called to China. Long before Annie's impetuous decision, she had been slowly led to realise that she, unworthy as she felt of the high honour, was chosen to be an ambassador for Christ in foreign lands.

In 1883 the C.I.M. had sent out an appeal for seventy workers. During the next year Nellie Barclay was one of a party 'over and above' the seventy who reached China during those two years. In Shanghai they 'put on their uniform' as soldiers of the King, getting a complete Chinese outfit, not even one foreign woollen garment being worn. Then they went to Nanking for language study, for Miss Murray, who was to open and carry on the women's language school in Yangchow, did not reach China until a month later.

In 1885, young Thomas Botham arrived for language study, bringing with him a present of the new Revised Version of the Bible which Katie Barclay had sent through his sister Sara to her sister Nellie. Thus Nellie

Barclay first came into contact with the one whose life she was to share for nine years on earth, for thirty-six years with the veil between (" for he is on Christ's other side ") and now, surely, they serve together.

But this was not yet. In 1886 Thomas Botham wrote to the brother with whom he shared many of his thoughts, of the party of ladies going inland, " I am sorry they are leaving, and afraid they will not be replaced by better ones." He stayed in the South until frequent attacks of malaria made a move to the dry North essential if he was to remain in China at all.

In Tsinchow, South Kansu (N.W. China), Nellie Barclay worked joyfully with Nellie Marston, who was her friend of friends. " Solomon found one man in a thousand, but no woman, I found one woman as well as one man," she said. There, with a few staunch comrades, they laboured together until Miss Marston became Mrs. Cecil Polhill and went to the unreached and, humanly

speaking, unreachable people of Tibet, and Miss Barclay, as Mrs. Botham, to the unevangelized Sian Plain in Shensi province.

There had been no superfluous comforts in Tsinchow but life in Feng-hsiang City was outwardly much harder. The home of the young couple consisted of three small rooms in an inn, *one* of which could be closed at night. All day they were open to any one who liked to look in from curiosity or interest or to try to upset the foreigners! Two young men who had joined Mr. Botham in his work were part of the household when in Feng-hsiang, and Mrs. Botham had the experience of house-keeping in very unusual circumstances. Most of their wedding presents from home had been lent (to be returned *if* not worn out or lost *if* and when they had a settled home) to fellow missionaries who could use them. "I couldn't bear to have things put away unused," said the bride. A large silver-plated teapot they kept, it was so nice and big for thirsty young men after they had been preach-

ing for hours in the dusty street. Some Irish linen table cloths (from the Irish 'Elder Sister' in Tsinchow) also adorned their tables; even though they couldn't be properly starched and ironed, they looked so nice and clean over the stained dented inn table.

Meals were prepared by the Chinese cook. Mrs. Botham, the only one who could reach and tell the Good News of salvation to women in the district, saw that there was plenty of nourishing Chinese food, but felt no further responsibility. She would not spend time making extra dainties unless anyone was ill and young healthy appetites gave no cause for alarm.

This was 'at home,' but most of the time they were away from even this comparatively private home life. The Sian Plain, their "parish as big as England," was still unevangelized and largely hostile, so nearly always either they, or the two young men, would be away on tour. Mrs. Botham rode a donkey, their possessions were on another,

and Mr. Botham and his servant walked, carrying extra books which would have overloaded the donkey. The servant was not always efficient, for it had been Tom Botham's plan to take a boy about with him only till he was converted and had had some months of public sermons and private Bible study. Then he must go home to "declare how great things God had done for him" and to win others. Later, with children to be considered, it was different and Lao Li refused to leave the ones he loved and served.

It was a happy life in spite of difficulties, dangers and dirt, but they sometimes longed for a little privacy! "I'm so tired of everybody," Tom would say, when there was a chance of shutting the door and being alone for a few hours at night, but often day and night there was constant interruption. Nellie once stayed sixteen days with a Chinese family where the ladies were so kind and polite that she was never alone day or night except once when, with many apologies, all the family had

to go to a wedding. "I used to roll myself, head and all, in my quilt at night," she said, "and think, 'At least I am alone inside here'."

It was a time of sowing seed and winning the people from their hostility and fear and they had as yet little of the joy of harvest and no Chinese fellow-workers to share the burden and the joy of the work.

Yes, it was a happy life. Tom Botham needed the ideal confidante whom he had found. In some ways he was extremely reserved. "You did call me 'dear' once," his wife teased him when they met a more demonstrative couple. In spiritual matters he spoke more freely, but his unusual expressions sometimes shocked the conventional. "I burst out laughing," he tells his brother, in describing how, surrounded by a hostile crowd, he was "beginning to think matters rather grave" till he remembered the near presence of the Lord, so that "my position seemed ridiculously simple." He forgets to say how he

escaped ; perhaps through the universal Chinese sense of humour which has saved many an awkward situation for those who know how to appeal to it. His laugh was infectious, and his humorous sketches of passing events are still remembered by fellow missionaries.

Nellie, on her side, needed his sunshiny faith. " Oh dear ! I never do anything right," she would exclaim some evening when she felt that she had missed opportunities or failed to show Christ to some woman. " Of course," says Tom, " do you think you are better than Paul ? ' I know that in me dwelleth no good thing ' ," and together they would study the beauty and power and glory of their Master Who can triumph in times of apparent failure.

CHAPTER II

A FULL LIFE

In 1891 the Bothams spent the summer in the North of Kansu with the Cecil Polhills. Mrs. Polhill, Nellie Marston of Tsinchow days, was seriously ill for a time and Mrs. Botham helped to care for her. Later, the four friends had 'rare times of fellowship' together which gave strength for the next stage of their work.

It took twenty-three days to get back to Feng-hsiang as they were delayed by snow in the hills, but every journey was an evangelistic tour so that extra days were as profitable in one place as in another. This journey had a special significance for, taking an unusual route, they passed through the Chang-Chia-Chuan (Valley of the House of Chang) where they first saw a really Moslem district. 'A valley full of fine-looking men riding about on fine-looking horses,' was Mrs. Botham's

first impression. The Chinese of North China are not the small-sized race of the South, but the Moslems are usually of even finer physique, and they manage to get hold of the best horses, too! In Feng-Hsiang there were still ruins which were pointed out as having been Moslem quarters before the rebellion of more then ten years earlier. "Not another Moslem shall ever live in our city," said the people of Feng-hsiang, for the recurrent Moslem rebellions of the North-West mean cruel slaughter, first by the rebels and then by avenging Chinese. Many of the people of the Valley of Chang were refugees from the Feng-hsiang district and spoke the dialect with which the Bothams were most familiar. "There were Buddhists here when we came," said one old man, "but they—went away." (Going away would be the alternative to death, of course.)

These people, with all their sin and cruelty, and their desperate need of a Saviour, were from this time a burden on the hearts of the travellers who had come upon them 'by

chance.' Moslems seemed always to be as these were, off the main route of missionary journeys. This and larger Moslem districts were passed by and small groups in Chinese cities kept to themselves. Their sacred Arabic, though few could understand much of it, supplied a religious terminology entirely different from that used by the Chinese, and Mr. Botham wrote of the need for special workers with a knowledge of Arabic, to carry the Gospel to them. Now, he and his wife could only stay a short time to leave their message. They found as others have found, that the people were friendly and apparently not very bigoted. The friendliness vanishes when they see the power of this new doctrine to change the heart of one of their own religion, but the time for this was still far away. Nearly a quarter of a century was to elapse before Mrs. Botham would see that their prayer for workers began to be answered without delay, for about six months later their son was born, who was to give his life for the Moslems of China.

For over two years the 'Mission House,' 'Chapel,' 'Guest House,' in Feng-hsiang had been comprised in the three rooms they were able to rent in an inn. Whenever they enquired about renting a house there would be riots and threats against the landlord. "Nell and I came to preach the Gospel, house or not," said Mr, Botham, so they and the two young men who worked with them continued to evangelize the Sian Plain, though homeless. Others had obtained premises more quickly in some hostile cities, but had been forced to leave after a very short stay, and officials would refuse permission to return for fear of further riots.

Now, however, a house was 'added to all their blessings.' It was small, it was bare, it was inconvenient, but they had their own front door leading into their own wee courtyard surrounded by their own few rooms and even containing their own well. Of course it was dirty, but they had to take possession at once, before the landlord changed his mind or the

toughs of the city managed to keep them out.

Once in, with a nurse friend who came to stay with Mrs. Botham, they had to move from room to room while workmen scraped the walls, and white-washed. One Saturday, the last of the workmen left, and next day, Easter Sunday, 17th April, 1892, Mark Edwin was born.

'Ma-Ko-Ta-Ma' (Mark's mother) was now welcome even where there had previously been opposition. The first funny little light-haired, light-eyed, but cheerful and friendly foreign baby they had ever seen, won the hearts of all. His parents carefully considered the claims (they would not say 'rival claims') of work and baby. Soon after marriage they had seriously thought of following St. Paul's example and 'working with their own hands' at some trade, but had decided that it would, in their circumstances, lead to more misunderstanding, not less. Now the question was, how much time ought the mother to spend

looking after her baby? and should she have a Chinese nurse? The few Christians around them had only recently come out of heathenism and might easily speak of things a child should never hear. They remembered an occasion when they had stayed for a day or so with a young missionary couple. The little girl in this home spoke only Chinese and knew a great deal more of the language than her parents did. Mr. Botham, who had in his travels heard much talk which he would not have dreamt of repeating, was horrified to hear some of these same expressions used by the child. So Mark, and later his sisters, while making friends with high or low, rich or poor, were never left to the care of an amah. Mrs. Botham boasted that she put her babies to bed herself every night and though she had as many meetings as anyone, she often took them "with a baby under each arm."

But regular meetings had not yet begun when Mark went on his first missionary journeys. His basket cradle lay beside his

mother in a cart, while the cow which supplied his milk kept pace with the mule which drew the cart when they moved from one temporary resting place to another.

By this time there was settled work in several cities on the plain. A large portion of the province of Shensi is now worked by the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, six of whose stations had been opened with the advice and help of Mr. Botham before the house was obtained in Feng-hsiang. The Baptist Missionary Society also started work in the province at about this time, so that the early believers were no longer to be unshepherded.

In July 1893, Mark's sister Ruth came to fill the parents' cup of joy to overflowing. A camera was not a necessary part of missionary equipment in those days and we have no photograph to prove or disprove her mother's statement that she never saw a more lovely baby! She was always happy and well until suddenly, when nine months old, she sickened

and died. Her mother had known trouble before, but never so near as this. Her inclination would have been to try and forget or at least never speak of her wound, but her husband took the wiser course of dwelling on the happiness of their beautiful baby in the loving arms of her Saviour.

In this same year, 1894, a beloved young Swedish fellow-worker was in their house. He had come, like the Levite of old, "with all the desire of his soul" to serve the Lord and he found that "life is like a beautiful dream." After less than a year in China, he woke from the dream to the even more beautiful life of the heavenly land. It was joy for him, but another sorrow for the Bothams. Later Mark was ill, and after this Mrs. Botham herself caught typhoid fever and was at death's door. When she recovered, they started off for furlough. She had been ten and her husband nine years in China, and now they left the Sian Plain, where foreigners had not been allowed to settle when they first came, with

mission stations only a few days' journey apart all over it.

In England they had to meet one another's families and many friends. They also had the joy of fellowship with Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Polhill, who had been beaten and driven out of Tibet with such injuries that they were forced to return to their own country some years previously. Before they went back to China God had given them another daughter as (they felt) He gave Seth to Eve, 'instead of' the one He had lent them for so short a time, and their hearts were comforted.

It was good to get back to Chinese dress which did not, at that time, suffer from the vagaries of fashion! In England Nellie had been unmercifully teased by her sister, for her out-of-date ideas, especially when she hunted the shops for a bonnet now that everyone wore a hat. It seemed so silly to one who had not seen 'foreign' dress for ten years for a married woman to wear a 'girlish' hat. But sisterly teasing and talk about feminine frip-

peries had helped immensely in the refreshment of one who had lived for long in purely masculine company. "I was never lonely, of course," she insisted, "but it is nice sometimes to talk about things that don't interest men."

CHAPTER III

IS THAT THE END?

MR. and Mrs. Botham returned to Feng-hsiang expecting to take up their former manner of life. More time would have to be spent in caring for their own district, but there was still need to visit new centres. When they arrived, all their plans were upset and it took a little while to realise that the new plans were among the "good works, foreordained that they should walk in them." Hudson Taylor was fond of the saying that "a born leader would be known because others followed him." Mr. Botham had been 'followed' by his fellow workers though he had never been appointed, much less had he claimed to be their leader. Mrs. Botham, too, had already shown the characteristics which made her, all her life, the 'mother' of very many besides her own children. Now they were

asked to go to Lanchow (the capital of Kansu) and superintend the C.I.M. work in Kansu and the Sian Plain. The two provinces were, in the old days, under one Viceroy, and to pioneer missionaries, too, the border seemed unimportant. What had troubled them, until they were able to accept it as part of God's perfect will, was that they must give up the special work in which they had, with all their powers of mind and body, striven to attain proficiency. To advise and encourage in the scattered stations, to co-ordinate effort so that no part of the field should be neglected, this was a work that called for all Thomas Botham's special gifts, but to reach all the centres in this vast area meant quick travelling. He had said once, " I am of Maxwell Gordon's opinion that ' feet ' reads better than ' hoofs ' in that text ' How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings '." For long journeys they had perforce had horses, but he loved to travel on foot, telling the good tidings to any willing listener

on the road. From now his life was spent in inspiring others with these ideals, and in clearing up the many difficulties which come thick and fast as any work develops from the pioneer stage into a more permanent form.

Mrs. Botham could not follow him in these hurried journeys, but stayed in " Five Springs " outside Lanchow. Here they still kept open house and she was able to visit the homes around and to have meetings and classes for the women and children. She was a gifted teacher and loved to help the illiterate women to learn to read the Bible, and the more intelligent found her ever longing to lead them on to further study.

While they were away on furlough there had been another of the periodic Moslem rebellions in Kansu. It had followed the course of so many previous rebellions. First the Moslems seemed about to reach their goal of complete independence, or, rather, of Moslem rule for the North-West. Later their power was weakened by disunion among their

own leaders and Chinese troops were able to defeat them. They had shown no mercy to the Chinese and now the Chinese showed them none. Wherever they outnumbered them the local Chinese, with the aid of soldiers, would kill or drive them into hiding and burn down their houses. As the Bothams travelled up through Kansu from Feng-hsiang, the smoking ruins of many a village or suburb showed where Moslems had once been. Since their journey through the Valley of Chang, they had never forgotten these people who dwell among the Chinese like Jews in other lands, one and yet never one, speaking the same language which is yet not the same in the religion which touches every aspect of their lives.

The marvellous news that the Messiah, whom they call a prophet, is indeed the Son of God and only Saviour of men, was told wherever possible in Moslem villages, Moslem inns, and in the Moslem quarter of Lanchow, but still, with burning hearts, the Bothams prayed for someone to give his life to this

work. They had lived among the Chinese till they became one with them. They knew the language well enough to follow puns and double meanings so that they could join in harmless banter or confound those who were using such means to ridicule their Message. They longed that others might be found to enter into Moslem life as thoroughly. It is still necessary to "become all things to all men" in order to "save some."

Living in the Capital, they naturally had more missionary visitors passing through; once they altered and divided the rooms of their house so that a young widow, with her two children, might have her own home for the months she stayed with them. Then, besides Moslem, Chinese and foreign visitors, they had a permanent addition to their family in another daughter born in March, 1897.

In the summer of 1898, an urgent demand for Mr. Botham's help in Church difficulties came from the south of the province. His journey was hurried to the limits of his strength,

and he arrived to find trouble which burdened his loving heart. A case of Church discipline in his first years had "seemed such a terrible thing" to him that he could only bear it by dwelling on the certainty that "He who is able to keep" would not allow any of His own finally to fail in becoming well pleasing to Him, and use had not made him more callous. On his return to Lanchow he seemed over-tired and Mrs. Botham was worried when he did not regain his usual health. At last, in October, it was obvious that he was ill with more than tiredness and they sent to ask the nearest nurse (seven days' journey away) to come and help. Before she could arrive, they realised that he had typhoid. "I may be delirious," he said to his wife, "don't attempt to lift me, send for Hunter, he'll help." So almost his last thought was for her, perhaps his last, for the only distinguishable words in his delirium were of the "perfect Will of God," and in this Will he could leave his wife and children safe.

Before he first came to China, he wrote of "a glimpse into the beauty of that abused text 'Thy Will be done.' His perfect Will, His Will that is always for our good and for our happiness too"; and a friend who was with them not long before his last illness, speaks of morning prayers in the home where "he led us right into the presence of God, as he praised Him for His glorious, wonderful and perfect Will." Mrs. Botham rested in that all-embracing Will and would not look at 'second causes,' but she felt as if she could not face life alone. "I think I cried myself to sleep every night for two years," she told a daughter who, in after years, feared that her wonderful mother was perhaps too good to understand how sorrow can almost make one doubt the Love of God.

But none knew the full depths of her sorrow. Duties were more, not less, and she faced them bravely. Her youngest daughter was born and seemed to bring comfort from the Land to which her father had gone a month

before. The ex-baby had been called 'father's baby' when the others were born, now the three elder children must not be allowed to miss the love and care they needed, though 'mother' must supply it all. A young Moslem came to watch over the children in their play and their little walks. Even those who only passed through Lanchow knew that 'Mrs. Botham was very interested in Moslems' and it was an extra grief to leave them and her Chinese friends soon after this. She went back to her old station of Tsinchow where she took charge of the little elementary boys' school and quietly helped new converts and young missionaries in various unrecorded ways, till the 'Boxer year.'

During their travels on the Sian Plain, Mr. and Mrs. Botham had been conscious that the Empire which seemed so secure, was threatened from within. The country was riddled with secret societies, but none knew that in 1900 the astute Empress Dowager would turn their rage against foreigners and the 'foreign doctrine.'

News of the outbreak of the trouble did not reach Kansu at once, but gradually rumours increased, and at last orders came to leave immediately. With the minimum of necessary luggage, the little party travelled by chair and boat towards the coast. They were not attacked, and only once were they in obvious danger from a crowd, but rumours and threats were constant. The tiny sleeping quarters on the boat, outside which they dare not be seen, had to serve as living room and nursery. The children were all ill before they reached Shanghai. Mrs. Botham, over-strained and fearful, could only pray for each in turn. "Let me keep Mark, I can't spare my son." "My little 'Seth,' oh, leave her with me." "I can't, can't bear to lose my Grace, she is so like her father." "My baby, I need my baby"—and all gradually recovered.

Then she herself had typhoid. When her children were allowed to see her Mark informed her, without thought of his own future, "I know you'd like to be with father,

so I've asked God to let you go to heaven." He little knew how nearly his prayer had been answered literally. One night, which those around feared would be her last on earth, Mrs. Botham saw (in dream or vision, who can say?) the heavenly City. The gate was ajar and she knew that she might go in, but she turned away. "Not while the children need me, Lord," she cried and began to recover from that hour.

CHAPTER IV

ANOTHER BEGINNING

On arrival in England, 'Mother, Mark, the little girls and Mabel,' found a home in Bedford where they stayed for three years. Mrs. Botham had her hands full with the small family and also as C.I.M. Prayer Union Secretary, but 'of course' she could not stay in England. In 1904 with Mark settled at school, the home was sold up and she prepared to take the girls to China with her. Then the eldest of the little girls developed appendicitis, an immediate operation was advised and their passages were cancelled. Apart from the anxiety about what was then a comparatively rare operation, there was the question of where they were to go until the following autumn, but, after all, this was to be the happiest year of the four spent at home.

After the stay in hospital and convalescence

by the sea of the small patient, and the visits to aunties and uncles of the others, Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Polhill asked if they would occupy a cottage on their estate. Nothing could have given Mrs. Botham more pleasure than to live in close touch with her friend, and the children of the two families played together in hayfields and woods and found life ideal. But before the end of the year Mrs. Botham was to have another great sorrow. No one realised how ill Mrs. Polhill was until the last weeks of her life came, and then only her own family can have felt the parting more than her friend.

In 1905, Mark was left at school and his mother and sisters returned to China. The two little girls went to the C.I.M. Schools in Chefoo while Mrs. Botham took Mabel with her to a city on the great dusty plain of North China. She was not able to stand the heat for much more than a year, but of that short time a fellow worker wrote, many years later, " Your example, your methods and way with

Chinese were the greatest help to me. I learnt how to work amongst the women through you."

After this she went to a station near Chefoo, where the girls could get home for holidays. It was difficult work here, for she had no efficient helpers, either in spiritual or material things. For a time Mrs. Tomkinson was there, the truest, finest colleague one could find, but later she was alone. Once she slipped on stone steps and broke her leg. She had to persuade garrulous old Mrs. 'Fish' to find a board to which she herself could tie her leg. Then good but stupid old Mr. 'Sheep' helped to bring a thin mattress and, under her instructions, carry her to her room. A mule litter "could not" be obtained, but on her insistence one was finally brought to the door the following morning. The muleteer was, fortunately, a sensible man, and, taking a door off its sockets, got another man to help pull the mattress on it and lift her into the litter. When she finally reached Chefoo after five

hours swinging and jolting, one can scarcely imagine the pain she must have been in.

Church matters, too, were difficult. Mrs. Botham did not feel it right to take on responsibility for an industrial mission (more industry than mission) which had been working in connection with the church. Because of her decision the church was nearly emptied on Sundays, and there had never been time for week-day classes with the employees. The over-worked missionary in Chefoo who gave such pastoral oversight as he could, was seldom able to come. However, at last a truly spiritual evangelist, Mr. Chiao, was found to work among the men in the same spirit as women's work was being carried on. The villages near began also to show promise. Mr. Chü went round selling oil by spoonfuls, and people remarked with amazement that his measures were just. "That's because I'm a Christian," he would say, and others came to inquire about this unheard of religion which made people honest! A stay to teach in his village was cheer-

ing, even though, as Mrs. Botham said, "I'd have been more comfortable at night if I could have cut off my legs at the knees," to avoid the winter store of sweet potatoes piled at one end of the k'ang (brick bed). A pig-sty just outside the tiny window added to discomfort, but willing listeners to the story of the Gospel made up for all, and her friends would have been hurt if she had gone to an inn instead of using their best spare room.

She went to Chefoo each August and the girls came home for Easter and Christmas. They did not in the least envy those whose homes were in Shanghai or other ports. Could 'foreign' shops provide more than the big parcel which Grandma always sent in time for Christmas? And, of course, nobody else's mother knew such interesting things. She read such thrilling books to them, which they were surprised, years later, to hear stigmatised as 'dull,' 'educational' or 'classical.' She also had a theory, unusual in those days, that children should be told the 'why' of rules,

and she shared her own varied interests with them.

And then yet another sorrow. Mrs. Botham was in Chefoo, most mercifully, when 'Queen Mab,' the youngest and most vivid of her children, came home from school in pain. She and one other child had, none knew how, caught the dreaded cholera. Early next morning she was 'with her father and our Father.' After losing the sunshine of her life her mother and brothers and sisters, felt that earth never regained its full brightness. Perhaps her going drew their hearts more to 'things above.'

Mark was in England without an 'own family' but his mother's weekly letters brought some of the home atmosphere into his life. His father had once asked his Master to show him where he could best be used in His service. Next morning he received *China, Its Spiritual Need and Claims*, by Hudson Taylor, and could only take it as His voice saying, 'Go.' Now Mark was waiting for leading when one of his mother's letters gave it.

In Chefoo at this time Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Rhodes were working, having left Yunnan for reasons of health. This South-Western province contains many Moslems, and Mrs. Botham was more than interested to find that Mr. Rhodes had felt the burden of their need. Because it stirred her own heart, she naturally wrote to Mark about these things, and he knew without a doubt, that to China's Moslems he must go.

For several years, Mr. Rhodes received letters in Arabic from Ahungs (the Chinese form of the Persian 'Akhund'—a teacher), and sent them on to the Nile Mission Press in Egypt, where Mr. A. T. Upson wrote replies to be returned through him. It was a round-about way of correspondence, but there was still to be a waiting time of faith before the answer to the prayers of years should be seen. Since 1891 the prayers for special workers who had studied Arabic and Moslem problems had been unforgotten in Mrs. Botham's heart.

In 1913, 'Borden of Yale' was preparing for Moslem work in China. The final preparation was to be a time of study in Cairo and here, just as he seemed ready for his life work, he died. Though he never reached China, his name is enshrined in the Borden Memorial Hospital in Lanchow, built with money left by him to the C.I.M. Here many Moslems were to hear the word of Life. Nile Mission Press books were also being translated into Chinese, to be distributed among Moslems.

Indeed, there were many signs that the time was coming for Chinese Moslems to be reached, when Mrs. Botham, with her two daughters, returned to England in the summer of 1913. Here they found Mark making weird noises as he practised phonetics! His certificate has the examiner's note that it was to be hoped he would "do original research in the subject," but he had other thoughts. His youthful enthusiasm was such that his sisters learnt to practise all manner of queer sounds, for "A tribe in Central Africa has a word like

this——"! "It would be no use going to the South Seas without learning to say this ——!" But the words they heard so often that they could not forget them were those of the Moslem creed, "La-illaha-illa-'llahu; Muhammadu-Rasulu-'Allah." Against this creed, "There is no god but God: Mohammed is the apostle of God," Mark hoped to have a share in declaring the claims of the Christ of God.

CHAPTER V

GROWING HOPES

BACK in England, there was first the joy of a holiday in a country cottage. Mrs. Botham loved England. She loved the land itself. "Each spring away from England seems like a lost spring," she said, and the autumn tints reminded her of her husband's exposition of "We all do fade as a leaf"—"may our fading show such beauty." She loved the history found in every corner of the land, in its highways and buildings, in the very landscape itself.

A scrap of paper is treasured in her Bible with a copy of the words from *Richard II*,

> "This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-paradise;
> . . . . .

This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
. . . . .
This blessed plot, this realm, this England,
. . . this dear, dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,"

Thus, in Shakespeare's words, she expressed what she usually only thought. But the thought made her understand and sympathise with the ultra-nationalism which was to come upon the world so soon. In China the young people who went to extremes with their 'days of shame' for defeat, and violence against 'imperialism' found that she understood their motives though she could point out what they had forgotten, that the highest good for a nation as for an individual is only found in following the "King of nations." She so entered into the patriotism of others that more than one who 'didn't like the English' would say, "I don't count you English."

To love of country was added intense enjoyment of all the little pleasures of family

life. Her son's mimicry of the great men of the day, his topical parodies of old songs and his absurd little sketches, gave joy unqualified by any fear that his heart could be turned from the aim which he had set before him, which was one with her own aim.

The early days of August 1914 have been too often described to need any mention here. Mark would fain have joined up at once and his mother would say nothing to influence him, but he had begun 'work of (super) national importance' and 'necessity was laid upon him' to continue. In 1915 they left for China.

Once more, as in his babyhood, Mrs. Botham journeyed through China with her son. Then she had cared for him, now in his care for her she learnt a new relationship. "I never knew until I had a grown-up son," she said, "the meaning of the words, 'The same is My mother.'" After his time in the language school, they went

together to Lanchow, home of dim memories to him and of many poignant memories to her. "Five Springs" still had its trees and temples, and the little Christian cemetery in which was Thomas Botham's grave. Lanchow was still the cosmopolitan centre where Chinese, Moslem, Turki, Mongol, Tibetan or Russian could be met without surprise. But there was a great and wonderful change in the missionary outlook.

The Borden Memorial Hospital was being built and Dr. George King was doing medical evangelism in less adequate premises until it was finished. Dr. King had not only steadiness of aim, but, as Mrs. Botham found, all the abounding energy she had seen in his father a generation earlier. He was specially keen to reach Moslems and in the wards set apart for them she could visit the women and so get an entrance to their homes in the city.

"My wife had a room . . . and to her the

daughters of the land flocked in large numbers," wrote Mr. Botham in 1890 when on a tour in the Sian Plain.

"Mrs. Botham had a very interesting time with a large group of women," wrote Dr. King in 1918 when he went ashore with Mark and his mother at a town they were passing by raft on the Yellow River.

So much of her time was spent in sowing seed of which others would reap the harvest, that it would be impossible to write of her life-work in the usual sense. While Mark was travelling throughout Kansu, she was teaching individual women in Lanchow. When he was ill with rheumatic fever she nursed him. Sometimes they could go on short journeys together, and the 1918 trip was undertaken that they might occupy the city of Ninghsia while the missionaries, with one exception, were on furlough, and she would otherwise have been left many days' journey from another European.

We can imagine Mrs. Botham's eager

interest when Mark made a trip to the south of the province and visited the "Valley of the House of Chang," where before his birth the need of the Moslems had so impressed his parents. He visited the 'Saint' who lived there, talked with his household, and left books with them. He was becoming more and more the worker for whom Mrs. Botham had prayed through the years. He travelled among Moslems, lived with them, and learnt their thoughts in a way the non-Moslem Chinese cannot do. His mother would never claim to be a specialist but she so entered into his interests as to learn much of the meaning of Islam, and in her patient teaching and listening in Moslem homes, she learnt more than any man could of the woman's less studious but often more bigoted point of view.

But in 1920 it was obvious that she was not fit to go on as she had been doing. "You need cups of tea and kisses," said her son,

" you'd better go to England and fetch Olive," and he wrote to his sister, 'I'll have to get a 'hsi-fu' (daughter-in-law) for mother if you don't come soon!" His sister knew in her heart, as he knew, that she would be constrained by a Higher Command than his to come to China in the end. But the feeling that she ought not to leave her younger sister alone (for without one of the family meant 'alone' to them all), joined with a purely selfish wish to take a full nursing course, had delayed her.

Now her mother set her face towards England, but first she went for a visit to Tsinchow, her earliest station in China.

Mark accompanied her as far as a mission station a few days' journey south. The night they were here, they felt a bigger earthquake shock than they had ever known. There were cracks in the walls of some houses in the city, but little real damage was done and they wondered whether their

friends elsewhere had noticed it. The next day they parted and going north and south each found evidence that the city where they had been had suffered lightly compared with other parts.

Day after day Mrs. Botham passed through ruined villages, often having to make long detours to avoid cracks in the ground, or great falls of earth and stones from the hills. Night after night she spent in her litter, well away from walls which might fall in the many smaller shocks which followed that first terrible one.

The people who had escaped with their lives, huddled together in fear, saying, "Heaven has decreed that all men shall be slain." Even hawks crouched in holes in the cliffs, afraid to swoop on their prey. The awful news of the catastrophe came to the traveller as a dreadful exhibition of power. "Such mighty power," seemed to be repeated again and again in the creaking of the litter poles, till suddenly came "The Mighty Power of God"—"and

He is on our side" she realised in joyful relief.

Another attack of fever at this time affected Mark's heart and he was ordered to the coast for rest, so he went to Shanghai with his mother. At first, unable for journeys among them, he prepared literature for Moslems. Later, he went for a tour (at the request of the China Committee on work for Moslems) through the Eastern and Central Provinces. It was a tour of investigation and also of stimulation for he stirred the hearts of some who had not previously considered the Moslem problem to join in forming a 'Moslem Evangelization League (for China)' as well as gathering much valuable information about Moslems in this part of China.

His mother stayed long enough to notice something which those chiefly concerned had not yet realised. "Mark is very fond of Miss Olive Trench," she told her daughter in England.

From this time, it was through letters and

through the understanding which knows more than letters can say, that she kept in touch with her son's work, which was also her own work.

CHAPTER VI

AND ANOTHER END

"Two great events are to happen to-morrow," said Mrs. Botham's younger daughter in February 1922, "Princess Mary's wedding and my mother's arrival in England." This daughter, since all the family was going to China, obtained a teaching appointment in Kuling at the end of the year, and Mrs. Botham would gladly have returned as soon, or sooner, but her elder daughter was kept behind for further training, and both lived for another year in England, with their hearts in China. Mark's letters distressed those who could read between the lines. He must return to Lanchow, not for his own work among Moslems (he had hoped for another tour in the Southern and Western provinces), but to take charge of the Boys' School. He often had to respond to calls for work which he, with his greater

knowledge of Chinese, could do better than most; but while he did this work for others there was no one to carry on his own. This was always distressing, but it was now obvious that he was not physically fit for life in the high altitudes of Kansu or for the mountainous journeys he still took during the school holidays to reach more and yet more Moslems. He *could* not neglect them. Later came a burst of gladness in his announcement of his engagement and a lyrical description for his sister of his fiancée. But he was obviously ill when he travelled down to Hankow to be married and to have a "long rest as well as a honeymoon" in Kuling. In their hearts the two at the other side of the world knew that the rest had come too late, but, as the weeks went by, they tried to persuade themselves that if he were not better a cable would have come. Then suddenly the cable did come, and Mrs. Botham, who was visiting a friend in Somerset, had a wire to say that her daughter was coming to see her from London. "It's Mark."

"Gone?" "Yes." No other words would come.

From this time the hope of life seemed all in the future reunion, but as the long days passed the light ahead seemed nearer and little daily joys were seen more clearly than ever. "She kept young for her two young men" (husband and son), said the daughter-in-law, who after this got to know Mark's mother, and she was more and more interested in young people and new work. She would always keep the published portraits of the new recruits for China by her for prayer. "I love young men," she said, and many a young man loved her.

In 1923, they arrived in China, and Mrs. Botham went to Kaifeng with her daughter-in-law, her daughter joining them after a short time of language study. Mrs. Mark was struck with the similarity of the pioneer spirit in Thomas and Mark Botham, and during this time she wrote the first draft of *Two Pioneers*, a short sketch of their lives. Then she went

to her Girls' School in Kansu, while the two who would fain have gone with her, remained in Kaifeng.

It was felt that the journey to Kansu would be too much for Mrs. Botham, and she was asked to remain in Honan. From the health point of view it was a mistake. She had never kept well on the plains, and during the three years spent here both she and her daughter contracted illnesses which were to hamper them for the rest of their lives. But it was part of the plan of God. In many ways it was an ideal sphere of work, and Mrs. Botham said how glad she would be to stay there until her daughter's furlough (she herself hoped to stay without furlough from now on). In Honan, Moslem women are thought more of than in any other part of the Moslem world. In Kaifeng there are schools for the training of women Ahungs, who learn the Arabic Koran and study Persian commentaries. Mrs. Botham was able to visit in the Moslem quarter, and more women came to the Mission

Hospital after her visits. Her daughter had the work she loved in helping to train Chinese nurses, and they had hopes of combining their work in a Moslem Hostel connected with the hospital. Dr. Guinness, keen on every plan for the advancement of the Gospel, was sympathetic, but we are still hoping and praying for the fulfilment of these plans.

Meanwhile, it was possible to reach some Moslems apart from the Hospital. It was a delight to meet two girls who had been at Mrs. Mark's School in Kansu. Their father was an official whose home was in Honan, and the girls were sent back to Kaifeng at a marriageable age. They never came out as Christians; one who went to Pekin after marriage wrote once, and S.P.G. missionaries there tried to keep in touch with her, but soon no more news came.

Among those resident in Kaifeng, an acquaintance with Sï Ahung (a woman ahung) led to a welcome in many homes. Also Mrs. Botham was twice able to visit a large Moslem

centre near by invitation from the American Baptist Mission. On another occasion she was amused by an experience in a C.I.M. Station. She had been invited to lead the Bible Study Classes in a women's Conference, and the young missionary in charge of it read aloud a letter she received on the first day. In it was the sentence, "I am surprised you have got Mrs. Botham for your Conference, she is a fine Bible teacher, but so very frail." Frail she was and had been for years, but the terrible headaches of her early years had ceased to trouble her and she had unsuspected physical stamina as well as spiritual power.

In 1925 they were forced by the threatening political situation to spend several months in Chefoo. Mrs. Botham arranged to go to Ninghai (her old station), and when some tried to dissuade her from the effort she replied—"I can't spend three months doing nothing."

1926 was less threatening, but in 1927 it seemed, as it had in 1900, that all the work of

foreign missionaries would be stopped. At staff meetings and consultations in the Kaifeng Hospital, it was reluctantly decided that all foreigners must leave. The anti-foreign propaganda of the time was especially anti-British, and they would do harm rather than good to Chinese colleagues by staying, so again Mrs. Botham and her daughter went to Chefoo.

" Evacuation year," as 1927 was called (when consuls ordered the evacuation of their nationals from the interior), was not a wasted year in missionary economy. At conferences in Chefoo, as well as in Shanghai, a forward movement was inaugurated by the C.I.M. One result of this was to be the sending of recruits to Chinese Turkestan, a largely Moslem field, until then, only occupied in the far south-west by Swedish missionaries and in the vast Central and Northern districts by two C.I.M. men and the trio of brave women who had been enduring the hardships of a pioneer life there.

In Shanghai there was special consultation about Moslem work. Some fifty interested persons met under the chairmanship of Bishop Maloney, to hear of a newly formed Society. The Moslem Committee of the National Christian Council was dissolved, so now the Moslem Evangelization League which Mark had hoped for, came into being as the " Friends of the Moslems in China," the Secretary and Editor being Mr. and Mrs. Pickens, son-in-law and daughter of Dr. Zwemer. Of course Mrs. Botham joined this, and their second Quarterly Newsletter contained from her daughter (she never wrote of her own doings), an account of her work and problems in Kaifeng, and the need she had found there. Friends from Kansu were also in Chefoo. Dr. King had been drowned in the Yellow River on the way down, and Mrs. King was here with her children. But friendly talk and conferences could not fill the life of this whole-souled missionary. While young recruits studied, and her daughter was busy in

nursing, she found where she was needed. She again visited Ninghai, still a difficult centre, from which so many went to nearby "Westernised" centres, and came home discontented. She also found work she specially loved on the other side of Chefoo. More than once an old friend of the American Presbyterian Mission invited her to conduct courses of Bible Study in her Girls' School. She would probably have done such work had she chosen a career instead of following her Master step by step. She never thought her time wasted in going over and over a chorus or sentence with some ignorant old woman, but her pleasure in teaching bright interested girls was obvious.

There was only one thing that could give her greater joy. When at last permission came for missionaries to return to the interior, she and her daughter were asked to open a new station in Kansu. And most joyful of all, this station was to be at "Clear Water," the county town of the Valley of Chang.

There was no need to revisit Kaifeng and pack, for the Hospital had been occupied by soldiers, and all possessions they might have wished to take, destroyed. They felt a little sad at the loss of a few things which had been sent from Mrs. Botham's old home after her sister's death. But "treasures on earth" were not for them. One lost book was already sufficiently memorized for the loss to be scarcely real. In quoting Traherne's *Centuries of Meditation* whenever trees or green of any kind varied the dusty scene, they felt how free was the beauty which the Creator had scattered over the earth—why worry about personal possessions?

CHAPTER VII

STILL BEGINNING

THE fourth journey to Kansu took weeks instead of the months of earlier years, but there was a delay on the border before this first party to return could get passports to enter the province. 'Brigands in the hills' was the official reason for delay, but Moslem muleteers were soon found willing to risk the journey as the 'brigands' were the forerunners of the army of Moslem rebels who were to come later.

Another delay in Tsinchow was rewarded by the offer of a house in "Clear Water." This belonged to a Moslem family the head of which had once been in command of the Empress Dowager's bodyguard, and their friendliness gave opportunity for future visits to Moslem towns.

For a few months Mrs. and Miss Botham

stayed in " Clear Water." This town is mainly Chinese with one mosque and a few Moslem inns in the suburbs. Mrs. Botham having now 'the great advantage of being old,' could visit inns as no young woman could. A small dispensary drew many Chinese and a few Moslem women and children. Once more it was the pioneer life. The large main room at the top of the courtyard had fallen in the earthquake eight years before and was not yet repaired. One of the side rooms was cleaned and whitewashed as soon as possible, and used as a guest room and living room. The first of a series of posters, which Mr. Harris is still continuing to prepare for Moslems, adorned the walls. A Christian carpenter from Tsinchow lived for some time on the premises and made a table, chairs, benches, and also preached to all who came.

Meanwhile, the landlord had invited his tenants to come and stay at his home. After a visit to the mosque, the old man came back somewhat dejectedly to say, " It's no good

coming if you are going to preach ; our people don't change." However, the reply, " We must say what is in the Scriptures," seemed to make all right again, and in May 1929 the day's journey to the Valley of Chang was taken. There had been drought and famine for the past year and the small wheat crop had been bought up by the rich families as soon as it was reaped. The missionaries had not lacked food for themselves and a little to give away to the most needy of their neighbours during the winter, but they could not help a childish enjoyment of the food made with fine white flour which was provided from the table of their host.

A few days of making friends with the sons' wives, grandsons' wives and great-grandchildren of their landlord were followed by a short journey on strong riding mules. This also was a pleasure after being forced to use the scraggy animals which had survived the famine and escaped the brigands, but they would not have wished to remain in this wealthy home. In an inn a few miles away

they were able to meet all sorts of people. They could still visit the secluded women in official homes, but they could also meet children of poorer homes where they might have an audience of half the women of a street, or village, to listen to the wonderful stories they told.

They also went to see the family of the 'Saint' Mark had visited years before. He himself had been killed in the 1920 earthquake, or as an enthusiastic Moslem said, "When he died, the whole earth shook." His tomb is still visited by members of his sect from distant parts of China.

Not long after this visit a message came asking for their help at Tsinchow where five young missionaries had caught the typhus so prevalent after famine. It was five weeks before they returned after nursing them, and both were overtired and ill. But though Moslem visits were not possible for a time, they had the joy of a visit from a Chinese friend who taught the group of

children who came daily to learn hymns and Scripture verses, and the women who came, usually for medical treatment. It was after she had gone that Mrs. Botham had her worst illness. One night, as they afterwards confessed to one another, she and her daughter each wondered what would happen if they were both to die at once! Mrs. Botham was distressed by the thought of the trouble it would cause to their nearest missionary neighbours (two days' journey away), while her daughter thought of the worry for their rather slow servant if he found himself the only Christian in the country trying to decide about correct funerals! But these fears passed, and in March they were able for another visit to the purely Moslem part of the country. This time they stayed in a hired room and were able to get in touch with many more people, as well as re-visiting the household of the landlord's family. The women sent a special message to ask them to go and sing to them and the small boys and girls

were so friendly that it was hard to leave. But other places could not be neglected, and elsewhere they were able to rent two rooms in a large yard. They had also bought a donkey so that for very near villages Mrs. Botham rode as she had done years ago; for longer journeys she would have a sedan chair while her daughter rode the donkey. Now they learnt more of what work among Moslems means. In the walled suburb of the city they were welcomed with their simple medical supplies, but as soon as there seemed to be some apprehension of their message dawning in the minds of a few of the women, they suddenly found themselves shut out. They could enter the gate, but the children who had always crowded round, crying "Come to my home"! "My mother wants you"! "You haven't been to see my baby brother"! now ran away when they appeared. They could get no entrance into any house. For the rest of their stay it was only in the villages that they were welcome.

Then came another visit to Tsinchow, less than two days' journey from "Clear Water." Mrs. Botham stayed there while her daughter (the only nurse in South Kansu) went four days' journey south to nurse, for famine had been almost as bad this winter as the previous one, and in giving relief two missionaries had caught typhus.

Meanwhile Tsinchow was captured by the Moslem rebels, who were no longer bands of brigands but an army. The rebellion had spread over the whole of Turkestan as well as Kansu and it was no small matter when it came to the south of the province. After Tsinchow was taken there was better discipline than had been hoped for. "We've got a place to live in now instead of wandering round starving," said the General; "behave yourselves so that we shan't get turned out." But before this there had been a massacre of all who had, or looked as if they might have, defended the city. The little group of missionaries and Chinese Christians gathered in

one house were made aware of the happenings outside by various signs. First a pariah dog rushed in, evidently so terrified that nothing would move it from shelter in a corner of the room. Then came Moslem soldiers with bloody swords, (ammunition had been used up long before) searching for local militia. Then soldiers searched for loot. Mrs. Botham and another married lady hid their wedding rings in the rafters and saved them, but watches and most of the money they had were taken. Then two officers came to occupy the front rooms and they were left in peace. Mrs. Botham had her Moravian text book (sent each year by a friend) with her, and this day she read in it, "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting places" (Isa. xxxii. 18). She was now seventy years of age, and all were afraid of the effect of the trouble on her, but she said, "I slept each night in a quiet resting place, though we were crowded and uncomfortable," and she radiated the peace of a

" peaceable habitation." But she felt the sorrows intensely. Among those killed was young Dr. Wu, a student of Dr. King's and son of one of the oldest Tsinchow Christians.

" Clear Water " had also been captured and the servant who had stayed in Mrs. Botham's house came sadly to Tsinchow to say that he " couldn't keep the soldiers from occupying it, and smashing all the medicine bottles." By the end of July Mrs. Botham, and her daughter were back in their own station. They were able to rent a (much) furnished room in a Chinese house (not Moslem) and visited the officer in charge of their own house. There was obviously no hope of re-occupying it, so they gladly returned to their rooms in the Valley of Chang. The longed-for rains came, and the roof leaked, the folding spring bed which Mrs. Botham had been given to use in Kansu was in the hands of the soldiers, as were the few chairs and the table the carpenter had made for them. Indeed they were free from all impediments, and Mrs. Botham preached

and taught and visited as she always did. Medical supplies having gone, they had to make use of local products. Mrs. Botham knew many simple remedies which could be bought, and with the help of a *materia medica* saved from the wreckage they made 'foreign medicine' with them!

But they were less and less able for the life they loved. One day a grandson of their landlord came to show off his new army uniform and had to be content with the admiration of the 'young teacher' while her mother 'chaperoned' from a bed behind a curtain. Another day their positions would be reversed. They spent two months in the Valley and then returned for another two months in "Clear Water." After this they could no longer hold out against strong advice to go to Lanchow and see the doctor there. So they left, hoping against hope that they would return.

CHAPTER VIII

ABUNDANT LIFE

PACKING does not take long when one's house has been looted and stores ordered from the coast have not come through. In looking back it seemed wonderful that there had been no lack of anything needful in spite of losses and delays.

First of needs was literature for distribution, and when this could not be posted from Hankow, a parcel of Arabic Gospels came direct from Cairo, so in one way and another their need was supplied.

Tea is not grown in Kansu and locally-obtained leaves are not comforting to an English palate, but whenever the carefully eked out store of real tea was almost gone, an unexpected package would come and supply at least a good morning cup each day, though sometimes without milk. All winter clothes

were looted, but wadded garments were obtainable and a long delayed parcel of woollens arrived after the looting; had it come earlier when eagerly awaited, it would have been lost before this last winter. "He is kind," is deeply underlined in a New Testament of Mrs. Botham's, and she loved to speak of the kindness which remembers to supply food and clothing and comforts as well as the great Love which brought salvation.

Before the end of the eight days' journey to Lanchow, an accident happened. The litter in which Mrs. Botham was travelling with her daughter, was thrown off by the mules and her collar-bone was broken. This, at her age, meant a long time of lying with her arm stretched out uncomfortably if it was to set and she had to receive her old friends in her room. She had revisited Ninghai in 1927, Tsinchow in the next year, and now in Lanchow she said "Good-bye" to those she loved here. One young woman whom she had cared for, taught and trained, came

with presents of rice and meat. "Eat this and get strong so that you need not go away and leave us," she said, but the doctor was firm in ordering her to the coast.

Later, she was able to visit this friend and others and to spend some time in the hospital teaching patients. When she left, the lepers whom she had visited in their quarters collected together a gift out of their poverty 'for journey expenses.' She felt like David with the water from the well of Bethlehem that this gift was too sacred to be used.

Finally the women of the church gave a farewell reception with speeches, tea and cakes, and a silk banner was presented inscribed with their names. This was the end of the years in China. Afterwards there was only the twenty-three days' journey by raft down the Yellow River, two days by train to Tientsin and then the coastal steamer to Shanghai, with a few hours to meet friends in Chefoo en route.

In Shanghai, it was decided that, since her

daughter was not fit to take her share of the strain, both must go to England. Here her daughter-in-law, who had not been in China since 1927, met her and all three spent a time in the country. But health did not come back, and Mrs. Botham had to spend months in hospital followed by stays with relatives, and later in rooms and in the C.I.M. House, to be near her daughter. The latter had hoped to prove fit for nursing again, but when she broke down they went together to Mrs. Mark's bungalow.

Still Mrs. Botham was actively interested in the Kingdom of God. Correspondence with China kept her in touch with her friends, and the appointment of a young couple to "Clear Water" was cheering. She also spent much time in copying out letters and composing original ones for the Prisoners' Christmas Letter Society, and through her suggestion Christmas letters were sent to Chinese prisons. These latter are printed as, apart from the difficulty of finding copyists, the Chinese

would be more likely to respect the printed than the written page.

Other countries, too, were at this time made more real. She had always loved maps and she never forgot a day when she, with a fellow enthusiast, spread a map of Central Asia on the floor and discussed how it could be reached from China and India simultaneously. Khartoum, also, became a living problem after a meeting in which its position (as Canon Gairdner had seen it) was demonstrated. Was the interest useless? Surely not, if we believe in a God Who hears prayer.

And she loved the view from her south-east room, with the sunrise, the skylarks near, and hills in the distance. She also, though cats had never much interested her, enjoyed the kitten's frolics! "He made leviathan to play (Psa. civ. 26), just to play, so He must have made kittens for the same purpose," she said.

She was still finding more in her Bible all the time. She took one verse from Psalm cxix each day to meditate on and was glad in the

realization that St. Paul's words were not contrary to David's love of "Thy law"—"The law is holy," "is spiritual," "is good," "I delight in the law," and his "freedom from the law" consists in being able to do much more than fulfil the literal commands. Many Bible readings were written down or told to her daughter. "I've no one else to preach to now," she said when the longing overcame her for the full life of teaching "the perfect law of liberty", which she had had to leave behind.

Still tiredness increased. "If it were not for leaving you, it would be lovely to rest," she said to her daughter, a remark so unlike her that it sent a stab of fear into the heart of the hearer. On July 19th, 1934, she stayed in bed, but insisted in getting up for tea in the garden. As she took her daughter's arm to go out, she suddenly exclaimed, "Oh, wouldn't it be lovely to be talking Chinese again"! She was at the time entering thoroughly into her daughter-in-law's work among soldiers

(and had names of soldiers down for daily prayer); but nothing could take the place of China in her heart.

She had hoped to be buried by her husband in Lanchow, though that small wish was outweighed by the thought of the reunion to come. Yet when after a fortnight in bed she had only short periods of consciousness, even this hope seemed merged in a greater. A spasm of pain would be followed by a look of relief, then joy, and more than once she sat up with such a look of wonder that the watchers turned to see what she saw. "Their eyes were holden," but they knew, for her only words were "Oh, Lord Jesus!"

. . . . . .

"Don't talk to me about grave-stones; can't we imagine she is alive and will be writing next week?" The very expression held a germ of comfort. There is no need to imagine—she *is* alive! Anyone who knew her could think of no better words to be inscribed above her grave than—"Life More

Abundant," with her complementary favourite —" Peace "; this word in Chinese, the language of those she loved right to the end.

Was such a life worth living? So little to be seen! No School or Hospital founded; very few converts; not even a home or settled work anywhere. In one sense she had no life of her own. It was all poured out, like a vessel filled only that it might be emptied into another, that that other might overflow in blessing.

Is that worth while?

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