BROTHERS OF THE LOTUS BUDS

THE HOUSE OF PRAYER FRAMED IN THE MOON ARCH

BROTHERS OF THE LOTUS BUDS

by

GODFREY WEBB-PEPLOE
DOHNAVUR FELLOWSHIP

WITH FOREWORD BY
AMY CARMICHAEL

In the hands of the mighty even a blade of grass is a weapon.—*Tamil Proverb.*

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τοῖς οὕτως ἀγαπῶσιν ὥστε
ὑπὲρ τῶν παιδίων ἐνεργουμένην
δέησιν ποιεῖσθαι τοῦτο τὸ βίβλιον
γέγραπται.

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FOREWORD

'CHILDREN in missionary stories always sound terribly good'—I can remember when this was what I thought, and I had no particular desire to read about them. They sounded dull.

These boys will not afflict anyone by uncommon goodness, and if a straightforward everyday tale of their ordinary everyday life is what is wanted, here it is.

But there is something that is not ordinary in this book. There is the sense of a shadow—the shadow of strong Powers. 'The prey of the terrible' is not a mere phrase with us: there is reality in it. This book strikes down to reality.

AMY CARMICHAEL.

Dohnavur,
South India.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

GLOSSARY

Accāl	Elder sister.
Ammā	Here refers to the Mother of the family.
Ānnāchie	Elder brother.
Bandy	Cart.
Cootum	A gathering, *i.e.* the family, or a meeting.
Dōhnāvūr	The name of the village beside which the Family lives. (Named after a German Count Dohna.)
Hindu	Belonging to the Hindu religion.
Indian	Belonging to the land of India.
Părămă Suhă Sālai	'The place of heavenly health'—the new hospital now being built.
Plantain	Banana.
Pukka	Good, reliable.
Sāmān	Luggage, gear of any sort.
Shāstrās	Hindu holy books.
Sittie	Mother's younger sister. Name given to all English women members of the Fellowship.
Sūriyă Sālai	'The sun hall'—the big boys' school.
Sunthiră Sālai	'The moon hall'—the small boys' school.
Tămils	The inhabitants of that part of India which is south of Madras and east of the mountain chain that runs down to Cape Comorin. Their language is called Tamil, and is spoken by over eighteen millions.
Tank	An artificial lake, filled by rain or by streams from the mountains.
Vănăchārbu	'The wooded land,' the boys' compound.
Vēshti	A South Indian man's lower garment, rather like a skirt.

ă is pronounced as u in cup.
ā ,, ,, as a in farm.

Annachies (grown up), Alphas (aged 18, 17), Betas (15, 14, 13), Gammas (13, 12), Deltas (11), Epsilons (10), Iotas (9, 8), Kappas (7, 6), the Tedlets in the Square, down to babies of a month old or less, comprise The Brothers of the Lotus Buds. The names are sometimes translations of the Tamil, sometimes changed.

No rule has been followed in the transliteration of Tamil words. We have tried only to make it easy for those who read to get near the right sounds.

BROTHERS OF THE LOTUS BUDS

CHAPTER I

'THAT FROG PRAISING GOD'

IT was evening. And the House of Prayer, with its one red light high in the tower, appeared framed in the moon arch—a shadowed outline against the fading sunset sky—as one of us passed through, escorted by some small boys.

'That frog praising God,' suddenly said a member of the escort, as a chorus of frogs struck up in the well beside the path. Perhaps it was. At any rate we all agreed that praising God is a splendid occupation.

The boys had just finished evening food together, sitting in a big square on a sandy patch of ground outside the kitchen. Meals in India are not at all a social occasion, for each one eats and goes, and usually there is no conversation. As soon as they have had enough, they go to wash their bowls and their right hand, which does duty for knife and fork and spoon. Then they foregather for conversation.

'Our Sittie's up in the forest. Who is going to rub oil on us this evening, as she used to do?'

'Another Sittie is coming,' and he used her English name.

'You must not call her that. It's her Hindu name.' And he promptly gave her Indian name.

The remonstrator was a small person who had been with us but a few months. When he came with only a Hindu name, it had been changed for something better. So he thought that once we join the family all old names are forgotten.

The boys who pass through the pages of this book come from many different places in South India, and were born into many different castes. They are all now members of one family in Dohnavur, a big happy family of boys and girls, saved, for the most part in infancy, from a peril far greater than any danger that can happen to the body. It is God's family, Indian and European, living on the basis of brothers and sisters, and it works out in harmony, for India understands such relationships. Out of the family we are training a fighting force in the greatest of all wars, under the Captain who goes forth conquering and to conquer.

The people of this land are well acquainted with religious men. There is the paid agent of the mission, and often the amount of his pay is a question of far more interest to his listeners than his message. And there is the wandering sunnyasi fed by the faithful, who revere his holiness, or fear his wickedness. India needs another type, at present all too rare, and we want to try to show it to her—men and women trained to a glad readiness for all manner of service, with their hearts set, not upon pay, but upon pleasing God, and able, as was St. Paul, to support themselves by service or work other than that called religious.

Most of our boys have no home but the family, so

that we have them all the time, with none of the hindrances of a long holiday in an atmosphere where truth and purity are of little account, which would be their lot if they were merely boarders for a term. We could get any number of masters for them if we offered suitable pay, but we only want those who join us not having in view material gain, and who will give their lives for Christ, and for the boys as their elder brothers. So there is work for many more than we at present have; but the pattern is God's and the responsibility is His, and He who has called us to do what is admittedly no easy thing promises to guide and to enable.

It is infinitely worth while living for the boys. Full of boundless energy, with the weaknesses and temptations of all boys, they possess an affection which, once won, will follow through fire and flood.

Not long ago one of our Fellowship was talking with the head master of a big school. He is a keen Christian man in sympathy with our work.

'What do you hope to do with your boys when they grow up?' he asked, and others stood by listening.

'We believe that they will grow up straight, and honest, and true. There is plenty of work for such boys,' was the reply.

They all smiled, not unkindly, but as those who had tried and found it an impossibility.

'We had hoped that that might happen when we began here,' said the head master, 'but it has not. And I do not think it is possible for a boy to live straight in this country.'

There is the voice of one who, though by no means a nominal Christian, has tried and failed. And who

are we to try? But the Lord God has bidden us, and in His strength we go to this battle.

A pioneer, says an English dictionary, is 'one of an advance corps preparing the road for troops.' And all over the world God's pioneers are preparing the way for the coming of the Lord of hosts. Sometimes this means climbing the mountains and passing to the unreached peoples of the other side with the message of God's love. But there is another kind of pioneer work, and it, too, calls for men. When they obey that call they may find themselves where they would not choose to be—in an old field, set with tradition fixed and firm. Yet, as they follow their Unseen Leader into new paths through good report and ill, the call grows surer, the vision clearer. They have no doubt; with obedience comes a liberty that is beyond all price. Both are true pioneers and to both is promised a stern, hard fight right on to the end of the way.

So, as you read, pray for our boys, for it is not to amuse and to interest only that these stories are told, but that you may have a share in the fight, and at the great Reunion may meet some from South India whom you have learned to love in prayer.

CHAPTER II

HOW THE BOYS BEGAN TO COME

FOR long it had been known that brothers of the Lotus Buds* were in danger all over South India because of the practice of using these small boys as actors in the drama or musicians in the temple. It was a life of undiluted evil for them; and much prayer went up that someone would start a nursery for baby boys such as there was already for girls at Dohnavur.

But though the years went by, the need certainly did not diminish; and the knowledge of the need grew, until it seemed that God was calling Dohnavur itself to do that which it had prayed another might be led to do. At last towards the end of the Great War the guidance came for the advance, with no prospect of any men offering; for what man would ever imagine that there was work for him in nurseries? For a little while the need of a man would not be so urgent; but babies grow, and for boys big brothers to guide and to help them was a vital necessity of the not-far-distant future.

How often we forget that, when we step out at God's command, He has promised to supply, and it is our duty to obey. There was an obedience in faith, and there was a supply as the years went by. Now the boys are growing up and are starting out into many

* *Lotus Buds* (S.P.C.K.) tells the story of their little sisters.

different useful kinds of work, and we know that the God who has supplied will go on to give according to our need those who shall train them for the highest. And though it means difficulties and battles and hard going over rough roads to those who join us, there is purest joy in being fellow soldiers under the world's best Leader—the Captain of the Host of the Lord, who is also the Head of our family.

Our Accals or Annachies are members of that family, and needs are supplied as they arise. Such a life does not attract great crowds of willing workers; for a regular salary is a comfortable thing, which makes many feel safer than what is called faith in God. But ' they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing ' is not an obsolete word, and those who join us prove it. To work on these lines is no impossible ideal, as the joyful devotion of many of our Indian comrades constantly reminds us.

Twelve years ago God caused a dream to come to a Christian man two hundred miles away, and in this dream He directed him to take a boy (to be afterwards shown) to Dohnavur.

' But, Lord, they only take little girls there.'

' What is that to thee? ' was the answer. ' Do thou obey.' And, wondering much, the man went about his daily work knowing nothing of how the vision would be fulfilled to him and when. Within a week he knew, and he obeyed. Alone with the boy, given to him as evidently as if an angel had appeared to give it, he set forth, and arrived at Dohnavur, to find that the bars were down which had kept boys out so long.

That was at the beginning. And God, who guided

those at Dohnavur and the man two hundred miles away to fit exactly into His plan, is still guiding us, bringing from other lands and from other parts of South India those whom He needs to fulfil His purposes for these boys. They and their sisters are His, and we are His, and out of us all, united in a joyous harmony, we want it to be possible for God to form something for His glory; that here from among all castes, both high and low (as India counts caste), in spite of the presence of a most triumphant Hinduism, He may draw unto Himself jewels for His crown.

But the path to the accomplishment of our purpose is no easy one, and Apollyon straddles quite over the whole breadth of the way. So we expect battles, and we get them.

CHAPTER III

IRON RAILINGS

THE cows and their owners had been most persistent, and the cactus of our hedges, in spite of the prickles, was totally inadequate to keep out marauders, who seemed to consider our grass much more palatable than that of the adjacent fields. So finally we had to collect, from various parts of the compound, all the old iron trellis-work we could find, and to make a fence round the north and west sides of the Vana-charbu (Wooded Land, the name of our boys' compound). Some few pieces were broken in transit and left lying on the ground, apparently useless strips of thin iron. These Leader found, and it occurred to him that a kind of chisel might be made from them, which would be most useful. With the help of a borrowed hammer and a stone step, he attacked a small piece, and soon had beaten it thin enough to be quite sharp.

Thus, from primitive beginnings, issued a joy that helped to occupy many an hour of spare time through term and holidays. Other small pieces of iron, thicker and more durable—pieces of broken spades and all manner of things—were used, until some of the boys had four or five really serviceable chisels. Handles were made for a few, but the problem of making the handle stay on was a little too difficult for most, who were content with broader-bladed chisels, whose blunt

ends could be hammered without much fear of hitting the fingers.

There were many pieces of wood thrown aside as too small for use, and broken boxes in which various stores had come, and we gave them out according to need and desire. The first demand was for tops, perhaps because they are small, and almost any piece of wood, provided it was thick enough, could be used. So everybody sat down, and hammering with the home-made mallets and chisels was the order of the day.

Once Victory was sawing away at a nail which was balanced on his knee, and Helen Bradshaw, who with Star, Mimosa's* sister, 'runs' the younger boys, saw him, and thinking it looked a little dangerous, said, 'Won't you cut your knee if you saw the nail on it?'

'Doesn't matter, Sittie, the nail *must* be cut,' he answered, without looking up; and on he went to the end with no apparent damage.

Great were the competitions with these tops, many of which were just as good as, if not better than, those to be bought in the local shops. Some were dyed red with the fruit of a tree that grows near by, to make them more distinguished, an effect not at all conveyed by the application of the same dye to the clothes of the smaller fry, whose method of carrying this much-prized fruit is to fill their shirts in lieu of pockets.

Then came bandies. The floor was quite easy to make; but the solid wheels took many hours of patient chipping, to round them off with chisel and mallet. At last the first bandy was completed; a small boy was installed in it, or rather on it; and, pulled by many willing hands, away it went. Half-way down

* *Mimosa*, S.P.C.K., London.

the path a wheel came off. But, as the fall was only a matter of inches, nobody minded; and that little deficiency was soon remedied. It was not long before four or five bandies regularly, or perhaps one should say irregularly, drew up outside the kitchen, soon after the bell for each meal had rung. But the solid wheels, fastened to the axle by a nail through the middle, sometimes got rather hot without any oil, and very often had to be renewed, and finally bandies, because of the frequent need of mending, went out of fashion.

Tops were in favour for several months; and from time to time, as new ones were made, the boys brought collections of old tops and old chisels, to be given to their smaller brothers. The tops gave great delight; but it seemed wiser not to pass on the chisels, as they were still quite sharp enough to do a good deal of damage.

Flip flap! Flip flap!

'Whatever is all the noise?'

'Oh, it's only Pleasure in his new sandals.'

Sandals, which followed bandies, are really much more simple to make than anyone would think; for all you require is a flat piece of wood about the size of your foot, a few strips of cloth or, if you are fortunate, of old leather, and several tin-tacks. As there is never anything to secure them to your foot at the heel, your coming can be heard afar. Of course, those who can afford it have them made of leather. But wooden sandals can be quite aristocratic. And so it came about that, at the entrance to the school, there would be a row of five or six pairs of wooden sandals, to the great pride of their owners. Sometimes one or two

odd ones would also be there, for one is better than none; and it seemed sound reasoning to the Gammas, that to wear one sandal, rejected by a Beta, raised the wearer a little higher in the scale than those who walked barefoot. One of life's joys, when a complete tidy-out of all cupboards is ordered for spring cleaning, is to find a pair of my shoes, into one of which at least two of their feet can go. Music loves to put one foot in each shoe, and to wade along with great difficulty, until one catches on the other and down he goes. So to have one's very own home-made sandals was a great event.

The autumn is the time of many Coming Days, especially among the English members of the family, so the carpentering fever soon began to turn into the channel of presents. Leader as usual showed the way with new ideas; there were pencil-boxes, and other kinds of small boxes, round or square, to hold nails, pins, and other things, a multitude of which seems always to be accumulating on our tables. These were, for the most part, hollowed out of blocks of wood, and some of them were fitted with covers and were quite in keeping with the dignity of a writing-table. Obedience even managed to make a plane which was most useful for smoothing the outsides of the boxes.

Then one day someone, watching one of the Annachies carving a text, realised that it might be equally possible for him to do this; so there was suddenly a great demand for long thin pieces of wood, and numbers of these would be brought and left on my table, that I might trace the letters in pencil as an aid to the carving. The smaller-sized chisels now came into their own, for this required more careful working, and

several texts were split in half by the too vigorous application of a larger chisel. Finally it was decided that a single word was more possible of accomplishment, and 'Others,' 'Love,' 'Joy,' sometimes in Tamil, sometimes in English, began to take shape on the strips of wood. Everyone was hard at work, for the sixteenth of December was near, and all are eager to give something to Amma on her birthday. The joy of giving is a very real and integral part of the boys' life, and we want to train them that they may grow to be full sharers in the spiritual wealth of life's greater givings as they get older.

Soon after Christmas, Leader came into my room with his new ball in his hand.

'I want you to send my Christmas ball to the person who prays for me in England.'

'Why? Don't you want it?'

'No, I'd like to give it to somebody.'

'Well, I expect they have enough balls in England. Is there anybody here to whom you would like to give it?'

'Yes, I'll give it to the little children in the Square.' So it was duly given, much to the little ones' delight, for it was a bright new Sorbo ball.

CHAPTER IV

THE PUTTARAI

HOPING to take the tide of carpentry at the full, we determined to build a *puttarai* or carpentry-shed. It seemed quite simple, and usually took a group of coolies only four or five days to complete, so we decided that the boys should build it. Neither John Risk nor I had the least experience, but we inspected some such sheds in various parts of our compound, and, by mixing a little common sense with our inspection, came to the conclusion that it could be done.

It is surprising to see how far missionary life departs from the ideas that fill our mind when we leave the home country. Building houses, making roads, even burying dead dogs may have just as much spiritual bearing as the occupations more usually associated with missionaries—preaching and teaching and healing the sick. A willingness to do anything joyfully is what we want our boys to acquire, so we have to start in ourselves to show the way. Some months back coolies had been at work, elsewhere in the compound, building a shed for carpenters who were making furniture and other necessities; and when the rumour got round that the boys were to have one all for themselves, it naturally was concluded that a team of coolies would arrive, and the thing be over in a week, all nice and ready. So there was no

show of wild enthusiasm when they learned that they were to build it themselves.

'The coolies could do it so much more quickly. If we build it, it may fall down,' said Leader, who often innocently voices the arguments of the grumblers, without feeling at all deeply on the subject himself. 'No, it's going to be our very own, so *we* must build it.'

It was interesting to see how enthusiasm arose from nothing, as the pile of bamboos and palm-leaves grew into the shape of a building. But, first of all, we had to get the material, and that was ordered through Aruldasan, our indispensable senior Annachie, who manages to do an amazing amount of work without appearing to be ever in a hurry, and is always at leisure to help or to give advice. Two strong planks and two giant-bamboos (a stronger kind of bamboo that does not bend so easily) for the central uprights, many ordinary bamboos for the beams, several bandy-loads of cocoanut palm-leaves for roofing, and a number of small side posts to support the roof at its eaves, instead of walls, were finally secured.

We chose a site near enough to be convenient and yet out of the way, for we did not at all know whether the result of our efforts would improve the view or do the exact reverse. Very soon enough material was there for us to start. So, while some boys dug holes for the posts, others fetched broken bricks and tiles, or sand from a little distance, and with these the holes were filled up, several inches at a time, round the posts, and beaten well in with a crowbar. Patience and a certain amount of hard work were necessary, which was capital training. The four central posts

were safely planted, and most of the side posts fitted in and lashed to connecting bamboos, leaving just room to drive the lorry in between. No, it was not going to be a garage. But we discovered that by placing a table on the lorry roof we could just reach the top of the central posts and make fast two strong bamboos as a ridge pole. After that it was only a short time before two of our better climbers, Light and Prince, sitting high up astride this, had secured the rafters.

About that time the term began, so our building operations slowed down. Two boys each day, instead of going to afternoon school, spent their time on the shed. The Betas—Music and Truth, Light and Leader, Warrior and Gold, Victory and Steadfast, Valour and Prince—worked in pairs; and on Saturdays, if more help was needed, all joined together. To some of them the height of the roof seemed a most dangerous altitude, and for the less plucky the necessary climbing was a healthy discipline. Side by side, standing on a bamboo slung over the ridge pole, beginning at the bottom, they built up a strip of palm-leaf roof, tying each leaf to the rafters with a strand of palmyra fibre.

As soon as that was completed, the bamboo was lowered and the next strip begun. One day Victory, working near the top of the roof, lost his hold and slid down the roof to the grass below, where his sense of humour, as it usually does, won the day, and his face became one great smile. He landed sitting upright on the ground quite unhurt, and in spite of some surprise—very natural in the circumstances—thoroughly enjoyed the joke. At last the roof was finished, and one half of the *puttarai* was enclosed for a store-room.

Then came the great event, when the boys felt

really glad that they had made it themselves, and when everything was swallowed up in the joy of achievement. The girls, in their blues, and reds, and yellows, came up with Amma and others, through the moon arch which divides our compounds, to join with their brothers in asking our Lord to accept the offering of this shed, and to work in it with the boys, as long years ago He worked at Nazareth, and to help them to do their work to His glory.

CHAPTER V

ODDS AND ENDS OF LIFE

SATURDAY is a day of odds and ends. Everything has to be cleaned up and the compound swept in readiness for Sunday. So the morning is filled, up to ten o'clock, with weeding, and sweeping, and cleaning out rooms, and all sorts of other jobs. One boy goes to cut up firewood, and two or three more help with the cooking of the curry and rice, until midday.

At ten o'clock they each have a bowlful of rice, and then off we go to the Anantha Cootum or Joy Meeting. We used to have a choir practice, but it has now been dignified with a new name, and it is a joyous half-hour to which many of the girls and boys look forward through the week. When we have made sure that we know the hymns and choruses for Sunday's services, sometimes there is a new tune which one of the Fellowship has 'taken,' and that is eagerly learned, for 'own' tunes to fit their own words are hailed with great delight. Then a few hymns are played on the autoharp, which always gives joy, and back we go to the odd jobs.

The next item on the older boys' programme is weekly inspection. Behind their rooms is a plantain garden, and beyond that, perhaps fifteen yards away, is a long lean-to shed parallel to the rooms; in it are kept all the buckets, brushes, spades, and other

paraphernalia of work. Each one is supposed to have two buckets, a brush, a cloth for washing the tiled floors, and, in the case of the bigger ones, a spade. These have all to be arranged in order beside their owner in a long line down the shed, and then one of us checks them through. Owing to the unaccountable disappearance of bathing-cloths, we have recently put these on the list, so they, too, must be produced. Music, Obedience—down the list we go. Usually difficulties begin when we get to the Gammas.

Here they are standing in a row—Virtue, Courage, Pleasure, Gift, Chieftain, Mischief (one of Mimosa's sons), Shining—and we take them one by one.

'Courage, buckets? Only one? Where is the other?'

'Lost,' says the owner with a resigned expression, for something of his is often lost. This time, however, another boy helpfully suggests that it may be covering one of the tomato seedlings newly planted out, and there it is found.

'Gift, buckets? Two. Brush?'

'I worked in the kitchen yesterday morning, and somebody else probably took it while I was away.'

'Cloth? One. Bathing-cloth? Where is it?'

'In the big well. I lost it when we were bathing there last Saturday.'

'What have you done since then?'

'Borrowed some one else's when I needed it.'

'Chieftain, buckets? Two. Brush. One. Cloth?'

'It's in Annachie's room.' (That is the temporary home of things found lying about.)

Inspection reveals one side of character, for some are born tidy, some achieve tidiness after struggles, but

one or two seem positively unable to acquire it, though it be thrust upon them.

At half-past eleven we go to the big well for a bathe. As it measures about thirty feet by eighteen, it makes quite a good swimming-bath. The greatest joy of all is to leap off the top into the water, about ten, fifteen, or twenty feet below, according to the season of the year. It is much better than diving, in the opinion of most, especially if you can land just in front of some one else and splash him in the face. It sounds dangerous, but even eight-year-olds think nothing of it after a little initiation. Many of them cannot swim properly, but they quite happily get along to the steps using the dog stroke, and they would merely smile if you suggested the possibility of drowning. When the water is high enough, there are two exits—by the steps, and by the engine platform; and touch-last is the order of the day for the more strenuous. Although there are only two ways out, you can jump in from anywhere, and so can your pursuer; so there is plenty of fun.

Then comes midday food, and, after a short interval, when the library is opened, they rest for the next two hours. As soon as they get up, the garden has a double watering, because of Sunday following; and there is the oil bath, with its attendant pump-washing, which is meant to leave them splendidly clean for the Sabbath. Then all the floors are scrubbed again, and at five-thirty come games. Sometimes, if there is any gardening or other work urgently needing workers, they go off to that.

Evening food and an hour's preparation or play, according to whether it is term or holiday-time, com-

pletes the day, and, after prayers with an Annachie, they go to bed.

'Do all your children sleep on white-enamel iron beds?' a friend once asked. A few weeks ago an Indian visitor said, 'Do you give them nothing at all to sleep on?' and we showed him the rows of rolled-up mats. But if you were to walk along the open verandah where they sleep on a warm night, you would find that a number of them actually prefer nothing, and use the mat as a pillow. Perhaps it is unbelievable, but a good hard tiled floor is one of the most comfortable of beds when the weather is really hot.

CHAPTER VI

COMING DAYS

A COMING Day is a very great event. As it is impossible to know the real birthdays of most of our children, we keep the day on which they joined the family, yearly, as a special day. First of all there are the flowers, which they love; and many are the vases that are brought, full of oleanders, roses, jacquemontia, henna, lilies, or whatever flowers are in season, until the Coming-day room is full of beauty and fragrance. Some bushes are in bloom at every season of the year, so this joy can always be supplied, and without it the Day would seem no day at all. Then comes the visit to Amma for presents. The Coming-day boy can choose anyone he likes, to go down through the compound to the bungalow with him. And it was just like Victory that, when his day came, he said,

'I want Shining to come with me, because nobody has ever chosen him before.'

So down they went to the big cupboard filled with all sorts of wonders, where, under Amma's guidance, Victory chose his presents. Back he came shortly afterwards with a cake of soap, and a pencil, and a tin motor-car. These must be duly shown to all, and no one must forget to smell the soap with one long breath of delight, and then to exclaim 'Ah! What a nice smell!' That is the formula usually required.

It is nearly always true, too, for those in England and elsewhere who love our children certainly do send a splendid selection. Would that they could see the pleasure they give.

This year Music's Coming Day fell when the boys were in the forest, cutting paths; and there garden flowers are scarce. But the forest is prodigal in its wealth, and we nearly always have many flowers or ferns even on ordinary days, so that on this occasion we had to think of something special.

'What shall we do about it? What flowers shall we give him?' said Helen Bradshaw to Rukma Accal, one of whose joys below is the rose-garden beside our House of Prayer.

'I shall have to go out into the forest to think about it,' she said.

This was almost too much for Music, whose capacity for joy and excitement over little things never seems to wane as he grows up.

On such days God often draws near; and when Music came for prayer, it was plain that beneath all the merry light-heartedness of the child there was a deep longing to know the Lord Jesus more intimately; for he is already His true follower, and his future work will be among the smaller boys.

'I know God answers prayer. I have often proved that, but I want to know how to recognize His voice, that I may hear Him telling me how to live for Him. May we pray for that specially to-day?' That was his desire; and three weeks later in a note, 'Please pray that I may think of the little boys as if they were my very own brothers, and that I may hear the wonderful voice of God.'

When an Annachie or a Sittie has a Coming Day there are even greater festivities, for the boys seem to have a huge delight in others' happiness. First, for days before, some chorus has to be learned, and then at the crack of dawn, or perhaps, if it can be postponed till a little later, at a more reasonable hour, they all stand outside the door and sing. Having finished singing, with shouts of 'Happy Coming Day,' everyone bursts into the room to see, and to smell, and each to present some small flower 'for joy,' for everybody brings a flower from the garden, or from the grass, where there is an abundance of tiny wild flowers in many months of the year. Usually we are banished from seven o'clock the night before, so that the Accals may come up to decorate the room properly; and of course we must not go in to see it before the morning, so that sometimes it is even necessary to sleep elsewhere.

And we must have presents, too. One year I thought that, as I had plenty of soap and pencils, there was no need for any, but the boys decided that that was not at all in order. Down they all went to Amma themselves, to fetch me some; and a short time after, while I was playing football with the Gammas, the Betas triumphantly arrived with a toy dog, a rabbit, a motor-car, and several other suitably absurd things that they had chosen. These, having been sufficiently admired, were lined up on a stone seat beside the field to watch the game. A few weeks later they proved a great diversion to some of the smaller boys after operations, when they could not walk about.

There is seldom any selfishness, and everybody has a share in everybody else's joys. Just occasionally we have to cancel a boy's Coming-day celebrations when

he has not been good and is still obviously not trying to improve, and then the day is sad instead of glad; but nearly always each boy looks forward to his day with ever-increasing excitement; and, as he grows older, blended with that is the sense of the gift of a new year, and a renewed desire to serve the God who, with the gift of His own Son, so freely gives to us at Dohnavur all the things promised.

CHAPTER VII

THE HILL OF THE HOLY WASHERMAN

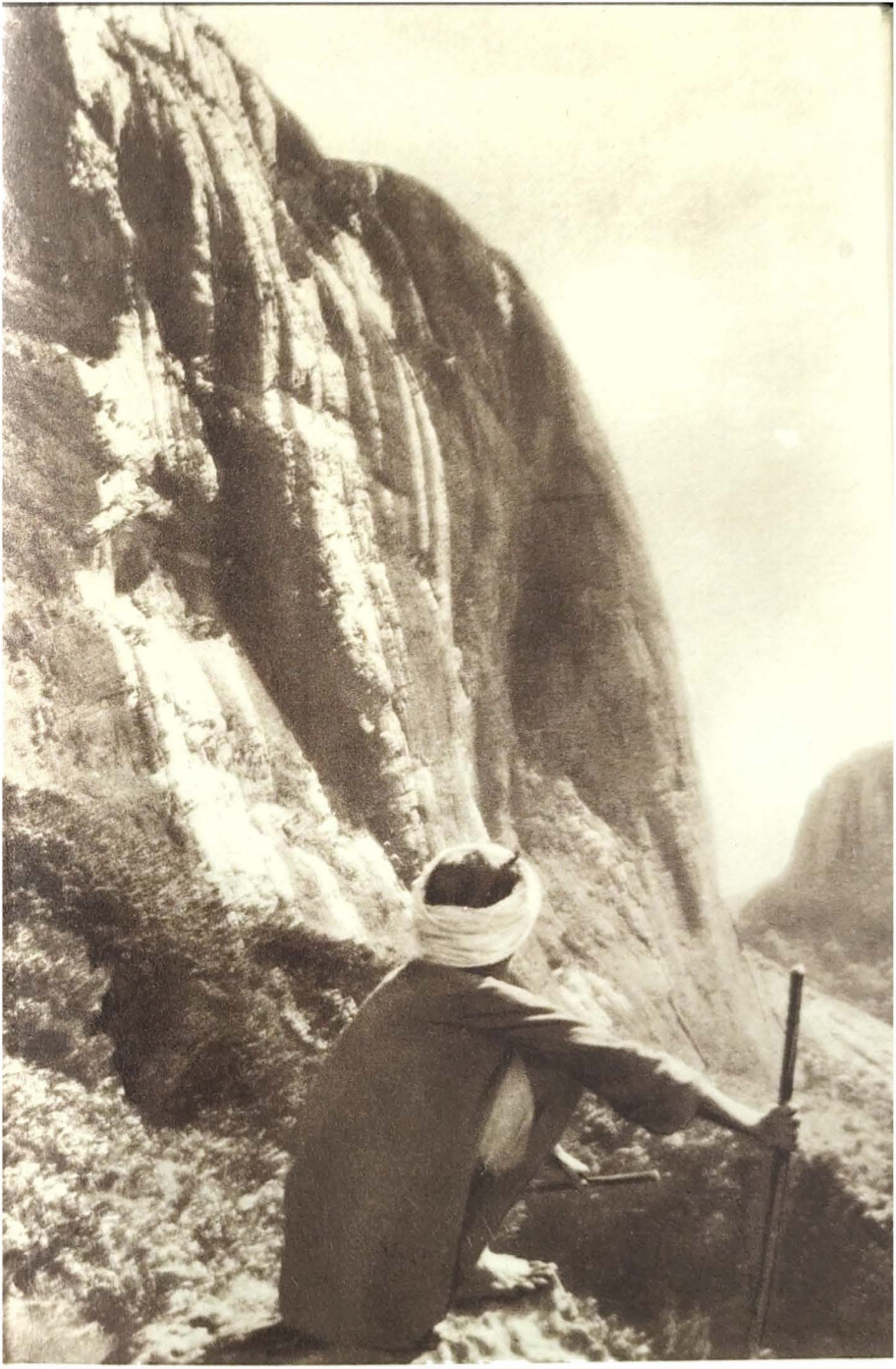
TEN miles to the south of us, standing out into the plains, and rising almost five thousand feet sheer on the side which faces us, is the mountain called Tiruvannamalai (Hill of the Holy Washerman). From this part of the mountains, according to some, in the story of the Ramayanam, Hanuman, the monkey god, took off in his great leap across to Ceylon, to rescue the wife of Rama from the clutches of the demon king of the island. Be that as it may, its precipitous slopes challenged us; and, although most of the people who lived under its shadow on the plains said that there was no way to the top, we felt that a day or two up the mountains would blow away the cobwebs and refresh us all.

So we set off with pots and pans, a sack of rice, the needed curry stuffs, a bunch of plantains, and other necessities of life. Each boy had his bundle with a blanket and various oddments. We went out together in the lorry and bandies to an enclosed valley, set in a circle of the hills, to the north of our mountain, and there unloaded. Led by two coolies, who said that they knew the hills, we set off up, and up, and up. At first we followed a charcoal-burners' path through the forest; but soon we passed their camp, and had

to strike out along the river-bed. Then another path was discovered, and we followed, trusting to the strong assertions of our guides, though it seemed to lead downhill. After a while we felt that we should soon be in the plains, so, retracing our footsteps until we reached the river, we started up it again.

A halt was called for food when we lay under the lee of our big friend, and it seemed time to leave the river-bed and to strike east. So after food and a short rest, most of which time the boys spent in cutting walking-sticks, we scrambled up an almost perpendicular rock, and struck a zig-zag path through grass and scrub, until we finally came out on to a splendid space of rock where a wooded nullah, then quite dry, ran into the open. Here we dumped our kit, and, leaving a few to cook, the rest of us foraged for firewood. As one party was exploring they put up a sambhur, and later in the evening the call of a hunting leopard came clearly up the slopes. Soon after the sun had set behind Mahendragiri, the mountain to the west, famous in Tamil literature for its hermits and its herbs, we went to sleep in rows on the rock, rolled up in our blankets, round a huge bonfire, for firewood was easy to get. As one or another woke up at intervals through the night, more wood was thrown on, giving a welcome warmth and a protection from any wild beasts that might be wandering near.

Next morning we were up early, and, having washed in a near-by stream, we had our quiet time as the sun bathed the further hills in glory. After breakfast we set off to reach the top. Our guides again assured us that they knew the way, so, leaving our camp, we started up a steep slope, clinging on to the tufts of



ON THE [illegible] OF THE MOU[illegible]

grass for support as we went. After an hour's climbing we came to an unscalable rock face, and had to turn south in an attempt to reach our wooded river-bed again. But a most unpleasant crossing by a small rift in the rock with a sixty or seventy-foot drop delayed us. One or two of the men managed to cross it, and, holding on to a rope secured at either side, one by one the boys came along. Everybody was glad when the last one was safely over, and we decided henceforth to trust to common sense, and not to take the word of our coolie guides, whose easy ways up proved so hair-raising.

Until eleven o'clock that morning we were climbing in shade, being on a western face; and, in spite of the exertion, most of us were nearly shivering when we came out on to a saddle where the sun could break through. Some of the boys felt that they had had enough, so a small party rested in the sunshine, which for once was most welcome, and the others pressed on a few hundred yards of comparatively easy climbing to the top, which forms a small open plateau with a magnificent view to the distant sea on the south and east, and on the north far into the plains, while ranges of mountains stretch over into Travancore on the west. And there, right down below, a cluster of little red jewels set in the green of trees was our own Dohnavur. Very small it looked, but very dear; and we tried in vain to signal to the family down there. After half an hour's rest we joined parties and came down all the way by the very nullah in which our camp was pitched; so, had we but known it, there was an easy way up lying beside us.

At midday news came to our camp that Favour,

one of the older boys, was desperately ill, so my brother Murray, who is a doctor, started down at once.

He was still very ill, and was hardly expected to live when we reached Dohnavur. But God put forth His hand; and, after days of lying unconscious, he gradually came back to us, though it was months before he was fully fit. He is now in training for the hospital side, to help others as he himself was helped. Some time in that Valley of the Shadow God must have met him, for there was new sensitiveness to spiritual things from the day that he came back from the gates of death.

We have had other trips with the boys up the mountains, for it is all good training, and helps to harden them physically and to prepare them in other ways for the battle of life. Once when a party went up it rained in truly tropical style, until finally they had to return. Two miles down the mountain side and six miles across the plains at a jog-trot, and they were in about half-past four. To rest? Oh no. At half-past five they were all asking for a game of hockey. They seem quite untireable, and to keep pace with their energy, by seeing that it always has a profitable outlet, is no picnic.

Some time afterwards, to refresh their memories and to help them to use a little imagination, a composition was set for preparation one night. 'If, on a trip up Tiruvannamalai, a boy broke his leg, what would you do?' Some answers were quite ordinary. But Leader wrote something like this: 'I should go down quickly to Mavadi (a village near Dohnavur), and collect a number of strong men, and give a pair of shorts and a pair of sandals to each, and then invite

them to a feast. After the feast I would say, "I want you to come up the mountains with me to bring a boy down who has hurt himself." And they would say, "Yes, we will come." ' The misery of the unfortunate one in the mountains what time the party was feasting did not occur to him, and a little relic of inheritance revealed the usual way in which things are done in this land.

Prince, on the other hand, was most ingenious. He was for making a stretcher, nice and soft, of branches and leaves, like a cradle, so that the injured boy could not fall out. Then he would catch a hundred wild pigeons (they nest in clefts of the rock up there) and tie them to the stretcher, and away they would fly with the patient to Dohnavur. Prince always has imagination, and his compositions, in spite of his English knowledge being distinctly limited, are interesting reading.

CHAPTER VIII

'I'M GOING TO DIE'—BUT HE DIDN'T

'ANNACHIE, I'm going to die,' said Victory one day, holding that part of his anatomy which bears the punishment of over-eating. Fortunately he did not, though he felt very sorry for himself for some time afterwards.

It is a constant source of wonder to see the immense variety of things in the vegetable kingdom that is labelled 'food' by the boys. I suppose the average boy at home has not the range of choice that ours have; though I'm sure that if he had he would avail himself of it.

In November the hedges are resplendent with the flaming red and yellow of the gloriosa lily. Up it climbs through the cactus, rejoicing in obstructions, only using them as a means of mounting higher, nearer to the sunlight and fresh air. Plant it in the open fields without difficulties, and it grows poor, and stunted, and seldom flowers; for battle is the breath of life to it. There it stands, year by year, a perpetual parable: Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.

But it has another lesson in it for our boys, for it brings to mind a sad and vivid scene of a row of twenty small boys lying in anguish on the floor of the weaving-shed. Our doctor had an anxious time, for there they

lay looking like death, and desperately sick, until at last the cause became known. That afternoon they had been for a walk to a newly bought piece of land; and there someone had discovered a little plant that had tuberous roots, which seemed most suitable to eat. So there had been a general scramble and a feast. It might have been much worse, for those lily roots are poisonous. It will not happen again. The picture of that row of writhing small boys lives in their memory. They do not usually make such mistakes, for they seem to know almost by instinct among the many fruits, big and small, that grow in field and forest, which are poisonous and which are not.

From January to April is the season for collecting the seeds of a small rambling bean that grows everywhere in the grass; and, at all spare hours of the day, parties can be seen on hands and knees gathering these minute seeds; for, to those who understand, they are a delicacy, and very much in demand.

Sometimes Courage or Truth will come up with clenched fist, 'Open your hand, please, Annachie;' and, as I open it, some of this pulse will be poured in. If I say, 'I do not think I will have any, for I have so many other things,' they wonder at my strange self-denial, for none of them would dream of refusing it.

Annachies' Coming Days are joyful, for many reasons. Bowls of roses are not loved only for their beauty, and when the petals fall there are many anxious to carry the remains to the rubbish-pit. If you went later you would find only the stalks and the leaves, for rose-petals are most delicious. One day we collected our rose-petals, and, dividing them on the window-sill into as many heaps as there were boys,

invited them to partake. A few have grown beyond it, but most of them went away munching, and Victory went down on his hands and knees, and buried his face in the pile.

In the quiet garden beside the House of Prayer stands a big Indian almond-tree; and one day we were asked to send some of our climbers to pick the fruit that was ripening fast. So, armed with buckets, we went in the evening, and soon half a dozen boys were up aloft picking and shaking. Before we left our compound I had suggested that, if it were possible, we should all pick without eating, for, as soon as we had collected them and carried them off, Accal would give out a fair share to each. No order was given, because it might prove too hard for human nature, but it was set as an ideal. After dark that night, as I sat in my room reading, a small voice from without said, ' May I come in? '

' Yes, come in.' And Courage entered.

' Annachie, when we were picking the almonds, I ate just a little bit of one. Then I quickly threw it down, so that I should not be tempted any more.' It was not sin, but he had failed to attain to the ideal, and it had made him unhappy until he had told me, and together we had talked to the Lord Jesus about it. Then all was clear.

On Sunday afternoons we go for walks, and sometimes nobody seems to mind where we go; but a few weeks back there was a strange persistence that we must go to the Parama Suha Salai, the new hospital land. I wondered at this, for there is usually a reason, and we had not been there long before I found that a little plant with very sweet palatable berries had been

discovered under the lee of the hedge. So that was the reason.

The forest is a place of delight. As our houses are surrounded by virgin forest, there are only a certain number of ways by which you can go for walks, if you are not prepared to cut your way through with an arivāl—the excellent kind of hand-axe of the country. So when a walk is suggested some such conversation as this ensues :

'Where shall we go to-day? To the Wood of the Mangoes?'

'No, the guavas are not ripe.'

'Then let's go to David's Rock?'

'No, nothing grows there.' (As a matter of fact, the way lies all through thick jungle.)

'Well, let's go to Sinniyer's Seat?'

'Yes, there are some wild plantain-trees near there.'

Perhaps it all sounds very greedy; but if God is kind enough to make these good things, and nobody else chooses to pick them, why should not we?

Those who go to the forest are old enough to know what is safe, so we give them a free hand with the wild fruit. If they are foolish enough to eat green guavas, which they nearly always do, they simply bear the consequences, which are more unpleasant to them than to us, and never do them any real harm. In fact, their digestive powers often seem to rival those of the ostrich.

And it is not that they do not have enough ordinary food, for there is no lack in the kitchen, presided over by Star, their Accal, who adds the supervision of the cooking to all her other work for the boys. But anyone who knows boys will understand, so I make no apology for these revelations.

CHAPTER IX

'I WANT TO WORK'

WHEN our boys reach thirteen or fourteen, it begins to be possible to see a little how they are likely to develop, and along what lines it will be best to help that development. Some have excellent brains and will make teachers or helpers with their younger brothers. Others have a special cleverness with their fingers. So at about this age they start, for a short time each day, to learn some form of work outside the usual school curriculum.

For two or three years now, the Alphas have been weaving the red cloth for the boys' shirts and veshtis; and just recently they have turned on to purple and mauve and blue as well, to meet the demand for several thousand yards required for the clothing of our big family. So keen have they become on their work that sometimes they are back at the looms long before the time allowed off at midday is finished. Two of the group are learning to help on the medical side, with a view to the hospital now in building. They set out from the bottom with the washing of bandages and bottles; and it is hard to be content with that most uninteresting beginning of things. But it is the only way to lay a foundation that will last, and to give an

understanding that can sympathise with others who later on will have to begin in just such ways.

There must come a time when these boys, growing into men, have to enter the world and be open to temptations that do not occur within the family. But we believe that their training and God's everlastingly patient loving-kindness will, in the end, win. The love of money is one of the great curses of this land, as of other lands—the root of all evil indeed. Without a tip, of a value suitable to the dignity of the one whose aid is sought, little can be hoped for; and so, unconsciously, money has come to be regarded as the key that unlocks the door to all good. When we bring up our boys to deem service a privilege, and the reward for service harder and more responsible work, we cut right across the accepted customs of the land.

It is a thought embedded in the mind of the countryside, that if you go to a hospital, unless you liberally tip everybody in the establishment with whom you have any contact, you will not receive anything but second-rate treatment. So patients coming in to us often try to insinuate a coin or a jewel into the hand of one of the men. Favour, who is in training on that side, was one day offered some money.

'No, thank you. I do not want it!'

'Oh, but surely, little brother, there are some sweets in the shop that you would like.'

'No, we get all we need in the Cootum.'

'Well, then, just take this, and give it to the doctor in token of my gratitude, or put it into the thank-offering box for me.'

But the boy understood, and said: 'No, you must give it yourself. I will not touch it.'

Many a temptation, such as this, will beset the path of those who come to work among the patients of the hospital that we are building at God's command. If Favour had taken the money to put it in the box, the half truth would have spread all round the villages: 'Yes, he took money.' So the only safe thing is to refuse to touch it; and if a patient really wants to give a thank-offering, he can come to the House of Prayer, as many do, to offer it, not to man, but to God.

At the beginning of one year the need to train someone, and more than one, to help on the mechanical side became so pressing that we decided to have four of our Betas off school for three hours every morning to fetch, to carry, and to watch, and thus to learn the beginnings of engines and telephones and cars. So two of them spent from seven to ten each day helping Ronald Procter, who was putting up fittings for the electric light, made possible for the main buildings by the kind particular gifts of friends. First the names of the tools and their various uses had to be learned, and it required a good deal of concentration to be ready at the right moment with whatever was needed by the Annachie at the top of the ladder. Then holes had to be dug for the posts that carry the wires from the engine-room to the various parts of the compounds. It is not always easy to go on working hard when you are not directly supervised all the time; but this is one of the lessons that we hope they will learn from the discipline of these beginnings.

The other two were told off to learn how to look after the well engine, and how to clean and oil the cars. There are two small tanks to be filled daily, and once a week the pomegranate and plantain garden has to be

watered. Having started the engine, whoever is on duty guides the water along the various channels, to see that each plant gets its fair share, and spends any waiting time between in pulling out the weeds that grow in profusion wherever there is a regular water-supply. That is our ideal. But there again perpetual supervision is impossible, so that they must be trained to be trusted to work, whether one of us is there or not. In that garden, near the big well that supplies the water, are some lime-trees, the fruit of which is much in demand for the hospital and the bungalow. One day, just after the new work had begun, Valour had, as usual, collected some of them to bring up to me; and then the temptation to keep them came upon him. As I was passing a group of boys where he was, I said,

'Have you brought up any limes to-day?'

'We brought up many yesterday.'

I dropped the matter temporarily. Shortly afterwards he came into my room alone on some other errand.

'You did pick up some limes to-day, didn't you?'

'Yes, I did; I'll go and get them now.' He soon brought them, and he was not happy until it was all put right.

It was a Sunday when first the news of the new work for these four got out. The rest of the boys had gone to the Parama Suha Salai for a walk. The four had been kept behind for a few minutes' talk about the new trust to be given them. When they and Music—for he, too, had waited with them to hear to his great delight that he would be trained to help the little boys—joined us, the others began to speculate as to what they would be when they were a little older.

'I shall help in the hospital,' said Steadfast, and then, as an afterthought, 'But it will be rather hard work;' and he was not quite sure about it.

'I want to work in the farm,' said Chieftain, with his smile that captivates everybody, and behind which he retires when laziness would bring him into trouble.

'That's because you want to eat the *cadalai*' (a grain of which the boys are very fond). This from another of the Gammas, who evidently did not attribute very high motives to Chieftain's desire.

There will be plenty to do for those who are utterly straight and prepared for hard work, and the only way for them to grow up to such a life is by introducing them personally to the Lord Jesus; and that is the underlying aim of all our training here at Dohnavur.

CHAPTER X

BOOKS AND BUTTER-TINS

IT was the hour when the library was open on Saturday at midday, and the boys all crowded round. Some always choose a Tamil book, the stock of which is, alas! small; for anything Hindu is impossible, for reasons that only those who know India will understand. Others want pictures. But there are some who read right on to the end with enjoyment. Light read solidly through every Tamil book in the library, and was of the opinion that he could never manage an English book, so that it was not worth trying to read one. But, as there were no more Tamil books, one day he decided to try the impossible, and found it comparatively easy; so now he has a new field in which to roam, and he comes regularly to get another book. To-day he took some time to make up his mind, but finally went off with a short Life of Napoleon under his arm.

Soon I saw him running back. 'A woodshrike's nest in the margosa tree by the road—yes, in that little one. They are building it. I saw the bird.' I went by a few minutes after, and there, sure enough, were three spiders' webs and a stick, on a little fork, perilously near the ground. I should never have guessed what it was. But he was right. As the days went by the nest grew until it was finished, a beautiful

cup like a chaffinch's nest. We often saw the bird inside smoothing it round with her breast. But no eggs were ever laid, for the frequent passing of bicycles and cars and boys frightened the birds; and they went off to a tree fifty yards away, and built another nest in a fork high up, and there reared their family in peace.

Margosa-trees are a constant delight, and next to the tamarind-tree they are considered by the folk of the countryside the most valuable, for in the autumn they are covered with thousands of little yellow, hanging berries, the nut in the centre of which, when ground, makes excellent oil.

Our compound has many of these trees; and when the season comes on each boy manages to secure some small and ancient tin, in which the berries are carefully collected and stored. It is an excellent occupation, and keeps them happily busy nearly all the spare time for two months or more. And there is a splendid object, for after the season is over the oil-sellers come round to buy the berries; and we hand our respective collections to Rāhēl Accal, the one in charge of the compound kitchens, who turns into income numbers of things which most of us would deem quite useless, and is a terror to all those who waste anything that could be used. Last year, on Amma's Birthday, over two pounds was given towards the hospital from the combined efforts of boys and girls. And all big things are made up of countless little things; so it is a real help, for the children feel that they are contributing to the hospital.

While the season is in full swing, the old tins are often found in all sorts of strange places—under the bridge over the water-channel, hidden in a pile of

bricks, or in the middle of an old wood dump. Each boy has his private hiding-place for his collection, until it is poured into the common barrel. But before that happens the flesh round the nut has to be removed, which is a messy operation; and, if you do not look carefully before you sit down, perhaps one morning, when going out for a quiet time on one of the stone seats under the trees that face the mountains, your pleasure in the beauty of the sunrise light on the hills may be tempered by dismay at discovering that you have sat down on a cushion of sticky yellow fruit. Of course the seats are not meant for such purposes; but they are very convenient, and so it sometimes happens.

Empty butter-tins are most useful. When comparatively new they serve as an excellent food-dish for the young people who cannot take care of their bowls. For three whole days they must eat out of a tin, which is a great disgrace.

Then, as the tin grows rusty, it sometimes becomes the property of a small gentleman who has no locker, and into it are put all his worldly treasures. The tin, for want of a safer place, is occasionally kept inside his pocketless shirt, so that, when you first see the contour of the owner, you feel sure that he must have eaten unwisely. But when the customs of the compound become better known, you cease to fear. The thought that the sharp edges of an opened tin might conceivably hurt him never enters into his head; and, after all, where else can you carry anything if you want your hands free? At times quite a store of little pieces of wire and string and wood and balls and all manner of what-nots come tumbling out.

The lids of tins do not often come their way, being of

comparatively little use; but one day, when Star was administering a dose of needed 'morning glory,'* she was surprised to hear a most unusual sound in answer to each stroke, and discovered that this enterprising person had reasoned that, if a tin lid (a biscuit-tin lid this time) were interposed between his person and the cane, it would probably relieve him of the discomfort usually attendant on such punishment. But he had forgotten that a beaten tin reveals its presence unmistakably. And he departed sadder and wiser.

* Reminiscent of *Lotus Buds*, Ch. 3.

CHAPTER XI

ROAD-MAKERS

DOHNAVUR. Station, Tinnevelly Junction, thirty-two miles. It is those last two miles which really count. The other thirty are passable. In fact, the roads are quite good for the weeks before and after the visit of the Viceroy, or the Commander-in-Chief, or the Governor. But the last two miles are never traversed by Authority.

Until recently there was a choice of roads, if such you can call them, and then one day we found a cactus hedge built across the way we used to go. Rumour had reached the village that Government was going to make a pukka road; and so, in hope of compensation, land long unused was quickly reclaimed; and there would be no lack of witnesses to prove that upon its cultivation and consequent crop depended the entire livelihood of whole families. That way led through a maze of palmyra palms, and when the cart ruts wore deep unevenly, there was often imminent danger of our leaving the lorry roof behind, for there was never much room to spare between the trees.

The way which we now use is a Government track, running east and west, and passing near to the new hospital land. Part of it goes by the red desert—open country, over which you can choose your own way, where the sand is least deep, and the water-jumps are fewest.

Further on, it narrows down into a lane with a mud wall crowned by cactus on each side, and here it was that the fun began. For the mud wall to the south had fallen down into the road, and, as it was of quite substantial thickness, it considerably raised the level of that side. In the rainy season this same road did duty for a temporary river-bed, so the villagers had further dug away the northern part, making a gutter for the water. The result was that, with two wheels high on the ruined mud wall and the other two in the water-channel, passage along the lane was apt to be quite uncomfortably exciting.

Something had to be done, and done without delay; so one afternoon a party of our boys and men set off to deal with it. As soon as they had arrived, they began to remove the southern half of the road, and, with it, to fill up the northern half. But it was not so easy as it sounds, for the owner of the collapsed mud wall loudly laid claim to the earth we were removing as his private property, until someone happened to see the boundary stone of the Government road, well within the line where his wall had stood; and after that he quieted down. A few hours' work, and the ditch disappeared, and once again it looked a fairly level surface.

But the villagers could not understand it at all. Although it was more than once suggested that some of them set to and help us, they did not see the point. Why ever an Englishman with a group of boys, who were certainly not of the coolie class, should come and do work that was someone else's responsibility—and with no prospect of pay—was beyond them. A few of the village children, on hearing the magic word

'Sīni' (sugar), came along and marked time at the double, to beat in the new-laid earth, but their respectable grown-ups stood by, kindly inquisitive and frankly unable to fathom it.

In China the scholar leaves the nail of his little finger to grow one or two inches longer than the rest, just to make quite sure that all who meet him shall know that he has never descended to the depths of manual labour. Although we have no such custom in South India, the problem is the same; for it is most difficult to convince the educated and half-educated products of the schools that to take a spade and dig is no disgrace. And as we know that to impose such a thought on the finished article is almost impossible, we try to train our boys from their earliest days to find joy in all manner of work. So they scrub their own floors, and help to cook their own food; and, whether it is weeding a large plantain garden, or removing and re-stacking several thousand bricks, or carrying stone, or cutting paths in the forest, or laying gravel on the roads in our compounds, they take it naturally as all in the day's work; and it never enters into their heads to admire the attitude of people who would starve rather than lend a hand in such activities.

CHAPTER XII

THE BEAUTY OF THE FLOWERS

THE garden round the big well usually occupies the Betas and Gammas on Saturday mornings, for there is an immense amount of weeding to be done, if it is to be kept in any semblance of order. Then, after each plantain-tree has fruited, a new hole has to be dug, and manured, and a fresh tree planted. Rāhēl Accal has a standing order for any number of plantain leaves, which are sold to some of the many people who bring milk to the compound morning and evening. Plantain leaves are the plates of the country, used for one meal, and then thrown away, which saves washing up, and is a very excellent custom. These leaves have to be cut in a special way, lest the tree suffer, and counted, and done up in bundles to be taken down to the big kitchen near the bungalow. From the produce of the various gardens where the boys work in the holidays, and on Saturdays in term-time, enough money has come to buy most of the books and other needs of our school as well as to get things such as footballs and hockey-sticks for their evening games.

At the back of the boys' rooms each one has a small patch of garden which is his own. Several plantain-trees, and, round the base, all sorts of little delicacies, such as chillies, are grown. Some of them have flowers, too, and it is an added joy to bring some very

own flowers on an Annachie's Coming Day. Beside my room is an enclosed plot, known as the rose-garden, where the roses and oleanders and ferns have till recently been looked after by Music and Light. Music had a special corner, where he experimented, and used to plant all sorts of seeds to see what would happen.

One day, when the boys had been at the foothills for a picnic, Leader came back with a number of orchids, which he put in the garden, and they have flowered all through the spring days. And Music brought a little plant, and put it between two of the ferns. For months nothing happened, and we almost thought that it had better be uprooted and thrown away. But he guarded it most carefully, and one day buds were reported, and now for four or five months hundreds of beautiful yellow blossoms have been coming out. It has spread all along the wall by the ferns, and there have been many requests for seeds. It is a common forest flower, a kind of asystasia, but never before have we succeeded in making it grow on the plains.

I used to take the four eldest Betas—Music, Valour, Light, and Leader—out on Sunday afternoons to look for flowers and birds, and they became quite keen, collecting the little wild flowers which abound in the grass and in the hedges, pressing them in a book, and then asking for their names. The fact that the only names in most cases were long Latin ones did not seem to dismay them; and the other day, when we were passing a clump of tiny white star flowers, Leader stopped and said,

'Don't tell me, Annachie. That is—Oldenlandia.'

'That's right, and what is this?' and I pointed to a little purple flower.

'Justicia.'

Some time ago one of our many visitors, who always love the little children in the Square, was playing with them, and pointed to a yellow-flowered creeper climbing up the pillar of the house.

'I wonder what that is called?' she said, and was struck dumb by the answer of a small person of three or four.

'Tristellateia Australasica.' Perhaps the pronunciation was not quite right, but the name was recognisable.

When our House of Prayer was in building, before even the roof was on, climbing plants were beginning to go up the walls; now the tower is covered with blue thunbergia, and the northern side is one mass of green, through which the purple passion-flowers open regularly at nine o'clock each day. Many are the flower songs the children sing. Some are little kindergarten songs, with simple tunes, so that they may know the names and learn to love the various plants and bushes that grow around them.

People who visit us ask how we ever manage to have so many flowers. Abundant water is the secret. Long ago God, who had ordained that this family should afterwards come into being at Dohnavur, caused an underground river to flow thirty feet below what was to be our compound. Wherever we sink a pump, we strike abundance of pure water, and the boys and girls are willing helpers; so, by their efforts and by God's good gift, our gardens grow, a perpetual delight.

And there are many other songs, known as Sonthum or 'our own' songs, about the flowers, and about the Lord of flowers, who loved the lilies of the field, and our oleanders, that still grow in profusion round the lake

He knew so well. Children of six or seven will sing as they water the plants :

We grow beside the shining sea
Set round with hills in Galilee,
We often saw our Lord and knew
He saw us and He loved us too.

For He loved all the little flowers
That smiled at Him through sunny hours,
And when the sky was dark and grey
Still smiled, and did not go away.

We tried to make the world more sweet
For Him who walked with holy feet
Along its way, and by its sea
Set round with hills in Galilee.

And we often pray that, when He is weary with the sin and sorrow of the world, He may walk in our garden as the day draws to its close, and find rest and joy, not only in the flowers, but in the family which He has gathered to Himself from the dark places of the earth and planted here.

CHAPTER XIII

THE LOVE OF LITTLE CHILDREN

As we stand in the room at the top of the House of Prayer tower, high above the compound, with God's fresh air all around, the blue words on the brown teak which meet our eyes express the longing of our hearts.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.

From this tower can be seen the greater part of our several compounds. On all sides of the House of Prayer is the circle of houses forming the Round, where the girls of school age live with their Accals and Sitties. To the south-west lie the bungalow and the kitchens; to the west, the mountain side, is the children's hospital, and away in the distance the new hospital. Northwards the road lies to the Vanacharbu, where the boys live.

But if we look between these last two to the north-west, quite close, is a large open space surrounded on all four sides by small rooms. This is the Square. Here in the old days lived the boys and the babies, but as the boys began to grow big, and more small babies began to come, the boys had to find quarters elsewhere,

so that now the Square is the home of all the tinies, Lotus buds and Teddy bears, usually called collectively tedlets, ranging from infants of nearly nought up to the very exalted personages of six, whose privilege it will shortly be to join the school-going communities in the Round or in the Vanacharbu.

The arrival in the Square of anyone outside the immediate circle of its inhabitants is the signal for shouts of joy, unless, of course, kindergarten be in progress, or such duties as floor-scrubbing are being performed, and then there can be no such disturbance. But if it is a time when nothing special is occupying them, the verandah of each room is lined with its row of blue-clad dancing figures, or, if they are the boys in their red, they usually rush out to meet us.

One day, before I knew many names or could talk any Tamil, just after I had gone into the room with a crowd of the boys, suddenly an unusual silence fell, and a small person began to sing most clearly,

> Brothers, don't stay away, don't stay away.
> For my Lord says there's room enough, room enough in the heavens for you,
> My Lord says there's room enough, don't stay away.

A visit to the Square in the evening is one of the best cures imaginable for a fit of the dumps; for it is certainly quite impossible to be gloomy in the company of forty or fifty small people full of life and joy, who are bursting to share it all with you.

The Accals who look after these little ones are mostly our own children brought up in the tradition of the family, and to them falls the important share of training in the earliest days. The Tamils have a proverb, ' The habits of the cradle will go with you to

the grave.' This admittedly does not allow for the miracle of God's working in conversion; yet it is far easier to help a child to win a battle in the nursery than to have to deal later with an undisciplined nature of twelve or thirteen. So that, through the days when a child is so often handed over to a nurse or ayah, whose character in the deeper things is quite unknown, we feel our children should have those who know God, and who serve for love of Him, to train them.

Among those whose particular province is the little boys are some of the Lotus Buds, now living to give to others the advantages that they had when they were small. And as an elder sister to everyone, is Pappammal Accal, brought by God to this work from a life of luxury and ease, to pour out her all for the children. Her special vocation is the training of younger Accals, and she rejoices in this most responsible task, certain that God has called her to it. And, beside all this, she has charge of a room of sturdy gentlemen who have just mastered the art of walking.

'What have you done with the moon?' asked a small boy one day of Barbara Osman, who lives with them in the Square, and is in charge of the kindergarten, 'It's in your house.' He seemed quite concerned. Night by night from his room he had seen the moon rise behind her house, until one night he was asleep when it was due to rise; and next day he determined to find out what had happened.

One of the joys that falls to the lot of those who live in the Square is the telling for the first time of the well-loved Bible stories. As the children pass the cradle and the crawling stages, as soon as their minds begin to open and to understand, they are told the outline of

the Gospel. One day it had been the story of the Annunciation. Soon after, two of the little boys were found together in their room. One was kneeling in the middle of the room, as he had seen Mary kneeling in the picture; the other, armed with an unlit lantern, to represent the light that shone about him, had climbed up on to the low window-sill, thence to descend as from the skies with his good news. So live again these stories that lead them to the love of the Lord, who loved them and gave Himself for them.

One of their little sisters was visiting the house of a married Annachie the other day, and there she saw three chairs, which we probably should have thought quite normal. Not so she. For, realising at once that for Annachie and Accal two were quite enough, she suddenly said, 'That chair is for the Lord Jesus,' and, running across, she jumped up into it, as though she meant, 'And I am going to sit beside Him.'

So they grow up in their simple way to love and to be unafraid in the company of Christ. And often when a sore battle is going on in the soul of an older one, we thank God for the love of little children, which steadies and strengthens weakened hearts, and helps to hold them to the service of the Highest.

CHAPTER XIV

THE JOY OF THE BIRDS

I HAVE often thanked God for the birds, and I thanked Him afresh one day, for Courage had been in hot water again. And I knew that he must be in a bad way, when he announced in a loud voice to himself, ' I shan't have anything more to do with birds.' For some weeks he had been very keen on watching them and finding their nests, which abound in our Vanacharbu. That remark was made at eleven-thirty, just as I was starting for a midday meal in the bungalow. After our Fellowship prayer-meeting I came back to my room about twelve-forty-five, and I was sitting at the desk writing, when someone, far too excited to ask, ' May I come in ? ' burst into the room. ' Annachie, please come and see a new Indian robin's nest. I saw the bird carrying a little stick in its mouth. It is building over there by the hedge.' It was Courage, his stern resolve quite forgotten in a new joy. So out I went, praising God for a victory won by His birds.

But Light is the real ornithologist, and he seems to have eyes and ears everywhere. At the height of the season hardly a day passes without the announcement of the discovery of a new nest.

There used to be an old sand-heap in our compound, a relic of the builders, and for many days I watched a bright-blue and chocolate kingfisher who came each

morning to break his fast upon the ants that abounded there. He nests year by year in a hole in the wall of the garden well where we bathe. Then there are the big blue-tailed bee-eaters who come in the winter; and sometimes one of them used to sit beside the kingfisher, and catch the dragon-flies which sail up and down among the trees.

Two dead trees stand, one in each half of our compound, and we have wondered whether we ought to cut them down for firewood. But up till now they have survived, for so many birds like to sit on their bare branches. There the coppersmith perches of a morning, in his green and scarlet, and bobs up and down to each beat of his monotonous call. There, too, the company of munias, uninteresting little birds, take refuge when driven temporarily by a passer-by from their search among the grasses down below.

The grey wagtails come in parties in December, with their dainty ways, catching all manner of insects as they run along, or jumping up after some very elusive grasshopper. The irrepressible bulbuls can be seen and heard at any time of the day, and they often nest in the ripening plantain bunches that hang on the trees in the big garden. Ordinary sparrows, strange to say, are few, not so common as their brothers with the yellow throat, a pair of which nested in a hollow bamboo, put up to support a heavy plantain-tree, not five yards from the Gammas' room. There was great joy when the little birds scrambled up and took their first flying lessons. Mischief and Gift tried to assist them one day, but, not knowing very much of the art themselves, were unable to help.

Three pairs of woodshrikes, in their soft grey uniform,

reared their families with us this year, and a party of cuckooshrikes, the father with his jet black head and the rest all in grey, were often feeding on the tree just outside my room.

A pair of crow-pheasants nested in our hedge, and used to play hide-and-seek with unfortunate lizards, who were never able to escape the vigilance of the red eye, and sooner or later were found and duly demolished.

As the nesting season advanced, so the interest in football temporarily waned, until, for some weeks, we used to go out to look for nests almost every evening, and most of the boys became tremendously keen. There were larks' nests by the Red Lake to be visited, to see how the baby birds were growing; and the ringed plover's nest, with its brown eggs laid on the bare brown earth, which the drying up of the waters of the Eastern Lake had left; and the pipit's and bee-eater's nests in the ploughed field across the lane. Nearly always we found something new.

One night, after our inspection of the various lark families, we were going along the bank of the Red Lake, when we saw an owl at the top of a dead palmyra-tree; and, as we watched, it disappeared inside, so I turned to Prince, who I knew would think nothing of it, and said,

'Would you like to go up?'

'Yes, I'll go.'

When we got to the bottom of the tree, it certainly looked alarming. Not the vestige of a branch was there, just a tall forty-foot pillar, with a five-foot circumference. But up he went, and when within three feet of the top, holding on with one hand, he

thumped vigorously with the other, and out came the owl.

'I think it is quite rotten. Had I better go any higher? The wood feels all soft.'

'No, come down.' And it was with great relief that we saw him come to earth again in safety.

But the greatest joy in our compound has come from the ioras, little birds that in the breeding season love to fly up into the air, and then, with every available feather fluffed out, to come down, a ball of gold and black and white. Light often has some new story of the ioras' doings :—

'As I was pumping to-day I watched a mother iora on her nest. All at once she began to get excited, and called the father bird; and, when he came, they both stood on the edge of the nest, and kept on looking in and talking about something. Afterwards I climbed up, and discovered that an egg had hatched.'

'To-day a woodshrike was teaching its young one to fly, and I took it in my hand and gave it a send off, and it went quite a little way.'

At another time, as I was going to rest in the middle of the day, Light came in. 'There is a little bird in distress in Alec Annachie's house. Can I go and help it?' We went to see, and there, sure enough, up in the roof was a young iora, who had taken a wrong turn in his flying experiments, and now could not get out. Light was soon up in the rafters and it was a very frightened little bird which was eventually put on the branch of a near-by tree. We had gone only a few steps, when the father bird flew rejoicing to greet his errant offspring.

Williyer Annachie, Bala's husband, told me one day

how he and a group of the boys had seen a mother bird teaching its little ones to fly; how they had gone close up to it, and how the lesson of our Father's care and loving help had been brought home to his heart by what he had seen.

CHAPTER XV

GIANT DESPAIR AND CO.

THE boys look forward to each new term with delight; and at the end examinations are the crowning joy of all. To be forbidden to write an examination is a severe punishment. Not that everyone loves to work hard and to study well, for there are many varying attitudes to that among the Betas and Gammas; and I suppose that no school lacks the boy who has brains, but cannot be persuaded to use them.

I had been reading "Pilgrim's Progress" with the Betas for English, and it was a little difficult for Leader and Prince, who are not bountifully supplied with brains, and for Victory and Steadfast, who have not been with us very long, and so are behind in English. Giant Despair was the subject of an essay, and Warrior becoming a little mixed between fits and fists, the application of which seemed to produce the same effect, wrote, 'Also the next night she (Giant Despair's wife) said, "Go to them in surly manner." Next morning he went and fell on them with fits.' Some of them understood enough English to appreciate the last grand passage, where Christian and Hopeful go into the Heavenly City; but, whether it was a slip of the pen or not I do not know, Victory wrote that the two pilgrims, having entered the Heavenly City, met

there many 'with crows on their heads and harps in their hands.'

The day on which we finished the book in class Leader said,

'This book was printed by a man who does not love God.'

'What makes you think so?'

'Why, when it refers to God, it always spells Him with a small h.' And it took quite a little time to explain that it was no sign of irreverence, for it is the same even in the English Bible.

Three times a week there is a general period for the Betas. Once we talked of radium, when an old Hindu lady in our temporary hospital was being treated with some lent us by Neyyoor. Another day it was newspapers and how they are produced. Sometimes they listen to a poem, and one day they sat spellbound for an hour as I read Matthew Arnold's great story of Sohrab and Rustum and their fight beside the Oxus stream.

Courage finds it very hard to concentrate in school, and at the close of one particularly stormy day for him he came to me after dark for prayer. This had been his usual custom. He seemed to feel that it helped. There would be a knock on the door about seven o'clock, and in he would come. But for several days he had either forgotten, or for some reason had not wanted to come; and as there seemed to be no sign of victory after school that day, I was not expecting him, when in he came. We had our prayer together, and he prayed most earnestly. Just as we were getting up off our knees, he said,

'Annachie, I am not very much good at school work.

Do you think I might start some other kind of work like Valour and Prince?'

'Which is the greater victory, to do a difficult thing, or to leave that and to turn to an easy one?'

'To do a difficult thing.'

'Which is easier for you, to go on with school or to do other work?'

'To do other work.' And then we read together Matthew vii. 13, 14.

'By which gate do you want to go in?'

'The narrow gate.'

'Well, what are we to do?'

'I must go on with school, and get the victory in that first.' And so it was decided.

The school lockers, in which all books are kept, have no doors. They were made thus purposely, not only for economy, but as an aid to neatness. Gradually even those who used never to be tidy have grown into it, but Prince still finds it very hard, being rather scatter-brained by nature; and the process of working back in thought to where he last saw and used a lost pencil is never easy for him, though it succeeds in unearthing hidden treasure sometimes.

In the regular discipline of the term time-table, the different things which to each boy are difficult soon come out. We all know the temptation to stay just one moment longer when the bell has rung for a meal; to read to the end of a chapter, if it is a book; or to write just one more sentence, if it is a letter. One of the hardest things for the boys to understand is that instant obedience to a command or to a signal is the only true obedience. Speed is not in the Indian make-up, and it takes long to learn this lesson.

Each boy comes once a month, on an appointed day, for prayer with me alone. They come at other times, too, but their day is a special time, and the older ones look forward to it. For then we share our thoughts and desires, and sometimes wrong things are put right, and always God is with us in fulfilment of His promise. Several months ago, when, as usual, I had asked him to say what we were to pray about, Light said,

'I want to pray that when the whistle goes I may obey at once. I find it so easy to take no notice.'

So we prayed, and he has been helped. In such little things as these God goes on giving victories; and it is the accumulation of these very things, small in the eyes of some, but great in God's sight, that builds character.

CHAPTER XVI

SUNDAY

SUNDAY is a joyful day for all. Life begins a little later than usual, following the normal course of a bathe under the pump, house-work, prayers, food and Bible-reading, until eight-thirty, when everybody joins together in the Suriya Salai to sing, preparatory to trooping down, a long red line, through the moon arch to the House of Prayer.

At nine-thirty is the English service, a half-hour of worship, including a litany, into which we bring many of the little homely details in the lives of the boys and girls for praise and prayer, and in which they all join gladly. Then comes a short interval when we scatter, until ten-fifteen. The boys go off to a patch of grass kept like a lawn in the cool season. But the mowing-machine cannot remove the seed-pods of every plant, and one day I saw a very small boy, at the Tamil service, with a row of seeds on the floor in front of him, feasting, all oblivious of what was going on around. Perhaps partly to save such incidents as this, the smaller children are given brightly coloured flags, which they wave with great delight during the singing —their contribution to our offering of praise.

'King Saul was at the service this morning. I saw him. Didn't you?' This surprising piece of news was conveyed to his Accal by a small gentleman in the

Square one Sunday morning. He had been learning about Saul during the preceding week, and one of our Hindu visitors, an old man from the hospital, seemed to resemble the picture of Saul so much that it took quite a little persuasion to convince this Tedlet that Saul had died long ago, and so it could not be he. This man, whose forefinger had been amputated in our hospital, though a Hindu of high caste, was a regular attendant at our Sunday morning service. As he left the hospital he said, 'I shall come every Sunday,' and when he comes he sits on a chair near the front, for he is old, and finds sitting on the floor difficult. At first it was a little disconcerting for my brother Murray, who was speaking, for he would intersperse the talk with loud remarks and exclamations of approval, much to the delight of the smaller fry. But it was distinctly difficult for the one who took the service; so he was asked to reserve his remarks until later, which he has learned to do. The other day after a service he said, 'I must be baptized.' Whether he realizes what it is likely to involve we do not know. But that was quite an unsolicited expression of desire.

Often we have from forty to fifty Hindu or Muhammedan men and women at our House of Prayer at ten-fifteen. It is a great evangelistic chance, for they are interested enough to come, which means that the initial barrier is broken down. Sometimes, too, the aisle has to be used for patients who are too ill to sit; and a poor man paralysed after a fall from a palmyra tree used to lie and listen while he was with us. Rickshaw and lorry are kept busy bringing those who cannot walk and taking them back again. Some have met their God in these services, and have gone away believing that

AFTER A SERVICE IN
THE HOUSE OF PRAYER.
'THAT PLEASANT FEELING

Christ is their Saviour. But it is a long and difficult path to baptism, even after a man has met the Lord Jesus.

In fact it is then that the real fight begins, for it may, and often does, involve him in the loss of all. One who deliberately before others disgraces caste and family, by joining the Christian Way, will almost certainly be turned out and disowned. There are many so-called secret believers, but no one minds the inclusion of Jesus Christ in the Hindu pantheon. It is when He must be made the one and only God that the powers of evil get busy. Tens of thousands in India to-day admire the life, and read the words of Christ, who do not admit His claim to be the one Lord, of the one faith, by baptism into His death.

It is still a true word: 'Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.'

It is a word that scorches. But in the fire walks the One whose form is like the Son of God, tempted in all points like as we are, yet sinless, and able to succour, and to save to the uttermost. And when He said those words long ago, He knew what it would be like in India to-day. And still He calls out men and women, boys and girls, to follow Him.

CHAPTER XVII

JELLY-FISH

By one o'clock on Sunday everyone is ready for the midday service, which sometimes is turned into a happy hour of Tamil songs and hymns, and we rejoice to the accompaniment of cymbals and all kinds of musical instruments. It is one of the few times in the week when almost all are together. Even those who look after the babies are relieved by Sitties so that they may come; and if anything that concerns the whole family needs to be said, this is the time to say it. Sometimes, too, our Annachies and older Accals testify to what God has done for them; or one tells the story of how God set him free and brought him to Dohnavur. These are glad and solemn times, and the family shares their joy.

Then comes a long rest, and, after various sundries, five-thirty finds nearly everyone trooping out to the Parama Suha Salai, where the hospital will be, a glorious stretch of land with a view across the Red Lake to the mountains.

The last joy of a joyous day is when we all gather in the House of Prayer again at eight-thirty for singing. The sisters choose one week, and their brothers the next; and there is plenty of variety, for we have five books and the C.S.S.M. choruses, many of which are great favourites, from which to pick the hymns and songs that bring the day to its end. As the sound of

the last verse of the vesper dies away, from the tower come the notes of 'Abide with me,' played on the tubular bells, another of God's loving gifts to us through one of His stewards. On these same bells the hour is struck, and all through each day they call us to a moment's silence to remember Him.

But this is not quite the end of Sunday, for when everyone is lying down and all talking has stopped, if you were to stand in the darkness of the courtyard, on the verandah of which we all sleep, you would hear, 'Thank you, Annachie,' 'Thank you, Annachie,' as a sweet is dropped into each mouth, and, after a short time of happy munching, sleep reigns supreme.

Sunday is a different day; not dull, or full of services, but different. And it is not the older ones alone who look forward to it; all are brought up to love it as a day of delight.

Once at the midday service, after one of Amma's visits to Madras, she told how the monotonous sound of the carriage wheels in the train (for if you once begin to think of it, it seems impossible to banish that beat) were turned into sweetness by the words which seemed to come, 'Let it be, think of Me,' referring to a trouble of the time, and fitting into the endless rhythm. Next day, at the boys' kitchen, a fight was imminent, and two were arguing hotly, when a third standing by began, 'Let it be, think of Me. Let it be, think of Me.' It was taken up in chorus by those watching, and the two soon forgot their quarrel.

Another Sunday the subject was jelly-fish. For the choice of the difficult way, when anything more easy offers, is one of the hardest lessons to make practical in the lives of our boys and girls. Not that they would

choose to do wrong. But the highest is the hardest; and therefore the attraction of the goods and betters, which are not so hard, is apt to be strong. The vocabulary of a jelly-fish received special attention. 'I can't do it,' 'I don't understand,' 'It is so difficult,' and similar expressions were duly pointed out to be suitable words for a jelly-fish, but certainly not for a healthy girl or boy. So now we have to be very careful in our talk. The other evening John Risk, playing draughts with Gift against Leader and Chieftain, was confronted by a hard choice of moves, and murmured aloud as he thought it over, 'That's very difficult,' whereupon he was immediately greeted with a scornful 'Jelly-fish!' from Mischief, who was amongst the interested spectators.

If you get a nickname it is apt to stick most unpleasantly. For a long time I could not understand why Truth, upon hearing someone call out 'Biscuit,' would dissolve into tears, but it eventually transpired that he had, a long time ago, once taken one without asking. It is not forgotten, and when anyone gets annoyed with him, out it comes. This is rather cruel, and we try to restrain it. But other nicknames are quite harmless. An aristocratic small gentleman, lately admitted to play football with the Betas and Gammas, came up in the middle of the game, and said, with tearful dignity, 'That boy called me ten pounds,' and his tone implied, 'You must please do something about it.' But as I could see no connection between his previous career and the name, I let it be, for a certain amount of healthy chaff is good for them.

What upsets them most easily of all, however, is what they call *kēli*. An unkind teasing, that would rouse an

English boy to an immediate retort in self-defence, is a weapon against which few Indian children can stand. When Light and Leader were somewhat younger, there was perpetual bickering between them, until one day something had to be done to stop it. I asked Leader why he did not stand out and take no notice of what others said, for I knew that if he did this they would soon stop. He admitted that they would, but obviously thought it a counsel of perfection. When Light came, I said, though I could not help sympathising with him;

'Why do you always choose to make fun of Leader?'

'Because he always, without fail, gets annoyed.'

'And you rather enjoy it?'

'Yes' (with a half-apologetic smile).

'Well, he doesn't, and the Lord Jesus doesn't, so will you try to stop it?'

He thought for a minute, and finally agreed. They both did try; and I believe there is victory now, even though they are together all day in their new work.

The Tamil memory of others' misdeeds lasts long; and the path back to full confidence, for one who has failed, is steep and stony; but the mercies of God are everlasting. He has proved them so to us; so we hold on through ups and downs, to those whom God has given us to train for Him; and we believe that, in the end, He will see of the travail of His soul in them.

CHAPTER XVIII

'BUT I LIKE TO GO'

'IF God's will I will go if that not God's will I won't go but I like to go.' It was the last sentence in Prince's essay, for they had been asked to tell what they would do, if they had a few days' half-term holiday, and could take their choice. Some wanted to go to London, while others were greatly drawn to the sky-scrapers of New York. One or two, not so ambitious, chose Tuticorin, where they could see the sea and a big ship, or Travancore State, whose capital contains a museum and zoological gardens with real live lions.

Education cannot be an end in itself; it must lead to something else; and so we train the boys, keeping always as our aim that, in the end, they may be equipped to help their own people to know Christ. We have no great desire of their becoming B.A.s, or 'failed B.A.'s,' which is the next recognised grade in this land. Our thought is to give them a good knowledge of Tamil, their own language, and of arithmetic sufficient for all ordinary purposes, and enough English to enable them to gain help spiritually and practically from English books, for there is a grievous lack of profitable reading in Tamil.

As we do not plan for most, at any rate, to go on to what is called higher education, we feel justified in spending some money on taking them to places further

afield than the surrounding villages, to open their minds, and to teach by eye and ear what no amount of tuition can impart. And so it came about that, early one year, we decided to fulfil the desire of the one who added, 'But I like to go,' and we planned a trip through Travancore for the Betas.

That the Gammas might not feel quite left out, we took them for a whole day up into the mountains the week before, to Pāvanāsam, where a mighty waterfall bursts out of the hills and flows, in a series of rocky rapids, past a famous temple to the plains. The greatest thrill to them, however, was a four-mile ride in a train, which some had never even seen before. It cost the seven of us a total of about fourpence, and I am sure that each one had his money's worth. A motor tractor was another source of interest. And the sacred fish at the foot of the temple steps, where the water boiled with them if you threw in a handful of grain, were a great attraction. All the way there and back the boys sat in the car with eyes wide open, taking in everything; and as anything new appeared there was an immediate cry of '*Annā*,' which means 'Look!' so that what we heard was something like this, '*Annā*, telephone wire!' from one; '*Annā*, horse carriage!' (a rarity round Dohnavur) from another; '*Annā*, monkeys!' from a third. And we came back home another way through Tinnevelly Town, tired, but very happy.

The Betas' trip was more ambitious. It took four days, and involved sleeping out three nights. We started about nine one morning, well supplied with pots, pans, tins, blankets, spare clothes, and food, all stacked in a heap at the back of the lorry. Ten boys,

Dasan Annachie, who loves them and helps in many ways, John Risk, and I made up the party. Our first port of call was Joppa, our little house at Cape Comorin, where we stopped for a bathe at the end of India, and where the great joy was to wade out into the sea, and then, jumping as the wave curled over, to be carried far up the beach in a tumble of surf and shingle. Even the smallest dared it in the end.

Then, after a meal and a short rest, we were off to Nagercoil, where we had to buy cooked rice for the evening and next morning. Our Indian Annachie, with Leader and Music, invaded a food-shop, and soon came back with the rice and curry. But the inevitable crowd had gathered.

'What is your home village?'

'We are from Dohnavur.'

'Oh, that is the place connected with Raj*;' many, on both sides of the mountains, still remember and admire him. And with Raj's young son sitting in the car behind me, I told them a little about what God had done for that one-time brigand chief, and they listened and took some of our tracts gladly. Then on we went to Neyyoor, to the L.M.S. Hospital, so often more than good to us from the earliest days. This time we were taking to them something medical of which they were in need. As we stopped in front of the hospital entrance, Music called out, 'There are some of Bala Accal's texts,' and up on the walls were a few of our green-painted texts on natural wood, reminding us of Dohnavur. We did not stay long there, and struck due north towards Trivandrum, the capital. The roads in Travancore State were a joy, after our by-paths and

* *Raj, Brigand Chief.* Seeley, Service & Co., Ltd., London.

steeplechases, and the whole country was different. Round us, it is palmyra palms and sand, with a lake or two here and there, and its attendant stretch of green paddy fields. There we saw no lakes, and the road runs through undulating country set with great forest trees, for there is an immediate increase in the rainfall when you cross the border out of British India, and the vegetation is much more luxuriant.

We were making for a river marked on the map; and just south of the capital we turned down a side road to reach it. We had not gone far when there was a cry of '*Annā*, elephant,' and there, sure enough, in a field close by, was a big elephant chained to a tree. 'He's not alive. See, he doesn't move,' said one; but that very moment he swished his great ear to drive away the flies, and we stopped to look at him. Finally, a little further on, we left the lorry beside the road. One of us had to sleep that night in it to guard our property from the too-curious crowd. The rest took the *sāmān* off by a little lane to the river-bed, where there was a high sandbank. We welcomed a bathe and food as the darkness fell, and were then quite ready for bed. So, in a circle round our belongings, lying on the sand under the stars, we all fell asleep. When we awoke everything was soaking wet, for there had been a heavy dew; but that was forgotten in the delight of watching our friend the elephant, who had come down to bathe. Soon we moved on, and after a while, when the crowd was left behind, we stopped in a shady lane to have a quiet time. It is most difficult ever to be alone in the East, but, in spite of a few distractions, we read, and, asking God's blessing and protection and guidance for the day's doings, set off for Trivandrum.

Then followed a day full of interest. Several hours had to be spent at the Zoo, where all the animals of our jungle could be seen. Lions there were, too, and we watched them and the leopards at their food. Zebras from Africa, and baboons, and cockatoos, and an endless variety of bird and beast and reptile. And there was the museum, a great high-roofed building full of strange things. Two Indian friends found us as we watched the lions, and when we had seen more than all that our brains could take in, they took us off to an Indian hotel,—quite a new experience for the boys—where we had our midday food, and then they left us to rest in a big hall which they have rented for evangelistic services in the middle of the town.

Early in the afternoon we visited the new Electric Power Station, of which the size and cleanness is the main memory. The manager was most kind, and insisted that each boy should have a bottle of lemonade at his expense. This was a doubtful joy to them at first, for the usual Indian method of pouring the liquid in one unending stream into the mouth from a height produced alarming and frothy results.

By four o'clock we were speeding north again, and, just as the shadows were about to fall, found an excellent Rest-house on a river-bank, where we spent the night in comparative luxury on the verandah. The next morning, just before we left, the caretaker was amazed to see one of the boys proceeding to sweep the floor.

When we reached Quilon, we were introduced to the intricate wonders of a saw-mill, an engineering workshop, a lighthouse, and a tile factory. The boys' first view of ice—' It bites ' was the verdict as they held a piece

in their hands—impressed them even more than a steamship at anchor off shore. A full day passed, made all the more pleasant by the kindness of other Indian friends, and evening found us going east towards the mountains. Again a Rest-house was provided just at the right place, and we spent a splendid night thirty yards from the railway line, which made necessary two midnight rushes out into the darkness to see the passing trains.

That evening a search for food had involved a visit to a Muhammedan village.

'Have you come to buy children?' This was from one of the crowd round the lorry, and there ensued some discussion and an explanation that that was not our way. Just before the lorry drove off an evil-faced man, looking at John Risk, said,

'How much do you want for that boy sitting up in front there?'

We knew that Muhammedans often bought little children, especially boys, but we had never before come across it openly talked of. The boys heard it all. And one of the advantages of a trip like this is that they begin to see what the ways of the world are, and from what they themselves in many cases have been saved.

Next morning, our fourth day, we climbed into the mountains, and halted for midday food where the road runs close to a magnificent mountain river, which opens out into a deep pool. After a refreshing bathe, we met on the river-bank under a tree, to say 'Thank You' together for all God's help and goodness, and for the joy of those four days, joy unspoiled by anything, for all had played the game. As we knelt, everyone was full of gratitude, and said so; but Music thought

of other things as well; 'Lord, let not the words spoken for Thee at the different places go in vain. Bless and use them.' That evening at sundown we reached Dohnavur—two hundred and ninety miles without a hitch. And, best of all, since we have been back, Light, for one, has in a new way been trying to help. So we know that it was not merely an educational trip, but that God was in it. And we are glad.

CHAPTER XIX

SONGS AND HOW WE SING THEM

'IT's no good trying any more, for I really do not think that they are capable of singing in tune,' was a Sittie's verdict in the early days, after much expenditure of time and patience without apparent result.

Foundations often do not appear, but they are very necessary, and we are now not quite so hopeless about the boys' singing. It is true that the accepted belief of the land, which they know, is that loud singing is good singing; and the point of pianissimo and of variations of tone is largely lost upon them. But they now enjoy the Anantha Cootum and the Sunday evening singing in the House of Prayer. And on school days singing is part of the curriculum.

One of us sits at the portable organ and teaches the Betas, Gammas, and Deltas in the Suriya Salai, or Sooriya Sally, as it was first transliterated by Truth. Across the road in the smaller boys' school, the Sunthira Salai, Sittie and Accal have the Epsilons, Iotas, and Kappas for kindergarten games, also with a small organ. And I, who sit at the apex of the triangle, involuntarily listen to the combined music of both. So, as I prepare for the Gammas' Bible class, which follows at eleven, I hear the martial strains of 'Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,' and then from

the other side (to the tune of ' Nuts and May ') comes, ' This is the way we wash our hands, wash our hands, wash our hands.'

When the older boys are singing the forest songs, the combination is a little less incongruous, but one has to learn to be oblivious of sound. On wedding nights, when bands and rockets do their worst to make hideous the hours of darkness, or when the village dogs are howling at the moon, or the frogs hold a concert in the garden tank, the ability to ignore noise is essential. And the combination of the singings is vastly to be preferred to these other sounds.

At times we have meetings out of doors, as on Easter morning. While the sunlight paints the mountains purple or rich indigo, we walk round God's Garden, the children's name for God's Acre. Until recently Obedience used to start the singing for the boys, but his voice is cracking, and though it is not easy, for he loves singing, he has had to stop. Courage takes his place now. It depends rather upon his mood, and it is a little disheartening at first, when one starts a chorus and it goes so high that none can sing, and all ends in an awkward silence. But he will win, if he makes up his mind to do so.

In the morning, at twenty minutes to six, everybody begins with a bath. At least that is what they are supposed to do, but it needs a little watching, for water feels cold at that time of the day. Then comes ' Daily Light,' in Tamil, of course, and prayer, and soon they all appear with a bucket of water, a brush and a cloth; and housework begins. There is always a temptation to sweep the centre of the room, and to leave the cupboards severely alone. Another scheme to save trouble, when the work

lies away in the Suriya Salai, is to carry down an empty bucket, and then use somebody else's water. Gift is very fond of that, but he tried it once too often, and was caught red-handed. Scrubbing floors, although it is in this land recognized as women's work, is good discipline; and everybody spends half an hour, morning and evening, sweeping and scrubbing the red tiles of which our floors are made, until they shine.

It is the custom with many to sing as they wash the floors, and often the singing is interspersed with ordinary remarks. Virtue will be singing away,

'O that will be joyful,'

Scrub, scrub, scrub,

'Joyful, joyful, joyful,'

'Ho, Mischief, have you finished your work?'

'O that will be joyful,
When we meet to part no more.'

Or, if it is in the evening, you may hear Courage,

'A mountain he and born of fire,
Flare O! Flare O!'

'Who's got the football?'
'I've got the little one,' says Victory.
'You again? You had it yesterday.'

'He pushed his shoulders higher and higher
Through the hurly burly world below,
For he wanted to look at the sea,
The peaceful, glorious sea.'

Well, it seems perhaps strange to us, but it does not at

all to them; and if singing helps them in their work, as it evidently does, why stop them? And surely it must make glad the heart of Him who, we pray, one day may rejoice over them with singing, to see them learning joyfully to perform life's common tasks.

CHAPTER XX

'GASHMU SAYETH IT'

'IT is reported among the people and Gashmu sayeth it. . . .' We are often reminded of Gashmu. Here is some one much afflicted.

'So and so said . . .'

'Who told you that?'

'Yāro. Someone or other, I don't know who.'

Yāro is responsible for an amazing number of petty troubles, and he can never be run to earth. He is the person who repeats things that were meant to be private. He, too, it is who causes to vanish clothes, and buckets, and all manner of small things. They are usually found again, but he never is.

One day the boys had a quarrel. Nobody quite knew the cause—perhaps it was another of Yāro's perpetrations—but, any way, the Betas and Gammas were ranged in two opposite groups about their two leaders, and something had to be done quickly. So at the end of school that day we had a solemn assembly. They all knew that I knew, so they wondered what would happen. We began with the story of the honey-drop-tumult, for, as all boys do, they love stories, and I blessed Dr. Pope, in whose Tamil Grammar this one comes, for more than my grammar that day.

A Muhammedan, having gone to buy honey in the bazaar, spilled a drop on the ground. A fly alighted on

it, and a lizard which was there immediately caught the fly. The bazaar-man's cat seized the lizard, and the Muhammedan's dog of course went for the cat. So the bazaar-man beat and killed the dog, whereupon the Muhammedan cut down the bazaar-man, whose friends attacked the Muhammedan, and a communal riot ensued.

As the story proceeded, and each new participant leaped to the fray, the boys were thrilled and forgot all about their quarrel; and at the end of the story (to make sure of things) a few words were enough to lead up to a talk with the One who can banish feuds. And God banished it, for not another sign of anything was there.

. . . . . .

Not at all so easy is every battle. Sometimes the enemy seems to be in a winning position, and there is only the bare word of God to which to cling. These battles take more of nerve and strength and endurance than any other part of missionary life; and if you are prepared to hold through to victory, there will be wounds and sore distresses.

When all the ordinary means of discipline have been exhausted, and there seems no response at all to spiritual appeal, then indeed are we cast upon the Lord only. He is enough, and He must reign in the end.

There is the laughter and the joy of happy children running through this book, but we who know them can seldom forget for long the Spectre of the great head of the powers of evil, from whose direct control most of these boys have been taken. And he will not let them go without a struggle. Little he cares for nominal Christianity such as makes men say, as they have said

to me, 'There is no difference between Hindus and Christians. They all lie, if it suits their convenience. What is the difference?'

We are out to prove that there can and should be a real difference, but we have to fight every inch of the way in almost every life. From the earliest days there is a sense of conflict. Sometimes—so keenly are these children wanted—money is offered.

'Here are a thousand rupees. See we have brought it,' and they showed the money to the one through whom he was saved.

And later, 'We will give you another two thousand if you will let us have him now.'

He was only a little baby, but as he lay there, fair and beautiful and helpless, we did not wonder that the dramatic people wanted him. They were willing to spend all that money to get one baby boy. But they knew. They saw that if he lived to be six or seven or eight, he would soon repay them their outlay and far more. For a time a court case threatened, but the fear of God restrained them.

He is safe with us to-day, an aristocrat of the aristocrats, and until recently, there had been no sign of a conscious yielding of the will to God. He will never be in that life of sin to which he nearly went; but we want the positive for him, that Christ may be his Lord.

CHAPTER XXI

TREASURES OF THE DARKNESS

THOSE of us who are called to this special work feel the need of first-hand knowledge of the conditions; and an attempt to learn more of these led me one night to a temple town many miles north of Dohnavur.

A glimmer of twilight still lingered in the west, and a light set in one of the great temple towers flamed out to show afresh the massiveness of those towers, set each in the centre of a wall so high that the whole seemed to shout defiance to the Lord of the earth whose right it is to reign.

> But He is patient to wait
> Till the towering temple wall
> Shall shiver and totter and fall.

It shall fall, but how long, before that day comes, shall the ungodly triumph?

There was one man in that city who could guide me to the house of the one whom I felt God wanted me to see. I knew his name and that he drove a jutka (a one-horse cart rather like a large barrel on wheels). But hundreds of men drive jutkas there, and how was I to find him? On my arrival I had asked a man in the station if he knew of him, and he said, 'No, but I will inquire.' Half an hour found him back. 'No one has heard of a jutka man of this name.'

After such a beginning, I was sitting on the upstairs balcony of a building that looked down to a jutka stand when one of the drivers left his cart and, coming close to where I was, began to make signs, as though he knew me. At last he said his name, and I knew then that God had sent to me the one man who could help me in the thing to which I had put my hand. He remembered a visit of my brother some months before to the town, and thought that I was he. Are not God's ways good to follow?

We agreed to meet at eight o'clock in the dark below and go together in his jutka to the house. The time arrived, but as time is nothing to most in the East, I spent nearly an hour talking to other drivers, who very much wanted to know why I was dressed in Indian dress and where I was going. When they again and again besought to be allowed to take me to sight-see in the temple, I told them that I was not there to sight-see, and some of them listened for a time to the story of the Lord Jesus.

At last my man arrived, and when I had sat down cross-legged, crouching low to prevent my head hitting the roof at each bump in the road, we set off. The path lay through a crowded bazaar street leading straight to the temple gate, in whose tower the light shone. Turning by the gate, we went along under the great striped wall, and stopped in the shadow where it turned again. A few yards brought us to a narrow street that led from the wall, and we started down.

For a moment or two I was left alone outside the door of an ordinary-looking Indian house, and even as I stood it seemed as though a whisper ran down the street, for at each door appeared a group of girls all

dressed in white; and as I waited, suddenly it came over me who all these must be—girls devoted to an infamy countenanced by the religion of the land. Words are poor things when the heart is burning with an unspeakable indignation.

But this was not all I was to see that night, for my companion was back, and I was soon inside the house and going up the stairs to a small high-roofed room. Seated on the floor in a corner was a middle-aged man with iron-grey hair and a face that seemed to combine desire and refusal, longing and despair. In the semi-circle in front of him were four boys, one of seventeen or so; the rest must have been twelve or under. First the man would say in a sing-song kind of voice a sentence from a Tamil classic, which he was teaching to the boys, and they would answer repeating what he had said.

For a little while they went on as if I had not entered; and then, as they stopped reciting, one of the boys, a beautifully fair child of about eleven, looked up at me, and while I talked to the man this boy never took his eyes off me. Sadder and sadder his face grew—whether it was that there was still left in him some loathing for the life into which, probably as a baby, he had been sold, or what it was I cannot tell; but when, at a sign from the man, the younger boys got up and went out, what would I not have given to have snatched him up and taken him away to where he would have a chance of purity in life? But though only an arm's length separated us, the legions of hell were massed there, and an attempt at rescue would have léd to a riot.

As soon as I began to speak of our Lord Jesus Christ, the sign was given for the smaller boys to go. All I had

managed to say to them before had been met by a frightened silence, and it was clear that they were forewarned to say nothing if I spoke to them. So were left the man, the boy of seventeen, myself and one other, and we read together the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah.

It was a solemn time, and again there seemed upon the man's face a certain desire, and yet with it a refusal and a sadness. There was no argument, no attempt to discuss or refute what was written in the Book, just a quiet listening, and God was there as well as the powers of darkness. So for half an hour we talked. In vain I besought him to recall the boys, that I might tell them too of Christ, but he was full of polite excuses—they had gone to eat and rest, and could not be disturbed; such small boys could not understand the philosophies of religion. And I could not move him.

He promised to come and see us and our children, but he has not so far been able or willing—I know not which—to come. He said that from his earliest memories his life was in the drama listening to others, learning, performing, and now teaching other little boys. And at the end he asked for a Christian book of songs to teach his boys.

As I rose to go, after we had prayed, he asked when I would again be passing through the town, and his continued friendliness gives God a chance; a slender chance, perhaps, but is not God the Mighty One, the Doer of deeds?

CHAPTER XXII

THE DRAMA

THE face of that boy has haunted me often since; and he is only one of the thousands of little boys in South India, sold when they have no will in the matter to be trained for the drama, in an atmosphere that precludes all hope of purity and the true life for which God brought them into this world. All over the countryside in town and village are those who are only too glad to make known the existence of a likely baby boy to the men or women who will bring him up for the drama. And often we hear of one such, only to find he has already been spirited away, and the next the world will know of him will be when, as a boy of six or seven or eight, he steps on the stage in some big theatre in one of these southern Indian towns.

Down the steps from the little room I went that night, past several girls sitting or lying on the floor of the room below and out into the street. Once more the doorways were filled with other girls in white, and I tasted afresh the bitter grief of helplessness to deliver. Soon I was in the jutka again, and this time set off eastwards to a great galvanised-iron shed with a sloping floor and a stage at the far end.

I had prayed on my journey that God would guide me whether or not to go to a drama, for I knew that

ordinarily it was no place for a Christian. As I sat in the train a man opposite pulled out a flaring red handbill, and when he had finished reading I asked him to let me see it. When I read, and discovered that it announced a performance for that very night in the city to which I was going, I handed it back. But he told me to keep it, as he would not be stopping there. And from this and other leadings I took it that it was in the plan for me to go.

Picture to yourself two or three thousand men all carrying on a normal conversation, which is decidedly higher in pitch than our conversations, with a handful of women in a separate enclosure to one side, and you have the audience. It is not considered a fit thing for a woman to frequent such places, When later, to make sure of this, I asked one of our older Indian women about it, her reiterated reply was, 'No good woman ever goes.' This will help you to understand the atmosphere.

The actors included three men, three girls, and two small boys. The men were one time boy actors of the same class as the man in the upper room, and the girls were temple girls. To most of the action the audience paid little or no attention, and continued talking, but one of the boys was obviously the more experienced actor of the two, and as soon as he began to speak or sing there was absolute quiet; and it was easy to believe what we had heard before of one who trained another such small boy receiving more than the equivalent of two pounds sterling a night for lending him to a dramatic company. What the audience most appreciated was just a gesture by that little boy of ten or so. Understanding something of its meaning as a storm of applause burst out

from all those men, I knew that I could not stay any longer, and, the play not half finished, I went.

But not to rest or to sleep I went; rather to walk under God's pure stars, away from that street and that hall, in the stillness of midnight, with a great purpose born in grief and gladness that mingled together in my thoughts and prayers: a gladness for every boy safe, at any rate from this life, with us at Dohnavur, and for those safer still in the Heavenly Home; and a grief that still burns over this never-ceasing traffic in the souls of little children. Life's calling and life's purpose took on a new aspect that night under the stars, with no company but that of Him who said, 'I will go before thee and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places.' A purpose backed by a promise of God can never be in vain. As the Tamils say, 'If you say, "I must" nothing is impossible;' and if God says it, who can hinder Him? And He has said it, for are not these the words of the Lord Jesus, 'Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring; they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd?' And with the sheep are the lambs.

Those whom God has saved and brought to us here are but a drop in the sea. In face of this, 'It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones perish' is a solemn word. And even more solemn does it appear, when we know that we can hinder His will by indifference or by disobedience to His call.

CHAPTER XXIII

TEMPLE MUSICIANS

LAWS have been passed in various parts of India to forbid the adoption of minors into temple houses. But fully to enforce such a law is impossible in a land where evidence can easily be bought. For a consideration, any number of people will swear that they were present at the birth of the child in question, and that it is the temple-woman's own. Thank God for all good legislation, but the battle does not end there. It may drive the forces of evil deeper underground. And the dark places of the earth are still full of the habitations of cruelty. And though our hearts burn within us as we think of the fate of the little girls, just as solemn and awful is the thought that thousands of baby boys, as full of life and possibility as some whom we know and love in our own families, are going to moral destruction by the deliberate will of men and women, to meet a popular demand.

Here is a living picture seen one day by one who has walked on the floor of India, and there is an infinite distance between the floor of India and the mission bungalow :

' We are in a temple court, all of stone and carved fantastically, lighted by flickering, yellow flames, blown about by the wind; at one end is a recess under the huge carved tower. In the recess is an idol, black,

sticky, unbelievably dirty, gleaming with a kind of malevolent gleam; for scores of unclean saucers of oil, each with its small tongue of wick hanging out aflame, are fitted round it in oil-stained, smoke-blackened grooves, and this yellow light falling on the messy surface of the god shows up all that is ungodlike. The beauty of holiness is a phrase very far removed from Indian idolatry.

'On the right-hand side, as one enters the great hall, is a door made of enormous planks of teak, embossed heavily and carved; it might be beautiful, but the carving is full of dust and cobwebs. The door opens and you look in, see a noble hall, supported like the outer court on carved stone pillars, grimy and cob-webby like the doors, but, like it, fine in original intention.

'An old man sits in meditation on the stone floor at the far end of this great room. He is the Jeer, half divinity in the people's thought, all but treated as a god. When he dies he will be buried up to his neck, and then his garlanded head will be cracked with coco-nuts. No alien may approach him; but if you know how to do it, you may perhaps be able to lay some books beside him and disappear before he turns his head.

'Out in the big court, groups of Brahmans and allied caste-folk talk and shout; women come in noisily, full of excitement over the tamasha of the day; or a wor-shipper prostrates herself before the idol, not in the least disturbed by the noise of voices and laughter echoing through the arches of the high stone roof. Children flit about; no one pays any attention to them, they cannot get into mischief, for there is nothing to break; stone carving is excellent where children are

concerned. Everyone does as he or she likes, and all is pleasantly casual.

'Suddenly there is the peculiar thrilling sound of the tuning up of musical instruments; you slip through the crowd and get as near the heart of things as you can. There, on the ground not far from the idol, is a line of little boys from eight to ten or twelve years old, headed by three or four full-grown musicians. Weird music, strident, penetrating, plaintive, never joyful, screams and wails and mutters. No one dreams of being quiet to listen. It serves as an accompaniment to the general racket. "Pour not out words where is a musician" is a sentence belonging to a civilization out of sight of this people. And yet no tamasha is perfect to them unless there is somewhere at the heart of it the monotonous, continuous sound of the music of their heart's affections. And to the musicians themselves there is fascination in it; they will go on cheerfully, if drowsily, whole nights.

'But the boys, the little boys, who are they? They are temple boys adopted as babies, probably, by temple women, or they may be their little sons. They are brought up to be temple musicians, and much else not easily described. Perhaps one sentence may cover it all; they are brought up in the worst way for the worst purposes, and have no chance at all of being good. They are fore-doomed to sinfulness—and yet Christ died to redeem them from all iniquity.'

There are times when words seem futile and the only thing worth doing is to get down upon our knees.

CHAPTER XXIV

'OUT OF THE HAND OF THE ENEMY'

'INDIA'S unwanted children' is a misleading phrase where these of whom we write are concerned, for if a child of good parentage, whose rightful guardians are unable for any reason to support it, gives promise of intelligence, it becomes at once one of the most sought-after children in India.

Not once have we sent, on hearing of a child in danger, without finding that the temple or dramatic scouts were in the field first; and there is spiritual conflict of the kind that can only be won by prayer before, by the evident touch of God, they are forced to let go. But often we send too late, for the powers of evil are very much awake; and yet there is a way open to help. For when we pray that God will take that little one to be with Himself, we sometimes hear afterwards that He has done so.

Some months ago three of our family went to a northern town far out of the Tamil area, where a great and famous temple stands. No non-Hindu is allowed near it, but in through its closely guarded doors are swept many a helpless baby boy or girl. God's marvellous guidances on that visit have led to the subsequent salvation of children in that very place. But news of this reached the ears of certain Hindus of

position, who have now offered a large sum for any child suitable for temple purposes. The object, of course, is to prevent their being sent to us or to any other place of safety. But God is more powerful than rupees, and He is still working. It is not easy for those who work with Him there; the powers of evil are mighty; so pray for courage and faith and patience.

The drama is closely connected with the religion of this land, where vice has from early times been openly countenanced and controlled by priests. Some of our children had, before they came to us, been definitely devoted to the god of some one of these Hindu temples; and we who have been in the depths, where live the dragons of the pit, know that behind the image in the inmost shrine of these temples is a power and a person none other than the evil one himself. If a child, marked by the devil for his own purposes, is suddenly by the power of God removed and brought to us at Dohnavur, it is not unnatural that upon us at times comes a furious onslaught of the powers of evil. Sometimes upon an individual child, at others upon us as a Fellowship, comes a blast of the breath of hell.

All true followers of Christ, who try to live for Him and to bring others to Him in heathen lands, know that the devil is not a mere force or influence, but a real person who manifests himself unmistakably, as he used to in Bible days. And his is the shadow that stands behind each child rescued and brought to us; his the hand that sometimes seems to come out of the shadow to grip and to hold the will, and to defy us. But he cannot defy our Lord Jesus, in whose Name we fight, and who will make both us and our children

more than conquerors. And so one of their songs runs thus :

Oh praise the Lord, oh praise the Lord,
  Ye children of His heritage,
Rejoice in Him with one accord,
  For He a furious fight did wage.
To save you from the terrible one
  The Lord your God great things hath done.

For on a blessèd, blessèd day,
  From Heaven's high place with pity He
Perceived the little helpless prey,
  (The prey of the terrible were ye);
He tracked the lion to his lair,
  He fought him and He conquered there.

And a crown was given unto Him: and He went forth conquering and to conquer.

CHAPTER XXV

RAIDS

THE mighty waterfall of Pavanasam, which our Gammas enjoyed so much, is visited at certain set seasons by hundreds of pilgrims. Many a Brahman widow, worn out by years of strict adherence to the cruel customs that are her lot, goes down the steps that lead to the river bank and on to the falls. Old men who have spent the best of their days in the ordinary affairs of family and business, and who now have left the comforts of home for the life of a wandering ascetic, come in search of nearness to God, and of an escape from the endless chain of rebirths, the fate to which most Hindus look. Young men there are, too, drawn by far other motives of pleasure or of sin. And all must pass down the stone-stepped pathway that is the only means of approach to the bathing-pool, into whose upper end falls the river in pure white splendour from the hills above. It is little wonder that the men of old thought of purity as they saw the marvel of those falls, and called the place Pavanasam (Expiation of sin).

Six of us, three Indian and three English Annachies, had arrived from Dohnavur the day before in the lorry, and had camped on an island in midstream, where we slept under the stars on the soft white sand, with the distant music of the falls for a lullaby. The great day

of the festival broke dull, and rain was threatening. No sooner had we finished our early meal than down came the rain, and it was not long before the water in the river began appreciably to rise, so that we were forced to evacuate, and to return our kit to the lorry, which we had left just off the forest road above the river.

I suppose the warmth of the air makes it easier to face the rain out here than in Europe, and nothing seemed to deter those who kept coming in a stream nearly all day up the forest road and down the steps to the river; so there was no question of going home, and we soon found a place where a great overhanging rock gave a little shelter from the rain, half-way up the stone stairway. There we sat with our books and texts, and talked to the people as they passed. As it was a convenient halting-place in quite a steep climb, many on their return journey stopped to talk, and took away the little books which would tell them more of the true Expiator of sin.

God called us to sow. We sowed that day, and we believe that He will give the increase. Some others of our party went down to the temple, in front of which are open rest-houses, where the people lounge about and talk, for festivals are also splendid holidays. There, too, the good seed of God's Word was sown.

All the small towns round us have large temples, far larger than any parish church at home; and to each one, at certain fixed times, come the people of the countryside in their thousands. Some festivals go on for several days, some for one day, others for a night. As we stand in the middle of the noisy, jostling crowd, there seems little chance of doing anything eternal for

RETURNING FROM THE FESTIVAL AT PAVANASAM. THE TAMIL WORDS ARE, 'HIM THAT COMETH UNTO ME I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT.'

our Lord and King. But He calls for witnesses, and we know that, among the thousands out for the holiday, there are some who have set up in their hearts an altar to the Unknown God, and who are seeking Him from place to place.

On the sea coast south and east of us are two wicked temple-towns, where Satan reigns supreme, and there, too, at festival times, we go to witness in the very strongholds of Hinduism. Many are the types of people we meet, and many are the chances to tell of Christ to those who have never heard. Once, during a car festival at a temple by the sea, we had many talks with men and boys individually in quiet places. One was a boy of seventeen in a dramatic company who always acted the part of Rajah, the chief character in the play. He had not heard the name of Jesus Christ, and was interested; he went back into all that was evil, and we have not heard of him again. Another young fellow, a college student, said, ' I just bathe for the joke of it. I don't believe it takes away sin,' and he was not in the least drawn to hear of a way by which he could get rid of sin. Another frankly told us that he came to these festivals to sin. And he was so dulled by evil living that the Gospel did not appeal to him.

A continual giving out without finding much response, and a never-ceasing sense of being in an atmosphere where man is set against the true God and against His Son Jesus Christ, is not easy. We go, not to preach, not to condemn, but to present the positive message of a Lord Christ who gives real forgiveness and who can set men free from the power of sin.

There are many who talk of the beauty of Hinduism, and who say that we should extol it and should lead on

from it to Christ. Parts of India's literature show us that among her sages there were indeed true seekers after God, but that does not warrant our compromising with Hinduism. Some minds may be able to see beauty in a cess-pool as the light plays upon the surface of its scum, but it remains a cess-pool. We feel our calling is to hold up the Christ of God, that His very purity in contrast may condemn, and that He may convict men of their need of Him. Our Lord has called some, who now love and serve Him, from the very depths. The purity He gives can be complete; so it matters not from whence we come, and He calls us to help Him as He chooses out His own from Hinduism.

Our older boys come out sometimes with us to these festivals, to help in many ways, and to prepare for the day when they will take their full part in witness to others. And because the training of a force for God's glory is no little thing, and can never be done in the mass, faith and patience are needed all through the common days, as well as during these special raids into the territories of the enemy.

CHAPTER XXVI

DECEMBER THE SIXTEENTH

BUT we are back again in Dohnavur. From early in November everybody begins to look towards December the sixteenth, Amma's Birthday, a special day in many ways. On the fifteenth several men go off to the pools and tanks, and come back laden with white and pink lotus buds and flowers; and by the evening Amma's room is a mass of colour. But that is not enough. Next day more flowers, roses and oleanders, that would not last over-night, are brought. Every bookcase, every table is covered. Vases are even hung from the roof, to add to the profusion of blossom that makes the room a veritable bower of beauty.

As soon as it is light, the family, from the eldest to the youngest, come to show their love, and to rejoice with the flowers. Some sing a new chorus or song, learned as a surprise, and all bring a flower for joy's sake. Unending comes the stream, for we are a big family, until at ten o'clock the bells in the tower ring out, and call us to the House of Prayer.

Half an hour later there is a time of great excitement, for the many presents of the family, wrapped up most carefully in brown paper and tied with string, are undone in the presence of all. The little ones in the Square one year gave a blotter, up and down on which walked many Lotus buds and Teddy bears, the insignia

of girl and boy Tedlets respectively. And the small girls, recently promoted to the Round, gave most useful little bags gaily decorated with patterns, at the cost of much patience, which are now used for taking out tracts on our evangelistic raids. The boys waited with breathless expectancy until their amateur carving and boxes were undone, amid frequent gasps of joy. The grown-ups' offerings are often works of art. Some give texts beautifully carved or painted on little slips of teak. A dark bowl made of a carved coco-nut shell, inlaid with tiny silver spots, was the love gift of our old one-legged carpenter. And those who have money of their own give it, whilst the pocket-money that all the older ones receive later on in the day is often given back entire, for the joy of giving is strong within them; and last year quite a large sum was divided between the new hospital, the little children in the Square, and the Friedenshort homes in Germany. All these presents are given on the understanding that Amma is free to pass them on to whomsoever she wills, so that through the gifts of this day joy comes to many, both in giving and receiving.

Of course there must be a Feast, and recently it has been held the day before. Seated thick on the floor of the girls' schoolrooms or in the courtyard round which they are built, all feast to their heart's content; but the more solid and enduring sweets are carried off, to constitute a long-drawn-out joy through the days to come.

Then on the sixteenth, in the evening, comes the meeting to which many look back in different years as the turning-point of life. Perhaps twenty minutes or half an hour is spent in the House of Prayer, and then

all split up into groups, each led by an Accal, a Sittie, or an Annachie. For weeks before, God's Spirit is at work, and quiet preparation goes on. Little misdemeanours are confessed, and things come out which have long remained undiscovered, that there may be a readiness on the day to receive what God wants to give. We had prayed very especially, some years back, that Valour might meet God on this occasion. As I was ill, I could not go to the House of Prayer, but waited for his group. They came one by one to have prayer with me, and he was among the first to come. Before, he had seemed quite unawakened spiritually, but I could see that something had happened.

'Annachie, when we were in the House of Prayer I saw the Lord Jesus. Oh, it was wonderful!' He could say no more. Later on he told me that, the day before, God's Spirit had spoken twice to him, and by obedience he had been prepared. So together we wondered and worshipped. Several weeks afterwards he and six others were baptized in the Red Lake under a sunset sky, and publicly declared their desire to be God's men.

But it is not all roses, and that was only a beginning of the pilgrim way. There have been many battles since, and there will be many more right on to the end of the journey. So help us, and help him, when you have read this, by strong prayer.

CHAPTER XXVII

CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS DAY in South India is usually sunshiny and pleasantly hot, not at all like an English Christmas, with snow and holly. This is another day filled from before the dawn with busy joy. While it is still dark, parties are out in different parts of the compounds carol-singing.

Last year the boys began early to decorate the Suriya Salai with palms and flowers, which had been brought up by the girls and piled in masses on the floor. Tied to each of our brick pillars in the central hall was a brass vase full of white flowers, with a pair of crossed palms behind it. All this had to be arranged and fixed and everything swept clean by ten o'clock, so for some time buckets of water and balls of string, palm leaves and flowers occupied most of us. A few were free to go to the farm, which was decorated and rejoicing. We always have a service there on Christmas morning, for was it not in a lowly cattle-shed that the Lord Jesus was born? In the Betas' class-room, which leads out of the hall, were hundreds of bags, laid out in rows upon the desks—the work of weeks of choosing and arranging presents, from the loving gifts of friends all the world over, who seem most wonderfully helped to know what will be needed year by year.

First of all we met together, young and old, in God's

House, to praise the Greatest Friend of all for His Greatest Gift. We began with a carol in English, and next we listened while an Annachie read in Tamil part of the ever-new message of Love; and as God's Word alternated with His praise, the story of Bethlehem lived again.

Then in a long stream of reds and whites, blues and yellows, away went everyone to the Vanacharbu. In single file they trooped round the present room, while Ronald Procter presided at the gramophone, to ensure, as far as possible, that there should be no talking, for silence is the rule when there is music.

Away in a corner, on a table in this room, lay a little boy, who, months before, had come from a village near by, desperately ill. All through the long weeks he was tended and loved by one of our nurse Accals, and not only has a miracle of full healing been granted, but he is radiant in his new-found Friend and Saviour. So, as a great treat, he was brought up from the hospital, to watch with shining eyes the procession and the presents. His old grannie stood beside him. At the end his cup of joy was filled by a present for himself.

Finally all came to rest, sitting in the hall, with expectant faces turned towards the table at the eastern end. For there Amma was to sit, and through a door by her side were passed those exciting bags inside which was—well, that is anticipating; for, till everyone had received one, none might be opened. So down the room each bag was passed. Big Accals and little Accals, big boys and little boys, the convert men and the convert women, and even the tinies in the Square—everyone received something. Then at a signal the bags were opened, and babel ensued. Everybody had

to see, and to admire, and, if it were soap, to smell, everybody else's presents. After sufficient time had elapsed for adequate expression of their joy, silence was called; and, salaaming to the four points of the compass, in token of gratitude to the givers, we thanked again the Great Giver, and dispersed.

In the afternoon the boys turned out the lockers which house all their worldly possessions. The careful compared the presents of the years gone by. The careless had nothing to compare, so were content to pull their toy motors on a long string round the verandahs, or to play with the sorbo balls, soon divested of their woolly covers, which were immediately made into bags for smaller treasures. Everyone was happy.

If you promise not to tell anyone else, as the small boys would say, I will let you into a secret that I discovered last Christmas. In the journeying of the presents from England in their big packing-cases, one or two of the doll's faces had been completely broken; and some of the Betas, who had helped to carry boxes, and had generally made themselves useful in removing the débris, were allowed to go off with the remnants. These were cleverly mended, given typical villain's hats which obscured the broken features, and made most masculine; and one night, as I passed down the sleeping row of boys, beside Victory, who is younger than most of the Betas, lay his much-battered, but much-prized doll. If you were to put one into a boy's Christmas bag, it would be an insult. This, however, was different, and the others rather envied him. But I fear the life of those dolls was very short. Perhaps that is why they are not usually given to boys.

A new joy last year came in the evening, for Ronald

Procter had been at work mysteriously in the House of Prayer for some days before. It looked like a tree, but nobody guessed how beautiful it would be. A tree, not so very different from those we used to love at home, hung from the roof, so that it seemed to be growing right out of the middle of the floor. Here and there among the branches were shining tinsel streamers and tiny electric bulbs. Red lanterns were everywhere on the floor, and the polished tiles reflected the light, so that the place looked like a pool of water. And down the sides, framing the picture, between the grey granite pillars, were Japanese lanterns. There, sitting round the tree in a happy circle, boys and girls, men and women, we brought to a close that Christmas Day, singing the praises of the Babe of Bethlehem, once despised, but soon to reign, King of kings and Lord of lords.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE GREY FOREST

SERVANT of Life was a very small boy, whose acquaintance I first made in the dim light of dawn, the day after he arrived, as he came up the steps to my room, waving his only garment in his hand. Whether this was meant to be a signal of distress or a gesture of friendliness, I know not; but the impression of two wide, wonder-filled eyes was my main memory of his face, before he was hurriedly removed to be re-clad. Not long after that he came up to Naraikadu, the grey forest hung on a mountain side where several houses have been built, to which some of us escape from the great heat. It was a long walk and a stiff climb for so small a person, but it moved him not at all.

One of our forest joys is the 'whistling schoolboy,' or Malabar whistling thrush, who always precedes the dawn with his delightfully unsuccessful attempts at a tune. Up the ravine, when all is still, and long before the sun rises, comes his cheery call, and you know it is time to get up.

Most of the boys had never before seen such a sunrise as this high forest offers, for trees and houses make it impossible to look to a far horizon on the plains. So one morning, as the 'whistling schoolboy' was practising in the river-bed near the Jewel House, the long line of apparently lifeless-looking lumps on the back verandah

was aroused, and led out to the front porch, to see the great fiery ball come up out of the sea. Someone shook Servant of Life, 'Time to get up. Everyone else is up. Don't you want to see the sun rise?' 'No, I'll see it to-night,' he said, and rolled over, uninterested. But some of them are not at all like that, and once Chieftain was found gazing spellbound at the beauty of the rising sun. And it certainly is beyond words to tell. First the two tall guardian mountains high above our ravine catch the golden light, and slowly the slopes are bathed in glory. Then, sometimes blood-red, out of the shining sea, full forty miles away across the green plains, comes the sun. And, for a few moments, all the hills and the great forest trees and the valley and the house are alight in a mist of gold or rose, which as quickly fades when the sun clears the earth haze and mounts upwards.

Soon after begin the labours of the day. Expeditions set out to collect firewood, which, as the weeks pass, means going further and further afield into the forest which surrounds our houses. Another group must fetch water from the river, which never runs dry, and flows not fifty yards below the house. Sometimes there is curry to prepare and rice to cook in the little kitchen at the back. And one or two of the climbers go out to pick some jack fruit, an immense fruit filled with delicious nuts, that grows wild everywhere round us.

There is always a chance that you may see a tiger in the forest, if you go quietly. But boys never are quiet, so they have not yet managed to secure that privilege. One of their Accals did, however, and one among the forest songs tells all about it. We sing these songs

sitting round the log-fire at night, while the firelight casts weird shadows on the walls and plays on the hanging monkey-swings—great, twisted creepers that festoon the room.

In the jungle so weird and dim
As I did peaceful walk,
I heard a sudden crash and looked up and saw him
Of whom I am going to talk.

He had cat's whiskers on his face,
And eyes of gleaming jade,
And he opened his mouth in a dreadful grimace,
And his teeth made me afraid.

Stripes and all I could see him plain,
All yellow and black was he,
Like the sunshine and the shade on the bamboo cane;
And he stared across at me.

Down he came like a monstrous cat,
With his two front paws out;
And my heart went pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat;
And he turned him round about.

For his manners were most polite,
Being of my mind aware,
He melted like a rainbow from my sight,
My tiger *débonnaire*.

We were teaching that song to some smaller boys down in Dohnavur, and after an explanation of the meaning of the word *débonnaire* was finished, Courage was overheard to say in an undertone, 'I believe he was *débonnaire* because she prayed.' Perhaps he was. None of our family who has met tiger, leopard, or bear in the forest has yet suffered harm from them, for if we leave them to their lawful occasions, they will not interfere with ours. The white-faced monkeys are very accommodating, and we often see them, on the trees near us, picking the fruit and the young shoots and

stuffing them into their mouths with no regard for manners at all. One of their main high-roads leads just by the front of our Forest House, so we see them pass in families. And the little brown monkey, who lives a sad life sometimes on barrel-organs at home, comes over the bridge too. And so does the big red-and-black squirrel. But the rest of the forest world lies low when the great lion-tailed monkeys swing across, though they are only occasional visitors to our valley.

The most interesting objects in the bird world are a pair of giant hornbills, who look as if they must overbalance when they land on a branch with that immense mass of a beak. Their coming is heralded from afar, for if the strange booming cry does not give warning, the sound of their wings makes the uninitiated think that an aeroplane is arriving.

If you drop down from the Forest House, along the path which turns in and out of the huge boulders and trees that are littered there, you will come to a splendid bathing-pool, a good ten feet deep in the centre, with a rock for diving, and filled with crystal-clear water. Nothing can describe a bathe in the Marahatha, after climbing up two or three thousand feet, so well as Browning's words, 'the cool silver shock of the plunge in a pool's living water.' It is just that. Weariness is forgotten in a coolness unobtainable on the plains.

Here some of the boys and girls learn to swim; and Valour loves to dive off the great rock, while Prince fights the water-fall that comes tumbling in at the head of the pool. At times it is difficult to reach the foam-white churning mass; and an Annachie has to help,

but as soon as a boy steps into the flood of the fall, he is swept away into the pool again.

There are days after the great rains when we can count forty or more waterfalls on the high hills around us. They all flow into our little river, and it is impossible—it would be death—to fight the raging torrent that hurls itself down the river-way to the thirsty waiting plains.

We are usually back in Dohnavur before the great rains break, so we do not often see the river in full spate. But once seen it is not soon forgotten. Its resistless rush, unending, that none can thwart, brings back Job's word of old, 'I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought of Thine can be hindered.' So when God calls us to the seemingly impossible, we remember that there is no such thing as impossible with Him. And many of our older ones, now in the work, in the quiet of the forest by that water have met with God, and gone back to take up burdens that before seemed too difficult, and to begin the fight anew with fresh hope and courage.

CHAPTER XXIX

SNAKE-CHARMERS

ONE evening about five o'clock, as we were going in to tea, two tall thin men stood outside the bungalow. They could not talk much Tamil, and understood no English; but, from the two baskets and the pipes that they carried, it was plain that they were snake-charmers. After tea Amma arranged that they should play their pipes in one or two places in the compound where there might be cobras. It is said among the people that such men let loose a few snakes before they begin to pipe, and these, knowing the sound, come to their masters. Whether there is sometimes truth in this or not, we did not know for certain; so one of our Annachies was told off to make quite sure, and to watch the baskets in which some snakes, already caught, were confined.

As I came up on my bicycle into the Vanacharbu, I stopped at the school, where several boys were sitting on the steps, shaping pieces of wood with their chisels, and said, 'We shall not have football to-day.'

'Everybody go and get spades,' said Leader, expecting that we were all off to do some gardening.

'No. Snake-charmers.' The magic word flew through the school, for there is nothing so exciting as to watch the snake's head peer out, and to see it drawn irresistibly to the piper. So in coloured cascades the

children poured in from all parts of the compound, to a small plot of land framed in cactus and thick with grass and shrubs. A convenient tree was full of boys, and the red walls that gave a good view were lined with them too. Everybody waited expectant, but nothing came. 'No cobra here,' said the snake-charmers. And off we all trooped to another place, and the pipes began again. 'Yes, there is a snake here, but it is not a cobra. This tune will not draw it.' We saw no snakes that evening, and the men told us that we were quite safe, for there were no cobras in the compound. We rewarded them for their attempts, but did not altogether believe their assurances. For once before, to the playing of some other snake-charmers, twelve cobras had come from different parts of the compound, and, mesmerized by the music, had danced before them.

So we were not surprised when some time afterwards, at twilight, just as the boys had changed and were going to evening food, there was a cry of '*Pāmbu*,' and, seizing any available sticks, we all rushed after the snake. It had been discovered in my rose garden, and had escaped through the wall, but was now at bay, with its great hood spread, and its head reared in anger. Not one of the boys was afraid, and soon it lay dead with a broken back. When you realise that, if the snake's fangs pierce the skin, no remedy is likely to be of much avail, and that a speedy death is practically certain, it is no wonder that these snakes must be killed. The wonder rather is that not one of our children has been bitten. Out here we are often reminded of the protection of God, and a thought of what might happen sends us in thankfulness to Him who has appointed unto each child his angel.

One evening after dark, as I got off my bicycle at the steps leading into my own room, I almost trod on a small snake which was on its way to a hole in the foundations of the house. Though I struck at it once or twice, it managed to disappear into the hole; and I wondered when it would come out, for the place was a foot or two only from where the boys were sleeping on the floor.

Some kind friends at home had just then sent out a boxful of common tin flutes, and all the Gammas had been thoroughly enjoying the tunes and noises that could be extracted from them. When they heard of my snake in the hole, a grand idea occurred to them, for this followed closely the visit of the snake-charmers. And soon Virtue and Mischief were squatting on their haunches in front of the hole piping away vigorously to the snake. Then Leader joined the party with his mouth-organ. But there was no success: and we understood why a month later, when a procession of ants came out, carrying the skin and backbone of the snake, which had evidently died under my ministrations.

Mouth-organs were another thought of kind friends at home, and each Beta is the proud possessor of one. Valour and Truth can play quite well on them, and most can pick out certain tunes. One of the recent joys of Coming Days has been, after the early morning singing, and the shouts of 'Happy Coming Day,' to play a short selection on the band. Unfortunately there is no bandmaster, and nobody has thought of deciding beforehand what to play. So each one plays the tune he likes most, and with serious faces they all stand outside the room, or walk up and

down, playing hard, until a suggestion is made that perhaps it is time to inspect the flowers; and everybody surges in.

Sometimes the desire to see if it breaks, or what its inside is like is overwhelmingly strong; and, in the case of the flutes, this was disastrous, for the mouthpiece would stand no hard treatment, and one after another sad Gammas came into my room, 'Annachie, it broke.' It is always impersonal. 'It broke.' One day, however, Courage discovered that if you put a little lead paper over a flame it melts, and a splendid thought struck him. So in he came.

'Can I have the two ends of my broken flute, please?'

'Yes; what do you want to do with them?'

'I'm going to mend them,' said he, looking most important. But an hour later he returned crestfallen, for the necessity of preserving the air passage through which to blow had not occurred to him, and now the flute, though one piece again, was useless. So he retired defeated.

Some of them really learn to love music, but most of the younger ones love noise for its own sake. 'Play it as loud as you can, Annachie; I like it when there is a big noise,' said Leader one day, referring to the harp, as we were going to the Anantha Cootum. So they are in sympathy with David when he sang 'Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.' They often make a joyful noise; and I am sure that the Lord of music is the Lord of joyful noises too, for He understands boys.

CHAPTER XXX

MY GRACE IS ENOUGH

EVERY school-day in term-time each class meets together for half an hour, to read and to learn about the Bible. This is a very interesting time, just as much so for the teacher as for the class. We had been following a harmony of the gospels through the life of the Lord Jesus. The first few days we spent in front of a map of Palestine, so that places and distances might be a little more familiar when we came across them.

Sometimes thought moves quickly, and from the Dead Sea one day we fell to discussing earthquakes and the fire that lives in the middle of the earth; and Mischief, to whom this was new, said, 'Is there fire? Who put it there?' He is full of questions. 'When the Lord Jesus brings the Jews back to Palestine, how will they all get in?' was one problem.

After a talk about the Samaritans, with their still-separate synagogues, he asked:

'Does the Lord Jesus love them?'

'Yes, of course He does.'

'Well, why do they not come to Him?'

There is no answer to that question all the world over, save the words of our Lord Himself: 'Ye will not come to Me that ye might have life.' And yet how many, who have never heard of His love and of His

great invitation, have no chance, because of the slackness of those who have heard but do not care enough to do anything that will help others to know.

The threefold temptation in the wilderness had been the subject for two or three days, when I saw that Mischief wanted to say something, and at last it came:

'Did the angels bring the food to the Lord Jesus right down from heaven? Was it heavenly food?'

'Yes, I suppose it must have been.' And when we had settled that question to his satisfaction, we went on.

I forget now how we came to talk about the coming again of our Lord, but it always interests.

'The Lord Jesus is coming again, it may be soon, to take everybody who loves Him to be with Him.'

'What will happen to the Jews?' asked one.

'Those who love and honour Him as Son of God and Saviour will be taken too.'

'Abraham and David—will they go?' ventured another. Then from several, 'They have gone to be with Him long ago, haven't they?'

Not only in Bible classes, but when we go for walks in the evenings, and at many odd times, questions come out.

'Annachie, in the Millennium war will the Turkeys fight?' said Leader, trying really to understand about the nations who would take part at Armageddon, as John Risk and he walked along the tank bank one evening.

'My grace is enough for you, for My strength fully understands in your weakness,' was a Beta's translation of 2 Corinthians xii. 9. The Tamil word holds two meanings, and another gave it like this, 'My strength fully shines in your weakness.'

One evening, coming back from the Red Lake, my mind was full of birds that we had seen, when I heard Music's voice and saw him pointing to the west, 'Look, Annachie!' I thought he meant me to look at some bird. 'The sky,' he said, and stood gazing at the pink and purple streamers that sprang from a dip in the mountains, where the sun had just disappeared. As we talked of the colours of a sunset, I told him how sometimes there are green patches in an evening sky, where the gold and blue are mixed. Next day at about the same time we were out on the football field, and Music came running up, 'There is the green colour that you spoke of yesterday,' and away over the mountains, where the pink clouds hung as a canopy above the sinking sun, were glorious transparent green windows in the sky. And I wondered, as we stood, whether the Lord was looking out at those windows.

CHAPTER XXXI

'OPRATIONS' AND 'GLORYFORM'

HONESTY is a small boy who arrived when I was away recovering from what Leader expressively calls 'Annachie's big sick.' His mother, a wandering sunnyasi woman, learned in the Hindu Shastras, brought him to us. For a time it seemed as if she might stay, and find in Christ that which she had sought in the temples of the south for so long in vain. But a settled life was irksome, and she left.

Several months later she returned. 'I want my boy,' she said. During those months we had learned little by little the kind of life which he had lived with her. We had no right to keep the child, and yet how could we let him return to such a life? He had entered into the family, and his heart seemed opening in the atmosphere of love, opening to the Lord Jesus. But what chance would he have in that temple town to which she purposed to take him? So there was much prayer. And lo, God put out His hand, for the mother departed as suddenly as she had come. But there is always a chance that she may come again, so we hold on.

Several months later operations were the order of the day. They were not very serious, only such things as adenoids; and we laid the results out in rows on the floor of the Sunthira Salai. But when he came round

HONESTY AND SOME OF HIS FRIENDS

from the anæsthetic this little boy did not seem to rally. He had never been strong, and now he lay there looking up with his great eyes fixed on my face. Faithful, one of his Annachies, was kneeling by him with a fan, for it was the beginning of the heat, and in the changing of the wind the days are airless. Then suddenly he became much worse, and he was carried back to the children's hospital, where for two days our Doctor Sittie fought for his life. And again the boys, who had seen God once before stretch out His hand in answer to prayer, knelt down and prayed that, if it were God's best, he might be given back to us.

As he lay there in hospital, wondering what all the people were doing, Star, whom he loves, came and sat beside him, and he was content. Sometimes a little shadow of fear would cross his face, but it did not stay, and once he whispered, 'Will the angels come for me?' for he realised that he might soon be going to see the Lord Jesus. But God wanted him here, and gradually life came back. The racing pulse slowed down, and he sank into a quiet sleep. Twice God has touched and delivered. Pray that this little life so wonderfully preserved may be doubly His.

During the operation days everybody who had the privilege was thrilled. When the hand-bell rang, which told them that it was time to go, there were joyous shouts of 'Opration, Opration,' from the crowd, who first marched down to Amma's room, where they played tiddley winks, and prayed together that they might be no trouble to the doctors, before they went one by one to the theatre.

And the day after it was over another word was in everybody's mouth: '*kānikkai*—thankoffering.' Long

before anybody was fully recovered, the joy and excitement of giving, and of saying ' Thank you ' to the Lord Jesus in the House of Prayer on Sunday morning, was the main topic of conversation.

' Did he have gloryform? ' asked someone, when an Annachie had been in the doctor's hands for a small operation. And they prayed fervently that there might be no pain. He did not have gloryform, but it did not hurt, so that prayer was answered too.

When the bells in the tower of our House of Prayer ring out the tune of ' At even ere the sun was set,' we know that some serious operation is just going to begin in the hospital. So, wherever we are, and whatever we are doing, we kneel in silence, or sometimes we gather together, to pray that the great Physician's hand may be over the operator's hand. And often has come to those in the theatre a sense of strong support, as of One unseen who stands directing.

On the wall above them as they work, are some framed words :

> When in the still white room I stand,
> Thy viewless hand will guide my hand.
> Dear Lord, what joy, what peace to be
> About Thy healing work with Thee.

The children share in praying about all these things, and they grow up to know that God still, in these modern days, does miracles, as He did long ago in Palestine.

CHAPTER XXXII

FELLOW-SOLDIERS

WITHOUT our Annachies and Accals this work could not be carried on for a day. In the case of the latter most of them are our own children, grown up to become loved and honoured fellow-workers. But the boys have not had time to grow up yet, so that our present Annachies are nearly all converts from Hinduism.

Over thirty years ago a caste girl decided to become a Christian, and left her home for Christ. The relatives besought her, they argued and pleaded, and, as a last resort, they put into her arms her baby nephew, much beloved, to draw her back. But Christ won. Twenty-four years afterwards, the boy, grown up, saw her again. He had heard about the disgrace she had brought to his family by breaking caste and by becoming a Christian. After watching her life, which was certainly different from any other he had seen, he asked her earnestly, 'What was the medicine the white woman gave you, that made you want to change your religion? Was it a magic powder?' She opened her little Tamil Bible and read to him from it. 'This was the magic medicine,' she said. Months later he walked over to Dohnavur. 'I, too, want to join the Christian Way,' he said. And though the path has been stony and the heavenward way difficult to one who was never disciplined in his own home, Christ is winning victories.

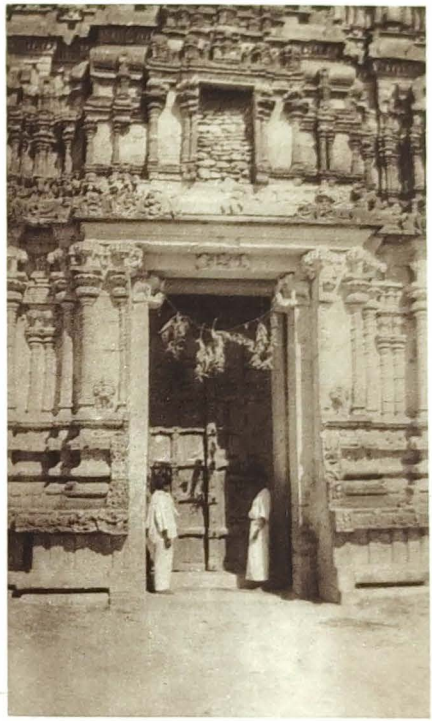
And his small daughter of five is an ardent little evangelist, in the delightfully simple way of a child, among the hospital patients where her father and mother (Vineetha, one of the Lotus Buds) work.

Then there is another, baptized as a boy when his family became Christian, and brought up in an atmosphere of worldliness and wealth. Because he has chosen to give his life for our boys, his relatives have robbed him of practically all that was his right as son and heir of the family property.

When he had to attend a lawsuit by which his people wrested from him these possessions, his lawyer said, 'If you say so and so, you will surely win your case.' For that is the way cases are constructed in India, and the lawyer, whether he knows the facts or not, will make out a splendid defence. 'But it is not true, and I am Christ's man,' said he, so the lawyer lost heart. What was the good of helping a man who would not help himself in the way recognized as usual by Hindu and Christian alike? God has given this brother of ours a hatred of deceit, and a burning love of truth, that we covet for each one of our boys. And the secret of it? Early in the morning, before the boys are up, there is a light in his room, and we know that he is getting strength from God for the day's battle.

The Annachie who now helps the bigger boys and teaches them Tamil came to us defeated and desolate, and God is strengthening him to be a builder-up of others.

And what shall we say of our Senior Annachie, who, when a boy, was tied to a post in an upper room, starved, and beaten to prevent him from following the accursed Way? But he followed, and he follows still,



COMING BACK FROM FAITHFUL'S VILLAGE.
STANDING BY THE TEMPLE DOOR ARE
TWO OF THOSE WHO WENT TO WITNESS

a blessing and a strength to us all. And of Great-heart, a member of the Syrian Christian Church of Travancore, who came one day to the Forest, and watched, and waited, for he had a suspicion of English people in his heart? None knew the thought that was in his mind, until, his fears blown upon by the breath of God, he offered himself unreservedly to the family, and ever since he has been an example and leader to all the other Annachies. For his dignity and sincerity won him respect at once; and God has often used a straight word from him with convicting and restoring power. Often on a Saturday afternoon he will walk six or eight miles to help a group of Christians who want to hear his message. And Kumar, who loves all forest things and was the friend of Raj, is in charge of the farm, and whenever you may go unannounced you will find all in perfect order as if for an inspection, for he has the blessing of an orderly mind, reinforced by true integrity.

And there are the younger Annachies, too. Mimosa's eldest son helps Star and Helen Bradshaw with the smaller boys, as they come up out of the Square. And with them is Faithful, who came to Christ because of the testimony of some of our men who had returned to witness in their own village, where his home was as well. He is the eldest son of a wealthy house, whom not even locked doors, that shut him in for a month, could keep from the Way and from God's work. His life, too, is given for the little boys.

We are rich in God's gifts of Indian brothers. There is work for twice their number, but we await those of God's choice, for only they will fit into His plan, and help to form and to train the army which we hope will

in the years to come make inroads into the dominions of the great enemy. There is little to draw them on the human side, no pay, and no honour and glory as the world counts it. Yet it is they that know their God who shall be strong and do exploits. So ask that all may, by the discipline that costs, know God intimately, and go forth in His strength more than conquerors.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE FUTURE IS HIS

WHAT of the future and what will you do with the boys when they grow up? It is a question often asked, and to it we can give no certain answer.

The past we know. Since 1918, when the boys' work began, on through the twelve years, there has been a following of the guiding hand, and there has never been a lack of any good thing. There have been days when it seemed as though it would be impossible to go on, and yet God has stepped in just at the moment of greatest need, and, looking back, we rejoice in His promise and in the surety of His supply.

The present is His. Step by step He is leading out into new developments. As the boys grow up, and as the widening work flows into fresh channels, He says to us, ' My grace is enough for you : for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' It is a word for the present, and again and again we prove it true.

And the future? What of that? God is with us, and, though to some degree we march under sealed orders, we are marching, not standing still, and we know our Leader.

Before me lies a future all unknown,
A path untrod.
Beside me is a Friend, well loved and known ;
That Friend is God.

There are days of spiritual attack, when the flesh is weary and the enemy presses home his subtle doubts. "'You will not be able to train them, and they will become . . .' but the very repetition of the thought is doubting God, who has led us all our life long.

'O Lord, teach them to stand, each upon his own individual leg,' prayed one of our senior Indian Annachies, who lives for the Alphas, and has helped them much. That is our aim. That they may stand, and, when all is over, may still stand, is our prayer.

Often friends among the planters and business men have said to us, 'If you produce men who are trustworthy, there will be no difficulty in finding work for them.' So we know that He will provide; for ours, we believe, is not an unpractical faith. But our eyes are off the future. God calls us to concentrate upon the present. The foundation of the future is in the present, and we follow the signs, knowing that life's whole path for each boy is mapped out before Him, and He can draw back the veil when He wants us to see where the next step leads. God has brought each one of these boys to us, and we cannot refuse them, if we would; so that, if we may say it reverently, the responsibility for the future rests with God.

But with us is a present spiritual responsibility. One from Ireland, another from England, one via Persia, two via China, God has brought us, by devious ways, to these boys, to work with Him for them. And with us He has united a band of Indian men and women, without distinction of caste, who have been drawn irresistibly to Christ and to His

service. They have been content to lay all at His feet, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater than the treasures of earth. Often they shame us, who seem so far removed from the suffering and sacrifice that they have known. Their fellowship is one of the many joys of the work, for there are no barriers in the family.

God asks of us one thing—that we should walk in undivided fellowship one with another, and each with Him. It is no little thing, for the enemy of souls is watching, and his attacks are sudden, so that it must be a constant walk. At any time of day or night a boy may be in need of help, and if we are in touch with God, there will be victory. If not, the fight may go against him. For we cannot live alone, and it is an awful and solemn truth, that when we are not in close touch with God there come special attacks upon the boys, and, because we are not ready to give aid at once, there is defeat.

It is the same wherever life's pathway may lie. Crises come suddenly, and not upon the thought of the moment depends the issue, but upon the hidden life of the soul, upon the Quiet Time, upon that part of us which no one sees but God.

Our need is of strong prayer support, that the One who is a very present Help may be our Companion and our Confidence. And were I not sure that these chapters were born under the pressure of God's Spirit, and that therefore the prayer backing will outweigh the enemy's attack called forth by their publication, I would not dare to let them go. Strong prayer will cost. But what was ever worth while that did not cost?

And the goal? These boys, saved by God's mighty hand from a life worse than death, will grow up to love Him above all else, and to count it life's highest joy to bring others unto Him.

CHAPTER XXXIV

DISCIPLINE

SOME who have read these chapters have for years intended to be missionaries; some are in the mission-field already, some God is calling to China or to Africa or to India, and they have not yet decided to obey. Others He calls to pray, really to pray, for all should bear some part in the great battle.

It is one thing to feel thrilled in a missionary meeting, and quite another to stand for the first time in the midst of a people of whose language and character you know nothing at all. 'To the cow on this side of the river the grass on the other side seems green,' the Tamils say; and often the distance of the mission-field lends enchantment to the eyes of those who look out from the home lands.

A call based on the romantic will be quickly shattered, unless we only intend to do philanthropic work or to teach in a school with no real desire other than to educate. No amount of education will convert a boy. It will only put over the natural heart a veneer of respectability. And to those who really care it is the unseen that matters first, for it is eternal.

When we land on a foreign shore with a longing in our hearts to tell others of Christ, what is it that lies before us? Not, indeed, preaching to an appreciative crowd of listeners, but first of all weary months of slogging

at a language which contains sounds that seem quite inhuman, and of twisting our tongues into seemingly impossible attitudes to make those sounds. Then, as they are gradually mastered, comes the ordeal of trying to use what has been learned, while we know that all the time we are making fools of ourselves before the very people we wished to impress.

It is the life that tells for God; He does not call us to impress people, but to love them, and to share His treasure with them. They are patient with our mistakes. But they watch us. Some may tell us that it is impossible not to tell lies, yet they will expect from us utter sincerity. Others will not think much of a quarrel amongst themselves at times, but they will demand from us an unending patience. And, above all, they will watch us to see if there is the slightest touch of superiority, in our attitude or in our thoughts, for even that will come out. If they see this, or any unwillingness to admit a fault, we might as well pack up and go home for all the good we shall do. They will applaud our preaching, they will be pleasant enough outwardly; but never, never will they put their confidence in us.

And without that confidence what is the use of our being missionaries? Without a oneness between us and the people of the country we go to serve, however well we may learn the language, we shall only know about them what they choose to let us know. And that will be the bare surface. But if by God's loving, ungrieved Spirit we who work for Him are welded into one in full fellowship, then we can be as one weapon in His hand. And the joy of such fellowship is unspeakable and full of glory.

Unless we live like this, either we shall be in a fool's paradise, or else we shall be constantly feeling that others are playing us false by not letting us know what is going on; whereas all the time the fault is really ours, in that we are not frank and humble and straight with our fellow-Christians. How many of us have grown content to appear better than we really are. We do not deceive the people about us, and the surest road to a winning of their trust is by uncovering and straightening out the crooked things that pride keeps hidden.

So the first years in a foreign land are years of testing. Those who appear smiling and kind from very politeness are all the while weighing what they see. If the Tamil sees love and utter truth, his heart is won; and it is joy, solemn and holy, to live in the experience of united loyalty as we serve under the same great Leader.

We do not need to face the mission-field with apprehension, thinking of the difficulties. We need to look up to the Lord, who sends us, and in His strength to go courageously, expecting the unity that He prayed might be for all His own.

There will be difficulties. But, though a trained soldier and a raw recruit may have to face the same hardships in a campaign, the impact is different. If self-will, and self-love, and the choice of the easy way have been put under our feet in the discipline at home, we shall come out prepared to win in the battle as it affects ourselves; for personal preference will count for nothing.

And that will leave us free to fight for others. It is an unremitting fight here in Dohnavur. We have told of the person who stands in the shadows behind our

children, and we dare not relax spiritually, for he is watching his chance always. It was said of McKay of Uganda :

' There was no such word as holiday in his vocabulary ; his mission was to him a whole-souled passion, and every hour was turned to practical account.'

God grant that this may be true also of us.

When the slothful flesh would murmur,
  Ease would cast her spell,
Set our face as flint till twilight's
  Vesper bell.

On Thy brow we see a thorn-crown,
  Blood-drops in Thy track,
Oh forbid that we should ever
  Turn us back.

CHAPTER XXXV

'STILL UPWARD . . . TO THE HIGHEST'

IN Tamil writings three standards of life are mentioned, the lowest, the medium and the highest. It is not likely that any who live upon the lowest level will read this book; so that the choice we must face lies between the other two. While there is an infinite variety of degrees of the medium, the highest for each person can be but one—an unquestioning obedience in everything to God's will as He keeps on revealing it to us. And 'if any man in any way would be the one man, he shall be so to his cost.'

The revelation of God's will is exceedingly practical, for it does not deal only with our attendance at prayer-meetings and conventions, and with our talking to other people about Christ—it strikes down into the details of life. It demands that we bring under His control all things. It affects the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the little luxuries which we enjoy, the use of what we usually call *our* money and *our* time, but which, in reality, are God's if we are His.

God does not call us to the ascetic life, but He wants us to live the disciplined life, for whom the Lord loves He disciplines. It will not be pleasant to the flesh, but unless we are cowards we must face it. Some have

chosen a way usually called good, and yet in their hearts they know that they have deliberately refused God's best. And, in consequence, however successful life may be from an earthly standpoint, eternally there will be loss.

The trouble with most of us is that we do not care. We are known as Christians, even as Christian workers, and so we sink back into a contented, comfortable respectability. We forget that our Lord was never in that sense contented. 'Let us go into the next towns . . . for therefore came I forth.' He was never comfortable. 'The Son of man hath not where to lay his head.' He was never merely respectable. For most of the respectable people of His time were against Him. 'A friend of publicans and sinners,' they called Him. Our reputation counts for so much with us. He made Himself of no reputation. We cannot bear to be thought extraordinary, and of Him they said, 'He is beside Himself.' We like to be masters of ourselves and of the situation, He came to serve and to give His life. We do sometimes those things that please God, when it does not run counter to our own comfort or to the accepted custom of the day. He said, 'I do always those things that please Him.' We say, 'Lord, I will follow thee, but . . . .' He says, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.' And we bring forward the excuse that it was possibly figurative language, reserving a little corner of unforsaken things where self may reign.

Christ says, 'Go ye . . . . and make disciples of all nations.' We say we have had no call to the mission-

field. We take many other of His words to ourselves to our great spiritual satisfaction; but, if one is rather unpleasantly personal, touching with compelling force our purse, our prayer-time, or our service, we back away from it, and leave it to others. Whereas the burden of the proof lies with each one to show that God has not called him. All are not meant to go, but everyone must find out for certain, alone with God, or else for ever be a hypocrite. How much we care about what people say! And all the time the praise of man is the devil's sop to satisfy us that all is well with us. Why has God brought us into fellowship with His Son? That we may work with Him to vindicate His Father's glory. If the glory of God were the chief motive of all our living, there would be for many of us a great change in the use we make of our time, and in the way we live.

And whilst some lie back in easy-chairs and say, 'I really have not time to learn about what's going on abroad, and I cannot afford to help the work more than I am at present doing,' there comes a vision of the Christ, with His wounded hands and feet and with His thorn-crowned brow. 'I died for you, and for all others too. And you do not care?' Many of those others for whom He died are waiting in the darkness. They may not know enough to want Him, but He wants them.

God forgive us that we do not care. May He burn out of us our reserves where self is king. May He give to us the spirit of power, and of love, and of discipline; that we may obey utterly, and live for the one best to which God calls us; as in the vision that Ezekiel saw:

'still upward . . . still upward . . . still upward . . . to the highest.'

Thy vows are on me, oh, to serve Thee truly,
Love perfectly, in purity obey.
Burn, burn, O Fire; O Wind, now winnow throughly;
O Sword, awake against the flesh, and slay.

NOTE

The Dohnavur Fellowship

The work which is now centred in Dohnavur began in the year 1901 for the purpose of saving little girls from a life that is wholly evil to which many are committed every year by sale or adoption. These little children are trained for the service of the temples.

In 1918, a work for boys was begun, for they too are bought and adopted in the same way, sometimes for temple service, more often for the drama.

From the first we thought of the children as our own. We did not make a Home for them. Our home was theirs. By far the greater number have responded to this intimate personal touch and are now giving themselves to a life of service for others. A hospital, whose Tamil name means Place of Heavenly Health, is being built as this book goes to press, and it will, we believe, offer an opportunity for many to serve the sick and sorrowful who come to us for help.

We, Indian and European men and women, live and work together on the lines of an Indian family, each contributing what each has to offer. We have no salaried workers, make no appeal for funds, and authorise none to be made for us. We have never lacked. As the needs have grown supplies have come, and as we advance we find that our Unseen Leader is moving on before us.

The witness of the family has led to the opening of village work and work for pilgrims in festivals and in pilgrim centres. This work knows no boundaries, for we have not been called to found churches, but to gather out a people for His name who has commissioned us to witness to Him, and when fruit is given anywhere, it naturally " belongs " to the nearest mission. We of the Fellowship come from several parts of the household of God; but we never find this to be any hindrance to harmony, for we meet at the centre, above and below difference, and are one in Him. The aim throughout all the work, however varied, is single: it is so to live before the people that, as one of them expressed it, they may 'see the life of our Lord Jesus' and, seeing Him, be drawn and bound by bonds of love to Him, and led on to become winners of others.

Dohnavur Books

Note.—All Prices are net

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