

show what happened, but the dread of this very thing had been constantly in my mind. I have asked Bill to give the story in his own words. This is what he says :

"The wells at Toukou were deserted now by all but scorpions and enormous spiders. The next well was five long marches to the south, as much as the camels could stand in their present condition. I had decided, however, to head straight across the desert to Abesher, and determined that we would attempt it even now. We filled every water-tank to the brim and the next morning found us already far on our way, with the Ennedi fast disappearing behind us.

"There was nothing to see ahead except sand and a shimmering heat haze—not even the horizon, for sky and land merged imperceptibly one into the other. There was no noise but the soft padding of the camels and the clank, clank, clank of the tanks bumping against their sides. By day the heat was blistering. Mirages were plentiful and the wind, blowing steadily from in front, drove the fine particles of sand into our faces in a most maddening way. Mercifully, at night, which was when we covered our greatest distances, it was refreshingly cold, and I would walk at the head of the camels following the guide's lantern as it twinkled away in front. I had picked up this man at Fada, and he always marched alone. All his faculties were needed to keep direction, and any distraction might have led to unhappy consequences. For the first day and a half we had to hobble the camels on camping, in order to prevent them returning to Toukou. They seemed to know what lay before them ; but, once far enough away from water, they resigned themselves to the future in the loudly complaining but fatalistic manner of their kind.

"On the third day stones appeared in the sand, and the camels' pads became badly torn. One of the men stitched pieces of an empty water-skin over their feet and we were able to continue, but it seemed to me that the pace was getting slower. That evening we saw a solitary gazelle, and the next morning a low range of hills with a single conical peak appeared to the south, hiding the wells we were making for. The sight of the hills put new life into the camels, and we began to move more quickly. A few thorn trees and acacias appeared. The heat was tremendous and our minds were filled with nothing but the thought of water. We reached the well in the afternoon. It was bone dry.

"For some moments no one spoke a word ; but at length the men turned to me and said calmly : 'It is forty miles to the next well, and the camels are weak. Who knows if there is water even there ? It is Allah's will that we die here.'"

"Only after long argument was I able to persuade them to push on, for they were all quite prepared to sit down and wait for death to overtake them. There was one small tank of water left, and I ordered two of the men to give it to the camels. They did this by blowing it up the creatures' nostrils, which so revived them that they began to graze off the thorn trees. We rested for the remainder of the day and broke camp as the sun was sinking. Ever since leaving Toukou we had been walking for the sake of the camels ; but by now they had very little strength left, and though we made good time for the first few miles they were almost used up. During the night one of them collapsed. The poor beast sank

helplessly to the ground, and though we did our best to revive him he was too far gone. We divided his load among the rest and left him to follow if he could. It was the camels who were the chief sufferers. We had been marching hard ever since leaving Fada, and they had had no chance of regaining their strength ; but even the men and myself were very tired, and I think we must have slept at times as we walked along, for all my memories of what happened on that march are vague.

"Dawn found us still moving, the camels staggering as though drunk ; but the guide assured us that, if we could reach them, the wells were no more than three hours distant. We stumbled on ; then, as the sun rose, we called a halt, and the exhausted men turned towards Mecca and said their prayers. The last part of the march was the worst, as the sun hurt our aching eyes, and the increasing heat weakened us still further, beside adding to the torment of thirst ; but at nine o'clock we reached the well, two pits full of green stenching liquid, redolent of camel dung. Seldom have men been more glad of a drink !

"After watering the camels and leaving them to graze as they wished, we flung ourselves down and slept until nightfall. We had marched fifteen hours without water."

XIII

ALMOST as soon as he was back in England, Ronald began making plans for another journey into Tibet. This time his main objective was the source of the Salween River, which rises somewhere to the north of Lhasa. He left England on February 27th, 1935, and, with John Hanbury-Tracy and three native servants, went into Tibet through Upper Burma by the same route he had used on his way back in 1933. By the beginning of January, 1936, when they were within a month's journey of the source, it proved impracticable to continue any further, and they were forced to turn south towards India again. They arrived in Assam in December, 1936, and reached England at the end of January in the following year. They had been away altogether twenty-three months, of which eighteen had been spent in Tibet ; and they covered between two and three thousand miles of hitherto unexplored country.

Ronald's first letter from Tibet, written on May 31st, 1936, reached me on July 22nd, but this was record time and owing to the great kindness of the Tibetan Governor at Shikathang. He sent a special messenger with Ronald's and John's letters in order to get them through to India before the rains made it impossible. Ronald wrote again from this same place only five days later, and this letter took over six months to reach me. A month after that a batch of three arrived together, the most recent of which was four and a half months old. At the beginning of the journey, however, and before they disappeared into the jungles of Burma, Ronald was able to send me back confirmation of fourteen of the detailed accounts I had received about him. They were remarkably correct. Several which dealt with the voyage out were full of minute details which he was able

to verify, and notably descriptions of some of the other passengers. While Ronald was away this time there were about two hundred and fifty pictures about him, and so I can necessarily give only a small proportion of them here. Incidentally I have omitted some, simply because various people concerned were too clearly, and not too flatteringly, described.

11 a.m. March 20th, 1935.

Uvani.

"We might inscribe a picture if you feel calm, quiet, ready."

I answered, and Uvani replied: "Then get me the boy's book."

"I was focusing my gaze, even as I requested you to bring me the boy Ronald's book. I suddenly saw a sun-drenched city, the sky blue without a cloud, sunshine upon everything, heat which seemed to shimmer; and over all a stillness, for, though much business was being enacted, quiet appeared to reign, so drowsy does heat make those who are amidst it.

"In a large bungalow, which had steps leading to wide open doors, I saw Ronald. He was sitting opposite two men who were white, apparently of high status; the room sumptuously apparelled. I saw soft furnishings, costly carpetings, all was rich."

The writing stopped, and presently I said: "Yes, Uvani?"

"This was seen quickly, and like a portrait taken rapidly in a box has dissolved. I mean the time which completes the taking of such a picture is so brief. I cannot get each detail, but I am endeavouring now to catch once more the same scene.

"I have again the boy before me. He is quite easy, happy, not perturbed, talking freely, both men rejoining and seemingly well pleased with him. I saw plainly that one is tall, with hair which is thin and of dark hue. He is also somewhat dark in colouring, with a moustache, and he is, I have little doubt, one who wields authority over many men. The other is not so tall (beside Ronald he appears short), fairer and younger, I note, than is the other man. The boy is confident, calm, with poise that will not be shaken. He will make progress."

From Ronald:

"A good picture of the 21st, the day I arrived in Rawalpindi. It was a clear, hot, cloudless day, and everything very still. I had tea with General X and General Y (who had just arrived). The room was full of the most gorgeous Turkestan rugs which General X had been collecting for years, and was very comfortable indeed. General Y is the taller one (well described), and General X is much shorter, but he must be actually older than General Y although he looks quite young. His hair is white, but I should say he used to be fair, without a doubt."

Ronald sent me back the foregoing picture before he left Fort Hertz. He arrived there on April 30th, 1935, after which he had no more letters from me, until he received all that were waiting for him on his return to civilization in December, 1936.

11.2 a.m. April 3rd, 1935.

Uvani.

"This is the scene. A long line, stretching far away into space, of men laden, bearing boxes upon their backs, and as they march chattering

volubly and with mirthfulness. The boy Ronald and his companion are among the throng, and there are natives superior in every way to those who are burdened, who are directing that which shall be done. Ronald is walking briskly and with purpose, and as he goes he talks to his companion.

"The scene has now changed. I see them, arriving at a small hut, place all their goods upon the ground; and, while this happens, do the servants take charge, sorting out that which shall be put into immediate use. The boy and his friend are stretched at full-length and rest. I see that one servant is busy erecting a shelter in which they are to eat, while yet another proceeds with the preparation for a meal. They are well equipped. All seems good as I look, all happy."

"Uvani, do you think this is being seen before it has happened? I think Ronald might be in a train today."

"I saw it clearly, yet knowing difficulties are caused by time, it may be that it is yet to take place. I am seeing another detail. There is within the hut (which was where once before the boy sojourned) an old man, caretaker, who comes to proffer service. He has recognized the boy, and there are acclamations, for he shows himself well-pleased. He appears quite old. Ask that you may receive further enlightenment from Ronald."

Uvani stopped writing in Ronald's book; but when talking to me later (on my remarking again that I felt the time must be far out, for I did not think Ronald could have travelled so far), he said:

"Well, should the time be wrong, I trust none the less you will feel happy, for I can assure you your boy is well; so strong, with nought that ails. Therefore ask for details, seeing whether they coincide, but feeling for now certain that your boy is all right, protected, guarded. Feel with me that you have glimpsed what he does, and be happy."

Ronald from now on had to comment upon all the pictures after his return, so that more than two years went by before he was able to do so, with the help of a very detailed diary. He says of the above:

"This is twenty-two days early, and refers to April 25th when we arrived at Masumzup, where I had spent ten days in 1933. There are one or two errors in the picture, though, which is otherwise good. At this time our baggage was being carried on mules, and not by coolies—although the muleteers were certainly chattering volubly enough—and we ate it in the hut and not in a 'shelter'. Uvani must have caught a glimpse of mosquito nets being put up, however, and have interpreted it wrongly. By the way, I seem to remember that when Bill went into Tibet, several pictures showed his mules as coolies!

"On arrival the boxes were all taken off the mules and put in rows outside the hut for the night, except for those we actually needed at the time, and these were sorted out by the servants.

"At Masumzup I was warmly greeted by an old Gurkha (the father of the caretaker) who had given me a meal when I arrived in Fort Hertz in 1933. We had a long conversation together, as he was most ambitious to come with us, and kept on imploring me to give him some job, even if unpaid."

10.20 a.m. April 13th, 1935.

H. A. K.

"There is Ron with John, his friend, kneeling down beside a large

mound, looking like a pile of earth, as if something was concealed inside. He is calling to someone to bring a basket. I think it is a basket, anyway some sort of receptacle. The natives are not very near; they are looking on with interest, but at a respectful distance. The servants, too, are a little way off, talking earnestly."

"What does it seem like to you?"

"Undoubtedly he is catching something, evidently some animal. He wants to get it alive. He has gloves, so don't feel troubled. They show up."

"Anything in his hands?"

"He has a stick. I see that. Probably he is getting hold of a snake. I will watch."

Here there came a pause from 10.30 to 10.32, and then the writing went on:

"I have seen. It is a small snake, which was coiled under a large stone. I saw this lifted away, and right at the back noticed something was moving. Ron caught it. It is being put into the basket, and he is quite safe. He took all precautions."

From Ronald:

"This is a good picture of me catching a certain snake, but, oddly enough, it is nearly sixteen months early. On August 9th, 1936, in the Ling Chu Valley, S.E. Tibet, I caught a specimen of Agkistrodon just as described here, except that the 'pile of earth' was a large boulder and the snake was underneath it. John was close beside me as I knelt, and, although I didn't have gloves, one hand was covered with a large cloth folded several times, while I held a stick in the other. The receptacle was a sort of large mug which Lewa brought me and which I covered with the cloth when the snake was inside.

"I now see that he has corrected his 'mound of earth' to a 'large stone' in the last paragraph. This is right."

9.15 p.m. April 29th, 1935.

Abdul Latif.

"Abdul Latif. Greeting.

"Ronald, as I looked, was not within the dwelling which had of late been home and which also is home to the lad with him. I saw him talking, while sitting at meat, with one dark of countenance and heavy in build; but Madame, radiating light, his soul giving beauty to the earthly tabernacle. I see this man humbly endeavouring to fulfil to all men his duty, forgetful of all else."

Abdul Latif stopped, and I said: "Please tell me some more."

"Listen, then, for I describe what I see. A room which is not beautiful, nor in any sense pleasing to the eye, dreary in its furnishings, and without choice hangings or beauteous surroundings. The room also is gloomy, lighted with but an oil-lamp, small in size, placed upon the table to give light to those eating. Abdul Latif desires to give you his eyes. See with him.

"Your boy seated beside the man who has been described, and, as he eats, full of gaiety, laughing and talking. They partake of food such as is always eaten in Eastern lands—much rice, curried flesh, and all manner of articles to give savour; tamarind and strongly spiced foods. They are

waited upon by a man who appears to be cook, and well pleased his efforts are appreciated. There are but the two, your boy and this man. He, I would tell you, is not young, and also much given to hard work. He has affection towards Ronald, and is very happy to be consorting with him.

"This picture. Is it true to time? I know not, but to fact—yes."

From Ronald:

"This picture is one day early, but is otherwise very good, except that John was there too. On April 30th we had breakfast with Rai Bahadur Dr. Nihal Chand immediately before leaving Fort Hertz for the north. Both he and his room are well described (it was an old Government bungalow) although the oil-lamp on the table was not lit, of course. We had an enormous meal of curry, and were waited upon by the native cook."

9.56 a.m. May 30th, 1935.

Abdul Latif.

"Now come, we will take a seeing, and this is what I propose. Your boy is, in all probability, not able to communicate himself. I will for your peace of mind say he is well; but what I am going to give I have already seen—when, I know not. It was, however, so vivid.

"I was idly watching your boy when all of a sudden this incident occurred. He was lying stretched upon the ground, deep in slumber. He was alone. There were mountains surrounding a little encampment; a great and towering erection which lay above them. Trees and flowering shrubs all around to one side; the camp lying half concealed so as to be in shelter on the one side, for on the other was there bare rock.

"Soon after I was beside your boy there came a great roar as of thunder. He leapt to his feet and rushed to the door. He was met by others also disturbed, intent on seeing what had happened. Madame, I stood beside your Ronald. He was perfectly collected, quite calm. He held conclave. They could see nought around them and gazed upwards. Then, as they gazed, came another mighty roar, and to their right descended a great avalanche. As it came it swept all before it in its track. It was some long distance from the boys—distance seems less, however, in such places. The camp wherein the boys sojourned was safe. Their little camp was well placed."

The writing stopped, and I said: "Abdul Latif, I am wondering if this has happened yet?"

"It has happened, I feel sure. The boy is safe. I have seen."

But Abdul Latif was out in time to the extent of over three months. Ronald had this to say:

"This is a picture of what happened on the night of September 10th, 1935, when we were camped below the Chindru La. I had not expected to find a hut at this camp, but actually there were two small shacks, and the coolies, servants and I packed into these.

"The description of the camp's position is good—in a deep narrow valley between high mountains; light forest on one side, with rhododendrons, and on the other almost bare rock. Except that I had one side of the fire to myself, however, I was not alone, for in the hut there must have been eight or nine men all told. And John was not with us, but some two days' march to the north.

"In the middle of the night we were roused by the thunder of a big avalanche which sounded so close that we dashed to the door to make certain that our hut was safe. After a pause a second avalanche began, which continued to fall for sixty-two minutes, while we sat round the fire, having decided that, as we could see nothing outside, we might as well stay where we were.

"The next morning we found that the avalanche had swept across the valley only fifty yards from the huts, so that it was a good deal nearer than Abdul Latif had thought."

10.30 a.m. June 9th, 1935.

Uvani.

"Now to-day do not, while you take down this that I am about to say, give thought as to the purport until later. I am myself doing this work. It has nought to do with you. Therefore feel no responsibility. See, if I choose is the power for writing completely withdrawn."

Then there came a dead stop, and I said: "I know it, Uvani."

"Then do not feel that perchance what is written may be wrong. Just take, Madame."

"Ronald has been out for many hours. He is walking now attended by his friend, he who is a fellow companion called John, and they have with them a servant. They have been to a somewhat large house. Within this house was one who greeted them, asking them many questions, pleased to see them, giving them of fare which was plentiful and satisfying. They had gone upon a mission intent on seeing this man. He was dressed in grand apparel, very rich in texture and in hue, and appeared to be of noble birth. He was attended by several, and while the boys sat with him had he two who were in constant attendance. The servant taken by the boys talked to them in one language, ascertaining their bidding, and then interpreting it to the gentleman."

The writing stopped, and presently I said: "Yes, Uvani?"

"The boy Ronald it was who spoke. He it is who has the ordering of the affair. He knows what he requires; he feels confident that he will get his will; and he inspires those with whom he comes in contact with much liking. They feel instinctive response."

Another pause came and I asked Uvani a question: "You say they had been travelling many hours, and have been doing these things. They are not now talking to this man?"

"No. I saw this. They were with him some considerable period. In Eastern countries time is of no account. There is never unseemly haste. They sat and ate, talking at intervals."

"Tell me some more, Uvani."

"While they did so, I could well perceive there was kindly intention in the mind of this nobleman. He will further them, doing what he can to help. He has, though of so different a race from Ronald, also felt his charm. Apart from this, Madame, it is written, Ronald shall follow his path. He but fulfils his destiny; for though much is left to the individual (the manner in which he chooses to tread the road), yet has the pattern he shall ultimately weave been chosen. Ronald has set his feet upon the right way. All shall be well."

"Now, I said that I had seen, and will give the present picture. They

are right away from this house, and upon a little plateau, which is surrounded by verdure. There are many trees. They are still inhabiting tents. I see the encampment, and there is a pleasurable feeling." (There was a long wait at this point, for someone came into the room, and Uvani stopped speaking. Then he went on.) "We can continue. I have still my thread. There is a pleasurable feeling of peace and comfort. Efficiency reigns, but what conduces most to this atmosphere is happiness. There is contentment, and in the hearts of the servitors, therefore, also gaiety, following the footsteps of their lords."

"What time of day, Uvani?"

"The sun nears the west. I see no preparations for a meal. The hour has not yet come."

"Madame, believe, your elder son is well."

Ronald says of the above:

"This is a good picture of June 2nd, which makes the giving of it just a week late. We were at Shikathang, S.E. Tibet, and on that day paid an official call on the Governor of the District—John H. T., myself, and Lewa, who acted as interpreter, speaking to me in Hindustani and to the Governor in Tibetan. The latter was dressed in rich dark-blue silk, and, though not actually of noble birth, is of very good family. He had a lot of servants, but only two waiting on him and us in his room. I think Uvani does not mean that we had been travelling that day (we had not) but that we had been visiting for many hours, which was quite true. When he says he saw us walking it can only have been for a few hundred yards on our way back to bed, after a long stay with the Governor, which included dinner."

"The second little picture, beginning 'They are right away . . .' can only refer to June 9th, the one day during our stay in Shikathang when I left the village, going with Nyima Tondrup (one of our three servants) up to a small plateau with trees round its edge to do some survey work."

"Oddly enough, we were still living in tents, as there was no available accommodation in the village. This was the only village we stopped in in Tibet without sleeping in a house."

"We were all very pleased at the results of this visit to the Governor, who went out of his way to be as helpful as he could; and this feeling of contentment lasted for a long time."

"On June 9th, dinner was very late, owing to the arrival of numerous messengers in the evening with farewell presents from the people we knew in the neighbourhood. We were leaving the next day."

11.23 a.m. June 11th, 1935.

H. A. K.

"A very clear picture again. Sometimes they stand out very much defined and sharp cut."

"Now this is what I see. A very tiny village—at least, a couple of little tumbledown sheds and a few houses, a few animals about and a few cocks and hens; the place muddy and dirty. There is, however, brilliant sunshine, and all around—some great distance away, it seems—are mountains, snow-covered, standing out. In this village I see a group of people standing, several children, some old women, a few younger ones, a man who appears to be influential, a very old man beside him. They are all standing together, while before them there is another little crowd,

consisting of Ron and his friend and servants, all very full of interest and talking a lot about something. The people press around, and I can see the children inquisitively pressing forward too.

"I am sure the boys want some coolies. They have pointed to some loads and evidently are making money arrangements. I see some heavy men, who are evidently going to take them, stoop down and pick them up. Ron is consulting with his head servant, who is perfectly calm and efficient, and who is telling the men what to take."

"Can you see the servants?"

"I can see two beside Ron and John. Lewa is moving about. Yes, all three are with them. They are quite well. I feel that everything is all right."

From Ron :

"This refers to our arrival in Shikathang on May 31st, and is therefore eleven days late. Otherwise it is good. The description of Shikathang is excellent. It was a fine sunny day, and we could see snowy mountains in every direction. After our arrival there was some discussion as to where we were to put up, the conference taking place in front of a small crowd of villagers who were all most interested in our appearance, etc.

"The influential man was the chief secretary of the Governor, and the very old man was the caretaker of the temple whom I had met in 1933. When we had decided where to pitch our tents, Lewa, the head servant, collected some men to carry the baggage there. The money question had no reference to these coolies, but we wanted to change rupees into Tibetan money, and I was enquiring about this. The other two servants were somewhere close at hand."

10.30 a.m. June 16th, 1935.

Frank.

"Ronald is very high up. Right up among mountains. There are glaciers about and huge hummocks of ice. This is the general aspect. I see it as the predominant feature.

"Then, with another attempt to get a concrete idea as to what is happening to Ron, a little picture stands out in the middle of this. It just forms itself.

"First I see Ron, and he is walking very carefully along a small slippery path of rock, which juts out from the side of a steep precipitous mountain side. He is clinging hold of the rock and coming along quite fearlessly. I see him getting round a bend. He now stands upon a wide surface where there is safety and any amount of room."

"Who is with him?"

"There was no one with him at first, but there is now. Ron has apparently gone off to look out some way or path which he proposes to go by. He is talking very cheerfully and is perfectly surefooted. Heights mean little to him and the men he is with. I have a feeling that they are going back to a little village where they have their abiding-place."

From Ronald :

"This is a picture of May 21st, and is thus twenty-six days late. We were then camped at about 13,000 feet on the Burma side of the Diphuk La. No glaciers, but snow everywhere. I went up from the camp to see if the pass ahead of us was sufficiently clear of snow for loaded coolies to cross,

but a dense fog came up the valley and I lost my way. I clambered about for most of the day in an attempt to reach the pass, and on my way back to camp I had a difficult climb round a cliff. At the end of this I was met by a search-party of two of our servants who had been sent out by John to find me.

"We were not in a village, but there were two broken-down little huts at our camp, and these may have caused confusion in the seeing."

12.35 a.m. August 27th, 1935.

Uvani.

"Ronald has been given much food for thought. As I see him, he is deep in cogitation, having arrived where there is a big river dividing into two parts. He is now considering whether to explore that which goes further towards the north-east, or more to the west. He has reason for this, for though he desires eventually to go east, he has a desire to penetrate the western side of the river also. So clearly do I get his thoughts.

"There are gathering around him his entire party, and also stray followers. They are where two or three small huts form a village which has afforded them shelter for the night."

"Uvani, I am now wondering about time."

"I see with them the hour is late. They are not going further. They will remain, I see, for some time longer. The way shall be explored to some extent while they are stationary. It is a very wild and turbulent river, with deep eddies, foaming water, large rocks. It must be one larger than the boy has yet struck. He goes in search of a mighty river, does he not?"

"Yes, Uvani; but I think he cannot reach that for several months."

"This one is very large."

Uvani stopped writing, and I said: "It is, I suppose, another."

"There are very beautiful surroundings, still amongst mountains which dwarf all else, and make the mighty rocks and trees seem so small, also the river to appear insignificant. Yet is everything majestic in size."

There was another pause, and I said: "Are the trees really big ones?"

"There is a forest with trees so tall, reaching skywards. They seem as though they had grown for many, many years and much undergrowth is there. The part, little frequented, has been left to Nature, who has filled each bit with plenitude.

"The whole party is well. Ronald, as always, full of determination and resource, is getting plans made. He lacks not decisiveness as do so many who, not being able to bear the weight of their own opinions, seek to share those opinions with many others, thereby lessening their load. He has, like his brother, full confidence in his own judgment.

"You need have no fear. He will be kept safe. He works, sparing himself not at all, and as he strives does help and guidance come always to him. I have no more; but believe always he and his little company are well."

Ronald says about this :

"This is an excellent description of Purtsang, where I stopped from August 10th to the 19th. In actual fact there are twenty-one houses in the village, but the place is rather scattered, and where I was living there were only two or three houses visible. Purtsang is on the bank of Zayul

Ngü Chu, a large, very turbulent stream, joined a few miles to the north by a tributary from the west, flowing down from the Tsang Kang La. While waiting I seriously considered whether I could not perhaps explore the latter stream as far up as the pass before pushing on up the river.

"The whole valley is richly wooded with great pine trees and dense undergrowth."

11.45 a.m. September 12th, 1935.

Uvani.

"We are seeing what happens now. I think, Madame, what occurs is, without a shadow of doubt, even now taking place.

"I have before me Ronald, looking somewhat thin and worn, having known much responsibility, given great thought to the ordering of his company and their going.

"I now watch this scene. There is a small village where the party rests, and in which place they will remain for several days. The tents are, therefore, not seen. There is a rough-hewn dwelling, looking as though logs of wood had been interlaced, forming good walls but without adornment, standing within a courtyard. Animals abound, walking as they will; and to your fastidious gaze, Madame, dirt and squalor would seem abundant. There are mitigating features, for although this be so, yet is the surrounding neighbourhood very open, very beautiful, fresh pure air all around; and our travellers are quite well, quite untroubled by small discomforts.

"I have now to give you a further description of the abode. There are three rooms inhabited by our party. Ronald shares a sleeping abode with his fellow companion John. There is a room containing a heap of skins, and a species of plankings called by courtesy a table. Upon this I see numbers of things, and Ronald is engaged in making sundry writings, which will some day be formed into charts. They are not being written yet upon the chart showing the way they travel. He is alone. I now see both John and Lewa approach, the former bearing in his hands a large fowl, which he gives to Lewa, who had not been beside the lad John, but came from the opposite direction.

"John seems very full of gaiety and talks quickly. He has much to say about a peregrination on which he has been, and during which time he had obtained the bird. The boys laugh with much glee, so, Madame, please believe they are not suffering. They are supremely content with life.

"The servants are, I see, within a small outside room and are preparing a repast. The cheerful, short, stout one has been plucking the bird with great skill and speed.

"Ronald has seized his thick woollen jerkin preparatory to going forth. I should say the sun is even now going to rest. Intense cold creeps upon the land. The abode is warm. You will remain with your heart peaceful?"

The writing stopped until I had replied: "I will, Uvani."

"That is as I wish, for, believe me, your boy is in safe keeping, his followers also. I would now say, tomorrow your lord portrays that which he will see. Abdul Latif says he, too, will shortly give."

From Ronald:

"At midnight on September 12th I reached Dashing, where I met John again, who had been on his own since July 24th. We were in a house built of logs and covered with plaster, very plain and with a courtyard attached. There were cattle, ponies, pigs and fowls in the neighbourhood and the place was distinctly dirty. The country round was not really very open, for the valley is thickly wooded; but from our balcony there was a grand view up a treeless side-valley to some high mountains.

"We had only two rooms, not three. John and I slept in the large one, which also had a rough table and a heap of skins—some of which I had bought and some John. The servants and kitchen were in the other.

"We were both very cheery, and John was telling me about his 'peregrination', which was, of course, his journey down the Ngagong Chu and his other explorations since we had separated. He had a lot to say about the fowl (which he had eaten some time before, and so could not produce in the flesh), because it had been given to him by a minor official up the valley, and having been plucked and cooked by Nyima Tondrup ('the cheerful, short, stout one') turned out to be even more incredibly rubbery than a certain famous bird we had tried to consume in Burma.

"I remember taking readings of the barometer and thermometer while John was talking, which would account for my writing. The kitchen was immediately outside our room, and Nyima Tondrup made me a meal as soon as he could after I arrived.

"The paragraph last but one is wrong. It was midnight when I got in and I didn't go out again."

8.10 p.m. April 6th, 1936.

Uvani.

"My picture is this. I see it as I speak. A clear starlit sky, beautiful in its exceeding wonder, for the heavens sparkle with diamonds and the moon gazes upon them, serene, and as a pearl, all unclouded in the firmaments.

"The night is clear and cold without much wind, which is good, for Ronald, wrapped with many coverings, is busy observing and taking calculations. He has before him a table used for this purpose. He arranges many things with exact care, gazing heavenwards as he does so.

"I see the country in which they are now is vast and high (a great expanse of unprotected land with little vegetation); and of buildings I see but two. They are mean and small, and seemingly isolated upon this plain. I think they are used by men who are given to the tending of herds.

"I think in one there are rooms which are being used for the housing of Ronald. His party is within. I see but one other. The serving-man Lewa comes up. He makes query. Ronald replies: 'I am done. These articles may be removed.' He seems loath to give up his work. There is contentment, however, within him, for his labour has not been in vain.

"The servant is a man full of strength, just the sort who would give his all to further his master. There is faithfulness and admiration in his heart, also love. Ronald to him is a sahib of great worth. He would do all that lies in his power for him.

"And for the boy himself, I see he is strong, well, and still more finely

attuned to all that lies before him. His friend I see not, but I feel he too goes well. He lies within."

Ronald says about this :

"This picture is nearly two months late, but is otherwise good. On February 10th, while we were at Nakshö Biru, I took some observations for Magnetic Variation. It was the first clear night we had had for weeks, and I well remember that the moon was so bright that it was difficult to see one of the stars I wanted. I knew all about its being cold, too, for my nose froze to the theodolite !

"The valley at Nakshö Biru is very shallow and open to the wind, and there is not much vegetation, apart from coarse grass and a few small bushes. Although by day several houses and a large monastery were visible from this spot, it is quite true that in the dark one could see only two, in one of which were our quarters. I don't know about the people in the other house, but our landlord certainly owned a large herd of yaks, and seemed to spend most of his time with them.

"Besides the theodolite I always had a small table with me when I was taking observations, on which were my papers, a light, a watch, a compass, etc.

"John was indoors during this observation ; but Lewa was always with me at these times. It is a true description of Lewa's character. He is the most faithful servant imaginable."

10.55 a.m. May 31st, 1936.

Abdul Latif.

"I was seeking the boy, desirous of getting a vision which would be crystal clear. I did this. He was within a large bare room. There was little furnishing. Ronald seated at a small table doing calculations. There was a brazier beside him. I saw a man enter, placing upon it fuel. There was in one corner of this room a large heap of skin rugs. Lying upon it was the companion. He appears to be asleep.

"I saw next the servant, who is trusted above all others, enter, bearing with him a large cauldron. The contents of this he proceeded to pour into bowls, offering them. He gave first unto Ronald. Then gently pausing beside the friend, he spoke quietly. I saw the friend stir, then after a moment sit up, taking the liquid. As he drank, he talked to Ronald, who turned aside from his work.

"Now this was plain to me ; but there is in the picture nothing out of the ordinary run of doings which may be frequent. Therefore, I waited eagerly, hoping for more. Presently, as though a veil lifted, I felt my sight extending.

"In another room I saw a party of travellers who had been given house-room also. They were talking to a man short and stout, evidently landlord of this dwelling. These travellers had with them bales of merchandise, and had opened one pack. I saw carpets and coloured silks spread along the floor. They were standing looking upon these articles. Then one, going to Ronald's man, intimated his master might buy. Lewa looked, and shook his head, scornfully disclaiming. He said his master bought only that which was of the best. Were these, he asked, worthy ? On thus hearing the owner indignantly jumped to his feet (for he alone had knelt), saying : 'See you, I have wondrous articles. Look !'"

There was a little pause, and then Abdul Latif went on :

"He hurriedly undid yet another bale. It was small and was wrapped in many coverings. Out of this he took with very careful handling three small vases. They were wrapped in silk. He handled them as though they were precious beyond rubies. I gathered his meaning. He said : 'Tell the lord, your master, that which I have cannot be found elsewhere.' Lewa carefully scrutinized these vases. He said : 'I go ; but my master who has travelled all the world will not be impressed. He is one of the great ones.'"

Abdul Latif stopped, and I asked : "Did you smile ?"

"I smiled, knowing the absolute naturalness of the boy."

"And then what happened ?"

"The servant (who has loyalty, devotion, ingrained in him) went. I next saw him approach Ronald, who was once more engrossed, tracing the delicate lines on his large paper, and heard him say : 'Sir, there are some men desirous of displaying such articles as they are travelling with. There are some small urns beautiful beyond compare. Will you permit ?'"

I waited a minute for Abdul Latif to go on, and then said : "What did Ronald say then ?"

"'Bring them along.' Then came two men. They gave salaams, and squatting down took first one treasure, then another, handing them unto Ronald. He regarded them dispassionately, as are the ways of the East. I perceived all that transpired carried out correctly. Then down came my veil once more, blotting my view. But be assured naught harms your boy."

Ronald says :

"This is a composite picture, and, as such, is excellent. The first part is undoubtedly of Nakshö Biru and would be equally true of any time between February and April, when I was doing a lot of work on the maps, almost always close to a brazier. Very often there was practically nothing for John to do during this period, and he used to go to sleep most afternoons. His bed, however, was not of skins but of woollen rugs and blankets. Eight or ten times a day a large teapot was brought in by one of the servants and we drank out of bowls. Our room was quite large and very bare.

"The remainder of the picture also refers to Nakshö Biru, but it should be divided up into three parts ; or better, be regarded as three pictures merged into one, giving a general impression of what used to take place.

"On March 9th, Lewa went over to the next house to inspect the goods brought by two Ladakhi traders who were on the way to Chamdo. Among other things they had rugs and cheap silks which we did not want, and Lewa said as much.

"The episode of the small bale, wrapped in many coverings, clearly refers to January 6th, when Lewa, in another house, was being approached by a man who had three gold charm boxes (not vases) for sale. They were wrapped in several layers of silk and kept in wooden boxes. I eventually bought one of them.

"The owner of these, however, did not come to our house on this occasion, and the deal was carried through with Lewa as go-between.

"The last paragraph would have been true many times, not only at Nakshö Biru but elsewhere.

"To me the most striking thing about this picture as a whole is that it is Lewa to the life, and that it shows him behaving exactly as I have known him to do so often when there was anything to be bought."

When this next picture was given to me for Ronald, Bill was on his way out with the First Division to Palestine, where trouble had become acute. Abdul Latif's description of his doings on the ship was, he thought, correct ; but I am only putting in here what I was told about Ronald.

7.20 p.m. September 14th, 1936.

Abdul Latif.

"Let us view now for Ronald. I saw, for one thing, bright sunshine. They were walking beside a river, and as I watched they crossed over, the bridge formed of swaying bamboos, upon which they bounced perilously, every step having to be taken cautiously. I saw perhaps three of these saplings side by side, suspended through loops, a rail being afforded by ropes which were very low. They did not reach above Ronald's knees. It is well he has a steady head ; but these things did not trouble any of the party. They crossed with ease.

"I next saw the path led upwards over a steep mountain side, which was formed of rock and earth. Flowers were to be seen in patches, growing to a height of some eighteen inches. Their colour appeared to be white only. I also saw an occasional hut, which was built in primitive fashion, and did not seem to be inhabited, for no people were to be seen apart from our party. It did not look as though any food was to be found near these huts. I saw no sign of cultivation, no living thing. It was wild and devoid of anything which was raised by the work of man.

"The party swung along cheerfully, covering many miles—of this I am sure. I viewed them, and later saw again what was happening—by which time they had reached a place where a number of coolies were waiting. A halt was called. There was much talk, much acrimonious discussion in which Lewa played a stirring part. He had some point to raise. The man to whom he spoke dissembled ; but after interminable discussion some decision was reached. Then once again there was peace.

"I next saw the tents being erected upon ground which was grassy. There was a flat surface around them, and I was sure they would remain. Ronald is well. That is all ; a wandering picture, and for now complete."

Ronald says :

"It is strange that so many of these pictures of about this time refer to events in the following November or later. This is obviously of December 1st, while we were in the Mishmi Hills. That day the path ran in cleared ground, for the most part, with a bright sun the whole time. We crossed the Dou River by a long suspension bridge with a narrow footpath of three or four bamboos, swung from old steel cables. The path then climbed steeply up and descended to a small grassy plateau where we made camp. There was some discussion here because half the coolies had halted about half a mile back at another camping ground, and at first they were not inclined to bring on their loads. We did not, however, put up tents, although we had done at the previous camps and we felt that it was perhaps rash not to do so.

"On this march, as Abdul Latif says, we passed many huts, but, although they were all inhabited, I don't remember seeing anyone about. Nearly all

the cleared land is cultivated, but at this time of year nothing was growing and there was excuse for thinking there was no cultivation.

"The bridge, incidentally, did bounce and sway."

7.10 p.m. October 12th, 1936.

Uvani.

"I want to grip your mind very firmly. Let me have your complete attention. Do not feel strain, but merely attend as you would were I really apparent to you. If that music disturbs you, Madame, will you cause it to be silent ?"

I promptly turned off the wireless, and Uvani remarked : "That is better.

"This picture I set my gaze on during such time as you held converse with a man concerning fires. Think back as to time. It was, I believe, eleven of your clock."

I said : "I think so, Uvani. It might have been a little earlier."

"It will serve. This was as I viewed Ronald. He held a conclave. There were many men standing around him, clad in outlandish garb, their aspects threatening. They sought to obtain more payment, and spoke loudly, saying : 'We will not carry loads.' Then the boy who had been seated arose. He spoke with great severity, great firmness of purpose, saying : 'Leave. You are required no longer.'"

There came a pause, and I said : "Uvani, will you tell me some more ?"

"There had been a chorus of voices, and all who stood about the boy spoke at one time. Then came a silence. These men had no wish for their word to be taken. They desired the boy should parley with them, first offering perchance some slight increase, then, on listening to argument, raising the amount until amicable settlement was arrived at. Ronald, however, knowing what lay in their hearts (as already with experience he had had dealings with these people), refused to bandy words. He again seated himself, saying : 'Go.' The natives sullenly left him, and standing without his tent, murmured between themselves. They said : 'He will give us more. Let us try again.'

"A rude fellow, constituting himself leader, thrust his way into Ronald's abode. There was scant ceremony observed, for Ronald, seeing him, thrust him forth violently, the man falling. He was not hurt, but made a sign that he would show fight. Ronald, springing to the door, told them that if they did not immediately disperse he would show them the same usage. With him stood the other sahib. Lewa was wielding a stout cudgel, as was the servant who is so worthy but thick of head. The miscreants retired. Presently one who was superior appeared. He demanded of them what had gone before. They sat giving, until pressed with threats, few rejoinders. Then one answering said : 'It is our due we get more money.'

"At this the patience of the superior one departed. He cursed them roundly for fools, saying : 'Know you not these are overlords under the protection of princes ; and, for the pay, what do dogs require more than bones ?' Then he turned, and praying leave to enter, sought Ronald who, perceiving him, said : 'Where were you, and why has trouble arisen ?' ; the man replying he had been called away, that there should be no more

trouble, and furthermore that he would see the work which was promised fulfilled.

"Madame, at one time it may be I would not have given this in detail—it might have caused dismay ; but take Uvani's word that all is now peace. Ronald is a leader of men. They will now follow him. It is but a trick of these wild races to see how much they can secure.

"I will now tell you of your young son."

Ronald says :

"This is a very excellent picture of some trouble we had with coolies at Shikathang on November 19th, and it is almost entirely right. We were due to leave that morning, but when the time came the coolies refused to start unless they were paid the whole of their seventeen days' wages in advance. It was not that they wanted more money, but that they wanted it all at once. I was not prepared to do this, and after a certain amount of argument I told them they could all go back to their villages, that I would not employ them as coolies but would wait until the Governor arrived and could make an official arrangement. I had been willing to pay them half their money in advance, provided they, in their turn, would guarantee to do the journey in a certain number of days ; but we were not able to agree.

"The most voluble and ill-mannered of the coolies, a big man, then pushed into our room (we were not in tents but in a low house) without ceremony, and I rapidly ejected him. I do not think that he showed fight, however, and we did not band ourselves together in case of trouble. Lewa, and not I, threatened to attack any of them who did not disperse at once, on the ground that they were making an unseemly noise in our courtyard.

"The superior native was the headman of the coolies. He had been absent at the time of the discussion, but returned during the afternoon. Once again Uvani is wrong if he means that the coolies were demanding a higher rate of pay ; but, though I can't answer for the actual words of the headman to them, he certainly cursed them for several minutes, just out of hearing, and then came in to me to say that he was sorry they had caused me annoyance and that they would start the following morning, taking their wages day by day. After that we had no more difficulty."

That picture for Ronald was seen more than a month in advance of the actual happening, and Bill's (which was given me directly afterwards) had taken place nearly two weeks earlier. I will include it as the last of the 'seeings' in this book.

7.40 p.m. October 12th, 1936.

Uvani.

"It interests me, this work, which is in so many ways unique ; for though I see at divers times many incidents for earth dwellers, never does it come in the same guise. True, we at all manner of times fail with synchronization ; but, though we desire it, yet does the difference also create interest. I will once again grip your mind tightly. This too was seen in the middle of your day.

"It was a dreary spot on which was standing Billy ; a vast expanse of barren land with dust clouds rising ; the country, where he was, bereft of verdure. There were many men all dressed as soldiers, with a number of vehicles, all of which were stationary.

"With Billy stood a group of officers, some of whom were of great

importance, for I see him who is in command of Billy display much deference. I therefore deem these men are those who are greatly experienced in warfare, with wide knowledge. There was, however, no warfare around the party. All was still. I am of opinion that they met with a view to reconnoitring the land. Billy stood silently. He was presently called upon. He listened to what was said, then mounted a moving vehicle and went.

"I could see he was well, alert, and, as is generally the case, full of vigour."

Bill's letter containing his comments on this 'seeing' was sent from Palestine on October 20th (we had both written by air-mail) and this is what he says :

"The time is wrong, and should be September 31st about twelve noon. The Divisional Commander came up from Jerusalem to visit our road pickets, and the C.O. and I accompanied him—I following in another car.

"When we arrived at the last picket (Fort Allen), the Divisional Commander talked with the C.O. for some time about the fortifications, and then told me to get into his car with him, and we went on to Nablus, leaving the C.O. at the picket. The other vehicles held the escort and machine-guns which went in front and behind the General's car.

"It is a very good picture, bar the time."

Ronald finally reached England on January 23rd, 1937, and Bill arrived back from Palestine early in the same month. With Ronald's return home all my long months of waiting seemed to become a dream ; but I then had the joy of finding that, quite apart from the 'seeings', most of the inner knowledge that had come to me throughout that period of nearly two years had been accurate.

During this last journey of Ronald's in Tibet, and also while Bill was in Palestine, I found that sometimes, while the pictures were being given, I too could see the scenes, though not plainly enough to take in the details. At rare intervals, however, I have had the most distinct objective visions of both my sons. On one occasion I saw Bill asleep, lying rather uncomfortably on what appeared to me to be a sofa, and it turned out that at that very time he was sleeping on a train in India. Again, I was standing by my window anxiously watching for Ronald, for I wanted to know if he had been able to finish some very important work ; and at last I saw him coming along. I watched him crossing the road—which, except for himself, was quite empty—and waited until he had reached the main entrance, when I hurried to the door of our own flat to meet him. I thought it strange that there was no sign of him, so I listened for his voice, thinking he must have wished to speak to the hall porter. All was silent, however ; but half an hour later he did in reality what I had already seen him do. Then I understood that, as so often happens in the case of the pictures, I too had overstepped time.