

My Army Career
as a

1939-1945

Medical Officer
in ~~the~~
R.A.M.C.

December 2nd 1939

I left Birmingham by the afternoon train to Euston. It was cold and wet and miserable when I reached London town - even the taxi drivers could not raise a smile as we dashed across to Waterloo. There seemed to be millions of soldiers in that very muddy station - a seething mass of khaki. All roads led to Aldershot and district. I waited for a small station called Fleet and pined there in darkness. A taxi brought me to Brookham Camp, the Depot of the Royal Army Medical Corps. I signed numerous forms and papers in the Office and proceeded to the Officers Mess. The mess was a cheery spot but oh the wretched quarters - tin wooden bunks. Three blankets and a rug did not keep me warm that night and for many nights to come! It seems I went to bed as an officer in His Majesty's Forces!

December 3rd - January 9th, 1940

These were bitterly cold days - barrack square drills and parades in mufti. We must have looked a queer lot - our bunch of lads - on parade. Strangely enough my companion in arms proved to be an Egyptian - Jattas by name. He had been in practice in Birmingham. I remarked that a very small percentage of doctors piling up were Englishmen! I

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(2) I met many Queensmen - Gross brothers, George Donaldson, Brian Cady. - and many Protestants too! There was Major Tim Ahern, Major Trimble, Col. O'Riordan etc. In those days I thought Majors were like gods and indeed they acted as such!

We had Gas lectures, hygiene lectures, physical training, all these in cold, cold huts in mid winter. A great day came for me when my full uniform arrived and I turned out in parade fully dressed. We were billeted out with the local inhabitants - Gattas and I were sent to Mrs & Mrs. Dewesbury, Othara Road. They treated us like kings and I shall never forget them. They gave me a lovely Sam Browne belt.

I had an occasional week-end with Dr. Lucy in Birmingham and I always visited Dr Macsherry. I shall never forget the first time I visited 12 Summer Hill Rd. all dressed up to kill in my uniform, cane, and gloves. The patients in the waiting room gave me a great reception - as did Dr. Mac. I met Tom Gunn that evening too. I spent my embarkation leave in Birmingham and Belfast - a hurried visit to my father at Old Park Road. He could not understand why I had joined the Army. He gave me a lovely Irish ham and oh how good it tasted on Christmas Day!

I remember a very happy day spent in London shopping - and eating. We went to London from Crookham in Lieut. Young's car; Gattas, another officer, and Young's

wife - came too. I paired off with Galtas and we proceeded to paint the town red! We had the most marvellous lunch at a Turkish Restaurant - the "Istanbul" near Piccadilly. Menu:- Suisscedad & Pilav; Turkish Delight; and real Turkish Cigarettes; wonderful coffee. We had afternoon tea at the Regent Palace in Piccadilly; and an evening meal at the Cafe Royal in Coventry Street. At the latter place we met Young and his wife. We set off for Crookham in a dense fog (+ blackout); the road was ice bound. We did not reach Crookham that night but had to put up for the night in a wayside inn. It was a grand adventure going off to sleep on a settle with the odours of things all around!

Lt. Young was a very nice chap - an Oxford Graduate with a new practice and a new wife. After our leave we were billeted in Fleet and I saw a lot of the Young family and Lady X. with whom they were billeted. Lady X. had a husband in the Indian Army and lived in a large mansion nearby. We had no work in those days - January 2nd - 9th. We paraded each morning at Crookham (3 miles away). A very imposing Assistant Adjutant Capt. Low solemnly read out 10 names each morning for "France", "Gib.", "Mideast Coast", "India". New faces appeared to replace the old ones. And then Lt. Humors' name came on that list and the word "India" was whispered in his ear! Gatty and I

rushed off to London and bought heaps of tropical kit well over £10 allowance. We spent hours in Cross Bros - the cheapest military tailor - and we spent very much more than £10 on rubbish that we would never need in the tropics. I thought I was the "Kati solishers" in my topi, khaki drill, and shorts! I loved shopping in London town, I loved the tube and Waterloo; taxis and buses seemed to travel at incredible speeds; lunches at Lyons' Brasserie were grand! The move to India was very secret! We were not allowed to breathe the word. "I always wanted to go to India and so I was not ~~so~~ very heart broken at going away so far from home. Still I thought would only be for a short time and I would "see my Irish hills" again within a year!

We left Fleet in the morning of 9th January 1940, arrived at Southampton at noon, and went aboard our ship in the early afternoon. It was one of the Keyham boats which had been dismantled inside for use as a troop carrier. We crept quietly out of Southampton water about midnight en route for a French port.

January 10th - January 31st 1940 Voyage to India

As I sat in the lounge of that little cross-channel steamer I took stock of my R.A.M.C. fellow officers (it is a habit of mine). Capt. Boplands had a commission in the last war; he was a small, round man; a bluish red face with a fat bulbous nose. He was a cheery soul and was a very talented pianist - but oh how he drank!

He was not sober for a moment during the whole voyage. I felt sorry for him being sent to a country like India, especially as he was blind in one eye (cataract) and partly blind in the other. Poor chap did fare badly during his first Indian summer at Meerut and I was glad to hear later that he was invalided out of the Army and sent back home in 1911. However I shall mention him and others later in my story.

Then there was a wild Liverpool-Irishman called Sickey Doyle M.D., F.R.C.S.; a fighting man with a heart of gold but with a very hot temper - and he with a few drinks taken. Believe me, Sickey could swill his liquor!

J. D. Stone was a Jewman who had wandered far and wide like his wandering tribesman Suss! I called him the "Rolling Stone" and I always enquired about his moss! He was a thin, underdeveloped, pale faced young man; very dapper but effeminate. The ladies were over at his feet - on the voyage, in Quetta, in Secunderabad, and in Singapore too. He must have been horribly disappointed with the Prisoners of War Camp at Changi (Singapore) - no ladies admitted.

"Gatty" (A. A. Gattas) was a Graduate of Birmingham University. He was a mixture of French and Egyptian, though he always proclaimed himself a Frenchman. He was very powerfully built though not very tall. He was a kind hearted chap, but he had a most awful temper!

He was clever and was widely "travelled in realms of gold and many goodly states and kingdoms seen"! He knew more about the world than I could ever hope to learn. Languages were his specialty - French, Italian, Arabic. He was my companion on the voyage to India.

The Oxford blood - young - showed his real worth on the voyage. He was small, thin and freckled - he had a weakish chin. He was the only one of our party with whom I crossed swords - and it was not my fault that trouble began. He had a small dark man as a bosom pal during the trip - his name does not matter.

An extremely wild Irishman from Belfast, called Mr. Callum, was the loudest man of the crowd. He had been with the BEF in France but had been promptly returned as "NOT WANTED". He was crude in everything he said or did. He was for ever wanting to fight and break things up, especially after a few drinks.

A typical English version of "Lord Haw Haw" was another of the party - Lieut. Thurston. He was fair and partly bald, had prominent teeth and a receding chin, and spoke with a stammering accent. He was a medical specialist of sorts. He had a pal too with a superior air and accent whose name does not come into things. And now you have met everyone!

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As I was saying - we were sitting in the lounge of our cross channel steamer and chatting amiably (without drinks) with R.A.F. and Navy men. We talked of everything but war - nobody was worried about war in those early days, it was all so unreal and afar off. War did not worry me in the least - it was all an adventure and besides, I was only a doctor!

We rose at dawn and saw the French coast in the horizon. A French flying boat scouted our tiny vessel in its last lap. Then the docks at Cherbourg became visible; ~~they~~ looked very peaceful basking in the sun. There seemed to be minefields everywhere. It is rather uncanny steering through minefields for the first time, but then I thought it would be grand fun swimming to the shore! We wended our way to the railway station and dumped our luggage on the train which was not due to leave until midnight. Off we ran to see Cherbourg and to fill empty stomachs! I loved Cherbourg and its quaint cobbled streets. "Gally" was our guide because of his fluent French. We moved around all kinds of queer little shops and cafes. Night was soon upon us and so we went off to a large restaurant and had a marvellous dinner with several French officers. The French are the only people in the world who know anything about food!

Cherbourg had no real blackout and so

we had no trouble finding our way to the station. I had
 an awful shock when I saw my compartment - it was bare
 and bereft of all comfort. I formed a poor opinion of the
 French railways. We could not lie down, so we sat
 awake shivering the whole night through. We tried to
 wash and shave the following morning but without success
 the water was frozen. And still we rumbled on through
 France. Eventually the sun came out and we saw
 glimpses of the French countryside - pretty farmhouses and
 quaint chateaux set in lovely surroundings. At each halt
 our carriage was invaded by French boys selling cheap
 wines and champagne. Gatty, Young, his pal, and
 another officer played Bridge - that was my first introduction
 to the game! We spent another cold night awake in that
 rumbling, sneaking, uncomfortable train and reached
 the docks at Marseilles at 9 am. on January 12th.
 We stretched our cramped limbs and inspected the various
 ships alongside - "Duchess of Atholl", "H.M.T. Cetrick" etc.
 We brought our luggage aboard the latter - a brand new
 10,000 ton troopship (P.O.), - were allotted our cabins,
 had a quick lunch aboard and rushed off to the
 City. I cling to Gatty and his French. We made a
 tour of the Cafés and showplaces; a church or two I
 visited. Eventually it palled a bit and we went to a

Cinema and saw a Bulldog Drummond Show - Reginald Denny actually made the French people laugh! We had a grand supper at a restaurant and became friends with a French couple - they claimed me, an Irishman, as their own because they were the proud possessors of an Irish Setter! Gatty was anxious to visit a cabaret and so I trailed along with him to the would-be "show". The latter proved to be a brothel and I fled the place and dragged Gatty away in time. We got aboard at 11 P.M. and prepared for bed.

We sailed in the morning of 13th January. Out into the Gulf of Lions we sped and soon we saw the blue Mediterranean. It proved to be a Mediterranean Cruise for everyone and I enjoyed every moment of it. We were escorted by a French destroyer so far as Malta. The sun came out each day and we basked in it on deck. I had no duties to perform and so I had time for games on deck. H.M.T. Ettrick was a beautiful boat and had every conceivable comfort. We had the usual boat-drill each morning and the Captain's inspection. After that we had the day to do as we pleased. The food was super and the drinks seemed good - judging by their effect on the officers! It was good to be alive - again the war was forgotten by all aboard. We did hear odd bits of news by radio

but nobody appeared terribly interested in news. patty kindly gave me tips about Bridge and soon I found myself becoming engrossed in the game. However it became too serious for me and I could not play serious card games!

I was in a three-bed room cabin with Young and his pal. I got on well with them though one was English and the other Scottish. Young began to take objection to poor old Gattys colour and was rude enough to mention the fact. Then he began discussions on religion and tried hard to make me angry, but he did not succeed. Many nights he had a few drinks too many and then he was particularly abusive. And then one night I decided to teach him a lesson. He had been very nasty and rude to me personally. I picked him up bodily under my arm and carried him, struggling, out into the passage way. There I pinned him firmly to the ground and pressed on his windpipe for a while! I bumped his head a few times on the ground and explained in a firm even voice that he really must learn some manners and be a good little boy in future! By this time Doyle, Mr Ballum and Stone had gathered around to see the fun and they expressed loud approval. Well, Young did become a good little boy after that and never a naughty word escaped him. It was the first time in my life

that I had ever used my strength against any man and may be it ~~was~~ ^{will be} the last. Before my tussle with Young I apologized to him because of my more powerful physique but I explained that it was very necessary to teach him his lesson!

We reached Malta in the late afternoon of the 17th. That was a glorious moment as we sailed into Valetta Harbour - large men of war, destroyers, and numerous small craft were lettered all over the place. The town seemed to rise sheer out of the water in wonderful terraces; the houses of Italian style and a peculiar stone work, light brown in colour. The gun positions looked very formidable and gave the impression that Malta really was a fortress - unlike Singapore! My disappointment was great when I learned that no shore leave would be granted. We only halted for a couple of hours and then steamed off down the Mediterranean again. I was always impressed with the very smart morning parade of the naval ratings on board. I became fast friends with three young midshipmen - the Ipswich and the Ceylon lads were my favourites. It seemed such a tragedy that such very young lads should be mixed up in a war like this. They were going out to join H.M.S. Kent which was then at Colombo and on its way home from China Station. The Ipswich had visited on

giving me dancing lessons (on paper) and even gave me a short book on dancing! I was playing lots of deck tennis and quarts - and feeling very fit. We had quite a good boxing tournament on the deck. The troops went wild with excitement and the referee's (An English Padre) decision was denisively received at times! Needless to say Paddy Doyle was one of the organisers of the tournament. I also indulged in a very rough game called deck hockey - played with any old stick and a chunk of wood!

I was looking forward to seeing Port Said which we were due to reach on 20th, but alas I did not even see it by day. We arrived in darkness, were granted shore leave till midnight, the others bottled off but I was left in bed with tonsillitis. The lads came back with very grand stories of Hungarian dancers, night clubs and cabarets and Simon Artz's famous shop. Gatty was allowed ashore, to visit Alexandria (where his people live), and then join the ship at Suez.

We entered the Canal in the early hours of the morning. The following day I was better and had my first glimpse of the Frenchman's famous masterpiece. It seemed just like any other big canal but smaller than most; on either side stretched sandy desert as far as the eye could see. Telephone wires ran all the way down the left bank and off into the desert. Small outposts appeared

at intervals all along. My made its appearance on the 22nd. We dropped the pilot and picked up Gatty in midstream without stopping a moment. We had collected some ~~page~~ passengers at Port Said and also deposited some troops for the middle east. Among these were some R.A.F. nursing sisters - who were immediately seized upon by various adoring subalterns - and a Major Bowler. The latter was in the I.M.S. (an Indian with a Scotch wife and kiddies who wore kilts!) and became boozing pals for Paddy Doyle and McCallum! He gave us a blood curdling lecture on "Snakes of India" - I only saw one snake in India and that was a tame one!

The hottest moments of my life were spent in H.M.T. Elfrick sailing down the Red Sea (well closed portholes at night). It wasn't so bad during the day, but the nights were really hell. The Red Sea is really red. It would be incredibly dull were it not for the fascination of the wild Arabic countries on either side, and even that is not often seen. We met an occasional boat northward bound but nothing exciting happened. We had our first sunset in the Red Sea; there were some good items and the genial sisters roared at the vulgar jokes.

On the evening of the 24th we reached Aden. It was dark when we arrived and so we were lighted into the harbour with shore searchlights. We leaped with joy when

we were allowed on shore for 6 hours. Off we went in a local motor boat to the pier. Our party consisted of Gatty, two hindshipmen, and myself. I was fascinated by the bazaar and all its odours. It was the real East - Arabs challenging all over the place, all eager to sell their wares to us. Their cheap silk goods were great and immediately we began buying - pyjamas, undies etc.. It was really funny doing business with the Arabs and their pidgin English; they have the invariable habit of asking triple the actual value of each article. My Ipswich friend bought a lovely silk dressing gown for his young sister - he borrowed 10/- from me which was faithfully repaid in India a month later. Having made our purchases I went in search of a telephone and after half an hour's search found me at the local police station (a small gamell up a back stairs!). I wanted to phone up Beemars Boue who was in an R.A.F. hospital at the other end of the island. The policeman jobbed away in Arabic; I found a number at last, but could only get more Arabic from the other end. I had to give up in despair in the end and content myself with a message to Boue with per another R.A.F. officer. We sped back to the boat at midnight and clambered into bed, happy and content with the world. The boat had moved off in the night and we slept on.

The sea trip from Aden to Bombay was not exciting. I was spell-bound when I gazed out across the waves and saw the rugged coast of Arabia. Its vast grey irregularity in outline has to be seen to be believed. I later saw something approaching its splendour on the North-West Frontier tribal area of India. I had many dreamy moments by night looking down at the phosphorescent glow in the spray of the waves. By day I watched the shoals of porpoise gambolling in the ocean and followed the flight of the flying fish as they sped over the surface of the waves - I often wished there a flying fish! Time passed pleasantly and quickly. Then came the eve of our arrival at Bombay - there was a tempie party and much breaking of glass and swashing of furniture by the lads (especially the Freshmen).

We anchored in the middle of Bombay harbour the following morning and awaited the tide. There was nothing spectacular to be seen, save the Taj Mahal Hotel which seemed to tower above the other buildings. We docked a few hours later. We were bombarded from above by kite hawkers (vultures) - they swooped down upon us from all angles snapping up scraps of food. We were bombarded from below by many dusky scollie lads asking for "backsheesh"! We were all dressed in our ready-made khaki duffle and topi, Sam Browne, and cane under the arm. We went ashore - the midshipmen, Gatty and I were together. How horribly damp and clammy and hot. Bombay was on 31st January while all at home were freezing in the grip of an awful winter. Before leaving the boat I

collected Rs 100 from the local bachelors. To decide what station we would be posted to, the names were drawn out of a hat - my good fortune was Rawalpindi. I made lots of enquiries and all agreed that it was about the best station in India.

The clock area was swarming with coolies - very thin men carrying enormous loads on their heads, and running too! The city seemed to teem with people; in every street we saw deformed and crippled children; at every step one was attacked by a beggar or a salesman, pressing his wares; tongas whizzed along the roads at breakneck speed - what thin, mean, scraggy beasts these tonga ponies were; oh what a motley mass of humanity surged along those streets - handsome, high caste ladies with delicate features, immaculately coloured saris, priceless pieces of jewellery on their wrists and long diamond earrings; men and women with red or green spots on their forehead or side of nose or cheek - indicating their caste; Indians dressed in Western fashion. Buses and tramcars dashed along the main streets; there were tonga and motor accidents but nobody seemed to worry if a poor woman was knocked down. The fashionable shops were there just like home but much cleaner (the rupee is supposed to be equal to $1\frac{1}{6}$ but in reality it equals $1\frac{1}{2}$!). The professional letter writers were there at their little stalls at every street corner; their patient illiterate clients standing by.

A man approached us with two baskets and plopped down on the ground. He opened one basket and a cobra popped his head out; he opened the other

basket and out dashed a mongoose and grabbed the cobra by the throat! The man separated the combatants and promised us a fight to the death if we paid him one rupee - we declined with thanks! I was eventually caught by a watch seller who dumped a dud watch on me for Rs 4. At first I found myself giving annas away to the beggars, but in the end I had to stop the practice!

I went into a ~~pepper~~ piellus with Alchason and there at the back of the Counter was a large picture of the Sacred Heart. The owner whom I thought Indian (now I know he was Anglo-Indian), said that there were many Catholics in Bombay - of course that amazed me! We had lunch at Green Hotel, which overlooks the harbour. Just across the road is a huge monument - an archway; it is symbolic of Bombay as the gateway to India. Lunch was not finished till late in the afternoon and so we went to see Greta Garbo and Ingrid Bergman in "Ninotchka". The Metropole was the most palatial cinemas I have ever been in - air conditioning, a bar, ice cream etc.! We had tea there (late tea) and then dashed back to the Ship for dinner. Later we went out again to see Bombay by night - we went to the Taj Mahal Hotel and to Green again but there was no dancing that night. We found a dancing class near the Taj. Bombay by night as seen from a tonga was a fascinating sight - the colorful scene of brilliant turbans, saris lit up by arc lamps. The temples looked weird by lamp-light, yet they were elegant too.

The following day we went sight-seeing by tonga. Of course we went into the prohibited area of the city - the streets were narrow and choc-full of Indians blocking the road and footpath. The Congress flag was displayed everywhere (Green, white & yellow! ). There were really the bazaar district the shops were open-fronted and the wares were scattered all over the pavement. I felt the tempo of the crowd as they regarded us with scornful looks - I liked them because I had so much in common with them. We visited the famous Bombay Gymkhana Club (tennis, cricket etc all being played), Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay University, and most interesting the Parsee temple. The dead are not buried here but left out in the open where vultures come and pick the bones dry! The Parsees are the wealthy merchant class; they are successful business men and very Europeanised - more than any other sect in India.

Our sight seeing was over and we went back to the Elthick for lunch. Then we were scattered to the four winds - the hindshipmen went South to Cochin to join H.M.S. Kent; Gatty went by troop train to Peshawar away in the north; Stone went by sea to Karachi to reach Quetta; Doyle, Young, Copland, Thurston and Shepherd were all due to leave for the north with me at 8 P.M. that evening on the Frontier Mail from Bombay Central Station. My bags had caused a lot of fuss at the Customs in my absence in the morning but they got through alright. Time passed quickly that afternoon as I had along chat with the S.M.S. and assistant M.O. of the ship. After an early dinner

I went off to Bombay Central Station (G.I.P.) with Young and his pal! Copland was awakened just in time to come with us - he was fast asleep in his cabin (and not too sober!). I shared a 1st Class Sleeper compartment with Doyle and Copland. We had a disturbed night even though the carriage was comfortable and the fans in full blast. In the morning we were covered with sand and dust! However after a shower we felt better. One by one the lads dropped off at the various stations until Doyle and I alone remained to spend another night on board train. The country was interesting - mud-walled villages, primitive ploughs being drawn by oxen, big cities like New Delhi, Delhi, and Lahore came and went. The last stage of my journey began when the train ^{in the morning} pulled out of Lahore. I spent those six dreary hours looking out at weird, barren, hilly, red country which was riddled with deep erosion - this was the Great Punjab one hears about! My last companion had left me at Lahore; I lunched with a young Subaltern who was on his way to Simla for skiing! I ate my lunch with a fork (horrible crime) and accepted bad coffee Louis in my change! Oh what a raw recruit I was in this India - I was like an infant among the wolves! I was joined in my compartment by a very gallant Brigadier - bull-necked, typical Indian Army. He was on his way to take over the Jhelum Brigade and he was accompanied by a terrific load of boxes and bags, golf bags, fishing tackle, and several guns! I found him very charming and we became like old friends soon.

I mentioned about skiving in Munnée - well, to explain. I had left home in mid winter shivering in my greatcoat and gloves; I was sweating in the Red Sea in shorts and shirt; I was suffocated in Bombay in my khaki drill; and now as I approached Rawalpindi I was shivering again in my greatcoat! (Munnée is the hill-station for Pindi in hot and cold seasons). As I stepped off the train at Rawalpindi I was besieged by numerous coolies, my bags were carried off to a *trai*, and off I was whisked to the "Doctor Sahib's Mess". I was not expected it seemed when I was deposited on the front door of a palatial Mess. I was made welcome by numerous young men dressed in civilian clothes - they stared at my uniform! Capt. Richards, the Secretary, showed me to my quarters (a Wana Hut); produced a bear, Yassin, for me, and made me quite at home. Richards was a Welshman, small, dark, and dapper; a Catholic who never went to Mass. a harmless lady-killer who played no games and who did not know his job. Soon I was introduced to all the members of the Mess - Lt. Col. Harris, A.D.H. Northern Command, a hale, hearty man of 45, made me doubly welcome as he was Irish-Lockstown man! We were fast friends immediately and remained so until I left India. He later went to Army H. Q. at Delhi and became A.D.H. of India. He was a M.C. and many other decorations from the last war. It seemed ridiculous that the senior officer in the Mess should be so friendly with the most junior. Next was Lt. Col. Lipscomb, Medical Specialist Northern Command. He was tall, thin, gaunt, grey, and tried to

act the part of a regular Army official. However he had the brains of a fish and Fred Harris inevitably took the wind out of his sails! He was an old man trying to be young again - played tennis poorly and golf badly and cricket awful! He did not know his medicine as he should. He got a good job in Iraq. Then I met Lt. Col. J. J. Dunn, the Women's Specialist of Northern Command. He was very small, thin, and dapper, long faced, long Roman nose, turned up. Skin to match! He was not clever and so jokes went for ever being turned upon himself. He was vain and effeminate, a good golfer, liked ladies, was insincere to quite a degree, always talking of his wife and children - as did Kipcomb. The Surgical Specialist, Major David Tetler, was a really grand chap - a first class surgeon, a good golfer, a jovial companion in the mess, a florid middle sized man of 42. He later became a full Colonel and Surgical Consultant to the forces in The Middle East. Major Taylor was the Skin and V.D. Specialist of Northern Command. He was a pleasant, good looking, pale faced, bald, Senior Major, who had no energy for anything save swelling beer and whiskey! He had a frightful temper - especially with Mess servants - I have seen him fling knives and forks around at lunch!

The Junior officers of the mess were a queer lot. Mawable was a sports friend, hockey, tennis, and cricket & golf. Always perfectly groomed and oh what a

And! Tom Fowler was a lanky Scotchman who didn't enjoy life very much at all - except for golf and whiskey! He was a down type, but decent enough. He was a camera friend but neither a doctor nor a soldier! John Mr. Glie was a loud spoken Scotchman playing at soldier but not a doctor. He was no use at games. Bell was only a kid with not much sense, plenty of cheek, and a flair for microscopes. He later got a job as pathologist in Abbottabad ^{Bombay} ~~District~~ Laboratory. Mr. Glie soon pushed off to the Frontier. I was amazed to find everyone in Muzti. Uniform was only worn till 1 P.M. daily; Muzti was compulsory on Thursday, Saturday, and Sundays! I was severely reprimanded one Thursday for failing to appear at hospital in uniform.

I reported for duty at British Military Hospital, Rawalpindi on the following morning. Col. Lang received me. He was a kindly grey haired man who made me very much at home. I was assigned my duties in the medical ward. Then off I went to District H.Q. to report to Col. Lane (P.D.M.S.); he was fat, florid, useless, but amiable. He sent me to Northern Command H.Q. where I faced the famous "Hannay the Hen" - Major General Hamilton - a steely eyed, fierce looking, efficient man who tried to weigh me up but without success. At there H.Q. I met Col. Harris and he introduced me to Major Bill Campbell M.C. & Bar, D.S.O. etc. - a Belfastman of 45 or 60 years old. He was a dashing, carelessly dressed devil-may-care man whom I admired very much.

We became good friends later. He was D.A.D. M.S. (Inst.) Lt. Col. Percival D.A.D. M.S., M.C., D.S.O., was a small sandy haired man of exceptional intelligence but no sense of humour. He was later the ADms of 9th Indian Division in Malaya (mine) and did gallant work there. I also met the Chief Warden of Woollen Command, a Cork woman! I didn't do much work that day, but met the Staff Captain - Tom White I. M.S.. He was a lazy man at District H.Q., but was a good friend to me on occasions.

I now settled down to life in an Indian Cantonment as an Army Officer. A huge bearded Sikh came along and measured me for khaki drill uniform, khaki jacket (summer and winter) - his name was Ram Singh and he was a rogue. Then I had visiting cards made "Lieutenant J.G. Murray, Royal Army Medical Corps" and popped them into those little black boxes outside each officer's bungalow "Mrs. Go-and-Sir" NOT AT HOME! Sometimes Mother Garsin did the job for me! That was "calling on people" - and I had to call on all the medical families of the district, on all the Messes and sign my name on two Generals and sign my name in the book at the gate! Oh what fertility. Typically, the Campbells had no box at the gate and invited me in for a chat. Mrs Campbell was very attractive - very dark hair (black), tall, and graceful. I was asked to drop in any time for a cup of tea

or a drink. I had many good games of tennis with them. Soon I had joined Kawaipindi Club, but only indulged in games - cricket and tennis. The counts were very fast and made of baked mud. I became no 2 tennis player to Kawaipindi and was chosen as his partner in the Kawaipindi Club championships. My cricket improved vastly and I earned quite a reputation in R.A.M.C. circles.

Hospital work was ridiculous. I would reach hospital at 9 am.; have a chat with Capt. O'Reilly (Sub Charge) M.D.; then do a round of the ward; sign a few papers, and work finished at 11 am. Not sweet tea killed time until noon; then all went off to the mess for a drink before lunch. The assistant Surgeons did all the work at the hospital. The O.A.I.M.H.S. Sisters and the officers did literally nothing! The Sisters were a queer lot - very mixed. Most of them were all out to get their man; a few were interested in nursing; and a very odd one interested in their work and in the troops who were patients. They all drank and danced and flirted. I held my own with the Tartan, was completely immune from their charming ones, ignored the fast ones, and showed only admiration (silent) for those who worked for the troops. I really got to know none of them in these first three weeks.

I made the awful mistake of saluting Capt. O'Reilly on my first day. He was not a King's Commissioned Officer. I did not then know anything about Anglo-Indians (Eurasians) and so I began questioning him about his Irish Ancestry, and suggested that they might have come from Heaven! He passed it off quite well and said that his grandfather was probably Irish. Strangely enough he was not a Catholic! Nor was Assistant Surgeon Mr. Namara! (who later joined me in Malaya). Popenia was a very good Catholic, and he was also in my Field Ambulance in Malaya.

And then one fine day I twisted my knee playing Cricket at the Club and the following day I was in hospital with Rheumatic Fever (my second bout). Col. Lepscorn was in charge of my case and he condemned me to bed for six weeks at least. Not knowing anyone in Rawalpindi I ~~never~~ had any visitors. My servant Abdul Gaffar was a treasure to me during those days of trial. Sister Iris Jones was a very kind young woman in charge of the officers' ward, but when not on duty (as I afterwards discovered) she was a very charming person indeed. Her young man was in the frontiers and she was expecting to marry him in a year's time. I did not forget to send her a wedding present on the eve of my departure from India in April 1941.

I had a boring time in bed during those six

weary weeks in bed, but after the first week I became used to it. I can only recall two patients who became good friends of mine. Oliver Walker who broke his femur in a horse accident, and Capt. Bostock R.E. who had a badly smashed elbow joint. Walker was a 2/Lt., a Gunner, and a mere lad. It was in hospital that I first met Pte. Dunhill when he was visiting Oliver. Poor chap was a 1st. in Law at London University, son of the famous Dunhill of pipe fame, and yet a mere private in the Royal Ulster Rifles, who were then stationed in Bangalore. (I was there M.O. for a couple of weeks and oh the Belfast accents were a treat to hear)! 2/Lt. Thompson Dawson (late Queens) was also in the Ulsters and he came to visit me too and brought me books to read. Capt. Walden of the Army Dental Corps brought me Auto-Bridge to play with. He was a little Wigan man who had a practice in Blackpool. I remember St. Patrick's Day amusing without Shamrocks, but it was a great day among the Ulsters. I had a special invitation to an Irish Ceilidh organised by the Red Club. I had also an invitation to dinner at their mess, but alas I missed all these treats. The Ulsters had just come down from the N.W. Frontier where they did remarkably well. Many of their best officers and men had gone home and were replaced by new recruits and conscripts.

While in hospital I experienced my first Indian dust storm. It raged for about an hour and was followed by a thunderstorm and heavy rain. The dust penetrates every hole and corner of a building - everything is saturated with dust; trying to eat food for the rest of that day is futile, because you just have mouthfuls of dust! An amazing feature of the first few minutes of the rain is that drops of mud come down instead of rain-drops!

After much trouble I managed to contact a priest and he came along to me for Confession and Communion. This brought me great joy on Easter Sunday morning. Capt. Bostwick was a very good Catholic - an old boy of Downside. Now I had felt very much in love with one of the sisters but she married another chap. He was a marvellous sportsman - polo and boxing and rugby were his speciality. He had a massive figure about 6ft 2 ins and very broad. He was killed later in an accident.

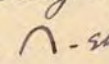
The O.C. hospital's weekly inspection was comical, with his long train of followers passing up the ward from bed to bed asking insane questions of the patients. The matron, Miss Clarke came round daily; she was a good sort and was very popular with staff and patients. Then one fine day early in April, Lt. Col. Lang came to me with a suggestion. The move to the hill station would be

taking place very soon and would I consider a post as Medical Officer in charge of some Gunners in a small station called Khyra Gali. I would soon be allowed up from bed and be ready for the journey by the 19th of the month. He explained that it was a quiet little place and would be a holiday for me as the work would be negligible. It was about 8,000 feet up and 8 miles beyond Munnec in the hills. I jumped at the offer and accepted right away.

I spent the night of 18th April in the mess and early next morning I was speeding to my new station. It was becoming hot in Pindi (100°F) and I was glad to escape to the hills. Yassin sat in the back with his luggage and mine; while I sat in front with the driver. I shall never forget that journey of 45 miles of tortuous road that ascended in a series of hairpin bends to 10,000 feet. The driver was the usual reckless Indian mechanic: the fact that the axle wheels only just cleared the edge of a precipice did not worry him in the least. The beauty of it all was not lost on me, however, because the country was lovely in the springtime.

We passed through Gora Gali, Sunningbank, and Kuldama on the outskirts of Munnec; then through quaint dirty Bagaas, through Barian and then up the hill to Khyra Gali. It was the deserted village in earnest - a few

Indians greeted us but all the buildings were shut and not a sign of white men anywhere. There were still traces of snow upon the ground as I floundered along a path to my bungalow. It was really the Assistant Surgeon's bungalow but I liked it so much that I determined to have it and not the Medical Officer's. It was a low building with two bedrooms and a sitting room; a very pretty verandah; a small front garden neatly sailed in by and overhanging a steep incline covered with pines and firs which stretched for thousands of feet below into the terraced valley. Murre could be seen among the pines on the opposite hill; the Ghelun River flowed behind another hill to the north; and then the most glorious sight of all - the Himalayas, snow capped and grand in their awful grandeur. Nanga Parbat 26,600 feet was a feast in the setting sun clearly visible 170 miles away!

The M.E.S. man room had the bungalow opened; Yassin unpacked and produced a meal somehow. I spent the afternoon and evening exploring my mountain home. I discovered that Khyapa Gali was -shaped and was isolated from the surrounding hills by the road and a huge valley all around it. It was rather barren except for the military buildings perched on its summit. I found the tiny hospital above my bungalow, the barrack room, the school house, the canteen, the married quarters.

lepper and lower - and the pretty little cemetery where several Catholics had been buried in 1860! I came across an apothecary's grave under a gnarled old oak that seems to be hundreds of years old. Infants were buried there too. That tiny graveyard could always bring me peace no matter when I visited it. I was fascinated by my little dispensary a few yards away from my bungalow.

Next day Khayra Gali came to life. The troops arrived accompanied by their families and an officer - Lt. Garnier R.A. By evening things were all settled. Garnier came round to see me and I found him very naïve - na hair, tall, broad, freckled, blue eyes, but not an ounce of sense in his head! He was mad about photography, women, and beer. He had the most remarkable little beard I have ever seen - a little old bearded man, who seemed to be forever padding around barefoot, had a red dyed beard and looked for all the world like a gnome! Garnier was the son of a Brigadier and was in the regular army. He produced some strange visiting cards which he often popped on people as a joke, such as "GARBAGE" and "GARBO". He was the S.S.O.; his battery was 23/24 Medium R.A. His C.O. came up a few days later with his wife - Major and Mary Bradshaw R.A. We all settled down to spend a delightful summer. A tennis court was fixed up and we played away at tennis every day. Dick B. and his wife, Mary, were quite expert tennis players

James was hopeless and so were the other ladies in the station. I was a match for Dick and Mary, but with James as my partner they always won! We had dances about twice a week but I rarely went to them except when dinner - and then I resisted dancing with the beautiful Mary. The latter was an English blonde, average height, thin and blue eyes. When Dick was busy he would urge me to take his wife for a walk - I did once but only under protest. I am still old fashioned about walking in the wilds with another man's wife! Mary was too broad-minded and I did not like her sex conversation when in mixed company.

Khyra Gali was no exception to the usual hill station in India. There were the usual scandals among the men and the wives (whose husbands were on the plains!). The R.M.R. had a company and all the families down at Banian - so they came up to our place quite often. Algic Semhill came to see me a lot and I was glad of his company. I had some marvellous tennis at Banian with Capt. Ledingham, his wife, Mrs. Christie Miller, and Major Morrison R.M.R. Ledingham was Scottish, 6ft. 2ins, red hair, very thin; he was Medical Officer at Banian commanding the hospital there. He was an excellent tennis player, but I managed to beat him when I was in form. I always went down to Banian in a pony ^(a taxi) all dressed up in my frock (Queen's) blazer and white stockings. I loved those tennis parties - especially

the ride back home up the hill. The sun would be setting behind those terrific mountains and the lone pine of Chongpa Gali looked so stately and grand, ^{perched} away up on top of the hill. I always felt like singing cowboy songs on those delightful occasions!

My morning shopping was amusing. The butcher, the baker, and the fruiterer came with their baskets and I sat in my verandah and brought sufficient for the day! At times I went to Munnec with Garbo and Bradshaw and bought a few things. We had some anxious evenings at Bradshaw's place listening to the war news, the fall of France, and Dunkirk! On one such occasion my bungalow was broken into and I returned to find the rooms in chaos, a suitcase missing, my Queen's blazer gone, not to mention blankets and equipment. Of course the thieves were never traced nor was my stuff! I always looked forward to the arrival of water each morning on mules. The latter were wonderful animals for that hilly country, though they occasionally bolted down the hill!

I had some wonderful walks in those days, along the "pipe line". This was a narrow path along the face of the mountains which connected Khyra Gali to Ghora Saka, and Khanspur (two small hill stations). It was at the former that I discovered Fr. Murphy and his lovely little church which was built by an Irish Regiment in India!

He was a little grey-haired man of pleasant countenance and charming manners. We had Mass once while I was in Rhyra Gali, in the Schoolhouse.

There was quite a sensation in my front lawn one afternoon when a theeny fat little man arrived panting and clumping, sat down in the grass, pulled off his shoes and socks, tossed the latter over the railings down into the Khudd! "I am Lewis from Khauspur - can you lend me a pair of decent socks? I have blistered feet!" He was followed by a charming little wife, dark, thin, and neat. They were both so full of life and yet they had their porous in a little boy who was constantly throwing fits. We had a heano in the Kanteen and off they tramped back home again. Poor Bluff Lewis later became D.A.D. in S. to Col. Percival in my division (9th Indian) and was shot by a Japanese on the night the British capitulated in Singapore (February 15th 1942).

I had some lovely nights in my verandah, but I had company always in my Swallows who were nesting there. They built marvellous mud baked affairs. Soon they produced young ones and I had a busy time feeding them with scraps. I also loved watching the ants at work - I often wished that I could work so hard. I experienced the worst thunderstorms of my life perched upon Rhyra Gali hill. I have never known anything so violent.

In one storm one of my out-houses was struck by lightning and burned to the ground; hailstones came down as big as small marbles and wind whirled around the house at terrific speed.

I got on rather well with the men of 23/24 and 19th Indian Batteries and the families. There were many Irish among them. Bombardier Wright hailed from Ballymena Carrat, but we became good friends. He was an expert cook and made me ~~very~~ wonderful iced cakes regularly. I had grand fun in my monthly sanitary inspection of the area. The bazaar tea shops were always very dirty and so I had a hectic time chasing the owners up to keep them clean. Many of the local Indians came to my dispensary for treatment and they always had the best I could give them. I remember one bad eye case - a young girl brought along by her father. It is most unusual among Mohammedans as the women are in purdah always. I managed to cure her trouble and save her eyesight - and they were grateful. A funny sight among the married troops was that of the Anglo-Indian wives and very dark coloured children. How these men could bring mixing in themselves and children by such marriages is beyond my comprehension. It is a big problem among troops in India. The men have absolutely no social contacts with young white girls and so they turn to the next best thing.

I had eight retainers attached to my "hospital" dandy-coolies who hailed from Poonah, a native state nearby which was ruled by a Rajah. Their duty was to transport urgent cases in the dandy down the hill to Banian. Their pay was 10 Rupees per month (15/-)! Of course they had nothing to do all day long. They made an imposing picture squatting there on the Khadd-side gazing down into the valley and to the Himalayas beyond. They would sit in little groups like that for hours in complete silence. I often wondered what they were dreaming of and what wonderful philosophy lay behind those rugged, weather-beaten faces. I had often yearned for a small cottage away on a hilltop far from the world and here at last I had found it and loved it as much as I know I would.

I had one grand inspection by the ADms (Col. Cane) and the D.A.D.H. (Major Karama I.M.S.) and it went off in grand style. My rest cure was complete and I was ordered to report at Rawalpindi on July 10th. "Garto" arranged a truck for me all the way and so I had no troubles en route. It was a marvellous ride down the hill to the plains; but not so pleasant when the hot air reached my nostrils. The temperature was only 110°F and oh it was like a hot oven. (The average hill temperature 30 miles away was 80°F).

I found many changes at the mess and the hospital when I arrived there. Marable had gone home; Col. Dunn had gone to Quetta; and many others had gone to the Frontier. A new comer in Lt. John Frank F.R.C.S. Ed. had arrived from England with a batch of E.C.Os, including Lt. Fletcher from Queen's (Belfast)! I was appointed M.O. to the 1st Devonshire Regiment at Victoria Barracks; the East Yorks were at West Ridge (Connaught Barracks). I had also a job at the hospital in the Medical Ward. I got in some tennis and cricket during my brief stay of 12 days - and a few visits to the Club. I did not see much of the Secms' officers until I was detailed to accompany them to Abbottabad on July 22nd.

I entrained with the regiment late in the evening and amid dreadful confusion we were off at midnight. We had little sleep of course en route. Abbottabad could not be reached by train, so we got off at a small station 15 miles from it at 5 a.m. We had tea and a biscuit at the station. About 50 men were transported by trucks in relays while the rest marched. An ambulance car was waiting for me and I had a seat all the way at the rear of the column. We picked up a few men who collapsed on the way, but otherwise nothing eventful occurred till we reached Abbottabad (about 4000 feet above sea level). The monsoon had arrived and

So we were greeted with torrential rain as we passed
 through the bazaar of the town and halted at the foot
 of a hill. We were met by hundreds of mules and
 Gorkhas who transported all our sodden baggage up the
 hill to the plateau on top where our camp was supposed
 to exist. The site was waterlogged and we just milled
 around in mud and water all that day trying to
 sort things out. We had a miserable supper and went
 to bed in just blankets. My ~~camp~~ ^{wooden chappoy} ~~bed~~ was useful at
 least because sleeping on the ground was unthinkable. Yet
 the troops had to do it! It took about four days for the
 camp to settle down! Then I began to be busy and take
 stock. I soon realised that the Devons were in a bad way.
 The C.O. (Col. Cope) was tall, thin, prominent teeth, no
 skin, no character, had a dreadful stammer - not an
 ideal leader of men. Major Bouille was old, drunken, and
 decrepit; an old Hamorian! Capt. Chumondly Coleridge
 (the G.O.C.'s nephew) was an old Etanian with nothing in
 his young head. Capt. Paul Gleadell was an old boy of
 Downside, a company commander of no mean ability,
 very popular, and a strong character. We became
 good friends immediately. He was born in Virginia and
 was married to a retired Colonel's daughter (Mary); their
 only child was named Virginia! Another drunken Major
 was in charge of a company. The younger officers were
 mostly Emergency Commissioned Officers; they were good
 chaps on the whole - Tom Lockton, a famous Oxford
 athlete (hurdler); Sandy - the T.P.O.; Lewis my best friend.

There was perpetual war between the regulars and the E.C.O.s - and a very unhappy mess. Of course I sided with the latter. I soon discovered that the M.O. is a very independent person in a regiment - he can even tell the C.O. where he gets off! Percy Hurran (the D'Israeli) was a gem in the crowd.

The regiment went into training for 6 weeks in mountain warfare prior to their departure for the H.W. Frontier. I naturally concluded that I was elected to accompany the unit to their final destination when training would be completed. My daily routine became heavier each day. The men were in poor shape and so there was much illness during the early days - also much malingering! The sanitation had to be carefully watched especially when under canvas. Added to my many duties was one more - M.O. in charge of the new British wing at the local Indian Military Hospital. We were the first British troops ever stationed at Abbottabad; the place was over-run with 4,000 Gurkhas, many Sikh Gunners etc. The local M.H. was four miles away and I spent the whole of the forenoon there. Col. Cope placed a regimental charger at my disposal daily for the trip up and down the hill. I was given a wonderful shortcut charger which I had difficulty in holding in check. I had many a wild gallop up that hill. I always had a supply of brown sugar handy from the syce (Indian) (L.G. Room) and my gallant heart was ever grateful.

The C.O. of the hospital was Col. van Rensselaer, a South African. He was quite a good type of Indian Army man, with wonderful stories of shikar and duels with tigers and numerous wild beasts. He was in the I.M.S. of course as were all the M.O.s at the hospital. The 2nd in command was a Major I.M.S. - an Irishman with a fund of good humour, too fond of a drink, and not much medical knowledge in his head. Capt. Henderson was in charge of the Bazaar Laboratory - a club man with fair hair and bright blue eyes, a real lady killer. The thousands of huge brown ants that swarmed all over his lab did not seem to worry him in the least. Capt. Taylor was a quiet lad, newly wed, a Scot, and a Damer! He was quite decent to me, and gave me many lifts from the hospital to the bazaar in his car. He went away early on leave for a month and I was left with the Indian surgical ward + the British officers' families wing. Things ran well in the nurses' ward thanks to a few capable R.A.M.C. orderlies. The local officers (British) with the Indian troops were a nuisance. There was one nice lad, an Irishman, called Monaghan - he was in the 6th Gurkhas. The Indian ward was the most shocking mess I have ever seen - chaos everywhere; no decent orderlies; no decent attention; everything dirty. I saw some interesting cases in the ward, such as Guinea worm in the leg. It burrows

its way under the skin right up the leg for 18 inches. At its point of eruption it can be twisted around a match stick. Oh! what a hospital and what awful medical treatment is meted out to Indian troops. Taylor left me with a case of Typhoid - an officer's wife; and a couple of maternity cases.

Col. van Rensselaer was not really commanding the hospital - his wife was the C.O.! Oh how that woman could talk and lay down the law and interfere in things that did not concern her around the hospital. I only paid two visits to their bungalow, and both were informal. I was given a cordial invite to come often but did not avail myself of the freedom of that home.

That long winding path up the hillside to the camp fascinated me. The lower half of the hill was covered with wild vines and bunches of green grapes hung everywhere. The upper half was wild and barren, with hairpin bends galore, but the mountain scenery in the distance was very pretty. There was a quaint native village about half-way up the incline, but oh! it was dirty. The streets must have been the narrowest in all the world - the basements above almost made an archway over the thin ribbon of a path below. The tiny children would scamper off at our approach and hide in the folds of their mothers voluminous pogganas.

It was in Abbottabad that I saw the smartest soldiers in the world - the Gurkhas. They were small, muscular, well-set, mongolian looking, and ever cheerful. They were good footballers, good pipers, and were very prolific - there seemed to be dozens of children in each family. They were officered by Britishers. I was intrigued with their luxuriant officers' mess (6th Gurkhas) - there seemed to be silver trophies everywhere and the walls were studded with fantastic antlers of various wild beasts of the Himalayas. They had a wonderful record on the H.W. Frontier against the Pathans of the border - those tall sinewy musclemen from the hills.

I paid about two visits to the local club with the younger officers. We had a swim on one occasion but it was a dirty pond, and so we found it rather flat. I managed one game of tennis. There was the usual mob of young females trying to look braver and masculine, and many old females trying to look young! And all the while young beardless males kept buzzing around the ladies, like bees around honey! The more pedate colonels sat around the swimming pond sipping beer and chatting scandal among themselves. What a life the Anglo-Indian leads in India. Sunday morning is the highlight of the week in the local club - the swimming pond is crammed full. Scores of people are sitting around drinking and admiring. Give me dear old Ireland any day of the week! Abbottabad itself

was dull and thank Heaven I hadn't any spare time to devote to it. The mess was quite jolly in the evenings with the younger officers. Percy Moran became a major one fine day and invited us all down to his tent for a party and a sing-song. We had a wonderful night of it; no regular officers had a privation so we cut loose. Percy was very fat, very fair moustache, very red faced, stumpy, and wheezy - and boy! could he drink. But he was one of the jolliest men I ever met.

Time passed very quickly and the end came on August 28th when an order came from the A.D.M.s, Rawalpindi District, appointing "Lieut. F. J. Murray R.A.M.C. as Officer Commanding B.M.H. Bannian". Col. Vaneeman arranged a truck for me and I was rushed off to the nearest station en route for Rawalpindi. On arrival at Pindi I stayed a night at the mess and next morning the faithful Gassier and I were off to the Munsie Hills again. Ledingham and his wife greeted me at Bannian in the bungalow which I was to take over from them. They were very decent to me, showed me around, gave me many tips about the place, and also presented me with a cushion. There was much furniture in the bungalow which they had hired from Pindi, so I just kept it on.

Baniam has been rated by many as the prettiest hill station in India. Certainly I have never seen anything to equal its quiet beauty. Pine trees, green verdant grass, and flowers every where. My bungalow had 11 rooms; a beautiful garden in full bloom in front. This gradually sloped away down into a valley between the hills. Rawalpindi could be seen as a blue haze down in the hot plains; at night it looked like springland with its lights dancing in the distance. There was a marvellous old tree right in the centre of the lawn whose branches gave wonderful shade in the heat of the day - it seemed to cover the entire lawn. There were two very annoying cicadas in that same tree and for hours on end they would scream forth their awful din. It was heavenly in that garden. About 20 yards away to the right was my tennis court. To reach it I had to walk through a tiny lopsie sloping away from the lawn.

The hospital was situated in terrace form away above the bungalow on the side of a hill. Besides catering for the troops at Baniam, Khayra Gali, Changa Gali, it was also the Rawalpindi (Munee) V.D. Hospital. There were few patients in hospital ever. My routine was - sick parades for troops in Upper and Lower Baniam; hospital rounds; families sick parade at Families Hospital followed by rounds there. Then one hour's office work - signing letters and routine orders. Then followed a pleasant morning on my front lawn under the tree, which began with tea and cakes provided by Yassin. On the evenings I have had

As I lay on my back looking up into that leafy wilderness, everything was so beautiful and peaceful and quiet.

My assistant at the hospital was Mr. Worral, an Anglo Indian. He had a very dark wife and many dark children. He was fat and jolly and had a forgetful stomach. He was efficient and kindly to the natives. One of his boys was a very good tennis player and I had many good games with him. There were about 10 Romc. orderlies working in the hospital and a regiment of Indians - ward servants, phistis, cholies, sweepers etc. There was a nice old woman as Matron in the Families hospital and she had two native Ayahs to assist her. We had a Mohammedan mosque in the hospital grounds and morning and evening I loved to hear the call to prayer. It is a very thrilling thing to hear - very impressive indeed. There were General Chowkidars (night watchmen) attached to the hospital and one always slept in a charpoy in my front verandah. One dark night he raised the alarm that a thief was breaking into the house. Yassin was out in a flash and captured the would be thief. Of course he pleaded innocent and was let off when he had bribed the local policeman. I had a wonderful scene with the latter gentleman who called me an Englishman and the boss.

My bungalow overlooked the road connecting Upper with Lower Banian, though the hospital and my abode were in Upper Banian. A small detachment of the Royal Mstrs Rifles still remained in Upper Banian with the families, to protect them. Numerous many of them

got very special attention! Major Morrison was in charge of the detachment. He was a hearty red nosed, heavy looking man with spectacles; he had tireless energy and was for ever marching his men up hill and down dale. He was not married. Mrs. Christie-Mueller and baby lived with Mrs. Ledingham and baby in a bungalow nearby. The former was wife of the adjutant of the regiment. Mrs. McCallum, who was Catholic, lived with her very eligible daughter in another bungalow. Her husband was the Quartermaster of the regiment. Both she and her daughter were good Catholics; Mrs. Christie-Mueller had been a Catholic at one time but had ~~turned~~ ^{fallen} away. She was a daughter of the Macdonalds of Gligo and was brought up in a convent. The Mothers had gone off home early in the hot season, leaving the families to follow later. There were sports grounds, a Cinema, a Canteen and a dance hall in Upper Beniam - so that there was lots of amusements.

Lower Beniam had the families of the 5th Field Regiment and one Battery housed there. I later met the 5th Field in Malaya at Kuantan and later I was their Medical Officer in Changi where we were P.O.W.s. Capt. Dick Pearson was the S.S.O.. He had a very charming wife and a lovely child. Mrs. Mueller and I had some grand games of tennis with them, both on my court and in Lower Beniam. They were an ideal couple and were very much in love. Poor Dick tried hard but never succeeded in gaining his majority. He was surprised to find me a Major in Malaya. I had many tennis

with Major Munro, who was poor, and Jones, with Mrs. Hedingham and Mrs. Miller.

I went on several route marches with Major Munro and his lads. I revelled in them. I remember one march in which we ran all the way up Jacob's Ladder. This was a narrow path which seemed to ascend up to the heavens from the road to the top of a hill. It was about 1 mile long! At the top we found an old Sangar (a fort surrounded by boulders). Here we had a shot-putting contest, which I won very easily, much to the surprise of Munro who thought I was soft. We had another grand march over the hills beyond Changla Gali. There we had tea and macaroons in the bazaar - the best macaroons in the world, all have declared. It was pleasant to come back to my bungalow, a nice fire, and the ever ready Gopin with tea and cakes. We had a lantern in the hospital grounds run by Kartar Singh of Rawalpindi. He had a long flowing grey beard and was very decent to me. He could produce anything for me at a moment's notice, from Benger's Chocolate to Wall's Sausages! I continued to patronise him on my return to Pindi.

My faithful friend at this time was "Algy" Semhill. I furnished all regulations and entertained him daily at my bungalow. He was very grateful, because his barrack-room pals were rather tough. We often went to the Cinema together, and had many pleasant walks in the vicinity of Banar. I got on well with all the men and their families. Mrs. C. Miller had several cocktail

parties at which I solemnly ate the dainty snacks, speared
 tiny sausages, and sipped orange juice or lime juice! After a
 very hectic party at which James took floodlight snaps, we
 all went off to a dance in the local hall. The troops
 and their families were there en masse from all the Gais.
 As is the custom with R.U.R. dances, several Irish dances
 are included in the programme. I danced an 8-hand reel
 with Miss McCallum, her mother having refused to take
 the floor! The troops could not understand how I came
 to know anything about Irish dancing.

One day I paid a visit to Mume and called
 in to see Mr. D. Donohue at the Chapel. I found him in
 wonderful form. I went up to the B.M.H. and saw
 Lieut. Frank in there as a patient with jaundice. He
 asked if he could come up to Banian and spend his
 convalescence there and I assented joyfully. A few days
 after this Fr. Murphy arrived in Banian from Gwa. Daka.
 I always revered his brass. He stayed a few days as my
 guest in my bungalow. There was a christening one
 morning of John Thomas Coyle and I was selected as
 godfather. His mother was a pleasant little woman who
 hailed from Harwill St. (Falls Road). I rushed off to
 Mume and bought a silver drinking cup for my god-
 child and had it inscribed suitably. They were very
 pleased with the gift. I was invited to the celebrations
 after the christening and sat with Fr. Murphy in a
 small kitchen eating cake and sipping lemonade!!

The most pleasant change at Barian was the arrival of John Frank at my bungalow. At first he was rather weak and had difficulty in walking, but when he had found his legs we had some marvellous walks together. It was then that I really explored the surrounding country. John was a very keen photographer and it was he who made me interested in this hobby and later persuaded me to buy a good camera. One day we went out in the fields below Lower Barian when we came across an old farmer putting his Indian Corn ($4\frac{1}{2}$ ft high). He presented us each with a corn cob. It was my first time to see the like and I soon found that we liked it as a sauce on toast in the evenings at dinner! We spent hours gazing down into those fathomless valleys and looking at the snow capped Himalayas on the horizon.

Then came the sad news that the "Wolters" were bound for home. They all packed up in a hurry; piled into buses and off they went one fine morning down the hill to Rawalpindi. Garbo, Frank, and I went by car as far as Murree. Then John Frank went away back to duty in the plains after 2 weeks stay with me. Oh it was lonely without Denhill, John, and everyone. Barian was silent and deserted like Goldsmith's village. Dick Pearson and his wife went away too as did Mrs. Ledingham. My last fortnight was very dull and I was not sorry to get the word to move everything to Lidi in October 19th 1940. And so it happened. Garbo

provided a truck for my convenience. A man arrived from Rawalpindi by bullock-cart a few days earlier and carted away his furniture down the hill again. It takes about 3 days to do the journey of 32 miles by bullock cart!

I found Pindi much as I had left it, except that some young blood had been added to the huss. Col. Dunn had gone and I was given his palatial suite of rooms in the huss. Everything in the rooms was green with a fine edge of gold. I went out and bought some Chinese prints with which to cover the walls. I bought a Golden Buddha, wood carvings, Chinese horses in series, white ivory elephants etc. I procured a Kashmiri Silk tea set and bed spread and many things which would make the place presentable. I had the lighting altered and a nice standard lamp installed. I found myself still attached to the medical work at the hospital and medical officer to the Royal Signals (District, Brigade, Divisional, Command Signals) and also to the Indian Army Ordnance Corps and families. As well as this I found myself the Quartermaster of the hospital! I was responsible for supplying food; all stores were on my charge; all the drugs and clothing! So I had a busy morning with all my various duties. There was never a dull moment during the next few months.

I had only been a few days in Pindi when I had a cable from my father telling me about mother's death. (I have never found out the cause of her death) It

just broke my heart to think that my beloved mother had died and I so far away from home. The greatest regret of my life was that I had not become reconciled to her before her death. We had become estranged while I was working in Birmingham and it was a slip of a girl and her mother who really caused it + my stupid infatuation and blindness. Thank God she thought more kindly of me just before she died - more kindly than I ever deserved. Her dying wish was that I should marry Eileen O'Kane (this was unknown to me at the time). Thank God I was sensible enough to send Eileen my love in a Christmas card from Priddy, which changed my entire life.

To relieve my mind I kept going all day long. All afternoon I spent playing tennis, cricket, or cycling. I found a new tennis opponent in Robertson, a dour Scotswoman from Edinburgh. He was tall, dark, expressionless, mean, but quite good at heart. I always managed to beat him. I became No. 1 tennis and cricket player among the R.A.M.C. officers and men. I was selected to play for Rawalpindi Cricket Club against Peshawar. I bought a new cricket bat (Canon) and I still treasure it. I had my Stayerzger vacuum resting and went Great Guns.

John Frank aroused my interest in photography and persuaded me to invest in a Voigtlander camera for 90 Rs. That little camera brought me more pleasure than words can tell.

Even keeps me a very nice

I just went around and snapped everything that came my way. I took a snap of my white elephants as they went trooping by in my deck.

I was present at some wonderful guest nights in the mess when high ranking military men were entertained. I had Paul Gleadell as my guest one night and he did enjoy himself. The dinner was always a spectacular affair. The massive trophies of silver down the centre of the long table; the brilliant columns of the mess ~~plate~~ kits; the rows of medals and decorations; the excellent food and wines - all made guest night a very delightful affair. One's guest always sat at his host's right hand. Paul looked very striking in his green and white coloured mess kit. There was always a spirit of good fellowship on guest nights - maybe it was the atmosphere, maybe it was the wine. When the port stage was reached there was the usual toast of "Gentlemen - the King!" proposed by the most junior member of the mess (which was myself once) and seconded by the senior dining member. After dinner drinking proceeded till well after midnight. Many games were improvised for the evening - some of them quite rough! I managed always to keep my head clear and watch the whole scene very impersonally.

I went a few times to the America and saw "Gone with the Wind"; "Down Argentine Way" etc

When sleep was a very scarce commodity

There was a good spot in the Cantonment for having supper called "Ganis". Ganis weight ^{was} about 16 stone but oh what excellent steaks he could produce - his mixed grills were delicious. He also had all kinds of slot machines. I met Garbo down there a few times. I went to the club a few times for dinner, but never bothered about dancing even though there were Sister ~~there~~ present.

I was invited to many cocktail parties - Col. Cairn, General Campbell. Huns, Campbells, Halls, Ledingham, Percivals etc.. I met some very nice people among the Signals - Col. and Mrs. W. Sweeney, Tim Fegan and Dot Fegan (Capt. Wk. & Mrs. Fegan), Paul Gambier of the fierce moustache and horses, Capt. & Mrs. Taylor, Col. & Mrs. Stevens (Ordnance). But my best friends were Major Paul Gleadell, and many met to mention Virginia, their daughter. I had never met many before but on first acquaintance I thought she was the most charming little wife I had ever seen, that was only confirmed by time. I spent many happy evenings with them. It was the happiest home I have ever been in - they were both good Catholics. Somehow they were always smiling - and it was not always pretence, there was something good about them that outshone anything I had
 ever seen in a woman.

ever encountered in a married couple before. The Tegans were a jolly couple too, but they were more ~~elderly~~ elderly (both about 45); Tim had risen from the ranks to be a Capt. and later a Major at Army H.Q. in New Delhi. Dot was a bit neurotic and imagined she had got all kinds of diseases. Dot fed me very well when I visited them which was very often. They had an excellent cook who made marvellous fudge of which I absorbed great quantities.

I played much tennis with Major and Mrs. Percy, Major and Mrs. Wall, the Crealays, and many officers and wives of the 18th Indian Cavalry. I had tea very often at Hall's as their bungalow was quite near to the Club. They had an adorable child called Jennifer - I had grand times playing with her! Jimmy Hall played quite good tennis in spite of his artificial leg. He was one of the best and kindest R.A.M.C. officers I ever met. He later went to A.H.Q. (India).

Then came December with the rapid expansion of the Indian Army. Field hospitals and Field Ambulances sprang up all over the country. Robertson was called into the 27th Field Ambulance with Major Benson R.A.M.C. in command. The former lasted four days when Benson had him discharged and I was selected in his place. I became 2nd in command. There were 6 other Indian Medical Officers (I.M.S.) + 1 Transport Officer (R.A.S.C.)

Even kept me a very close - on my toes!

The officer in charge of training was Capt. Gamble M.C., a Canadian. Benny was a queer mixture - regular army officer, conversation very slow, sandy moustache, reddish face, no chin to speak of; a good fellow - fond of gin and horses - hunted a lot with Poshawar Vale Hunt. He was a bit of a bore. I remained with him until January 19th 1942 and at times he drove me mad with his indecision and muddle-headedness.

We went into intensive training with our bunch of new recruits - Indians just left their native villages. We had hours of drill on the "Square", which was a brown dusty area above the golf course; we had long weary route marches through quaint mud villages, over hill and dale (mullah), off the beaten track where there were no roads. Our usual march was 20 miles. Of course the men could not keep in step. At first Benny accompanied me at the head of the column but soon he did not come on any more marches and until the end of the Ambulance course I led all the troops! There was stretcher drill, first aid drill, field ambulance administration practice, tactical manoeuvres etc. We were all under canvas, but for the first two months we lived at the Rangoon Mess. When I was orderly officer I had to sleep in camp and oh it was cold those nights with no fire. I had a wonderful sleeping bag which brood. I made for me - camel hair, soft, and warm. Still Bengalis turning out the Guard morning and evening; they presented arms ~~off~~ with their "hookies" (a thick short bladed, curved sabre - a Gurkha invention for cutting heads off). We had every known Indian caste with us - Mohammedans, Hindus, Sikhs, Dogras, Pathans, Gurkhas, Nepalese, Christians, English, Anglo-Indians, Malwates, Tamils. We had to have several cookhouses - one for each caste! On my rounds as orderly officer I was not allowed to enter these cookhouses. When sleep was a nightmare on my mind it was!

- I could only peer through the doorway and never could see much because of the smoke (never any thinners or winders). Brades being 2nd in command I was O.C. H.Q. company and also Quartermaster and Sports Officer. I organised football and baseball matches and always took part in them. The Indians were very keen on volley ball and basket ball. Sridharan (Lt) was a very good footballer from Madras University. He was O.C. "A" company; a good lad; educated at a college run by Italian priests. He was quite Westernised. Lt. Jetley was a fanatical Brahmin; who had not slept in a bed until he was 24 years old! Palmer was a Sikh - not a bad fellow, though his long black beard was quite terrifying at first. Laher was educated by an Irishman - he was a dapper, fair complexioned Parsee from Bombay. Bawa was a Sikh of high caste who had shaved his beard off and smoked heavily. He was forever titting and he spoke with a lisp. Then came the mighty Onora - a great hulking brute of a man, with a small heart and a big appetite and a loud mouth! I took many snaps of the men in camp and out on the march. We had an exciting time at West Ridge with the Coast Yorks where we had a revolver course (.45) for 10 days - I qualified with honours!

On the social side I was playing much cricket and tennis. I was selected as no. 1 tennis officer for the R.A.M.C. officers & sergeants tennis tournament. I won all my matches, singles and doubles. We were entertained to tea, and lots of dainties by the families - I enjoyed the feast very much and was reluctant to leave. I saw a lot of Paul and Mary in those days too and paid many visits to the Pegans and MacQuinnys who lived near our camp. I went to a few parties at Gambles where I met Gambles wife - a very talkative American lady of 33 years.

When reports were made very soon after my return.

She had a caustic tongue but oh what awful taste - Land!
The General (Campbell-Henro) made eyes at her but that
helped Gamble a lot!

Christmas was coming and I made my preparations.
I had sent brass cards home - one to Eileen. Then I bought
Jennifer a beautiful doll; for Virginia it was a nice
fluffy, cuddly, white doggie. Those were my two best
gifts! Paul and Mary invited me to spend Christmas
night with them and have dinner + a few games. I was
so very pleased and accepted gladly. I began my day with
midnight brass. It was bitterly cold as I set out in my
bike for church. Oh what a lovely scene that was; I was
sad unto tears and yet I was happy in a way. I felt so
lonely sitting there thousands of miles from home and
very little chance of going back soon. Mr. O'Donoghue
said mass and preached a lovely sermon. Paul and Mary
greeted me outside when all was over and that made my
heart glow. I sped back to the brass on my bike, collected
Virginia's present, and went off to Gleadell's house. I
kipped along the edge of the gravel path and placed the
dog on the front verandah and then slipped off into
the night. It seemed that Virginia tottered outside next
morning and discovered her doggie; she was overjoyed and
hugged it. They didn't know whence came the present
because I signed it "Uncle". Many days later I told them.

After the usual morning greetings to all in the brass
I went off to the hospital with John Frank; we saw all the
patients and sisters and the lovely decorations. Then we were
dragged off to the families' quarters and had to have a drink
and cake at each house (and there were a dozen of them).
Then we helped to carve the Christmas turkey for the
patients. Back to the brass we went feeling the worse for
even sleep in a very nice room - very nice indeed!

break and had lunch at 3 p.m. Off I went to the hospital again and had tea there with the doctors and sisters. Then we visited the R.A.M.C. Mess with Col. Crealey and the sisters who were brave enough. We helped serve the B.O.R.s, turkey and some other pudding. Speeches were made and toasts proposed. I sped back to the mess again and dressed hurriedly for dinner, dashed off to the party at Opleadells. It was a small affair Paul, Mary, Paul Gambier, another young married woman whose husband was overseas, and myself. We each had a small gift on our plate as we sat down to a marvellous dinner - mine was a small notebook and pencil (made in Japan!). We had card games and house games after dinner. I enjoyed myself among my friends and went back to bed happy.

The Christmas spirit lasted for several days and then came the New Year. I was invited by Col. and Mrs. Perceval to spend New Year's Eve at their party. I went there with Col. Harris and found quite a crowd - Major & Mrs. Percy, Lucy Sheridan, and one more couple besides our hosts. We had a wonderful feast and some hectic games afterwards. Then as the Old Year was ringing out we sang in the new one with Aida Lang Syne. The party lasted an hour after that. Mrs. Perceval was great fun - an Australian by birth; old "Percy" himself had not a shred of humour in his soul! Fred Harris spent the evening roaring with laughter, which became infectious.

About 10 new sisters had arrived from England in the Autumn and of course the officers of Pindi made a big fuss over them. I created an unfordable mine by taking four of them + Carroll and Orchard to a Corporal's dance in the Signals' lines. I had always felt so very sorry for B.O.R.s in India - they were cut off completely from all social contact with females of their own age. The lads at this dance had a glorious time dancing with the nurses and the latter declared they had never enjoyed a dance so much! Of course my good intentions were frowned upon by the hospital people because Army Sisters rank as officers and so they must not

Wear skirts in a mess hall or anywhere else!

dance with the lower ranks! All these young sisters either married off or became engaged - forgetting why they were sent out to India! My best friends among the older sisters were Carroll (Pier) and Orchard (Australian). The latter went to Peshawar; the former to Singapore where I met her doing gallant work in the theatre under shell fire. Alas she was killed escaping from Singapore when her ship was sunk and all the sisters machine-gunned in the water.

I had an awful ordeal before Christmas when I was asked to lecture to V.A.D. nurses in first aid. It was my first experience as a lecturer and I was humbly self conscious - whether the young ladies knew it or not I do not know - but it was a nightmare. Mrs. Barlow, a general's wife was the murder! Gail there.

There were many dances and parties at this time and oh it was so very far removed from war. People behaved as if the war did not count at all. ~~Then I was suddenly uprooted from my pleasant surroundings and posted to the 27th Indian Field Ambulance.~~ I spent many cold nights sleeping under canvas. I learned to love my work, the route marches, and the hard training. We had a remarkable house at West Ridge with the East Yorks Regiment. The C.O. of the 27th was Lt. Col. Horace Claude Benson R.A.M.C.; not much personality or drive. I was made 2nd in Command and promoted A/Major. To celebrate I threw a party and we had a terrific night - all my friends were there. Fred Harris, then a Colonel; later became D.M.S. with 19th Tank of Lt. General. Had grandly letters from him after the war. Given slept in a haystack in my life.

This letter sent on 29 Dec. 1940

And now came the most important
 period of my life - a letter arrived on 26 Feb.
 1941 from Eileen O'Kane^{with love}. After many years of
 Silence and Repentance I had sent her a RASC
 Christmas Card¹⁹⁴⁰. The ice had been broken at
 last. ~~She had written to me if I was still~~
~~retained in the same place and to~~
~~get my card and I found it in my pocket~~
~~but I had not time to write her~~
~~but I had not time to write her~~
 packed pages, full of love and joy - and got
 a sadness that we were 7,000 miles apart
 at this moment of jubilation. We first met
 in Rosaport (Gueltact) ¹⁹²⁹ at a Caliche in
 Coláiste Brígidⁿ; when I saw her across a
 crowded room and knew then, even then
 that this was my girl. I connived in
 every possible way to get messages to her
 at her ~~school~~ boarding school in
 St. Louis Convent, Kilkeel. I met her at
 parties ^{at} McHabb's in Castlewellan.
 Even slept in a haystack one night there!

Any dodge to be with my Goddess. This was
a very simple, idealistic love - no courtship
no kissing! It appeared that she was
touched of my earnestness. At Queens
I found out her subjects, and the times
she was leaving - and I managed to way lay
her as often as possible, accidentally or purpose.
^{And then we drifted apart}
~~I was not to be so foolish and that~~
~~she did not wish to be subjected to my~~
~~attention any more.~~ So while I remained
at Queens I saw her at times - but only
from afar. I walked many miles a week
ostensibly to visit the Falls Park, but
really it was so that I could pass her
house at 195 Springfield Road.

I was in Dublin once playing
football for Queens in the Sigerson Cup
and bought her glass beads and a small
brooch - ~~with~~ the beads were blue & clear

but they were Sapphires & Diamonds in my
 memories! Where did the money come from?
 By walking from Beerhead to Queens daily
 and skimping on lunches! I just idolized
 that girl of mine. Everyone knew that
 I loved Helen (all, that is, except Helen). I felt
 very bitter about our separation, even when
 I went to Birmingham to work. While there
 my father was informed by our local P.P.
 that I had married an English girl!

So you can imagine my joy when
 I ~~receive~~ this letter arrived from the girl I
 idolized all through the years. It was a
 sort of miracle - and it was this miracle
 that was to give me hope and courage
 to survive for the next ~~years~~ years.

~~the rank of Lt. General.~~ After the war he always
wrote me in the friendliest terms.

Meanwhile the "27th" was getting into shape
- many Indian Doctors, Jallay, Shindoran, etc. not to
mention Jemidat Partap Singh an astonishing tall
man with flowing grey beard. We tramped the
countryside by day in the heat of the day, over dusty
dirt roads and through sleepy little villages and
there we saw the real poverty of Indian people. They
had little water, no education, and no proper hygiene
which led to much disease. The nights were cold
under canvas; and the days hot (102°F).

However it wasn't all work. I hired a
car and went to Peshawar with some friends. Leaving
the Hyper Pass, we turned off into Tatal Jamiray,
which was controlled by Pathans, and arrived at
the Kabul ^{RIVER} ~~Route~~. This divided India from

Afghanistan; the scenery was awesome
but had a rugged grandeur about it. Another
memorable trip was by car up to ^{MURREE} ~~Poonah~~ and
then through the snow in a sleigh pulled by
Coolies. Up we went to Khyra Gali and

Had macarons and tea at a rest house.
A more romantic trip was to the banks of the
Ghelum River where we had a midnight picnic.
All the goodies were in a ~~large~~ huge basket.

* ~~Addendum~~
After many months of training, exercises,
and route marches, the 27th was ready to
go to war. We entrained at Pindi on 15th April
1941 and we had no idea whether we were bound.
All our baggage and equipment were loaded
- the faithful Yassin came with me. It
was a sad journey of 3 days down the sub-
continent of India to Secunderabad, &
a military town in Hyderabad (Deccan).
a sad farewell to my faithful Yassin
We moved under canvas and boy it was hot
down there, especially on route marches. As
a diversion we were entertained ^{to lunch} by the
Nizam of Hyderabad - the richest man in the
world, at the Royal Palace in Hyderabad city.
He was an old wizened man and looked
very unhappy to me. He was a notorious
Viper Nigrah, and ~~got the best of the best~~

He owned badly ⁶⁴ & lived on 30 rupees monthly
ancient ~~Food~~ ^{Food} ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~precious stones~~ ^{gold & precious stones} all over his
person. His Subjects were pitifully poor.
What a family he had - 80 Children, some
were legitimate, others illegitimate, the former
wore yellow turbans in a fez shape, and
the latter pink ones. The sea bazaar had
all pomp and seldom goes out in state.
Kirkington is well run and quite modern
in ways - the approach to the city through
a grand Avenue lined by magnificent
Electric Standposts. The two eldest legitimate
sons were locked up in the palace for the
1st 20 years of their lives; no education and
poor food. The Viceroy intervened and they
were given proper education, a weekly allowance
and were allowed to travel. One married
a Turkish Princess and they entertained a lot
and performed state functions. However ~~there~~
a careful watch was kept on expenditure.
The bazaar collected money from relatives
several times a year. We found the

eldest son a very charming man. So back to camp after an amazing afternoon.

On the 16th April we entrained once more and next day came to Malacca on the East Coast. And there on the dockside was ~~an~~^a ancient troopship; then it dawned on us whether we were bound - Malaya of course! It was a short journey ^(3 days) to Penang where we docked and were ferried across to Port Swettenham. Then by train to Ipoh (April 21st). Here I was billeted in the Royal Hotel with the other officers while the men were under canvas. It was nice to be spoiled again when not on duty at the camp. But it was work all day till 7 P.m. - no sport. Ipoh seemed very modern - race track, cricket club, tennis club, hockey club, ~~the~~ swimming club etc. I went to one dance, but no partners available so no dance for me. Officers were not allowed to dance with the lovely Chinese hostesses!

I was in love with Malaya - everything so verdant and green and clean. It was hot but not as bad as India, but very humid. I loved the people - especially the Chinese who make up a big percentage of the population.

Early in May we attended a reception given by visiting Chinese Generals. They were charming at the afternoon tea but really went to town at dinner that evening - 10 courses including bird's nest soup and roast pork crackling!

On 3rd May, the Sultan of Perak gave a garden party in our honour. He lives in a gorgeous Palace overlooking the Perak River. The Royal Jugglers did all kinds of acrobatics & tricks; the Royal Tennis Coaches gave a tennis exhibition on the Royal Court, and we went home in the Royal Car at a regal speed of 10 mph.

It was in Ipswich I met Dr. Rupert
Shelley and his wife 'Shrimpy' not to
mention their blonde daughter, Brigida (9 yrs)
They were real odd balls. They threw
a party one evening to celebrate the
completion of their new ^{£100} ~~£50~~. We all formed
a Penic Circle around the latter, Shrimpy
got on it, and Rupert pulled the chain, &
amid loud applause from the audience.

Then I met a ^{Mayo man} ~~Mayo man~~ & his wife
at Mass one Sunday - Mr & Mrs. Winsey.
They came to tea at the hotel and we
became good friends. We met up with
him on our honeymoon and went to the
Leopardstern races with him! He was
a Superintendent in a local hospital.

I hadn't any news of Helen since
Tom Opine but on 17th May came a cable
- and signed Love Helen. I was on
Cloud 5! No letters yet!