ADVENTURES *of* MISSIONARY
HEROISM

John C. Lambert

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FOREWORD

The 19th century has been called “The Greatest Century of Christian Missions.” It was the century that the sheaves were gathered in, the captives were set free, the nations were discipled, the light of Christ scattered the darkness, and the Lord began restoring the years the locusts had eaten.

Until the end of the world and Jesus returns, these stories about the courageous Gospel heralds of the 19th century must be told from one generation to the next. These are the greatest stories of faith in our age, to be appended on the Hebrews 11 list of the heroes of the faith. We republish this classic compendium of stories from John C. Lambert, who wrote virtually as an eyewitness to these accounts of pioneering missionaries serving in the greatest century of missions. Every Christian child growing up in Christian homes should know these stories by heart, and every family should pass this record in printed form on to the next generation.

Our hope is that our children will emulate the faith of these saints who have gone before us. Today’s heroism offered to our children for role models are too much limited to sports figures who are adept at throwing balls or actors who pretend to be very courageous in make-believe stories. Christian parents would much rather give their children real heroes who actually accomplished something of eternal substance for the sake of the Kingdom of God. They gave up their real lives in a real world. They faced real enemies for a real cause in order that real people might receive a real Gospel and be really blessed forever.

These stories do not speak only to a courageous, adventuresome spirit, but to faith in Jesus Christ and sacrificial love for Him. All of us are called to “deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow” in the footsteps of the Lamb of Calvary. These missionaries give us tangible, real-life examples of how this is done.

Parents, as you read these stories to you children, be forewarned that you will probably break down in tears as you read some of these stories. The magnitude of the sacrifice and the authentic love of these great men and women of God will overwhelm you at points. But, what better message is there to communicate to your children?

—Kevin Swanson
2017

INTRODUCTION

In a "foreword" which he contributes to Dr. Jacob Chamberlain's attractive missionary book, *In the Tiger Jungle,* Dr. Francis E. Clark expresses the opinion that one need not patronize the sensational and unhealthy fiction to find stirring adventures and thrilling narrative, and then goes on to make the following statement:

"There is one source which furnishes stories of intense and dramatic interest, abounding in novel situations and spiced with abundant adventures; and this source is at the same time the purest and most invigorating fountain at which our youth can drink. To change the figure, this is a mine hitherto largely unworked; it contains rich nuggets of ore, which will well repay the prospector in this new field."

The field to which Dr. Clark refers is the history of Christian missions. His meaning is that the adventurous and stirring side of missionary experience needs to be brought out, and emphasis laid upon the fact that the romantic days of missions are by no means past. These are stories which are now among the classics of missionary adventure. Such are the expedition of Hans Egede to Greenland, the lonely journeys of David Brainerd among the Indian tribes of the North American forests, the voyage of John Williams from one coral island of the Pacific to another in the little ship which his own hands had built, the exploration of the Dark Continent by David Livingstone in the hope of emancipating the black man's soul.

But among missionary lives which are more recent or less known, there are many not less noble or less thrilling than those just referred to; and the chapters which follow are an attempt to make this plain. There is, of course, a deeper side to Christian missions—a side that is essential and invariable—while the elements of adventure and mystery are accidental and occasional. If in these pages the spiritual aspects of foreign mission work are but slightly touched upon, it is not because they are either forgotten or ignored, but simply because it was not part of the writer's present plan to deal with them. It is his hope, nevertheless, that some of those into whose hands this book may come will be induced by what they read to make fuller acquaintance with the lives and aims of our missionary heroes, and so will catch something of that spirit which led them to face innumerable dangers, toils, and trials among heathen and often savage peoples, whether in the frozen North or the burning South, whether in the hidden depths of some vast continent or among the scattered "islands of the ocean seas."

In the *Memoirs of Archbishop Temple* we find the future Primate of the Church of England, when but a youth of twenty, writing to tell his mother how his imagination had been stirred by the sight of Selwyn of New Zealand starting for the Pacific with a band of young men who had devoted themselves to the propagation of the Gospel among a benighted and barbarous people. “It is not mere momentary enthusiasm with me,” he writes; “my heart beats whenever I think of it. I think it one of the noblest things England has done for a long time; almost the only thing really worthy of herself.”

It is the author’s earnest desire that the narratives which follow may help to kindle in some minds an enthusiasm for missions like that which characterized Frederick Temple to the very end of his long and strenuous life; or, better still, that they may even suggest to some who are looking forward to the future with a high ambition, and wondering how to make the most of life, whether there is any career which offers so many opportunities of romantic experience and heroic achievement as that of a Christian missionary.

—John C. Lambert
1912

Publisher's Note: This book is based on a 1912 edition of John C. Lambert's *The Romance of Missionary Heroism*, originally published by London-based Seeley, Service and Company, Limited. It is an exciting and inspiring account of courageous, God-fearing missionaries who brought the Gospel to remote, faraway places across the world during the 19th century. These men and women experienced incredible hardship and sacrifice as they served the Lord. In telling their uplifting stories and the historical details, we have preserved the original text as much as possible, with minimal changes.

However, this book is also a product of its time and place. It will not seem like a contemporary book because it is not one. The original style, formal tone, and British spellings and word usage remain intact. The text also depicts native cultures at a time when Westerners were often not well-informed about these people groups and often held misguided or unfounded assumptions about these people and cultures. As a result, at times the text may express attitudes that were very common in the early 1900s but are not considered acceptable now. We do want readers to be aware that these attitudes are expressed within the context of a historical presentation of a book from that time.

PART I

ASIA

ASIA

IN THE STEPPES AND DESERTS OF MONGOLIA

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE EDITORS: Great men do not arise by chance. They often emerge from generations of faithful Christian parents who laid the foundations and prepared the way for future warriors of Christ. Such was the heritage of one fearless missionary — James Gilmour. Born in Scotland on June 12, 1843, the faithfulness of godly grandparents and parents set the stage for his life's work. In his youth, his mother's great joy was to gather her sons about her in the evening and read to them about missionaries who carried the precious Gospel of Jesus to foreign lands. His dedicated father made family worship such a priority that neighbors wanting to visit had to wait until this special evening hour was concluded before bringing up their business.

After completing his primary education, Gilmour attended Glasgow University and upon graduating offered himself to the London Missionary Society for service on a foreign field. He ended up in Mongolia, and as we shall soon see, he met the challenge with great enthusiasm in a land that was anything but welcoming. After several years of service, a helpmeet was brought his way to join in his efforts, and he married Miss Emily Prankard in 1872. He wrote of her: “She is a jolly girl, as much, perhaps more, of a Christian and Christian missionary than I am.” Together they continued to serve the cause of Christ in Mongolia and China for ten years until her illness-related death. Faithful to the end of his short time on earth, James Gilmour traveled, preached, and taught throughout Mongolia and parts of China until he contracted a malignant strain of typhus fever and died at age 48, on May 12, 1891. Upon hearing the news of his death, the fierce Mongol men who had been affected by his life broke down in tears when told, “their Gilmour was dead.”

Throughout a history of over 2,000 years, Mongolia has been a largely nomadic and pagan country. First inhabited by the Huns before the time of Christ, and later by the Turks and Kirghiz tribes in the 7th-10th centuries, it was the home of the great Genghis Khan. The Khan formed a powerful empire that lasted for hundreds of years, stretching at times from the East China Sea to Western Europe. By the time James Gilmour began his missionary adventures, the Mongol people were a vast collection of tribes which had lost something of their former greatness.

Though just a short synopsis of the life and work of James Gilmour is presented here, you will soon discover the courage, ingenuity, energy, loyalty, passion, fervor, and at times eccentricities that made this man of God so remarkable. Although he labored for years with little fruit, God knows what effect his humble life of service had on countless men, women, and children, and their progeny.

The adventures of this man have given some biographers reason to call him "Robinson Crusoe turned missionary."

James Gilmour (1843–1891)

About the middle of the year 1870 there arrived in Peking (now Beijing) a young Scotchman, James Gilmour by name, who had been sent out to China by the London Missionary Society to begin work in the capital. Within a few weeks of his arrival, there took place at Tientsin, the port of Peking, that fanatical outbreak known as the Tientsin massacre, in which a Roman Catholic convent was destroyed and thirteen French people murdered. A widespread panic at once took hold of the capital. The European community felt that they were living on the edge of a volcano, for no one knew but that this massacre might be the prelude to a general outburst of anti-foreign hatred such as was witnessed later in connection with the Boxer Rebellion movement. All around Gilmour, his acquaintances were packing up their most precious belongings and holding themselves in readiness for a hurried flight to the south. It was at this moment that the newcomer resolved on a bold and original move. Instead of fleeing to the south in search of safety, he would turn his face northwards and see if an opening could be found for Christian work among the Mongols of the great Mongolian plains. He was utterly unacquainted both with the country and the language, but he had long felt a deep and romantic interest in that vast, lonely plateau which lies between China proper and Siberia. The suspension of work in Peking seemed to offer the very opportunity he wanted for pushing his way into Mongolia. And so as soon as the necessary preparations could be made, for Gilmour was never the man to let the grass grow beneath his feet, he left the capital behind with all its rumors and alarms. Before long the Great Wall was passed, which ever since the third century B.C. has defended China from Mongolia. And then, with two camels and a camel-cart, our intrepid traveler set his face towards the Desert of Gobi, which lies in the very heart of the Mongolian plain.

Mongolia, the home of the Mongols, has been described as a rough parallelogram, 1,800 miles from east to west, and 1,000 miles from north to south. It is a huge plateau lifted high above the sea, in part desert, in part a treeless expanse of grassy steppe, and in part covered by mountain ranges whose peaks rise up to the line of perpetual snow. The climate, hot and dry in summer and bitterly cold in winter, makes agriculture impossible except in some favored spots, and so by the force of his circumstances the Mongol is a nomad, dwelling in a tent, and pasturing his flocks and herds upon the grass of the steppe. For long centuries the people were a constant terror to the Chinese. Even the Great Wall proved an ineffectual barrier against them, and time and again they poured like a mighty flood over the rich lands of their more peace-loving neighbors to the south. But around the 1400's A.D., they converted from their earlier pagan faith to Buddhism in its corrupted form of Lamanism, and this change of faith has had a decidedly softening effect upon the national character. Much of this, no doubt, must be attributed to the custom that prevails among them of devoting one or more sons in every family to the priesthood. One result of this custom is, that the Mongol priests, or *lamas* as they are called, actually form the majority of the male population, and as the lamas are celibates in virtue of their office, another result has been a great reduction in the population, as compared with early days. It has been calculated that at the turn of the twentieth century there were not more than two million Mongols occupying this vast territory of 1,300,000 square miles. Mongolia is no longer entitled now to the name it once received of *officina gentium*, “the manufactory of nations.” It does not now possess those surplus swarms of bold and warlike horsemen which it once sent out to overrun and conquer other lands. But, like all nomads, its people are still an active and hardy race. As horsemen, too, they still excel. From their very infancy both men and women are accustomed to the saddle, and even yet some of them could rival the feats of the horsemen of Genghis Khan, the greatest of all the Mongol conquerors of long ago. It was to this country and this interesting, but little known people, that James Gilmour devoted his life.

His first journey across the great plateau began at Kalgan, which lies to the northwest of Peking, just within the Great Wall, and terminated at Kiachta on the southern frontier of Siberia. He made this journey over plain and desert, which occupied only a month, in the company of a Russian official who knew no English, while he himself knew neither Russian nor Mongolian. He was glad, therefore, on reaching Kiachta to meet a fellow-countryman, one of the world's ubiquitous Scots, in the person of a trader named Grant. Grant was exceedingly kind to him, and took him into his own comfortable house. But finding that this contact with civilization was hindering him in his strenuous efforts to master the Mongolian language without delay, Gilmour formed a characteristic resolution. This was nothing else than to go out upon the plain and try to persuade some Mongolian to receive him as an inmate of his tent.

It was at night that this idea occurred to him, and the next morning he left Kiachta, taking nothing with him but his "Penang lawyer." This, it should be explained, is a heavy walking stick, so called because in Penang it is supposed to be useful in settling disputes. Gilmour had already discovered that in Mongolia it was not only useful, but altogether indispensable, as a protection against the ferocious assaults of the wolfish-looking dogs which inevitably rush at a traveler if he draws near to any encampment. One of the first incidents of the caravan journey from Kalgan had been the narrow escape of a Russian soldier from being torn down by a pack of Mongolian dogs. With a stout "limb of the law" in his fist, however, Gilmour feared nothing, but strode cheerfully over the plain, making for the first tent he saw on the horizon.

As he drew near he heard the sound of a monotonous voice engaged in some kind of chant, and when he entered found a lama at his prayers. The lama, hearing footsteps, looked round and pronounced the one word, "Sit!" and then continued his devotions. For another quarter of an hour he went on, taking no further notice of his visitor meanwhile. But suddenly his droning chant ceased, and he came forward and gave Gilmour a hospitable welcome. Gilmour opened his mind to him without delay, telling him that it was his desire to spend the winter in his tent and learn Mongolian from his instruction. The lama was surprised, but perfectly willing, and agreed to receive his visitor as a paying guest for an indefinite period at the modest rate of about a shilling a day (about $3.50 per day). And so within a few months of his departure from London we find Gilmour living the life of a nomad in the tent of a lama on the Mongolian plain.

Once the first novelty had worn off, he found the life somewhat monotonous. Dinner was the great event of the day, the more so as it is the only meal in which a Mongol indulges. The preparations for this repast were unvarying, as also was the subsequent menu. Towards the sunset the lama's servant, who was himself a lama, melted a block of ice in a huge pot, over a fire which filled the tent with smoke. Taking a hatchet, he next hewed a solid lump of mutton from a frozen carcass and put it into the water. As soon as it was boiled, he fished it out with the fire-tongs and laid it on a board before his master and Gilmour, who then attacked it with finger and knives. Forks were things unknown. When a Mongol eats he takes a piece of meat in his left hand, seizes it with his teeth, and then cuts off his mouthful close to his lips by a quick upward movement of his knife. The operation looks dangerous, but the flatness of the native nose makes it safe enough, though it would be very risky in the case of one who was otherwise endowed.

The Mongols always thought Gilmour's nose tremendous, and they excused him for cutting off his mouthfuls first, and appropriating them afterwards.

Meanwhile, as this first course was in progress, the servant had thrown some millet into the water used for boiling the meat, and when the diners had partaken sufficiently of the solid fare, this thin gruel was served up as a kind of soup. The mutton, Gilmour says, was tough; but he declares that seldom in his life did he taste any preparations of civilized cookery so delicious as this millet soup. He admits that he has no doubt that it was chiefly the desert hunger that made it seem so good.

Though he ate only once a day, the lama, like all Mongols, consumed vast quantities of tea. At dawn, and again at noon, the servant prepared a pail full of the cheering beverage, giving it always ten or fifteen minutes hard boiling, and seasoning it with fat and a little meal instead of milk. Gilmour accustomed himself to the ways of the tent. As a concession to his Scotch tastes, however, he was provided every morning with a cupful of meal made into something like porridge by the addition of boiling water. This the lama and his servant called "Scotland," and they were careful to set it aside regularly for the use of "Our Gilmour," to whom, Buddhist priests though they were, they soon became quite attached.

Before leaving the subject of meals, we may mention that on the last day of the year Mongols make up for their abstemiousness during the other 364 days by taking no fewer than seven dinners. When New Year's Eve arrived, the lama insisted that his visitor should do his duty like a Mongolian, and a yellow-coated old lama, who was present as a guest on the occasion, was told to keep count of his progress. Gilmour managed to put down three dinners and was just wondering what to do next when he discovered that his guardian lama had got drunk and lost count. In this case, although himself a strict teetotaler, he did not feel disposed to take too severe a view of the old gentleman's failing.

When the time came at last to re-cross the plains, Gilmour decided to make the homeward journey on horseback instead of by camel-cart. The one drawback was that he had never learned to ride. But as he had found that the best way to learn Mongolian was by being compelled to speak it, he considered that a ride of a good many hundred miles might be the best way of learning to sit on a horse. The plan proved a decided success. In Mongolia a man who cannot ride is looked upon as a curiosity, and when Gilmour first mounted everybody turned out to enjoy the sight of his awkwardness. But though he had one or two nasty falls from his horse stumbling into holes on treacherous bits of ground, such as are very frequent on the plains where the rats have excavated galleries underground, he soon learned to be quite at home on the back of his steed. When he rode at last once more through a gateway of the Great Wall, passing thus out of Mongolia into China again, he felt that after the training he had received on his way across the steppes and the desert, he would be ready henceforth to take to the saddle in any circumstance. Indeed, so sure of his seat had he become that we find him on a subsequent occasion, when he formed one of a company mounted for a journey on Chinese mules, which will not travel except in single file, riding with his face to the tail of his beast, so as to be better able to engage in conversation with the cavalier who came behind him.

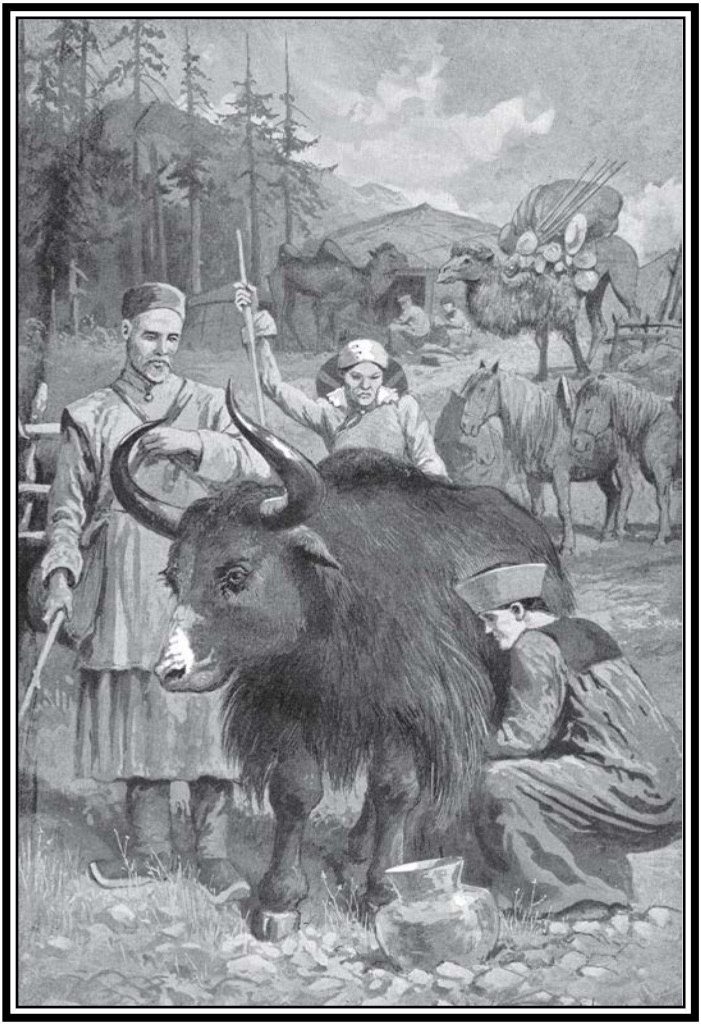
This crossing and re-crossing of the Mongolian plain, and especially the winter he had spent in the lama's tent, had already given Gilmour a knowledge of the Mongolian language, and a familiarity with the habits and thoughts of the Mongols themselves, such as hardly any other Westerner could pretend to. Peking, when he returned to it, had settled down to something like its normal quiet, but he felt that the ordinary routine of work in the city was not the work to which he was specifically called. The desert air was in his blood now, and Mongolia was calling. Henceforth it was for the Mongols that he lived.

Year by year Gilmour fared forth into the Great Plain in prosecution of his chosen task. And although it was his custom to return to Peking for the winter, he still continued while there to devote himself to his Mongol flock. Between China and Mongolia a considerable trade is carried on, the Mongols bringing in hides, cheese, butter, and the other products of a pastoral territory, and carrying away in return vast quantities of cheap tea in the form of compressed bricks, these bricks being used in Gilmour's time not only for the preparation of the favorite beverage, but as a means of exchange in lieu of money. During the winter months large numbers of traders arrive in Peking from all parts of Mongolia, and many of them camp out in their tents in open spaces, just as they do when living on the plains. Gilmour frequented these encampments, and took every opportunity he could make or find of conversing about religious matters, and especially of seeking to commend "the Jesus-doctrine," as the Buddhists called it. One plan that he followed was to go about like a Chinese peddler, with two bags of books in the Mongolian language hanging from his shoulders. All were invited to buy, and in many cases this literature was taken up quite eagerly. Often a would-be purchaser demanded to have a book read aloud to him before he made up his mind about it, and this gave the peddler a welcome chance of reading from the Gospels to the crowd which gathered, and then of introducing a conversation, which sometimes passed into a discussion, about the merits of Jesus and Buddha. Sometimes those who were anxious to buy had no money, but were prepared to pay in kind. And so, not infrequently, Gilmour was to be seen at night making his way back to his lodgings in the city "with a miscellaneous collection of cheese, sour-curd, butter, millet-cake, and the sheep's fat, representing the produce of part of the day's sales."

Among the most remarkable of Gilmour's many journeys through Mongolia was one that he made in 1884, and made entirely on foot. He was a tremendous walker at times, more perhaps by reason of his unusual will power than because of exceptional physical strength, and is known to have covered 300 miles in seven and a half days—an average of forty miles a day. On the occasion of his long tramp over the plains and back, he had special reasons for adopting that method of locomotion.

One reason was that grass was so scarce during that year that it would hardly have been possible to get pasture for a camel or a horse. Another reason was that the love of simplicity and unconventionality, which was so marked a feature of his character, grew stronger and stronger, and also the desire to get as near as possible to the poorest and humblest of the people. At a later period we find him adopting in its entirety "not only the native dress, but practically the native food, and so far as a Christian man could, native habits of life." An idea of the length to which he carried the rule of plains living may be gathered from the fact that for some time his rate of expenditure was only threepence a day. His biographer, Mr. Lovett, gives us a graphic picture of him taking his bowl of porridge, native fashion, in the street, sitting down upon a low stool beside the boiler of the itinerant vendor from whom he had just purchased it. And the plainness of his garb at times may be judged of when we mention that in one village on the borders of China he was turned out of the two respectable inns which the place could boast, on the ground that he was a foot-traveler without cart or animal, who must be content to betake himself to the tavern for tramps.

It was in keeping with his tastes, therefore, as well as from necessity, that he once tramped through Mongolia with all his belongings on his back. His equipment when he set out consisted of a postman's brown bag on one side containing his kit and provisions; on the other an angler's waterproof bag with books, etc.; together with a Chinaman's sheepskin coat slung over his shoulder by means of a rough stick of the "Penang lawyer" type. In the course of this tramp, his formidable stick notwithstanding, he had sometimes to be rescued from the teeth of the dogs which flew, not unnaturally, at a character so suspicious



IN A MONGOL ENCAMPMENT

Mr. Gilmour always dressed in Chinese clothes, and when on tour generally had a post-man's bag strapped over one shoulder and a waterproof fishing-bag over the other, these two containing all his baggage.

looking. But he met with much hospitality from the people, both lamas and laymen, where he went; and returned to Kalgan without any serious mishap. From two dangers of the country he altogether escaped. One was the risk of being attacked by wolves, which are a perfect terror to the Chinese traveler over the plains, though the inhabitants themselves make light of them, and never hesitate when they catch sight of one to become the attacking party. The result of this is that a wolf is said to distinguish from afar between a Mongol and a Chinaman, slinking off as hastily as possible if it sees a wayfarer approaching in long skin robes, but anticipating a good dinner at the sight of another in blue jacket and trousers. Gilmour himself was of opinion that Mongolian wolves are not so dangerous as the Siberian ones. The reason he gives is that, unlike the Russians, the Mongols keep such poor sheepfolds that a wolf can help itself to a sheep whenever it likes, and so is seldom driven by hunger to attack a man. The other danger is from bandits. For there are parts of the Desert of Gobi, crossed as it is by the great trade routes between Siberia and China, which are quite as unpleasant to traverse as the ancient road between Jerusalem and Jericho. But Gilmour was probably never more secure against highway robbery than when he walked through Mongolia as a missionary tramp.

It is impossible to enter into the details of the strange and romantic experiences which befell this adventurous spirit in the course of his many wanderings. Now we find him spending the night in a lama's tent, most probably discussing sacred things with his host till far on towards morning over a glowing fire of *argol*, or dried cow's dung, the customary fuel of the plains. At another time he is careening across the desert on horseback as swiftly as his Mongol companions, for he was a man who never liked to be beaten. Now he is at a marriage feast, looking on with observant and humorous eyes at the rough but harmless merry-makings. Again, he is in the court of justice, where punishment is meted out on the spot upon the culprit's back, in the presence of a highly appreciative crowd. At one time, with a heart full of pity for a superstitious and deluded people, he is watching a Buddhist turning his praying-wheel with his own hand or hanging it up in front of his tent to be turned for him by the wind. At another, as he passes a criminal in an iron cage who is condemned to be starved to death, and is set day by day in front of an eating-house in a large trading settlement for the aggravation of his tortures (a common Mongol practice), he is reflecting on the defects of a false religion that can permit its followers to enjoy the public exhibition of a fellow-creature's dying pains. In his journeys he was constantly exposed to the bitter cold of a land where the thermometer falls in winter to thirty or forty degrees below zero, and all through the heat of summer huge lumps of ice remain frozen in the wells. Often he had to endure long spells of hunger and thirst when on the march. Worst of all, he had to share the filth and vermin of a Mongol tent as well as its hospitality. But these things he looked upon as all "in the day's work" and with the Apostle Paul, he counted them but loss for the sake of the high calling of Jesus Christ; and though he may sometime chronicle them in his diary as facts, he never makes them matter of complaint.

Among the most interesting incidents which he records are some in connection with his endeavors to bring relief to those whom he found in sickness and pain. Although not a doctor by profession, he had picked up some medical and surgical skill, and did not hesitate to use it on behalf of those for whom no better skill was available. In doing this he sometimes ran great risks, for with all their hospitality the Mongols are terribly suspicious, and ready to entertain the most extraordinary rumors about the designs of any stranger.

Once he persuaded a blind man to come with him to Peking, to have his eyes operated on for cataracts in the hospital there. The operation was unsuccessful, and the story was spread over a large region that Gilmour enticed people to Peking in order to steal "the jewels of their eyes" that he might preserve them in a bottle and sell them for hundreds of taels. In consequence of this he lived for months under what almost amounted to a sentence of death. Only by showing no consciousness of fear and by patiently living suspicion down, did he escape from being murdered.

Once he had undertaken to treat a soldier for a bullet wound received in an encounter with brigands, thinking that it was only a flesh wound he had to deal with. It turned out to be a difficult bone complication. Now Gilmour knew hardly anything of anatomy, and he had absolutely no books to consult. "What could I do," he says, "but pray?" And a strange thing happened. There tottered up to him through the crowd a live skeleton—a man whose bones literally stood out as distinctly as if he were a specimen in an anatomical museum, with only a yellow skin drawn loosely over them. The man came to beg for cough medicine, but

Gilmour was soon busy fingering a particular part of his skeleton, with so strange a smile on his face that he heard a bystander remark, “That smile means something.” “So it did,” Gilmour adds. “It meant among other things that I knew what to do with the wounded soldier’s damaged bone; and in a short time his wound was in a fair way of healing.”

James Gilmour’s *Among the Mongols* (now out of print but available from rare book dealers) is a book to be read, not only for the adventures of its subject matter, but because of the author’s remarkable gift for realistic statement—his power of making his reader see things in bodily presence just as his own eyes had seen them. In more ways than one he reminds us of Borrow, but especially in what Borrow himself described as “the art of telling a plain story.” On the first appearance of *Among the Mongols* a very competent reviewer traced a striking resemblance.

“Robinson Crusoe,” he said “has turned missionary, lived years in Mongolia, and written a book about it. That is this book.” It was high praise, but it contained no small degree of truth. And to the advantage of Gilmour’s book as compared to Defoe’s, it must be remembered that everything that the former tells us is literally true.

NOTES AND AUTHORITIES: *Among the Mongols* by Rev. James Gilmour, M.A. and *James Gilmour of Mongolia* by Richard Lovett, M.A. (Religious Tract Society); *The Far East* by Archibald Little (The Clarendon Press).

ASIA

IN THE COUNTRY OF THE TELUGUS

CHAPTER TWO

FROM THE EDITORS: India — a land of jungles, a land of mystery, a land of tigers and deadly serpents, an ancient land once under the rule of King Darius and the Persians with a history spanning 5,000 years — a land of millions of souls in desperate need of Jesus Christ. Founded in ancient times, then conquered by the Turks and Mongols, and finally incorporated into the British Empire by the early 18th century, India today has the second largest population on earth. Today it is inhabited by Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, numerous pagan tribal groups, and by an estimated 27 million Christians. It is a land of great variety. Christians ventured into India from the time of Jesus' death, when His disciple Thomas first brought the light of the Gospel to this dark land about 50 A.D. Then, from the 1500s until the 1900s American and British missionaries answered the call of Christ to once again spread the Good News there.

To this far off land came Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, a man venturing to risk all for the sake of the Gospel of Christ; willing not only to risk all, but ultimately, like so many others, to give his all. Born April 13, 1835 in Connecticut, at an early age he felt the call of God to be a missionary. At first, his service on the field was delayed. That he might honor his father's wishes, he remained on the family farm and cared for his aging parents. After experiencing several narrow escapes from accidents at home, Jacob sensed God was preserving his life in order that he might go to India as a missionary. With his father's release and blessing from filial duties, he attended seminary at Case Western Reserve University, and then earned a medical degree from Cleveland Medical College in Cleveland, Ohio. He married Charlotte Close Birge in September of 1859.

The couple arrived on the mission field in India on April 12, 1860, where Dr. Chamberlain was assigned to work with the Telugu people at Madanapalle. Controlled by a keen interest to minister to both soul and body, Dr. Chamberlain would often see patients in the morning and evening and conduct short preaching tours in the middle of the day. From time to time he would also venture out to remote areas of the jungle to reach native groups and to explore lands never before reached by the Gospel.

During his many years in India, the Doctor worked on a Telugu translation of the Bible; he helped establish numerous Christian schools and dispensaries and later wrote several books on his experiences in India. On one missionary tour, he contracted a jungle fever that in time would ravage his body. By 1902 he was partially paralyzed, though he continued faithfully in his calling for six more years. Dr. Jacob Chamberlain died on March 2, 1908, after 48 years of service in India. It was to India he felt his calling in life; it was in India that he spent his life, and it was for countless Indian souls that he ultimately gave up his life.

Dr. Jacob Chamberlain (1835–1908)

Apart from the Tibeto-Burman tribes scattered along the skirts of the Himalayas, the peoples of India have been commonly divided by ethnologists into three great race groups—the aborigines (often called the Kolarians), the Dravidians, and the Aryans. The aborigines are now found chiefly in the jungles and mountains of the Central Provinces, into which they were driven at a very early period by the Dravidians, the first invaders of India. Mr. Kipling, who has done so much to make India more intelligible to the English, has not forgotten to give us pictures of the aboriginal peoples in his famous *Jungle Book*. In his *The Tomb of His Ancestors* again, we have a vivid sketch of the mountain Bhils, whose combination of superstition, courage, and loyalty reminds us of the Scottish Highlanders in the days of Prince Charlie.

These aborigines of the hills were long neglected by the Church, but much is now being done on their behalf. Doctor Shepherd, for example, a Scotch medical missionary, carried both the Gospel and the healing powers of modern science into the wild country of the Bhils and Rajputana, and could tell tales of his experiences among them as striking and thrilling as any that have come from the pen of Rudyard Kipling.

The Dravidians, who first overran India and drove the earlier inhabitants into the hills, were afterwards themselves supplanted to a large extent by the more powerful Aryans. These Aryans were members of that same original stock to which the nations of Europe trace their origin, for while one section of the race moved southwards upon India through the Himalayas from the great plains of Central Asia, another flowed to the west and took possession of Europe. Through the Aryan invasion of India the Dravidians were pushed for the most part into the southern portion of the vast peninsula, where they have formed ever since a numerous and powerful group. Five Dravidian peoples are usually distinguished, the Tamils and Telugus being the most important of the five. It is of work among the Telugus that we are to speak in the present chapter.

The country of the Telugus stretches northwards from Madras for some five hundred miles along the shores of the Bay of Bengal, while to the west it extends about halfway across the peninsula, and so includes large parts not only of the Presidency of Madras, but the kingdom of Mysore and the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad. It is a region which attracts those who go to India for sport and adventure, for its jungles still abound in tigers and other wild animals. From the point of view of Christian missions, it has this special interest, that there is no part of all Hindustan where the Gospel has been preached with more marked success in the 1900's, or where the people have been gathered more rapidly into the Christian Church. One of the most enterprising of modern Indian missionaries was Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, of the American

Reformed Church, who began his labors as a medical evangelist to the Telugus. He is the author of two books, *The Cobra's Den* and *In the Tiger Jungle*, which give graphic sketches of his experiences in city and village and jungle, on horseback and in bullock-cart, in the surgery with operating knife in hand, and at the busy fair when a crowd has gathered round and the knife that cures the body has been exchanged for the Book that saves the soul. Taking these two delightful volumes as our authorities, we shall first glance at Dr. Chamberlain in the midst of his medical and surgical work, and see how effective such work becomes in opening the way for Christian teaching. Then we shall follow him on one of his longer evangelistic tours through the Telugu country. Let us look in and find where Dr. Chamberlain begins his day and read about one of his missionary journeys.

All morning, ever since sunrise, the doctor has been busy with the patients who have come from far and near to be treated or prescribed for, until about a hundred persons are gathered in front of the little dispensary. The heat of the day is now coming on, but before dismissing them and distributing the medicines they have waited for, he takes down his Telugu Bible, reads and explains a chapter, and then kneels to ask a blessing upon all those who have need of healing.

It is now breakfast time, and after several hours of hard work the doctor is quite ready for a good meal. But just as he is about to go home for the purpose, he hears the familiar chant used by the natives when carrying a heavy burden, and looking out sees four men approaching, two in front and two behind, with a long bamboo pole on their shoulders and a blanket slung on it in hammock fashion with a sick man inside. Behind this primitive ambulance, two men are walking, one leading the other by the hand.

In a few minutes the sick man is laid in his blanket on the floor of the veranda, and the little company have told their tale. They have come from a village two days' journey off. They have heard of the foreign doctor that he can work wonderful cures. The young man in the blanket is dying; the old man led by the hand is his uncle, who has recently grown blind. Their friends have brought them to the Doctor Padre to see if he can make them well.

On examination Dr. Chamberlain finds that the young man's case is almost hopeless, but that there is just a chance of saving him by a serious surgical operation—and this he performs the same afternoon. At first the patient seems to be sinking under the shock, but he rallies by and by, and gradually comes back to health and strength again. The old man's blindness is a simpler case. An easy operation and careful treatment are all that are required. So when uncle and nephew have been in the hospital for a few weeks, the doctor is able to send them back to their village—the young man walking on his own feet, and the old man no longer needing to be led by the hand.

But here the story does not end. Every day while in hospital the two patients had heard the doctor read a chapter from the Gospel and make its meaning plain. And when the time for leaving came they begged for a copy of the history of Yesu Kristu, "the Divine Guru" so that they might let all their neighbors know of the glad news they had heard. They acknowledged that they could not read, for they were poor weavers who had never been to school. "But when the cloth merchant comes to buy our webs," they said, "we will gather the villagers, and put the book into his hand, and say, 'Read us this book, and then we will talk business.' And when the tax gatherer comes we will say, 'Read us this book, and then we will settle our taxes.' Let us have the book therefore, for we want all our village to know about the Divine Guru, Yesu Kristu."

They got the book and went away, and for three years Dr. Chamberlain heard nothing of them. But at last on a wide preaching tour he met them again. They had learned of his approach, and when he entered the village at sunrise the whole population was gathered under the "Council-Tree," while his two patients of three years ago came forward with smiling faces to greet him, and told him that through the reading of the Gospel everyone in the place had agreed to give up his idols if the Doctor Padre would send someone to teach them more about Jesus. Dr. Chamberlain discussed the matter fully with them, and when he saw that they were thoroughly in earnest, promised to send a teacher as soon as possible. But just before leaving to proceed on his journey he noticed, near at hand, the little village temple, with its stone idols standing on their platform at the farther end of the shrine.

"What are you going to do with these idols now?" he asked the people.

"The idols are nothing to us any longer," they replied; "we have renounced them all."

"But are you going to leave them standing there in the very heart of the village?"

"What would you have us do with them?" they asked.

"Well," said the doctor, wishing to test their sincerity, "I would like to take one of them away with me." He knew the superstitious dread which even converted natives are apt to entertain for the idols of their fathers, and the unwillingness they usually have to lay violent hands on them. He did not expect anything more than that they might permit him to remove one of the images for himself. But at this point Ramudu, the old man whose sight had been restored, stepped forward and said, "I'll bring out the chief Swami for you;" and going into the shrine he shook the biggest idol from the plaster from which it was fastened to the stone platform, and then handed it to the doctor, saying as he did so something like this:

"Well, old fellow, be off with you! We and our ancestors for a thousand years have feared and worshiped you. Now we have found a better God, and are done with you. Be off with you, and a good riddance to us. Jesus is now our God and Savior."

And so the ugly stone Swami that had lorded it so long over the consciences of these Telugu villagers was "dethroned," as Dr. Chamberlain puts it, "by the surgeon's knife," and passed in due course to a missionary museum in the United States. But Yesu Kristu, the Divine Guru, reigned in its stead.

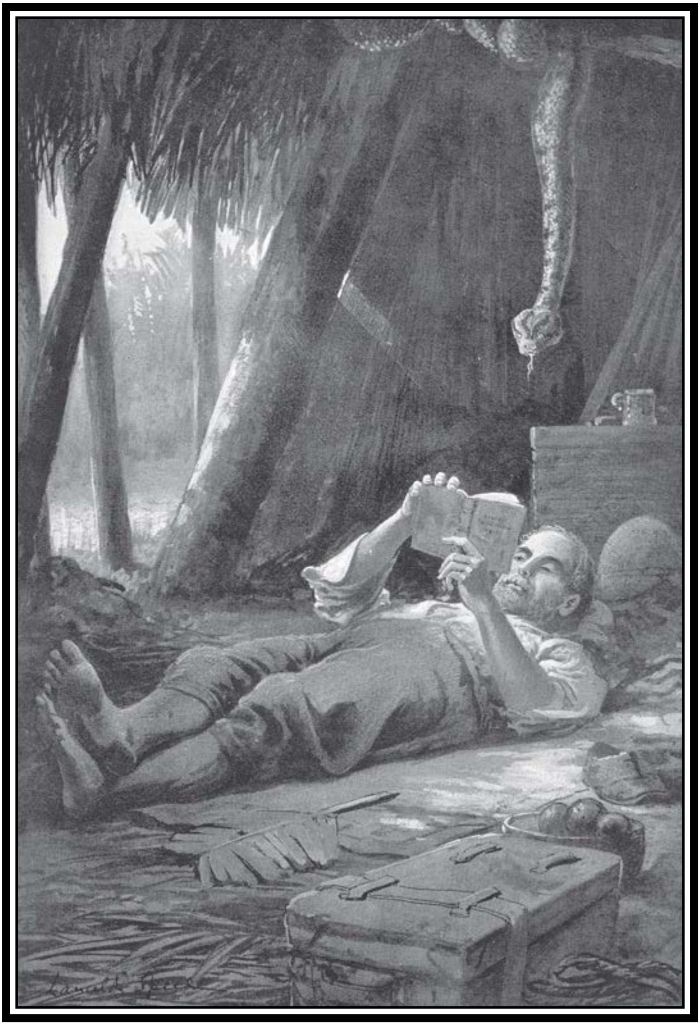
But now let us follow the doctor in some of the more striking episodes of one of his earliest tours. It was a journey of 1,200 miles through the native kingdom of Hyderabad and on into Central India—a region where at that time no missionary had ever worked before. He rode all the way on a sturdy native pony, but was accompanied by four Indian assistants, with two bullock-carts full of Gospels and other Christian literature which he hoped to sell to the people at low prices.

One of the first and most dangerous adventures was in a walled city of Hyderabad. They had already disposed of a few Gospels and tracts when some Brahmin priests and Mohammedan fanatics raised the mob against them. It was done in this way. A number of the Gospels were bound in cloth boards of a buff color. The Mohammedan zealots spread a rumor that these books were bound in pigskin—a thing which no true disciple of Mahomet will touch. The Brahmans, on the other hand, told their followers that these yellow boards were made of calfskin—and to a Hindu the cow is a sacred animal. The crowd got thoroughly excited, and soon Dr. Chamberlain and his four helpers were standing in the market place with their backs to a wall, while a howling multitude surged in front, many of whom had already begun to tear up the cobblestones with which the street was paved in order to stone the intruders to death. The doctor saved the situation by getting permission to tell a wonderful story. Nothing catches an Indian crowd like the promise of a story. Their curiosity was aroused from the first, and soon their hearts were touched as they listened to a simple and graphic description of the death of Jesus on the cross. The stones dropped from the hands that clutched them, tears stood in many eyes, and when the speaker had finished, every copy of the Gospel which had been brought into the city from the little camp without the walls, was eagerly bought up by priests as well as people.

But dangers of this sort were rare. For the most part, both in town and country, the white traveler was welcomed courteously, and gladly listened to as he stood in the busy market place or sat beside the village elders on the stone seat beneath the "Council-tree," and explained the purpose of his coming. Dangers of another kind, however, were common enough, and Dr. Chamberlain tells of some narrow escapes from serpents, tigers, and the other perils of the Indian jungle.

They were passing through the great teak forest, where the trees towered one hundred and fifty feet above their heads, when they came in sight one day of a large village in a forest clearing. As they drew near, the elders of the place came out to salute them. The doctor asked if they could give him a suitable place to pitch his tent, but they did better than that, for they gave him the free use of a newly erected shed.

Somewhat tired out with a long forenoon's march, Dr. Chamberlain lay down to rest his limbs, and took up his Greek Testament meanwhile to read a chapter, holding the book over his face as he lay stretched out on his back. By and by he let his arm fall, and suddenly became aware that a huge serpent was coiled on one of the bamboo rafters just above him, and that it had gradually been letting itself down until some four feet of its body were hanging directly over his head, while its tongue was already forked out—a sure sign that it was just about ready to strike. He says that when studying the anatomy of the human frame he had sometimes wondered whether a person lying on his back could jump sideways, without first erecting himself, and



DR. CHAMBERLAIN ATTACKED BY A SERPENT

that he discovered on this occasion that, with a proper incentive, the thing could be done.

Bounding from his dangerous position, he ran to the door of the shed and took from the bullock-cart which was standing there a huge iron spit five or six feet long, which was made for roasting meat in a jungle camp. With this as a spear he attacked the serpent, and was successful at his first thrust in pinning it to the rafter round which it was coiled. Holding the spit firmly in its place to prevent the struggling animal from shaking it out, though he ran the utmost risk of being struck as it shot out its fanged mouth in its efforts to reach his hand, he called loudly to his servant to bring him a bamboo cane. The cane was quickly brought, and then, still holding the spit in position with one hand, he beat the brute about the head till life was extinct. When quite sure that it was dead, he drew the spit out of the rafter and held it at arm's length on a level with his shoulder, the transfixed reptile hanging from it. He found that both the head and the tail touched the ground, thus showing that the serpent was not less than ten feet long.

Just at that moment the village watchman looked in at the door, and then passed on quickly into the village. And immediately it flashed into the doctor's mind that he had got himself into trouble, for he knew that these people worship serpents as gods. They never dared to kill one, and if they saw a stranger trying to do so, would intercede for its life.

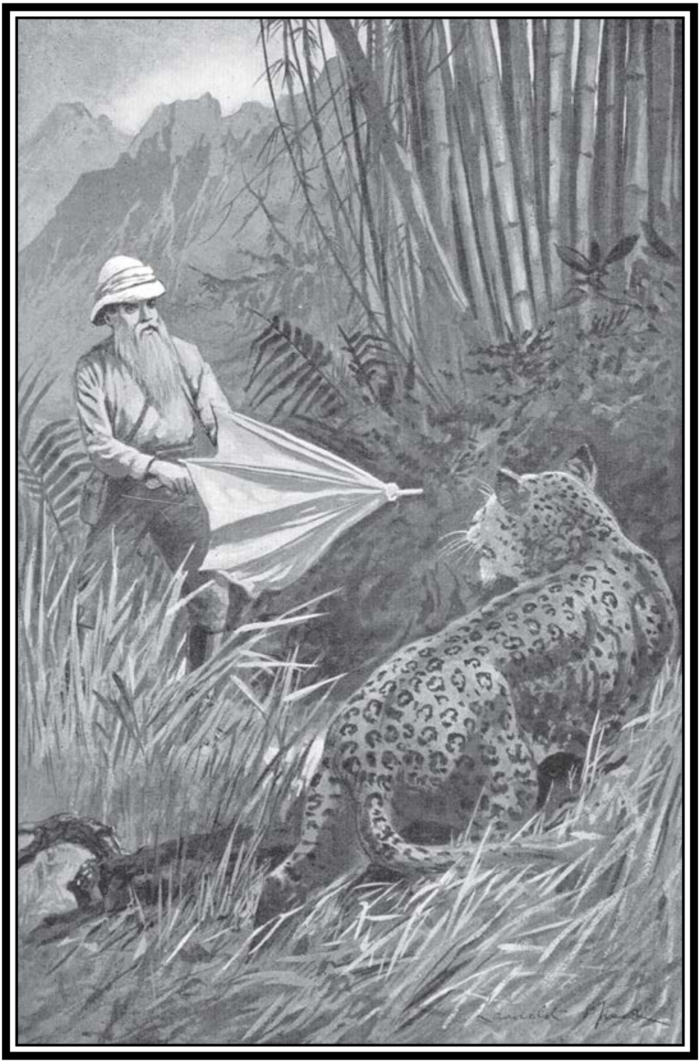
He was still considering what to do when he saw the chief men of the village advancing, and noticed, to his surprise, that they were carrying brass trays in their hands covered with sweetmeats, coconuts, and limes.

His surprise was greater still when, as they reached this doorway in which he stood to meet them, they bowed down before him to the ground and presented their simple offerings, hailing him at the same time as the deliverer of their village. That deadly serpent, they told him, had been the terror of the place for several years. It had killed a child and several of their cattle, but they had never ventured to attack it, for they knew that if any of them did so he would be accursed. The kindred of the dead serpent would wage war upon that man and his family, until every one of them was exterminated. But their visitor had killed it without their knowledge or consent, and so they were freed from the pest of their lives, and at the same time were absolutely guiltless of its blood. Their gratitude knew no bounds. They pressed upon the doctor the fattest sheep in their flocks. They sent the village crier with his tom-tom all round the place to summon the people to come and hear the words of "the serpent-destroyer." And when Dr. Chamberlain seized the opportunity to speak to them about "that old serpent called the devil," and One who came to bruise the serpent's head, they listened to him as he had rarely been listened to before.

While serpents were, and still are, the most frequent danger of the traveler in the jungle, tigers were very numerous in the Telugu country at this time. Dr. Chamberlain told stories both of the striped tiger, the royal tiger as it is commonly called, and the smaller spotted variety, which is marked like a leopard, but has a tiger's claws and cannot climb trees as a leopard can. On one occasion, when all alone and unarmed, he met a spotted tiger face to face on a narrow mountain path, but succeeded in putting the beast to flight by suddenly opening his big white umbrella and letting out a war-whoop which he had learned when a boy from a tribe of American Indians in Michigan. An experience with a tiger of the larger sort, however, though less dramatic, was probably a good deal more dangerous.

It was about three weeks after their narrow escape from stoning in that walled city of Hydria (Hyderabad), and they were still in the territories of the Nina, but about one hundred miles farther north and in the midst of hill and jungle. The native assistants with the servants and bullock-carts had made an earlier start, and the doctor was riding on to overtake them when he noticed in the path, and side by side with the fresh cart tracks, the footprints of a huge tiger and its cub. He had been warned before plunging into the forest that seven people had recently been killed in this very neighborhood by man-eating tigers; and it seemed evident that this tiger was following the carts with murderous intent. It is not the way of a tiger to attack a group of travelers. It watches and waits until one of them falls behind or gets detached from the rest, and then it makes its spring. Dr. Chamberlain realized the situation at once. The little caravan was safe so long as all kept together, but if any one lagged behind the others, or stopped to quench his thirst at the wayside stream, the tiger would be on him in a moment.

Pulling out a loaded fourteen-inch Navy revolver, the only weapon he carried with him in his expeditions through the jungle, and dashing his spurs into his pony, he



ATTACKED BY A SPOTTED TIGER

Dr. Chamberlain came face to face with a spotted tiger in a lonely mountain path, he had no weapon, but emitting a war-whoop and suddenly putting up his umbrella, he put the animal to flight.

galloped on through the forest to warn those ahead. As he flew onwards his eye was on the path, and always he saw the cart tracks and the footprints of the tiger side by side. A deadly fear took hold of him that he might be too late. But suddenly there came a turn in the road, and there, not far in front, were the two carts and their attendants moving slowly and peacefully forward. And now the doctor noticed that the tiger tracks were gone. He had seen them last at the very corner round which the carts came into sight. Hearing the sharp tattoo of the pony's hoofs coming up behind, the tiger must have leaped into the bushes at that very point. Probably it was only a few feet from the horseman as he whisked past. But either his sudden appearance on his galloping steed gave it a fright, or else his motion was too rapid to offer the chance of a successful spring.

Not the least of the difficulties of travel in the wild parts of India is caused by the tropical floods. On one occasion Dr. Chamberlain and his little band were swept bodily down a river, usually fordable, but swollen now by recent rains. For a moment or two the doctor and his pony were submerged, but ultimately the whole company managed to swim or scramble to safety to the opposite bank.

But it was a flood on the great Godavery river and its affluents that caused the worst predicament of all. By that time they had reached the extreme point of the expedition, up among the mountain Gonds, and had turned to the southeast to make the return journey by a different route. At a certain point they found that the steamer on which they had counted had broken down in attempting to stem the furious current, and that there was nothing for it but to march through seventy-five miles of a jungly, fever-haunted swamp in order to reach another steamer lower down. Bullock-carts were of no use, but by the aid of a hookam or firman from Nizam himself which the doctor had got hold of, he succeeded in obtaining a large body of bearers from a native deputy-governor. These men, however, though promised threefold wages, were most unwilling to accompany him, for with the country in flood the jungle becomes a place of special dangers; and it was only by much flourishing of the aforesaid Navy pistol, though without any intention of using it, that the doctor could make his men march at all or keep them from deserting.

But by and by an unforeseen trouble emerged. The constant dripping rain, the steamy heat, the jungle fever, the prowling tigers had all been taken into account. What had not been realized was the exceptional violence of the floods. And so one evening, when they came to a little tributary of the Godavery, which must be crossed if they were to reach a place of safety for the night, they found that the backwater of the main stream, rushing up this channel, had made a passage absolutely impossible.

For a time they were almost at their wit's end, for it would have been almost as much as their lives were worth to spend the night in the midst of the swamp, and it was too late now to get back to the place from which they had started that morning. But guidance came in answer to prayer. Dr. Chamberlain tells us that all at once he seemed to hear a voice saying, "Turn to the left to the Godavery, and you will find rescue." And though the native guides assured him that to do so would only be a foolish waste of time and strength, as the Godavery was now a swirling flood three miles across, and no boat or raft could possibly be got within a distance of many miles, he made his men turn sharp to the left and march in the direction of the Godavery bank. To his great delight, and to the astonishment of the natives, the first thing they saw as they emerged from the bushes was a large flat boat, just at their feet, fastened to a tree on the shore.

The boatmen told them that early that morning their cables had snapped, and they had been carried away by the flood from a mooring station higher upstream and on the British side of the river. To this precise spot they had been swept, they could not tell how. But to Dr. Chamberlain and his four native evangelists it seemed clear that God had sent this boat expressly for their deliverance. They pitched their tent on the broad deck and kindled a large fire on the shore to keep wild beasts away. And though the tigers scented them, and could be heard growling and snarling in the bushes that fringed the bank, the night was passed in comparative comfort and safety. Next day they floated down the stream towards the steamer that was to carry them southwards.

And so ended the more adventurous part of this long missionary journey through the country of the Telugus.

NOTES AND AUTHORITIES: The material for this chapter is derived from Dr. Chamberlain's two books already referred to, *The Cobra's Den* and *In the Tiger Jungle*, both published by Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier.