

# THE CALL

An American  
missionary in China  
a novel by

JOHN  
HERSEY



BOOK NINE

## THE KNOTS UNDONE

A SMELL OF SMOKE

HERE CAME David Treadup, doing coolie work.

The Japanese consular police were herding some three hundred fifty foreigners into the area of the Recreation Ground usually set aside in clement seasons for clay tennis courts. Treadup, wearing a fur hat and a black overcoat with a velvet collar, was trundling a contraption he had put together: a "knock-down" wheelbarrow, two bamboo poles supporting a V-shaped platform, the forward point of which ran along on a sturdy wheel purloined from the tea-service cart in Mrs. Evenrude's parlor.

On this rig rode his valises and those of Phinneas Cunningham. A vehicle of this sort was needed, because both men's bags were crammed to bursting with books. The best advice held that the stay might be long. "Shakespeare," Phinneas had said, "has more utility in the long run than extra underwear." (A supply of underwear and other haberdashery — and, among the miscellany, David's cornet — had gone forward with the men's clothes in their trunks.)

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"I had pain in my arm but did not feel it, if such can be," Treadup later wrote. He felt "a false lift" — false, because it had no motor but curiosity. Any change was better than no change. The dreadful monotony of his uselessness had at least been interrupted. He was worried about Mrs. Evenrude who for some reason had been put down for a second transport of internees; he did not know whether she was strong enough to manage alone in her house for even a few days. But he had the consoling company of Dr. Cunningham, who marched along beside him looking like a hunchback — the little doctor was carrying a haversack, which bent his frail figure cruelly forward, for the kitbag, too, was full of books. The doctor kept pointing out to Treadup the bright side of every disastrous moment of this mass humiliation.

The Japanese consular authorities had set up areas for registration and for baggage search on the porch of the nearby pavilion — a small building of an architectural style which was wildly incongruous in the light of this day, for its bulbed and spiked roof conjured images of the proud palaces of the great days of the British Empire in India. At this very second, Japanese

noncoms were scornfully flinging out onto the examination tables illegally held currency which they had discovered under the false bottom in a suitcase of Arthur Elmslee of the Hong Kong-Shanghai Bank. He was clearing his throat with a great roar, as if the hard lump of the humbling of the Union Jack were lodged somewhere just under his epiglottis.

When Treadup's and Cunningham's turn came, a bit later, the Japanese laughed to see the little traveling library, but they made no difficulty about it.

**THE WOMEN** and older men were anxious about the expected ordeal of carrying their bags on the long foot march — more than half a mile — to the railroad station, but at the last minute the Japanese authorities, better than their word for once, turned up with two large lorries, on which they built mounds of the heaviest bags. Treadup paid for the foresight he had invested in his barrow by having to push it with its load all the way.

The procession of three hundred fifty British and American Tientsiners out from the "Rec," along to the rim of the French Concession, down to the Bund, across the **International Bridge** and to the railroad station presented a sight for thousands of Chinese lining the way — and for Japanese cameramen, busy turning the cranks of their cameras to provide the home front with some cheerful entertainment.



The diary:

*They liked my funny little cart, and one of them stuck his lens right in my face. I puffed out my cheeks and made cross-eyes. If a picture of the Imbecile Enemy was what they wanted, I would give it to them.*

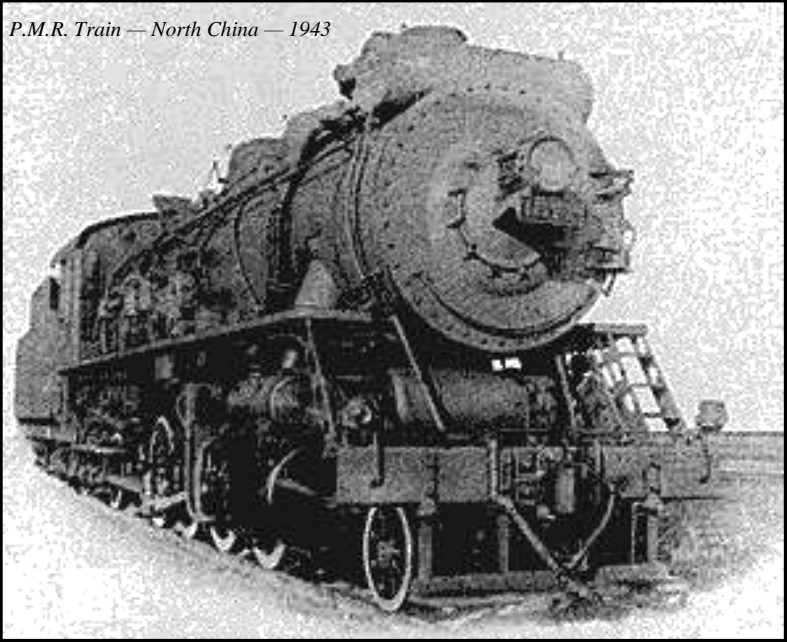
**AT THE RAILROAD** station, a Japanese officer shouted through a megaphone that a train would soon be ready. It turned out that there was a wait of nearly two hours.

*When I saw how many women there were, and indeed how very many children, some of*

*them quite small, I felt a flash of helpless rage at Todd and Blackie and the other people in New York for having been so dogmatic about Emily's evacuation — and at myself for having accepted their advice. I wanted her now standing beside me. Then I thought: Would I want to put her through all this? Then I thought: Yes. Being the woman she is, she would be happier here — 'knowing.' By this time I was so raw and my arm was so sore that I nearly bit poor Phinny's head off when he asked me some inconsequential question.*

Finally the whole crowd was loaded, bags and all, onto just two Chinese third-class coaches, with merciless unpadded wooden benches. Treadup left his wheelbarrow on the station platform. Not everyone could find a seat; Treadup sat on his bags. The train crept across the countryside at what seemed to Treadup about ten miles per hour. There was nothing to eat or drink, save what picnics people had brought for themselves. After dark, no one but children slept.

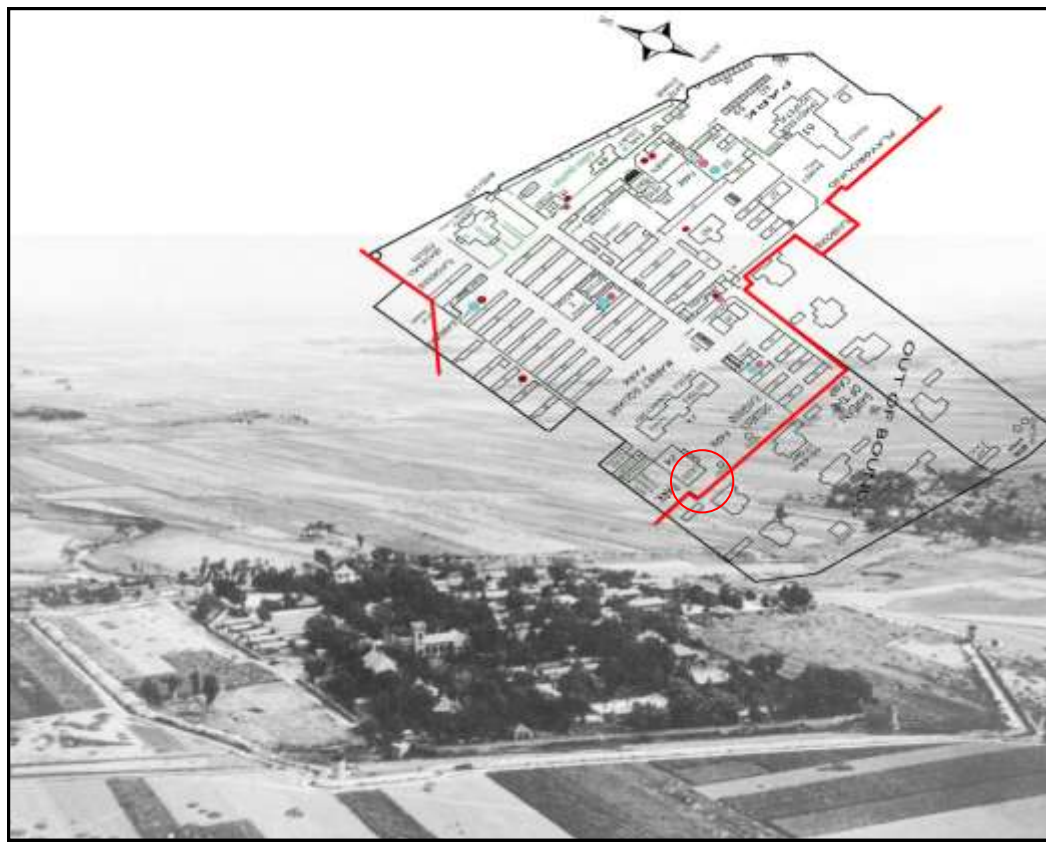
In the middle of the night, at the rail center of Tsinan, all were obliged to change trains. Women needed help with their bags. Children, wakened, screamed with fear and hunger. The new train finally moved. Treadup felt feverish.



Late in the afternoon of the second day, the exhausted company arrived at the Yin Hsien station. Buses and trucks were waiting for the internees. They rode out of the city and through its suburbs into the country, and they were offloaded on a terraced hillside, planted with willows, between a river and a compound wall.

*I was listless, tired, downhearted, in pain, but that wall roused me. My buttocks prickled at the sight of it. It was as if I were in an old*





more names than people, the usual mix-ups, endless palavers in Japanese at a high pitch. Treadup and Cunningham stayed tight, side by side.

This place, they knew and could see, was a former missionary compound, in which there had evidently been a large college or middle school, a hospital, a church, and several Western-style residences; now all was drab and befouled. Most of the passageways were cluttered with all sorts of furniture and trash thrown out from the buildings, presumably by uncaring bivouacs of Japanese troops and, later, by quartermasters in hasty preparations to receive these internees.

At last the group was marched to Building No. 24. The men were

placed in dank basement classrooms from which everything had been removed except some reed mats to sleep on — not enough to go around. Each chose his floor space and piled his luggage beside it. Then the Tientsiners, having been directed to carry along their own eating utensils, were escorted to Kitchen No. 1, where they formed in long lines to wait for food.

Half an hour later Phinny and I had drawn close enough to the servers to see something important: there was not a single Chinese in the compound. We were being helped by folks, as we soon learned, from Tsingtao. They had been in the camp about a week. Merchants, bankers, lawyers, doctors, musicians, missionaries, former **soldiers — people just like us Tientsiners —** were manning the kitchen and serving lines. There would henceforth be no servantry in our lives. My first thought: *Dirty work I don't mind. But this is verily the end of the end of my mission to the people of China. Cut off. Cut off. I remember the time, long long years ago, when I first arrived in Tientsin, and I thought — in the way we thought, back in those days — this is war, and I am a Christian soldier, a General for Jesus, and I must have courage. Now I am down to the root of it. Yes, I must have courage. Now I am really to live an army life, with a mess kit in my paw, waiting in line. A prisoner of war of a sort — not quite the kind of hero for Christ I envisioned when I was that boy so wet behind the ears.*

*wooden house and waked up from a deep sleep smelling smoke. This was the usual eight-foot gray brick mission-compound wall, familiar to me as an often seen boundary of refuge for foreigners, setting the limits of a peaceful sanctuary from the Chinese universe roundabout — except that now there was a difference: guard turrets had been erected at the corners of the wall. This was no refuge. This was a prison.*

## ON EDGE

**THE° FIRST** sensations, within the wall, were not so alarming — merely of bone chill and brain dampness.

The Tientsin troop was led in and **lined up on an athletic ground next to a brick church** with a corrugated tin roof. There the Japanese camp authorities held an interminable roll call; there were two or three



... the athletic Field ... © Louis Schmid



Kitchen number 1 © by Louis Schmid

The famished travelers were given a hot, watery brew, in which bits of Chinese cabbage, field carrots, and leeks could be seen to float, and plentiful bread that had been baked, as the servers said, right in the compound.

*I bedded down in my clothes on the chilly floor. How unforgiving that concrete was! I hardly slept at all. I thought and thought about Emily. I am safe, Em. My body is safe. But it is hollow, null, and void. I tried to pray. I made several efforts. I would start my silent habitual line of address to the Almighty, only to have the feeling that there was no ear up there. There had always, all my life since I came to know God, seemed to be two of us when I prayed. We were together. But now it seemed as if I, like old Mrs. Evenrude, was mumbling to myself in an empty room. It was the sensation of talking on the telephone and realizing that the line has gone dead. This frightened me.*



© This photo was taken in 1908 by Eric Gustafson's grand father — Church / Assembly Hall



This photo was taken in 1908 by Eric Gustafson's grand father ---  
From the tower of Block-23

**HIS BODY** was not quite so hollow as he thought: In the morning, after a breakfast of bread and tea, he had the urge to go to the toilet. He asked directions. Walking from Kitchen No. 1 to the nearest latrine for men, he got a sense of the choked scope of his new universe.

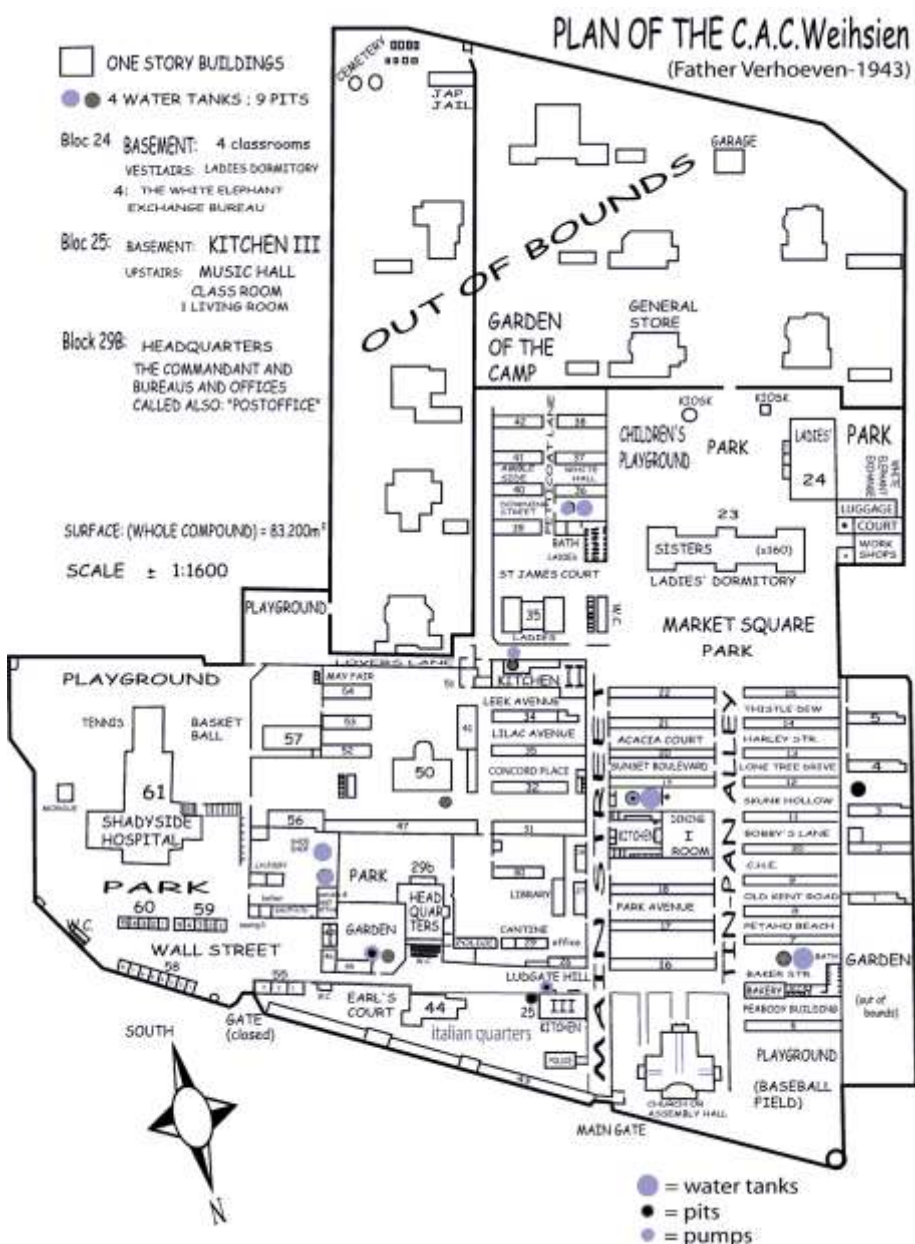
The compound was large — more than five acres, Treadup guessed — but it was nonetheless a prison. **To the right of the main gate stood the church**, and beside it the athletic field where the group had been assembled for roll call the evening before, and again that morning just after dawn. Running southward were two straight alleys, on both sides of which stretched about **a dozen rows of long, narrow, one-storied buildings** — evidently former student dormitories. They reminded Treadup of the rows of stables at the Tientsin Racecourse. Beyond these dorms, to the south, were two large classroom buildings, and farther yet, strictly out of bounds to the campers, were spacious courtyards with several substantial brick houses formerly occupied by missionaries, now sheltering the Japanese camp authorities in fine style. To the west, in a swerve of the enclosure, stood a large hospital building, with tennis courts and a basketball court beside it.

The men's W.C. to which Treadup had been directed was on the way back to Building 24, where the Tientsiners had spent the previous night. There was a long line waiting.

In the diary, from this time onward, Treadup more and more addresses Emily, as if he were writing to her. Now:

*Em, I cannot describe the horror of that latrine, when finally I could enter it. The Japanese had taken out the Chinese-style squatting toilets and put in some flush ones — but Lord! only 23 for hundreds of people. I had to stand in line nearly half an hour. And then - Gehenna! The conveniences have pull-*





TREADUP went back to the basement room in Building 24 and lay down on the concrete, with his rolled-up overcoat as a pillow. He did not try to read. "Against my shut eyelids, Em, I could see strange shifting patterns of lights — like those I saw when I went under ether, all those years ago when my arm was operated on." It seemed to him that his essence, his selfhood, had been condensed into some sort of hot liquid which was now being siphoned out of his head and torso and into his throbbing arm. "I tried prayer, but again I seemed to be talking into a wind. The fragments were torn from my mouth and blown away. I was afraid."

He had no idea how long this went on.

The next thing he was aware of was Phinneas Cunningham's pink face peering into his. It was a matter of course that the doctor would have bounced back from the mood of the death sentence he had so grimly pronounced earlier; but Treadup winced. That rosy face was too bright for his infirm eyes.

"Rise and shine, old sport!" Cunningham said with a robustness which grated on Treadup's ears. "You are needed."

Treadup sat up. "I'm dizzy," he said. "Look here, Treads. You can't funk now."

"My arm," Treadup said.

"Yes, yes," Cunningham said. But, he went on, the arm would simply have to wait a week or two, or perhaps even longer. The hospital was a shambles. He, Cunningham, was going to be in charge of getting it back on its feet. The commandant of the Jonathans, he said, had ordered certain committees to be set up, to manage the various operations of the camp. There would be three to five internees on each. Phinny had been given the chairmanship of Medical Affairs. And, he said, "I suggested you for Number One on Engineering and Repairs. It was unanimous, Treadsy-boy. Old Olander of Standard Oil backed you up — said you're a brick — been to one of your lectures — 'a practical noggin,' he said — said you're soft on the Chinks but after all there are none of them in here, are there? It was unanimous, Treadsy-boy. Come on! Ally-oop! On your feet!"

"I'm not up to it."

"Look here, Treadup. ..."

"God himself damn you! Leave me alone."

**THE DIARY:** two days later:

*Em, I loathe this person, David Treadup. He is not I. He is a stranger. I imagine using a curseword against my dearest friend — next to you. I have never used such language in my life*

*chains for flushing from wooden tanks overhead, but there is no water supply, and the cesspools below had all packed up, so the toilets were all full and flooded. Human leavings were awash on the floor. Perhaps Dante or Virgil could have described the stench — this was surely the stink of the vilest ring of hell. I suppose the closest bond one can form with his fellow man comes from walking in his excrement — the most equalizing stuff on earth: that of the genius smells as bad as that of the idiot, the emperor's perhaps worse than the beggar's. But it isn't stuff that makes one love his brother man. Except at sea I have always thought I had a strong stomach — here I added vomit to the mess. Even Phinny, my indomitable Dr. Pangloss, cannot, for once, see anything good about this. After his visit to the latrine this morning he came to me and announced that we will all die within a month. I don't mind if we do.*

*before: blasphemy: learned it from terrible Mrs. Evenrude. I have bit my tongue ever since. I just lie here. My arm is hot. Phinneas makes me go to meals. Can't eat anything but a little bread.*

*Thank heavens I am constipated — don't have to face the River Styx. When will our beds come? I can't sleep on this bedrock.*

**E A R L Y** the fourth morning Treadup saw a sight which shook him at least partway out of his lethargy. On his way to Kitchen No. 1 from the basement room, he passed near one of the men's latrines. In the open area in front of it, he saw a number of men in black trousers rolled up above their knees, bare to the waist in the March air, working with shovels and buckets in a trench half filled with a foul-smelling ordure. They were clearing the drains and cesspools for the latrine.

*Catholics, Em! I have always thought Papists to be self-indulgent and high-living, with their Benedictine liquors and feasts of suckling pig. How wrong that mythology must have been. Have I been a bigot? These people were so stolid and vigorous, and so insouciant, roaring at each other in what I took to be Dutch and Belgian and laughing like sailors on some sort of drunken wading party on a shore-leave beach — but they were slopping about in that glaucous, scummy soup of urine and feces — talk about your Augean stables! My word, how I admired them! I honor those Romanists. They put the rest of us to shame.*

**T H E B E D S** and trunks came. The Tientsiners were assigned permanent quarters. Married couples and families were housed in the rows of ten-by-twelve rooms in the long, low dormitory buildings. Bachelors and spinsters were placed in former classrooms in the large buildings.

Treadup and Dr. Cunningham now lived with nine other men in a room on the second floor of Building 23. Treadup felt pent up. "There is not space in this pigsty for me to expand my rib cage enough to fill my lungs with air." He had calculated that he had thirty-six square feet of floor area for his bed and his gear. This gave roughly three feet by four at the foot of the bed for what he called his "parlor." The Jonathans had provided a bookcaselike cupboard of open shelves, floor to ceiling, nailed against the wall beside each person's slot.

*Even when the boys were with us, you and I always had privacy and quiet, Em, and since you*



*Block-23 and 24 (on the left). The White Elephant exchange is just behind Block-24 ...  
by Jacqueline de Saint Hubert*

*pulled out I have been alone. This confinement is very trying. I am having sordid quarrels. My loneliness in prayer scares me. My arm makes me furious. Everyone seems to take the attitude that because I am big I take up too much room.*

**B E S I D E S** Treadup and Dr. Cunningham, the room held:

- A potbellied retired sergeant of the U.S. Fifteenth Infantry Regiment in Tientsin, a bully by nature and training; he had lived a shady life in the French Concession there, some said as a middleman in sales of smuggled curios.

- An Englishman with startling mustaches like porcupine quills, a grand personage high up in Kailan Mining, owner in Tientsin of the great racehorse Kettledrum, which had won the Tientsin Champion Stakes five straight years.

- An American derelict, formerly a Socony engineer, whose "better years," he told everyone, had been in the Bahrein oil fields in the Persian Gulf, now a lank, gaunt sausage of a man suffering agonizing cramps and sweats in forced withdrawal from his beloved paikar, the fiery Chinese liquor.

A muscular American Negro dance instructor from the Voytenko Dancing School in Tientsin.

A Eurasian, half Belgian and half Chinese, a salesman of cameras in a Tientsin store, who looked and acted like a ravishingly beautiful woman.

- A Pentecostal missionary, a bachelor with rattling dry bones under leathery dry skin, a kindly but rather repugnant man, with little dark velvety bags like bat bellies under his eyes, who groaned and babbled hair-raising fragments of sermons in his sleep — bringing loud roars for silence from the sergeant and the dancer.

- An English executive of Whiteaway Laidlaw, the largest department store in the British Concession, a sensible, direct, practical, unemotional man, an observer of rules and a mediator in all storms in the room.



◦ The former chief steward of the posh Tientsin Club, who still wore the black coat, double-breasted gray waistcoat, and striped trousers of his Club uniform, all of which he somehow kept impeccably clean, a straight-backed figure, honorable and correct, yet also mischievous, a fountain of laughter, a man, as David soon wrote, "too good to be true."

◦ A mean little Australian errand runner for the Customs Service, with a fake limp, who told a new lie every day about imaginary past glories — as the pilot of a smuggling plane, as a photographer of nude women, as a big-time Shanghai gambler — reduced now to a finicky, sneaky, sniveling complainer, scornful of Americans whatever their station but embarrassingly obsequious to upper-class Englishmen.

**ON THE MORNING** of March 25, word got around that a new transport of internees from Peking was to arrive. The Tientsin kitchen was given responsibility for preparing their evening meal. In the afternoon Dr. Cunningham made Treadup get up out of bed to help him at the hospital, which was almost ready to take its first patients. Late in the day Treadup found himself among the onlookers as the exhausted Peking people straggled in at the main gate.

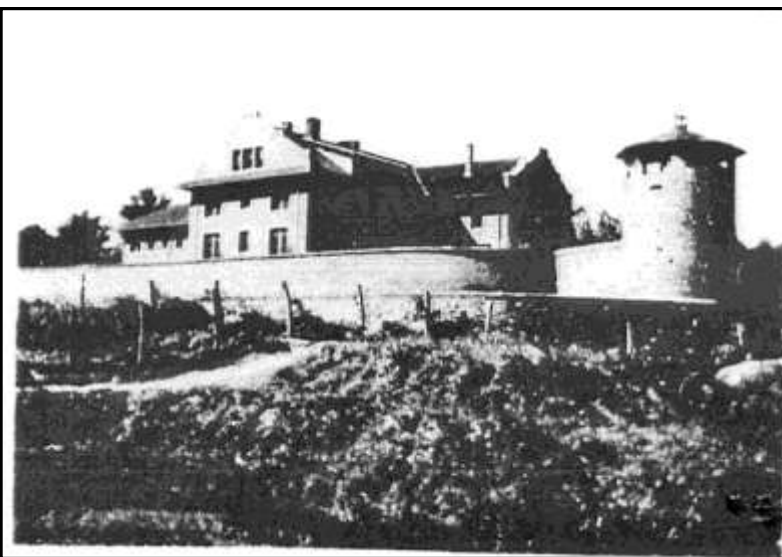
*Em, they were tired, but they looked like people from a real world. I realized that in only a few days my hold on the pride and dignity of a free man had given way. I had the mentality of a prison inmate. I was dead wrong in thinking I would want you to go through all this with me.*

Three days later the second Tientsin contingent came in, and again Treadup stood by the doctor's side to watch the arrival. This time both kept an anxious eye out for Mrs. Evenrude. There she was! — being carried in a "fireman's chair" by two priests. She had her arms around their shoulders, and she was nodding and laughing as if this were the nicest outing she had been on in years.

At seven that evening, Dr. Cunningham had her in a bed in the first ward in the hospital to be opened, one for women.

#### THE DIARY:

*What I cannot stand is waiting in line to go to the toilet. The latrines are orderly and clean now; the cesspools, though dangerously close (Phinny says) to the water wells, are working; buckets of waste water are kept at the facilities to flush them with. It's not the mess; it's the humiliation. My bowels are tied up. I wait half an hour for my turn and then can't do anything. This hasn't happened to me in four decades in China.*



*The Hospital and a Japanese watchtower, taken from outside the camp. The top two floors housed the pupils of the Chefoo School.*

**TREADUP** lay abed much of the day.

One morning Dr. Cunningham said, "I can't treat your arm until the hospital is straightened out. You will be helping yourself if you help me. Get up, now."

*I felt very angry at first, Em, but I held my tongue this time, and in the end I was grateful to him. He put me to work on the horrendous pile of debris beside the hospital. Everything had been ripped out by the Jonathans, presumably when they were stationing troops here. Phinny was in a hurry, because inmates were scrounging all sorts of things for their rooms from the junk piles outdoors, and he didn't want to lose any possible medical gear that way. You would be astonished at what useful things we turned up. Much **scientific apparatus** — the equipment of the physics and chemistry labs thrown out on the ground without regard for value. Phinny and his staff are adapting all sorts of salvage for medical purposes.*

The work tired Treadup, and that afternoon he collapsed onto his bed again. He wrote in his diary awhile. Then his mind drifted. Suddenly someone was shaking his shoulder.

"Get out of bed, you damnable malingerer," a voice was saying ("in that sort of English accent, Emily, that seems to have been brought on by the swallowing of a wet piece of flannel cloth — do you remember old Bishop Francis at the Centennial in Shanghai—Lord Frawncis, we used to call him?"). This was the voice of the high-toned Mr. Ramsdel, bereft now of his Kettledrum. Red in the face. Beside him, the Customs Service wharf rat, Drubbins — "pale as a fish filet," Treadup later wrote. This mismatched pair had somehow

quickly teamed up to make everyone else in the room miserable, with their constant carping and complaints.

"It's a bloody shime, big bloke loik you," Drubbins said.

Treadup sat up. He felt a surge of anger. "I worked all morning," he said. "I have been excused from assignments because I have an infected arm." His own words enraged him even more — they sounded like the last thing he intended: an appeal for sympathy.

"And I have the runs," said the rat. "The blighters didn't excuse *me*."

"And I a toothache," said Mr. Racehorse. "You lie here scribbling."

Drubbins thrust his face so close to Treadup's that David could smell his breath — "air from an abandoned cellar." "You're a bloody nuisance," Drubbins said. "Going to take you up with the Jappies, I am. You've shoved your bloody bed four bloody inches into my particular premises."

*I 'm on edge. Everyone's on edge. This matter of inches is everything. I scrambled out of bed to check the chalk marks on the floor, and my bed was in fact an inch or so in Drubbins's area. Being in the wrong threw me quite out of kilter, and I began raving at the two persecutors.*

**THAT AFTERNOON** Dr. Cunningham opened a men's ward, and his first admitted patient was David Treadup.

## OUT OF TOUCH

**HE CAME** up from ether seeming to be on a deck chair on a very rough day. A basin was providentially in place, just in time. A beautiful face swam into focus for a few seconds, then faded. Later it was there again. He felt less seasick.

At an indefinite time he heard a woman's voice, "That's better, Mr. Treadup."

He saw that it was a nun. He groaned. He had counted on Em.

**TWO DAYS LATER** he was able to read, and even to write a little. There was a gauze drain in the wound in his left arm. He still had a lot of pain. The nun, Sister Catherine, bathed his forehead with a cool damp cloth. Every few hours Dr. Cunningham came to change

the dressing and to chat, and in the evenings he came back and talked for a long time. He had brought David a book on the Epicureans and Stoics.

*My little friend Dr. Rubber Ball comes bouncing in here and tells me to get that dark cloud off my forehead. You make me irritable, I say. Look at these ancients, he says, their 'ataraxia' — tranquillity — tranquillity, Treads! — two, three centuries before your Jesus Christ and his agony on the cross. When he says this, I feel an icicle in my heart. I am puzzled by this sudden fear. I am not used to fear.*

Another entry:

*Avoidance of pain. O how I would like to achieve it. Phinny says I will, at least in my arm, in a few days. He says these sulfa drugs that the Jonathans let him have (perhaps the very ones commandeered from his hospital in Tientsin!) are better than faith, when it comes to healing sore arms. But it is the pain in myself, which the drugs can't touch, that frightens me. I had thought Epicurus was more joyous than he turns out to be. Those were very cool nerves he had. No raptures. Anchored under a lee shore out of the wind. I t doesn't seem enough to me. Both these schools taught different sorts of resignation; I want and need more than that. I read late last evening, till the print blurred. Realized this morning I forgot even to try to pray last night.*

**"THE ONLY THING** that kept my head above water in those days of my utter raggedness," Treadup wrote in "Search,"

*... was Phinneas Cunningham's elation. He seemed to dart about on free air like a chimney swift. His joy lay in improvisation. He and his colleagues imagined a hospital and then materialized it out of match sticks, and pieces of cellophane from cigarette packages, and cold-cream jars, and hatpins, and battered mess kits. The Jonathans provided some equipment later on, but at first everything had to be dealt up by ingenuity. Phinny told me that for a successful mastoid operation on a child from Tsingtao, Flanner, the chief surgeon from P.U.M.C., had to boil up a carpenter's hammer, use a retractor made from a Meccano set, and make sutures with a woman's sewing kit.*



Yet there are numerous notes during the days of his recuperation which suggest that Dr. Cunningham, with his repeated jibes at Treadup's faith, his railing at the "high tone" of missionaries in the camp, his mockery of Christian cant, was causing Treadup increasing pain and fear. "I wish I were back to Ma Ch'iao!" he wrote once. "I am at my wits' end."

**SISTER CATHERINE** sat beside his bed each afternoon. She prayed a great deal. Treadup lay and peeked at her over his book as she ran beads through her fingers, her lips silently moving. It was hard to tell her age; the wimple shaded her face; he thought she might be ten years younger than he. Her eyebrows were black smudges on her paper skin. She had amazing physical strength for a woman of her age, and one so willowy and fine-boned. Her touch was as cooling as menthol. She pursed her lips at Dr. Cunningham's heresies. She answered questions openly but asked none.

She had been born, she said, in Milwaukee, in a large German-American family; she was the third of eleven children. Her father drank and beat her mother, who died — "she was ready for a vacation" — bearing the eleventh child. Four of the six daughters became nuns "in order to get away." Sister Catherine had been in China for thirty-two years, all of them spent in the far interior, in Shensi Province. Yet now she did not seem in the least dislocated; she acted at home in the internment camp.

Treadup wrote "to" Em, a month later, that with her so far away when he was in the hospital, Sister Catherine had been the dearest and safest woman on earth to be with, for she was capable of such a hovering closeness that one could almost hear her rapid heartbeat, yet at the same time she kept herself at such a distance that "looking at her was like gazing at a mountain vista a high-sky day with a cool north wind." Probably, he wrote, the miles of us distance lay in the ever true keeping of her oath of chastity. But she did not seem, like some of the nuns, de-sexed. Pure, yes. The love she gave a male

hospital patient held more in it than the word "charity" could contain.

One afternoon he was reading about Epicurus. He was feeling low. Here was a passage in which Epicurus urged a man to be honest, prudent, and fair toward others — not in order to be a good man, but simply in order to escape the censure of society and thus avoid one kind of pain. Suddenly tears started into David's eyes. At once Sister Catherine was up out of her chair and had put a hand on his arm. "What is it, Mr. Treadup?" she asked.

"I don't know," he said. Then he said, "Will you forgive me?"

"What for?"

"I don't know"

"Yes, my son," she said. "I forgive you."

He began to sob. She took his shoulders in her arms and held his head against her breast.

### IN "SEARCH":

*I see now that I should have taken that emotional break as a warning — or as advance notice — of the far deeper plunge that was to come in a few days. My convalescence was misleading; I guess I was in an unusually vulnerable state. I must not have realized how angry I was at God the Father for having snatched my mission, and therefore, as it seemed, the meaning of all my past life, away from me.*

**WHEN** Dr. Cunningham discharged Treadup from the hospital, he arranged with the Housing Committee to have the big man transferred, because of his infirmity, to a room in one of the long, low dormitory buildings, where he would have only two roommates and less hullabaloo than in his former quarters. David did not like this transfer. He confessed to Emily in his diary that being separated from Phinneas frightened him.

*I was humiliated, being so big and looking so strong, to have to stand by and watch two slight fellows carry my bed and baggage over from Building 23. They certainly didn't like it. They cut some very black looks at me.*

Treadup's new roommates began at once to quarrel with him. Having been just two in the ten-by-twelve room, they had been quite comfortable.

Now they had a jostling, nonworking giant and all its gear to contend with.





A typical internee family room at Weih sien.

One of the men was a sporty bachelor, Cyril Watkins, Tientsin agent for the Jardine Matheson trading company. As everyone else became more and more seedy, he wore silk shirts, handmade in Hong Kong with his initials on them, and Liberty silk neckties with paisley patterns. He had posted on the door a set of fourteen rules of the room: "Beds made before breakfast. No clothes left lying about. Knock before entering ... "

The other roommate was a Rumanian, Ion Titu Corbuc, who, Phinneas told David, had had a reputation in Tientsin as a tout at the Racecourse. It had not taken him long to find a new life as a scrounger: he had built a short wooden ladder, which by day he kept hidden under his bed and by night leaned against the compound wall, in order to bargain over it with Chinese farmers for eggs, peanuts, malt candy, sugar, honey, tobacco, and matches, which he sold to his fellow inmates. In this "over-the-wall" commerce he was in frantic competition with a group of Catholic fathers, who had early commandeered, for night use, the mounds of earth the Japanese had raised against the inside of the wall for sharpshooters when the camp had been a Japanese military bivouac. The monks had become kings of the black market, partly because of their excellent command of both spoken and written Chinese. As a trader, Corbuc was unctuous, smiling, and agreeable; as a roommate, he was contemptuous, whining, short-tempered, and often vicious. Cunningham

thought he may have bought his occupancy in the room from a corrupt member of the Housing Committee.

Dr. Cunningham had asked the Employment Committee to give Treadup four days of convalescence before assigning him to a task. His roommates here, as in the former room, were infuriated by the inactivity of this hulk, and they criticized him for everything he did or did not do: for growling when his arm hurt, for reading and writing in bed, for staying in his pajamas when the Japanese dawn roll call required everyone to go to the doorway of his room.

**TREADUP** was assigned to be a kettle and pot washer in the Tientsin Kitchen No 2.

This turned out to be hard work, especially at first, while he was still weak.

The bulk cooking was done in vast, shallow, round-bottomed iron cauldrons, four feet in diameter, in which soups and stews were made. This meant that Treadup contended, over and over again, for hours at a stretch, with crusted gravies and fatty mucilages and blackened residues. The wooden covers of the great kettles were particularly hard to clean. There was, as well, an endless oncoming rush of spoons and ladles and smaller utensils in which the kitchen staff cooked black-market eggs for the internees. The soap supplied by the Japanese was itself greasy; his scouring brushes soon lost their stiffness.



Kitchen No.1

The Tientsin kitchen served about five hundred fifty mouths; Kitchen No. 1, Tsingtao, served seven hundred fifty; Kitchen No. 3, Peking, about four hundred fifty. Each meal's serving took about an hour and a half; but each meal's mess took a kettle washer at least three hours to clean up. Treadup worked two meals a day. Grim in his thoughts, his vision still turned mostly inward on himself, he was only dimly aware of the long lines waiting for their turns at the dripping ladles at the great kettles. He sealed himself off from the hubbub of kitchen workers around him.

**NOW CAME** what Treadup later called "the precipitating incidents." Objectively, these happenings were not nearly so shocking as had been many things he had seen and experienced in the field; their significance, their force for precipitation, lay in his overreaction to them.

° A wiper working at Treadup's side was Irrenius P. Cashman, a Presbyterian missionary who was known



throughout China as one of the finest leaders of the Christian movement. He was used to sitting on managing boards, and he had been "surprised" at being assigned to the lowly kitchen cleanup squad. But, he said, dropping out one of his famous saws, "You are never quite safe from being surprised until you are dead." As Treadup gradually became more aware of the people around him, he found himself growing annoyed by Renny Cashman's habit of passing judgment on his fellow man. One of the assistant cooks, a Baptist missionary raised on a South Carolina farm, had a sweet, yielding nature. "Poor fellow," said Cashman, "he always chooses to be the anvil rather than the hammer." ("Mr. Cashman is too ignorant of physical science and the furrier's trade to know that in the long run the anvil always breaks the hammer, not the other way around.") A cockney steamfitter who had worked for the Tientsin Municipal Council kept forgetting to do things he had been asked to do. "Putting Off is the main sheet in that sinner's Gospel," Cashman said. It got back to Treadup that Cashman had said of him, "Treadup is a good man, but his mind is dark with thunderstorms."

Dark indeed it grew one day when he overheard Irrenius Cashman complaining about the helpings he was being given on the chow line. "These people have me doing donkey work," he was saying to the woman with the ladle, his voice rasping with anger. "You might at least feed me enough for me to bear my burden."

The kitchen supervisor, a Briton named Slawter, former executive of the coastwise traders Butterfield & Swire, stepped quickly forward and made the most of the fact that this time our friend had categorized himself — as a donkey. He said, "We're all asses here, Mr. Cashman. Kindly refrain from being a silly ass."

At that Irrenius Cashman exploded.

*Serpents, toads, and spiders came out of his mouth, Em. I have never heard such vile speech. Not that he cursed or blasphemed. I t was just sheer moral arrogance and contempt, with overtones of an overindulged only child denied its sweets. Slawter shouted in a brusque*

*voice, "Stop your braying, Mr. Cashman." Well! The very idea! That really got the donkey heehawing. I wish I could say it was funny. I t made me very much afraid — as so much seems to do, these days. I had always been in awe of Irrenius P Cashman's reputation as a man of dignity, compassion, and humility — "God's truest man in the field," everyone always said. What is happening to us — to me?*

° Here was Miller, the potbellied ex-soldier from the room in Building 23, in charge of the supply-collection detail inside the compound gate. Treadup was taking his assigned turn, as all the men did in rotation, at this hard labor. Yes, Miller was a bully — born to it, and from having sergeanted for so long. His tongue was white hot. There were no such things as adjectives and adverbs in his lexicon — only modifiers standing for excrement, urine, private parts, the rectum, women's breasts and buttocks, and a range of shocking sexual practices far beyond Treadup's ken. But it had gradually come to David that under his hectoring, Miller was astonishingly tender to the weak and the sick. He blustered at, but filled in for, goldbrickers. Roar he might, but he obviously heard and understood the faintest whisper of pain from anyone else.

Supplies were brought into the compound on Chinese carts and wheelbarrows — at first with Chinese muleteers and barrowmen; but the Jonathans, having become suspicious of secret communications with the outside world through the carters, had ordered the Chinese bringing the supplies not to step inside the gate. From then on campers had had to lead the mules or push the wheelbarrows to the supplies depot, several hundred yards away near the south wall. Chinese mules had their own ideas about appropriate language from a driver, and their responses to strangers, especially strangers who had never had mules as friends, were not always cordial. The wheelbarrows were worse — they were wide and their loads were high, and balancing them on their huge single wheels was not easy. Some of the loads had to be carried on Chinese coolie poles. Here were businessmen, whose



Old Chinese cart

habitual exertions had been cricket, tennis, and golf, and missionaries, who had not done much more than kneel to pray; all doing the work of louse-bitten Chinese wharf coolies. And here was Miller, in charge, hurling obscenities like a Georgia chain-gang boss.

One morning everything had gone wrong for Treadup. He had cut himself shaving. At breakfast, climbing over a bench at a table, he had spilled his bowl of bread-mush. After twenty-five minutes on the latrine line, he had failed to perform again. He reported five minutes late for the supply-collection detail, and Miller had put his mouth against David's ear and filled it with decibels and filth. Treadup's lot, then, was a mule cart piled high with leeks. He tugged sharply and angrily at the bridle. The mule threw its head back and brayed. Treadup yanked the head down. The mule reared and then kicked, banging at the cart with its hind hocks and losing its balance in the traces, pulling the cart over on its side and spilling the leeks on the ground. Miller charged at Treadup like a bull, growling unthinkable curses at him. "Get out!" he said. "Get out. You're dismissed. Get out. Go to bed, you overgrown baby." He drove Treadup away and gathered a squad to right the cart.

"He must have sensed," Treadup wrote,

*... how exhausted and beaten I was. He was rough but merciful. I felt the kindness in his sound and fury. Miller has never been saved, but there is perverse brotherly love behind that hateful bullying front. I say perverse: he may be kind for scummy reasons, for all I know. But I think St. Pete will not hesitate at the pearly gates when Miller shows up. I can't bring myself to speak to him. He frightens me. Not his foul mouth. No. What frightens me are his faith, hope, and charity. They terrify me. Faith? I don't know what I mean, but it's there, in something, and it's more enviable to me even than his amazing carnal knowledge. Forgive me, Em, but you and I seem to have missed out on a few things. That idea, too, frightens me.*

° Two ancient Belgian Dominican friars, with white beards and faces like old manuscripts, had been assigned to do nothing all day but swat flies at Kitchen No. 2. One of them was unspeakably dirty; he had, as Irrenius Cashman said, "a bad habit" — his long black gown was caked with mud on the skirts and greasy droppings on the lap; his beard was as unkempt as a bluejay's nest. The other, Father Julius, by contrast, was spotless and constantly preened himself like a cat: even while he banged his flyswatter all about, he combed his long, wavy, cobweb-fine beard with the other hand. He said he was ninety-one years old. He had arrived in China the year Treadup was born. He had served out most of his mission in Peking, and there he had taken up the study of



... the Priests Quarters © Father Louis Schmid

ancient Chinese bronzes. The other friars said he was a world-famous scholar, and he talked to Treadup, between whacks, with his eyes transported by the exquisite vision of memory, about ritual vessels of the Shang, Chou, and early Han dynasties. He described to the huge American, as Treadup scrubbed the cooking cauldrons, the ancient casting of these artifacts by the still-used lost-wax method — "old, *old* things, my boy, going back to sixteen centuries before the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, sir." Father Julius had been one of those to decipher the ideographs with which some of the objects were decorated.

*I lie in bed thinking about him, Em, and get the horrors. Here he is, at ninety-one, this distinguished scholar with a mind as hard and bright as bronze itself, and what is his destiny? — to kill flies. He is, in a narrow field, a great man. And this is what he has come to: flap, flap, flap. Ever more flies keep coming, as if he were actually multiplying them with his blows. Futility! I actually wept, thinking of him last night, Godforsaken as he is. As we all are.*

° Drubbins had organized a brothel. Miller, the ex-soldier, told Treadup about it. Three White Russian women from Tsingtao, he said, and a half-Chinese, half-French wife of a no-good American ex-sailor. He told Treadup the number of the room — one of the small rooms in the dormitory rows.

*I was drawn to it, walked past it often, Em. I promise you it was not that I wanted to enter. I wanted to condemn, to blame, to stare it out of existence. Then one afternoon, in broad daylight, I saw little Frances Player, the daughter of those Presbyterians who used to be in Tsinan — remember? — the girl's about seventeen — go right in that door. I checked later to see whether I had mistaken the room*



number. I had not. What did I do about it?

*Nothing. Nothing — except to stop passing that way.*

° A foolish Dutch priest, a stout, pink man, was caught by a camp guard bargaining with two Chinese farmers over the wall in broad daylight. The Japanese commandant charged the Discipline Committee with dealing him a severe punishment. Guards collared the Chinese farmers and kicked them and beat them with bamboo rods; the whole camp could hear their screams. The Committee staged a trial of the priest. The sentence: He must stand on a mound by the wall every night for a week. In other words, they were sentencing him to deal "over the wall" by night rather than by day.

Later, in the dining hall, Treadup heard roars of laughter from a table of friars. The "condemned" man was regaling some who had not been there with the story of his hour at the bar of justice.

*Phinny guffawed when I told him about it. But Em, this disturbed me, horrified me. Not just the cynicism of it. The beatings, almost to death, of those poor Chinese. This winking at the regulations by our supposed court. You know I have always believed in the rule of law. The floor of values I've stood on all my life is unsteady, as if there were a mild but constant earthquake going on. Yes and No are topsy-turvy.*

° Treadup went to Sunday service. Oh, no! There in the pulpit was Reverend Planson, from Union Church, in Tientsin. He had not failed to bring his purple cassock, his white silk surplice, and his leaden clichés and commonplaces with him in his internment baggage. "Probably the worst sermon I ever heard." The text was Romans 10:12: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Planson seemed to be suggesting that in the Yin Hsien camp there was no real difference between the British and the American, they were God's children, even Belgian and Dutch Catholics might conceivably be God's children; yet he managed to suggest, in easily decipherable code, that Americans were colonials, lacked education, were muddled in their thinking, used bad grammar, and were materialists; even their missionaries were materialists.

*This idiotic sermon cheapened everything. I will not be able to go to church when Planson is to be in the pulpit. I may not be able to go to church at all, for I am so fearful in the pews. I cannot wait for the service to be over, so I can go outside and breathe.*

° Physically stronger, he had become voraciously hungry. It was an unhealthy hunger, a survivor's hunger, something like that he had felt after the drowning of Penn Landsdown in the mountain stream near Kuling, so many years before. Only the memory of Irrenius Cashman's outburst kept him from whining at how little he was served at meals. Even when a server made some allowance for his huge frame and gave him an extra dollop, it never seemed to be enough. The bread, baked at a common bakery for all the kitchens, was fresh and usually tasted good, and he could eat as much of it as he wanted, but "bread melts away to nothing in the mouth," he wrote.

He was on the evening shift. One of the wipers was ill, and the pot washing seemed to last forever. Most people had left.

*Something got into me. I suddenly tingled with what I must have thought was canniness. My heart began to pound. I told Spencer Dodd, who was wiping, to run along, I'd be glad to finish up. He's a young sprig, and he has taken a fancy to a plump Tsingtao girl, Molly Someone, so he was glad to run off. I was alone. All the cooks had called it a night. The meat had been delivered for dinner the next day, and of course I knew where it was hung. I carried a stack of pans into the kitchen, quickly slipped a knife from the rack at the cutting tables, dodged into the cool-room, and hacked off a beautiful slab of lean pork from a whole side on a hook there. I put it under my shirt, I felt against my chest the cool strength it would give me within, when I ate it. I was crazy, Em. I hadn't thought how I would cook it, or how I would hide it from my roommates. But O I was happy!*

"Not you, Treadup!"

Treadup wrote that he nearly fainted. It was Slawter, the supervisor. He must have ducked back in to the kitchen for something he had forgotten.

"I'll have to report you to the Discipline Committee, old man. I wouldn't have thought it!"

**TREADUP's** case came before the Discipline Committee two mornings later. Now he experienced firsthand what the Dutch priest had gone through — except that the outcome was very different. The proceedings were exceedingly British. "The only things lacking," Treadup wrote, when he had achieved some distance from the event, in "Search," "were wigs on the judges and barristers." The presiding officer was the former head of the Legation Quarter police force in Peking, a large, portly man, now jovial, now stern.

Treadup recorded in his diary that he wanted to say to the Committee: "You let the priest off the other day. He was venal. I was only hungry." But "something — was it a rag of pride I still wore? — something held my mouth shut." The Committee sentenced Treadup to two perambulations of the compound wearing around his neck a sign:

## I AM A THIEF

On this awful walk Treadup encountered Miller, the ex-soldier, who clapped him on the shoulder and congratulated him for having been a bad boy. Corbuc, the Rumanian scoundrel in his room, looked at him later with pity, so badly had he bungled his theft. At night, unable to pray, he felt a fearful punitive trembling settle in his empty belly.

**THE CRISIS**, when it arrived, took him by surprise. Though he came, later on, to give it great importance, referring to it as his "counterconversion," we lack a full, coherent narrative of it, perhaps because he was never sure how deep the change in him actually ran. The first note, the morning after, is brief:

*Up all night. Torn to pieces. I was alone in the room, Corbuc out smuggling, Watkins visiting his British friends in Building 24, a drinking party as usual. I am in quicksand.*

Then, a blank day, and then, two days afterward:

*I turned in, three nights ago, thinking myself very tired, but I could not sleep. I got up and began pacing. Bare feet, cold. The strangest feeling. Others seemed to be in the room with me. I was not dreaming. I suppose my imagination was overworked, by the stress of recent days, and by my inability to pray. Phinny was there in my mind, I rrenius Cashman was there, Miller the ex-sergeant, Reverend Planson, the pink-faced smuggling priest, and, perhaps, at the very edge of my perceptions, Sister Catherine. I felt very angry, I argued with the night air. Horrible Planson began speaking to God — and to my surprise his tongue was smooth — seeming to offer me words to address to God: "Thou art the God of my strength: why hast thou cast me off? why go I mourning ... ?" Miller's curses burned my ears, and Renny Cashman's arrogance made me furious. Then — were they whispers I heard from Sister Catherine? or were they from a great distance? — from you, Emily, far away? "My beloved is like*

*a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice. My beloved spoke, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." I saw the pink-faced priest laughing; I laughed, too. I felt bitterness toward Phinny; he had cut into my arm. I don't know how long I walked back and forth. I remember that I threw myself to my knees beside my bed, the way I used to when I was small, and I may have said "Jesus friend of little children." Whatever I said, the line was dead. No one was listening. There was the most awful void. Then nasty Cashman said, "Your prayer should be, 'Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, **There is a man child conceived.**'" At some time in the night, after more, much more, of my confusion, they left me. I was exhausted. I fell onto the bed and slept soundly.*

Nothing, here, about the consequences of the experience, devastating though they were to be for him. He does not speculate — he never will — whether he imagined those presences with him in the room, or was suffering some sort of psychic accident. Several days pass before he can write:

*I am calm. I am out of touch with God. It may be that I realized that night — that I now think — that there is no God. On that point I am not sure. I still feel capable of amazement; I walked out this morning and was dazzled by the shimmering line of dew, touched by the new sun, along the upper edge of the wall that holds me imprisoned. I feel as if my hands and feet had been tied for a long time, and that the knots have suddenly been undone. This has been an eerie experience. I don't think I am going to be quite so afraid any more. If there is a God, I must be a disappointment to him.*



# THE INNER FRAME

**H E F E L T** no raptures, but he began to notice some spring in his legs. The colors of the day had gained intensity. He ate his food slowly, savoring the tastes. He was not so tired at work as he had been. He was still susceptible to fear, but now the fear, when it came, responded to real dangers, real concerns, and it was edged with the old familiar expectation of surprise, which he had first experienced as a boy, watching the dog Tub give birth to her pups. Fear was no longer dominant. He was open to minor pleasures. Memories of major ones, long asleep in him, rushed forward.

**I N "SEARCH."** a few weeks later, as his loss of the bulk of his faith hardened in him, he wrote:

*What was happening now was altogether different from the period after my conversion at Syracuse. This was a much calmer aftermath, though colder. I felt, all along, this time, a deep sense of loss — a loss of years of habits of thought, a loss of God's wings over me in the nest, a loss indeed of some kind of narrowness, tightness, which had made life easy for me, without my even knowing it. Yet the gain was palpable, too. Now, right away, I had access to a range of feelings that seemed to me greater than what I had known before. Nonsense and folly, my own and others, were more visible than before. I still wanted to be good in the eyes of others, but the whole idea of sin had found its proportions. Living at close quarters with Miller, the bullying ex-sergeant, and Irrenius Cashman, the supposedly sainted missionary, each with his astonishing contradictions folded into him; and with Sister Catherine, and with the shabby Corbuc and rodent Drubbins, and with Flanders the Tientsin Club steward, "too good to be true," and Phinny, and Ramsdel the pompous Kailan Mining executive - stripped down, all of them, to their most primitive conditions of value — living so intimately together, in such raw states of hunger and need — it seemed to me I was seeing some human constants at work which made the idea of being cleansed of sin by Jesus Christ illusory. One could believe in illusion and take strength from it, and I suppose I had, for all those years, but the moment illusion is seen for what it is — whoosh! its beauty and support are gone. The outcome was bleak for me. I t would take a new order of courage to live*



*Typical row of 9 by 12-foot rooms where families lived.*

*without this support. Yet the possibility of courage had itself taken on a new meaning, somewhat painful, but challenging, because there was no hand but mine, now, on the tiller.*

**T R E A D U P** was on his way back to his room after the noon shift of pot washing. The day was so brilliant that he felt himself embedded in a, universal sapphire. The compound was livable. Cleanup squads had got rid of all the rubble and debris that had made the camp so unsightly at first, and the English gardening mania had begun to tell a cheery story in a large plot alongside the hospital.

As Treadup walked past one of the two water-boiling sheds that had been set up to provide water both for drinking and for showers — this one was called "Waterloo" and the other was "Dew Drop Inn" — he found Flanders, the club steward, manning the pump which raised water to the holding tank for the boilers. This pump, and others like it around the camp for various water uses, had to be serviced all day long by turns of strong men. "Chief" Flanders, forever tidy in the eye of his club clientele, was in his immaculate black jacket and striped pants. Flanders had always been slightly condescending to Treadup, who had not been "clubable" when he had lived in Tientsin, but now, when Treadup, in the good mood of this bright day, called out a greeting, Flanders stopped pumping, straightened himself, responded with the slight bow of respect he usually reserved for clubmen, and then with an involuntary groan stretched his arms over his head.

"Your back's sore," Treadup said.

"The pump handle's frightfully awkward," Flanders said.

"I see that," Treadup said. "The fulcrum is much too low."

Treadup, "finding myself excited by the problem," examined the pump, then went straight to the plumbing shed of the Committee on Engineering and Repairs. He

knew the man on duty, an engineer from the Tientsin Municipal Council, and he persuaded him to let him have the parts and the tools necessary to see if he could heighten the hand pump Flanders was working on.

Hacksaw, threader, wrench, and muscle — two hours. Flanders had left. Treadup pumped hard to make up for the lost time. He could work standing up straight.

#### THE DIARY:

*When I wrote the other day about a new, wider range of feeling, I did not take note of something at which I marvel: I mourn the great loss I have suffered, it is bitter and impoverishing, there is a huge hollow place, yet at the same time I am joyous and feel free. I am waking up from a sleep. Phinny kept at me all that time about "entering the twentieth century." Perhaps I have begun to do so. That thought gives me some strength. Part of my joy, I think, comes from my sense that in spite of this void in my spirit, I can look back on my mission in the China field without shame or guilt. It was not all error and mummery. I really think*

*I gave what I could give with a whole heart. And this: Old Todd was onto something, after all, with what I thought was his so offensive charge of "humanism." This experience I have gone through here must have been brewing in me for a long time.*

**IT WAS** May, and the weather was fine. The food preparers worked outdoors, at a long table outside the kitchen. One afternoon Treadup, taking a breather from washing pots, stepped out into the soft air. The workers there were chatting. Treadup heard a familiar, somewhat metallic voice. Mrs. Evenrude! The seventy-odd-year-old woman, who had not done a stroke of domestic work for three-fourths of her life, was peeling turnips. He watched her, without stepping forward, for a long time. She was chatting away like a catbird. Her face was strong and clear. She was doing this menial work with great dignity and amazing deftness and rapidity. When Treadup finally intruded, she threw down her knife and the turnip she was working on and flung her arms around his neck. Treadup had a sudden vivid memory of another unexpected embrace, from long ago, when old Dr. Elting, on the porch of the Astor House in Tientsin, had taken raw young Treadup to his breast, and astonishing tears had come to David's eyes. Now, rather, David's impulse equally astonishing to him — was to laugh. Stiffening, perhaps sensing this, Mrs. Evenrude drew back and presented Treadup to her co-workers, formally, as if she were serving high tea on Davenport Road.

**HE TALKED** one evening with Sister Catherine, and, for the first time, looking in her eyes, he saw the deep pools of her loneliness. He touched her with something he perhaps carelessly said, and she suddenly opened out to him with a shocking candor. She was frightened. She had stopped menstruating. She said she had endured all sorts of troubles in China; others had always praised her calmness, her equanimity. But here, in this crowded camp, she was cut off, alone, and now, as she so strangely put it, considering her vows, "barren."

Sister Catherine's loneliness reached like a pickpocket into his. Soon she was in full possession of his starved love for Emily. She drew from him many pictures of Em: the maiden with nut-brown hair in the Y.W. canteen at Syracuse; the seasick bride riding up the China Sea; the pale being beyond the terrible wall she had built around herself, after the loss of Nancy; the cynosure of four thousand men on His Majesty's Transport Tyndareus. On and on. The nun, having with her disciplined charity put aside her own distress, listened to his, saying nothing.

Emily! As he tried to tell Sister Catherine about Emily's serenity, he suddenly found it hard to describe; it



5. The hospital water tower

Willis





copyright 1945 William Arthur Smith

... first evacuations after our liberation in 1945 ...

had subtly changed, it baffled him, it became an enigma. He was faced with wondering what Em would think of him now. Would he seem a stranger to her? Would she accept him as he now was? Was he, puzzling over something he had seen so often in her, at a distance from her that was not just geographic? "I was disturbed by these thoughts, and they made me dishonest," he wrote. "I did not tell Sister Catherine a word about my apostasy." And then, a perplexing line: "I didn't want to hurt her feelings."

**EUSTACE HOCKING.** former chief engineer for Kailan Mining and now head of the camp Committee on Engineering and Repairs, asked Treadup if he could find spare time to raise the level of the handles of all the other water pumps around the compound. The committee assigned Treadup a helper. He called their undertaking the Great Yin Hsien Civilian Assembly Center Rainmakers' Spine-Straightening Company Limited. He pieced the work out, between pots and pans, over a two-week span.

Then on a Monday morning Phinny Cunningham asked David if he had seen that day's posting of the week's assignments by the camp Employment Committee. Treadup went right to the notice board and found that he had been transferred from kitchen work to Engineering and Repairs.

Now came a burst of energy which was — on a somewhat lower scale of grandeur — like the one he had had after his first lecture tour in the spring of 1911. He felt, in fact, easily three decades younger than he had a month before. His arm was all healed. He ran three times around the perimeter before breakfast each morning. His mission now was modest. Its slogan: Modernize the Yin Hsien Camp in This Generation!

His ingenuity opened out like a morning glory. First of all, he rearranged the carpenters' and fitters' shop to make it more efficient; he trained the men to think of their tools as precious extensions of themselves, to be

cared for as tenderly as their own limbs and extremities. (He even pointed out, as a measurement of value, the sense Sergeant Miller gave to the word "tool." "I could never have uttered such a thing a month ago, and even now I felt a little thrill of shame. My fellows encouraged me by laughing.") Cannibalizing materials already in the compound, he designed and supervised the refashioning of the camp's hot-water boilers. Phinny importuned him to rebuild some of the hospital's facilities. He headed a team that did over the Tsingtao kitchen while it was being used. Every day brought a score of breakdowns, collapses, accidents.

In June he succeeded Eustace Hocking as chief of the Committee on Engineering and Repairs. Dr. Cunningham said he had "engineered" the replacement. Hocking was in fact happy to step down into an easier job.

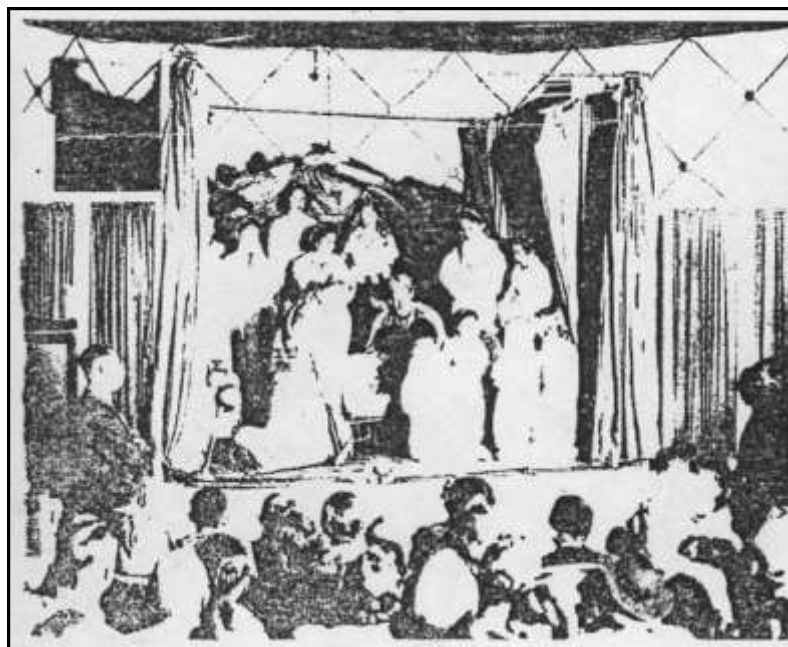
The diary:

*I must confess I wanted it. Hocking is a friendly fellow, but he is muddled in his thinking and cannot take things in sequence. I'm going to make things hum.*

**TREADUP** played third base for Tientsin. In the fine weather there was a softball game every evening. There were kitchen teams, city teams, corporate teams — B.A.T., Kailan, Standard Oil.

*I hit one over the wall for a four-bagger last night. I don't think I've had so much fun since those games at the summer conference at Silver Bay, when I was how old? — fourteen? We have an arrangement with the Jonathans for one of their guards to shag for us when somebody knocks one "out of the park" — obviously we can't chase balls outside the compound. I t's a long peg from third to first, and I manage to get the ball over there. I've booted a few, but so has everybody else. The big surprise is the Catholic team. Their left fielder is a bishop. The best player in the whole camp is their pitcher, we call him Father Windy. He talks constantly while he is pitching — to himself, to the batter, to the umpire, to the crowd in the stands. Which, by the way, is always a big one. Half the camp turns out to root for a team. Even the British come out to be amused by the chaps playing rounders. The nuns and priests all come to watch. Two young nuns act as cheerleaders. "Rome! Rome! Rome! Rickety-rah!"*





**TREADUP** wrote: "My 'I' has moved into my eye." By that he apparently meant: Now he was aware of the world. He wrote in another note that he realized how "shut in" he had been for so long.

One use of his eye (and ear): He began going — as he had not done at first — to the entertainments that were put on in the church building each week. The Pekingers were particularly active in staging these evenings. A young pianist and conductor from the capital, Peter Plumb, gave some recitals on a grand piano which the Japanese had, after much importuning by the internees, shipped to the camp from Peking. Plumb organized, rehearsed, and presented an orchestra and chorus in performances of Stainer's *Crucifixion* and *The Daughter of Jairus*, Mendelssohn's *Hear My Prayer*, and parts of Handel's *Messiah* and a Bach oratorio.

After hearing the Bach, Treadup wrote:

*What a superb sense of order, struggling against almost uncontrollable inventiveness! The composer must have thought he had a special relationship with his God, who said to him, "Tame your wild imagination so that ordinary human beings can hear what you're saying!" How I envy that, in my spiritual deprivation. If I were a genius, perhaps I would need a God so much that I would still have one.*

The Tientsin entertainments tended to be more popular "and frankly," Treadup wrote, "more fun." A company put on *The Pirates of Penzance*. Treadup played his cornet in the orchestra. ("I started tooting again about three weeks ago. Corbuc the Rumanian runs howling from the room when I practice. My poor fat lip could manage Sullivan; never could have done the Bach.") Groups got up satirical skits. A squad of hearty British men, dressed up as chorus girls, staged an all-male *Folies Bergères*. And, finally and inevitably, David Treadup went to work in the engineering shop, and in early July,



to full houses on two successive evenings, "trotted out Good Old Gyro." The lecture was a great hit. He had trained Miller, the ex-sergeant, to be his assistant, and Miller turned out to be very funny. "Is there a clown hiding in every retired sergeant? — there's a certain kind of humor, after all, which has cruelty at its core." Treadup himself "felt on the wing up there. Of course it was that dear old spiel — automatic, by now." He was obliged to realize that he was becoming a Camp Personality.

#### THE DIARY:

*Em, I am at home here in a community, with as much sense of belonging as I have ever had — more, even, I think, than in Salt Branch — far more than in Ma Ch'iao (alas that that should be so). The citizens here have, through a remarkable effort of cooperation, mastered all the basic services that we need, using no labor but our very own. We even have some refinements, now: a laundry, a sewing room, a shoe repair shop, a watch-repairing service. We have a library — the heart of its collection, it goes without saying, being the load of books from Phinny's Tientsin house that he and I lugged here. The Peking American School and the Tientsin Grammar School are going strong, and there are evening courses for adults, with*

language study predominating — the preference being for Chinese — but with about 25 other courses, too.. Greek classical drama, a history of the industrial revolution, etc. A resourceful lady has started something called the White Elephant Exchange, where people can trade things that are useless to themselves for things that are useless to others. Theatricals, concerts, puppet shows, shadow pictures, skits, and sports contests keep us busy. The church is full all day Sunday — three or four early Catholic masses, which I have visited out of curiosity, the music is splendid, especially for the pontifical masses; then an Anglican service at eleven; the "free" Protestant denominations in a Union Service in the afternoon; and hymn sings in the evenings — the last not nearly as popular as an outdoor Sunday-twilight show put on by a Dutch priest, which consists of skits, jokes, and community singing, all to a great deal of laughter. It would be a full life if you were here.

Even in his diary, while addressing Em and writing about church services, he could not bring himself to tell her about his alienation from Christ.

**ON THE EVENING** of July 7, 1943, David Treadup drew his ration for supper and

walked into the dining hall, craning his neck to find a place to sit. He saw Phinny waving to him, beckoning from across the way. David went to him. He had saved a place. David found Mrs. Evenrude also at the table. With Sister Catherine. ("Had no idea they knew each other.") And more: Miller, somehow excused for the evening

from kitchen work; "Chief" Flanders of the Tientsin Club; his two roommates, Cyril Watkins and Ion Corbuc; Eustace Hocking; Boggs, the Pentecostal missionary from the first room (where Phinny still lived). "I was suspicious. What was this little caucus?" The people at the table sat in silence, watching Treadup wolf his food. He wiped his chin. Suddenly there was a circle of waiters and table clearers around the table, and one of them was holding a cake with a single candle burning on it. The circle broke into a comical cappella version of "Happy Birthday." The whole dining hall clapped, cheered, and shrilly whistled.

I had completely forgotten it was my birthday. Completely. Away from you, Em, I must have an inexorable need to lose track of **time — which is elusive** in my head, anyway, as you know. Sixty-five years old. Can you believe it? I must say, I feel forty-five right now. I was so touched by fire warmth of all the folks. How did this celebration come about, anyway? Phinny told me later that Mrs. Evenrude had **remembered — the** date, got the bakery to do up the cake.



From Mitch & Linda Krayton, July 2008,

We live in the greater Los Angeles community of Santa Clarita. Several years ago, while attending an antiquarian book fair, we came upon the most incredible book that was the guest book of a The Camel Book shop in Peiping (Peking, Pekin, Beijing). We purchased this tome which is leather bound volume (apx 12"x18"x6"), corners of woven silk, has brass hinge fittings (missing the locking pin) and encrusted with many semi-precious stones. It was in the Grand Hotel de Pekin which was the largest and most modern hotel in the area and served as the major hotel for visitors of every rank and distinction.

The hotel was located inside the walled city (which have since been removed to make the ring road) and very close the The Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square. Also nearby was the Foreign Legation which came to be as a result of the Boxer rebellion.

The Camel Bell (aka The Camel Bells, The Camel's Bell) was owned by Miss Helen Burton. My wife and I are researching the life of this incredible person and hope to put our findings into a book. The more we research, more fantastic things we find out about the time, the place and the people she knew.

Here is a bit of what we know...

Born in 1917 in North Dakota, her father and brother both rose in state politics. She wanted to venture off to exotic places. She wound up in Peiping looking for secretarial work and it turns out she was a bit of an artist and entrepreneur.

It was not long that she started her shop with candy, clothing, art and gifts of her design that she arranged to be made by locals.

People from all over the world stopped by and signed her guest book. Others did a lot more: drawing, painting and writing poetry. There are photos and holiday cards, too. Hundreds of visitors are here (we are trying to catalog them all).

She was very much the socialite and people would often stay with her in the city or at her summer home in the hills outside the city.

She never married, but did adopt 4 Chinese girls who helped her run the shop.

When the Japanese overtook Peiping, she was captured and wound up in Weihsien. Which leads me to find all of you.

There she was involved with a barter site that has been called The White Camel Bell or The White Elephant Bell. There was no money but I suspect her entrepreneurial spirit and her fearless willingness to bargain gave her the courage to set this up.

So to all of you who knew Miss Burton in Weihsien or the barter shop, we would be delighted to know your stories and your impressions of her. And if you have relics or photos of her or the shop, it would be a thrill to see those, too.

Thank you all in advance for making our quest so real and so interesting.

Mitch Krayton



*Goodness, she asked me my birthdate one day months ago, in her most crotchety period. I went to bed early, in order to lie there and think back over the years. I hardly slept at all.*

**THE NEXT MORNING** he arose at five o'clock, went to the camp library, and at a desk there wrote at the top of the first page of a new quarto notebook with marbled cardboard covers, one of several he had brought from Tientsin to use for diaries, these words:

### SEARCH

*Ever since I arrived at this place, and for some time before this spiritual experience I have recently had, I have noticed that my memory has been unusually active. In captivity, nostalgia for the wild grows strong. Perhaps my separation from Jesus Christ has obliged me to try to remember what it meant to be close to him. Perhaps my separation from my wife has forced me to rely, for the special sort of warmth she gave me, upon reminiscence. I think of my boyhood often. Each day I bank interest on my debt to Absolom Carter. Kind women are **with me day and night — my mother, Maud Chase, Mrs. Farleigh, Mrs. Kupfer, Letitia Selden, Madame Shen;** they all hover about me and keep me from being lonely. Especially, and always, Mrs. David Treadup of dearest recollection.*

*These memories come to me spontaneously, helter-skelter, to meet a moment's need for comfort or comparison. Each recall has had a transient value; together, the mass has not cohered in any way. Because of my apostasy, if that is what it is, I have now determined that I will try to make a systematic search, through the tangled nets of my memories, for whatever meaning I can find **there — a search, I presume, for the inner frame upon which the house of me stands.***

And so he began the work which we have seen so often quoted from in these pages. It became his habit to rise early every morning, before the sun, and well before roll call, and to go to the library, where he could be alone, and to write for an hour or so. His diary entries, which he made in the evenings, become less voluminous; quite often days passed without any notation at all.

"**A PARADOX** has ruled my life," he wrote in a passage toward the end of "Search." "It is this: The busier I am, the more time I have to do things." In conformity with this rule, Treadup now took on, in addition to his ever increasing engineering work and his writing, the functions of warden for his dormitory block.

The wardenships had developed as a convenience, to make the daily roll calls less onerous. At each roll call, the Japanese required every inmate to stand at his or her room door to be seen and counted. At first the morning roll calls had been at ten o'clock, but as this interfered with morning chores the time was changed to seven thirty. It was the warden's duty to get everyone up on time, but not too soon, to show a face when the consular police and guards would come by. Treadup had the physique and force of character to get even the laziest slugabeds out — some, to be sure, in nightgowns or pajamas, some men with shaving lather on their jowls muttering about the tyranny of "that blockhead," meaning Treadup, the head of their block. So good did Treadup's record become that soon the guards began to take his word for the attendance of Block 17, without having to see each face.

How thankful certain sleepers were! "I must confess I got a little drunk on their gratitude."

The pleasure of this intoxication led Treadup to make yet more of his wardenship. Each internee received, each month, a small amount of "comfort money" in North Chinese currency, provided by the American and British governments and delivered to the camp by Swiss consular couriers. There was a camp canteen, supplied by the Jonathans and run by the former manager of the Whiteaway Laidlaw department store in Tientsin. The campers could spend their money at the canteen to buy eggs, fresh fruit, honey, and a few delicacies, such as ginger, spices, and dried fruit, as well as such things as soap and cigarettes. The long lines of waiting customers were a great nuisance, and Treadup offered to be the buyer for his block. Each morning at roll call he would take orders, and later in the day he would buy for everyone; he kept charge accounts. Other wardens took up the practice, and soon the lines at the canteen were much shorter.

Treadup then extended the service yet again, offering to act as middleman with the black market. At first he approached Corbuc for help, but the shady Rumanian was after much bigger fish than a few sweet-toothed campers. Corbuc told Treadup to go to the Catholics for retail goods. Treadup asked Sister Catherine to "recommend an honest trader," and she put him in touch with a Belgian Passionist missionary, Father LeGrange. Soon Treadup and the two assistants he had enlisted to stand in line and run errands were supplying the residents of Block 17 with sugar, honey, jam, sourballs, and even paikar, a powerful Chinese grain liquor. "What would Mama have thought!"



*There's a gold fringe on my pleasure in this work. It is said to be getting dangerous. Why does that delight me so? The Jonathans are punishing the offenders they catch. Why? Because they smell money, they want the business for themselves. But they would never suspect Mr. Teddy! He is so conscientious!*

**IN ORDER** to monitor each internee's general health, Dr. Cunningham had early instituted a universal monthly weigh — in of every person. Weighing Treadup in his rotated turn, not long after the birthday party, Phinny found that David had gained eight pounds, but he said that on account of the earlier osteomyelitis he wanted David to come in for a full checkup. A few days later Phinny went over him from sole to crown; took blood and stool and urine into his little lab. The next day in the dining hall, Phinny: "Treads, you have been lying to us about your age. You are a young lion."

**ONE OF** the few entries of more than two or three lines in the diary during this period:

*The weather is fiercely hot. Both men and women have reduced their clothing to a minimum. Besides the heat, economy has forced this on us, as we know we cannot replenish clothing supplies while in camp. The exigencies and conditions of camp life have shattered all the common and conventional patterns of occidental apparel, and the results have been extremes of vanity and variety in camp costumes — highly picturesque and often daring. Since we men have been reduced to the level of Chinese farmers and coolies, we go, as they do, with our bare backs to the sun, and some wear nothing but underwear briefs. I have joined the brown race. The women wear the most abbreviated "sports suits, "cut to modern bathing suit patterns, and sometimes even more spare. Female beauty (and, alas, ugliness) is being evidenced, in some cases flaunted. Some of the missionary women, who have been most strict in their speech in the past, have suddenly become startlingly immodest in their dress. Is one supposed to look away, or not?*

**IN LATE JULY** two rumors sneaked around the camp: that all the Catholics would soon be leaving; and that there might be a repatriation of American citizens. In August — the sad miracle of confirmation of one of the rumors. It seemed that the Apostolic Delegate in Peking from the neutral Vatican had somehow convinced the,

Japanese that the priests and nuns were not their enemies. So they were to be allowed to return to Peking and to missionary work .

On the day of their departure, as the Catholics were assembled on the athletic field to be loaded with their baggage into trucks, all the rest of the inmates gathered around the field and at the gate. Like others, Treadup rushed around saying good-bye to friends — to Father Windy, to the outfielding bishop, to Father LeGrange. He found Sister Catherine, busy supervising the loading onto a truck of some nuns' luggage. He spoke her name.

"Ah, Mr. Treadup," she said, quickly turning to him. "I need Mrs. Treadup's address. I don't know why I hadn't thought of it sooner. I will try to get a message to her through Rome — to tell her what a fine man her husband is."

"Cool and distant," Treadup later wrote.

*I told myself she was keeping strong emotions under check; now I have moments of wondering whether there was any feeling at all. "What a fine man." Drily said. She seemed a teacher or a nursemaid — after all that I had invested in our friendship.*

Treadup ran to the nearby library for a piece of paper and a pencil. By the time he got back, Sister Catherine had been loaded into a truck and non-Catholics had been pushed back by the guards to the edge of the field. He waved toward the nuns' truck that she was in, but everyone was waving and shouting, and he could not tell whether she saw him.

**THE FOLLOWING PASSAGE** appears, strangely, not in "Search" but in the diary:

I think I can write about this at last. About the team of Communists sitting comfortably on the 'k'ang' in farmer Feng's house in Li Chia village, confronting me. I have never been really at ease, seated on a flat plane with my legs crossed under me. Those young men were trying to make me sweat, anyway. They were hammering away at the theme of my complicity with businessmen in the rape of China. They were too sophisticated to use such phrases as "running dog," but it was clear that they were convinced that all missionaries were tools of nations and corporations, which, with their insatiable cupidity, systematically exploited the poor of the world.

I argued that there were missionaries and missionaries, and I did break into a sweat.

They cited, very bitterly, three cases in which missionaries in the northwest, in Shensi, had informed to the authorities on Communists and had caused their arrests and deaths.

# TIME TO LEAVE

## ACCEPT AND ENJOY

**H E W A L K E D** out the gate. He expected a wild surge of elation — he was going to Emily! — but instead he felt — what-ataraxia? A serene emptiness? Or possibly nothing? Or nothing, anyway, but surprise at how little he felt?

He and nearly three hundred others were at the top of a terraced slope. At the foot of the hill the little river wound its slow way northward, reflecting the blue of a champion sky. The terraces were covered with grass freshened by recent rains. Tall willow trees, growing on the different levels of the bank, mingled their feathers in a yellowy canopy overhead. Dappled early sunshine played on the flanks of the black-and-white cows of the camp dairy, which were grazing on the green steps of the hill.

Notes written later in a shaky hand on the train:

*Father had Holsteins. Black and white, too, but much bigger than those runty cattle. That hit me: my memory put me in the barn, my nostrils and ears were full of the sugary smell and the quick thunked splashes of warm milk squirted into the pail. Yes, there on the embankment outside the compound I had a small-boy feeling. Chores were over. Only now aged sixty-five, do I realize how sweet the chores had always been. Inside the barn, inside the compound wall, I had been free-busy, orderly, useful. Released, I felt at loose ends. A great deal had happened to me in Yin Hsien camp, and now all I could feel was a paradox: the loss of the freedom of confinement.*

On the camp road, at the top of the ravine and next to the gray wall, were several motor lorries, onto which the repatriates, Treadup among them, were loading their hand luggage. The Japanese, perhaps glad to be rid of three hundred, were allowing a certain looseness. Boys and girls and some bold adults, who were staying in the camp, sat atop the wall, with their legs outside; other adults were standing at various places within, where the ground rose high enough for them to look out. Inside, the camp orchestra was playing good-bye tunes, and those on the wall alternately sang and showered the repatriates

I lost my head. Instead of pointing out to them the missionaries' opposition to such "imperialistic" things as Boxer indemnities and extraterritorial rights, I began shouting about the Communist slaughter of innocents in Hunan. Our session was becoming ugly. Those young men and I had both reached each other's tender places. They gave me an oral thrashing I have never gotten over

I had a chat today with Gilbert Olander, the crusty Standard Oil man from Tientsin. He gave me reason to remember — was it my first year in China? — his calling the old missionary Dr. Elting an ass, a numskull, and a busybody who hadn't "the faintest idea what the Chinks are all about." As a missionary I myself felt light-years from Olander then — and always have — until today. I certainly never felt I was a running dog for him in China! I can admit now that I disliked and feared him and his kind. But today he congratulated me on my work in Engineering and Repairs, and he actually said, "We should have let you missionaries run the place. You fellows get things done." Of course what he grudgingly admired was strictly a matter of efficiency-energy, really-nothing more. But what a turnabout!

**SOLID NEWS** came, on the twenty-third day of August, 1943, right from the Jonathans' mouths, that the Americans in this camp would all be repatriated within a fortnight. The last page of "Search":

*With these few lines I shall stop work on this document. It will remain, like everything else in my life, incomplete. I had intended to read what I have written, to peruse it over and over again, paying close attention to what could be seen between the lines, and then pen some grand conclusions. "My mission to Cathay, brothers and sisters, was..." "Now there will not be time. There may not have been the possibility. For what lies between the lines is doubtless gossamer, which would be torn by removal. My self.*

with farewells. Mrs. Evenrude was inside; she had decided to stay; China was her "only home." Treadup was careful not to look up toward the wall, for fear of seeing Phinny.

### **A DIARY NOTE** on the southward trip:

*Hsuehchow, delay of several hours. Rumors of line broken by Chinese guerrillas. Picnic food supplied by Jonathans at Yin Hsien, supposed to last whole trip, already running out. Long chat with Swiss diplomatist who is neutral observer of exodus. Fresh-faced 26-year-old, sprightly, perfect English, this is an adventure for him. We had a charming conversation about Rousseau -sweltering RR car, wooden benches, the Social Contract-thank you, Phinny, for my late learning! Pleasured away a terrible afternoon.*

**INTHE INNER COURT** of a dormitory at St. Johns University, in Shanghai, where the repatriates were being housed, an inspection of luggage was to take place. Trunks had been shipped ahead.

The repatriates were ordered to find their baggage and stand by it, waiting for the examiners. This examination turned out to be different from any Treadup had experienced in North China, and it made him realize that the Yin Hsien regime had been a relatively benign one. From where he stood by his trunk, he could see the contemptuous Japanese examiners — from Customs and the gendarmerie — unfolding and shaking out each garment from a trunk, and heedlessly dropping it onto a pile on the ground; and then he saw excitement, resentment, gesturing, shouting, on the part of outraged Americans, as the inspectors seized articles which they ruled, quite by whim, it seemed, as forbidden, and threw them into large baskets and carried them away. It looked like official plunder.

Then Treadup saw something that made him gasp. A book was thrown into one of the contraband baskets. His back diaries and "Search" were in his trunk. In total disregard of orders of the day, he darted out through the unguarded gate of the courtyard, ran to the university administration building, and found the young Swiss consular representative in the office he had taken over.

*Begged the boy to come posthaste and "commandeer" my various notebooks. He demurred. Said he hadn't license to interfere in Japanese procedures, so long as they conformed in a general way to the Geneva Convention. I suddenly heard myself saying, "Then you will have a suicide on your hands, Monsieur Ramminet." He gave me a long, queer look. He*

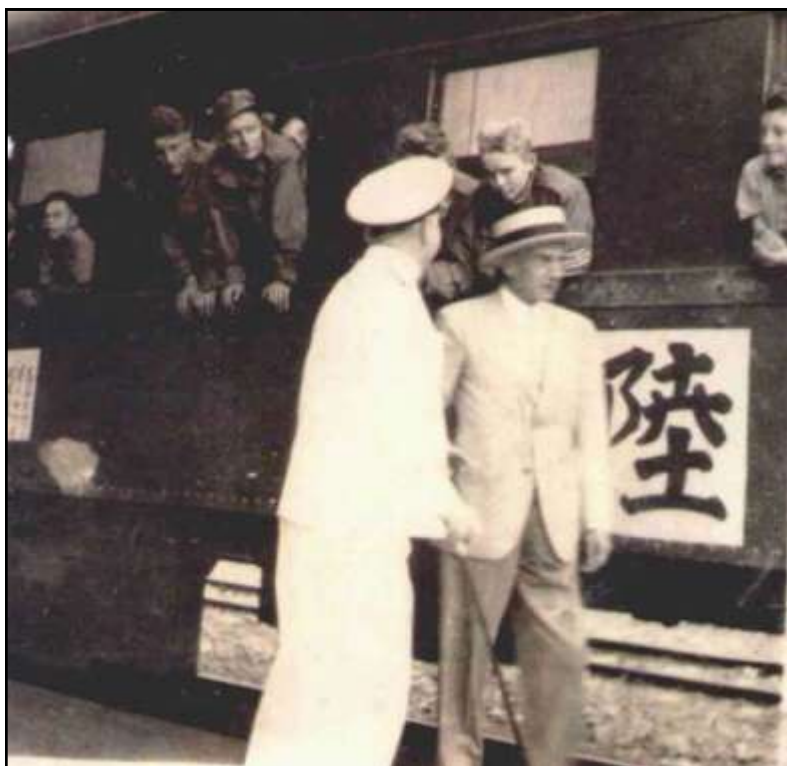
*must have seen smoke in the pupils of my eyes. Emily and my sons were very far away in my mind. My life seemed to be in my "Search" — intrinsically worthless scribbling, perhaps, but at the moment, at least, I was overwhelmed by a conviction that I couldn't live without some tangible effort, even if unsuccessful, to comprehend the past. I think it may have been Jean Jacques Rousseau who saved my writings. Young Ramminet and I had made a kind of social contract with each other — came to an unspoken understanding about what is valuable on earth, what is worth sacrificing something for — in our talk on the train.*

Ramminet slowly rose to his feet. He walked deliberately to a closet in one corner of the office, picked up a canvas bag, at the mouth of which were a hasp and a padlock; and he said, "Show me the way." Ramminet would not run. He said, "If you would cheat a Chinese, you must cover your action with a loud flurry. To cheat a Japanese, you must be calm as a stone. It is not easy to cheat either one. Mr. Treadup, you are too agitated. Try to be calm."

They walked slowly into the courtyard and to Treadup's trunk. Treadup opened it. His hands were shaking. He rummaged for the notebooks. He straightened and handed them to Ramminet, who dropped them in the bag and locked it.

A Japanese gendarme was suddenly there — yes, calm as a stone. He asked in excellent Chinese what the two men were doing.

Ramminet said he had confiscated some Swiss property.



*'Qingdao Railway Station, Sept 25 1945 --- The Swiss Consul'*



The gendarme demanded that Ramminet give him the bag.

Ramminet said it was a diplomatic pouch.

The Japanese said it would have to be examined.

Ramminet reached in a pocket and drew out a paper. Treadup could tell it was a Japanese document, because it had simplified Japanese kana characters, clues to pronunciation, alongside its Chinese ideographs. Ramminet asked the gendarme to look at it. The gendarme took the paper, and Treadup saw the blood drain from his cheeks — this was "a physical picture of a loss of face." He handed the document back to Ramminet and without another word walked away.

Ramminet said to Treadup, "I shall return your papers to you on the ship."

Treadup was so confused that he said, "What ship?"

Ramminet said, "The ship that will take you to heaven. If you had killed yourself, you would have gone to hell. Seventh circle."

*Sept. 19 Sunday. Early breakfast, inspection of hand luggage. I was so complacent, now, as to be truly calm. Was I wood or stone? Seeing I had two straight razors, they stole my better one (my ticket to the Seventh Circle, had I made that voyage — today that idea seems to have been quite insane — not my idea at all — yet at the time it was all too real). Roll call. Then in buses to the Customs House on the Bund. Another examination.*

**AS AN ELDERLY MAN**, Treadup was given a choice berth in a first-class cabin on D Deck — A Deck being the lowest steerage deck, E Deck being the highest. The ship was called Teia Maru — S.S. "Asian Empire"; she was the former Aramis of the French shipping company Messageries Maritimes, captured by the Japanese, it was said, in Saigon. She was a gray creature with seven huge white crosses painted on each of her flanks. She had been rerigged to carry twice her normal capacity of passengers, so that fifteen hundred repatriates

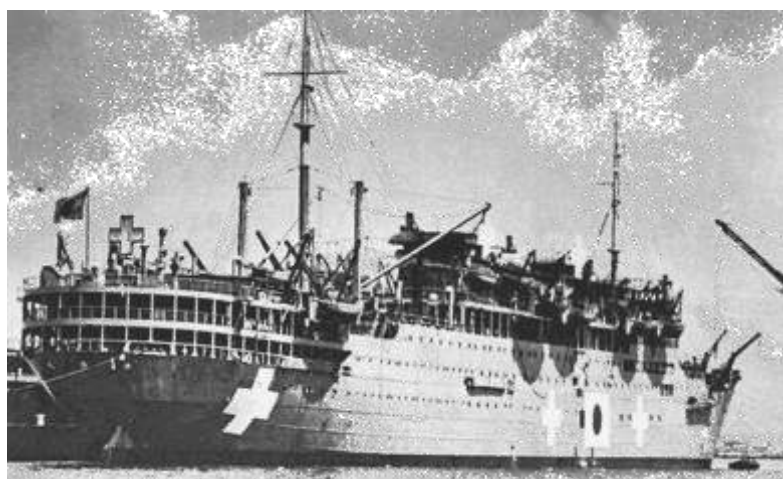
could be accommodated, from camps around Shanghai as well as North China, and also, as it was to turn out, from Hong Kong, the Philippines, and elsewhere.

*For two passengers our cabin would have been luxurious, with a window instead of a round porthole, beds with "Simmons" mattresses, wide and most comfortable, four commodious wardrobes, two with full-length mirrors, and a good lavatory with sitz-bath. But two other men have been assigned to the cabin, and they have to sleep on the floor on straw mattresses similar to those provided for the wooden bunks built into all the public rooms of the ship. In the big lounge on E Deck, 240 young and middle-aged women sleep on such bunks — we call that saloon the Sardine Tin. To our astonishment, the ship is filthy: the Japanese are usually so finicky.*

**ON SEPTEMBER 20, 1943**, the Teia Maru was eased by tugs away from her wharf in the Pootung district of Shanghai, and she steamed slowly downriver. The diary:

*For all these days I have been empty. I have been waiting for some emotion — any emotion — to surface. When I left Yin Hsien, nothing. No release, no joy that I would be rejoining Emily. Even when I talked, yesterday, and thought I meant what I said, about suicide, I felt nothing — no fear, no sadness, nothing. Some transient alarm, yes, over the thought of being separated from my "Search" and my diaries. But even that implied a consciousness of my emptiness — a sense that only written words could give my flesh and blood meaning. Such fear as I had — not even strong itself — was that I would never again feel anything 'real.'*

*This morning, on the Whangpoo River, as the ship nosed toward the unknown, my eye carelessly brushed across a certain wharf, and I was startled by a vivid picture of the day in 1905 when I walked down a gangplank, just there, and first set foot in a place that did not seem to me to be China at all. And suddenly, in wave after wave, I crashed into knowing that I was sailing away from all that has been life and breath to me for nearly four decades. I wrote, a moment ago, "toward the unknown." Certainly not toward a place I can think of as home. What new start can a man of my age make? I said out loud, "Good-bye, Johnny Wu!" — meaning. Good-bye,*



... the M.V. Aramis / Teia-Maru

*Phinny; good-bye, Mr Lin; goodbye David Liu, Christian General, dear A Ch'u, and all the others; good-bye to everyone and everything. Then I began thinking of my beloved villagers, and I had to rush to my cabin or make a fool of myself in public.*

**A CHANGE** of air, waterscapes, a landfall — green mountains against the sea and a sense of the miracles of diversity in the terrains of this earth. Each surprise of arrival helped mitigate, minim by minim, the enormous pain of having taken leave of a lifetime. Stanley Bay off Hong Kong. A new party of repatriates aboard, among them a number of Filipinos with merry children. Sunday, September 26: San Fernando, a hundred fifty miles north of Manila — the great lizard spine of Luzon looming to the east. Fifty tons of anomalous sugar aboard. And 130 repatriates who had been interned at Manila — "reunions with many North China missionaries, who were caught here on their way home to the States in '41." Another ocean ride. "Strange: the wind blows, but I have not once been queasy on this trip." Saigon, one more small group of repatriates, mostly gaunt, tendinous missionaries from the interior of Indo-China. Lush fruits and vegetables thrown in heaps on one of the decks — no room in the holds, which were full of repatriates' trunks. Down the Mekong River from Saigon, under a sky with watercolored cotton clouds put to the torch by the setting sun, around the bends of a crooked channel between spreads of mangrove as far as a top-deck eye could see. "What an imagination behind such wonders! My disbelief is being tested." An anchorage in the straits forty miles off Singapore, an oil tanker alongside to refuel the Teia Maru. Then a surprising run to the southeast — the Straits of Malacca said to be mined — around the southern tip of Sumatra: volcanoes, the torn cone of Krakatoa.

*Tonight Ramminet, a fellow named Murchison, and I took our steamer blankets to the top deck and spent the night in deck chairs there stargazing. Murchison some kind of business fellow, captured in Manila, had traveled around these seas, at home in all the heavens. He pointed out the major stars. The Southern Cross is high, up 25° or more, and Scorpio is almost at the zenith. We watched the constellations revolve around the South Pole. I began to feel my proportions. Some of those pinpricks of light started traveling in this direction millions of years ago, and the light would have traveled — I could hear my lecture-hall voice saying this in my spiel "Phenomena of Light" — would have traveled more than 63,000 times the distance between the sun and the earth in every single one of those years. What*

*of my puny 10,000-mile lecture tours? My burnt-out instant — sixty-five years?*

**AS THEY STEAMED** up the Sumatran coast, a Lutheran missionary named Halze died. He had suffered a stroke just after the heavy baggage inspection in Shanghai; it was said that he had blown up, fatally as it proved, because the official Jonathans had stolen a silver cup that he had won in his youth for outstanding scholarship at the University of Wisconsin. Treadup was surprised to learn that the dead man had been six or seven years younger than he. Someone said the man had died of an extreme case of repatriation sickness.

*Didn't know him but for some reason was drawn to his funeral. It was on C Deck aft, at five in the morning. A Reverend Tarpenson conducted the service. Ramminet was there. About fifty people attended. The engines had been stopped and the vessel slowed, not to a full halt but to a calm drift through the dark gray-blue waters of the hour before dawn. The body was wrapped in canvas, weighted, and lowered over the rail at the very stern. There is a somber beauty in burial at sea: "We commit thee to the deep." I wondered afterward what had made me want to see this stranger's remains thrown overboard. Then I recalled that at the service Ramminet gave me a very curious and sharp look; and I made a connection — realized that I have been trying to penetrate (perhaps he has, too) the mystery of my threat to him of suicide. I did not feel have not felt — I do not feel the least bit suicidal. Like everyone else, I have had the symptoms of repatriation sickness. I am sad. I am truly sad to leave so much that is unfinished behind. I have found I can feel a sea-deep and "real" sadness, and I can only say that this ability to feel such strong emotion leads me to want life, not an end to life. I cannot wait to be with Emily again. I have even more distant thoughts. I want to go back to China.*

**ON THE TEN-DAY VOYAGE** across the Indian Ocean, Treadup, apparently turning toward vigor of mind, toward ever more intense thoughts of Emily, showed signs of becoming conscious of his body. He noted in his diary that everyone talked all day about food. "The dietary," Treadup wrote, "is such that all the men and many of the women with robust appetites leave the table hungry three times a day." At breakfast passengers were served, among other things, "a small portion of rice porridge to which some liquid representing milk and some substance representing sugar have already been

added." There were skimpy helpings of meat and vegetables at night.

On the ninth day came a frightful shock. Members of the crew were set to shoveling the fruits and vegetables that had been stored on the open deck overboard. They had all begun to rot. The passengers could have been eating more all along.

*Our outrage is tempered by the conviction that these people are losing the war. They are demoralized and hopelessly inexpert — so striking in a race from which we have come to expect the utmost in spotlessness and efficiency. The crews are disabled men and young boys. They have a filthy ship. They do not care. They are on a voyage toward futility.*

**FRIDAY.** October 15. At a long wharf in Goa, the Portuguese enclave on the west coast of India, under a green headland crowned by an ancient stone fort, huge electric cranes, like gigantic herons fishing at the water's edge, reached down into the holds and drew up nets bulging with trunks.

Saturday afternoon: land leave for passengers. On the foreshore there was an intricate network of narrow-gauge railroad tracks, many of them rusty with disuse and overgrown with thick, unweedy grass — "felt good to the soles of our feet, which had been treading only the corridors of a ship for weeks."

Treadup and Ramminet took a walk on this turf together. They were allowed by Indian guards as far as a curious stone structure, a kind of shrine, at the foot of the headland, which they specially asked to visit. Over the arched doorway of this small building stood a life-sized statue, in the robes of a papal nuncio, of Francis Xavier, the sixteenth-century Jesuit missionary who opened up Japan to Christ, died on his way to China, and was buried back here in Goa. Ramminet — "a somewhat backslidden Catholic," as Treadup put it — talked with fervor about Francis Xavier's strange, powerful mix of mysticism and horse sense.

*Suddenly I found myself, under the stern gaze of the saint, blurting out to this Swiss boy my loss of confidence in God. He blushed as I spoke, as if my confession amounted to some sort of accusation against him. This is the first person to whom I have unburdened myself. I never even told Phinny. It was a great relief. I have felt as if I had been maintaining myself in disguise, all this recent time, as still a devout Christian missionary. His tactful response — silence — helped me to master the intensity of my catharsis.*



*Le Teia Maru et le Grisholm à Marmagao en septembre-octobre 1943*

The two men turned back toward the wharf, and there, beyond, inching inside the breakwater, was a white ship with huge black letters on her side: GRIPSHOLM SVERGE DIPLOMAT. The liner was warped slowly in to the wharf forward of the Teia Maru. Her decks swarmed with Japanese, who were being repatriated from the United States in exchange for the Americans from the Far East. A flag — big red dot on a white field — broke from the Teia Maru's superstructure, and the passengers on the Gripsholm gave out a pealing, high-pitched cheer. At this, Treadup suddenly found himself in tears, which he tried to hide from Ramminet. "My joy couldn't have been for the Jonathans' patriotism," he wrote later. "I think it was for the great beauty of the white ship. It was going to carry me to Emily."

**ON TUESDAY,** October 19, exactly one month after Treadup had boarded the Teia Maru in Shanghai, he marched in a semicircular line of passengers from a gangplank at the bow of the Japanese ship to one at the stern of the Swede; while in a similar but wider loop in the other direction, the Japanese repatriates simultaneously walked from the bow of the Gripsholm around to the stern of the Teia Maru. On the deck of the Swedish ship, while the passengers waited for the just-vacated cabins to be cleaned, Treadup was served, as everyone was, a glass of ice water, which he had not sipped for years; and he was given, as everyone was, a box of chocolates. Delightful! But it was only a few hours later, when he had been assigned to a luxurious four-bunk first-class cabin with three gray-haired men — a Baptist from the island of Hainan, a Catholic father, and a well-known Presbyterian missionary, linguist, and explorer from the borders of Tibet — and when these four had gone together in response to a bell to the dining saloon, and there in a buffet line had been allowed to heap all sorts of delicacies on their plates, taking just as much as they wanted — only then did David Treadup feel the surge he had expected from the beginning, way back at Yin Hsien's gate, the flood of exultation and gratitude for the sense of ease, of material well-being, of



open choice, of being trusted — the sense, at last, of being a man released from long captivity.

**NOW CAME** a delay of two days, while the giant cranes and the Indian porters labored at a mutual transfer of luggage and mercies. From the Teia to the Gripsholm went innumerable casks, clearly marked with red crosses, said to contain a mixture of fish and soy beans, for distribution to Japanese in the United States. Two sorts of Red Cross packages went the other way: boxes about twice the size of suitcases, marked "Medical Supplies for One Hundred Adults for One Month-Details Below"; and smaller cartons containing "comfort packages" for American prisoners and internees held by the Japanese. "I thought: One of those boxes is for Mrs. Evenrude."

During the two days the passengers of the two ships were allowed to mix freely ashore. The diary:

*On the evening of Oct. 19, my Presbyterian explorer roommate and I accosted a substantial-looking Japanese man and had a long talk with him. He was from Los Angeles, where he had been in the importing and wholesale business for 31 years. He was thoroughly Americanized. He had been a member of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce, and had been interested in promoting many Japanese cultural activities — Kabuki and No drama, and so on. On Dec. 7, '41, he was arrested and held for some days, first in the city jail and later in the county prison, where he lived on jailbird rations. After fierce interrogation he was interned in a concentration camp in Montana, under civilians, and was later transferred to Arkansas, in a camp under Army control, where the regime was strict and harsh. He had been summoned back to Japan — by whom he didn't say. His business had been destroyed, the years wiped out. What could be waiting for him in Japan, save defeat and ignominy? Upon parting we exchanged cordial handshakes and mutual good wishes.*

*The next evening I talked for a few minutes with six Japanese girls, perhaps 15 to 18, who had come over near the 'Gripsholm' to say goodbye to their favorite Swedish dining-room steward. We talked while they giggled and hopped from foot to foot, waiting for him to appear. They were of a typical American-schoolgirl type — talkative and somewhat frivolous, modishly dressed as pert California*

*girls. None of them knew either spoken or written Japanese. Their parents were still interned, and they were going to live with grandparents in Tokyo. They were critical of the inferior accommodations on the 'Teia.' All said they couldn't wait to get back to America. Enemy aliens! These conversations have made me think that in China I must have got a false picture of the Japanese: the images of them must have come to me distorted, the lines of sight somehow bent — refracted through the medium of war. It is hard to think of them as Jonathans anymore, after talking with these young women.*

**AS SHE** had been first to arrive, the Teia was first to leave. She went out on the twenty-first. "Most spontaneous were the gestures of farewell, and the waving of hundreds of handkerchiefs from the decks of both boats." The Gripsholm sailed the next morning.

**NOW ON** the benign sea came "a moment of utter astonishment." Mail Call. At the time assigned to P-through-T, David Treadup called at the Purser's Office, expecting — from long habit of such expectation — nothing. He was handed a packet of eight letters, seven from Emily and one from brother Paul.

*I could hardly breathe as I made my way through the corridors to my cabin. I threw myself on my berth and read and read and read. I went over those pages many times, till the words had burned their way into my memory. Five of the letters had been written in July and August, after Em had been notified by the State Department of the repatriation, and had been given an address to which to write. One letter had been written back in October 1942, and of course not mailed back then. There was, Em wrote, a huge stack of unmailed letters waiting for me at home. Home? O such a difficult hour These letters were from a stranger.*

Em "seemed to be writing from the moon." Perhaps she was bitter, though she would not say so. She did say she had lived with fear for David so long that her hair was pure white. She wrapped up her news in tight sentences, each of which contained explosives. Young Philip, now thirty-four years old, was married and had two children, the first of whom was named David Treadup. The second, a girl, bore the dangerous name Nancy. Phil was a teacher at a private school for girls. Absalom, who was thirty-one, was still in Maine. He had

a drinking problem — no further details given. Paul, still factoring in New York City, was "the Croesus of the family." He had just bought an Oldsmobile "with a Hydromatic — it shifts gears for itself — whatever that means." He sent his mother two hundred dollars every month. He was very big and "as handsome as his absent father" and had six or seven girl friends. Em was still working at the village library. "I have a wide acquaintance among people who owe money for overdue books."

Brother Paul wrote with excessive economy:

*As you can imagine, Davie, these have been hard hard years for your wife. She holds on very bravely. Do not be distressed by her appearance when you see her.*

**ON NOVEMBER 3** the Gripsholm tied up at a dock in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and on the morning of November 15, exactly two months after Treadup left Yin Hsien, the ship made the harbor of Rio de Janeiro. After the ship put out from Rio toward the north and home, David found a cablegram slipped under his cabin door. He tore it open. It was signed EM.

BROTHER PAUL PASSED AWAY  
SUDDENLY TODAY HEART LOVE

David wrote that the word "heart" in the message "mercifully threw its weight in two directions — Paul's finished him, Em's love filled hers. Without the latter, I would be a man overboard." A later note: "I had wanted so to talk with Paulie. He would have understood" — would have been, this must have meant, the one person in the family to whom David could have trusted word of the withering of his belief.

**THEY WOULD** be crossing the equator soon. The air was warm. The waters had traded whales for flying fish.

One morning the passengers saw a supine rainbow. They looked down on it from B Deck. It seemed to lie flat on the water, stretching from just off the side of the ship in an elongated horseshoe shape clear to the western horizon. All of it except the rosy top point seemed to be on the water. It was not in the sky at all, and it was not so much an arc as a narrow ellipse. The ends of it seemed to bend in toward each other, as in a hand magnet.

Murchison — "what an extraordinary businessman, he seems to know about all natural things" — told Treadup and Ramminet that what they were seeing was a secondary rainbow; the primary one was overhead, but

dimmer. He said the one on the water had the purple inside.

*I had forgotten — I had used this in my section on prisms in my lecture "Phenomena of Light" — that primary rainbows always have purple on the outside of the arch. This morning's fanciful quirk of nature gave me pause, as I remembered my conviction, delivering my lectures, that God had made all scientific laws under the firmament. What can I think now? How did this perverse casting of the spectrum down upon the sea come to be? Is the universe mindless? I asked Murchison what he thought. "My God, Treadup," he said. "We have enough to worry about. Why don't you just accept and enjoy?" A practical man's advice. I must try to heed it.*



**TREADUP** could not sleep. He got up at about three o'clock to see an almost full moon in the west, washing the cold sky and sea with silver. He rose again about four and watched the pilot climb a rope ladder up the hip of the ship. By six o'clock in the morning of December 2, 1943, the ship was anchored off the quarantine station on Staten Island. All passengers were called on deck, where they formed a mob and milled about for an hour. No one was examined. The yellow Q flag came down from the mast and the doctor went over the side: The ship's doctors must have satisfied him, no plague on board.

*Passing the Statue of Liberty I remembered the eager young man, still at Syracuse, who had come to New York to be judged for his calling, his appointment put off, who then came to Bedloe's Island and climbed up in the statue and savored his romance with the idea of going across the ocean to bring succor to "your poor, your tired, your huddled masses." My boyish dream!*

# A RAIN OF LOVE

By the time breakfast was over, the ship was easing into a dock on the Jersey side, just across from the lower tip of Manhattan. Baggage went off in the morning, to be sorted and stacked by initials in the Customs House. No hope, word came, of getting off the ship until the next day.

**AFTER** lunch the next day Treadup found a note under his cabin door: "They will not let me on the dock. Am at Prince George Hotel. God has brought you home to me. Emily."

**THERE WERE** four examiners: three F.B.I. men and a Navy ensign. They were at a desk in the purser's cabin. The questioning was dry — utmost courtesy with the slightest push of authority behind it. All the usual: age, birthplace, names of family, length of residence in China, places visited in the Orient, occupation, education, skills, language capabilities.

*Then we came to the part that was like pressing the hot jelly out of the gauze bag of boiled fruit — judgment on political and military situation in North China. The ensign said he was particularly interested in this last, and he asked me to have lunch with him. I told him politics and military affairs were out of my line. We had a puzzling talk.*

They were not through with him. The investigation resumed after lunch. He had struck fire with his answer to the question: Had he ever encountered Communists in the villages where he worked? The men wanted every shred of conversation repeated. One finally asked, "Mr. Treadup, do you disapprove of America's war effort?"

Treadup said, "I disapprove of war."

*This statement had to be carefully and extensively parsed, as if its four words contained, cleverly ambushed in them, many relative clauses and adverbial phrases and modifiers and qualifiers. I was reminded of diagramming complex sentences for Absalom Carter at Enderbury Institute. But I had only spoken, and meant, four words.*

The senior F.B.I. man abruptly said, "Thank you, Mr. Treadup. You are free to go ashore."

*I felt a hostility. I wanted to explain. But the line of people waiting to be examined was long. He waved me off.*

**HIS HEART** "going like a cannonade," Treadup stepped to the reception desk and asked for the room number of Mrs. David Treadup. He had left his trunk on the dock and had taken a taxi to the Prince George.

The clerk said, "Ah. There is a message."

He disappeared around a partition; he was gone "for five years." Then he returned and said, "They have asked that we ring the room. We have done so. The young man will come down."

David sat in a chair in the lobby. At last a thin man with a balding head, dressed in a tweed jacket and gray flannel trousers, walked toward him, rising and falling a little too jauntily with each step, "as if he were riding a camel." David saw a flashing picture in his mind of the time when this son, Philip the Yale man, had met them at Grand Central and had kept his loving parents at arm's length, giving them manly handshakes; and the father now reached out his hand in something like self-defense. But Irrenius Cashman had been right — "you are never quite safe from being surprised until you are dead" — for Phil opened his arms and threw himself forward into one more never-to-be-forgotten embrace: old Elting on the Astor porch; Mrs. Evenrude outside the camp kitchen; and now, Philip Treadup, responsible oldest son, "in a hug that I immediately understood as a warning, given with love, that I must hold myself together for my meeting with his mother, my wife." Philip at once put the warning into words.

"Mother's had a hard time," he said.

"Let's go be with her."

"She's afraid you'll be shocked."

"Let's risk that."

**EXCEPT** for laconic entries, usually only a few lines acknowledging movement or sharp change of some kind, David Treadup's diary falls nearly silent with his disembarkation from the Gripsholm, and remains so for several months. Perhaps he could not bring himself to write down honest words that might wound someone who happened to peek into the notebooks. For his reunion with Emily, from his point of view, we have to rely on a passage from a lengthy "Addendum to Search," which he wrote four years later. There is a merciful distance from the event in the account.

*My first thought was that we had blundered into the wrong room. One problem for me, as I walked into Room 344 that morning and saw Em for the first time, was that I had somehow never had an opportunity, up until then,*



to think of myself as an old man. One possible signal of that reality, my sixty-fifth birthday party, in the camp at Yin Hsien, had come at a time when I was enjoying a burst of newly discovered vitality. There was only one candle on the cake. I was in health, I was useful. The clock and the calendar aren't necessarily reliable measurers of time. Here, before me, begging me with her eyes not to look at her, was an old woman. This was the reunion in Montclair, after France, raised to the 'n<sup>th</sup> power of difficulty. What made it terribly hard was her being so afraid of my looking at her. Of course I **embraced her — partly, perhaps, to get her out of my field of vision — no! I loved her, I had promised myself an ecstasy — and I found** myself holding a creature so fragile and so nervy that there came into my head something Murchison had said on the ship: that a hummingbird's heart beats six hundred times a minute. My mind brimmed over with memories of my Emily; I was grateful for her existence; I wept with joy. She was the first to speak.

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End of chapter.

