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ABOUT THE BOOK

No Dram of Mercy is the story of a woman's courage, told simply and unassumingly in her own words. Sybil Kathigasu was the wife of an Ipoh doctor who along with her fellow Malayans became caught up in the horrors of the Japanese occupation of Malaya during the Second World War. Her selfless concern for the sick and wounded anti-Japanese guerillas who came to her house secretly for treatment ended inevitably in her betrayal and her arrest and imprisonment by the Japanese authorities.

The tale of fortitude and endurance under duress and torture which follows is testimony not so much to the ruthlessness of a conqueror as to the indomitability of the human spirit informed by faith and belief in God. As such, the story of Sybil Kathigasu, reprinted here after a lapse of five decades, is a tract for our times as much as it is a reminder of the tribulations experienced by a former generation of Malayans.

No Dram of Mercy

Sybil Kathigasu

PERPUSTAKAAN KOMUNITI PETALING JAYA
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燧人氏

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PERPUSTAKAAN KOMUNITI PETALING JAYA
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No Dram of Mercy

Sybil Kathigasu

燧人氏

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* Pictures by courtesy of Mr. Tang Ah Chai

PREFACE

THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF THE MALAY Peninsula is best remembered by Malays, Chinese and Indians as a period of great economic hardship, suffering and oppression. Consequently, stories of this period have an endless fascination. This is evidenced by the large number of contemporary eye-witness accounts which were published after the war such as Sybil Kathigasu's *No Dram of Mercy*, Chin Kee Onn's *Maraiee* and *Malaya Upside Down*, Gurchan Singh's *Singa: The Lion of Malaya* and Ahmad Murad's *Nyawa di Hujung Pedang (Life at the Sword's Edge)*. Like the other books, Sybil Kathigasu's *No Dram of Mercy* has long been out of print. But lately there has been a revival of interest in the stories of the Japanese Occupation, and these once unavailable books are now beginning to reappear.

To put Sybil Kathigasu's *No Dram of Mercy* in its proper social and political context, it is necessary to say something about the Japanese administration in Malaya from 1941 to 1945. At the very beginning of its rule that administration lost the goodwill of the civil population. Instead of behaving charitably as victors, after crushing the British forces, the Japanese commanders decided to bare their teeth and deal with the local population with the greatest severity. Looters and rioters were beheaded on the spot, and their heads displayed on top of poles at prominent public places to terrify the public. Persons suspected of anti-Japanese activities, if caught, were summarily executed or interrogated under various forms of torture to make them confess the names of their friends or to divulge other information. Anyone on a bicycle, who, at the sight of a Japanese sentry, failed to alight and execute a servile bow would find himself seized, slapped and kicked; he would, indeed, be lucky to escape with only minor bruises. As the Japanese regime continued, the atrocities committed by the *Kempetei*,

the secret military police, against those who dared to resist began to follow a sickening pattern—prisoners were beaten, maimed, burned with cigarette ends, given the water treatment, and finally decapitated. These acts taught the Malayan population that they could not expect justice and mercy, but only terror and violence from their new masters. In consequence, the frequent Japanese use of violence created a generalised climate of brutality, which affected both the civil population and the resistance forces. People adopted drastic measures to settle old scores, and communist guerrillas meted out the same cruel treatment as the Japanese to *Kempetei* informers and collaborators whom they caught.

The Chinese community was the first to suffer the brunt of the Japanese Army's draconian measures. In retaliation for anti-Japanese activities conducted by various Chinese organisations in Malaya before the war following Japan's invasion of China in 1937, the Japanese 25th Army under General Yamashita carried out a series of massacres of Chinese in Singapore and Peninsular Malaysia known as the *sook ching* (肅清) or 'Operation Clean-up'. According to Chinese estimates compiled at the end of the war, some 60,000 Chinese were killed in this way, while Japanese estimates put the figures mildly at a mere 6,000 victims. This single act of the Japanese administration not only frightened the Chinese away from the Japanese, but made them easy recruits to the communist-dominated resistance movement. However, as time passed, even the passive support given initially by Malays and Indians to the Japanese regime turned into disillusionment as the stress and strain of war continued, with foodstuffs and goods getting scarcer, and with the increasing numbers of youths and men conscripted for labour and military service. Malay nationalist demands were spurned, and Malay resentment became noticeable after the four northern Malay States were handed over to the Thais in 1943. Indian labour conditions worsened, and Indian nationalist aspirations for a liberated homeland with Japanese help received a setback with the disaster which overtook the Indian National Army at Imphal.

'Japan lost a golden opportunity to show Asians that as an Asian power, she was a kind liberator who would treat them better than

the European powers,' General Iwaichi Fujiwara told me in an interview in Tokyo in 1976. As head of the Japanese military intelligence agency known as F Kikan, he claimed he had tried to persuade his commanders not to pursue a policy of harshness which could only breed hostility and hatred among the local population, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. It has been suggested by some Western scholars that despotism is a natural oriental trait, and that the Japanese atrocities of the Second World War are a typical example of this. These scholars, however, forget that Hitler's Germany was responsible for the murder of six million Jews. Although the British in prewar Malaya did not commit the same sort of atrocities as the Japanese did during their occupation of the country, yet there were instances of British brutality and the wholesale killing of Chinese communist sympathisers, such as the Batang Kali Incident during the 1948-60 Emergency. The American involvement in Vietnam produced episodes such as the shameful massacre at My Lai. No race, in fact, has an exclusive monopoly of barbaric terror and violence. It is military chauvinism and war which breed the conditions that turns human beings into barbarians and makes them commit heinous crimes against their fellow men.

Seen in this wider context, Sybil Kathigasu's struggle against her *Kempetei* tormentor, Ekio Yoshimura, was one woman's brave struggle for humanity, justice and sanity in a Malaya turned upside down, to borrow Chin Kee Onn's now well-known phrase. The message which comes through her book is that when all around her chose to keep quiet and to cease to think critically, Sybil Kathigasu dared to question, and to stand up for her beliefs in humanity, justice and reason. How often have we all seen this struggle repeated in our present time, when a few brave individuals dare to speak up for human rights against a powerful administration, while the majority prefer to keep silent? Consequently, the Japanese occupation may be said to have taught many people in Malaya, by contrary example, the true meaning of peace and freedom and the value of free institutions.

This book, then, tells the memorable story of Sybil Kathigasu, the wife of a local doctor in Ipoh, who assisted wounded Chinese guerrillas during the Japanese occupation. Sybil was informed

against and arrested with her husband. During her interrogation by the *Kempetei*, she was repeatedly tortured, confined to a solitary cell and made to witness her husband being beaten up and, later, the stringing up of her six-year-old daughter, Dawn. Finally, a Japanese court sentenced her to life imprisonment and her husband to fifteen years. As a result of injuries she received from the tortures, she was paralysed and unable to walk. With the Japanese defeat, her ordeal came to an end and she was flown to England for treatment. However, whilst in England, she died of acute septicaemia due to a jaw fractured by the kick of a Japanese boot. For her sacrifices and example, she was awarded the George Medal, the highest British civilian award for bravery, by King George VI.

To a very great extent, Sybil Kathigasu's courage was sustained by her religious faith, which together with her own belief in the ultimate triumph of the Allies, strengthened her resolve to survive and served to keep her sanity intact. Sybil's support for the communist-dominated resistance movement which took the form of caring for wounded guerilla-fighters, was carried out in the name of humanitarianism, although it is clear her support was also rendered because they were on the side of the Allies. Some Malaysian readers may be embarrassed by her unabashedly pro-British sympathies, but Sybil Kathigasu could not help being the product of the prewar British system and was, therefore, quite representative of her time—when national awakening had not yet fully taken place. Nonetheless, the spirit of resistance against oppression and injustice that Sybil Kathigasu represented is not merely confined to Malaya, but is universal and is found wherever people are free.

18 May 1983,
Universiti Sains Malaysia
Pulau Pinang

CHEAH BOON KHENG
Professor of History

FOREWORD

'IN TUO ADVENTU SUSCIPIANT TE MARTYRES.'

IT IS RECORDED THAT TALLEYRAND ON HEARING of the death of Napoleon remarked, 'It is no longer news; it is history.' Similarly the advance of the Japanese down the Malay Peninsula is no longer topical but an episode of yesterday. The strange words they introduced are already being forgotten or corrupted beyond recognition, and once more the Malay is buying the cycles of Tokio and the textiles of Yokohama. If this book were no more than an account of Japan's mad and discreditable adventure it would be born out of due time.

Actually this narrative by the Odette of Malaya has a deathless interest. For the human predicament and mankind's heroism in the face of it are topics that can never grow old. Generally the predicament being circumambient as the air, that heroism is instinctive. Only when suffering is intense does the courage to meet it become conscious, requiring an ideal born of the mind to counter the agony of the senses. Mind and sensation are of course terms abstracted from reality. And it is doubtful if for the heroine of this book they were ever separate. The human predicament in its modern sense meant nothing to one for whom God was nearer than tortured hands and feet and before whose eyes there were always the passion of Christ, duty and what she still called the British Empire. Mrs. Kathigasu had the blood of Asia as well as Ireland in her veins and was born at Penang, the port of Northern Malaya. The white cliffs of Dover and the Sussex downs were alien to her. Yet when the Japanese were yelling paeans on their Emperor's birthday, she from the dust of her verminous cell sang 'God save the King'. Passionately loyal to the British flag, she loved it partly, I think, because it sheltered her religion. It was religion that

sustained her in the darkest hour, and when on her knees and broken she crawled up the aisle of the little blue-washed Catholic church past oleographs of the stations of the Cross, she had become a modern symbol of what for her Church is an eternal verity: TU VICISTI, GALILÆE.

Putney
April 1954

RICHARD WINSTEDT
Former Civil Service Officer in Malaya

INTRODUCTION

SYBIL KATHIGASU NEVER COMPLETED THE ACCOUNT of her experiences during the Japanese occupation of Malaya, for she died as the result of injuries received during her imprisonment. Her book has a twofold interest: it gives a plain and straightforward account of actual events grim and heroic, and it reveals a spirit which would not acknowledge defeat.

It would have been easy for Dr. and Mrs. Kathigasus to have avoided the terrors and miseries they endured. They could have escaped when the British forces evacuated Perak: when they elected to remain, their professional status, their family responsibilities and even their ages gave them every excuse to acquiesce or appear to acquiesce in Japanese domination. Such a course did not for a moment commend itself to Sybil Kathigasus; her allegiance was fixed and unalterable. She loved Ipoh and the people she served and she was proud to be a British subject. But over and above patriotism she had the spirit of a crusader. A devout Catholic, she regarded the Japanese and their worship of material success as incarnate evil which it was the duty of a Christian to oppose and defy. It is abundantly evident that much of the hideous and revolting cruelty inflicted on Mrs. Kathigasus by the Japanese represented their fury of exasperation at a spirit which mocked their pretensions. But neither brutality nor cajolery could break that unconquerable soul and in the end it was the Japanese who had to acknowledge defeat.

To complete Mrs. Kathigasus's story: when the British reoccupied Malaya she was at once flown to London for treatment of her injuries. When she was sufficiently recovered to move she was summoned to Buckingham Palace, where she received the George Medal at the hands of His Majesty the King. In Malaya her principal Japanese persecutor was captured and after a full, fair and public

trial was sentenced to death and executed.

My own acquaintance with Sybil Kathigasu began when she was in hospital in London fighting to recover her health. Fifteen months of almost incessant pain, recurrent operations, repeated disappointments and the constant strain of separation from all she knew and loved were as powerless to crush that brave and imperious spirit as was the Japanese *Kempetei*. She retained all her zest and interest in life and it seemed that once again the spirit would conquer the weakness of the flesh. Then, just as we all hoped and believed that a few more weeks would see her return to the family and surroundings that she so dearly loved, with startling suddenness the end came. Her character can be read from the pages of her book. Proud, loyal and dominant and yet devout, humble and loving, she had many of the qualities that mark the great women of history. It is a privilege to have known her and an honour to have enjoyed her friendship.

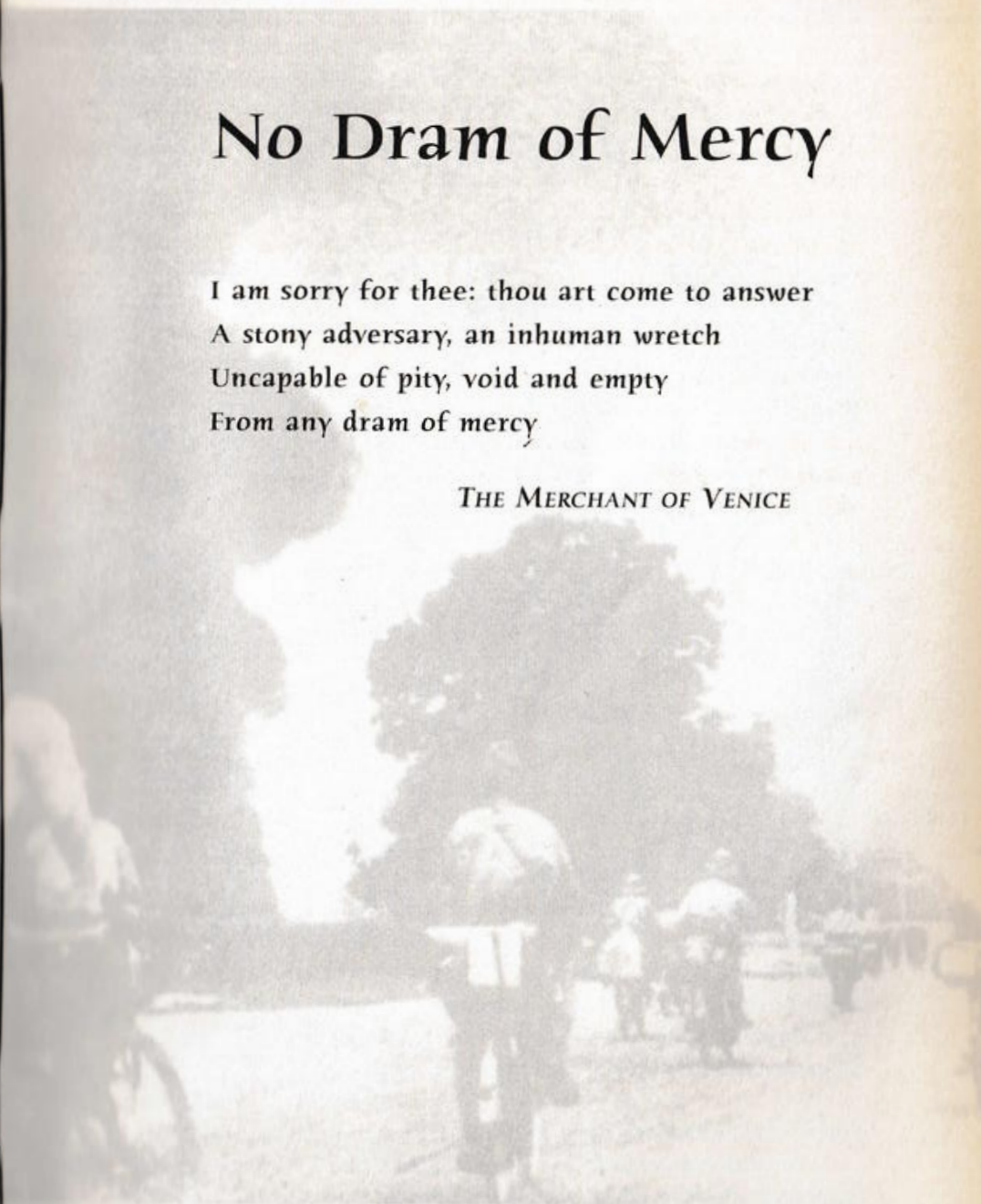
GEOFFREY E. CATOR

Former Agent for Malaya in London

No Dram of Mercy

I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE





CHAPTER ONE

IN 1941 THE DOCTOR AND I, WITH OUR THREE children, were living in Northern Malaya. These were days of suspense and anxiety, for although outwardly life went on much as usual, we were all dreading the outbreak of war which seemed daily more imminent.

Our home was in Ipoh, a growing town on the banks of the Kinta River, centre of the tin-mining district and soon to become capital of the rich State of Perak. Round the town were the still peaceful hills, rounded hills, bluish white in the sunshine, with trees spilling over their upper slopes like green paint spilling out of a tube. It was beautiful country, still innocent of the trappings of war, the sound of guns, the hunting down of guerillas, the robbery and rapine that were to come with the occupation. . . .

Early on the morning of the 8th December, 1941, our old friend George Weaver appeared at our house in Brewster Road. He was in a state of great excitement. 'Have you heard the news, Mrs. K?' he shouted, and before I could answer blurted out, 'It's war! The Japanese have bombed Singapore. All the Japanese in Malaya have been arrested.'

This was the news I had dreaded to hear, though I had expected it for months past. I heard it without surprise, with a dull sense of shock. Before I could give expression to my own feelings I was obliged, with the bravest air I could assume, to calm the other members of my family, who had heard George's news and come running to me. My poor mother was especially upset; she was seventy-three at this time and might have looked forward to a peaceful old age. 'Bil, Bil,' she kept asking me, 'will everything be all right? I feel so afraid.'

I put my arms round her and did my best to comfort her. 'Don't worry, Mother, I will look after you as I have always done.'

The days that followed are chequered in my memory with hope

and despair, but the pattern is dominated by the black. The bombing of Singapore was followed almost immediately by the news that the Japanese had landed in South Siam and in Kelantan, where our troops were in action. We took comfort in the reassuring sight of the convoys of military vehicles crammed with soldiers which moved northward through Ipoh to meet the enemy in Kedah and North Perak. Then further news broadcasts filled us with dismay. Penang had been heavily bombed and fires were raging in the narrow streets of the town. When would Ipoh's turn come?

My husband, the Doctor, and I had long realised that the war might come to Malaya and that, if it did, Ipoh would be in danger of attack from the air. We had arranged, in the event of bombing, to move the family to a place which offered greater safety than did our house in the heart of the town. The place we selected was our garage in the suburbs. There was no target of military value in the neighbourhood, our chauffeurs had quarters there with facilities for cooking and washing, and I had laid in a store of food. The garage itself was partly concealed from the air by a tall, thick bamboo hedge, and the cars could be parked under the trees some distance away. If Ipoh were raided, the Doctor and I would be required for duty with the Medical Auxiliary Service; the knowledge that our loved ones were in a place of comparative safety would free our minds of at least some anxiety on their account and enable us to devote ourselves the more whole-heartedly to our duties. On hearing the news of the Japanese attack on Singapore I gave orders that one car should be available with its driver night and day to take my mother and our two daughters to the garage without delay. We had arranged also that our old friends the Weavers should, with their family, share our refuge.

Confident that we had made what arrangements we could for the safety of our family, I awaited events as calmly as I was able. In these December days the town, sparkling under the Malayan sun in its lovely setting of forest-clad, limestone hills, looked as quiet and peaceful as it had ever looked. The casual observer would have noticed little that was out of the ordinary in the life of the streets. Cars, buses, bicycles, rickshaws thronged the roads; hawkers tortured the air with their raucous cries; people of all races—Europeans, Chinese, Malays, Indians—seemed to be going just as usual to work

or to market. The schools had closed for the Christmas holidays, and children were everywhere at all hours, dragging their parents round the shops and gaping at the bright treasures they contained. One big store among the many gaily decorated shops was the particular focus of childish interest. There in the entrance stood a tall, scarlet-robed Santa Claus, nodding his head and beckoning the children to step inside and admire the wonders of Toyland. Beside him was a post-bag into which children, anxious not to be forgotten, dropped their letters. From morning until evening he was surrounded by an eager crowd, excitement and joy on every face.

This was the scene I passed when, on the morning of the 15th December, I set out in the small car to visit a maternity case in the little town of Chemor, on the main road, some ten miles north of Ipoh. We had not gone far from the town when I noticed a number of aircraft circling like hawks above the hills. Mat Yunus, the chauffeur, noticed them too. 'Look at the planes, Missy,' he said. 'Why should we fear when the R.A.F. is guarding us?' The aircraft did not look to me like the R.A.F. Buffaloes with which we were familiar, nor had their engines the characteristic sound of the American planes. However, I made no comment, only telling Mat Yunus to hurry, as I wanted to be in Chemor as quickly as possible.

Soon I was immersed in my work and had forgotten all about the aircraft. I had almost finished my task when I heard my patient's husband, who had just returned in his car from Ipoh. 'Have you finished, Missy? Can I speak to you?'

'Just one moment and I'll be ready.'

As I walked out and saw his face, pale with fear and worry, I guessed what news he brought. Even so, at his words I felt every bit of colour desert my face, leaving it as pale as his own, and I clutched the back of a nearby chair for support.

'The Japs are over Ipoh,' he said. 'Many bombs have fallen in Brewster Road, and I think your house is on fire.'

It was a moment before I was able to speak. Then, 'I must go back at once,' I said.

'Don't do that, Missy. You'll never get through. It's terrible. The planes are still over, and they're machine-gunning the streets. I was nearly killed.'

'I must go. I must find out what has happened to my children.

Besides, I may be needed.'

He looked as though he wanted to make a further effort to detain me, but said nothing. I went in to my patient.

'Ipoh has been bombed, but there is no need for you to worry. I will visit you tomorrow if I can get through, but you will be all right now even if I can't.'

'God keep you safe, Missy,' she said, with tears in her eyes.

I got into the car. 'Back to Ipoh, Mat Yunus, as fast as you can. The Japs have bombed Ipoh, and I'm told my house is on fire.' Almost at once I regretted my instruction to the chauffeur. Poor Mat Yunus, staggered by the news, seemed scarcely to know what he was doing. We escaped accident by what seemed a series of miracles, and I had no time to think of bombs or bullets.

In the streets of Ipoh all was panic and confusion. It was clear that the Japanese were attacking the morale of the town. We reached Brewster Road to find the house, to my relief, intact. The fire brigade were doing their best with hoses to put out the blaze in a building across the way. As the car drew up, our dispenser, Hanif, came forward to meet me.

'The children and my mother, Hanif? Have they gone to the garage? Are they all right?'

'Yes, Missy.'

'And the Doctor? On duty, I suppose?'

'No, Missy I'm sorry to say that he has been wounded and taken to hospital.'

'Wounded, Hanif? Is it serious?'

'I don't think so.'

'What happened?'

'We all went outside into the street to look at the planes, thinking that they were British. Then, as they dived, there were loud explosions in the town, noise all round us. They were dropping bombs and firing their machine-guns at us. But we did not for the moment realise they were Japanese planes. Then there was an explosion just across the road. Everyone ran for the nearest doorway. We ran back into the dispensary, and were almost crushed by the crowd from the street outside. Then we saw that the Doctor was wounded; blood was pouring down one leg and soaking his trousers. We gave him first aid, then the ambulance took him to hospital. He himself did

not know he had been hit, until he saw the blood.'

Now what was to be done? 'We're in for trouble, Hanif,' I said slowly.

'Yes, Missy—Missy, can I go home? All the servants want to go too.'

Hanif's words confronted me with a new problem. I had known Hanif from a child, and the servants had been with me for years, since my children were babies. Without thinking, I had assumed that they would remain with us. But what was more natural than that they should want to be with their families at this terrible time? Could I justifiably ask them to stay?

I made up my mind. 'Ask the servants to come downstairs, Hanif,' I said. 'I want to speak to them.'

When they were all in the dispensary, I told them, 'I realise that you are anxious to go to your homes. But you know that the Doctor has been wounded. Won't you stay until I come back from the hospital? There is no one to look after the house and dispensary until I return.'

'We will stay until you return,' was the willing reply.

I then rang up the hospital. 'This is Mrs. Kathigasu. How is the Doctor?' I asked. 'What is the extent of his injuries?'

'He is leaving the theatre now, Mrs. K,' was the reply. 'It is a deep flesh wound in the right groin. Caused by shrapnel. There is nothing to worry about, but he has lost a good deal of blood and is rather weak.'

'Thank you very much. I will come down to the casualty ward right away.' And to Hanif, 'Get Mat Som please, Hanif, to drive me to the hospital. Mat Yunus seems very shaken and unsteady. And, Hanif, ring up the M.A.S. headquarters. Tell them the Doctor has been injured and will not be able to report for duty.'

When I reached the casualty ward I found that the Doctor had returned from the operating theatre and was waiting for me. He looked so drawn and pale that I could scarcely believe I had left him only a few hours before, attending his patients with a smile and a cheery word for each.

'Cheer up, Ziew,' I said, 'and keep your spirits up.'

'Are you all right, Bil? How did you get through?'

'Don't worry about anything. Try and rest until I return for you.

You had better not stay here. I'll take you out to the garage. I'm going there now, to see how the children are, and I'll make all arrangements for you there. Good-bye till I see you again. And good luck!

I was greeted on my arrival at the garage with cries of boundless joy. 'Oh, Mummy, you're safe! We're so happy now.' My mother, too, clung to me and kept repeating in her excitement and relief, 'Are you really all right, Bil? Are you really all right?'

'I am, Mother,' I assured her, as I kissed and hugged them all, thanking God in a silent prayer that all my loved ones were safe. 'I've just been to see Daddy at the hospital. They've stitched up his wound and I'm bringing him here. What about Mr. and Mrs. Weaver? Did they get here?'

'Here we are, Mrs. K,' said Mrs. Weaver, coming in at that moment.

'How are you both? You look badly shaken.'

'We're all right now, Mrs. K. We had a terrible time getting here, but we managed it.'

'You had better all keep indoors unless there is bombing,' I said. 'If the planes come over, take shelter under cover of the hedge. And now I must go back to the house. The servants are waiting for me. They want to go home.'

On my return to the house in Brewster Road I felt all at once unutterably weary—exhausted mentally rather than physically by the terrible events of the day, though it was still early. There seemed so much to do that I was at a loss where to begin. I went upstairs and kneeling down prayed to God for guidance, and for strength to do His will in whatever trials I might encounter, and as I prayed I felt the tension relax.

After a few moments I felt refreshed and stronger. The servants must be sent home now, before the bombers returned. I went downstairs and called for the keys of the cash box and the poison cupboard, which were in Hanif's charge. I then gave Hanif and the servants what money I could spare and told them they could go. 'Thank you for staying until now,' I said, 'and may we all meet in safety again before long.'

I was now left alone with the two chauffeurs. Fortunately—since I could not do without the cars—their families were out at the garage at a safe distance from the town, and they agreed to stay and

help me. First we loaded cotton mattresses and a rattan couch for the Doctor into the Austin and sent them to the garage. Visiting the hospital we picked up the Doctor and installed him in the garage too. Having seen him settled and reasonably comfortable, I returned to bring more clothes for all of us, and to get what petrol I could before it was too late. At the petrol pump there was trouble; I was told it was for military vehicles only.

'I want that petrol even if I have to take it by force,' I said. How this was to be done I did not consider, but I must have looked remarkably menacing for the man wavered.

'But what am I to tell the military?' he asked.

'Tell them I took it.'

He hesitated for a moment, then shrugged his shoulders and filled the tanks of both cars. I paid him and we drove off.

Though so much had happened already, it was only eleven-thirty in the morning. The streets, now that the bombers had gone, presented a picture of chaos and confusion. Everywhere families were loading their belongings, wrapped up in corded bales and Chinese boxes, into cars and carts and on to bicycles, and streaming out of town. The owner of any kind of wheeled vehicle could command whatever price he liked that day. The ambulances were still plying to and fro, taking the injured to hospital; firemen were fighting fires in several quarters of the town; Indian and Malay police were everywhere, directing the lines of laden traffic and on the watch for looters, while here and there parties of British and Indian troops gave what help they could.

Confident that I had now done all that was in my power for my own family, my attention was now drawn to the many others who needed my help. At the dispensary I found waiting for me a crowd of poor people—Chinese, Indians and a sprinkling of Malays. There were many familiar faces among them—patients the Doctor or I had treated at some time in the past. I noticed several mothers with babies in their arms, not more than a few days old in more than one case. As soon as I appeared they crowded round me, clamouring for help. All wanted to move their families out of town and asked me to help them with the cars.

'Where is your house?' I asked, turning to one old lady.

'Near the aerodrome, Missy.'

I realised the urgency of the situation. If they had not bombed it already, the Japanese would certainly make an effort, tomorrow or the next day, to put the aerodrome out of action. In the process this old dame and her family might well be wiped out. Just then the murmur of a distant plane reminded us of what might now be on the way. A movement of panic ran through the waiting group. 'Please help us, Missy. Please take us before it is too late.'

'Very well,' I said. 'We'll pack as many as we can into the cars right away, and return for the rest. But I can't take a lot of baggage. People's lives must come first. You must be content with taking enough rice and sugar and salt to last you for the next few days, and a change of clothes. Now, where do you all want to go?'

Some said Mangoi, a small suburb of Ipoh, others named more distant towns and villages, others had nowhere to go. 'Look,' I said. 'I can't take you all over the country while there are others waiting here for the cars to return. You must help one another; this is trouble we are all of us in together. I'll take you all to Mangoi and there you must find what accommodation you can. And don't forget to boil your drinking-water if you don't want disease to spread.'

It was late in the afternoon before the last car-load had been deposited in safety. I returned to the garage to see that all was well. The Doctor's wound was bleeding and his dressings were soaked; I changed them and made him comfortable. Then I went back to the dispensary to pack up the medicines. It was night before I had them securely stowed in cases so that they could easily be removed if the need arose. Tired, cold and hungry, I returned to the garage through a heavy rainstorm, which increased the miseries of the black-out. Everything seemed out of place, and everyone was worried and weary. We had never known what war was like.

A sleepless night, and morning brought the bombers back. The Doctor's wound was still bleeding and I knew that it needed further attention. When the raiders had passed, we took him back to the hospital. An X-ray revealed a large piece of shrapnel still lodged in the wound. He was taken to the operating theatre at once, and the jagged lump of metal was removed. After completing the operation the surgeon came up to me and told me that the hospital staff had been ordered to leave Ipoh for the south with what equipment they could carry with them. 'Are you coming with us, Mrs. K?' he asked.

'No,' I answered, 'I'm staying.'

'Well, you needn't worry about your husband's wound. Just change the dressings and remove the stitches when it has healed up. Good-bye and good luck.'

'Thank you, and all the best attend you.'

During the next few days our last hope faded—that help would arrive from Singapore. We were very cramped in the garage, but adequately equipped with the necessities of life. Japanese bombers were incessantly overhead, but, though we took shelter under the bamboo hedge when they came near, no bombs fell in the vicinity. The town itself was almost deserted; everyone seemed to have fled into the surrounding country. By the 20th December the aerodrome, which had been the target of several heavy attacks, was out of action. Then we learned that the military H.Q. was leaving Ipoh for the south. One of the officers suggested that we accompany them, but, feeling that we might be of more use here than elsewhere, I refused the offer. Struggling to keep the pain and sorrow out of my voice, I wished our friends good-bye and good luck. The troops were going. British rule would shortly be at an end. For how long?

Our adopted son, William Pillai, called in a great hurry to say that he and Francis Weaver were ordered south at once with their Volunteer company.

'Are you coming, Mummy?' he asked me.

'No, I'm staying here. Go, for that is your duty. God bless you and keep you.'

He did not answer me, but turned to Mr. and Mrs. Weaver. 'Francis is on duty and may not be able to come over,' he said. 'Good-bye all,' and with that he was gone. Our poor friends seemed on the verge of collapse and clung to one another as if for support, but I had no word of sympathy I could offer them.

I now decided that the time had come for us to leave the garage and find shelter in the country, away from Ipoh. There was no longer any need for us in the town, as nearly all our patients had left. Moreover, the Doctor needed rest while he recovered from his wound. And now Barh, an electrical engineer who had lodged with us in Brewster Road, joined us once more; the company he worked for had closed its power-houses and offices, and was sending its employees home. The European staff were being evacuated to the

south, but Barh had decided to stay. We were glad to have him with us again. Then Hanif returned, saying that he wanted to leave with his family. Could we find room for them in one of the cars?

We had no clear idea as to where we should go, but we loaded up the three cars and, joining the stream of refugees, set off along one of the roads to the south.

Every day the Japanese had been swooping over the roads packed with transport of all kinds, bombing and machine-gunning without discriminating between military and civil. Many a family's flight had been pitifully terminated in this way. So, as we drove, we kept a wary eye on the sky. We had not gone many miles before the planes whose sight we dreaded appeared over the hills. At once we left the main road by a convenient turning and found ourselves in a few minutes in the little village of Papan, where we sought shelter under the trees in a rubber plantation beside the road.

Our good fortune had brought us to Papan. When the air was clear we emerged from our cover and almost at once met an Indian friend of Barh's, a Mr. Ratnam. Mr. Ratnam worked for the same company as Barh, and he proved a good friend to us. Seeing our plight, he offered us half his house, which was No.74 in Papan's Main Street—the only street in fact. We moved in without delay. And so we became residents of Papan.



The Main Street of Papan: stranded at the foot of the hills

CHAPTER TWO

THE LITTLE TOWN WHERE WE NOW FOUND OURSELVES by chance established had once been the biggest centre of population in Kinta. But this was in the early days, when the Chinese tin-miners had done little more than begin to open small areas in the boundless forest. As the country was opened up and mines spread over the whole of the valley, the tide of prosperity receded and left Papan, as it were, stranded at the foot of the hills, to be eclipsed by Batu Gajah a few miles away. Batu Gajah in its turn was succeeded as chief town in the Kinta Valley by Ipoh. Papan at this time consisted of little more than the main road, which straggled on for about half a mile bordered by shops and houses. A market, a Chinese school and its playing field and the police station made up the rest of the town. This latter was at the entrance to the town; several Malay constables, under a corporal, composed the police force.

When we arrived the population of the town had already increased two- or threefold by reason of the influx of refugees from Ipoh. Every house, every hut, every mining shed was packed, and if it had not been for the timely kindness of Mr. Ratnam we should have had great difficulty in finding shelter.

Mr. Ratnam was only the first of many friends to help us. Soon many of our former patients and friends from Ipoh, who like us had sought refuge in Papan and now learned of our arrival, helped us to move in and make ourselves as comfortable as we could under the circumstances. Wooden benches were used as beds, and our Indian cook rose to the occasion and soon had a meal ready. Owing to the black-out regulations, everyone retired early.

We had not been in Papan a day when, the news of our arrival having spread in the town, patients began to come in.

'Doctor, we are so glad that you and Mrs. K are here. There are so many sick.'

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The need for our services was apparent, but at the moment we had with us only the first-aid equipment and simple medicines we had brought with us from Ipoh in our hasty withdrawal. All the drugs and instruments were in the dispensary in the town. I had packed them in cases on the first terrible day of the bombing, and now we should have to go into Ipoh once more and bring them out to Papan—if the dispensary was still standing. The only thing to do was to go and find out.

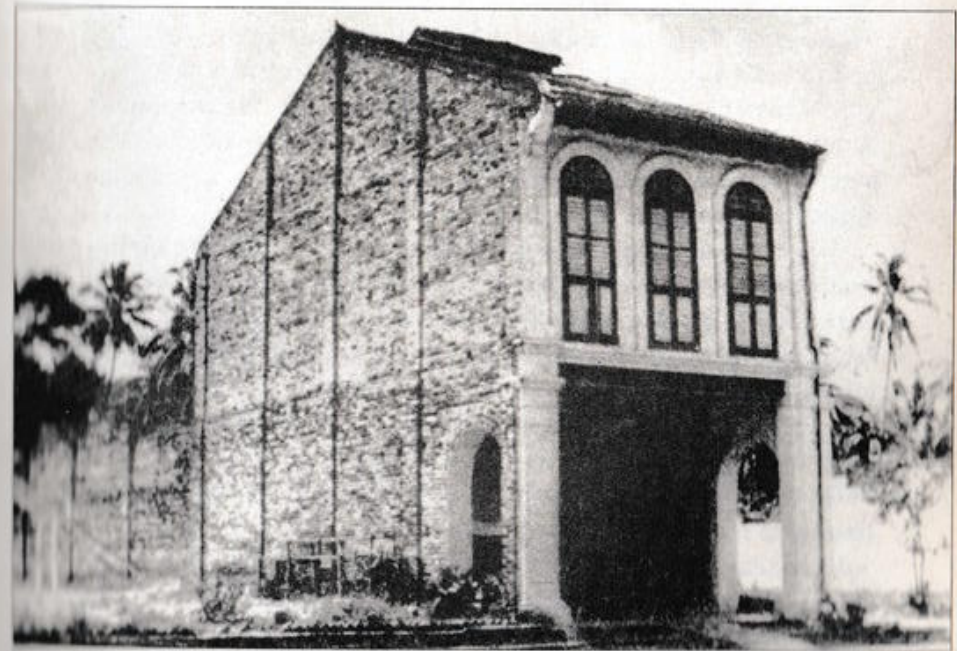
So for three days—the 19th to the 21st December—we drove three cars daily into Ipoh, and brought back not only the drugs and instruments but also clothing, provisions and other necessities. The two chauffeurs had preferred not to remain in Papan with us, so the Doctor himself—though the stitches were not yet out of his wound—drove the big Chevrolet. He showed Hanif, who had never driven before, how to handle the small car. To begin with, the little Austin wavered all over the road and showed a tendency to stop short on hills, while alarming noises issued from under the bonnet whenever Hanif changed gear, but it made the journeys without mishap. The third car was Barh's, which he drove himself. These journeys were never without risk; several times we had to seek what shelter was available during an air raid, and once as we were filling the petrol tanks a Japanese plane swooped down over the cars, spraying the road with machine-gun bullets but fortunately doing no damage.

We were amply rewarded for the risks we had taken when on our return to Papan with the last load we were able to announce that the dispensary was open once more, and saw the joy and trust in the eyes of the sufferers who had been awaiting our help.

Mr. Ratnam's home, No. 74, had been built as the first of a row of Chinese shophouses, limewashed blue-white, of the type to be seen in every small town in Malaya, but had remained the only one of the row; it stood by itself, with vacant plots of ground on either side. It was tall and narrow, with a frontage of only about twenty feet, but extending a long way back from the road. The side walls were uncovered brick, and windowless, waiting for adjoining houses which had never been built on. On the ground floor the front of the house was set back five feet from the edge of the road, but the upper storey was carried forward, supported by arches over the five-foot way, so as to make the maximum use of the limited space of the

building lot. The front door was of heavy timber; it was secured by a wooden bolt. It opened into a large room in which a movable screen served as a partition. At the far end of this room a door in one corner gave access to the back part of the house, while at the other corner was a staircase leading to the upper storey, which was one single room. This was larger than the room downstairs, by reason of the extra space over the five-foot way in front. It was lit by three tall, shuttered windows which looked out into the street, and by two smaller windows at the back. These two large rooms comprised the dwelling proper. The door at the end of the lower room led to the kitchen, which was really a sort of courtyard, partly roofed and partly open to the sky. Beyond this were two small square rooms opening on to a narrow passage, also unroofed. This passage was in fact an extension of the open part of the kitchen, and was flanked by a nine-foot brick wall. The passage led, past the doors of the two rooms, to a small square back yard. A wooden door in the wall of the yard opened on to a narrow lane, which ran parallel to the road.

Equipped with electric light, running water and a telephone, the house seemed ideally suited to our requirements. Mr. Ratnam and



The house to which wounded guerillas and sick townfolk went for care and aids

his family occupied only the two small rooms at the back. The remainder of the ground floor was made over to us and provided us with a dispensary, separated from our living quarters by the screen. Here an electric plug provided power for the steriliser, and a cane couch, a long wooden bench, a table and sets of shelves completed the fittings. Upstairs lived Mr. and Mrs. Weaver with their younger son Dominic. There was space upstairs also for storing the medicines, provisions, clothing, and for the wireless set. We drove the cars round to the back of the house, and hid them as well as we could among the rubber trees and coconut palms.

Each day we listened to the news broadcasts, and our hopes receded as the British forces were reported to be retreating, step by step, before the Japanese.

Christmas came upon us almost unawares. On the evening of the 24th my younger daughter Dawn, aged five, came up to me and said, 'Can I hang up my stocking tonight, Mummy?'

I put my arms round her and kissed her. 'It's no use, darling,' I told her. 'Santa Claus will not come tonight.'

'Why, Mummy?'

'Because the Japanese have taken him away.'

'When will he come back?'

'We will ask the Little Jesus to send him back soon.'

So Christmas Day dawned. Although we had the cars, we did not dare venture out of the town to go to church. We all knelt down and prayed together. At the finish Dawn said, 'Please, Jesus, send Santa Claus back soon.'

Our fears, our anxiety and uncertainty about the future almost ousted from our hearts joy for the birth of our Saviour. We marked the occasion by sharing at dinner the one tinned plum pudding I found among our provisions, but we could not help thinking of the joyous Christmasses in previous years, when we had always given parties for our friends and a special treat for the orphan children of Ipoh to which we looked forward almost as much as they did.

On this day the Doctor's wound was sufficiently healed for me to be able to remove the stitches.

Every day Japanese aircraft were to be seen in one quarter of the sky or another as they sought out and attacked positions defended by the British forces and convoys moving along the road, or flew

over to raid Singapore and Kuala Lumpur or targets along the line of communications. As time went on we could hear not only the sound of bombs and anti-aircraft guns but also the thud of artillery as the Japanese forces pressed on to the south.

We knew little, however, of the bloody battles being fought within a few miles of our refuge. We found more than enough to occupy us with day-to-day emergencies nearer home. One day a Malay police constable, Ahmad, was brought in with a fractured skull—the result of persisting in his duty. He had come across a party of Chinese opening a gambling den in the market, and, attempting to arrest the ringleaders, had been struck from behind with an iron bar. We kept him with us, and he required several weeks of care and treatment before we could be sure that he would live. Ahmad never forgot what we did for him, and for his wife and two young children who depended on him; later on he was to find a practical way of demonstrating his gratitude.

Ahmad was only one of many we treated at this time. Every day, as the news of our arrival spread, more patients came in, not only from Papan itself but from the neighbouring towns and villages too. We soon found the crude equipment of our dispensary and the supplies we had been able to bring from Ipoh inadequate to the work which was coming in, and were forced to improvise. The Doctor found it necessary to perform operations for which, since he had done little surgical work in Ipoh, he had not the proper instruments. Patients who, injured by bomb or shell splinters or by machine-gun bullets, needed surgical treatment offered a major problem until a razor blade came to the rescue and to their relief.

Along with the patients came requests to attend maternity cases. Most trying of all were the cases of difficult labour, which often took place in conditions which imposed the maximum difficulty on all concerned. One case in particular I remember. The patient, already the mother of nine children, was in labour for five days in a windowless attic. To allow light and air to enter the place I ordered a portion of the palm-leaf roof to be removed. As, after hours of painful waiting, the climax approached we heard the hum of a plane circling overhead. At the time I thought the suspicion of the pilot must have been aroused by the half-uncovered roof; for there was a roar as the plane dived over the house and a deafening clatter of

machine-gun fire. At the moment when it was most necessary to concentrate all my attention on what was taking place in the tiny attic I found myself waiting with every nerve for the shattering impact of bullets. However, the danger passed; all went well, in the end, with mother and child, and we learned later that the target of the Japanese attack had been a party of Australian soldiers retreating down the road nearby.

The amount of work increased so much that it was necessary for every member of the household to take a share. Dominic Weaver, helped by Dawn, made sure that there was always a supply of clean bottles ready for medicine. His father, old Mr. Weaver, received the patients and saw to it that the urgent cases were treated first, the rest taking their turn. Mrs. Weaver took care that the water needed for dispensing was strained and, in the absence of a filter, thoroughly boiled. Olga looked after her grandmother's wants and generally acted as a maid-of-all-work. In all surgical cases, whether septic or clean, Dawn did what she could to help, fetching instruments, swabs and towels, and handing them to her father as they were required; the others could not and would not have anything to do with the surgical work.

It was necessary to find a new dispenser, since Hanif had decided to take his family to Batu Gajah, where they had relatives. Their departure eased the congestion in the house, but we were sorry to see them go. Since there was no one else, Barh was appointed dispenser in Hanif's place.

'But I know nothing of this work, Mrs. K,' he protested.

'I know, Barh, but you'll just have to pick it up as well as you can.' So Barh did his best.

We made it a rule that the poor, and those who had lost everything, should be treated free. Others were charged according to what we estimated they could afford to pay. To begin with, it was difficult to know what the standing of our various patients was. Many, unwilling to pay if they could get treatment free, claimed to have lost everything, and we must often have been deceived. Later, when we got to know Moru, he helped us in this respect. He was nearly always present when the patients were shown in, and would scratch his head when he wanted to indicate one who could afford our very moderate fees. He knew the circumstances of everyone in Papan,

where he had lived all his life, and saved us from many errors.

As the British forces withdrew, the machinery of local administration came to a standstill. Papan had depended for its sanitation and cleanliness on the labours of a handful of Indian coolies, supervised by a sanitary inspector. Now that there was no effective government to which its servants could look for direction and pay, all work ceased. Roads and drains were filthy, and for days there had been no collection and disposal of night soil. As a result of the increased water consumption caused by the swollen population, the reservoir showed signs of running dry.

Some of the more energetic and public-spirited citizens got together and formed a committee for the management of the town. They collected money from all householders and so were able to pay the town labourers to continue their work. They organised a band of Chinese with the duty of keeping order and guarding the town against the gangs of ruffians and looters who were already, in isolated parts of the country, taking advantage of the general disruption. This "Home Guard" was armed first with sticks and later with shotguns, and successfully protected the inhabitants of the town from molestation. We followed the example of many householders and dug a well in the garden of the house; everyone used well-water for washing, and the piped water only for drinking and cooking. In this way it was hoped to maintain the level of water in the reservoir.

As day followed day, air attacks in the neighbourhood ceased, but we could see the Japanese squadrons flying over to attack targets in the south. The thud of artillery sounded fainter and finally vanished as the battle receded. Our hopes that somehow reinforcements from Singapore would turn the tide receded too.

When, finally, the electric current failed we felt for the time being completely cut off from the outside world, with neither radio nor telephone. However, we were able to obtain a battery set which was in working order and this soon became a part of our existence.

CHAPTER THREE

AT MIDNIGHT ON THE 28TH DECEMBER I WAS lying awake when I heard the sound of heavy vehicles passing down the road into the town. I got up and peered out through a crack in the door. In the dim light I could see that the lorries were crammed with troops, their squat bulky bodies ludicrously hung with weapons and equipment of all kinds. The Japanese had arrived. Apart from these intruders, not a soul stirred in the streets; as I peered, I imagined how every door and window in the street must conceal its silent watchers, standing tense like me with fear and anxiety in their hearts. The soldiers did not attempt to enter any of the houses. They spent the night in what must have seemed a dead town, and were gone before dawn.

By noon next day a detachment was back in the town, searching for motor-cars at the point of the bayonet. The Japanese loved cars. Every one of them of any importance possessed a car, and one judged their rank and status by the size and quality of the car they rode in. Within a few months of the Japanese occupation the price of second-hand cars had risen several times above the prewar prices for new ones. It was typical that while they loved to possess "quality cars", the Japanese conveniently overlooked the fact that they were of British or American manufacture! Our cars were sheltered from the air by coconut palms and rubber trees, but we had made no further attempt to conceal them, and they were the first to go. These were first-line troops and all spoke Malay; the N.C.O. in charge of the detachment was delighted at the sight of the big Chevrolet, which, he said, was what he had been looking for as the Governor required just such a vehicle as this. Pleased with his find, he was considerate enough to allow us to keep the little Austin when we explained how necessary it was for our work. But Barh's car went with the Chevrolet.

Alas! We were not to keep even the Austin for long. Two or three

weeks after this we were roused in the middle of the night by an irate Japanese soldier who ordered us with a flood of gesticulations and incomprehensible grunts to accompany him to the place where we were accustomed to park the car. Though he spoke no Malay, we understood him to be inquiring who was the owner of the car, and demanding that it be handed over to him at once. We produced the permit given to us by the soldiers who had taken the other cars, but it cannot have been sufficiently impressive, for it was at once torn up and stamped upon with a flood of abuse. We had no choice but to hand over the ignition key. However, Barh had made a practice of immobilising the car every night by removing a small but vital part from the engine, and as we refrained from mentioning this, the frantic efforts of the Jap to start the car were ineffectual. In the end he went off, but within an hour he was back with an army lorry and a tow-rope, and our car was towed off without ceremony. It did not console us when we learned, a few days later, that our Chevrolet had been seen by a friend, with the Japanese Governor inside and a huge flag on the bonnet.

Although, at the outset, the Japanese forces were instructed to behave with courtesy and consideration towards the local population, with a view to winning their loyalty, this policy of the High Command was not always followed at the lower levels. In the early days, no less than in the years that followed, neither person nor property were safe from brutal and marauding hands. The greatest danger at this time was that besetting young women and girls. Any drink- and lust-inflated Japanese soldier was a menace, but worse was the deliberate and calculated policy by which unfortunate victims were seized and carried off without warning, in many cases never to be heard of again.

There was rape throughout Malaya in all places traversed by the military, both in the towns and in outlying villages and plantations. When younger women were not available, older women were not safe, but generally it was the younger women and girls who were swept off or else raped before the eyes of their own families. Whenever there was the least resistance, all males were either bayoneted or slaughtered in cold blood, or else they were bound and made to watch the orgy of rape perpetrated on their own womenfolk. When the Japanese occupied a town, the fate of the inhabitants

depended on the officer in charge. So in some cases order was restored and raping reduced to a minimum, but in other cases, when the officers were as lustful as their men, raping was general. In most of the large towns, young women and girls were rounded up and kept in certain buildings "for military use". . . Small wonder, then, that I was frantic with worry as I thought what might befall my little Olga, who was at this time twenty years old. In the end we decided to disguise her and I started off by giving her a close crop. Though she knew the reason for this measure and was well aware of its necessity, she could not help crying as her beautiful natural waves fell to the ground. I dressed her in an old pair of trousers belonging to her father, and a torn shirt, then smeared her face with touches of mud and charcoal. Whenever Japanese were in the neighbourhood, she was not to answer any questions but to be sweeping out the drains. We had to be constantly alert, for visits from the Japs might be expected at any hour of night or day. This went on for nearly three months, until we could be reasonably sure that the danger had passed. When questioned by the Japs I told them that Olga was my young brother—deaf, dumb and an idiot. They would glance with disgust at the pitiful figure, then turn away.

Every day we listened in secret to the news from Singapore. Then one day the battery set failed to respond when we tuned in to the accustomed wavelength. There could be no doubt in our minds what had happened, but it was not until several days later that we heard officially of the fall of Singapore on the 15th February. Our thoughts went to William, and to Francis Weaver; to Francis's mother I could only say, 'We must trust in God.'

One night in the middle of January, tired out with worry and without hope for the future, I fell into an exhausted sleep. It was during the early hours of the morning that I awoke, feeling a gentle tap on my feet. As I opened my eyes I was dazzled by a vision of the Sacred Heart before me. Overwhelmed by a feeling of awe and love, I arose and knelt by my bed, murmuring:

'My Lord, and My God.'

And His voice said to me:

'My child, you must be ready to pay the supreme sacrifice, for the glory that is to come.'

'My Lord, I cannot . . .' I whispered.

'You can, and will, for I the Lord command it. I will be with you and will give you strength.'

A great fear came over me as I answered: 'I will pay the supreme sacrifice, my Lord. I promise this in Thy name.'

As the last rays of His brightness were vanishing, my mother awoke.

'Who were you talking to, Bil?'

'I was dreaming, Mother,' I answered, for I did not want to frighten her by telling her the truth.

But I knew within myself that I must be willing to face death if my God willed it. He Himself had come to warn and strengthen me. And I was fortified through all the trials that lay ahead by the knowledge that all that was taking place was ultimately part of a divine pattern beyond our human comprehension.

After this, I hung a picture of the Sacred Heart on the plank wall of our shabby dispensary. This I found an aid to prayer, and a reminder of a world beyond the tangible, material one which so often, in this room, pressed upon us. The picture had also a more practical purpose. Behind it we bored a hole through the wooden wall, so that, by lifting the picture, we could look out without being seen.

As the Japanese grip tightened on the land our lives became governed—in theory—by an ever-increasing web of prohibitions and regulations. In practice, the laws were so many and complex, and so frequently altered, that the most enthusiastic supporter of Dai Nippon could scarcely be sure that he was not transgressing in some respect. But any law might be arbitrarily and brutally enforced.

It was a crime to be in possession of the flag of any of the Allies, or the photographs of Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek or other Allied leaders. All pictures of the King and Queen were proscribed, as were all books and magazine articles relating to Their Majesties and the Royal Family. The people were ordered to destroy any such articles; thereafter, the Japanese might search any house, and woe betide the inmates of any house where a "disloyal" book or photograph was found! They might be lucky enough to escape with kicks and slaps, but if the Japanese happened for some obscure reasons of their own, or merely because they were in an ill humour, to take a graver view of the crime, then it might be punished by

torture and death.

And "political crime" was any one of the following: possession of a short-wave radio; listening to a short-wave radio; spreading rumours; discussing radio news; association with secret societies; association with people known to have anti-Japanese or anti-Axis sentiments; making complaints about the Administration; complaining about the high cost of living in public; making sarcastic remarks about community leaders; making fun of Government co-operators; dealing in British or American currency; and racketeering in essential goods affecting the war effort. To be suspected of any of these "crimes" was sure to lead to torture; to be found guilty was sure death, either early or late.

The Japanese technique of crime investigation was based on torture. Torture first, then investigation, and always more torture than investigation.

Suspects usually underwent one or other of the following tortures: a medley of wild kicking, boxing, slapping, judo and ju-jitsu throwing; flogging on bare bodies until they bled or else the victim fainted; hanging the victims upside down or else with their hands tied behind their backs and the full weight of the body resting on raised toes. Then there was the "Tokio wine treatment" or the "water treatment", which meant the pumping of gallons of water into the victim through a hose direct from the water tap down the victim's throat, followed by a violent stamping on a board laid across the victim's stomach, until water (frequently with blood) ran out of every orifice in the victim's body—and, if this had not killed the victim, he was put out in blazing sunshine to dry. As an alternative there was always the burning of hands or feet until they were practically roasted; and the injection of boiling water into the rectum, or the pulling out of finger-nails or toe-nails. And there was the racking, the cramping of bones of fingers and limbs, the administration of electric shocks, and kneeling on pebbles. . . .

Very few victims could live through more than one or two of these tortures; and only the toughest of men lived through three or four. And as a background to the tortures, prison conditions alone were horrible enough to break down anyone's resistance.

It was usual to herd from fifteen to twenty victims into a room not larger than eighteen feet by fifteen feet by twenty feet, with only

one well-barricaded window for ventilation. Prisoners slept on plank-beds, which harboured in their crevices thousands of bugs, lice and other vermin. Only one bucket was available for urine and night soil, a humiliation that was at its worst when women and girls were herded together with men. The effort to sleep under such conditions was maddening, in the true sense of the word. Apart from marauding rats and mosquitoes, and the stench and foulness of the air, and the biting cold of midnight draughts, there was often the accompaniment of groans and shrieks from adjoining torture rooms. Food, served twice a day, was a meagre portion of boiled rice with a few vegetables, or else some thin broth with a few grains of tapioca or sweet potatoes. The aim of all this inhuman treatment was to make the victims talk—make them say anything, whether truth or falsehood, that would incriminate others.

To begin with, there were people who thought that the miseries of our existence at this time were the temporary consequences of the Japanese victory, and that when the Civil Government took over from the military things would settle down and life become much as it had always been. I did not believe this; and when people asked me anxiously whether I thought things would be better under the Civil Government, I just said what I thought—that one Japanese was as bad as another. My family warned me to be more careful—a rash word might be repeated to the Japanese and cruelly punished. But I have never been held back by fear of the consequences from saying what I think is right, and I refused to deprive myself of the liberty of expressing my true feelings about the Japanese.

In fact, the Civil Government was no different, except in name, from the military administration. The Japanese tried to reproduce the pattern of British administration, and made use of the Malay officers of the Civil Service, who now became district officers and magistrates. But as the Army was still all-powerful, and any civil officer who held no military rank could be slapped and kicked by the meanest Japanese private, the system had little reality. The only effect was an increase in the volume of regulations and restrictions, a breach of which might be punished by beating-up, imprisonment or death.

The Japanese administration of Malaya had three principal aims—restoration of the country's economy as far as possible to its prewar

level, substitution of Japanese for Western cultural influences and the elimination of the Communists. An initial effort was made to bring back labour to the local industries. All those who had fled from their homes before the threat of Japanese bombs and bullets were now ordered to return to their former occupations and places of residence. Our house and dispensary in Ipoh had, however, been taken over by a Japanese medical unit. This gave us an excuse for not returning to Ipoh, which was most welcome to me. In Papan there was no regular garrison, and we were in consequence relieved of the hateful presence of the Japanese except when a military detachment came to carry off property or persons. I was resolved therefore to stay in this relatively uncontaminated atmosphere for as long as I could.

In the cultural sphere the first target was the English language. Japanese educational policy had three main objectives: the fostering of Nippon-Go (the Japanese language) as the *lingua franca* of East Asia; secondly, the inculcation of Nippon-Seishin (the Japanese spirit) into all, which meant, briefly, iron discipline, blind obedience to authority and undying loyalty to Tenno Heika (the Emperor); and thirdly, the training of the younger generation to be useful subjects of the Japanese Empire, spiritually and physically fit to be drafted into any form of military or national service. The teaching of Nippon salutations, Nippon manners and customs, Nippon songs was the daily routine. There was also plenty of mass physical drill and manual labour. Progress in Nippon-Go was rewarded with promotion or higher salaries, so that it was made clear that the Japanese language was the gateway to better prospects in life. The use of English was, of course, prohibited, and those of us who habitually spoke in English were to converse in Malay instead. British and American gramophone records were banned, and Japanese tunes were everywhere to be heard on the lips of the young people who a few months earlier had been whistling or singing the latest hit from Hollywood. The Western handshake was even superseded by the Japanese bow.

Wherever the Japanese armies had spread, the Japanese had found the Communists their bitterest and best-organised enemies. The elimination of Communist influence in Malaya was a primary aim of the Japanese policy, and one that in its execution caused

untold suffering to the unfortunate people of the country.

With a view to keeping under observation the activities of all who might have some connection with the Communists, the Japanese ordered the registration of the entire population. Registration officers and clerks were appointed to all towns and villages, and every individual was registered in his home town. All movement was controlled; it was necessary to get a permit for every journey—even an afternoon's trip from Papan into Ipoh. These were galling restrictions, but most dreaded of all the anti-Communist measures were the identification parades or "Sook Chings" (肃清). Without warning, the entire Chinese population of a certain area would be ordered out of doors, and herded together in some convenient open space. There were no exemptions—men and women, old people and babes in arms, healthy and sick were rounded up like cattle. With luck, the parade might be over in a few hours, but equally it might be prolonged over two or three days, in which case the plight of the unfortunate victims was miserable indeed. Scorched by the sun, soaked by the rain, and chilled by the night wind in turn, subjected to the brutalities of the Japanese guards, forbidden sometimes to stir from a single spot for days on end, many of the weaker died of the treatment they received. But worst was the fear and uncertainty. Many were carried off by the Japanese with no reason given: sometimes the victims were sturdy young men—taken, it was rumoured, for work in labour gangs—who were never seen again, but anyone regardless of age or sex might be seized on suspicion of Communist sympathies or activities, to return, if they were lucky enough to return at all, with the marks of torture on their bodies.

At the commencement of the Japanese régime there were many people in Malaya who, won over by the Japanese talk of Greater Asia, looked forward hopefully to a new future under benevolent Japanese leadership. These people were soon disillusioned when their conquerors revealed themselves for the savage barbarians they were.

CHAPTER FOUR

ONE OF THE FIRST ACTS OF THE JAPANESE, ONCE their control of the conquered territory had been established, was to order the surrender of all wireless sets. People were told to take their radios to the police station by a certain day. Thereafter, Japanese military police might make a surprise search of any house; if a radio were found the owner might be hauled off for summary execution. So Barh took his set, which had kept us in Papan informed of what was going on in the country at large, along to the police station and obtained the official receipt for it. My own set we had left behind in Ipoh; it was presumably in the care of the Japanese who were now occupying the house, so we felt on safe ground. We settled down to endure the burden of isolation.

As time went on, however, I felt more and more intensely the burning need to know what was going on in the world outside, and many others were in like case. We were able to maintain our courage in the face of the collapse of all our hopes only by reason of our conviction that the Japanese triumph was short-lived and that our freedom would soon return. Were the Japanese, as they claimed, really threatening with invasion Australia and India, or had the tide already turned, bringing back the Allied forces in a victorious wave? It was torture not to know.

Now that the electrical supply system had been restored, the realisation that only the possession of a set stood between us and knowledge was too much for me. One evening I broached the subject.

'It means a lot to us, having the electricity again, doesn't it?'

'Yes, indeed,' said someone. 'We didn't realise what a blessing it was until we had to put up with oil lamps.'

'It means more than that,' I replied; 'it means the B.B.C. again!'

There was a moment of silence. Then a chorus of protest—'Mrs. K!—Bill! Mummy!—you can't—you know what it means!'

'I know what it means,' I said, 'and I know that it is worth the risk. Listen; our greatest hardship is not knowing what is happening to our friends abroad. We are cut off from the free world like frogs beneath a coconut shell. We learn only what the Japs care to tell us. Truth or lies, we cannot distinguish between them. But a wireless set will bring us the truth, and the truth means hope for all of us.'

In the end it was agreed that we should obtain a set, install it in the house, and spread the news among our friends. We should have to work with the utmost discretion, and every member of the household would have a part to play.

I started to make covert inquiries among people I could trust, and soon learned that Mr. Wong, a Chinese neighbour of ours in Papan, could let us have a set. I saw Mr. Wong and agreed to take over his set: he refused payment, and I did not inquire where the set came from. It was a handsome six-valve G.E.C. model.

I promised him that we would pass on the news to him, but he was to use the utmost discretion in spreading it further. So the set arrived—brought to the back door late one night. It was forthwith christened "Josephine", and from then on we always referred, for the sake of security, to "Josephine".

We took Josephine upstairs, where there was more privacy and less damp, and proceeded to conceal her as best we could. First we removed the bulky wooden case, with the number plate, chopped it up and burned it on the kitchen fire. We had a pair of earphones, so we next removed the loud-speaker and concealed it in the garden adjoining the house. These operations made Josephine much less conspicuous and she was safely tucked away in a corner of the room, concealed among sacks and cases of books and provisions.



Sybil Kathigasu at thirty

We also took the valves out and hid them in different places every day, replacing them in the set only to enable us to listen to the news. This we hoped would lend colour to our assertion, if she were discovered by the Japs, that Josephine was a damaged set, and worthless. We had little hope that such an excuse would be accepted, but every possible precaution seemed worth taking.

Barh, being an electrical expert, was put in charge of Josephine. His duties as temporary dispenser were not onerous, and it was usually he who listened in. We heard the B.B.C. news only once a day, considering it unwise to listen more frequently, and though we passed the news on to those among our friends and patients whom we felt we could trust, they never asked us the source of our information. We were determined to keep the secret of Josephine's existence to as close a circle as possible; this was made a little easier by the fact that Mr. Ratnam had taken his family to Ipoh. He had gone back to his old job, working now under the Japanese, and had handed his house over to us, making us responsible for payment of the rent. We now employed two Chinese maidservants who lived in the town and went home at night. There was clearly a danger that if they found out about Josephine they might let their tongues wag. In the end we succeeded in so arranging things that they were never upstairs alone; someone was always unobtrusively on duty to see that Josephine was not disturbed. Josephine's loud-speaker and certain spare valves were concealed in a hole in the garden which Barh had laboriously dug and cemented round so that it was clean and fairly dry. The site was carefully chosen, but we could never be certain that one of the gardeners might not stumble upon it.

Josephine was certainly a big responsibility and a source of serious worry. Her discovery would certainly mean torture and imprisonment for some of us—perhaps even death. But, though the news in these early days was far from encouraging, simply to hear the calm voice of the B.B.C. announcer, describing Allied successes and reverses without trying to exaggerate the one or to minimise the other, was a tonic to all of us. It was a constant reminder that we were not alone—that the world we knew still existed though we were temporarily cut off from it. This knowledge fortified our faith in the ultimate victory of truth and right.

CHAPTER FIVE

UNDER THE JAPANESE, THE INFORMER WAS everywhere, and everywhere was hated and feared. For all their talk of "co-prosperity" and freedom for the peoples of Asia, the Japanese made little serious effort to win the support of the Malayan people. Their rule was based on terror, and this was particularly so in respect of the Chinese. It was as if they expected hostility rather than loyal support—as well they might, considering their record of naked aggression in China. Nearly all the guerillas in the hills were Chinese, and though the Chinese community subscribed heavily to Japanese war funds, feted and feasted their conquerors and appeared willing to do anything that was required of them, the Japs were not taken in. In truth, they feared the Chinese, and gave expression to their fear in savage persecution and constant spying. They were determined that the Chinese should fear them and be kept docile by fear. Hence the public executions which were a barbarous feature of the Japanese rule.

It cannot be denied that their methods were up to a point successful. They relied for their information about what was passing among the people on a widespread system of spies and informers, whose rewards were as much in the enjoyment of power and privilege as in cash. Evidence was not needed—suspicion was enough to arrest a man on, and torture would do the rest. In consequence, life among the Chinese was precarious. Even if you had never broken a law or uttered a word against the Japs, you could not be certain that someone who had a grudge against you might not lay false information, which, even if the military authorities did not take it seriously, would at least earn you an unpleasant spell in the cells and a savage beating—just in case. However careful a man was, it was hard not to become involved in some conversation or activity which might be interpreted as anti-Japanese. Then there was the constant danger that a friend or associate might give him away

under torture or the threat of death to himself or his family. In short, when even the most innocent word or action might lead to disaster, no one knew whom he might trust. Suspicion was everywhere.

The Japanese stopped at nothing to mobilise an army of informers or "intelligence agents". They were collected from all races—Chinese, Malays, Javanese, Banjerese, Filipinos, Siamese, Indians, Ceylonese and Eurasians. Some were rickshaw-pullers; some were waiters or waitresses; some were cooks and maidservants; some were cabaret girls; some were messenger boys; some were telephone girls and so on. Informers haunted all crowded places—cafes, hotels, places of amusement, so that one never felt safe. The blow might come at any moment, from an unseen hand and an unknown person. Friends had betrayed friends, sons and daughters had betrayed parents. . . . One learnt to trust nobody. In Papan, whose population was exclusively Chinese and, moreover, known by the Japs to have extensive contacts with the guerillas, the limits of whose territory lay just beyond the boundaries of the town, the atmosphere of suspicion was particularly oppressive.

Under these circumstances, Josephine had at all costs to be kept from becoming a topic of conversation in the town. We passed on the news only to a limited number of friends on whose discretion we could rely, and most of whom lived at some distance from Papan.

In the summer of 1942, the Doctor decided to return to Ipoh. Before, when the Japanese authorities had inquired why we had not returned to Ipoh in accordance with the law, we had been able to reply that our house was still occupied by a Japanese medical unit, and we had heard no more about it. Now, however, funds were running low, since, while the majority of our patients in Papan were of the poorest class, the prices of such supplies as we were still able to obtain had risen sky-high. By returning to Ipoh, even though it meant finding a new dispensary, the Doctor would be able to earn enough for all our needs. I did not like the idea, though I could see its financial advantages, and tried to dissuade my husband; he insisted, however, and Olga accompanied her father.

Our adopted son, William Pillai, had returned shortly after the fall of Singapore, but his dislike of a settled life soon caused him to seek an occupation elsewhere. At this time he was constantly

travelling between Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur on some important work of his own, about which he said very little. When in Ipoh he would sometimes come over to Papan for the night with my husband and Olga. Francis Weaver too had returned safely and was living with his parents and younger brother. He helped in the work of the house, the garden and the dispensary. Olga was with her father in Ipoh, and returned with him every alternate day; in their absence, Dawn, Barh and I made up, with the Weavers, the remainder of the household.



Dr. A.C. Kathigasu

With the family split up, transport presented a greater problem. In the end we succeeded in buying a small car—an Austin Seven—and ran it on "rubber oil", the synthetic petrol produced by the Japanese. This was a great blessing, and made it much easier for us to pass on the news to our trusted friends. Every Sunday we went to church in Batu Gajah. After the service, we would meet Father Cordiero and other friends at the church door, and pass on the latest news to them—almost under the nose of the sentry who guarded the gate of the military H.Q. opposite (in more peaceful days it had been the maternity block of the hospital). Once a week also we would go into Ipoh, where little Dawn attended catechism classes at the convent. This gave us an opportunity to visit Father Francois and the Brothers of the school. These latter had suffered a good deal; they had no home and no work. Their school, St. Michael's institution, had become the Government offices of the Japanese administration, and they were forced to lodge with Father Francois, the parish priest. Every week we used to bring fruit, eggs and vegetables from Papan for Father Francois and the Brothers—though in small quantities only, since cars were searched several times on the road between Papan and Ipoh, and large quantities of food aroused suspicion. With the food we brought also what was per-

haps even more necessary to sustain them—the latest news from the B.B.C. in London.

So obsessed was I by the prevalent fear and suspicion that even with the Brothers I could not relax completely. One day, as I was recounting the details of the latest great R.A.F. raid on industrial targets in Germany, Brother Rupert walked in. Brother Rupert is a German, and I stopped short. The Brother Director said quietly, 'Go on. You have nothing to fear from Brother Rupert.'

'Our Order is banned in German,' said Brother Rupert, realising my doubts. 'I have no place there now.'

I understood then that Brother Rupert was a man of God first, and a German only after that, and continued my account.

Another day we received an unexpected visitor in Papan. Chris had been our friend for the past eighteen years, but we had heard nothing of him since the fall of Singapore. He had worked in Singapore for a Government Department, and we thought he had probably left the island before the Japs arrived.

'Why didn't you get out of Singapore when you had a chance?' I asked. 'And what have you been doing these last few months?'

His answers were vague and non-committal; my ready suspicions warned me to be on guard. As time drew on, and he showed no signs of leaving, I became worried. The evening news broadcast was the great event of the day and could not be missed. In the end I asked outright: 'When are you going, Chris? The Japs are very particular here. If you want to stay the night, you will have to be registered. I don't like the idea of their knowing that you're from Singapore.'

'I will go a little later on,' was all he said.

Chris had been our friend for so long that I could scarcely believe him to be spy. Yet stranger things had happened in wartime, and I dared not let him into our secret. I resolved that Josephine should keep quiet as long as Chris stayed. In the end, however, Chris solved the problem himself. He had seen the Doctor in Ipoh and had learned from him of Josephine's existence. At first I was angry that the secret should have been revealed unnecessarily, but later I realised that it could not be safer than with Chris, who was himself daily risking his life in order that people should learn the truth. Before the war he had been working in Singapore for the Department of Information, controlled by the Ministry of Information in

London. After the fall of Singapore he had continued to do the same work, though in a different way. He had certain contacts in Singapore and Penang from whom he obtained the broadcast news, which he then passed on to various local men of influence and even succeeded in getting through to the news-starved P.O.W.s and internees in the Singapore prison camps. His public occupation as agent for the sale of a locally manufactured liquor enabled him to move freely up and down the country and to keep in touch with his various contacts. Henceforth Papan provided a new source of supply; he made several visits in the course of the subsequent months and was always given the latest news to supplement his own sources of information. So the British Ministry of Information continued to function "underground".

CHAPTER SIX

JOSEPHINE KEPT SUPPLIED WITH THE LATEST news two distinct groups of people who I was determined should have as little contact with one another as possible. These were first our own circle of trusted friends, and second the guerillas. Of my contacts with the guerillas it is now time for me to speak.

Right from the time when the British forces retreated from the Kinta Valley there were persistent rumours concerning those who had remained behind. There were said to be thousands of British and Australian soldiers hiding in the forested hills which flank the valley, and that many Chinese youths had fled to join them rather than submit to Japanese rule. These rumours persisted throughout the period of Japanese occupation, though we later learned that the number of European troops left behind was only a fraction of that suggested, and that of these only the merest handful survived the dangers of the jungle and enemy action. In truth there were large bands of guerillas living in the jungle-covered hills, who resisted all attempts of the Japs to drive them out. They were, however, almost exclusively Chinese, and their numbers were steadily swelled by Chinese youths who for some reason or other fled to the hills rather than remain within reach of the Japanese.

These bands were a thorn in the flesh to the Japanese. They avoided regular battle with the greatest skill, and cultivated a sort of secret underground warfare, exhorting the people to resist the Japanese rule where possible, and issuing forth when the coast was clear to kill a notorious informer, a brutal policeman or a particularly sycophantic supporter of the Japanese régime. Japanese forces would move in impressive array against their jungle hide-outs, but the results, for all the Japanese boasts, were seldom impressive. Every now and then a column of lorries would thunder through Papan, to draw up beyond the town, where the road comes to an end at the foot of the hills. The squat, uncouth-looking soldiers would leap

from their lorries with a great show of zeal and determination, and the long winding columns would soon be lost to view as they climbed the jungle-covered hillside. During the next two or three days, desultory firing would be heard—sometimes heavy, sometimes scattered shots. Then the columns in single file would appear once more, not so jaunty now and invariably carrying a number of lifeless bundles on improvised stretchers. The Japanese publicity organs would announce another victory over the “Communists”, but within a few days the death of another informer or collaborator would remind the Japanese that their enemy was still there.

The guerillas depended on the Chinese populations of the towns and villages in the neighbourhood not only for food and clothing but also for information about Japanese activities and intentions. The Japanese knew this and showed no mercy to those of their helpers whom they caught. A man whom the Japanese had reason to suspect had been giving aid or information to the guerillas could expect to be kept alive only until the Japs were persuaded that they had wrung from him by torture everything he knew.

One evening, shortly before the Doctor returned to Ipoh, he came into the house from the porch where he had been sitting. With him was a Chinese lad, a neighbour of ours who had been working as a school teacher in Ipoh and had now rejoined his family in Papan.

‘Bil,’ said my husband, ‘Thean Fook (天福) wants our help. I am willing, but it is for you to decide.’

‘Well, what is it?’

Our neighbour was silent for a time, clearly deliberating whether he could trust me with his message. Then, ‘It’s the guerillas, Mrs. K’, he said. ‘Some of them are sick and wounded, and need medicines. They know you don’t like the Japs. Will you help?’

It took me only a moment to make up my mind. I could not approve of some of the guerillas’ methods, but this was war. They were fighting the common enemy, and any help I could give them was a contribution to final victory.

‘Come back in an hour’s time,’ I said, ‘and we shall have something for them.’

When Thean Fook returned—this time by way of the door at the back of the house, which opened on to a narrow lane—he was accompanied by another Chinese, a silent, powerfully built man of

middle age. This man, whom we nicknamed and always referred to as Berani, "the Bold", was, as we learnt later, the guerillas' most trusted courier; he became our chief link with the guerillas, making frequent visits to call for medical supplies or news, but never uttering a single word more than was necessary.

Berani would appear at the back door of the house whenever there was a message from the guerillas' headquarters in the hills, or whenever there was anything to collect, but we ourselves never knew where he was to be found or exactly when he would come. When I wanted to send a message to the guerillas, I passed it through Thean Fook, who knew how to get in touch with Berani or another courier. Thean Fook became a constant visitor in the house and a great friend. We nicknamed him Moru because of his fondness, unusual in a Chinese, for buffalo's milk (the Tamil word for which is *moru*). Moru was a very different type from Berani. Of a studious nature, he was one of the very few English-speaking Chinese in Papan. He had completed his education at the big Government English School in Ipoh, and had started his training as a teacher when the arrival of the Japanese cut short his progress and he returned to Papan. The guerillas, knowing of his English education and Western outlook, had decided to enlist his assistance when they wanted to find a way of making contact with the Doctor and me.

In order to provide an excuse for Moru's continual presence at the house, I appointed him to teach Dawn English—though officially he came as a teacher of Chinese. Also, I insisted that he never be told of Josephine's existence, nor did we pass on the broadcast news to him. It was always Berani who took the news to the guerillas in the hills. It was my policy to keep the two groups who knew of my secret activities as separate as possible, in order to minimise the risk of a member of one incriminating the other.

The Chinese are notoriously clannish, and their poorer classes suspicious of strangers. The reader may well wonder



Moru: chief link with the guerillas

how it was that, in the atmosphere of suspicion of which I have tried to give an account, the guerillas should have ventured to approach us, one of the very few non-Chinese families in Papan. The truth is that we had won the confidence of the townsfolk, in a way, as a result of the very circumstances. When it might eventually lead to a painful death even to be seen visiting a house which the Japanese suspected of harbouring "Communist" elements, the townspeople were extremely cautious in all their daily contacts. But our house was exceptional. Every day a crowd besieged the dispensary, and it was not difficult to meet "accidentally" and talk there to a man when a visit to his house might cause unwelcome comment. Moreover, the Doctor and I were able to move about freely in the course of our professional duties; when the Doctor returned to Ipoh and we bought a car I used to travel about a good deal by myself, attending maternity cases and other urgent calls, without attracting undue attention. Like all Eurasians, I wore a red-and-white armband with my name and registration number on it (my number was 121). The purpose of this was to enable Japanese police and armed forces to distinguish us from Europeans, who, they thought, might escape from the prisons or leave the jungles and attempt to mix with the local population. In fact my armband served as a sort of badge of office or official passport. It and my number became well known in the district; I had only to show my armband when stopped by a police post on the road and to say that I was on my way to attend a confinement for me to be waved on without further delay. The fact that No. 74 could be approached by anyone without arousing suspicion, and the freedom of movement which I enjoyed, had the result that the house became a sort of clearing-house for local news, messages and warnings. Another factor which perhaps contributed to the confidence which the townsfolk had in me was that I spoke fluent Cantonese, and was able to understand and make myself understood in several other Chinese dialects. This was a great advantage to me in dealing with illiterate Chinese who often, having lived almost entirely in an all-Chinese community, spoke little or no Malay.

The Government insisted that everyone should plant and grow food wherever possible, so soon after Moru's visit we turned the vacant plot of land beside the house into a vegetable garden. In

doing so, we had inaugurated a campaign to "Grow More Food", but our garden had a value beyond the food it produced. As I have said, Berani on his visits to fetch supplies for the guerillas was accustomed to use the door at the back of the house. This door was approached by a path which was clearly visible across the vacant plot from the main road.

We had the ground dug and planted with vegetables—beans, brinjals (aubergines), maize, lettuce and onions. Then we erected round three sides of the garden (the fourth was the brick wall of the house) a fence of bamboo and palm leaves six feet in height. The purpose of this fence was to keep out of the garden our neighbours' goats and chickens and other unwelcome visitors, but it served also to screen from the main road the approach to the back of the house. It was in this garden that the hole was dug for Josephine's spare parts. Though we employed two labourers—Chinese patients who had been cured of beri-beri—to look after the garden, we all made a habit of doing a certain amount of work in it ourselves. In this way we hoped to avoid suspicion when it was necessary to open up Josephine's vault.

In response to the exhortations of the Government, and of necessity as rice and other foods got scarcer and more expensive, nearly everybody in the town had to some extent taken up the unaccustomed occupation of vegetable gardener. So the subject of growing vegetables became of absorbing interest to everyone, and it was customary when visiting a friend's house to admire his garden and discuss with him the growth of his crops. Of our friends in the town, Fu Kee, who kept the provision shop from which we bought rice and other supplies, was a particularly enthusiastic gardener. Nearly every evening he would stroll along, often with his wife or brother-in-law, to pass the time of day and discuss the garden. In his shop he naturally heard all sorts of local news and rumours, and would pass them on to us as we walked slowly down the rows of beans or stopped to admire a particularly fine patch of maize. This was a most useful contact for me and I did not fail to hand on to Berani when he visited the house those items of news which I thought would interest the guerillas. It was astonishing, the variety of information which found its way to Fu Kee's shop in the course of a day's business, and I do not remember a single large-scale operation

by the Japanese forces in the Papan area of which I was not able to send through Berani some warning to the guerillas.

One evening, after commenting on the size and healthy appearance of my brinjals, Fu Kee asked me whether I knew Ah Kow.

'Is that Han Ah Kow?' I asked. 'The one we call Don Juan?'

'Yes, that's the fellow.'

'What about him?'

'The Japs are going to pick him up. Someone has told them that he's been helping the guerillas. I don't know if it's true, but that's what they say. Your ladies' fingers (okra beans) seem rather weedy; have you put any manure on them?'

This conversation worried me a little. Fu Kee was a visitor who was always welcome, but I had never thought it wise to let him into the secret either of Josephine's existence or of my contacts with the guerillas. Were his remarks about Don Juan designed to show that he had learned my secret, or were they some sort of a trap? After some thought, I decided that my suspicions were exaggerated. Probably Fu Kee only wanted to warn Don Juan, but dared not run the risk of seeking him out himself or of sending one of his family to do so. He had come to me in the hope that I would send Don Juan a message, but had not been more explicit in order to make it clear that it was up to me to act on the hint or ignore it as I chose. At all events, I resolved to send a warning to Don Juan if I could, but to say nothing to Berani.

Though I did not know Don Juan personally, I knew him well enough by sight and by reputation, and I knew where he lived at the other end of the town. He was one of the most handsome Chinese I have ever seen, with clear complexion, fine features and the tall, well-built frame of a natural athlete. When the Japanese arrived, he had recently finished his schooling in Ipoh, where he had been successful in all forms of sport. Though his friends asserted that there was nothing vicious in his character, his good looks and athletic distinction had perhaps gone to his head, and he fancied himself as the complete lady-killer—hence his nickname.

First thing in the morning, I sent Dominic off with a bottle of medicine for Don Juan's sister, whom, fortunately, we had been treating for boils, and a message for Don Juan himself, asking him to come to No. 74 as soon as he could.

When he presented himself I drew him as inconspicuously as possible straight into a little room at the back of the house.

'Listen,' I said, 'you are wanted by the Japs and must leave Perak at once.' He said nothing, but just stared. 'Never mind how I know, but trust me. Don't waste time, but get out as quickly as you can.'

'Will Singapore do?'

'The farther the better.'

'Thank you, Mrs. K, I—'

'Never mind thanking me. Every minute may be important. Good-bye and good luck to you,' and I pushed him out, not forgetting to thrust into his hands a packet of pills for his sister which would serve as excuse for his visit.

Later I heard from Fu Kee that the Japanese had visited Don Juan's house but finding him absent had been content with questioning the members of his family and had left without giving a reason for their visit. Soon after Don Juan's departure I learned that Kim Loon, Don Juan's friend and former schoolmate, had gone to join him in Singapore. I knew that Berani had sometimes visited Kim Loon, who presumably felt himself threatened by the same danger as had forced Don Juan to flee.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WITH THE DOCTOR WORKING IN IPOH AGAIN (though it was some months before he was able to return to the house in Brewster Road) the money began to come in once more. This meant that he was able to buy drugs, officially unobtainable, which were in fact, like so many other commodities, to be had in large quantities on the black market. Certain drugs it is true were not available at all, but there was no real shortage of those most commonly needed—provided that one could pay the price asked for them. The Doctor built up an ample stock of drugs, which he kept always in Papan, having only a small quantity with him in Ipoh. Thus I was able to keep the guerillas supplied at any rate with those drugs, such as quinine, which were most in demand and most easy to administer. One day Berani brought in another guerilla who he said was in charge of medical services at H.Q. (Berani himself was under the command of an area headquarters situated in remote and much wilder country in the hills beyond Ipoh.) This man was qualified for his post by his experience of Chinese medicine and the fact that he had been for some time a dresser in a Government hospital. I showed him how to give injections, and handed over to him several hypodermic syringes and various drugs that he asked for.

As well as sending medical supplies through Berani, I also treated a number of guerillas who came for treatment to the dispensary, mixing with the ordinary patients and paying when they could. At first I did not know who they were, but after a time we came to recognise some of them by a curious greenish tinge which appeared in their complexion caused by living in the jungle among trees whose thick leaves filtered the sunlight. I never asked payment from the guerillas. Their ailments were generally easy to treat, and such as one would expect from the life they led. More than half the cases were malaria, and the rest were jungle sores, scabies and other skin diseases, and beri-beri. This last, caused by a deficiency of

vitamins, presented a problem at first, as we had no vitamin tablets. However, we learned to make a sort of paste or porridge from the "waste" or millings of polished rice, and this worked wonders.

Then one day Moru brought news of a case of a very different nature. He came with a message from Berani; a guerilla had been wounded during an engagement some three weeks earlier, and was very ill. Would I help him? I agreed to do what I could, and that evening Berani called at the house to give me further details and make the necessary arrangements.

I learned that the guerilla had received two bullet wounds in the leg. One was in the thigh, the other in the ankle. The bullets were still in the wounds, but whereas the wound in the thigh was causing no trouble, that in the ankle looked very ugly and was very painful. The guerilla was in a high fever and his companions thought that he could not live much longer without medical aid. From what Berani told me, I understood that acute septicæmia from the wound in his ankle was slowly poisoning him. Something must clearly be done at once if he was to have a chance of life, and I asked Berani where he was. The reply filled me with dismay. The wounded man was in a hut at the back of Siputeh—a small mining town like Papan, wedged against the same range of hills, but a good eight miles away.

My dismay arose from the fact that I could not see how the wretched man was to be brought to Papan, unless carried on a stretcher over rough mountain paths which might well prove too much for him. The Japanese did everything in their power to prevent the guerillas receiving aid from the populated areas. After an engagement in the hills, especially when it was reported that some of the enemy had been wounded, precautions were redoubled. All roads were watched, and check points set up at which strong detachments of police carefully scrutinised and searched all traffic. Hospitals and private doctors were reminded of the penalties attending failure to report to the authorities any patient who came with a bullet wound for treatment, or with a wound which might have been made by a bullet. These precautions undoubtedly reduced a wounded guerilla's chance of life. The guerillas themselves of course did all they could for a comrade wounded in battle, but, without experience and the necessary equipment, their efforts were dis-

tinctly crude.

What Berani told me convinced me that another victim must be scored up to the Japanese, but I had underestimated the resources of Berani and his friends. It would be easy enough, he said, to bring the man in by lorry from Siputeh. The lorry would be loaded with vegetables, and a sort of nest constructed among the baskets. The driver, I could be sure, had his own effective methods of persuading anyone who stopped him that it would be to their advantage not to examine the load too closely, and in any case the engagement in which the man had been wounded having taken place three weeks ago Japanese vigilance would certainly have relaxed in the area. It was agreed then that the lorry should bring the man over from Siputeh the following afternoon (it was less likely to arouse suspicion if it travelled by daylight) and he would then be lodged somewhere outside the town and brought in to No.74 under cover of darkness. I should be ready to receive him between seven-thirty and eight o'clock. I knew Berani well enough by now to be sure that he would carry out to the letter his side of the undertaking. All that remained for me to do was to bring the Doctor over for the case. Next day, therefore, I took the car and went into Ipoh.

At this time, the Doctor, though working every day in Ipoh, was in the habit of returning to Papan two or three evenings in the week, after the dispensary closed, and going back next morning. His visit, therefore, though it was not one of his usual days, would not arouse suspicion. I went to the dispensary and told him that he must come to Papan that night, as there was an urgent case which needed his attention.

'Very well, Bil,' he said, 'I'll come as soon as I've dealt with this last batch of patients. What sort of case is it?'

'Bullet wounds, received in a battle with the Japs.'

The news was clearly a shock to the Doctor, as well it might be, considering that death was the penalty for the crime I was asking him to commit.

'What about the risk, Bil? You know I'm thinking about the children. What will happen to them if the Japs get us?'

I explained the precautions that would be taken, and the reasons I had for confidence in Berani; the Doctor agreed to come back with me and do what he could to save the guerilla's life.

We returned to Papan shortly before dark and made everything ready for the reception of the wounded man. The departure of Mr. Ratnam for Ipoh had made available to us the two small rooms beyond the kitchen. The first of these we used as a dining-room, the second became officially Dawn's schoolroom. This room now was converted into an operating theatre. The servants had gone back to their homes in the town; every member of the household was posted to keep a lookout in all directions, and to see that no chance visitor penetrated beyond the living-room. Moru took his stand on the other side of the road and a little higher up, lounging innocently in the doorway of his house from which he could signal to Dominic at an upper window of No. 74. Soon after seven-thirty, there came a gentle tap on the back door. I opened it and admitted two Chinese, armed, I could see, with pistols, and supporting between them a third, clearly in a high fever and in a state of great exhaustion. I helped him on to the couch and prepared the anesthetic while the Doctor removed the filthy bandages and examined the wounds. One of the armed guerillas remained with his wounded companion, the second joined a couple of other guards, similarly armed, who had posted themselves discreetly outside the house.

The wound in the thigh gave no difficulty whatever. In another week it would probably have healed up completely, though the bullet remained buried in the muscle. It was simple to remove the



The last room was an operating theatre for the wounded



... who entered from the back door

bullet and dress the wound. The ankle, however, was a very different matter. The wound was highly septic and when I had cleaned it up we could see that the bullet had lacerated the tendons and shattered the smaller bone, in the midst of which it was embedded. The bullet had penetrated so far that it was quite invisible, while with the probe the Doctor could not be certain whether it was lead he was touching or a shattered fragment of bone. In a hospital, an X-ray would have been called for at this stage, but here we had to do without that invaluable aid. The Doctor hoped that my sensitive woman's touch might do the work of an X-ray and tell him the difference between bullet and bone, and handed the probe over to me. Between us, and after a good deal of prodding and tapping, we succeeded in locating the bullet, after which it was a comparatively easy matter to extract it. After a while the wounded guerilla came round, and his companions carried him away. He was to be lodged in a hut at the foot of the hills and brought daily for treatment. We cleared up the "operating theatre", removed all traces of what had taken place, and went thankfully to bed, exhausted but conscious of having done everything in our power to save a life. Next morning I took the bullets, put them in a bottle, sealed it, and buried it in the garden. Dominic helped me, and we measured the distance of the place from the gate and the brick wall of the house so that I should be able to find it again.

'Why do you want to keep them, Mrs. K?' asked Dominic.

'For a souvenir. We'll dig them up again when the British return.' I was to have cause to regret that I had not disposed of those bullets where there was no chance of their discovery.

The operation had been a complete success, but Panjang (as we nicknamed the guerilla on account of his height, which was accentuated by his emaciated condition) was still in need of the most careful attention. It was some weeks before we could be sure that he was out of danger, and even then he gained strength very slowly. Every day he was brought into Papan seated on the carrier of a bicycle; his companion answered the queries of the curious by saying that his friend was a vegetable farmer from an outlying farm, suffering from fever. Every day I dressed his wounds (or wound, rather, since the one in his thigh soon healed) and gave him an anti-splenicæmia injection. I made a point also of keeping him supplied

with the best food available—eggs, milk, butter or ghee, fruit and vegetables. We had the satisfaction of seeing him make a steady if slow recovery. At the time of my arrest six months later he was able to walk, though with a heavy limp.

Soon after this Japanese interest in Papan redoubled, and two or three times in as many days the whole population was rounded up and subjected to careful screening. Torture was the chief instrument of Japanese investigation; once they had got hold of one man who was in contact with the guerillas they used all the devilish ingenuity of which they were capable to force him to betray to them the next link in the chain, when the process started again. The guerillas realistically assumed that a man arrested by the Japanese sooner or later told all he knew, and they took their own precautions. It was the standard practice that on the arrest of anyone who had any connection with the guerillas, all those whom he might recognise or incriminate should discontinue their activities among the general public, where they were liable to arrest, and retire wholly to the jungle.

The renewed attention paid to Papan had its effect, and several Chinese lads were taken away after the various identification parades. In consequence it was arranged that men from the jungle should come for treatment only at night. As a rule, Berani brought a note (which I burned at once), some time during the day, stating the number of patients I could expect, and the nature of their complaints. The arrival of the patients themselves was announced by three sharp taps on the back door, and we learned to expect this signal at about eight p.m. There was always an armed guard with the sick men, and, as with Panjang, one would remain inside the house while the others posted themselves outside. The room at the back, where we had operated on Panjang, became a regular surgery and consulting room for the "little army", as we sometimes called the guerillas.

Of course, I tried to keep knowledge of what was going on to as limited a circle as possible; of those who visited the house (apart from Berani and the guerillas themselves) only Moru was in the secret. Dawn was a worry, since she insisted on accompanying me wherever I went and imitating me in everything. I felt that she was too young to understand the importance and risks of my work, and feared that if she knew of the guerillas' visits she might in all

innocence give them and me away by a chance remark in public. Fortunately, she was nearly always in bed and asleep by the time the guerillas arrived, but one evening, when I entered the back room to attend to the patients awaiting me, I found to my horror Dawn already there, seated on the knee of a guerilla and playing with his revolver and the ammunition which he had considerably emptied from the chamber. 'What are these for, Mummy?' came the eager question as I entered the room.

'I'll tell you all about them later. But what are you doing in here?' 'I only wanted to find out what you do here, Mummy.'

Dawn at this time was not yet six, but she seemed to have grown up a lot since our arrival in Papan. I made up my mind to take her wholly into my confidence, and knelt down beside her.

'Dawn,' I said, 'do you love me?'

'Of course I do, Mummy,' and she put her arms round my neck and kissed me.

'All those men who come here are soldiers who are sick and need medicine. They are fighting to save us from the Japs. If the Japs see them they will be shot. So they have to come at night. Nobody must know they are here. If somebody sees them come here, he might tell the Japs and these soldiers will be shot. Then Mummy will be killed too.'

'If they kill you, Mummy, I will die too.'

'If you love me, you must promise never to say a word about what you have seen here. These men are fighting for us. Whatever happens, we must never let them be killed.'

'I love you very much, Mummy. I will never tell anybody.'

'That's Mummy's brave girl. Jesus will protect you. From now on you shall always help me and be the youngest soldier of all.'

'When can I have a gun?'

'We'll have to see about that later.'

From then on I told Dawn everything, even about Josephine, and never had cause to regret my decision. She frequently came into the room when the guerillas were there and became a great favourite with all of them.

CHAPTER EIGHT

IT IS EXTRAORDINARY HOW SOON ONE IS ABLE TO adapt oneself to a new manner of existence. By this time, we all felt almost as though we had been living in Papan, and under Japanese rule, all our lives. There was plenty of hard work, and plenty of anxiety too, but one must relax sometimes and our house was always a happy and sometimes even a gay one. We soon dropped into a routine which found room for everything.

My husband worked every day in Ipoh but returned four evenings in the week to spend the night in Papan. On Tuesdays and Thursdays he would be back at five or six o'clock in the evening, on Saturdays a little earlier, and would leave for Ipoh next morning at about eight. Sundays only would see him back in time for lunch. I dealt with the bulk of the cases who came to the dispensary myself, though some insisted on seeing the Doctor. These, usually of the richer sort who demanded a qualified man (and had to pay for the privilege), he would as a rule get through before leaving for Ipoh in the mornings when he was in Papan. Cases which specially required his skill and experience would be dealt with on his return every alternate evening.

From eight a.m. on, when the dispensary began to fill up, I had plenty of medical work, and in addition there were frequently maternity cases to attend. These were mostly in the vicinity and I would go on foot, though on occasion I had to go in the car as far as Pusing, Batu Gajah, or even Ipoh. At the same time the work of the house had to go on. Every member of the household had his or her job to do; only my mother, aged and infirm, had no fixed duties.

By five p.m. the work would, with luck, be finished—though in Papan as everywhere else a doctor and a midwife could never claim to be "off duty". At this time, when the heat of the day had abated, some would set to work in the garden while others visited friends in the town or entertained guests. With money coming in from Ipoh as

well as here, we could afford to live better than most of our neighbours. Moreover, Papan is a small country town, and was not affected by the shortages of food which afflicted Ipoh as time went on. I lived, as I always have, on an exclusively vegetarian diet, but I liked to see a plentiful variety of good food on the table. Scarcely a meal went by but one visitor at least was there to share it. Moru of course was constantly in the house; other regular visitors were the "Professor" and his wife, and the Sikh teacher, Lal Singh. The "Professor" had been laboratory assistant at the Anglo-Chinese School in Ipoh, and now lived by trading on a small scale. Lal Singh worked in a Government department under the Japs. Mr. Wong, who had supplied Josephine, called in frequently; he worked as a dresser in the Batu Gajah hospital, but lived in Papan. And once a week George Matthews would cycle over from Batu Gajah to hear the news; his wife had been my schoolmate and he was one of our oldest friends. Of all the regular visitors to the house, George alone, apart from Mr. Wong, knew Josephine's secret.

It must not be thought that the table we kept was the only reason why we had so many constant visitors. Papan was a small town, and most of its inhabitants were educated, if at all, only in the vernacular; it was natural, therefore, that the few better-educated and English-speaking people should seek out one another's company, and our house proved the most suitable meeting place.

If I had received a note from Berani during the day, at about eight p.m. we would hear the three taps on the back door which indicated the arrival of our patients from the hills. Only when their complaints had been dealt with would we sit down to supper. The meal over, we would invariably gather for family prayers, after which we soon went to bed in order to wake up refreshed to the next day's labours. Barh was as a rule left to attend to Josephine himself, though if some news of particular importance was expected some or all of us might gather round him, pressing as close as possible to the earphones. After the news, Barh disconnected Josephine from her aerial, earth and power supply, and stowed her away behind some packing cases in a corner of the room. If any of us had not been present Barh would give us a summary in the morning.

Under the Japanese, every town elected a "Peace Committee" from among its citizens, to represent the people of the town in all

dealings with the authorities. If the Japanese required anything of the townspeople, they would call on the committee, which also took upon itself the duty of entertaining visiting Japanese officials, whenever it pleased them to make an appearance. Mr. Leong, the registration clerk, was secretary to the Peace Committee.

Learning that, though my husband was working in Ipoh, I was resolved to remain in Papan, Mr. Leong called on me one day and asked me to serve on the committee. Seeing that this might give me greater scope for my anti-Japanese activities while also serving to establish my "loyalty", I agreed, but on one condition. 'I am a woman,' I told Mr. Leong, 'and it would not be proper for me to entertain the Japs when they visit the town. But of course I will subscribe to the entertainment fund.'

That night I sent a message through Berani to the guerillas' H.Q. and told them what I had done, giving my reasons. In reply I received the approval of H.Q. Evidently I was trusted to act as I thought best. So outwardly I became a loyal citizen of Dai Nippon. This I found a great help to me.

One morning we were awakened early when a column of lorries loaded with police and soldiers entered the town. We learned that there was a cordon all round the town, and that no one was to enter or leave on any excuse whatever. In the meantime, while a strong party advanced into the hills to try conclusions with the guerillas, an exhaustive screening operation took place in the town.

At eleven a.m., when, though the screening was over, we had been told that the order forbidding people to enter or leave the town was still in force, I received an unexpected visitor at the dispensary. A distraught Chinese asked to see me urgently, and implored me to come to his wife, who was in difficult labour and had been bleeding since midnight. He was a poor vegetable farmer who lived about a mile from the town, near the junction on the main road.

'How did you get into the town?' I asked.

'I ran through the rubber trees at the side of the road, then crawled through the undergrowth by the Chinese cemetery. Will you come the same way?'

'Certainly not. We should both stand a very good chance of a bullet through the head. I shall go to the Japanese officer and he will let us through.'

'All we shall get will be the point of a bayonet in our stomachs.'

'I don't think so. Just leave it to me. If they question you, you must say you came into the town last night.'

I decided to take Ah Lim, one of my maidservants, with me to boil the well water, and sent her off to fetch a rickshaw while I went to Mr. Leong and asked him to give me a note in Chinese for the Japanese officer. This he did, asking on behalf of the Peace Committee that I be allowed to pass on an errand of mercy.

At the road block on the outskirts of the town I handed this letter to the officer in charge, but received in reply only an angry command to get back, delivered from behind a pointed revolver. For about ten minutes I argued with him in Malay, explaining the contents of the letter, who I was, and the nature of my work. The only result was that he got more and more angry, and made more threatening gestures with his revolver. Finally I said, 'Officer, if you don't believe me, send some of your soldiers with me to see what I do.'

This for some reason seemed to convince him. He at once calmed down and ordered a soldier to search us and my midwifery bag. Then after a gruff 'Follow me,' he marched off with us to the main road about half a mile away, where we found a further detachment of Japanese soldiers. We were permitted to pass on a few guttural words from my escort, whom I thanked politely for his help, bidding him good day in Malay. The farmer expressed surprise at the ease with which I had passed the blockade; I told him in Cantonese that God always helps the poor and sick, and that we should always seek His aid in difficulty and danger.

I arrived at the house only just in time to save the woman's life, though she lost her child. It was weary work, and I was not able to leave until after six in the evening. The blockade was still on, but I was allowed to pass without comment. The Doctor visited the patient next day, and prescribed the necessary treatment. Her husband was very poor, their home a single rented room; I refused to take any fee, though the man offered me all he had.

As I have said, Josephine was disconnected when not in use, her valves removed, and she herself concealed among packing cases in a corner of the room. One evening Barh was away in Ipoh, and I attempted to connect up Josephine when the time came to tune in to

the B.B.C. Alas! the connections I made were the wrong ones. All that issued from Josephine instead of her familiar whisper was a smell of burning and a thin trickle of smoke. On his return Barh examined her and pronounced the patient beyond hope of recovery; he performed the post-mortem and dismembered her so that Dominic and I could give her a decent burial in the family vault.

We did not waste time in mourning her loss, but set about finding a successor without delay. Mr. Wong, to whom we first applied, was very sorry, he had no other set, but George Matthews might have one. I saw George after Mass on Sunday and tackled him. He knew of several sets which were available, and were never used as there was a strong Japanese garrison in the town, and houses were frequently searched. I decided to take a very small set which belonged to Father Cordiero and was concealed in the ceiling of a schoolroom. It was small enough to be easily hidden, and Mr. Wong brought it on his bicycle to Papan when he returned from work, hidden in a basket below a layer of vegetables.

However, we were due for further disappointment. Having no short-wave range the midget could not do Josephine's work, and was useless to us. I took it back to Batu Gajah, in a basket of bananas for Father Cordiero. Then I arranged with George to pick up his own six-valve G.E.C. model, which was hidden in an out-house in Father Cordiero's garden beside the church. This I took back to Papan in the car.

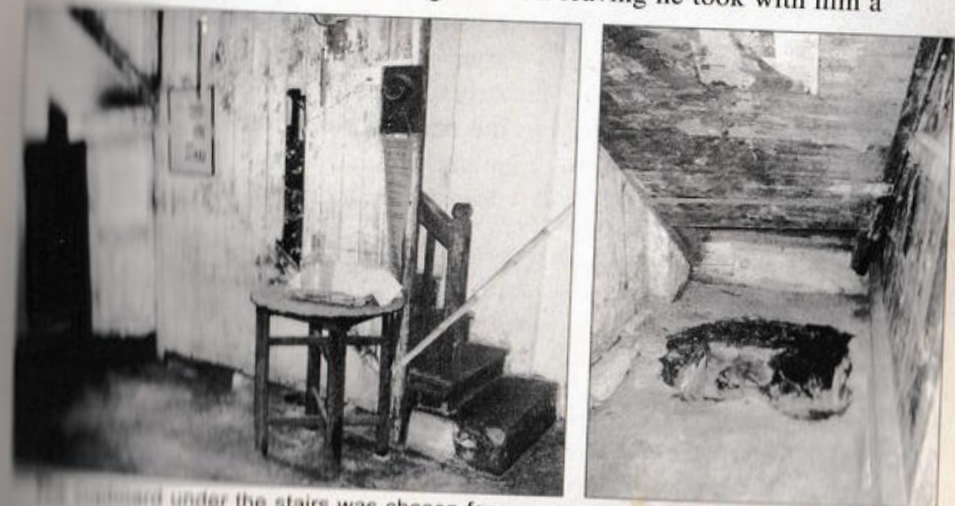
Josephine II was soon working regularly, though before long she needed a new valve, which William procured in Kuala Lumpur, a hundred and fifty miles away, where we hoped the purchase could not be traced. We then decided that she ought to have a better place of concealment when not in use, as the Japs were frequently visiting houses in Papan and searching them. So far they had left No.74 alone, but we could never tell when our turn might come.

We chose the cupboard under the stairs for Josephine's new hiding-place; it had the advantage of brick walls on three sides, which reduced the risk of any sounds from the set being heard in other parts of the house. However, this dark cupboard was just the sort of place the Japs made for when searching a house, and we decided that for safety a hole should be dug below the concrete floor. Most of the work was done by Barh. With a chisel and hammer

he laboriously chipped out a square section of the concrete, while Dawn drowned the noise by singing, loudly to the accompaniment of tin cans beaten with sticks. The hole when dug was lined with cement, and a cement slab made to cover it.

When not in use Josephine was kept in the hole under the floor with some old sacks thrown, as if carelessly, in the corner of the cupboard to conceal the slab. At the time of a broadcast Barh would lift her out and connect her to the various wires which he had cunningly fixed so that they entered the cupboard through a hole drilled in the stairs above. The aerial was led outside the house, and ran up the wall concealed behind the vertical galvanised iron drainpipe.

All went well for a time, but still Josephine's troubles were not at an end. One night there was exceptionally heavy rain, and in the morning we found Josephine standing in several inches of water. Of course she refused to function when we tried her out. Barh did what he could, but without success, and we decided to call in Raja, an Ipoh radio mechanic. Raja had long been a close friend and we felt sure we could trust him. He was working for the Japs now, and it would have probably cost him his head if his employers had discovered the purpose of his visit to Papan. But he did not hesitate, and William drove him from Ipoh in the car. After examining her, Raja told us that Josephine needed a new transformer, which he was unfortunately unable to get us. On leaving he took with him a



The cupboard under the stairs was chosen for . . .

Josephine's hiding-place

bottle of medicine labelled for his wife to provide the excuse for his journey.

We succeeded in replacing the transformer, with the help of our good friends the Catholic Brothers in Ipoh, but Josephine remained a weakly specimen and was often in need of treatment. We decided that she should have a replacement on the spot, so that we might never go without hearing the news; making inquiries through George Matthews I learned of a Philco set which we could have. This was brought to Batu Gajah in a wooden crate, labelled as medicines.

But first, before we could receive Josephine III, we had to prepare a place for her reception. A similar hole to the first was dug in the room at the back of the house where we treated the sick guerillas; this, like the other, was covered with a cement slab, and over the slab we placed a wooden couch, shaped like a great box, on which the patients lay for examination and attention. Both holes were made waterproof. In the second hole we placed Josephine II, who was now a reserve, together with spare valves in a tin. Josephine III was removed from her crate, stripped of her wooden casing and loudspeaker and lowered into the hole in the cupboard under



The second hole for Josephine

the stairs. The polished casing we burned, and buried the loud-speaker with the other parts in the garden. Josephine III needed a visit from Raja before she was quite fit; thereafter she functioned perfectly and never failed to bring us news of the outer world, without which we might well have given ourselves to despair.

CHAPTER NINE

'HAVE YOU HEARD THE LATEST RUMOUR, MRS. K?' asked Moru one evening. 'Someone told me today that Don Juan and Romeo have returned from Singapore and are wanted by the Japs.'

'Where are they now?'

'I believe they're in Ipoh.'

I did not press for any more information, nor did I say another word about the subject. I felt in a way responsible for Don Juan and his cousin and resolved to help them if I could. But I said nothing to Moru about my intention. I never really trusted anyone completely. I felt it was better that way; the Japanese were masters in the art of forcing men to tell them what they knew, but if a man knew nothing he could give nothing away.

Next day after lunch, which was as soon as I could get away from my work in Papan, I went into Ipoh with Dawn and Barh. I took a hired car, as my own was well known in Ipoh and I wanted to be as inconspicuous as possible. William was at the dispensary in Brewster Road when we got there. 'There's a note for you. It arrived this morning,' he said.

The letter was written from an address in one of the poorer quarters of the town and read as follows.

Dear Mrs. K,

We have returned from Singapore and the Japs are after us. We have to leave our room here as the landlord is suspicious and we cannot trust him. We have not dared to go out to an eating-shop for a meal. Please help us if you can.

Don Juan

'Who brought this letter, William?'

Don Juan himself. He went off again in a great hurry when he learned that you weren't here.'

'Please take the car, William, and bring both of them here at once. This is the address. Here is some money: take it with you in case they owe anything.'

When William returned I took the two young fugitives upstairs at once. 'Why didn't you stay in Singapore?' I asked Don Juan.

'You've no idea, Mrs. K, the sort of reputation Perak has down there. They seem to think we're all Communists in Perak. Romeo's brother got us jobs but we couldn't avoid meeting police officers and even Japs. They used to ask us where we came from and when we told them we were from Perak they seemed very curious to know more. We thought the Japs were getting suspicious and would try to check up with their people here. So we came back to Ipoh.'

They were both jumpy and restless, clearly under a nervous strain. 'You can't stay in Ipoh, obviously. What are you going to do?'

'We want to go back to Papan. Can you take us, Mrs. K?'

'I can, of course; but what will you do then? I don't think it's safe for you to stay in Papan. It wouldn't be fair on your families.'

'We shall go and join the people in the hills. That's the only place where we can be safe now.'

'Do you know any of the guerillas?'

From their reply I gathered that Romeo had been in contact with Berani, and that they could join the guerillas with his help. I said nothing more, but started to prepare a meal for them.

Almost at once, however, a shout from downstairs announced a visitor to see Dawn. Going to the top of the stairs I looked down and saw Kalyan Singh, an old friend and patient, but—a police sergeant in the Ipoh Detective Branch. It seemed unlikely that his visit was anything but a friendly one, yet he was a detective and there was the possibility that he was here on duty. Dawn had always been a special favourite of his.

'Come up,' I called. 'Dawn will be glad to see you. How did you know we were here?'

'A friend told me he had seen you arrive in Ipoh this afternoon and I knew that the little one must be here too. When are you coming back to Ipoh for good?'

'Not while I have such a fine vegetable garden.'

'But Papan is a very dangerous place.'

'Not for me. I harm no one. Why should anyone harm me? But here is Dawn; she will tell you all about her goat Sally.'

While Kalyan Singh was in the house, the two boys remained in a bedroom. I locked the door and told them to be ready to get away through the bathroom beyond if they heard the door being unlocked. It was an hour before the detective left and I was able to prepare the meal.

We left in the evening. Barh sat in front with the driver of the hired car, while Dawn and I sat with the boys behind. As we turned into Belfield Street, the driver drew up at a signal from another car. Turning round, 'You don't mind if I take another passenger, do you?' he said. I had to agree, though I recognised the passenger in question as Mo Lai, who had the reputation of being very thick with the Japs. She sat in front and was soon engrossed in an animated conversation with the driver. I signaled to the boys to pull their hat brims well down over their eyes and hoped for the best.

When we reached Menglembu, about three miles from Ipoh, we were waved to a stop by a police sentry, who advanced to the window of the car. 'What's the matter?' I asked.

'The orders are to examine everyone, going and coming.'

Hearing his voice, I looked again at the policeman's face and recognised P.C. Ahmad, whose broken head we had treated in the early days in Papan.

'Good evening, Ahmad. How's the head?'

'Why, it's you, Missy. I'm sorry, I didn't recognise you. My head is all right, but I'm still deaf in one ear. Are you still living in Papan?'

'Yes. Why the check-up?'

'We're supposed to be looking for two wanted men.' He glanced around the occupants of the car. 'Who are your friends?' nodding at Don Juan.

'They're patients from Papan. I brought them in to see the Doctor in Ipoh as I hadn't got the right drugs in Papan.'

'That's all right, Missy.'

He was about to wave us on when the corporal, who had been standing out of earshot, strolled up.

'Missy is an old friend of mine,' Ahmad told him; 'she and the Doctor saved my life when I got a crack on the skull in Papan. The

others are patients whom she took in to Ipoh to see the Doctor.'

'Papan is a bad place.' The corporal seemed dubious about letting us go, as though every Papan citizen should be suspected.

'If you can't trust Missy,' Ahmad assured him, 'there's no one you can trust.'

'Very well, then.' The corporal waved us on and we said good night to one another.

I did not know whether Ahmad had known that I was lying about the boys. If he had, then he had taken a big risk in allowing us to pass. I could not help thinking how readily I, and all of us, had taken to this new life in which lies were part of the foundation of our existence. I had brought up the other children to respect truth above all else. What effect would this life of lies have upon Dawn, who was just of an age to understand?

The remainder of the journey was uneventful. I did not think it wise, however, for Don Juan and Romeo to be seen in Papan, where they were well known to everyone. Nor could I take them at once to the house, as I did not know who might be there. Scribbling instructions on a sheet of paper, I told them to get out when the car stopped and hide among the rubber trees near the cemetery until it was dark. Then they were to wait in the shelter of the bamboo fence until they saw a light in the small square window at the top of the house, when they were to come to the back door. Just before we reached the cemetery I told the driver to stop as my patients wanted to return to their homes among the rubber. Having seen that they had a couple of bottles of medicine with them, I gave them a few words of instruction regarding doses for the benefit of the driver and Mo Lai, and saw them follow the path among the trees.

The rain started soon after we got back to the house. Moru was there with the Professor and Lal Singh; they were reluctant to go home as long as it was raining, and seemed prepared to make a night of it. I said that I was tired and wanted to go early to bed, so we had an early dinner. I asked Moru to close the door and windows of the dining-room as the wind blew in with chilly gusts of damp air, then I got up from the table.

'Is anyone coming from the hills tonight, Mrs. K?' Moru whispered.

'No, Moru; I have something to do in the back.'

Don Juan and Romeo would be getting thoroughly cold and soaked to the skin. I could no longer wait until all our visitors left, but they were likely to remain where they were for some time, talking over the dinner-table. I put a lamp in the window upstairs, then waited by the back door.

After what seemed a long wait I opened the back door to admit the two dripping and shivering fugitives. 'Don't make a noise,' I whispered as I hurried them into the schoolroom. 'Moru and the others are in the next room. I don't want them to know you're here. Wait a moment and I'll bring some dry clothes.'

Some of the household were in the front room with my mother; the others were still in the dining-room. I closed the door leading into the front of the house, then went upstairs. Barh gave me some clothes, then put out the lamp and closed the window. I took the dry clothes down to the schoolroom, with blankets and pillows.

'Make yourselves as comfortable as you can with these,' I said, 'but I'm afraid you'll have to wait a bit longer before I can get you a meal. Everything is in the dining-room, so we'll have to wait until the others leave. Lock the door, and don't open it unless you hear three light taps. I hope you won't have to wait long as I know you must be hungry.'

Back in the dining-room the conversation flowed inexhaustibly round the table. The Professor turned to me. 'Don Juan and Romeo are supposed to be in Ipoh,' he said. 'They are wanted by the Japs. Lal Singh and I have decided to try and find them and give them a warning.'

'That would be very good of you. Lal Singh's pass as a Government employee should be of help to you.'

I dared not tell them that they would be wasting their time, that the boys they supposed to be in Ipoh were only a few feet away from them, on the other side of the wall.

'It's getting late, Mrs. K, and you seem tired. We must be getting home.'

'Good night, Professor. Let me know if you get in touch with those two boys.'

Moru paused after the others had left. 'You look worried, Mrs. K,' he said. 'Is anything wrong?'

'Nothing wrong, Moru. I just feel tired. Good night.'

'Good night, Mrs. K.'

It was by now after ten o'clock and the whole household was in bed. I set to work and cooked a meal for the hungry boys. Then, while they slept, I washed up everything, removing all traces of my activities in the kitchen. Then I took their wet clothes and dried them over a charcoal fire and with a hot iron. At four a.m. I woke them up, gave them their dry clothes and told them what to do while they drank the coffee I had prepared for them. There was no need, I said, for them to try to get in touch with the guerillas through contacts in the town. That was not safe; there were more informers and spies about than ever. It would be better if they were never seen in the town at all.

'Follow the path which leads past the back of this house,' I told them, 'until you are clear of the town. The track forks then, and you take the right-hand branch. Carry on towards the foot of the hills until you reach a small hut beside the track. Probably you will be stopped before you come to the hut. The man you will meet we know as Berani. Tell him you come from me, and why, and ask him to send me a message that all is well.'

They seemed dumbfounded at the way in which I appeared to have everything planned for them, but I cut short their requests for an explanation. Giving them as much food as they could carry and some money, I pushed them out through the back door.

'How can we thank you, Mrs. K?'

'By doing what you're told. It's four-thirty now and you have some miles to walk. Good-bye and good luck.'

I watched them out of sight, cleared up all traces of their visit, and lay down for a rest before the household awoke. At about eight o'clock Moru came in and brought me an envelope. Inside was nothing but a small scrap of paper with the three letters pencilled on it, "S.A.B."

'Thank you, Moru. There's no reply.'

I knew that Don Juan and Romeo had reached the guerillas safely.

The three letters stood for the words *Semua ada baik*—"all is well" or "everything's all right" in the "bazaar" Malay which is the *lingua franca* of the country. They were used as a sort of code sign on all communications between the guerillas and myself, and

avoided the necessity of using names.

In the afternoon the Professor called at the house. 'We couldn't find a trace of Don Juan and Romeo in Ipoh. They have been there recently, but no one knows where they have gone. The Japs are certainly looking for them and we dared not continue our search too long.'

'Then there is nothing more you can do. You are sure the Japs are still searching for them?'

'Yes, we got that from friends in the police.'

'Then at least we know they haven't been caught.'

Next time Berani came to the house I told him that the search for Don Juan and Romeo was still on.

'Please see that they are taken deep into the hills. The Japs will certainly be looking for them in this area, where their homes are. If they are caught, it will mean the end of me.'

For some days Japanese activity in the neighbourhood increased, but nothing came of it, and things quietened down once more. But I could see that Moru had something on his mind. One day it came out.

'You don't trust me, Mrs. K.'

'Why do you say that?'

'Don Juan and Romeo.'

'That was something I could handle by myself. You know I don't like anyone to be given information which may be dangerous to someone unless it is really necessary. That is safer for all concerned. The safest secrets are those which are never shared.'

CHAPTER TEN

FOR SOME WEEKS AFTER THE FLIGHT OF DON Juan and Romeo into the hills things were quiet. Sometimes I used to think they were too quiet to be healthy, and felt that my enemies were stealthily closing in on me. But there was more work than ever, and I continued to tackle it with all the energy I could summon; it was the only thing to do. Almost every evening now a party of sick guerillas came in, and every week there seemed to be more, needing treatment for malaria, dysentery, scabies and sores of all kinds. William came over to warn me that there were rumours about me, and Moru was more explicit.

'The story I've heard is that the Japs are after a Chinese midwife who has been helping the guerillas. They're supposed to have traced her as far as Papan.'

'As long as the midwife they want is Chinese, all is well. They will not think of suspecting an Eurasian. The fact that I speak Chinese so fluently must have put them on the wrong track.'

'But they will learn the truth sooner or later, and you must not fall into their hands, Mrs. K. We ought to take precautions.'

'We cannot avoid what is to be, Moru,' and I turned the conversation into another channel.

However, I could not help thinking about what Moru had said and wondering how I could best ensure the safety of those associated with me. And a day or two later there came a letter from H.Q. Those in command, said the letter, were worried about my safety and that of my family; they thought it would not be long before the Japanese were on my trail. They suggested that I should bring the whole family and join them in the hills. Comfortable huts would be built in a safe area, and on an arranged date the whole town of Papan would be occupied by guerilla forces while a labour squad of as many as I required would help to transport all the inmates of No.74 with any stores or furniture we wanted to bring with us into the hills.

It was indeed encouraging to know what powerful and determined friends we had in the hills. What they promised I knew they would perform. The suggestion of H.Q. appealed to me very much, though I could see there were difficulties in the way. It would be a fine thing to join the anti-Japanese forces in open defiance of the hated enemy and as active allies of the British. But of course I would not take any decision in this matter without consulting my husband and the rest of the family.

When the Doctor returned at the weekend with Olga and William, I told them of H.Q.'s suggestion. We began to discuss the practicality of the scheme, and I soon saw that there were two factors which made it impossible for us to decamp into the hills in the manner proposed. The first was my mother. She was very infirm at this time and her eyesight was failing; apart from the difficulty of carrying her to the place decided on, which in order to be safe must be some miles deep among the hills, she would never have survived the hardship and discomfort of life with the guerillas. The second was the danger to the people of the town if the Japs took revenge—as they surely would—on the entire community. It was not right that we should escape to safety at the expense of our fellow-citizens. A long discussion was not necessary to convince me that the guerillas' offer must be refused, and I sent H.Q. a reply to that effect.

I realised that H.Q. would not have made such an offer without good reason, and that I must be prepared for arrest at any moment. I had long ago decided that if the worst happened and the Japanese discovered all that had been going on at No.74 no power on earth could save my life. But I must do everything I could to see that no harm came to the other members of the household, even though it meant that I should have to take sole responsibility for everything that had been done. I could not escape death, I told myself; my task should be to see that the Japanese were satisfied with taking one life. It was not difficult to make such a resolve, but I knew well that I had not, unaided, the strength to carry it through to the end. Going upstairs, I knelt before the crucifix and prayed to Him who suffered for us on the Cross to fortify my faith and give me strength. As I prayed I felt two small arms round my neck, and Dawn's voice in my ear, 'Don't cry, Mummy. I love you very much. If they take you away I shall always come too. Jesus will help us.' Such words, from

my baby daughter, so tiny, weak and fragile, gave me courage and strength. They were as a sign to me that my prayer had been heard.

At about the same time as I received the letter from H.Q. Berani was transferred to another area. He told us before he left that he was suspected and that his movements were being watched; it was no longer safe for him to remain in Papan. So Berani left, much to my regret, for he and I had always understood one another very well and I knew that he could be relied upon completely. His place was taken by a Chinese whom we did not know, though he was a local man; for some reason or other he insisted on wearing a faded football jersey with what had once been gaudy red and yellow stripes. He was scarcely ever seen without this distinctive garment, on account of which we nicknamed him "Stripes". I could not feel in Stripes the same confidence as I had felt in Berani; he seemed to be a bit of a braggart. Possibly H.Q. felt the same way about him, for he did not take over the whole of Berani's duties. He acted as courier for the local unit only and carried to them what medicines I sent up with such notes as it was necessary for me to exchange with the local commander. "Regimental" H.Q. appointed their own courier to handle contacts in Papan; he seemed a much more trustworthy agent, and I entrusted letters and money to him without misgivings. Nor was Stripes concerned with the evening's "sick parade". Another Chinese, whom we nicknamed "Blackie" on account of his dark complexion, brought the sick guerillas for treatment at eight p.m. in the evening. He seemed completely trustworthy, and preferred not to send any message in advance, which would have had to come through Stripes.

Another development at about the same time indicated increased Japanese interest in the Papan area. The detachment of police who had been stationed in the town under the British had for some reason or other been withdrawn by the Japanese, so that for over a year we had been without permanent protection or surveillance by the police. In the early months of 1943, however, the police station was occupied once more; fourteen constables and a sergeant made up the Papan force. When sick, they were supposed to go to the hospital in Batu Gajah, but this meant travelling a distance of some five miles and it was never easy for them to arrange transport. In consequence they soon began to come to me for such treatment as

was required, and to bring their families too. The Doctor saw the serious cases, and we made a point of never asking fees from them.

They would come at all hours, as duty permitted them, and this sometimes led to embarrassing situations, as when a guerilla who could not come at night received treatment under the same roof, and sometimes in the same room, as a policeman. In such a case, I would relieve the guerilla of his pistol and ammunition and lock them in the drawer of my desk while Barh or whoever else was assisting me diverted the attention of the P.C. by inquiries about his ailment. Never once did the police ask any questions about the patients who attended my dispensary; whether they suspected anything I never knew, but if they did they took care to keep their suspicions to themselves. They used to patrol the streets of the town in pairs at night, and to begin with we would keep a close look-out as eight o'clock drew near, when we might expect the three taps at the back door. But after a time we realised that though they might be standing almost ostentatiously near the front door of No.74 at about seven p.m. they invariably moved off towards the other end of the town well before eight and did not reappear for two or three hours in our neighbourhood. In time I learned that we could trust them to do on behalf of the Japanese only what was absolutely unavoidable. They usually knew when the Japanese were going to hold a screening operation in the town or make a raid in the area, and they saw that I was warned. Though obliged if they wanted to keep their heads on their shoulders to run with the hounds they made it clear that their sympathies were with the hare and that they would let her escape if they could.

There were among the guerillas independent bands who were more bandits, out for what they could get. The majority of the guerillas, however—and all with whom I came into contact—were well organised, with very rigid discipline, on a regular army model. The Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, as it was called, was dominated by the Communists, and the intention of the leaders was undoubtedly to set up a Communist State in Malaya. At this time, however, they were wise enough to keep their long-range plans to themselves. They were willing to co-operate whole-heartedly with all anti-Japanese elements in the country, regardless of political differences. They never tried to preach Communism outside their

own ranks, and we never thought of them as Communists at all, but simply as allies of Britain and America in the fight against the Axis.

The M.P.A.J.A. was organised into a number of "regiments" corresponding roughly to the States in which they had been formed. The Fifth Regiment was the Perak regiment; its headquarters was somewhere deep in the hills behind Chemor. This small mining town, some twelve miles north of Ipoh, is close to the foothills of the Main Range—the mountainous tract of jungle-covered country which is the backbone of the peninsula. Jungle tracks gave access, through these hills, to the Siamese border in the north, Kelantan and Pahang in the east, and Johore in the south. Papan was separated from regimental H.Q. by the broad, densely populated stretch of the Kinta Valley. I used to correspond with and send medicines and money to H.Q. by means of a special courier, but I never knew the route he took.

There was little contact between the rank and file of different units. Couriers kept the commanders in touch with one another, and in addition the senior officers of regimental H.Q. would occasionally make a tour of the subordinate formations. Such tours of inspection always involved lengthy and laborious journeys, and often considerable danger. It was on such a tour, when visiting a unit in the extreme south of the Kinta area, that Lai Fook (赖莱福) was captured. Lai Fook was the military commander of the Fifth Regiment, and in charge of all anti-Japanese activities in Perak, though his authority was ultimately subordinate to that of the political commander. His loss was a great blow to the guerilla organisation. He was known to be a man of great courage and determination, but the Japanese methods of questioning had often enough succeeded in breaking the strongest wills, and no one could be sure that Lai Fook would be able to hold out against them. Soon after his capture I was asked by the local guerilla unit to find out where "the Captain", as he was called for security reasons, was imprisoned. I made several inquiries but had learnt nothing before I shared his fate myself. If I had been able to provide the necessary information I believe the guerillas would have staged an attack on the largest possible scale with the object of rescuing him.

The guerillas in the immediate vicinity of Papan were organised into a unit which was a component of the Fifth Regiment and subor-

dinate to regimental H.Q. It may most conveniently be referred to as a company. The strength of the Papan company was perhaps a hundred, but this number varied a good deal from time to time. A number of agents maintained contact between the population of Papan and the surrounding area and the company in the hills; they collected information and contributions in the shape of money, food and other supplies. Stripes and Blackie, who visited No.74, were only two of this number; some of the others we knew by sight or reputation, though we had no dealings with them.

Company H.Q. was some miles deep in the hills behind Papan. A winding track led up to it from the town itself, and along the track, at intervals of perhaps three miles, were two or three huts, at each of which a courier or perhaps a small detachment was stationed. These served as stages on the route between the company and the town. The first hut was only a couple of miles from the town; it was to this that I had directed Don Juan and Romeo. In fact there were two or three huts at this point, and it was actually a small camp. It was used not only by the agents who maintained liaison with the town but also by the sick guerillas who had to come in to me for treatment. So it sometimes accommodated quite a number.

A number of letters passed between me and the commander of the Papan company, but I never met him until June 1943, when he went down with a severe attack of malaria and came to regularly for treatment. Almost every patient who came in from the hills used to get a cup of hot tea and a few biscuits before he returned. Chen Yen (陈彦) would always insist on seeing that the others were treated before himself, so I used to invite him to stay on when the others had left and share a meal with us. This gave me an opportunity to talk over



Chen Yen: superior intelligence and ability

many things, and I got to know Chen Yen pretty well. He was a young man—not more than twenty-one at this time—and with considerable charm. He was not one of the “hard core” of convinced Communists, and had been given his command rather by reason of his superior intelligence and ability than for his political orthodoxy. His father, who owned a number of goldsmiths’ shops, had given him a good education of the traditional Chinese type; he spoke little English but was a considerable Mandarin scholar. After leaving school, he had become a teacher in Batu Gajah, and had joined the guerillas as a patriotic Chinese to fight the enemies of his country. I had great respect for Chen Yen.

One evening, when Chen Yen was convalescent, Sun Kow was brought in dangerously ill with a very high temperature. I knew Sun Kow, because he had been in several times for minor ailments. His rashness amounted to folly; he would parade the streets of Papan, even under the noses of visiting Japanese officers, his trousers pocket bulging with what, to us, was too obviously a large revolver. Tonight he was clearly in a very bad way. I gave him an injection of quinine and watched over him for several hours, doing everything I could to bring down his temperature. A second quinine injection was necessary before I could be sure that he was, for the moment, out of danger. I told Blackie to let him sleep as much as possible and bring him back the following evening for treatment. In the past Sun Kow had always accepted what I had to give him in the most casual and offhand manner; it therefore surprised me a good deal tonight when, in spite of his very exhausted state, he wished me good night and thanked me most earnestly and emphatically for what I had done. I commented to Moru on this abnormal behaviour, and we agreed that perhaps Sun Kow had been shaken by the realisation that he had been very close to death at the height of his fever.

The very next day, without our having received any warning from our friends in the police, the Japanese came through the town in some force and deployed in the open country beyond. It was just light when we saw them moving off; the operation had clearly been planned to start at dawn. It was not long before we heard firing from the area where the camp was situated at the first stage on the route to company H.Q. I knew, from the number of guerillas we had treated in the last few days, that there must be a large number of sick and

convalescent concentrated there, and was apprehensive for their safety, but there was nothing I could do until the Japanese retired.

Round about midday the lorries again rumbled through the town. I was relieved to see, as they passed loaded with troops and police, no sign of any prisoners among them. After a discreet interval I sent a message through Moru to the effect that the coast was clear and that I was ready to treat any wounds. Not until about five-thirty did a patient appear, and then it was none other than the company commander, Chen Yen himself. He limped in supported by another guerilla, and I examined his wound. It was not a serious one, but needed the Doctor’s attention. I cleaned the wound, and while we waited for the Doctor, who was due to return from Ipoh that evening, Chen Yen told me what had happened.

Their sentries had given them warning of the arrival of the Japanese, who seemed to be making straight for the camp as if they already knew its location. Chen Yen had decided that there were not enough fit men to hold off the Japs and help the really sick ones to safety too, so he had given the order to scatter. Sun Kow was in a deep sleep, and Chen Yen had himself dragged him into the cover of thick secondary jungle which came right up to the edge of the camp. They had crawled painfully along a narrow track made by wild pig through the dense undergrowth. The Japs, having arrived at the camp to find it deserted, had sprayed all available cover with their tommy-guns, and bullets tore through the leaves and branches above the heads of the fugitives. Chen Yen was leading, trying to make the way easier for his companion. Sun Kow, however, must have found crawling too exhausting for him and in a place where the height of over-arching branches permitted it, had risen to his feet in order to catch up with his leader. Chen Yen had turned round to see how Sun Kow was faring. At the same moment he had felt a heavy blow on his left knee, and had seen the other topple forward and lie motionless. The bullets had caught him clean in the back of the head and killed him instantaneously. Chen Yen paused to take the revolver from Sun Kow’s pocket and to see that there were no papers on the body. Then, on, he had found his way barred by a party of police; in spite of his wound, he plunged into a mining pool and swam across without the Japanese spotting him.

‘Poor Sun Kow,’ I said. ‘Did the Japs capture anybody or any

papers?'

'All the others escaped, and I made sure that no papers were left behind in the camp. I took everything with me; they're a bit wet, but quite safe.'

'Well done!'

Chen Yen's wound had been caused, probably, by a bullet which, ricocheting from the trunk of a tree or a boulder, had spent its force. It had struck the knee but had been deflected by the bone, without shattering it. The Doctor made sure that nothing was fractured, and I bound up the wound. Chen Yen stayed until late at night before we would let him go.

During the next couple of weeks, the Japs made several raids into the foothill area beyond the town. We never heard any firing, however, so assumed that the guerillas had altered their dispositions and would not be caught in the same way again. About the middle of July, Chen Yen, who was by now fully recovered both of his wound and of his malaria, called in after the evening's "sick parade". He seemed worried and depressed, which was unusual for him; Japanese operations in the area were, he said, making things increasingly difficult for his company to maintain its contacts in the Papan area. He urged me to change my mind and to leave for the hills with my family.

'I can't, Chen Yen,' I said. 'You know my reasons. But don't be afraid. Even if the Japs do catch me, I will never give away you and your men.'

'I don't believe you will, Mother' (this was how the guerillas habitually addressed me), 'but the tortures are horrible, and we want to save you from them if we can.'

'One must be tested to be trusted. But do not fear for me. Look after yourself and your company. Your time will come when the Japanese are to be driven out of Malaya, and you must save yourselves for the great day. I think it will be best if you do not come here again, unless it is very urgent.'

He said nothing for a time, but took Dawn on his knees and stroked her curls. After several minutes, in which he appeared sunk in reflection, he said, 'We are alive one day but may be dead the next.'

'Yes, but if we die to win the freedom that others may enjoy,

there is comfort in that.'

He left soon after, and I did not see him again until after the Liberation.

On the evening of the next day I was in the kitchen. Though it was little after seven p.m. it was already quite dark as the sky was heavily overcast. There was no reason to expect any patients from the hills just yet, but I suppose my ears were alert in expectation of the three knocks on the door. A slight sound outside made me think that perhaps our visitors were early, and I called to Barh to join me in the "schoolroom". Just then there was a loud crash outside, as if some heavy body had blundered into the palm-leaf fence of the garden.

'Open the door and have a look outside, Barh.'

As soon as Barh opened the door, a group of heavily armed men stepped forward from the darkness outside and grasped him tightly by the arms. 'What do you want with me?' he asked, in a startled voice. At the sound of the English words, they released him, as if they had made a mistake. 'Someone is trying to frame Doctor K,' said one. 'They say he has been treating the guerillas, so we have come to make sure there's nothing in the story.' As usual, I was dressed in black, and they did not notice me standing in the background. At these words, however, I stepped forward. 'The Doctor lives in Ipoh,' I said; 'I'm here alone. What do you want?'

'We've come from the hills, and need treatment,' said one in a fatuous attempt to redeem their blunder.

'I don't know what you're talking about.'

Six or eight men pushed their way into the yard, leaving two of their number to watch the door. I saw that there were no Japanese among them; all were special constables recruited locally. All held revolvers which they pointed at me, rather nervously I thought; one had a tommy-gun. They were standing as if unable to decide what to do next when Dawn came out into the yard too. She had expected to see her friends from the hills, but realised that something was wrong and said nothing.

'Take those ugly weapons away,' I said. 'You'll frighten the child.'

'We want to search your house.'

'Go ahead,' and I led the way in, Dawn clinging to my skirt.

The other members of the household stared in horror when they saw the party following me, but said nothing. I did my best to appear as though nothing was wrong. One of the visitors walked up to the front door and closed it. 'No one is to use this door,' he said, then joined the others as they went through every room in the house. The time was now seven forty-five; unless I could warn them beforehand the sick guerillas would walk straight into the trap. There were armed men at the back door, but the front door was unguarded and none of the raiders had remained to watch me. Stooping down as if to smooth her long curls, I whispered urgently in Dawn's ear. 'Run quickly over to Moru, darling, but don't let anyone see you. Give him this message: "Mother surrounded. Send back patients but don't try to help. S.A.B." Have you got that? Go now, and God bless you.' The dispensary was not lighted so it was dark by the door. I stood with my back to the door, cautiously pulled the wooden bolt behind me, and opened the door just enough for Dawn to slip through, shutting and locking it again at once. No one was paying any attention to me, so I turned round, lifted the picture of the Sacred Heart which had hung on the door since our early days in Papan and peered out. My heart beating so violently that I almost thought the sound must echo round the whole house and betray my agitation, I saw my daughter emerge cautiously from the shadow thrown by the porch and mingle unnoticed with the people who strolled unconcerned in the road. At this time Moru was always on watch for strangers from the doorway of his house across the street; I saw Dawn speak to him, then return across the road while Moru walked off trying not to appear in too much of a hurry. A moment later I opened the door in the same way to let in my darling once more. 'Well done,' I whispered, and silently offered a prayer of thanksgiving for her mission safely accomplished. The whole errand had taken little more than two minutes, and no one had noticed anything.

Though they turned the whole house upside down, the police party found nothing and left, looking rather crestfallen, at about nine o'clock. The darkness of the night had spoiled a well-laid plan. Normally there would have been plenty of light to enable them to take up their positions quietly, and they would have seized the guerillas coming for treatment before we had any knowledge of

their presence. The darkness which had caused one man to blunder into the palm-leaf fence had given us warning, and had perhaps saved the lives of the whole household.

Early next morning Stripes arrived at the house looking extremely worried. 'Thank God you are still alive,' he said. 'It is all my fault. They got your letter.'

'What are you talking about, Stripes? Sit down and tell me everything.'

'I had a letter for you from company H.Q., also that bottle of medicine you gave me for Fatty. I spent the night in a new hut near the track—not in the camp which was raided before. Someone must have led the Japs to it. I only just managed to escape, but I left the letter and the medicine in the hut. All day I was trying to get here and warn you, but they had patrols everywhere and I had to lie low.'

'Well, it can't be helped. They raided the house last night but bungled everything and went away empty-handed. Tell H.Q. what has happened and warn everyone to keep away from Papan. I have a parcel of medicines ready for you, and here is some extra quinine. Take all this, and don't return here; it won't be safe any longer. Good-bye, Stripes, and good luck.'

He said nothing, but went off looking the picture of dejection.

An hour or so later Moru came in, looking pale and excited. 'Stripes has told me what has happened. It is terrible. What shall we do?'

'You must see that Blackie is warned not to come here again, though I expect Stripes will have done that. Anyway, send word to regimental H.Q. in Chemor, and don't let their courier come here again.'

'What about you, Mrs. K?'

'I must wait here and see what happens. To do anything else would endanger the whole family. Where did you meet the sick parade last night, Moru?'

'Just as they were crossing the bridge into the town.'

'You did well. I wish I knew what was in that letter Stripes lost, but it would be madness to get them to send a copy now. I must just take whatever comes and pray for the best.'

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE DOCTOR RETURNED AS USUAL AT THE WEEK-END and I told him everything that had happened. He realised as well as I did how close was the danger that threatened.

'What are you going to do, Bil?' he asked.

'What can I do? I must just carry on as before and face what comes. If I were to try to escape it would only mean ruin for those left behind. I went into this with my eyes open, and I must take the consequences.'

My husband said nothing, but the look of misery and anxiety on his face made me feel wretched at the thought of the pain I caused him.

I expected a raid on the house at any time, and we refrained from listening to Josephine. In some ways this deprivation was the hardest of all to bear. I sent messages to George Matthews and Mr. Wong asking them not to come for news, as Josephine was under repair. I did not want them to be involved if it could be avoided.

Days passed, but still nothing happened. The suspense became more and more difficult to bear, but I did my best to carry on as usual, treating the patients who came to the dispensary as if nothing was wrong. I suppose that the Japs were not satisfied with the evidence they already had against me and wanted to catch me red-handed, but the guerillas had received my warning and there were no more knocks after dark at the back door. It was almost a fortnight before there was any further indication that the Japs were interested in my existence; on the evening of the 29th July we received a visit from a Chinese police inspector from Ipoh.

Inspector Lim had been known to us for some time, though we had never been friends. He was employed in the detective branch of the police—a branch which was known under the Japanese as the Toko. He asked for my husband, and when I told him that the Doctor usually returned at about five-thirty or six o'clock, he started

to make a perfunctory search of the house, as if to fill in the time. He commented on the large amount of rice I had stored in sacks upstairs, and on Dawn's Chinese primers. 'It is the preliminary to learning Japanese,' I explained when he remarked on the latter, and he made no reply to this rather improbable explanation. It was soon obvious that he was not particularly interested in the outcome of his search, and I had little anxiety on Josephine's behalf. After a while he looked at his watch and said, 'It's already past six; is the Doctor always as late as this?'

'Not always, but he is often delayed; he will almost certainly be back before dark.'

'I cannot wait so long. Please tell him to call at the Toko office in the morning, at ten o'clock. The Superintendent wants to speak to him,' and he drove off in his car.

It was nearly seven o'clock before the Doctor returned from Ipoh, and I gave him the message. We were both bewildered, first by the apparent inactivity of the Japs and next by this seemingly courteous request that the Doctor call at the Toko office. 'He must simply want to ask me a few questions,' said my husband, and we tried to hope for the best. I scarcely slept that night.

In the morning, the Doctor said good-byes all round as usual before leaving for Ipoh with Olga and William. We tried to act as though nothing out of the ordinary was to be apprehended, but I saw the tears in his eyes as he lifted Dawn in his arms and kissed her.

'Listen, Ziew,' I said, 'whatever happens, please say that you spend nearly all your time in Ipoh, and know nothing of what goes on in Papan. Promise me you'll stick to this, and leave the rest to me. Cheer up, and God bless you.'

Since the raid on the house on the night of the 16th July, I had forbidden the Malay drivers, for their own sakes, to come to Papan; the Doctor had therefore Ah Kow, a local Chinese who sometimes did odd jobs for us, to drive the car.

I spent the morning as usual, treating the patients who visited the dispensary, but with only half my mind on the job. At about midday Ah Kow returned. 'Missy,' he called out, even before he had stopped the car outside the front door. 'Missy, Doctor's in the lock-up!'

The news was like a physical shock to me. I was so sure that it

was me that the Japanese were primarily interested in that I had scarcely contemplated the possibility of the Doctor's arrest. My mother began to cry, and Dawn joined in; the others were aghast and said nothing. 'Ah Kow,' I said, 'please drive me into Ipoh at once. I will take Dawn with me. You others please stay here. I must try to see the Doctor, and I'll bring Olga back with me.'

I went first to the dispensary in Brewster Road, where Hanif met me. 'Good afternoon, Missy,' he said; 'this is terrible. Why should they lock the Doctor up? Doctor Lye is here; I asked him to see the patients when I heard that Dr. K had been detained.'

'Thank you, Hanif. We must trust in God.'

After making arrangements for our regular patients to go to Doctor Lye while my husband was away, I went to find out from friends in the police what had happened and whether anything could be done. Mr. Chin had a son who worked as a clerk in the police office; from him and others I learned what had taken place.

The Doctor had called, as requested, at the Toko office at ten o'clock. He had been kept waiting for over an hour, then led into the office of the Toko chief. The Japanese had asked him his name, then, without any warning, had slapped him hard on both cheeks and ordered a constable to lock him up. The Doctor had not even had time to ask what was the charge on which he was being detained before he was hustled from the room. The next moment he had found himself locked up in the Toko cells adjoining the office building.

We had very many friends in Ipoh, and they had not been slow in hearing of the Doctor's arrest and doing what they could to help him. Although they included some of the most respected citizens of the town, men whose word weighed even with the Japanese, the police authorities would not pay the slightest attention to their requests in this matter. Not only was the Doctor refused bail; his friends were not even informed on what charge he was being held, and nobody was allowed to visit him.

I wanted to visit the Toko office myself and demand to see my husband, but my friends warned me that it would be useless, and might actually do harm. I contented myself with seeing that arrangements were made to have extra food supplied to the Doctor from outside the lock-up and that he received some warm clothing. I then

returned to Papan, my heart heavy with foreboding.

The news had already spread in Papan, and on my return I was surrounded by sympathisers and questioners. 'What had the Doctor been arrested for? Had he been helping the guerillas?' To all these queries I had only one reply, 'I don't know.' Kind Mr. Leong, secretary of the Peace Committee, came up to me in great agitation. 'There must be some mistake,' he said. 'What could the Doctor have done? The committee will write to the Japs and vouch for his good character. You can rely on us to do our best to get the Doctor released.' I later heard that Mr. Leong was as good as his word—but of course his efforts were of no avail.

The Doctor's arrest made me feel sure that my own would not be long delayed. There was plenty to do. Josephine III (the Philco) we left in her vault below the floor of the cupboard under the stairs; Barh put the concrete cover over the hole and cemented it in place. The cupboard was dark and we hoped that the marks of new cement would not be noticed if the house were searched. Moru agreed to take away Josephine II (the G.E.C.) and dispose of her. The bulk of our drugs had always been kept in Papan, so I went through the whole stock setting aside those drugs which were most difficult to obtain and which would be of most use to the guerillas. In the morning I handed over these supplies to Moru. The bulky package contained large quantities of quinine in various forms, made up for both taking orally and injecting. There were also several boxes of M. & B. 693 tablets, iodine, sulphur ointment, Epsom salts and other medicines, with lint, cotton wool and bandages. I included also a dispensing scale, suturing needles with catgut, silk and horsehair sutures, and a pocket case of surgical instruments. 'You must see that these get to the guerillas as soon as possible; don't let them remain in your house a moment longer than you have to.'

After lunch I went into Ipoh to see that all was well with the arrangements for supplying food to the Doctor in the lock-up, and to gather what news I could. While I was in the house at Brewster Road Annie Chew called. It was she who had insisted on providing meals for the Doctor and arranging to have them taken into the cells. Now she brought me a message from Mr. Chin's son in the police office. 'You are advised to settle your affairs as you will soon be arrested yourself.'

'Thank you, Annie,' I said. 'Will you please keep an eye on my children while I am away, and look after them if I don't come back.'

'Of course I will, Mrs. K,' she replied. 'It is the least I can do, seeing what you and the Doctor have done for me and my family. Don't worry; you can rely on me.'

'God bless you, Annie.'

On my return I learned that a party of special constables had arrived at the house with a lorry and taken away all the surplus rice and salt, leaving only our official ration for the month. However, they had not touched the large store of tinned provisions and sugar which I had accumulated. Moru, I learned, had taken away Josephine II, with her spare valves and earphones. There was now nothing for me to do but to carry on with my work as best I could, and I distributed a good deal of the food which had been left in the house among the poorer patients and some of the police constables.

In the evening of the 1st August, Moru called with a message to the effect that Romeo was very sick with fever and seemed near death.

'He has not had enough quinine,' I said. 'He had his last injection a fortnight ago, and of course has not been here since the raid.'

I was about to give Moru instructions about the doses he should be given when the corporal from the police station came in.

'You're wanted on the telephone, Missy,' he said.

'Thank you, I'll come at once.'

'Is that Mrs. Kathigasu?'

'Speaking.'

'This is the Toko office. Will you please come into Ipoh at once, and report to the Central Police Station?'

'No. If you want me, you must come and fetch me. I have just returned from a midwifery case and need a bath and my dinner. I shall expect you at eight o'clock.'

'It is only five o'clock now. You can't need three hours.'

'Don't worry, I shan't try to escape when you have my husband as hostage. I shall be waiting for your escort at eight o'clock,' and I rang off. The corporal tried to detain me at the police station on the grounds that I was under arrest, but I refused to listen to his argument and walked home.

After my bath I dressed and packed a change of clothes into a leather attaché case, along with some small personal belongings. Then I sat down to a good meal—I could not tell when the next one would be.

During the meal we discussed some practical details concerned with the future. I insisted that all should claim complete ignorance of my activities, and particularly of my contacts with the guerillas. When questioned they were to say that I did not allow anyone to interfere in my affairs; whom I treated at the dispensary, and when, were entirely my own business. I emphasised that nothing they could say or do could save me, and that to avoid unnecessary suffering they must allow me to take full and complete responsibility. I asked everyone to refrain from working for the Japs unless physically compelled to do so; above all, Dawn should never attend a Nippon-Go school.

We agreed that Olga should remain for the time being in Papan, and keep on the lease of No. 74, while my mother should move to Ipoh with Dawn. I brought out a box containing some pieces of jewellery of little value, and \$3,500 in British Government notes; these I had put aside when patients used them to pay their fees and saved them, using the Japanese notes for ordinary purchases. This box I handed over to Olga, to be kept in Papan, warning her not to try to make use of the British notes, but to save them for the Liberation; she also took charge of my marriage certificate and other important papers. Olga was to stay in Papan and carry on for as long as possible with my work on behalf of the very poor and destitute; once our stock of Japanese money was finished she was to sell the car and what portions of land we had acquired and go to live with her grandmother in Ipoh.

Mr. Weaver agreed to see William in the morning and tell him of my arrest. After some discussion, we decided that Moru should go and join the guerillas in the hills; if the Japanese ever found out how much he knew they would certainly torture him until he told all or died. Then I asked him what he had done with Josephine II.

'I am going to destroy her,' he said.

'Haven't you done so already? Please don't put it off any longer. Think of the risk to your family if it is found in your house.'

News of my arrest had spread through the town, and, though it

was little after seven o'clock, a large and sympathetic crowd had assembled outside the house. Among the people were several patients whose course of treatment would be interrupted by my arrest; to some of these I gave the necessary drugs, and instructions how to complete the cure for themselves. I noticed Romeo's sisters, and was able to speak to them without being overheard. 'Your brother is very ill,' I said, 'but all he needs is quinine. See that he gets these tubes of tablets; they will save his life. And here is some money, which may be of use to him.'

Moru came up to me and drew me urgently aside. 'A message from Chen Yen,' he said. 'He has heard of your arrest and has mobilised the entire company. He wants to ambush your escort and rescue you.'

I was extremely touched that the guerillas should be willing to risk their lives for me in this fashion. But what was the use? If I had wanted to escape from the Japs I could have joined the guerillas in the hills weeks ago, and without causing any bloodshed. But my escape now, and in such a fashion, would undoubtedly call down upon my family and fellow-citizens the redoubled fury of the Japs. Moreover, my husband was already in the hands of the Japs, held as a hostage for me.

'Tell Chen Yen not to attack on any account. I will not try to save my own life at the expense of others'. Tell them not to worry; I will never give them away.'

It was not yet eight o'clock when two of my friends, the constables, came from the police station. They clearly disliked the task they had to do, and apologised sincerely for the necessity. I was to wait at the police station for the escort from Ipoh, which was expected at any minute.

Now came the hardest task of all—the parting with my loved ones, whom I might never see again. I said goodbye first to my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Weaver, and their boys; Moru had already gone to deliver my message to the guerillas. Then I turned to my mother and my children; they clung to me as if they would never let me go. We were all in tears, as were many of the crowd outside. I took off my wedding ring and handed it to my mother, asking her to keep it for me. Taking Dawn in my arms, I whispered my message for her alone. 'Be brave, my darling. If you love me, you

must never tell what you know.' She understood my meaning and replied through her tears, 'I love you very much, Mummy. I will never tell.'

One last kiss all round, and I forced myself to part from those dearest to me. Drying my tears, I turned to the policemen, who were themselves almost overcome with emotion at the scene. 'I am ready now. Let us go.'

As I moved away, the outburst of sobs and cries behind me almost made me falter in my pace. But I stepped out, the two policemen following me, and seemed to acquire an access of strength. The cries grew faint behind me, and I found myself contemplating the future, for the moment without fear or foreboding. I actually looked forward with a sense of relief to the prospect of sharing the sufferings of my husband and facing the worst that the future might bring.

I arrived at the police station to find that the escort from Ipoh had not yet arrived. An air of constraint and embarrassment reigned, and I understood the distress of my friends in the police at the unpleasant task they had to perform. I was given a chair, and sat, composing my thoughts, while I waited for the escort. It was nine-thirty before they finally turned up, and I had been waiting an hour and a half. There were ten men, armed with revolvers and tommy-guns, packed into an enormous tourer with the hood down. It gave me a certain satisfaction to see what a powerful escort the Japanese considered necessary for the task of arresting one frail woman, and my satisfaction increased, for I could not help noticing how extremely nervous they all were, fingering their weapons all the time, and starting at the slightest sound. I understood then why the Toko office had insisted on the Doctor coming to them, and why they had been so anxious that I should drive into Ipoh to give myself up. Papan to them was enemy territory, where they might expect attack at any time.

The escort was in the charge of a police N.C.O. 'Are you Mrs. Kathigasu, wife of Doctor Kathigasu?' he asked.

'You know quite well I am.'

'We have been ordered to arrest you and take you into Ipoh. But first we must search you.'

'Don't you dare touch me. I will turn out my pockets and empty

my case for your examination.'

'Don't be rude. You must speak with respect.'

I made no reply, but allowed them to carry out their inspection of my personal belongings. This over, one of the number tentatively produced a pair of handcuffs, but the leader waved him away. 'Come along,' he said, and we moved out to the car. As we did so, two figures in black turned into the main road from a side road a little distance away. At once every pistol was out, and tommy-guns were brought to the ready. 'Who are they?'

'Only the *Jaikidans*. You're not afraid of your own night-watchmen, are you?'

In the car I was made to sit next to the driver and another man who kept me covered all the time with his pistol. The rest piled in behind, and two stood on the running-boards of the car. The driver pressed the self-starter, but nothing happened. After a fruitless search for the handle they all got out to push; I was asked to get out and help. 'Certainly not,' I said, 'I'm your prisoner, not a coolie.' So I sat in the car while the escort toiled to get the heavy car into motion. I could not help thinking that one word to Chen Yen through Moru would have meant the end of this nervous and incompetent escort.

In time we arrived in Ipoh, and I could sense the relief of the escort at having escaped safely from the territory of the guerillas. The car took me to the Toko office, adjoining the Central Police Station. My attaché case was examined and taken from me. 'Prisoners are not allowed personal belongings. We will keep them for you.' I never saw the case or its contents again. When I asked to be allowed to retain essential articles of toilet I was answered with vulgar jeers and obscenities. Before leaving Papan I had put on a suede jacket, as the night was cold. Now I was told to give this up, and when I refused attempts were made to pull it from my back. 'You shan't have my coat,' I said, and held it firmly round my shoulders. The attempt was abandoned, and I was marched across to the Central Police Station.

The corporal on duty was busily writing when I was led into the charge room, and refused to look up until he had finished. Then he gave a start of recognition and sprang to his feet. '*Tabek*, Missy. I didn't know it was you. Please sit down.' He pushed a chair towards

me, but I refused the offer, while he glanced at the paper which my escort had brought from the Toko office. With a sigh he took a key from the wall. 'Come, Missy. I'm afraid I have to lock you up.'

'Carry on, Corporal. Duty is duty.'

He unlocked an iron-barred door, and I found myself in a small square courtyard, paved with concrete and open to the sky. Around three sides of the courtyard was a verandah, and the cells opened on to this. To the right a corridor led away from the courtyard, with cells facing one another across it. The women's cell, to which the corporal now led me, was at the far corner of the block. He opened the barred door, and a putrid, nauseating smell greeted me. The cell was pitch dark, but I could hear cries and groans. I stepped back, refusing to enter this noisome hole. 'Please, Corporal, let me sleep in the corridor outside the cell.'

'That is not allowed, Missy.'

'But you are in charge.'

He hesitated for a moment. 'Very well,' he said; 'but you must go inside first thing in the morning. Wait here.'

He came back with a couple of auxiliary policemen who bore with them a long bench, pillows, a blanket and a cup of steaming coffee. 'Drink this, Missy, while we arrange your bed. Is there anything else you want?'

'Yes, you can do something for me. The Doctor is in the Toko lock-up. Please see him and tell him I am here.'

The corporal nodded and walked away. I fell on my knees to pray, and it was long before I lay down on the improvised bed to sleep.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE FEDERATION POLICE WHICH MAINTAINED LAW and order under the Japanese was very much the same force as it had been under British. Only the very highest ranks had been filled by Japanese officers; the remainder of the vacancies created by the departure of the British officers had been filled by promotion from below. The rank and file consisted as before mainly of Malays, and Indians from the Punjab; a small number of Chinese were employed, mostly in the detective branch, now known as the Toko. The police had, in conjunction with the Japanese military forces, the formidable task of suppressing all resistance to the Japanese throughout the country. This had made necessary the expansion of the force by the recruiting of an auxiliary police force or special constabulary, drawn from men of all races who were willing to serve the Japs for the meagre pay offered—and whatever they could pick up “on the side”. In addition to the very large regular and auxiliary police force there was the military police, the dreaded *Kempetei*. Though small in numbers, the military police was all-powerful. All specially picked and highly trained men, they were less concerned with the discipline of the Japanese armed forces, as the military police of the British had been, than with the general direction of the fight against the anti-Japanese forces wherever they might be found. Everyone, Malayan or Japanese, from the Military Governor downwards, had cause to fear the *Kempetei*, which was in fact the Japanese equivalent of the German Gestapo. Most of the routine work against the anti-Japanese elements was done by the ordinary police, but their zeal, which might otherwise have flagged, was kept bright by fear of the *Kempetei*. The *Kempetei* might decide at any time to take over from the police the handling of a certain case, and would not fail to investigate the way in which it had been previously handled. So the police, though often in sympathy with their victims, dared not, if they valued their lives, give their sympathy practical

expression, unless there was no danger of the Japs finding out. We had been well known in Ipoh for many years, and had had many friends and patients among all ranks of the force. Probably there was not a policeman in Ipoh at the time of our arrest who did not know me and the Doctor well, at least by reputation. There were a few who seemed glad to see the state to which we were reduced and took pleasure in ill-treating us, but these were a negligible minority compared to the rest who were our friends and sincerely wished us well. These men went out of their way to help us and to ease the burden of imprisonment for us. In helping us, even in apparently trivial ways, many of them ran the risk of severe beatings, torture and even death. The Japanese had no mercy on “traitors” within the police force. The wonder is, not that the local police did not help us more; but that they did so much—the more so since it was known that the *Kempetei* was watching our case with interest.

In the police lock-up, therefore, I found myself among friends—but friends who dared not show their good will too openly, lest it reach the notice of the Japanese. There were of course spies and informers among the police themselves. So my good friend the corporal made sure that I was safely locked inside the cell well before there was any possibility of a visit from some Japanese officer.

At six o'clock in the morning the prisoners were wakened to wash and to tidy their cells. The corporal woke me himself and, as he locked me into the cell, whispered to me, ‘The Doctor’s all right. He was very worried, but I told him I’d keep an eye on you myself. Don’t let anyone know about your bed last night.’

‘Thank you, Corporal.’

The cell in which I found myself imprisoned measured perhaps ten feet square. Half the room was taken up by a low wooden platform on which the prisoners slept. A door in the back led to a small enclosure where was a bucket latrine and a cistern with an automatic pump, but no tap for drinking-water. There were no other furnishings and the place was indescribably filthy. The stench which made me recoil yesterday seemed stronger than ever this morning and I found it difficult not to keep my handkerchief permanently before my nose. I soon found the cause of this.

There were two occupants of the cell besides myself. One was a

Chinese girl, about fourteen years of age, who, she said, had been arrested when walking along the road two or three days before. She told me that she had no connection with the guerillas and that she knew no possible reason for her arrest. She was very unhappy as her parents did not even know where she was, but she thought she would be released today. The other was a rather older girl, lying on the wooden platform, and moaning from time to time in what seemed a feverish and uneasy sleep. 'Who is she?' I asked the younger. 'She seems ill.'

'I don't know. She has been terribly beaten, but she never says a word.'

I was anxious to do what I could for her, but did not want to disturb her sleep. I called to the sentry and asked him for a broom and some coconut husks. This was clearly going to be my home for the present and I might as well make it as habitable as possible. I scrubbed the floor and cleaned the walls. In the meantime the unfortunate girl had woken up and was lying with her eyes open, staring into space. I went over to her and knelt beside her. She refused to utter a word in answer to my questions, but allowed me to examine her. She was miserably thin, and her body was a mass of bruises. A huge abscess on her back was causing her great pain and was obviously the cause of her fever. It was the septic discharge from this ugly wound which was the source of the stench in the cell. I washed the abscess as well as I could with cold water, and did what I could to make the girl comfortable, though this was little enough.

At seven o'clock we received our morning meal. This was sago kangee—a sort of watery gruel without salt or flavouring of any kind—in which a few grains of rice were mixed. Breakfast was served in the half shell of a coconut. If the shells were small we got two helpings, otherwise one. Every prisoner was issued with his shell on arrival; it was generally filthy and often had a hole which had to be stopped with a bit of rag or paper if the shell was not to leak badly. For drinking-water we had to ask one of the sentries on duty.

At eight the cells were inspected by the duty officer and everything had to be clean and tidy. When the inspection was over a sergeant read out a list of the prisoners who were to attend court for

trial. They were taken from the cells, tied two together by the wrist, and marched off under heavy escort. Often a prisoner was unable to walk and had to be carried to the court on a stretcher. It was not unknown for a prisoner to die on the way to his trial. After the departure of prisoners for trial, the interrogations started. Throughout the days prisoners were called from their cells, sometimes to return after a few minutes, sometimes to be carried in hours later in a state of collapse with the marks of beatings and tortures on their bodies. For prisoners in their cells the day passed wearily enough, with fear of interrogation and torture always before them and only the evening meal to look forward to. This was served at five o'clock, and consisted of boiled tapioca—carefully weighed out to see that no one got more than the ration. Sometimes there was salt, but more often not. This wretched meal was supposed to last the prisoners until breakfast next morning. In practice, however, this starvation diet was generally supplemented with food smuggled in, with the connivance and sometimes the active help of the police, from outside.

The younger of the two girls was released on the first day of my stay in prison. In the evening I had a visitor, a friend from prewar days who was a leading member of the Japanese-sponsored Indian Independence League, and so a privileged person.

'How are you, Mrs. K?' he asked.

'As well as can be expected, thank you.'

'I've just been to see the Doctor. He is quite well. Is there anything I can do for you?'

'Yes there is, if you don't mind. This girl here is very ill. She is being poisoned by the secretions of an abscess which ought to be drained. She should be in hospital, not in a cell. Will you please see if you can manage to have her sent for proper treatment? She will probably die if she remains here, and anyway I don't think it fair to me to have to live in this atmosphere and breathe this stench.'

'I'll do what I can for her, Mrs. K,' and he walked away. He was as good as his word; the girl was released next day.

Twice every day an Indian Sanitary Board labourer came round the cells to empty the latrine buckets. I was delighted to recognise Bamy, who before the war had performed the same office for the houses in Brewster Road and had been in consequence a daily

visitor to No. 141. Samy was very distressed to see the plight I was in. As I was now alone in the cell I could talk freely to him and was pleased to learn that his friend Suppan was in charge of the latrines in the Toko cells. This gave me an opportunity for corresponding with the Doctor. Samy and Suppan had free access to all the cells and would never be interfered with in the execution of their essential services; moreover the Japs had an extreme fastidious horror of contact with human excreta and would be the less likely to think of searching my humble but loyal friends. Samy brought me paper and a stub of pencil concealed in his turban, and undertook to deliver any messages I chose to write, whether to my husband or to my children and friends outside.

Prisoners awaiting interrogation were sometimes granted the privilege of receiving food from outside. Friends applied on our behalf, and I began to receive ample meals from the house in Brewster Road. Emboldened by achieving this success, I asked to be allowed to receive clean clothes daily and send out the worn ones to be washed. I was granted this concession, and also succeeded in obtaining a blanket. The opportunity to send out clothes to be washed I welcomed also as it gave me a second channel by which I might if necessary send messages to the outside world.

Another friend in need was Harshan Singh, a Sikh policeman and uncle to the Kalyan Singh I have already mentioned as Dawn's detective friend. Two or three times a day I used to see his burly form and kindly bearded face outside my cell, and he never failed to give me what news and what encouragement he could. With his nephew working in the Toko branch, Harshan Singh was able to do quite a lot to help the Doctor too, and regularly sent him hot coffee and fresh milk from his house.

As day followed day and still I was not taken from the cell for questioning, or indeed even informed why I had been arrested, it became almost an obsession with me to make contact with as many different people and to pick up as many scraps of information as I could. In the corridor, not far from my cell, was a wash-hand basin which was used by the male prisoners who washed their faces and their coconut shells there, and drew drinking-water from the tap. Women prisoners were not allowed to talk to the men; but I was the only woman in the cells at this time and I simply ignored the

order. I took every opportunity of engaging the other prisoners in conversation and picking up from them even the slightest item of gossip. I made a point also of talking to every policeman who came near my cell. In consequence I was very well informed about what happened from day to day, and made many friends. I even heard the latest items of news received over the wireless; as far as I was concerned this was the most valuable information of all.

One whole week went by in this way until the evening when I was informed that I was wanted for questioning at the Toko office.

Prisoners were supposed to walk barefooted when going for interrogation or trial, but I refused to submit to this indignity and insisted on putting on my shoes. My escort led me out of the courtyard, through an entrance at the back of the police station and across an open space to the Toko building beyond.

The head of the Toko, Kunichika, was well known to me by reputation, though I had never seen him before. Like so many of his kind he had lived a seemingly innocent life in Malaya for some years before the war, working as a taxidermist in Johore. In appearance he looked like any other Japanese officer, with his round glasses, his cropped head, and the long sword trailing by his side. I knew that he spoke excellent English, but in our interviews he never used anything but Malay.

'I want you to tell me nothing but the truth,' he began as I was brought to stand facing him across the table. 'Did you treat the guerillas?'

'I don't even know them.'

'You are lying,' he shouted, and reached for a cane walking-stick. Holding it by the end, he leaned forward, caught my neck in the crook of the curved handle, and pulled me closer to him.

'Did you treat the guerillas?' he repeated.

'I have told you. I don't know them.'

At my denial a rain of blows from the stick descended on my head and shoulders. Again the question was asked and received the same reply. In a moment his manner changed. 'Have a cigarette,' he asked, offering me one from a tin containing a good English brand which lay on his table.

'No, thank you, I don't smoke.'

He got up from his chair, walked round the table, and stood

beside me, a smile on his face. 'My dear sister,' he began, stroking my arm as he spoke.

'Take your hands off me,' I said, jerking my arm away. 'I am here as your prisoner, not for your pleasure.'

This reply brought a torrent of slaps upon both sides of my face, with an outburst of filthy language. I was then taken back to my cell.

Next day I was brought back to the Toko office, and the procedure started as before.

'Did you treat the guerillas?'

'I don't know them.'

At this Kunichika nodded to a policeman standing beside him, who went out, returning a moment later with two young men whom I recognised at once. They had been among my patients and I had treated them for malaria, but as far as I knew they had never come for treatment with the guerillas after dark.

'Do you know this person?' asked the Japanese, pointing at me with his cane.

'Yes, Tuan. She injected us a few weeks ago and gave us tea and biscuits before we left. She treats all the guerillas; they come to her house every night at eight o'clock.'

'What do you say now?' shouted the Japanese, turning to me. 'Here are two men who know the truth about you. Answer me at once!'

'I have never set eyes on them before.'

The two Chinese were sent away. Kunichika and another Japanese, who I later learned was from the Kempetei, continued my interrogation. They were persistent men, and asked the same question over and over again: 'Did you treat the guerillas?' I replied always in the same way, and every denial brought me blows from Kunichika's cane and savage slaps from the Kempetei man. How many times I made the same reply to the identical question I cannot say, but at length they became tired of the exercise or realised that this particular technique was not effective, and I was sent back to my cell.

Now a new approach was tried. For some days I was left alone in my cell, but a succession of new prisoners joined me there. They all told me that they were connected with the guerillas, and were very

friendly and ready for conversation. I told them nothing and showed no sort of interest in their stories. It was only too easy to see that they were in the pay of the Japanese. No sentries came near the cell when they were inside, and they never ate any of our food. They got nothing out of me, and at length left me alone.

I could not at first understand why the Japs should go to such lengths to force me to admit what they must anyway know to be true, or the evidence they had captured from Stripes' hut. But what were the contents of the letter which Stripes had been ordered to deliver to me? I had never had the opportunity to find out. Possibly it was so carefully worded that it could not at the moment be used against me, until they found out more. Or perhaps they had never got the letter at all, and were only going on the evidence of the medicine bottle. I could not tell. At all events, I resolved to admit nothing if I could avoid it. The Japs might kill me, but I would fight them every step of the way.

It must have been about a fortnight after my arrest that I was next summoned, late one afternoon, to the Toko office. 'Are you going to speak now?' demanded Kunichika as I was led into the room. I remained silent, expecting the usual blows. 'Bring in the Doctor,' was the next order. I could scarcely recognise my husband when he was brought in, in a state verging on collapse. He was barefooted, soaking wet from head to foot, looked terribly thin and pale, and his face was disfigured with livid bruises. 'I'm so sorry, Bil,' he said when he saw I was there. 'I had to tell them we had been treating the guerillas.'

'Never mind about that, Ziew. They had to know some time. See that you get some dry clothes to put on.'

We could not exchange any more words as the Doctor was led out at once and taken back to his cell.

Kunichika, I later learned, had been concentrating on the Doctor for the greater part of the day. Drawing his sword, he had first threatened to behead him at once if he refused to admit his guilt. This threat having failed, my husband was mercilessly beaten with heavy rattan canes and wooden sticks. Finally, they had tried the water treatment, not once but three times. This was surely one of the most diabolical products of the ingenious Japanese mind . . .

When my husband had been half led, half carried, from the room,

the Toko chief turned to me. 'You're an expert liar. aren't you?' I said nothing. I must confirm what the Doctor had told them, but say nothing more until I could find out just how much they knew and could invent a suitable story which would keep the Doctor at least out of further trouble.

'Did you treat the guerillas?'

'Yes, I did.'

'Ah, that's better. Now you can help us a lot. What is S.A.B.? Speak out and tell me all about it.'

So they had learnt that much from the letter; but what more? 'I have nothing more to say.'

'You must speak.' The kicks, blows, slaps and curses to which I was becoming inured followed his words, but I refused to add anything to my admission. At length, weak with pain and exhaustion, I was led back to my cell.

During the night I planned in my mind the story I was going to tell, and resolved to stick to it, come what might. In the morning I was ready.

'Tell us about S.A.B. and the guerillas, or you will get worse than you had yesterday.'

'Very well,' I replied in a weary voice, 'I'll explain everything. About four or five months ago I was in the house one evening at about nine p.m. when there came a knock at the front door. Thinking that there was a patient needing treatment, or that I was being called to a woman in labour, I went to the door and opened it. Three men thrust their way in and closed the door behind them. They were armed with revolvers and wore black masks over their faces. They told me that they were the guerillas and that they wanted me to treat some of their members who were sick. "But I can't do that," I told them. "I dare not disobey the orders of the Japanese," "You must," I was told. "You will find it more dangerous to go against us than to disobey the Japs. We are desperate, and will shoot you here and now if you refuse." What could I do? They looked very determined and I felt they would be as good as their word.'

'These were the arrangements they made. The patients were to come to the back door of the house at eight o'clock in the evening and would announce their arrival by three taps. I was to let them in and treat them myself and no other member of the household was to

know anything about it. I was also to supply medicines from time to time; the guerillas would send me a message saying what they wanted and I would have to have the stuff ready for them when they called for it. "*Semua ada baik*", or S.A.B. for short, was the code used on all messages asking for drugs.'

'Why did you not report all this to the police?'

'I was afraid. The guerillas told me that if I went to the police I should be shot and my whole family would be wiped out.'

'How was it that you feared the guerillas more than the Government?'

'Because the Government cannot protect us.'

'What do you mean?'

'If anything happens, the military or police never arrive until it is too late.'

'Do you expect me to believe this story?'

'It is the truth.'

'I don't believe a word of it. You have been lying all along.'

I continued to maintain the truth of my story through the beating which followed. Kunichika pinched my lips between finger and thumb and twisted them until the tears started to my eyes. In the end I was allowed to return to my cell. That night I wrote out in full the story I had told the Toko chief, and gave it to Suppan. He tucked it carefully into a fold of his turban and promised that it should reach the Doctor without fail.

Next day when I was taken for interrogation the Toko chief was very formal and correct. 'There are one or two questions I want you to answer about your statement yesterday. You will see Inspector Lim.'

Inspector Lim offered me a chair, and I was only too thankful to sit down, as my body was aching all over from the beatings I had received.

'I have to ask you a few questions, Mrs. K,' he began, in a friendly tone. 'First, who are Romeo and Don Juan?'

'I have never heard of them.'

'Do you know the Captain?'

'I do not know what you mean.'

'You do know. Why do you persist in lying when we have such clear evidence against you?'

'What is your evidence?' I asked. For a moment we stared one another in the eyes without a word. Then he glanced down at a letter spread out on the table in front of him. Still he said nothing, then a wave of relief swept over me as he pushed the letter across for me to read.

The letter was written on a half-sheet of notepaper, and was in Chinese characters. It was just the same in appearance as many others I had received from Chen Yen.

S.A.B. [it read]. Can you let us have the answers to the questions we asked some time ago?

1. Where is the Captain imprisoned?
2. Where does the Jap Government keep its medical stores?
3. What is the strength of the Jap Army forces now in Ipoh?

We are all much better now, thanks to you. Don Juan and Romeo join me in wishing you and the family all good luck.

C.Y.

Another note, written in English, was pinned to this letter; it started "Dear Sister" and was signed "Romeo". I recognised the handwriting as indeed Romeo's but had no time to read the contents, as Inspector Lim reached out his hand to take the papers from me. But I had learnt all that I needed to know.

'Did you receive a previous letter asking these questions?'

'Yes, I did.'

'What did you do with the letter? What was your reply?'

'I burned the letter and simply answered "I don't know."'

'The tone of the letter is very friendly. Do you still maintain that you don't know who these people are?'

'Of course it's friendly. People usually adopt a polite and friendly tone to their doctor. No doubt these are patients I treated under compulsion, but I certainly do not know these fancy names.'

'Who is Romeo's sister?'

'I don't know who Romeo is. How can I know his sister?'

'She must be living in Ipoh.'

'I tell you I know nothing about her.'

'Have you nothing more to say?'

'I have told you and the Japanese officer all I know.'

Here the interview ended. I was well pleased with what I had

found out. The letter was damning enough, but there was nothing in it to incriminate the Doctor and I felt that I should be able to keep him out of it.

Back in my cell I wrote a note to my husband and sent it to him by the faithful Samy. I told him of the contents of the letter, and of my statements to Inspector Lim. The one thing which really worried me was the possibility of the Japs finding out about the guerilla Panjang. If they ever obtained proof that the Doctor had removed bullets from a wounded guerilla, nothing could save him. In my note I reminded him to admit nothing about Panjang.

Next I wrote a letter to Moru, with information to be passed on to the guerilla H.Q. I confirmed that Chen Yen's note to me and Romeo's to his sister were in the possession of the Toko, and asked Moru to see that Romeo's sisters destroyed everything in the house written in his handwriting. The Japs had a specimen of Romeo's writing in the letter, and might well make a search of all likely houses in order to trace the writer. If they were unable to lay their hands on Romeo himself, his family would certainly suffer. I advised Moru himself to leave for the hills without delay, and suggested that it would be best if Barh came to live in Ipoh lest he too became involved with the guerillas, which would be disastrous at this stage. This note I resolved to send through a different channel.

Early every morning William used to drive out to Papan to collect milk and fresh vegetables. He would come to the prison to bring me and the Doctor food and a change of clothing. He was never allowed into the lock-up, but had to hand what he had brought to the policeman on duty at the entrance.

The corporal who had been on duty on the night of my arrest was on duty again when I wanted to arrange delivery of my note to Moru. When he came round to supervise the distribution of the evening meal, I grasped the opportunity and had a word with him in private. 'Corporal,' I said, 'will you please do something for me? Please let me have a word with my son when he comes to bring my food tonight.'

'What for, Missy? You know it's not allowed.'

'I want to give him some instructions about my baby daughter's diet and a kind of medicine she takes.'

'Very well. Missy.'

An hour or two later he came to my cell and unlocked the door. I took up the bundle of dirty clothes I had ready, and followed him to the iron-barred gate which separated the lock-up from the rest of the police station. The note I had previously tucked into the hem of the dress I was sending out to be washed. William was standing on the other side of the gate, and the corporal moved out of earshot. As he handed to me through the iron bars the meal he had brought I spoke quickly to him in a low voice. 'In the hem of the dress is an urgent letter for Moru. Please see that he gets it when you go to Papan in the morning. Let me know you have delivered it safely by including a hard-boiled egg in my food.' I was about to push the bundle through the bars to William, when the corporal came up. My heart was in my mouth as he undid the bundle and shook out the garments one by one. Fortunately I had tucked the paper securely into the hem of the dress, and it did not fall out. I breathed a sigh of relief as the bundle was tied up again and handed over to William, but I resolved that it was not safe to use this channel of communication again.

'Don't forget, William, it's Agarol for Dawn.'

'I understand, Mother. Cheer up,' and we parted.

I was very anxious when the whole of the next day passed and there was no egg in my meals. On the second day it was there, however, and my doubts were set at rest.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE WEEKS OF INTERROGATION WHICH FOLLOWED dwell in my memory like the confused recollection of a nightmare. I cannot remember the day-to-day details. I would be called for questioning, without warning, at any hour of the day or night. Sometimes I went, at least once but sometimes twice a day, every day for perhaps a week; sometimes there was a break of a few days in which I seemed forgotten, after which the proceedings would be resumed as before. There was nothing particularly subtle about the methods used. I would be asked the same question over and over again, and each time I would give the same answer, 'I don't know.' They seemed desirous of battering the truth out of my body. Each unsatisfactory answer I gave—and they were all unsatisfactory—was followed by a dose of intense physical pain, administered in varying quantities and in many different forms. Usually I was punched and slapped in the face, and beaten with sticks and heavy rattan canes. The places on which the blows were concentrated were those containing no vital nerve or organ so that no permanent injury resulted to the victim; in particular the outside surface of the upper arm, the thigh, and the calf were chosen. These parts of my body were soon solid bruises, the pain from which made it impossible to lie down and sleep with any sort of comfort. Sometimes as a change from the beatings other tortures were tried; it might be the water treatment or some other equally diabolical method of inflicting pain. It seemed to me that Kunichika was trying out every weapon in his armoury in an effort to make me talk. Under his supervision policemen, some of whom seemed to hate their task almost as much as I did, would run needles into my finger-tips below the nail, while my hand was held firmly, flat on the table; they heated iron bars in a charcoal brazier and applied them to my legs and back; they ran a stick between the second and third fingers of both my hands, squeezing the fingers together and holding them firmly in the air

while two men hung from the ends of the cane, making a see-saw of my hands and tearing the flesh between my fingers; they thrust the rough ragged ends of canes into the hollows of my knees and twisted them until I screamed with pain. I used to find a certain relief by screaming and yelling at the top of my voice, and several times was spared further suffering by falling to the floor in a dead faint. But I held out against Kunichika and his henchmen and told them nothing.

Sometimes he tried to force me to admit that I had treated the guerillas of my own free will, but more usually the questions were demands for more information. Who was the leader of the Papan guerillas? What was his name? What did he look like? Where were his headquarters? How many men had he there? Who were they? Where did they get food? Who gave them money? Who brought me their letters? Who were their agents in Papan? Who helped them in Papan? Who was Don Juan? Who was Romeo? Who was the Captain? How were the guerillas armed? Were there any Australian, Gurkha or British soldiers with them? To all these questions, and countless others, I had but the one answer, 'I don't know.' The Doctor, too, received his share of the beatings and tortures, but he stuck to the statement which I had made and passed on to him. As the days went by, Kunichika concentrated more on me, and for this I was thankful.

One morning there was a change. The Doctor and I were both taken from our cells and marched under escort to the Roman Catholic Boys' School in the town which the Japanese had taken over as Government offices. We were taken into a room which I recognised as having been Brother Rupert's classroom. A Japanese officer was there. 'Good morning, Officer,' I said.

My greeting was answered, as I had anticipated, with a couple of hard slaps. 'Speak in Malay,' shouted the officer, 'and address a Japanese as Tuan.'

'I speak English,' I said, 'and I never used "Tuan" to the British so why should I to you?'

Another torrent of slaps and blows was the only answer.

The Doctor was called first into the adjoining room. I could not hear the questions he was asked, though shouts and the sound of heavy blows were clearly audible. After about half an hour he came

out, looking pale and shaken, but determined. I had no time to speak to him as my turn followed at once.

There were several Japanese officers I had not seen before in the room to which I was led. 'The Doctor has admitted that he removed bullets from a wounded guerilla,' said one. 'What have you to say.'

This I knew was a ruse. 'It is not true. Your tortures must have forced him to lie. No guerilla ever came to my house with a bullet wound, and in any case the Doctor never had anything to do with treating the guerillas. They did not want the Doctor to know what I was doing, and never used to come when he was in the house. I expect he found out what was going on but he never had anything to do with it and we did not even discuss the matter together.'

'We have caught the man and he has admitted that the Doctor removed two bullets from his leg.'

'Then he is lying. The Doctor never did anything of the sort. I doubt if he could perform such an operation; he hasn't touched a surgical instrument for over twenty years.'

'If the Doctor didn't remove the bullets, you must have done.'

I said nothing to this, and to my surprise the interview was brought to an end and I was led from the room. For some hours we sat waiting, without being allowed to communicate in any way. There seemed to be great confusion in the building; we later learned that this was the result of the release by the guerillas of a wealthy and influential Chinese business man they had kidnapped some days earlier. It was after midday before we were led through the streets of Ipoh back to the police lock-up.

We walked barefooted and I was limping badly with a cut leg. We halted at the sight of our own handsome car, now flying the flag of the Japanese Governor of Perak, drawn up outside the house. 'What robbery!' I exclaimed, turning to one of the sentries on duty at the entrance. 'That is our car, but now we have to walk.'

'Please keep quiet, Missy,' was the man's anxious reply.

'Am I not speaking the truth?'

The roads were crowded at this hour, and we encountered many friends and acquaintances. Some took no notice of us. They may have been frightened to acknowledge that they knew such dangerous criminals, or they may simply have failed to recognise us. This was not surprising, if so, for we presented a sorry aspect. My face

was swollen and misshapen with the blows that had fallen upon it, while the Doctor, who had not been allowed a shave or a haircut, wore a long straggling beard and hair which fell almost to his shoulders framing an unbelievably haggard and pale face. Some, however, recognised us and greeted us with a word or a smile, and we returned their greetings as cheerfully as we could.

Once we were clear of the school building our escort allowed us to talk as we walked along side by side. I told the Doctor what I had said and asked him to stick to my story. He was very upset when I told him I had taken sole responsibility for treating the guerillas.

'Why did you do that, Bil? They'll certainly kill you.'

'They'll kill me anyway; I know that. But I can only die once, and there's no point in your being involved too. That's only common sense.'

'I don't like it, Bil.'

'You must think of the children, Ziew. Who will look after them if they lose both their parents? Please do as I say, and save yourself. It doesn't matter what you tell the Japs about me. Better admit everything they want you to than try to hold out against them; they might kill you with their tortures and that would defeat our purpose. But you must never admit the truth about guerilla Panjang or they will certainly cut your head off. Save yourself for the sake of the children, and let me fight my battle alone. They may kill me but I will never give in to them.'

My husband said nothing, and our escort would not allow further conversation as we were now near the police station.

That night I wrote a letter to Olga. Now that the Japs had found out about Panjang, the bullets I had so rashly buried in the garden were a threat to the Doctor's life. If the Japs chose to make a really thorough search they would surely find them.

Dearest Olga [I wrote],

Please go to Papan and carry out these instructions personally, and at once. Get Dominic to dig up the bottle containing bullets, which we buried in the vegetable garden. Dominic is the only one who knows the place. Smash the bottle, take the bullets and throw them into the river as you cross the bridge before reaching the main road on the way to Ipoh. Do not at all costs be caught by Japs or

police with the bullets in your possession. Your father's life may depend on the way in which you carry out these instructions. Do not attempt to reply to this, but send a hard-boiled egg in my food when you have got rid of the bullets successfully.

Love and kisses to you, Dawn, and Granny;

Your loving Mummy.

This letter I wrote in tiny letters on a small scrap of paper. When Samy came in to carry out his daily task I gave it to him, and watched him conceal it carefully in a fold of his ragged turban. 'Give it to no one but my daughter Olga,' I said. 'There will be no reply.'

'Trust me, Missy.'

At times during the night and the next day I regretted having taken the risk of sending such a dangerous note, and thought that I would have been wiser to let the bullets remain where they were. I prayed that Samy should deliver the message safely. My relief was tremendous when I found a hard-boiled egg in my evening meal next day, and I at once got Samy to convey a brief note to the Doctor. "Olga has got rid of the bullets," it read, "and there is now no danger of their being found."

Next morning we were taken once more to the Japanese Government H.Q. This time I was the first to be called for questioning and I welcomed this as a sign that the Japs had accepted my statement that the Doctor had had nothing to do with the guerillas. The interrogation began.

'So it was you who treated the wounded guerillas?'

'I did nothing of the sort.'

'Do you deny that you treated a man with a wound in his leg?'

'I remember treating a man with an ulcer in his leg, if that's what you mean.'

'How did he get the ulcer?'

'Lots of people got them. Their diet contained too much tapioca, and I think that was the reason.'

'Why did you try to find out the strength of the Nippon Army?'

'I didn't.'

'If you won't tell us the truth of your own free will, we shall have to force you to.'

They did their best, kicking and beating my body, which was by now permanently bruised and bleeding, and I was led back to the waiting-room feeling more dead than alive.

I could hear the angry shouts of the Japanese, the cracks of rattans and the bangs of sticks. I feared that my husband could not survive such a beating and prayed that he would not try to shield me. At length the ordeal was over; the Doctor was led staggering into the room, his clothes torn and every part of his flesh so exposed showing hideous bruises. His face was grotesquely swollen and a wide gash on his forehead was bleeding profusely. I had no time for a word of sympathy as I was called out at once for further questioning. As we walked along the verandah to the next room the Indian interpreter who had been sent to summon me slackened his pace for a moment. 'The Doctor has admitted that you asked him about the Jap forces in Ipoh. Admit it too and save yourself the torture.'

This was most welcome information. If I could continue to deny it they might come to regard the Doctor as an unreliable source of information and so lose interest in him. I resolved to hold out against all they could do to me.

'You are a spy for the guerillas as well as a nurse to them.'

'I am nothing of the sort.'

'We know that you asked your husband to find out the strength of our forces in Ipoh. He has already confessed it.'

'If so he is lying through fear of you and your tortures.'

'It is you that is the liar, and you will be punished until you speak the truth.'

He was as good as his word. My punishment began in earnest. Every method was used to make me speak. In the end my whole body seemed one great throbbing pain. I screamed and yelled at the top of my voice, but when at intervals my torturers stopped and repeated their questions I stuck doggedly to my denial and my torments were resumed. At length I fell to the ground through sheer weakness and did not move even when they continued to kick me with their heavy boots. I was dragged to my feet and carried out into the waiting-room, where I collapsed in the middle of the floor and lost consciousness.

When I came round the Doctor was supporting my head with one

hand and feeling my pulse with the other. He later told me that he thought, from the fearful sounds which had come from the room where I was being questioned, that the Japs had killed me this time. When he saw that I was still alive he asked for water, but the clerks and police constables standing around did not dare brave the wrath of the Japs by succouring their prisoner. One of the Japanese from the *Kempetei* who had assisted at my interrogation walked in and seemed actually concerned at my condition.

'Officer, please let me have some water,' I said.

The Jap gave an order and a glass was brought; he then commanded that we be taken down to his own car. As soon as my husband had given me the water, the sentry, in terror of his Japanese masters, tapped him on the shoulder reminding him that he was a prisoner, and made him stand away from me. I struggled to rise, but was quite unable to do so. A crowd of clerks working in the offices had gathered round in sympathy or curiosity, but such was their fear of the Japs that none dared to assist me. At length one, braver or more compassionate than the rest, stepped forward, lifted me in his arms and carried me down to the waiting car.

We reached the police station after a short drive. My husband was clearly worried by my condition and was almost in tears when they led him away to the Toko cells. My friends at the police station expressed the utmost horror and distress when they saw the condition in which I had been brought back to them. The P.C. on duty at the entrance threw down his rifle and carried me in his arms to my cell. 'Missy,' he said in a passionate tone, 'I'd like to take my rifle and kill every Jap I see.'

'Please don't do anything so foolish. This cannot last for ever, and you have a family depending on you.'

The corporal on duty came into my cell with some of the constables. 'This is terrible, Missy,' he said. 'When will the British return? Is there anything we can do for you?'

'It is good to be among friends again. I would like some ice to suck, please.'

Ice was brought, as well as fresh milk from Harshan Singh's house. I could scarcely swallow the milk, but they fed me patiently, a teaspoonful at a time. When night came they brought a bench into my cell, and covered it with a thick pile of soft blankets from the

corporal's house. My clothes were sticking to my body with the dried blood from my wounds; they soaked each place with water and gently drew the cloth away from the raw flesh below. Then, spreading a blanket over me, they changed my clothes and made me comfortable. Trained hospital nurses could not have been gentler or more considerate. They told me that my back looked just like raw meat from my shoulders to my waist.

'Supposing a Jap officer makes a surprise visit? You will all get into trouble.'

'Don't worry. If one comes I'll delay him while the sentries lift you on to the sleeping-platform and hide the bench and your blankets. When the coast is clear they'll give you your bed back.'

I could not find words to express the gratitude I felt for the ministrations of my kind friends. 'Thank you, Corporal,' was all I could say.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

FOR SOME DAYS I WAS LEFT IN PEACE AND allowed to recuperate from the effects of my latest interrogation. The Doctor's questionings ceased, but for some reason or other he was now forbidden to receive food from outside, though my supplies were allowed to continue. He did not suffer by this, however. By this time it seemed that all the regular guards, both in the police station and in the Toko lock-up where my husband was, were our friends. The Doctor received so much food smuggled in from outside that it was far more than he could eat himself and he was able to distribute it among the other prisoners. He was also brought cigarettes and a constant supply of news from outside. We communicated freely, as there was scarcely a sentry who would not willingly carry a message between the two of us. Our guards made no secret of their hatred for the Japanese régime and their longing for the return of the British, and they found innumerable ways of demonstrating their good will and sympathy for us.

Saturday nights were our gala nights in the lock-up. We saved up food, and had special delicacies smuggled in from outside. The sentries and even the N.C.O. on duty joined us in a feast, after which we sang all the anti-Japanese songs we knew, which gave a great uplift to our morale. This went on until eleven-thirty. After that the lions of Heaven might be expected to make their midnight rounds, after an evening at the cinema or the cabaret. All traces of the festivities were removed, and by the time twelve o'clock was heard to sound from the Ipoh clock-tower all was quiet and still as the grave. We lay on the bug-infested sleeping-platform or the cold concrete floor, and heard our sentries and the duty officer report that all was well as the Japanese officer made his rounds.

One evening I heard a fine voice singing Mandarin songs in a neighbouring cell. 'Who is that?' I asked the sentry.

'I don't know his name, but he's supposed to be connected with

the guerillas.'

'Do you think I could have a word with him?'

'Why not?'

He moved off and I heard the sound of a door being unlocked. He returned a moment later with a young Chinese whom I did not recognise. His face was deeply lined; he seemed to have suffered a great deal, but there was a look of determination about him which made me think he must be a match for the Japanese.

'Good evening, Madame,' he said in Cantonese. 'I have heard a lot about you and am very sorry to see you in such a condition.'

'Are you Lai Fook, known as the Captain?'

'Yes, I am.'

'Do the Japs know?'

'They didn't at first, but a traitor recognised me and informed them.'

'What are they doing to you?'

'They nearly killed me with their tortures, but I told them nothing. Now they are trying what kindness will do. I have good food and a comfortable bed. They have offered me an important position, a big house and car, plenty of money, girls, and so on, if I will work for them. They will be wasting their time. I suppose they will start their tortures again, and kill me in the end.'

'I am proud to have met you. Please don't let them know that you have spoken to me. If they tell you I have admitted meeting you it will be a trick. I too can hold my tongue.'

'I understand,' he replied, and was taken back to his cell.

I did not see Lai Fook again. Later I learned what had happened to him. His forecast had been correct. Temptation had proved no more effective than torture, and at length Kunichika had given up hope of breaking down his resistance. One morning the Chief of Police had called at the police station, with an escort, taken the guerilla leader to a deserted place outside the town,



Lai Fook, the young Captain

and himself beheaded him with his sword.

Soon after this I received a severe shock. One of the sentries approached my cell and told me. 'Missy, your eldest daughter has been arrested. She is in the charge room now. I don't know what the charge is but I'll find out for you.' This was a new and unexpected anxiety; surely they couldn't have found out about the bullets? But of what else could Olga possibly be guilty! It was an immense relief when the corporal came and told me that she had been arrested in Menglembu for carrying an amount of sugar in the car which greatly exceeded the ration. She had been allowed bail, which William had provided, and her case had been transferred to Ipoh.

'Please, Corporal,' I said, 'find out who is the inspector in charge of the case and ask him if he will be kind enough to come and speak to me.'

I was very pleased when, a few hours later, Inspector Sivam came up to my cell and told me he was in charge of Olga's case. Sivam was an old friend and I knew I could trust him to do his best for me and my family. I explained that Olga had been drawing the sugar ration for two households, one in Papan and one in Ipoh, and told him the numbers in each. I also told him that I did not like to have my daughter forced to hang around police stations and law courts, and begged him to do what he could to get her out of it.

'Don't worry, Mrs. K. It sounds as though it has all been a mistake. I will do my best to see that nothing comes of it.'

A day or two later I heard that proceedings had been quashed. Inspector Sivam was another true friend in need.

My respite from torture did not last long. As soon as it was judged that I was strong enough to stand further interrogation, the hideous process started all over again. It was now clear to me that the Kempetei had taken over my case from the Toko. I did not see the Toko chief, Kunichika, again; my chief inquisitor was now a short, thick-set sergeant of the military police, Yoshimura by name. Sometimes I was questioned in the Toko office, but more often was taken to the Kempetei H.Q., a luxurious mansion in the residential part of the town.

The familiar routine of question and torture went on as before, but the questions were more subtly planned to trap me into a damning admission, and I had to keep my wits about me all the time. A whole

series of inconsequential and farcical queries would culminate in one which seemed of the same kind but actually concealed a pitfall.

'We are going to start from the beginning,' Yoshimura began. 'We have all the evidence against you so you may as well tell us the truth and save yourself a lot of unpleasantness. What is your name?'

'Sybil Kathigasu.'

'How can that be? Kathigasu is the Doctor's name. You have no right to use it. He is innocent of the crimes you have committed and you are trying to shield yourself and put the blame on him by using his name.'

'I am his wife and must use his name.'

'That is nonsense. Tell us your own name at once and leave the Doctor's alone.'

'My name is Sybil Kathigasu.'

'What were you called before you were married?'

'Sybil Daly.'

'Then that is your name. Why didn't you tell the truth at once? Were you the Doctor's mistress or are you really married?'

'I have my marriage certificate.'

'What is your nationality?'

'Eurasian.'

'That is why you are an enemy of the Japanese Government. How old are you?'

'Forty-three.'

'How many children have you?'

'Three.'

'Did you buy them?'

'No. The two girls are my own and the boy is adopted.'

'Have you been in gaol before?'

'I never even saw the inside of a police station until you got hold of me.'

'Don't be impudent, and speak civilly. Aren't you a robber and a murderer like the guerillas?'

'I have never stolen or killed in my life. As for the guerillas, I know nothing of them or their doings.'

'But you treated them when they were sick.'

'I had to. They threatened me with death.'

'You are lying. Tell us the truth at once or it will be the worse for you.'

It was. They gave me the usual ferocious beatings and whippings and devilish tortures, but my constant prayers were answered and I received strength to persist in my denial until unconsciousness brought welcome release.

A few days later the interrogation was continued.

'Where were you born?'

'In Medan, Sumatra.'

'Why were you born there?'

'I don't know. You must ask my mother.'

'That poor old lady is not to blame. This is another of your crimes. You purposely chose to be born in a Dutch colony because you knew the Dutch were the enemies of Dai Nippon. Why did you marry the Doctor?'

'Excuse me, Officer, I will ask you a question. Are you a married man?'

He seemed temporarily taken aback by the fact that I was questioning him, but he replied. 'Certainly I am.'

'Why did you marry your wife?'

He grinned complacently. 'I like woman, so I marry wife.'

'Just so. I like man, so I marry husband.'

His grin changed to a scowl of anger as he felt that I had scored off him. 'That is a lie. You married the Doctor because you wanted him to treat your guerillas. You planned this years ago, long before the war.'

Other questions and comments followed in a similar vein. So insane were they that after a time I felt I scarcely knew the difference between truth and falsehood myself, and no doubt this was their purpose.

'Why did you stay in Papan when your husband returned to Ipoh?'

'Our house and dispensary in Ipoh were occupied by your medical unit.'

'The house was returned to you.'

'I had acted in accordance with the Government's orders to grow more food. I had planted a large vegetable garden and had to stay to look after it.'

'Why did the boys in the house not get work outside?'

'I did not want them to.'

'Why not?'

'I wanted them to help me with my work and in the house.'

'How long did you expect to be able to carry on in that way?'

'As long as I had enough money and drugs to be able to fulfil my obligation of service by helping the poor people of the town.'

'Did you expect that the British would soon return?'

'How could I, when your newspapers and announcements told us that Britain was on the verge of defeat?'

'You must account for every member of the Papan household.'

'Mr. and Mrs. Weaver are old and infirm and cannot work. Before the war their son Francis supported them, working as a clerk.'

'Where was Francis before he came to Papan?'

'He was on holiday in Singapore when your soldiers attacked Malaya, and was unable to get home until after the fall of the island. His younger brother Dominic was still at school.'

'Why does he not attend the Nippon-Go school now?'

'He was about to enrol when his mother fell and broke her leg. She was in bed for some months and Dominic had to stay and help me to look after her. Also, his father is a chronic invalid and needed his son's assistance.'

'What about Barh? Why did you prevent him from going back to work?'

'He helped me with the medicines.'

'But he is an electrical engineer. How could he help you?'

'He wrote labels for the medicine bottles, entered the names of patients, treatment given and fees paid in a book kept for the purpose.'

'How about William?'

'He did the same work for my husband in Ipoh.'

'But the Doctor has his dispenser.'

'Ipoh is a big place, and an extra hand was needed.'

'How did the Doctor's dispenser manage before the war?'

'I assisted him myself.'

Now the questions turned to the incriminating letter.

'Do you know the Captain?'

'I have never set eyes on him.'

'Haven't you tried to discover his cell?'

'How could I, when I am a prisoner myself and closely guarded

all the time?'

'Did you try to find out where the medical supplies were stored?'

'Never.'

'But you did try to find out through the Doctor the strength of the Japanese Army in Ipoh.'

'I did nothing of the sort.'

'Your letter was signed "C. Y." Who is that?'

'I don't know. Someone at guerilla H.Q., I suppose.'

'You must lead us to the guerillas' H.Q.'

'I don't know where it is.'

'You do know. You are a trusted spy of the guerillas and have been doing your best to help them in their treacherous work.'

'I tell you I know nothing about them.'

'If you won't co-operate by telling the truth we shall have to kill you.'

'I am quite prepared to die.'

I felt more than half dead when at the end of the questions and tortures I was dragged from the room in a state of collapse. By now I was beginning to forget what it felt like to have no pain.

This process went on day after day until I lost all count of time. The same questions were repeated over and over again, and every minute detail of my statements repeatedly worked on. Sometimes Yoshimura tried a different approach, allowed me to sit down while he spoke kindly and reasonably about my folly, and called for iced water and coffee at frequent intervals. But on the whole, blows and pinches, with other more elaborate tortures, formed an unvarying background of pain.

Every day I spent long periods on my knees in my cell, praying for strength to withstand the worst that the Japs could do to me, and while undergoing the agony of torture I called aloud on the Sacred Name of Jesus. Without His assistance I could never have survived what I did.

When called for interrogation, I would leave my treasured rosary—given to me when I made my first Communion—safely hidden in my cell. One day, however, I forgot, and it fell from my pocket as I collapsed to the floor under a savage blow. A Japanese soldier lifted his heavy boot to crush it underfoot, but I was too quick for him. Placing my hand over the rosary, 'Dare you?' I said,

looking up at him. He turned away and I replaced the rosary in my pocket.

Weeks went by in this way, but the Japanese made no progress. My body sometimes seemed to be reduced to an aching pulp; raw flesh in places and an ugly purplish colour where there was still skin. Every movement of my limbs was agony and I could scarcely sleep or eat. At length the weary process came to an end. I was presented with a sheaf of typewritten notes and told to sign my statement. This I refused to do until every word had been read out to me, and the many insertions made by the Japanese, which I had never admitted, deleted. Only when this was done did I sign each sheet, and then wrote out for Yoshimura a list of the names of all those who had lived with me in Papan.

'You are very stubborn,' said the Japanese, 'but you will have to tell us the truth in time. We'll see how the bare prison diet suits you. You will not be allowed to receive food from outside, nor will you get any more clean clothes.'

'Please let me have a blanket, Officer. The nights are cold and my body is very sore.'

'So you are capable of feeling pain, are you? That is good. It will be worse when you are hungry.'

However, I was allowed to retain one blanket and one change of clothes; these with a small comb and a bit of charcoal for cleaning my teeth were the only possessions left to me. Soap was a luxury not allowed. Worst of all, the entire section of police who did duty in the lock-up was changed. All my good friends disappeared, and their place was taken by a section from Singapore, specially selected and trained. They knew no one in Ipoh and all smuggling of food and passing of messages stopped abruptly. Famine set in.

Our new guards were all that their Japanese masters could have wished them to be. They did everything according to the regulations, with the result that we got nothing but the barest prison diet and no news from outside. Even my good friend Samy was too scared to carry messages any more as the new guards used to search him as he left or entered the lock-up. For the first time, I learned the meaning of hunger. The women's cell was always the last to be served, and often the sago kangee or boiled tapioca was finished before all had been served. If this happened, the unfortunate ones received as a

substitute a handful of the shredded flesh scraped from a coconut, from which all the rich milk had been squeezed; this was mixed with a little hot water and not flavoured with so much as a grain of salt. The meagre diet soon began to show its effects; our legs started to swell and our faces became puffy. After some days all the political prisoners (how the news got round the cells I do not know, but it did) agreed to stage hunger strike. This brought some improvement. We received rice kangee instead of sago in the morning, and the evening ration of boiled tapioca was increased from six to eight ounces. Emboldened by this success, I resolved to follow it up by other methods.

One evening I addressed the sentry, speaking in English which I knew he understood.

'Will you please get me some water to drink?' and I held out my coconut shell to him.

'Speak in Malay, or you will get me into trouble.'

I did so, repeating the question, and he did as I asked.

'Thank you very much,' I went on, still in Malay. 'You must be very grateful to your new masters. I hear that you police get everything you want.'

'Will you keep quiet? I am not allowed to speak to the prisoners.'

'I know that. They can padlock my cell, but not my mouth. If you do not talk you will fall asleep.'

'Do you want to get my head cut off?'

'Certainly not, but I would like to get your brains cleaned out. How long did you serve in Singapore?'

'A few months.'

'I have heard that everyone who goes there for training gets plenty of rice, plenty of sugar and other rations, and a salary which enables him to live like a Tuan.'

'Don't you believe it. They give us nothing but a few ounces of rice a day, and a salary so small that it lasts a week instead of a month.'

'That must be to cultivate the Nippon spirit.' And I continued in English. 'How do you like cultivating the Nippon spirit?'

'A starvation diet, very hard work, and a salary which goes nowhere with prices so high—that's what it means.'

'Why did you join, then?'

'They promised us all sorts of things, but it was all bluff. We not

only have to work like slaves but to risk our lives too.'

'How is that?'

'They get us up at three o'clock in the morning, and make us climb hills and plough through thick jungle after the guerillas. It's terrible; we come back more dead than alive.'

'Is that a part of cultivating the Nippon spirit?'

'That's what they say.'

'Don't you feel sorry for the men you have to hunt? Look at their condition in the cells around you. Some are more like skeletons than living men. Look at these marks on my arms and legs and back; that is what we have to bear when you catch us.'

'They must be very painful. But I thought you were inside for stealing.'

'Nothing of the sort.' And I told him something of the charges against me.

'Please excuse me, Missy. I am not from Perak, so I do not know you. Are you hungry?'

'What if I am?'

'Can I bring you some food?'

'That is not the Nippon spirit. But can I trust you?'

'Don't be afraid, Missy; I won't let you down. Listen. In your bathroom there is a small hole to let the water drain away. I'll tie a bundle of food to a stick and pass it through to you. Be ready at eight o'clock this evening, and be quick to untie the bundle from the stick so that I can pull it back.'

'Is it safe for you?'

'Don't worry; I shall be careful.'

'Very well. I shall be waiting. And thank you for your kindness.'

It was actually as the town clock was striking eight that the bundle of food emerged from the hole. I untied it at once and the stick was withdrawn. Food never tasted better than this meal. When my friend came on duty again I handed him the wrappings of the bundle so that he might destroy them.

'That was the first decent meal I've had for a fortnight. You are very good to take such a risk.'

'Do you think that the British will ever come back?' he asked.

'I know they will,' and I told him some of the news I had heard both before and after my arrest. Now was the time to preach my

gospel. Recalling what I could of Sir Richard Winstedt's stirring broadcasts to the people of Malaya, I reminded the guard of what Malaya owed to Britain, and of the amount of talent, labour, money and material which had gone to make Malaya the happiest and most advanced country in the East. 'Do you think the British will allow all this to be wasted?' I said. I spoke as eloquently as I could of the prosperous prewar days, and contrasted them with the present miserable state of the country.

'What has the Nippon spirit done for you? You never even get a decent meal of rice, but have to live on tapioca. Prices are so high that, as you say, your monthly pay is scarcely enough for a week.'

'Look at the uniform they give you to wear. All different colours and covered with patches—it's a disgrace. Some of you can't even get a pair of boots and have to wear slippers or go barefoot. The Japanese cap they give you to wear makes you look like an owl.'

'Think what a fine force the police was before the war. Do you remember their smart uniforms and manly bearing? Then it was a matter of pride to be in the police; what is it now?'

So I went on, and in this way gradually won over, not one of the guards only, but all who ever came near my cell—and most of them made a point of doing so. In the end the N.C.O. in charge of the guard too fell a victim to my propaganda. The careful Japanese training and indoctrination went west, and soon food, salt and cigarettes began to find their way into the cells once more. I had made a fresh set of friends and allies, and, I felt, won a substantial victory over my enemies the Japs.

The days went by, and I felt my strength returning with rest and an improved diet. Then one evening Samy brought me news which horrified me. 'Missy,' he said, 'William has been arrested and taken to *Kempetei*.'

'Oh, Samy. What is the charge, do you know?'

'No, I haven't heard.'

'How are my children and my mother?'

'They are well.'

'Please don't bring any more written messages from Brewster Road. It may not be safe. See that you have no paper on you when you come in to work.'

'Very well, Missy. I understand.'

I tried all means to find out why the Kempetei had arrested William, but no one knew anything. It was a fortnight before one of the guards told me he had heard it was something to do with listening to a wireless set. Had the Japs found out about Josephine? If so I might as well resign myself to further anxiety, questions and torments. Soon after this I was taken from my cell and trod the familiar path to the Toko office. It was just the same as before; the same Jap from the Kempetei faced me across the same table.

'I have one or two questions to ask you. If you tell the truth there is a chance of your release.'

I had heard this before, and said nothing.

'Did you remove a wireless set from Batu Gajah to Papan some time last year?'

'Yes. I did.'

'What make was it?'

'A G.E.C.'

'You are a liar,' and to my great surprise he walked away and I was taken back to my cell.

Two mornings later the police corporal came to my cell. 'The Kempetei have come to take you away, Missy,' he said. 'I am very sorry about this.'

'Good-bye, Corporal. You and the others have been very kind to me. I thank you all. God bless you.'

As I left the police station I felt tears come to my eyes at the thought of the good friends I had found there. A large car was waiting, and in the back seat was my old tormentor, Sergeant Yoshimura.

'Get in,' he said, indicating the seat beside him.

We drove first round to the Toko office, where the Doctor was brought out and made to sit in the front seat next to the driver. He too had recovered somewhat from the ordeals he had been through, but was still a ghost of what he had been. Not a word was spoken in the car, and I had no means of knowing whether we were going to execution, release, or further interrogation. I tried to compose my mind to accept whatever the future might bring. After a short drive through the streets of the town we drew up outside the Kempetei headquarters in Gopeng Road.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

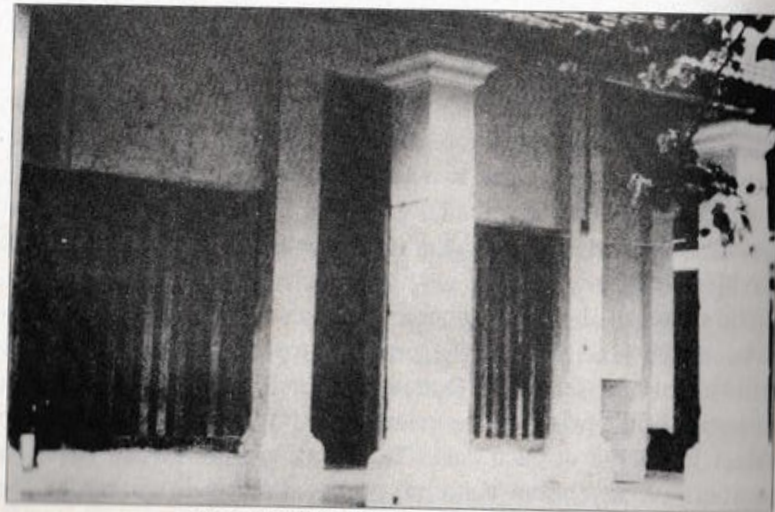
FOR THEIR HEADQUARTERS THE KEMPETEI HAD taken over a large house on the outskirts of Ipoh which belonged to a wealthy Chinese miner. It was a modern building, beautifully furnished, which stood in its own well-kept grounds. The servants' quarters were behind the house, connected to it with a covered passageway. These had been converted into cells for the prisoners of the Kempetei. There were three rooms with thick brick walls and one small window in the back. This was heavily barred, and admitted a certain amount of light and air but nothing else, for a high fence of wooden planks had been erected about two feet from the window and this was the only view. Each cell measured perhaps twelve feet square and was floored with concrete. The doors were not solid but made of heavy wooden bars set close together so that it was relatively easy to see from outside what was going on inside the cell, but impossible to pass any but the smallest object through. Each door was divided horizontally in two; the upper half was fixed and only the lower half opened to admit the prisoners, who had to stoop and enter the cell like dogs. There was a small square opening in this lower half, through which food was passed. Each cell had a wooden sleeping-platform about six inches high, which occupied nearly the whole of the floor space, and by the door the concrete floor was raised an inch or two to form a small square platform on which rested a kerosene tin. This was the latrine bucket; there was no sort of privacy in a crowded cell, nor was any paper or water provided.

The doors of the cells opened on to a verandah about five feet wide, which was barred off from the outside world by a sort of trellis about nine feet high. Outside each cell was a board on which the names of the prisoners were written, with a note of the Kempetei officer in charge of each case. The sentries were Indian soldiers, members of the Indian National Army; directly in charge of the

prisoners were the Haehos—auxiliary military policemen who were recruited locally from all races, especially Chinese.

Each cell held as a rule between twenty and twenty-five prisoners, men and women herded together indiscriminately. The stench from the latrine bucket was appalling; sometimes we were not allowed to have it emptied for two or three days. When it overflowed we were cursed for the mess. The wooden planks on which we slept were infested with bugs of all kinds; innumerable rats lived under the boards and in the ceiling. Prisoners were not allowed a bath, a comb for their hair, or a change of clothes. Our garments rotted on our bodies and stank of sweat. The women asked over and over again to be allowed a few personal articles of toilet, but were told that these were luxuries and not permitted to prisoners of the Kempetei. The figures we cut when we went for interrogation provoked mocking laughter and ridicule, but we were past feeling shame.

We received one meal a day, some time between five and five-thirty in the evening. It was passed to us, one by one, through the opening in the lower half of the door, so that we had to go on our knees for it; we received it in our cupped hands and ate it from the boards on which we sat and slept. The meal consisted of one pound of boiled rice, pressed together into a cake, and flavoured with a pinch of salt. We drank cold water from sections of bamboo, which had to be passed from hand to hand round the cell. These "cups"



The cells at the Kempetei headquarters

were not rinsed between one drinker and the next; this was forbidden on the grounds that it was a waste of precious drinking-water. The same excuse was given for the prohibition of washing—yet after every meal we saw the buckets of drinking-water being emptied into the drain outside the cell. The occupants took it in turns to take the latrine bucket outside to empty and wash it; this task was eagerly looked forward to—it enabled one to drink a few mouthfuls of water from the tap in the heat of the day, when the evening meal was many weary hours ahead.

These were the surroundings, and this was the life, into which I found myself thrown. I was put into Cell Three and the Doctor into Cell One. Almost the first face I saw as I crawled through the door was a familiar one, that of Lim Eng, who was one of William's friends.

'What are you doing here?' I asked in astonishment.

'They arrested me as I was connected with William and the radio set.'

'What set?'

'William brought it from Papan, and we listened to it in my house.'

Lim Eng, I knew, lived in a house only just across the road from that used by the Kempetei.

'What,' I exclaimed, 'you listened to the wireless in your own home, under the very noses of the Kempetei. That took some nerve. What kind of set was it?'

'A Philco, six valves.'

Josephine III! William must have disinterred her from her vault under the stairs and brought her to Ipoh to satisfy his hunger for the news. No wonder I had been called a liar when I had said it was a G.E.C. I had brought from Batu Gajah! It was not until later that I learned how the Japs had discovered William's possession of a set. He and Lim Eng had passed on the news, as I had in Papan, only to a small circle of intimate friends. But each member of that circle had his own friends too, and in the end it reached the ear of an informer (through the man's chauffeur) that a certain dealer in second-hand cars was receiving the news. The dealer was arrested and under torture or the threat of torture revealed that he heard the news from an elderly retired Government clerk, who was in turn

arrested. The usual Japanese methods drew from him the required information, and so the Kempetei followed the trail through the Chinese manager of a bus company and a young Eurasian business man to William and Lim Eng. Lim Eng's house was searched and the set found. Both were arrested, and William at length revealed under torture that he had brought the set from the house in Papan. So the Japs brought home to me responsibility for the existence of Josephine. It is difficult not to wonder at the persistence the Kempetei showed in following such a trail; there were no less than seven links in the chain which connected me with the Kempetei officer to whom the informer whispered his titbit of information.

I had not been in my cell for more than a few minutes, and had barely had time to digest the information which Lim Eng had given me, before I was called out for questioning. Sergeant Yoshimura was seated at his table which was placed outside on a balcony overlooking the garden. It was still early, the sun was pleasantly warm, and the lawns, shrubs and flowers around made a picture of peace and beauty. The Japanese offered me a chair, which I gladly accepted. 'Thank you, Officer,' I said as I sat down. He looked through the papers on the table before him.

'When questioned at the Toko office,' he began, 'you said that you had removed a G.E.C. set from Batu Gajah to Papan.'

'That was the truth.'

'It was a lie. We know the set was a Philco.'

'No, Officer. There was a Philco as well as a G.E.C. I can take you to Papan and show you to them if you like.'

'How many sets did you have altogether?'

What was I to answer to this? How much did the Japs know already? I resolved to tell the truth, since, if he had reason to doubt my answers, Yoshimura might well decide on an exhaustive questioning of all the occupants of No. 74. I was used to the methods of the Japs, and knew I could stand all they chose to do to me, but the same was by no means true of them.

'Five altogether, Officer,' I replied.

He flung down his pencil and seizing his cane banged me on the head with it. 'Are you mad?' he shouted.

'Five! What have you done with them all? I was never saner.'

'The radiogram I had before the war in Ipoh was surrendered to

the police according to your instructions, and another set was handed in at the Papan police station. I had two G.E.C. sets, but both went out of order and I buried the parts in the garden.'

'If you were so keen to listen in, why didn't you try to get them repaired?'

'Whom could I ask? And where could spare parts be obtained?'

'Barh is an electrical engineer. Why didn't you ask him to help you?'

'I didn't like anyone in the house to interfere in my affairs, or even to know anything about them.'

'Go on. What about the fifth?'

'A six-valve Philco. As far as I know it is still where I hid it in the house, and in working order.'

'The last three sets were not yours. Whom did you get them from?'

Again I thought it best to tell the truth, though it went against the grain to give away my own friends to the Japs. However, I felt that their crime could not be regarded by the Japs as a serious one—and events proved me right.

'The first G.E.C. belonged to Mr. Wong, of Papan. The second and the Philco belonged to George Matthews.'

He wrote something down, then, 'Did you ever send a wireless set to the guerillas?' he asked.

'Certainly not,' I said.

'Very well. We shall go to Papan, but if you can't produce the sets you mentioned it will be the worse for you.'

'I am content.'

I was led back to my cell, and called out again at midday. A lorry packed with fully armed police was waiting outside H.Q.; this was the great escort for our perilous journey. I was motioned by Yoshimura into his car, and we followed the escort out into the road. Arrived at Papan, we drew up outside the house, which I had not seen for nearly four months. Not until the force of police had jumped from their lorry and surrounded the house was I permitted to leave the car. Getting out, I looked around me; many of the faces I saw were familiar, but the people were so paralysed with fear that they dared give me no more than a scared and hurried glance as I stood there barefooted, ragged and dirty, and then avert their faces.

Mr. and Mrs. Weaver with their two sons were in the front room when I entered. It was easy to read the horror in their faces when they saw my appearance. I smiled and nodded to them, and asked for a crowbar. I then went into the cupboard under the stairs and started to attack the concrete of Josephine's vault. Of course, I knew this was useless, but I wanted to persuade the Kempetei that Lim Eng had told me nothing. After a few minutes work I turned round.

'Officer,' I said, 'the Philco isn't there.'

He raised his revolver, and my friends paled and shrank back. I was used to this performance and was unmoved by it.

'Let me ask one question, please, Officer.' Francis was standing beside me; I turned to him. 'Francis,' I said, 'who removed the set after it was sealed up here?'

'I don't know.'

I went up to him and grasped the front of his shirt with my right hand; I spoke as earnestly as I could. 'There is nothing to be afraid of. Please tell the truth and hide nothing.'

'William took it to Ipoh.'

'When was that?'

'About the end of September.'

'Do you hear that, Officer, nearly two months after my arrest.'

The Japanese turned to a policeman. 'Take her outside and guard her well. I want a word with this fellow.'

I was led out into the yard at the back of the house. To my surprise my guard turned to me and spoke in English.

'Do you want a drink, Missy?' I nodded. 'Go ahead,' he said, indicating the drinking-water tap. 'You can trust me.'

'Thank you,' I said, 'and God bless you.' I made the most of this unexpected opportunity to quench my thirst, and it warmed my heart to know that I was still among friends, even if they could do little to help me.

After we had waited for some minutes in the yard, Yoshimura joined us. 'Now for the damaged sets,' he said. I asked for a changkol—the large hoe used as a spade in Malaya—and led the way into the vegetable garden. So overgrown was the garden with weeds and shrubs that I could not find the right place in which to dig. The sun was hot and I had no strength. My slowness seemed to infuriate the Japanese; 'Hurry up,' he shouted. The truth was that

he was afraid to stay a moment longer than necessary in such a dangerous locality.

'Please can I ask Dominic to help me?'

Dominic was called. Between us we found the right place and soon dug up the tins containing Josephine I and her spare parts. They were taken over to Yoshimura who examined them while I stood some distance away. He soon detected that the parts were not enough for two sets; 'What about the other G.E.C.?' he asked. This question made me think fast. Pretending not to hear the question, and seeing that the Kempetei man was still examining Josephine, I turned and started to walk back to the house, Dominic beside me. I deliberately stumbled over a stone and fell; as Dominic stooped to help me up I whispered urgently to him, 'Did Moru bury the other set?'

'No, he took it with him up into the hills.'

This was the thing which of all I most dreaded to hear. So the Kempetei's suspicions were in fact well founded; if they obtained proof, it might well mean death for every member of the household. As the guards crowded round me and ordered me not to try to talk to Dominic or anyone else, I uttered a fervent prayer to Heaven for guidance. The Japanese repeated his question, 'What about the second set you say was buried here?'

'This way, Officer,' and I led the way towards Moru's house. Moru was safe in the hills, and I had somehow to persuade the Japanese that he had buried it. We reached the house and Yoshimura ordered that it be surrounded and searched. Moru's mother came to the door.

'Where is Moru?' I asked.

'Is Moru her son?' the Japanese asked me.

'Yes. I gave him the set and he wrapped up the parts and buried them in his garden one night when no one was about to see.'

'Where is your son?'

'He went to Telok Anson some months ago in search of work,' Moru's mother replied, 'and I haven't heard a word from him since.'

'How am I to know he hasn't taken the set and gone to join the guerillas with it?'

This was too near the truth for my liking. 'Listen, Officer,' I said, 'the set was a damaged one, or I wouldn't have gone to the trouble

and run the risk of bringing another from Batu Gajah. What use would be a damaged set to the guerillas, even if they have electricity to run a good one?’

‘You’re a clever liar. Why should I believe a word you say?’

‘Officer,’ I said, issuing a direct challenge which he could not ignore, ‘I’ll prove that what I say is true. I’ll dig up the whole of Moru’s garden myself until I find the set which I know is buried there.’

He looked at me for a moment, as if considering my suggestion, then turned back towards No.74, motioning me and my guards to follow him. ‘It would take too long.’ My relief was great.

On my return to the house I asked Yoshimura to be allowed to speak to my friends for a moment in his presence. ‘Certainly not,’ was the reply, but I ignored it. Going up to Mr. and Mrs. Weaver I shook them both by the hand, wishing them good-bye, and kissed Mrs. Weaver. They returned my greeting in a voice choked with tears of despair, and there seemed a constraint in their manner. Going outside I understood the reason; Francis and Dominic were being taken to Ipoh for questioning. Francis was seated in the car beside the driver, and his brother was in the lorry with the escort. Clearly their parents could not help holding me responsible for their sons’ arrest. I must do all in my power to save them from harm.

On the return journey the car was in the lead. Before we reached Lahat I spoke to Yoshimura. ‘Those radio parts are very precious, Officer,’ I said. ‘They ought to be in your possession.’ I had scarcely expected that he would act on my suggestion, but he did. As I had hoped, he got out of the car and went back to the lorry, taking the driver with him—he was far too great a man to carry anything for himself. I spoke rapidly to Francis. ‘You and Dominic must not try to hide anything about the sets; only say that Moru took Josephine II away and that you don’t know what he did with it. If they ask you about anything else, say that I would not permit anyone in the house to know anything about my private affairs. Stick to that, and leave the rest to me.’

Yoshimura returned with the driver carrying the parts of the damaged set, and not another word was spoken until I reached Ipoh. ‘Officer,’ I said as we got out of the car, ‘these boys have done nothing wrong. I am to blame for everything that happened in the

house, and I am prepared to take full responsibility. Please do not put them into the cells.’

‘Return to your cell at once,’ he ordered, but I stood my ground. We gazed at one another for a moment. Then he turned to one of the Haehos on duty: ‘Take these two and lock them up in the detention room,’ he said. I breathed a sigh of relief as I followed my guard back to my cell. The detention room was separate from our cells, and was not used for serious suspects. Prisoners there, I had already learned, were released as a rule after a day or two; they were allowed food and water in reasonable quantities, and were not beaten up as the other prisoners were.

Nevertheless, I was still anxious about them, and it grieved me to think that my actions had brought danger to them and distress to my kind friends their parents. I told Lim Eng what had happened.

‘Cheer up, Mrs. K,’ he said, ‘there can’t be anything serious against them. Would you like to talk to William?’

‘Where is he?’

‘Next door, in Number Two.’

‘I don’t think I will speak to him yet. I am so tired.’

Soon after this we received the daily ration of rice and water, and I felt stronger.

‘I am going to pray,’ I told the occupants of the cell. ‘Won’t you all join me? We all worship one God, though we call Him by different names, and He alone can save us.’

So we all knelt down in humble adoration and supplication praying together. ‘O God, maker of all things and of all men, our tormentors and our enemies as well as our friends and ourselves, we beseech Thee for the strength to bear our trials. We cannot know Thy purpose, but we pray Thee to keep us faithful to Thee to the end.’ Our prayers became a regular feature of life in Cell Three; every morning, noon and night we knelt together.

The next day, the 17th November, 1943, is one that I shall never forget as long as I live. My interrogation began at eight o’clock in the morning and continued until late evening. I doubt my ability to give an adequate impression of the methods used and the effect those methods had on me. I could not hope for mercy; it was as inaccessible as the moon. The chief feeling was of utter helplessness; my fate was governed by the incalculable caprice of my tormentors.

Both physical and mental pain were employed to force out the truth. In addition every effort was made so to confuse me with sudden changes of subject, constant repetitions and covering of ground exhaustively gone over many times before, and sheet inconsequential lunacy, that I almost contradicted myself and fell into the various traps laid for me by the way. A clear head and a quick wit were invaluable allies, but not easy to maintain when I was throbbing with pain from head to foot.

Yoshimura began about Francis and Dominic. 'In your previous statement you said that Dominic was a schoolboy.'

'That is correct.'

'Where was Francis employed before the war?'

'He worked in a provision store.'

'He has told us he was a soldier, and that you wanted him to fight the Nippon forces. That is why he was in Singapore.'

'That is not true. I never saw him in uniform. He went to Singapore on holiday just before the war.'

'How do you know there is a war?'

'Because I am your prisoner.'

'Did these boys listen to the wireless?'

'I wouldn't let them. I kept the key to the cupboard myself.'

So began another endless series of questions asked over and over again, and every minute detail of my answers pounced upon and made the subject of fresh questions. Yoshimura used every torture he could devise to break down my resistance and make me say something which would incriminate the Weaver boys. I prayed constantly for strength to persist.

'How did Dominic know the right place to dig for the parts of the G.E.C.?'

'He helped me to bury them. I ordered him to do so.'

'So you were the boss in the house, and they were all afraid of you.'

'That is perfectly true—Officer, won't you please release those boys? They had nothing to do with all this and their parents are old and sick. It will kill them if anything happens to their sons. I am alone to blame for everything that went on in the house. Please let them go home.'

'Will you keep quiet?' shouted the Japanese, beating me over

the head and shoulders with his cane. 'You are the worst prisoner I have ever had.'

'How should I know how a prisoner ought to behave? I have never been in such a position before. Please have a heart and release those boys.'

He said nothing, but stared at me for a short space of time, then went away for his midday meal. I was not taken back to my cell but left in the charge of two Haehos.

When Yoshimura came back he reopened a subject which I had hoped was closed.

'I am not satisfied with your answers about your dealings with the guerillas,' he began, and started to go bit by bit in minute detail over the statements I had already made. The same questions were asked repeatedly and in different forms; the Japanese was hoping that, tired and confused, I would at length contradict myself and make some damning admission. However, I stuck to every word I had said; he could not get me to shift my position an inch. At length he gave an order which turned my heart to stone; turning to a Haeho, 'Go and fetch her little daughter here,' he said.

I rushed across and tried to drag the man back as he was entering the car, but was hauled back to my place before the table. 'Officer,' I begged, 'please leave Dawn out of this.'

The car moved away. 'You love your child, don't you?' asked the Japanese.

'What mother doesn't?'

'Then you can prove your love when you see her.'

'What are you going to do?'

'You will know when she arrives.'

I waited anxiously. Were they going to try to make Dawn betray her own mother? Or was it a new mental torture they had in store for me? At length the car returned and, for the first time in four months, I set eyes on my darling daughter as she came running towards me across the green lawn. 'Mummy, Mummy!' she cried happily. I moved forward to take her in my arms, but the sergeant stepped between us and held me back. 'That is not allowed,' he said. 'But tell us all you know and you shall see as much of your daughter as you wish.' I was silent. He turned to a Haeho and ordered him to tie Dawn's hands behind her back. Again I rushed forward but was

rudely pushed back and tied to one of the pillars of the summer-house. There were tears in Dawn's eyes as she looked at me. 'Don't cry, darling,' I called.

The interrogation continued. 'Speak!' roared the Japanese. 'Tell us all about the guerillas, or we'll burn your daughter before your eyes. Speak! Speak! Speak!' And he lashed me over the head and shoulders with his cane. They could beat me as long as they liked; I could stand that. But supposing they decided to try their beastly methods in order to make Dawn tell them what she knew? I dared not contemplate the thought. Or what if Yoshimura put his threat into action and made me choose between maintaining my stubborn silence and saving my daughter from a fearful death? I could not believe that even a Japanese could be so inhuman—but the power-crazed monsters were capable of mixing the tenderest sentiment with the most brutal cruelty, their actions and motives were entirely incomprehensible to decent folk.

My beating continued until I could scarcely stand but hung limp in the bonds which tied me to the pillar. Now, on a command from the Japanese, a couple of Haehos tied a rope round Dawn's chest, threw the other end over a branch some ten feet from the ground, and hauled her up, her hands tied behind her back, into the tree. The tree was swarming with ants and my daughter was soon wriggling uncomfortably as they bit her.

'Are the ants hurting you, Dawn darling?'

'I can stand it, Mummy. Don't worry.'

Then to my horror a brazier was brought, and at a word from Yoshimura the glowing coals were emptied out and spread on the ground below my daughter's feet. Nearby was a pile of wood and a tin of kerosene.

'Now speak,' said the Japanese, 'or your daughter is finished.'

For a moment I lost control of myself. Fighting madly against the bonds that held me I shrieked aloud;



Dawn was suspended from the tree

my husband was in the cell nearby, but prevented from seeing what was going on.

'Ziew, Ziew,' I yelled. 'They're burning Dawn alive.'

My cries brought the entire staff of the Kempetei headquarters out to the back of the house to see what was going on. The Japanese M.P.s laughed to see my struggles at the pillar.

'Speak! Speak!' roared Yoshimura above my cries.

Then I heard Dawn's voice from the tree. 'Don't tell, Mummy. I love you and we'll die together. Jesus will be waiting for us.'

'Speak!' repeated the Japanese, and ordered the Haehos to throw wood on to the glowing coals. 'Speak, or they will lower your daughter into the fire.'

Dawn's words had given me courage. 'My darling, I love you,' I called out, then turned to the Japanese. 'Is this the bravery of Dai Nippon, to torture and kill a little child? I always thought the Japanese were cowards: now I know that it is true.'

A furious rain of blows descended upon my head and shoulders, but I scarcely felt the pain. I prayed as I had never prayed before. 'Holy Mother of God, have mercy,' I repeated over and over again; 'Queen of Heaven, save my child. Spare my baby, O Mary; don't let my Dawn die.'

I was scarcely aware of the crowd that had gathered to watch



... while her mother was tied to a pillar of the summer-house.



Dawn's bravery recognised

my agony, until all at once I realised that there was a change. The crowd of Haehos and hangers-on had parted, and the Japanese military policemen had come rigidly to attention. A Japanese officer whom I had never seen before, but whom I realised must be of a very senior rank, strode over from the building and took in at a glance what was happening. He gave a few sharp commands in a guttural voice; at once one Japanese ran to lower Dawn from the tree while another held out his arms

and received her in them, then untied her hands. At the same time I felt my own bonds being released. My prayer had been answered, and Dawn was safe! I scarcely waited to be freed before rushing forward and gathering my daughter in my arms. I was almost intoxicated with the relief. Waving my right hand triumphantly in the air, 'Long live Malaya and the British,' I shouted. And turning to Yoshimura, 'You'll pay for your crimes when Malaya is British again!' I said. He rushed at me in fury, knocked me to the ground with one blow of his fist, then kicked me savagely in the face as I lay helpless at his feet. I slowly got up, staring at him as I did so, and he lashed out with his cane at Dawn, catching her on the forehead. She did not utter a sound, and at once his mood changed. He sat down at the table and drew Dawn on to his knee. She sat motionless and refused to look at him.

'Would you like a nice drink, and some sweet biscuits?' he asked gently.

'No, thank you,' was the cold reply.

'Your mother is a very wicked woman,' he said, 'but you are worse.'

'Officer,' I interrupted, 'please send Dawn home.'

He said nothing, but ordered me to be taken back to my cell.

'Don't let them give you anything to eat or drink,' I told Dawn before I was led off.

'Very well, Mummy,' she said, and I knew that I could trust her to resist the efforts of the Japanese to win her over.

On the way back to my cell I ignored the Haeho who was escorting me, and stopped outside the door of Cell One where my husband was.

'Ziew,' I called out, 'Dawn is saved.'

'Thank God. I heard your cries, Bil, and prayed.'

'Listen, Ziew,' I continued, since the Haeho was a short distance off, unlocking the door of my cell. 'I have stuck to my statement about the guerillas, but I had to tell the Japs about Raja* and George Matthews giving us the wireless sets.'

'Very well, Bil. I understand.'

Back in my cell, a wave of fear crept over me once more. Yoshimura still had Dawn in his power; what was he doing now? It was agony to be shut up without knowledge of what was going on outside. I must have become for the moment crazy with anxiety. I scarcely know what I did, but the other occupants of the cell told me that I rushed from door to window like a mad thing, yelling and banging on the walls, and even using the opening in the lower half of the door to support one foot while I climbed as high as I could on the door in a vain attempt to look through the bars and see over the high partition outside. They tried to pacify me, but I was not to be consoled. At length the Indian sentry on duty took pity on me and relieved my anxiety. 'Don't worry, Missy,' he said. 'The little one is all right. She is sitting with the officers and they are treating her kindly.'

Next, I learned that William had been called for questioning. After a time he returned to his cell and I heard his tap on the wall. This was the signal for us to talk through the windows at the back of the cells.

'Listen, Mummy,' he said. 'Dawn is quite all right. She has gone home, and Francis and Dominic have been released too. They all went off together.'

I could not have wanted to hear better news. The relief was so great that I fell to the floor in a dead faint. When I came to, I did not fail to utter the most heartfelt thanks to Heaven for the mercy shown to me and my child.

* Editor's note: This seems inconsistent with the rest of the book: Raja, the radio mechanic, did not provide any wireless set. See Chapter 8, pp. 67-68.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE GREATER PART OF THE NIGHT I SPENT IN prayer. Dawn's release had lifted a great burden from my mind, but I could not help wondering what new torments the Japanese would devise for me. As I prayed, however, I felt confidence and strength gathering within me. My whole body ached with the beatings I had received; the side of my face, which had suffered the impact of the sergeant's boot, was causing me great pain. It throbbed with every beat of my pulse, sending spasms of sharp agony through my head. But when morning came, my spirit was calm and I felt able to bear the worst of what might be done to me.

As on the previous day, I was called out to the summer-house at the back of the building. But to begin with I was not questioned. My husband was brought from his cell, and, while I stood helpless beside a sentry in the summer-house, was unmercifully beaten before my eyes. At every pause came the insistent yell, 'Speak! Speak!', and he would repeat that he had already told all he knew, I could do nothing but pray. After a while Yoshimura turned his attention once more to me, hoping that the sight of my husband's agony would bring from me further admissions. He had the Doctor taken to the very tree in which Dawn had been strung up the day before. His hands were tied together behind his back with one end of a length of rope, the other end of which was thrown over a branch about fifteen feet from the ground. The rope was then hauled until my husband could only just rest the weight of his body on the tips of his toes. If he once relaxed in this uncomfortable posture his whole weight fell on the muscles of his shoulders, twisted by the position of his arms behind him.

'Now speak,' the sergeant said, turning to me. 'Your husband will stay there until you do.'

I looked at my husband. The pallor of his face and the lines of pain and exhaustion I saw there brought tears to my eyes, but there

was a look of stubborn determination there too and I caught a glance that told me that he would not give in, and that I should not either.

'I have nothing more to say. I've told you everything.'

The familiar routine began again—the same questions, the same answers, the same blows, the same insistent 'Speak! Speak! Speak!' By now my answers came almost mechanically, and it seemed to me that the Japanese had almost given up hope of getting anything more from me. At length he rose from his chair, as if to indicate that he had finished with me for the time being.

'Officer,' I said, 'please release the Doctor. I am at your disposal, and you can do what you like with me. There is no need for him to suffer.'

He looked at us both for a moment, then ordered a Haeho to cut down the Doctor from the tree. This was done, and the Japanese went away for his midday meal, leaving us in charge of the armed Indian sentries.

My husband had been released from his agonising position, but his hands were still tied behind his back, and he was made to sit in the hot sun, with a guard over him. I could see that he was on the verge of collapse and called out for someone to bring him water. At length a Japanese came from the building and asked what was the matter.

'The Doctor is ill, Officer. Please let him have some water and allow him to sit in the shade.'

'No, that is not allowed.'

'I know it is not allowed, but please show some mercy.'

'Very well, but you must first kiss my feet.'

Such a gesture, humiliating though it was, was more degrading to him than to me. As he ordered, I stooped and kissed his boots three times. He grinned complacently.

'Take that flask of iced tea from the table in the summer-house and give him a drink. But you must not talk.'

'Thank you, Officer.'

There was not much tea left in the flask, and the Japanese looked on while my husband swallowed it in a couple of gulps.

'I will send some more,' he said and walked away. A few minutes later his driver appeared with another bottle of tea. I

poured glass after glass from the bottle, and from another which the driver willingly brought, and held them while my husband drank, his hands still tied behind his back. Then I helped him to move into the shadow of the trees, and returned to the summer-house.

After an hour or so Sergeant Yoshimura returned, still picking his teeth and belching after his meal. He gave an order, and the Doctor was led back to his cell. Then he sat down at his table and looked through some papers while I stood waiting before him.

'Would you like a drink?' he asked, after a long pause.

The sentry had prevented me from drinking any of the tea brought for my husband, and I felt parched with thirst.

'No, thank you, Officer,' I said.

'Try some iced tea. You will find it refreshing.'

'I want nothing from you.'

'Have you not reconsidered your decision? Are you going to tell me the truth?'

'There is nothing to reconsider.'

He sat looking at me for a moment, then to my surprise ordered me back to my cell.

Every morning in the cells we could hear the roll being called. I was not surprised when I heard the names of Mr. Wong and George Matthews read out a day or two after I had revealed to the Japanese their connection with Josephine. When I was next called up for interrogation, Yoshimura began with a reference to them.

'You passed on the news you heard over the wireless to your friends Matthews and Wong, and asked them to spread propaganda and slander against the Nippon Government.'

'I did tell them the news, but it was on the strict understanding that they were not to repeat it to anyone.'

'Why did they not surrender their sets?'

'When the order came out I asked them not to as I had a use for them. I told them to say if questioned that their sets had been looted.'

'Was Wong one of the guerrillas?'

'I don't know who were the guerillas, but I'm sure that Mr. Wong was not one.'

'Then why did he remain in Papan?'

'The Government would not give him a house in Batu Gajah,

though he works in the hospital there. Officer, these two are innocent people who have been involved by my fault. If they have committed a crime I am responsible for it. You can do what you like to me, but please let them go.'

'So you are responsible for all this trouble, are you?'

'I am, and no one else.'

'You have done everything in your power to harm the great Nippon Government, setting good and honest people against us.'

'I admit the truth of what you say.'

'And you are still lying to me; you refuse to tell me the whole truth. Do you know what I am going to do if you won't co-operate? I am going to have your husband and your little daughter tied together to an iron bar and roasted before your eyes. What do you say to that?'

'I cannot prevent you from committing such a crime if you are determined on it. You people have all the power in this country and can do what you like. But I cannot tell you any more than I have told you already.'

My words seemed to throw him into a frenzy of exasperation. First he picked up a light cane and thrashed me with that. Then, finding it inadequate, he seized from the floor a heavy wooden bar and beat me about the back and shoulders. As I reeled and staggered under the force of his infuriated violence, a severe blow caught me squarely on the spine. I felt an acute spasm of pain throughout my body, and fell to the ground in a dead faint. After what seemed an age I came to and found myself being half dragged, half carried to my cell.

Next day the pain in my spine was intense and there seemed to be no strength left in my legs. It was all I could do to place one foot before the other when called for interrogation, and I felt I was very close to the limit of my endurance. This time I was led into the house itself. Yoshimura was seated at a table in a large and comfortably furnished room; seeing my weakness he waved me to a chair, in which I thankfully sat down. There was a change in my tormentor's manner, and I wondered what this meant for me.

'I want to know all about the news you have been listening to,' he began.

This was a welcome surprise. By telling the truth about the

progress of the war I could perhaps strike a blow, however puny, at the Japanese self-confidence. 'I will gladly tell you all I have heard, Officer,' I said. 'You will forgive me if I cannot remember all the details, but at least I shall get the major items right.'

I began by outlining what I could remember of the sequence of Japanese successes in the Pacific—the capture of Singapore, the conquest of Java and Sumatra, and of Burma—and the sergeant's face lit up with in almost childish delight at the memory of those heroic and exhilarating days. Then I went on to the subject of Japan's naval defeat at the Battle of the Coral Seas, and watched with a secret joy and fascination how his expression changed to one of frustration and rage. I described as best I could how the tide of Japanese advance had lapped the Australian continent, and had then begun to recede.

'And now,' I said, 'you are being driven step by step out of the Solomon Islands. How could your politicians have supposed that they would escape retribution for the treacherous attack at Pearl Harbour? Were they so blind as to think that they could challenge the whole might of the United States and get away with it?'

'What do you know about the campaign in the Solomon Islands?'

'I know how the air, naval and land forces of the Allies are in combination an irresistible weapon. And every island regained brings the American bombers within closer range of Japan itself.'

The mention of a threat to the sacred homeland roused the Japanese to a frenzy of rage. 'How dare you say such a thing?' he shrieked, seizing his cane from the table and raining on my head and shoulders a shower of blows.

I was well used to such outbursts by now, and bore the pain with such patience as I could command. 'You asked me to tell you everything, Officer, so I am hiding nothing.'

'Very well; then you must know that our forces will soon be in India.'

'I didn't know that. But I do know that the British are building up great forces in India and will soon win back Burma. Then the road to China will be open again and a great stream of supplies will be rolling to Japan's oldest enemy.'

'Do you think our bombers can do nothing?'

'They did make a few raids on some towns in India, but now the

British Spitfires are making it impossible for them to reach a worthwhile target.'

'We Nippons are not afraid of Spitfires.'

'Perhaps not, Officer, but the Germans certainly are. Nearly every day Mr. Churchill is sending thousands of planes to bomb Germany.'

'I did not ask you about Mr. Churchill.'

'You asked me about the news, Officer, and Mr. Churchill had to come in with the news, whatever you may think. Do you not know that Mr. Churchill is one of the very greatest wartime leaders Britain has ever had?'

'Go on with what news you have heard.'

'Just before my arrest the Allies had ended the North African campaign with a great victory, and stood ready to obtain a foothold on the mainland of Italy itself. With the Mediterranean free, the route to the East is much shorter for the Allied shipping, and supplies and troops will arrive all the quicker for the defeat of Japan.'

'You have been listening to British propaganda and swallowing everything. When did you hear of Italy's surrender?'

I had just sufficient presence of mind to realise that a trap was being laid for me. The news of Italy's surrender had come through after my arrest. It had been whispered about the Central Police Station cells, and I had obtained confirmation through Samy and Suppan.

'So Italy has surrendered, has she? That is good news. And you have lost an ally.'

'Answer my question.'

'I knew nothing of it until this moment, when you mentioned it. I was not able to listen after the middle of July, and Italy had not surrendered then.'

'Now, what was your motive in risking your neck to listen to British broadcasts?'

'Curiosity; I wanted to know the truth. Under the British we were always able to hear the news, however unpleasant it was.'

'Who was the British agent to whom you passed on what you heard?'

'There was none. Do you think any agent would be so brave and

skilful as to operate in Malaya today? I never trusted anyone with the news except George Matthews and Mr. Wong. I knew they would never give me away, and anyhow they were themselves implicated, since they had supplied me with the sets. And I made them promise never to pass on to anyone else what I told them.'

As I spoke, I felt a cold sweat start out all over my body, a wave of blackness spread before my eyes, and I knew no more.

When I recovered consciousness I was lying on the lawn outside the house, and Yoshimura himself was holding a glass of water to my lips. 'You must be hungry,' he said when he saw that I was myself again. 'I have had some food prepared for you. I know you are a vegetarian, so it's just vegetables and rice. Eat as much, and drink as much water, as you like.'

I said nothing, but dragged myself to my feet and followed the Haeho to the kitchen at the back of the house, where an elderly Japanese woman was in charge. She had a kind face, and smiled at me as she handed me a plate piled with steaming fragrant rice. I sat down to eat, and as I did so could not help thinking of the stories I had heard about the last meals given to prisoners condemned to death. The change in Yoshimura's manner seemed to indicate that he had finally given up hope of getting any further information from me. If so, the Kempetei could have no object in keeping me alive any longer and I could expect death very soon. The thought did not disturb me. Death would be a welcome relief after the torments of the past few weeks, and I had the consolation of knowing that my family would be safe, and that I had successfully resisted all attempts to wring from me information about the guerillas and their contacts. Meanwhile, I was hungry, the plate before me smelt delicious, and I fell to with a hearty appetite.

When I had eaten and drunk my fill, I was, again brought before Sergeant Yoshimura. 'Have you enjoyed your meal?' he asked.

'Yes, thank you, Officer.'

'You will remain here for the rest of the day. Sit down and rest. There will be no one guarding you, but you needn't try to escape.'

'I should never be so foolish, when you hold my husband as a hostage.'

He nodded and walked away. I lay back in the comfortable chair, surrounded by the luxuries of a rich man's room, and tried to

compose my mind in preparation for the final ordeal which I felt certain was not far off. So the day passed peacefully, and in the evening I was led back to my cell.

It seemed during the next few days that the Kempetei had forgotten my existence. Newcomers were thrust in to join the shifting population of Cell Three; others were dragged off for interrogation, execution or release, but no summons came for me. I slept little—usually an hour or two in the early morning—and spent the rest of the night in prayer and self-examination. During the day I felt cheerful and composed, and did my best to make things easier for the other inmates of the cell.

These varied in number, but were usually between seven and ten. For most of the time I was the only woman in a company of men, and was invariably treated with the utmost courtesy and consideration. Lim Eng made himself my special companion and protector; he and I, with two other Chinese youths, Chin Hwa and "Andy", established ourselves in one corner of the cell, and "messed" together. Our rice was given to us every evening in a loose lump, without any sort of receptacle, and the majority of the prisoners ate it off the stinking, vermin-infested floorboards of the cell. Lim Eng, however, insisted on taking off his singlet and spreading it over the planks for use as a table-cloth or communal plate. After the meal he would shake it out (the grains of rice that fell from it were eagerly pounced upon and devoured) and wear it for the next twenty-four hours. The ration was barely enough to keep us alive, and hunger was always with us; yet Chin Hwa never ate more than half his rice and, despite our protests, insisted on sharing the remainder out among the rest of us. This gave us, one evening, the idea of saving half of our ration to eat in the morning. Andy tore one sleeve off his already tattered shirt and wrapped the rice up in it; I took the bundle and hid it under my dress from the prying eyes of the sentries, since what we were doing was strictly forbidden. When the light went out and we lay down to sleep with the comforting thought of an unaccustomed breakfast awaiting us, the bundle was placed up against the wall, where Andy's body shielded it from the beams of the powerful torches carried by the men of the Kempetei on their rounds. Soon all the inmates of the cell were asleep, and the silence was broken only by a light snore, a groan, or a half-

stifled cry which suggested that night had brought to at least one sleeper no relief from the nightmares of the day. According to my custom, I made no attempt to sleep, but lay awake concentrating on my prayers. All at once my attention was caught by a rustling sound, as if something was being dragged over the floor. I sat up and by the dim light from outside the door saw a huge rat dragging our precious bundle of rice along the wall towards the edge of the sleeping-platform. I uttered a sharp cry, but the brute took no notice whatever, and none of the sleepers stirred. Leaning over the recumbent forms of Chin Hwa and Andy, I was just in time to grab our breakfast before it vanished over the edge of the platform. Even then the rat did not release its hold until I struck at it with my other hand. Our precious hoard was saved, and we took care after this narrow escape that the bundle of rice was securely lodged under someone's head before we went to sleep.

The night in Ipoh can be distinctly chilly, especially after heavy rain, and in our weakened condition, without any additional clothes or other covering, we felt the cold acutely. Lim Eng had been wearing only a singlet and a pair of shorts at the time of his arrest; he and I were particularly wretched when the nights were cold, until Chin Hwa and Andy, seeing our plight and being rather better clad themselves, removed their underpants to give us some sort of a blanket—and very welcome it was. More than the cold, however, and the hunger, the complete absence of any facilities for washing made my life a misery. One morning I plucked up courage, and, crouching down beside the aperture in the lower half of the door through which our rations were passed to us, begged the sentry to let me go to the tap and have a wash. I had not realised, unfortunately, that a Japanese military policeman was at that moment standing right beside the door, outside my line of vision. The first intimation of his presence was a heavily booted foot, which flashed through the aperture at which I was crouching. I moved my head just in time to avoid a heavy kick in the face, but the toe of the boot caught the side of my knee, tearing off a large flap of skin. I fell to the ground and lay there for a time too weak to move, until Andy and Lim Eng helped me to my place in the corner.

One evening a middle-aged Chinese was flung into our cell in a state of collapse. His face was marked with the scars of cigarette

burns, and his soaked garments and general condition indicated that he had suffered the dreaded water treatment. I did my best with what wretched resources were available to make him comfortable, and at length he was sufficiently recovered to thank me and to tell me that he was charged assisting the Communist guerillas. 'But I have only one answer to all their questions,' he said. 'Whatever they ask—even if it is only my name—I say "*ta'-tahu*"—"I don't know". That's the only safe answer to give these devils.' I refrained from asking him any more questions and henceforth he went among us by the name of "*Ta'-Tahu*".

Two days later, *Ta'-Tahu* was brought back into the cell in an even worse condition than before. He lay apparently lifeless, but for a faint tremor in his pulse and an occasional gasping breath; we all did what we could for him, but I did not think he would last until morning. After some hours, when the whole cell was asleep but for me, he recovered consciousness and cried out in a weak voice for water. 'Hush,' I said, 'I'll try to get you some. But don't make a sound, or you'll bring the Japs.'

The sentry, an Indian soldier, was pacing slowly up and down outside the cell. I had to appeal to his charity, but might get nothing but a stream of curses for my trouble; however, I could only do my best. I knelt beside the door and listened carefully to make sure that there was no one else about, then 'Soldier!' I whispered as the sentry passed opposite me.

'What do you want? Talking is not allowed. Go and sleep.'

'The coast is clear, and I want to talk. Tell me, why do you carry just the butt of a rifle with you on duty guard at night?'

'They only give us a broken rifle which falls in two whenever you touch it. The barrel makes such a clatter falling off that we leave it in the guard-room. Why are you here?'

'I'm a prisoner like yourself, and I need your help.'

The sentry said nothing, but did not move away from the door, so I continued. 'That man in the corner is dying of thirst and exhaustion. A drink of water might save him and only you can provide that.'

'If I'm caught I lose my head.'

'If he doesn't get a drink he loses his life.'

'Wait.'

He went off and returned a moment later with a bottle of cold

water which he passed through the opening in the door. I received it with a word of thanks and went over to poor Ta'-Tahu. Supporting his head gently with one hand, I held the bottle to his lips with the other, and was in the act of tilting it so that the precious liquid ran into his mouth when the sound of loud footsteps on the concrete verandah outside announced the arrival of the Kempetei officer on his rounds. I had just time to stand the uncorked bottle on the floor between my knees where it was covered by the skirt of my dress as I knelt, and to clasp my hands before me in an attitude of prayer, when the powerful beam of the M.P.'s torch swept slowly round the cell, rested on me for a moment, then passed on.

'Does she never sleep at night?' I heard the Japanese ask the sentry.

'She is always praying, Tuan,' was the reply, and the Japanese moved on. I poured the rest of the water down the sick man's throat, and as I passed the empty bottle back to the sentry I knew I had found in him a friend who might prove of value. Next day, however, his unit's tour of guard duty was over and all the sentries were changed.

It might perhaps have been better for Ta'-Tahu if he had died that night. After two more days of interrogation he was taken out for execution and we did not see him again.

A day or two later William tapped on the wall, when I spoke to him through the window at the back of the cell told me that he had signed his statement and that the Doctor had done the same. I breathed a sigh of relief. This meant that as far as the Japanese were concerned their cases were closed; no further attempts would be made to wring more information out of them. Their statements would be the only evidence produced at their trial, which would be nothing but a hasty formality, and they would then be sentenced. The sentence, I was sure, would be a few months' imprisonment for William, a few years, perhaps, for the Doctor. How one's standards alter in times of trouble! Before the war, a prison sentence would have been unthinkable for a man of the Doctor's background and age—it would have been a living death. Now prison life appeared in prospect as a luxurious holiday or rest cure after the torments of the Kempetei cells. Both William and the Doctor had admitted to having listened to the forbidden radio; the Doctor had also con-

fessed having treated sick guerillas under compulsion—but he had staunchly denied having had anything to do with wounded men. The same day, Lim Eng too was called from the cell and on his return told me that he had signed his statement and admitted having listened to the radio. I later heard that George Matthews and Mr. Wong too had admitted the charges against them. The news that the lives of those I had implicated were safe gave me strength and courage to continue my duel with Yoshimura; whatever I said or did now, only I should be made to suffer for it.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

YOSHIMURA'S ROOM, WHEN I WAS AT LENGTH brought to it after a respite which must have lasted over a week, wore a more formal air than usual. The sergeant himself was in uniform, his sword on the table before him, and a number of other members of the Kempetei were grouped around him, watching me as I walked as firmly as I was able into the room. As I stood at the table, I could see that Yoshimura was holding in his hands a large sheet of paper on which were written a number of sentences in the formal Japanese script. This I guessed—correctly—to be a statement of the charges against me.

For a moment my chief tormentor and I looked at one another in silence. I seemed to read in his glance a kind of unwilling admiration, and I understood that he had at last withdrawn from the conflict and left me in possession of the field—for what it was worth.

'Sybil Daly,' he began, 'you have been very stubborn all along, and have caused yourself a lot of unnecessary suffering, and us a lot of trouble. Tell me, why do you hate the Nippon Government so?'

'May I answer frankly, Officer,' I said, 'or will you beat me again if I tell you what you do not like to hear?'

'Speak out. You are not worth beating any more. You can say what you like.'

'I hate your Government because you Japanese think that your strength gives you the right to act as tyrants everywhere. You treat the people of Malaya like ill-bred dogs who can respect only the boot and the whip. You forget that Malaya has been ruled by the British for generations now, and has learnt to follow a way of life far more civilised than yours.'

'We are only following the example of the British, who founded their Empire by conquest and oppression.'

'But they brought civilisation to Malaya, and it is too late for you to try to follow an example hundreds of years old.'

'The British will never come back. They ran away and left you.'

'That is a lie! They were not prepared for your treacherous blows and were forced to leave; but you know well that they are on their way back even now. It will not be long before you have to leave even more swiftly than you arrived.'

'You have been deceived and duped by the lies of your British friends. South-East Asia is free of them for ever; they will never return where they have once been driven out. We Japanese have nothing to fear from the future—but you must think of the present. The crimes you have committed have earned you a hundred deaths, and the British cannot save you. You are completely at our mercy, but you can save yourself. You have only to co-operate with us, to tell us all we want to know, and you shall live in freedom and in a luxury you have never dreamed of. You and your husband, your mother and your children, shall have the finest house in Ipoh to live in; you shall have cars, servants, as much money as you want, power and prestige. You are an intelligent woman—you have only to be reasonable.'

'The bait is a tempting one. For such a bait would you, Officer, betray your Emperor?'

'Of course not! That is quite different.'

'Not at all. If you would not betray your country and Emperor, you have no right to ask me to turn traitor to mine.' He made no reply, and I went on, 'Officer, you mentioned the crimes that I have committed; may I know what are the charges against me?'

He hesitated for a moment, then glanced down at the paper before him.

'You are accused, first,' he said, 'of acting as a spy on behalf of and in co-operation with the enemy agents in Malaya. Second, of giving medical attention and other assistance to the Communist guerillas and outlaws. Third, of possessing a radio set, listening to enemy broadcasts and disseminating enemy propaganda. Each of these charges carries a death sentence.'

'How are you going to kill me? I refuse to be hanged—you will have to shoot me.'

'The penalty for your crimes is beheading.'

'So you will bury me as a headless body, and I suppose exhibit my head in public as evidence of your barbarism. One form of

death, I imagine, is much like another when you are dead, but you will have to pay the penalty for what you do. You may not act without the sanction of your superiors, but do not think that will save you when the British return. Your crimes will then bring their proper reward.'

'As I told you, we do not fear the future, and it does not concern you. But you can still have your freedom if you want it. I shall come back in two or three hours' time. In the meanwhile you may think over the offer we have made you, and let me know your decision when I return. Think carefully over what I have said.'

With that he strode from the room, leaving me, not to consider or regret the answer I had made, but to compose my thoughts in the certainty of death.

It did not seem a long time before the Japanese was back again. 'Well?' he said, standing before me. 'Have you changed your mind?'

'No, and nothing will ever make me change.'

No flicker of feeling crossed his face. 'That is a pity,' he said as he took his seat at the table. 'You are a brave woman.'

He picked up the pen as if to sign the document before him, then for a moment his sense of frustration burst out in a blaze of fury. He hurled the pen at me, then seized one of the slippers into which he had changed during his absence from the room and, with a torrent of rough-sounding Japanese imprecations, flung it with all his force at my chest. I stood for a moment, then without a word stooped down, picked up the pen and replaced it on the table, took the slipper and laid it down beside the sergeant's feet. His calm regained, he signed the paper and ordered the Haehos to take me back to my cell.

As I passed the door of my husband's cell I paused and spoke to him through the small opening in the lower part of the door. 'How are you, Ziew?' I called.

'Hullo, Bil,' came the reply. 'The Haehos say we are all going to be released.'

'That is good news if it's true. Let us hope for the best.' I did not tell him that I had just received what amounted to my death sentence, nor did I mention it to any of my companions in Cell Three.

Three days later I was again called into Yoshimura's presence.

'Does the prospect of death still attract you more than life and freedom?' he asked. 'Have you changed your mind yet?'

'I have not, and you are wasting your time in waiting for me to do so.'

'You may choose death for yourself, but what about your family? Why should you deny them freedom and wealth?'

'They will never accept your freedom and wealth if betrayal is the price to be paid. I tell you, you are wasting your time.'

For some time the sergeant argued with me, but, it seemed to me, without any expectation of convincing me. At length he gave up. 'Very well,' he said, 'I can do nothing more for you,' and picking up a sheaf of typewritten papers from his table, 'Here is a copy in English of the statements you have made under interrogation. It wants your signature.'

I picked up the papers and a glance showed me that they contained a full admission of all the charges against me—admissions I had never made.

'These are all lies,' I exclaimed, throwing the papers down on the table. 'I am not a spy, and have never said I was.'

The sergeant shrugged his shoulders, picked up instead the sheet on which were set out the charges against me, and read them out to me. 'Do you understand the charges?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Then please sign the sheet, to show that you have heard them and understand them.'

A translation in English had been added below the Japanese characters; I read through this and put my name to it. Then my thumb was pressed on to a pad of red ink and a print taken beside my signature. Yoshimura signed his name below mine and sealed it with the seal carried by every Japanese with any official standing. As he did so I felt that my fight was over. I need struggle no more, but submit to whatever the future might bring.

Next day the Haehos told us that the Kempetei had finished with us and that we were to be handed over to the civil authorities. A truck would take us to the prison at Batu Gajah.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

WHEN WE LEFT THE KEMPETEI WE HAD BEEN IN their hands just one month, though it seemed ten times longer. It was about midday when the door of my cell was unlocked and I crawled out on all fours like a dog to find the Doctor and William, with several other prisoners, and an escort of armed guards, waiting on the verandah. The Doctor was so weak that he could not stand without assistance; he was leaning on William's arm and looked very ill and weary. He opened his mouth to speak when he saw me but a guard struck him in the face and told him to keep quiet. I found that I could scarcely walk, and two Haehos were obliged to help me along in order to keep up with the others as we were marched round to the front of the building where a lorry was waiting. We prisoners were made to scramble into the back, and our wrists were tied cruelly with sharp wire to prevent our escaping. An armed Indian soldier travelled with us, but I was able to exchange a few words with my husband.

'You look terrible, Ziew; what is the matter?'

'There's a huge abscess on my thigh. It will have to be operated on before it poisons me altogether.'

'Don't worry, they'll attend to it in the prison hospital. You must keep your health and strength, Ziew, in order to look after the children when the British return. You must do that, whatever happens to me.'

Our conversation was roughly cut short by the guard, who pushed the Doctor into the farther corner of the lorry. The vehicle was an open one, and the sun beat savagely down on our unaccustomed heads and shoulders. Nevertheless, it was pure joy to me to be in the open air once again, and to see the sky and the blue Perak hills once more, even though it were for the last time. The journey, slow though it was, was over all too soon. The sun was still high when we passed through the great gate in the brick walls of the Batu Gajah

prison, and Sergeant Yoshimura, who had travelled in the cab of the lorry, handed his charges over to the Japanese superintendent of the gaol. Once inside the gaol I had only time to say 'Good-bye and God bless you. We'll meet again soon,' before the men were marched away, and I was handed over by the Japanese superintendent to the matron in charge of the women prisoners.

I had known Matron Stephens for many years and had often called on her when I had visited Batu Gajah before the war. How, I wondered, would she treat me now? Without a word she led me to her office in the women's section, then turned to me and pointing to a chair, said, 'Please sit down, Mrs. K. I can't say how sorry I am to see you here.'

'I am here as a prisoner, remember.'

'Only when the Japs are about.'

'Thank you, but I don't want any privileged treatment. That would give rise to jealousy, and might endanger you. There is only one thing I should like to ask you for; may I please have a bath, and some soap to wash my clothes? I am a political prisoner, not a criminal, and I refuse to wear the prison uniform.'

My request was granted. Never have I known such luxury as that bath, and the feeling of cleanness which followed it. I had almost forgotten what it felt like to be clean. After bathing I washed my clothes, ragged as they were, and put them out to dry in the sun, wrapping myself meanwhile in a couple of old sheets lent me by the matron.

The prison was like a palace after the cells of the *Kempetei*. My cell was large and airy, and a well-ventilated lavatory opened off it. True, there was no furniture, but the cell was spotlessly clean and I could lie on the wooden sleeping-platform without being tormented by bugs. The brick walls were only five feet in height; above that, bars ran up to the ceiling. Looking over the brick wall I could see through the bars the prison yard, gay with flowers—hibiscus and canna. I could not help admiring the way in which the matron and her staff had maintained the standard established before the war under the British. Meals were served three times a day. The prison diet was little better than that of the *Kempetei* cells, but one at least ate one's rice from a bowl, and there was unlimited drinking-water. I soon made friends with the wardresses—one of whom I had in fact

known as long as I had known Matron Stephens—and they got into the habit of smuggling in small additions to the prison fare. As well as food, my friends brought me news of the outside world. Every day I saw the English newspaper printed under the supervision of the Japanese Government and, reading between the lines, took courage in the growing strength of the Allies. They brought me also news of my husband and William. My husband's abscess had been operated on by Doctor Chelvam the day after his arrival in gaol, and he was now making satisfactory progress. At this time, the pain in the lower part of my spine was increasing daily, and I found that, try as I would, my legs would no longer support me. I later learned that Yoshimura's savage blow had fractured the lumbar vertebræ, and that this fracture had caused a partial paralysis. At the moment, however, I asked the wardresses not to let the Doctor know anything about this, as it would only worry him unduly. By Christmas I could no longer stand or walk unaided.

As Christmas approached, I found comfort in a book of prayers to Saint Anthony which Matron Stephens gave me, warning me not to let the superintendent see it. To celebrate the feast, she also sent me a small piece of cake. As I lay in my cell, I heard the bells from the church of Saint Joseph nearby ringing out their message of hope and thanksgiving.

Christmas passed. New Year's Day came, and, a week later, the day of my silver wedding, I learned that we were all to be tried at the Supreme Court in Ipoh, but I knew quite well that the trial would be a mockery. Sentence had already been passed—on me at least—at the Kempetei headquarters. However, a trial in Ipoh meant a public trial, and the Japanese, who prided themselves on maintaining a system of justice at least as good as that in force under the British, might at least allow their prisoners to be defended by counsel. I asked the matron to find out if counsel would be allowed for my husband and William.

'Very well,' she said, 'but what about yourself?'

'No counsel can help me,' I answered.

'What do you mean, Mrs. K?'' she asked, but I did not reply.

A couple of days later, Matron brought me the news that the Doctor and William were to be defended by Lawyer Coomaraswamy, and at once his interest in the case bore fruit. By his efforts we were

all—with, for some obscure Japanese reason, the exception of William—allowed the normal privileges accorded to prisoners awaiting trial. Friends were allowed to bring food to the gaol to supplement the prison diet, and we got blankets and a change of clothes. With the help of a friendly warder the Doctor was able to pass some of his food over to William, and I shared mine with the others in the women's section. The prison staff told me that these concessions indicated that I might expect lenient treatment.

'They are only fattening me for the kill,' I told the matron.

'Don't even think such a thing,' was her robust reply. 'You will find that I am telling the truth.'

I made no reply, but for the first time allowed myself the luxury of a glimmer of hope.

One day I received an unexpected visitor in the person of a dour-faced Japanese wearing military uniform, with, of course, a sword. He only asked me my name, and requested me to stand up, which I was quite unable to do. Later I learned that he was the Public Prosecutor, Sugimoto by name, and that it had been decided that, in view of my health, my trial should not take place with the others' in Ipoh, but privately within the prison. The authorities made out that this was out of consideration for me, to spare me unnecessary discomfort, but I was not taken in. The Japanese Government was always anxious to cover its most barbarous actions with a mask of civilisation; my appearance, crippled, in a public dock would be damning evidence of the methods employed by the Kempetei. Our rulers were, for all their ruthlessness, not insensitive to public opinion, and the Doctor and I were far too well known in Ipoh for our trial not to cause a great deal of public interest and comment.

The Ipoh trial was fixed for the 21st February. As the day drew near, I was heartened by confirmation of the report that the case would be heard by the Chief Justice of Perak. Judge Kusaka had the reputation of being a just man, and a humane one, who before the war had had many British friends and had remained a firm admirer of the British and their justice.

On the 20th February the Doctor and William, with George Matthews, Wong and Lim Eng, left Batu Gajah to spend the night in the Ipoh police cells before their trial next day. Much of the night and the following day I spent in prayer and intercession on behalf

of those to whom my actions had brought trouble and suffering. As the afternoon passed I became ravenous for news; after what seemed hours of suspense, Matron came to my cell to tell me what she had heard. She told me first that judgment had been reserved in the case of the Doctor and William, and that the others had been granted bail pending the decision. The case, it appeared, had provoked intense interest and the court had been packed to capacity and above with sympathetic spectators of every nationality. The Japanese Public Prosecutor had demanded death for the Doctor, five years' imprisonment for William. Both had pleaded guilty to the charges brought against them, but Lawyer Coomaraswamy had excelled himself in his plea for leniency. The judge, in reserving judgment, had promised to make a strong recommendation for mercy to the Military Government, in whose hands the matter finally rested, provided that the Doctor undertook to atone for his criminal folly by attending the sick and wounded at the Burma front. The Doctor had thanked him, and proclaimed his willingness, if called upon, to relieve suffering among the Japanese and Indian soldiers. The court had then been adjourned, and the prisoners had returned to the Ipoh lock-up. Olga had been permitted to bring Dawn to see her father, and food from home.

Two days later, the 23rd February, Matron came into my cell to tell me that my trial was to take place that afternoon. Judge Kusaka was to hold court—in the prison office—at two o'clock. 'Be brave,' she said, 'we're all praying for you.'

When she had left the cell, I took out my prayer book with its picture of Saint Anthony, and, kneeling before it, supported by the wall of the cell, said the following prayer.

'Great Saint Anthony, please intercede for me with the Infant Jesus to give me the strength and courage to bear bravely what God's Holy Will has ordained for me. Let me face death, if I must, in the spirit of the Holy Martyrs. But if I am spared to write a book about what I have undergone, I promise that the proceeds from the sale of the book shall go to building a church in your name, in Ipoh, and, if there is any over when the church is completed, to the relief of the poor and suffering, whatever their race or religion. Please help me, Saint Anthony.'

After the midday meal I changed into a clean dress which had

been brought in to me with my food. The matron came in, followed by two men prisoners carrying a chair. I sat down on the chair and was carried between the prisoners to the verandah outside the prison office. As I sat waiting to be summoned before the court, I felt a gentle tap on the shoulder. Turning round, I was astonished to see Chris smiling down at me.

'Chris,' I exclaimed. 'You, of all people! What on earth are you doing here?'

'I've come here for your case, Mrs. K. Don't worry; everything will be all right.'

His words brought me relief on his account—I had feared that he too was under arrest. But he went on to reassure me about my own fate.

'I know Kusaka. He's not a bad sort, for a Jap. And I've brought Coomaraswamy with me, he'll help you at the trial.'

'Listen, Chris, I don't want a lawyer. What does Coomaraswamy know of the statements I have made under interrogation? He might complicate things for me without knowing it. I should much rather conduct my own case myself.'

'You had better let a lawyer handle it.'

'Please let me have my own way, Chris. I really do know best.'

I could see that he was disappointed, and feared for me, but he said nothing and a moment later I was carried into the improvised court-room, where the judge had already taken his seat.

To one accustomed to British ideas of justice and legal procedure, this court of law was a mocking parody. The judge sat behind the prison superintendent's desk, on an improvised platform. Next to him, and on the same level, sat the Public Prosecutor, Sugimoto; on the other side, and lower, was the judge's secretary. All three men, though this was supposed to be a civilian court, wore uniform and carried long swords. The spectators included the superintendent and Matron Stephens, a sub-warder, several men whom I did not recognise—reporters perhaps—Chris and Lawyer Coomaraswamy, who were conferring anxiously together.

To start proceedings, the judge read the charges against the Doctor, William and the others, and announced that as they had pleaded guilty to all charges the court was empowered to pronounce the maximum sentence in every case—which meant death for the

Doctor, long terms of imprisonment for the others. My heart sank as I heard his words, but he went on to say that he had recommended mercy and requested permission of the Military Governor to mitigate the sentences demanded by the prosecution. He announced that he would pronounce sentence in this court at a later date, and then directed that my case be heard.

The charges against me were read out, and the judge asked, 'Do you plead "Guilty" or "Not Guilty" to these charges?'

'I do not know, my lord.'

'What do you mean, you don't know?' and the judge banged angrily on the table before him.

Lawyer Coomaraswamy jumped nervously to his feet. 'You must say whether you plead "Guilty" or "Not Guilty", Mrs. Kathigasu.'

As I remained silent the judge went on, 'You have already admitted the charges against you.'

This was not true. I had signed the document on which the charges were written, but that did not mean that I accepted their truth. However, I could not expect justice from a Japanese court which was clearly convinced of my guilt, and my only hope lay in a recommendation for mercy.

'Please excuse my ignorance and confusion, my lord. I have never been inside a law court before. I plead "Guilty".'

I thought the judge looked a little relieved that I was not going to prove troublesome. Glancing at the papers before him he asked me a few perfunctory questions; it was clear to me from these, and from the points he required me to confirm, that he had been "briefed" by the Kempetei and had no intention of discovering the objective truth by free inquiry. It was apparent to me that the Kempetei had not even supplied him with an accurate account of my replies under interrogation, since he expected me to confirm admissions I had never made. In these cases I persisted in my denials, but it was clear that the whole proceedings were empty formality and that it made no whit of difference how I answered. When the judge had satisfied himself that a show of impartiality had been preserved, the Public Prosecutor took over with a short but vehement harangue. He emphasised the grave nature of the crimes that I had committed, and claimed that as I had pleaded guilty the court should impose the maximum penalty laid down by the Imperial Military Law—death

in every case. When he sat down, Lawyer Coomaraswamy sprang to his feet and told the judge that I had repented of my folly and criminal ingratitude to the great Nippon Government. He begged that I might be shown mercy. The judge took little notice of the lawyer's speech, conferring most of the time with the Public Prosecutor at his side, and when it was over turned to address me.

'Have you anything to say?'

I had resolved to play the part of a penitent sinner, in the hope that it might suit the Japanese Government to make a show of clemency in a case which had aroused so much public interest.

'My lord,' I began, 'I am a miserable cripple; I have an aged and helpless mother, a grown-up daughter and a small child. I throw myself on your mercy, though I know I do not deserve it. I know that you, my lord, are a man of deep sympathy and understanding. If you cannot spare my life, I beg you to spare my husband, so that he at least can support my mother and the children when I am gone.'

As I finished speaking I burst into a flood of tears, burying my head in my arms on the table before me. Still sobbing I was carried from the court-room, back to my cell in the women's section.

A day or two after the trial I was permitted the unexpected joy of a visit from my children. Through the kindness of the head warder, the meeting took place in my cell instead of in the prison office. As soon as the iron-barred door was opened Dawn ran to me, arms outstretched, and buried her face in my shoulder, crying bitterly. 'Mummy, Mummy,' she sobbed, 'don't let them kill you.' Olga, too, was close to tears as she described to me the steps that she and our many friends had been taking to save our lives. Through the good offices of an influential member of the Indian community, she had secured interviews with several high Japanese officials, and was shortly to see Judge Kusaka himself. There was hope for mitigation of the Doctor's sentence, but no Japanese officer, she said, would hear a word of pleading for me. Comforted by the good news in respect of my husband, I did my best to console my weeping children, and the time allowed for our meeting was over all too soon. Painful as it had been for me to witness the grief of my daughters, it was far more painful for me to see the door of my cell close behind them and to realise there was more than a possibility that I should never see them again.

Slowly the days dragged by. One morning the matron told me that Judge Kusaka would be at the prison the same afternoon to pronounce sentence. After a final prayer to Saint Anthony, I allowed myself to be carried on my chair to the prison office, once more arranged to look like a court-room. In spite of myself I had allowed my hopes to be raised during the past few weeks, and the suspense as I was carried through the courtyards and corridors of the prison was almost more than I could bear. I calmed myself the best I could by uttering repeated prayers that my husband's life at least should be spared. Chris was waiting for me once more outside the prison office. 'Don't worry, Mrs. K,' he said. 'The Doctor and William are with the judge now; you will be next. We've all been doing all we can to help you.'

I had no time to answer him before the door of the court-room was opened, and the Doctor and William came down the steps, a warder beside each of them. They were smiling—and the warders were smiling too. 'I've got fifteen years in prison, Bil,' my husband said when he saw me, 'and William got three years.'

'Thank God, Ziew,' I said, with intense relief. 'The children will be in your care, if I die.'

There was no time for further talk, as my two bearers had already lifted my chair and were carrying me up the steps into the office.

The "court" looked just the same as it had on the previous occasion. The expressionless faces of the uniformed Japanese in no wise betrayed what my fate was to be. In the silence that reigned as my chair was deposited before a small table, facing that at which the judge sat, I fancied that the whole room, with its bare whitewashed walls, resounded with the noise of my heart beats.

'Sybil Daly,' the voice of the judge broke the silence. 'The crimes to which you have pleaded guilty richly deserve that the sentence of death be passed upon you. But His Excellency the Military Governor, by virtue of the power vested in him by His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor, has seen fit to confirm the recommendation for mercy that I made to him. As an act of clemency, therefore, this court pronounces on you the sentence of imprisonment for life.'

Praise be to God, and thanks to Saint Anthony, whose intercession had saved me from an ignominious death! So great was the relief that I scarcely heard the next words of the judge.

'Your husband has promised, if called upon, to go and act as a medical officer to our soldiers fighting in Burma. Your life has been spared in order that you may atone for your misdeeds. When you are strong again, you too will be sent to care for the wounded at the front.'

I pulled myself together in order to make a formal expression of my thanks. 'Thank you, my lord, for the clemency shown to me by this court, in sparing not only my husband's life but my own. I promise that when I am well again I shall redeem the past, and work with my husband to alleviate suffering.'

Though Judge Kusaka was an intelligent man, as well as, by all accounts, a humane one, no sign in his face indicated that he had appreciated the irony in my last remark—for what was the reason for my imprisonment, torture and sentence but that I had carried out the duties of my profession to the best of my ability and as my conscience commanded me? No doubt the judge knew as well as I did that all talk of sending either me or the Doctor to Burma was empty; if the Japanese could not trust us in Malaya, still less could they trust us in Burma, where they were already on the defensive.

News of my sentence preceded me from the court-room, and as I left Chris advanced to press my hand. Other well-wishers followed his example, members of the prison staff among them. Chris told me that Lim Eng, George Matthews and Mr. Wong had each been sentenced to two or three months in prison, in addition to the periods they had already spent in the cells. Back in my cell, Matron informed me that my husband and William, being long-term prisoners, would serve their sentences in Taiping Gaol, but that I should remain in Batu Gajah. Permission had been granted for them to visit me in my cell, in order that together we should be able to make arrangements for the care of the children and of our property. There was no lack of good friends whom we knew we could trust to take charge of the children and to look after our interests, so the future was easily arranged for. We said good-bye, not knowing when we should meet again, but full of hope that it would not be long. Soon after they left for Taiping, wrists tied together, barefooted, and under a heavy guard. I knew I should not see them again until the Union Jack flew once more in Malaya. Later on the same day, Olga and Dawn were allowed to visit me; they brought me messages

from my dear mother, too sick to make the journey. They were wretched at not having been able to obtain permission to visit me regularly, and I tried to console them, saying that the British would soon be back, and we should all be together once more. But as they left, I wondered bitterly whether there were really any grounds for my optimism—should I ever be free again, or was I to die a prisoner?

CHAPTER NINETEEN

AFTER MY "TRIAL" AND CONVICTION, I WAS NO longer allowed to receive food and clothing from outside the prison. I was obliged to exist as best I could on the wretched prison diet, with the addition of what my friendly warders were able to smuggle in. I refused to wear the prison uniform, and was given two dresses, which I wore alternately, a blanket and a comb. One day Judge Kusaka came to inspect the gaol, and visited me in my cell.

'You still cannot walk?' he asked.

'No, my lord.'

He made no reply, but next day I received a bowl of plain boiled rice in place of the watery kangee. The superintendent visited me at more frequent intervals, and as my condition did not improve my diet was extended to include a little oil, and some sugar and salt once a week. I also received an air cushion to support my injured back. My spine still gave me a lot of pain, and so did the side of my face, where Yoshimura had kicked me. Pain became my constant companion, but when I felt unduly wretched and sorry for myself I remembered the terrible days in the *Kempetei* cells, and thanked God for the mercies He had shown me. So days, weeks, months passed, while I did my best to relieve the monotony of my existence by gathering and treasuring every tiny scrap of information which reached me from the world outside.

The Doctor and William, I learned, had spent two days in the Ipoh police cells, visited by all their friends, before continuing their journey to Taiping. They had walked barefooted from the railway station there to the gaol, where Olga had been waiting to say good-bye. Both had at once been given jobs in the prison hospital; the Doctor was posted as assistant to the prison dresser, while William, as an attendant, had the duties of sweeping the drains and serving medicines. The Doctor's experience and skill soon gave him, within the prison walls, almost as much authority as the prison doctor

himself. The diet at Taiping was much better than that provided at Batu Gajah; this, and the fact that he was doing the work to which he was accustomed, soon brought about an improvement in the Doctor's health, though he was still pitifully thin at the time of the Liberation.

Every day I read the Japanese-controlled daily newspaper. It was clear, in spite of the boastful communiqués from the Burma front, that all was not going there according to plan, while warnings about enemy aircraft which began to appear in increasing numbers suggested that the air-power of the Allies was beginning to make itself felt even in Malaya. The public was told how to recognise the sound of the new American bomber, the B29, and to distinguish it by its deeper note from that of the Japanese planes. About the middle of the year, the newspaper reported that a B29 had been shot down in Negri Sembilan, in the south of the peninsula. The report indicated that enemy planes had been coming over in increasing numbers, without even bothering to wait for dusk—such, I thought, was their contempt for the Japanese fighters. Soon after, I heard in the daytime the deep rumble which had become almost familiar during the hours of darkness. Gazing eagerly at the corner of sky which was visible through the bars of my cell, I was able to see an unfamiliar streamlined shape sailing majestically, high above the Perak hills. It was not difficult, in spite of the height at which it was flying, to see that it was very much larger than any of the Japanese bombers. It did not need the excited shouts of the other prisoners, and of the warders, to tell me that this was a B29, the herald of our freedom.

Every day I became more certain that liberation was near, and at the same time became more impatient. The British, I knew, were making good progress in Burma, but there were three great rivers to cross before the monsoon, and at last I resigned myself to at least another year in captivity. I was by this time firm friends with most of my fellow prisoners and with all the prison staff. We all seized on the slightest opportunity of departing from the monotonous routine and cheering ourselves up. "Tiny", the fat and cheery Malay wardress, was a great favourite with all the prisoners. Whenever she came on night duty an informal sing-song was soon under way which ended with dances of all kinds—Indian dances, the Siamese snake-dance, the Malay Ronggeng. Everyone joined in,

either as performers or as accompanists, beating their tin rice bowls or coconut shells with sticks, or simply clapping their hands. There must have been some first-class artists among our number, for, in spite of their rags or shapeless prison uniforms, I remember some extremely graceful and moving performances.

It was difficult to keep track of time, but I was particularly careful to observe in my prayers the dates of the Church Calendar, and to remember the birthdays of my family and friends. Dawn's birthday I prepared for days ahead. I planned to give her a surprise, and made her a rag doll, with odd bits of rag supplied by my friends in the prison, and coconut fibre. My hair had recently been coming out in handfuls; I took some of it, set it in curls with the help of a friend among the prisoners, and stitched it to the doll's head. Matron kindly agreed to take the doll and see that it was delivered to my daughter on the eve of her birthday. Dawn treasures her doll to this day.

My own birthday followed soon after Dawn's. My children came to see me, bringing cakes and tasty dishes, but the Japanese superintendent would not permit them to see me, or even to leave their presents. News that Singapore had been bombed by Allied bombers gave us reason to rejoice. We agreed to make this an excuse for an extra celebration at Christmas—my second in prison, but, we all hoped, my last. I heard the bells ringing for Midnight Mass, and soon after our friendly wardresses brought in cakes from their own homes for our feast.

The New Year brought new suffering for me. On the 16th January, the matron brought me news that my mother was very ill. I asked her to wire for further news, and she agreed to do so. Most of the night I spent in prayer, and in the morning Matron came to visit me again.

'What news is there, Matron?' I asked. 'Is there an answer to the wire.'

'There is no need of an answer,' she told me gently. 'Here is today's paper.'

I took the badly printed sheet and my eyes fell on the paragraph she indicated. "The funeral of the late Mrs. B. Daly . . ." I read, and the paper fell from my fingers as I allowed my grief to overwhelm me. My profound sense of loss was mingled with remorse. My poor

mother had depended on me so much in her old age. Had I failed in my duty towards her? Vividly I remember how I had reassured her on the day we heard that we were at war with Japan. 'I will always look after you,' I had told her; how had I kept my promise? Such thoughts were a worse torture to me than any of the physical pain I had suffered at the hands of the Kempetei, and it was some hours before I was sufficiently calm to pray for my mother's soul and to beseech her forgiveness.

I never recaptured, after my mother's death, the comparatively light-hearted moods of the summer months. And it seemed to me, as it became increasingly obvious that the Japanese were facing defeat, that a cloud of fear and uncertainty was darkening over the prison. Matron Stephens resigned, and so did my chief friend among the wardresses. Instructions were issued that all female prisoners were to knit and sew for the Nippon soldiers fighting in Burma. This I refused to do. Morning after morning, materials were placed beside me, and the new matron did what she could to persuade me to make a show, at least, of working. I steadfastly refused; my conscience forbade me, I said, to work for the enemy, even in token. The matron warned me that she would have to report my refusal to her superiors, but I told her I was prepared to take the consequences of my actions. My obstinacy soon brought results. One morning there was a tramp of heavy boots outside, and a uniformed Japanese entered the cell. I recognised him after a moment as Sugimoto, the Public Prosecutor, whom I had not seen since my trial. He stood over me, looked down at the wool and sewing materials I had been given.

'Is this how you show your gratitude to the Nippon Government for saving your life?' he asked.

I made no reply, and after a moment he grunted something and strode out of the room.

It was no surprise to me when, a few hours later, a stretcher was brought, and two male prisoners, with a warder as escort, carried me from my cell and into the men's section. With nothing but the dress I wore, I was thrust into the solitary confinement cell, and the door was bolted behind me.

The cell was furnished with two planks for my bed, a rusty tin mug, and a tin bowl with a hole in the centre for rice. There was no

lamp; the cell was lit from the dark corridor outside by an expanded metal grille in the door. The cell was dirty, its concrete floor damp and smelly, the plank bed infested with bugs. The food was wretched; for breakfast I had a little watery kangee, at midday a few small pieces of sweet potato, usually rotten, and in the evening a handful of rice with a few boiled vegetable stalks. I had one mugful of water a day, and no salt. I was never allowed to leave the cell; there was no question of washing, let alone a bath, and a tin chamber-pot was the only provision for toilet. At night centipedes and scorpions came out from the crevices in the walls and from under the planks of my bed. I scarcely ever saw them, but shrank back and shouted in horror when I felt them crawling over me. Then I realised that they would do me no harm, but on the contrary were my allies, for they fed on the bugs which tormented me, and so kept down their numbers. They were not my only allies; spiders wove their webs to trap the mosquitoes whose maddening whine drove away sleep, the friendly house lizards on the wall ate mosquitoes and flies, and when my friends among the warders pushed morsels of food to me through the tiny mesh of the expanded metal the ants came out to clear away the tell-tale crumbs before the superintendent's morning inspection.

Though the hole in my rice bowl was over an inch in diameter I was not allowed to have it changed. Before filling my bowl the kitchen orderly would lay a leaf over the hole. This was sometimes dirty, and often gave way either while I was eating, or even before the bowl reached me, so that I lost some of the rice, or had to pick it from the dirty floor of my cell. At last I decided to use instead the tin lid of my chamber-pot. I saved drinking-water, and gave the lid a good scouring with sand from the corners of the cell. It made a splendid dish, and lasted me until I was freed.

Civil prisoners were employed to sweep the verandah and the drains outside the cell. Many of them were normally heavy smokers and in the absence of tobacco were desperate for any substitute. I used to save up the skins of my sweet potatoes which they dried and smoked wrapped in banana leaf. The smell was disgusting, but they seemed to enjoy their smokes. In return they used to gather edible leaves and roots, which they washed and passed through the grille to me. These, with a pinch of salt, or a few peppercorns in addition,

made the finest salad I have ever tasted.

After three weeks my whole body was itching and sore with insect bites and the absence of any washing. My legs were beginning to swell again and my hair was matted. Every morning the Japanese superintendent passed by my cell and grinned to see the state he had reduced me to.

'This is what you get for being so wicked,' he said.

One morning I happened through the grille in the door of my cell to see Doctor Chelvam passing on one of his visits to the prison. I called out to him, and came over to him. As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom in my cell I saw the look of horror and amazement as he took in my condition.

'Good afternoon, Doctor,' I said. 'Could you please let me have some sulphur ointment, and get me permission to have a bath?'

'I will try, Mrs. K. The superintendent has issued very strict orders about you, but I will do my best.'

Doctor Chelvam was as good as his word. I got a bucket of cold water and a small piece of soap, and the Doctor's assistant brought me the ointment I needed and a couple of ounces of salt, which he told me I must keep from the eyes of the superintendent.

At first the warders were too scared, by reason of the superintendent's instructions, to have anything to do with me. Gradually, however, as they gained confidence, they became my friends. The wardresses from the women's section were allowed in to see me, and used to bring me scraps of food and messages from outside. I soon accumulated a little larder of delicacies—salt, ginger, chillies, pepper, and cucumber cut into thin strips which would pass through the mesh of the grille. My larder I kept wrapped in a handkerchief, and bound with a strip of material to my thigh under my dress, where it was concealed from the prying eyes of the Japs. Water was now brought daily for me to wash, and with it someone threw in one day a small piece of comb. It took me a week to comb all the knots and tangles out of my matted hair. At night the Indian warders used to pass me fragments of the flat wheat cakes which were their staple food—only they were of tapioca and cornflour, not wheat.

In this way it was possible for me to endure the physical hardships of my existence, but the solitude was hardest to bear. Even to hear the sound of my own voice was a relief, so I talked to myself,

prayed and sang aloud. I knew the Stations of the Cross and the Litanies by heart, and said the Rosary on my ten fingers; prayer was a great consolation and a source of strength. Every day I went over in my mind all that had happened since my arrest, racking my brain to remember some insignificant detail. Sometimes I thought I should go mad, but the mental exercise proved of great value to me when I came to write this account of my experiences, since I had been allowed no paper and had not been able to keep any sort of a diary in prison.

CHAPTER TWENTY

ONE DAY IN MAY A SCRAP OF NEWSPAPER WAS pushed in through the grille with some small pieces of tapioca. Holding it up to the light I read the line of print, "The war in Germany has ended". For the moment I did not bother to read more. The feeling of joy welled up so strongly within me that I had to find some way of expressing it. Banging my two planks with both hands, I sang and shouted at the top of my voice, until the sub-warder on duty came to the door and asked me if I was off my head.

'I'm perfectly sane,' I said. 'Now that Germany is defeated we shall soon have the British back here, and then the shorties are in for a hot time.'

'Don't make too much noise, Missy, or they'll hear you from the office. You must be alive to get out of here.'

Next morning, as the prison staff assembled to salute the Rising Sun flag in the compulsory daily ceremony, I joined in their singing—but my anthem was "God save the King".

Soon after this I noticed that the soldiers who visited the prison from time to time for some reason or other now wore nets over their caps, with green leaves and twigs stuck into them as camouflage. This suggested that Malaya was once again in the front line. Was the Burma campaign over? No one could give me any reliable information. At the same time the noise of air activity increased. One day there was the sound of an aircraft overhead, and all the warders rushed out to watch. 'He's dropping leaflets,' called one.

'Please bring me one,' I shouted.

'That evening, Tiny the wardress from the women's section came to see me, and before I could ask her for her news pulled out a leaflet from the folds of her dress.

'I've brought you this,' she said.

'Please read it to me, Tiny, it's much too dark in here.'

'Very well. This is what it says—"Cheer up, Malaya. We shall

soon be with you. From the British Military Authorities, India."

'What is the date?'

'The 8th June.'

'Please pass the leaflet in to me for a moment. I must hold it in my hand—God bless the pilot for bringing us a message of such hope. The British are coming back at last.' Handing the leaflet back I thanked my kind friend and she walked away.

The next few weeks passed in an agony of suspense, and I heard no further news, only rumours. There was talk that the Japs would execute all their prisoners in a wholesale massacre before committing suicide themselves. Then in the first week of August I heard that the guerillas had left their hills and were fighting the Japs in the open. The end, I felt, was near, though I could not tell what it would be.

The 14th August was the eve of the Feast of the Assumption, a day of fasting and penitence. I gave my morning meal of kangee and my midday sweet potatoes to the prisoner who brought me the water for my bath, and ate only the evening meal of rice. The Feast of the Assumption also I kept as best I could, and seemed to receive assurance in my prayers that all would yet be well. On the morning of the next day—the 16th—the superintendent came and told me that I was to be removed as my cell was needed to store rice. Accordingly I was carried on my stretcher back to the women's section, where I found myself once more in my old cell. None of the other prisoners was allowed to speak to me, nor I to them. To return to friendly company and clean surroundings was like coming home again, but the anxiety and suspense of not knowing what was happening made it impossible for me to appreciate the change as I should otherwise have done. Two or three days passed, and again we heard the sound of an aircraft circling low over the town. This time I could see it—and it was low enough for me to recognise the roundels of the Royal Air Force. As it circled, a shower of leaflets came floating down from a door in its belly. Some fell actually in the prison yard, and one was brought to me.

"The Japanese capitulated on the 15th August, 1945," it read. "Until the arrival of the British military authorities, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army will take charge."

I waved the leaflet in the air, sang, cheered and shook hands with the wardress and my fellow prisoners until we were all exhausted. In

the evening, when the bells sounded for Angelus, I thanked God in prayer that the long struggle had at last ended, and for His mercy to me. I prayed also to Our Lady of Lourdes, asking her to complete my liberation by restoring to me the power to walk, and promising to make a humble pilgrimage to her shrine.

For some days nothing further happened. British planes were often to be seen in the sky, but the Japs remained in control on the ground, at least as far as the prison was concerned. It was not until the 6th September that the Japanese superintendent came to my room, as arrogant and domineering as ever, accompanied by Doctor Chelvam, another doctor and a dresser. The doctors examined my legs, then I was placed on the stretcher and carried to the prison office.

'You have been a very wicked woman,' the superintendent began, 'but the merciful Nippon Government is sorry for your condition and is sending you to the hospital for treatment. When you are better, and if you behave yourself well in hospital, your release may be considered. My car will take you to the hospital.'

I could have laughed aloud to hear his hypocritically magnanimous words; I wanted to wave in his face the leaflet I had concealed in my dress, and which he presumably thought I had never seen. But Japanese are unaccountable in their moods and sudden rages, and, for once, I thought it more prudent to remain silent. I was handed back my blanket, my second dress and the small bundle containing the personal belongings which had been taken from me. The superintendent's own car was waiting for me outside the office, I was lifted in, and the great gates of the prison swung open as the car started. A moment later I was outside—a free woman once more.

At the hospital all pretence of my being a prisoner was dropped. Doctor Chelvam welcomed me and wrung me warmly by the hand.

'Please will you do something for me, Doctor?' I asked.

'Certainly.'

'I want you to send a message to my children to say that I am here and would like to see them as soon as possible.'

'Very well, Mrs. K, I will see to it at once.'

I went on to ask for a bath, as I wanted to go to church right away. I had a warm bath with the help of the kind nurses, and dressed myself in my second dress which, though ragged, was at least clean. Then, a piece of torn cloth over my head, I was carried by two

attendants to the church. At my request they lifted me from my chair at the door of the church, and left me to make my own way, painfully on all fours, up the aisle to the altar. Here I prostrated myself in thanksgiving and humble devotion, and here the good Father Cordiero at length found me.

Refreshed even more in spirit than I had been, by my bath, in body, I returned to the hospital and the luxury of a soft cotton mattress. Soon I was receiving a stream of visitors, congratulating me on having survived my prolonged ordeals, and expressing kindly hopes for my early recovery. Among them was a young Chinese, wearing a dark green uniform and high boots, with three red stars in his pointed cap; it was not until he introduced himself that I recognised him as one of the guerillas from the Papan guerilla H.Q. He had come to see what service his unit could do me, and I told him that all I wanted was a car to take me home.

'Very well, Mrs. K,' he said, and hurried off, leaving me to wait impatiently for the arrival of my daughters. It was extremely difficult to get a car, and the buses and trains had stopped running, so it was not until next morning that Dawn was brought in to see me. I could not hold her and kiss her enough, while those around wept in sympathy.

'Where is Olga?' I asked at length.

'She stayed in case Daddy came home, so that he wouldn't be disappointed to find no one there to welcome him.'

Next morning a car arrived, provided by the guerillas—now no longer the outlawed "hill people" but the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, well clothed, armed and equipped by British aircraft. My journey home was a sort of triumphal procession. At Pusing I was welcomed by a contingent of the M.P.A.J.A., and from there we made a detour to Papan. Here the whole town turned out to welcome me, and against my wishes a collection was made as they knew that I had lost everything. The sum collected was \$7,600 in Japs currency. I was immeasurably touched by this gesture, as I knew that many of the people who contributed to this sum were the



MPAJA emerging from hills

poorest of the poor. At length I was allowed to leave and to continue my journey to Ipoh.

Olga was waiting for me at home when I arrived, but as we kissed and embraced one another she told me that there was no news as yet of the Doctor's and William's release. Though I was exhausted by the events of the last few days, visitors continued to call to congratulate me on my release. Among them were Chen Yen, commander of the Papan guerillas—very spruce now in his dark green uniform and red-starred cap—and two British officers of Force 136. At the sight of British faces after so long, it was almost more that I could do to refrain from tears. Chen Yen told me that Colonel Itu, commander of the Perak regiment of guerillas, would come to see me as soon as his duties permitted. The British officers, who had responsibility for military intelligence, took down in outline the story of my experiences, and then asked me if there was any way in which they could help me.

'There are two things I want,' I told them. 'First, will you please see that my husband and my adopted son are released as soon as possible from Taiping Gaol; the Japs cannot be trusted, especially when they know they are beaten.'

'That will be seen to at once. What is the second thing?'

'I want to walk again. I would like the best medical attention available. We have no money now, but we will find enough to pay whatever is necessary.'

'You shall have the best treatment, and it will be entirely at Government expense. We are authorised to tell you that the British military authorities will have your injuries treated exactly as if you had been wounded in battle.'

They kept their promise in both respects, though the story of how I walked again is not my concern here. On the evening of the next day I was resting on a couch, after receiving visitors all day. I heard a voice outside say, 'Hallo, Doctor! Have you just been released?' and had only time to call the children before my husband and William walked into the room. I shall not attempt to describe the scene that took place as we came together, a united family once more. Once the first shock of joy was over, we all knelt down and made the sign of the Cross, joining in a prayer of thanksgiving to Almighty God, who had protected us and brought us safely together again.



Awarded the George Medal for her heroic acts
Buckingham Palace, October 1947

EPILOGUE

THERE IS PERHAPS NO ADEQUATE RETRIBUTION IN this world for the crimes of which Sybil Kathigasu was a victim. But on the 10th February, 1946, Sergeant Ekio Yoshimura, head of the Kempetei in Ipoh, was brought to trial before the Perak War Crimes Tribunal.

He faced two charges: the first, of brutally ill-treating Sybil Kathigasu and her seven-year-old daughter by suspending the child from a tree over a fire, in the presence of her mother, and of savagely beating the mother in November 1943; and the second of brutally ill-treating civilians in his custody from October 1943 to July 1945.

As Mrs. Kathigasu was too ill to be present at the trial, her evidence was given by affidavit. Evidence was also heard from several other Ipoh residents who had suffered at the hands of Yoshimura—men who had been accused of receiving or passing on news from Allied broadcasts, of giving sums of money to members of the resistance movement, of spying, and who had been beaten, burnt with cigarette ends, hung up by the hands for hours on end, given the water treatment or threatened with torture to their families to make them confess.

After three days' hearing Ekio Yoshimura was sentenced to death. In his summing up, Lt.-Col. Figgives, President of the Tribunal, said:

'You have over a period of many months been a scourge to the people of Ipoh. You have continually brutally ill-treated and tortured persons whom you were questioning. You have claimed that you did so with the knowledge of your superior officers; but your claim for mercy must fail in view of the cruelty you have shown to Mrs. Kathigasu and her daughter. The heroism

of the mother and her young child are beyond all praise. To you, who inflicted such unendurable mental anguish upon them, no mercy can be shown, and the sentence of this court, subject to confirmation, is death by hanging.'

So pleased were the inhabitants of Ipoh when this most hated man, the self-styled 'King of Ipoh', was sentenced to death that a deputation approached the court president and offered to build a public gallows. They felt that the execution of this man should be made a public one.

Sybil Kathigasu's story was to have a tragic ending. Doctors struggled for two years, with a measure of success, to restore her to health, but the sufferings she had endured at the hands of the Japanese finally proved too great. Gradually her partial paralysis yielded to treatment, and the great day came when she walked unaided. Fulfilling the vow she had made in prison, she went as a pilgrim to Lourdes. Full recovery seemed in sight and she made eager preparations for her return to Malaya. But in May 1949 she fell ill again; a succession of painful operations had failed to check the spread of septicæmia from her fractured jaw, and on the 4th of June* she died.*

Yet, she was still to return to the country she loved. Great crowds witnessed the arrival of her coffin in Penang, and then again in Ipoh; men and women of all races and all walks of life attended her funeral, paying reverent respect to Malaya's 'Nurse Cavell'.

* *Editor's note:* These dates contradict the inscription on Sybil Kathigasu's tomb: "BORN 3RD SEPTEMBER 1899 DIED 12TH JUNE 1948"



A large crowd joined the funeral procession

All races honour
the heroism of
the dead woman



The last resting-place—back in Ipoh



Many a lonely heartache, . . .



Dawn Kathigasau
in London



In remembrance
of the heroine



The No.74 in Papan,
after a lapse of six
decades



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No Dram of Mercy is the story of a woman's courage, told simply and unassumingly in her own words. Sybil Kathigasu was the wife of an Ipoh doctor who along with her fellow Malaysians became caught up in the horrors of the Japanese occupation of Malaya during the Second World War. Her selfless concern for the sick and wounded anti-Japanese guerillas who came to her home secretly for treatment ended inevitably in her betrayal and her arrest and imprisonment by the Japanese authorities.

The tale of fortitude and endurance under duress and terror which follows is testimony not so much to the indomitability of a woman as to the indomitability of the human spirit informed by faith and belief in God. As such, the story of Sybil Kathigasu, recounted here after a lapse of five decades, is a tract for our times as much as it is a reminder of the tribulations experienced by a former generation of Malaysians.

'I hate your Government because you Japanese think that your strength gives you the right to act as tyrants everywhere. You treat the people of Malaya like ill-bred dogs who can respect only the butt and the whip.'

(CHAPTER SEVENTEEN)

No Dram of Mercy
by Sybil Kathigasu



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**The Story of a Woman's Courage during
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