

THE ROYAL ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

The Valleys of The Shadow of Death

An Illustrated Story Catalogue of the "Charles Thrale" Exhibition



At the End of the Day's March (35)

Painted on the spot by a Prisoner of War with Human Hair, Jungle Roots, Clay, Indian Ink, Crushed Pencils, Rice Water, Blood, Boiled Book Covers, Crushed Leaves, Boiled Rags, Writing Ink and Schoolboy's Paints, ON Tissue Paper, Music Score Paper, Cardboard, Scrap Paper, Note Paper, Wrapping Paper and Jap Field Cards.

THE ONLY PICTORIAL RECORD IN THE
WORLD OF THE JAPANESE P.O.W. CAMPS

All proceeds from this exhibition and from the sale of Catalogues go to the Royal Artillery Association Benevolent Fund, which assists Gunners and the dependants of deceased Gunners who are in need



(100) Queen Mary viewing the Pictures with the Artist.

Published by Courtesy of "Press Illustrations," Twickenham, and
"Barr, Photographer," London, S.E.

The Valleys of The Shadow of Death

HITHERTO, the truth of the sufferings of those Englishmen who were Prisoners of War in Japanese hands, has been largely hidden from our gaze, and their terrible ordeal is for most of us a matter for nebulous conjecture. Through the courtesy and co-operation of Charles Thrale we are able to exhibit the only pictorial record in the world of this 3½ years of Spiritual and Material laceration. We offer them, not as an amusement, but as a lesson which, gruesome though it is, must be learned if we are to remain educated. It must be a rare occurrence to be able to tell a story by a series of paintings, but this Catalogue allows you to follow the trail to hell in company with those thousands of our countrymen who were unfortunate enough to be caught up in the Japanese blitzkrieg. One of them willed that the story should not be brushed aside as something "finished with," and used his gift and incredible ingenuity to paint the story. Whilst the survivors of this outrage live, this story can never be wholly out of print, for the injuries inflicted on mind and body will remain until their "Call" comes. When you look at, and think about these pictures, please remember they are not to be judged by the accepted standards of Art, but are to be judged with your mind occupied with the conditions under which they were painted. By that standard they become "Masters." Charles Thrale is a Commercial Artist by profession, and a Portrait painter of great promise. He became a soldier in 1940, and when he started painting these pictures was a Corporal in the Cambridgeshires attached to Intelligence. He left England for the Far East in October, 1941, and eventually landed at Singapore. After a very hectic two weeks the Island fell, and he was taken prisoner by the Japanese. The hell into which he and thousands of his comrades passed, is depicted in these sketches, all of which were painted on the spot, and none of which have been touched up in any way since they were painted. Whoever sees these pictures and remains unmoved must be inhumanly callous. These pictures are not frightening so much as they are inspiring—they should be a stimulant to a world too apt to forget. They were painted under the most frightful conditions with improvised materials. Crushed leaves—crushed pencil lead—Indian Ink—Boiled Rags—Boiled Book covers—Jungle roots—Clay—and even his blood was used for tints. The paper used was any old scrap that could be begged, bought, or bartered, or even stolen from the Japs. It varies from wrapping paper to music score sheets. At times much needed food was bartered for a scrap of paper—two dinners were given for a very coveted piece of Cartridge paper. These scraps afforded spiritual food—the artist insists they kept him alive and sane. Sometimes he managed to borrow a box of school-boy's paints—these were untold gold, and the flickering spark of life was fed with a paint brush manufactured from his own hair. Thin Bamboo was used for handles, and the thin end was taken well up into the hairs—this thin end flexed and allowed the hairs to spring with it, otherwise human hair could not have been used. Surely, no one in

the world before has produced pictures of such merit with such inadequate materials. Surely no one had a greater incentive to paint. It is said by many of the men who have returned from this imprisonment, that it was possible to forecast accurately the death of a seemingly fit man two weeks before it happened—losing all interest in living, meant losing life. There was very little in living, in that Dante's inferno. Charles Thrall had this abiding creative instinct, which kept him alive and continually creative. These pictures have received a lot of National publicity, and they have been exhibited as a collection in London—this is the first time they have been set up in sequence, and as a story. Queen Mary, (picture 100) took a particular interest in them. These pictures are in themselves the finest tribute in the world to the immortal courage of every prisoner in Jap hands whether he lived or died. There are no other pictures from life of the Japanese P.O.W. Camps, and this is the only known record of an Artist pursuing his calling under such circumstances. It is not necessary to give you a detailed description here—we are taking you by his picture route to Singapore—Thailand and the Railroad of death—back to Singapore and liberation. The catalogue story is written in the first person, in reminiscent collaboration with the Artist.

W. E. CLARK,

Hon. Sec. Royal Artillery Association,
Oxfordshire District.

Tetsworth,
Oxford.

And each for the joy of the working,
And each in his separate star
Shall paint the thing as he sees it
For the God of things as they are.

"POURING OUT THE RED, SWEET WINE OF YOUTH."

1.—The hoisting of the Union Jack at Adam Park, Singapore, in August, 1945, immediately after the capitulation of the Japanese, together with self portrait and photographs of a freed Charles Thrall.

2.—My story starts whilst I am still free, before I am forced to "Bow" my dignity away to the Japanese "Ringmasters." I painted these pictures whilst Outward Bound to Singapore, aboard U.S.S. Westpoint—one of them shows the living quarters on board.

3.—PORTRAIT OF A LADY. Painted aboard "U.S.S. Westpoint." My beloved Paint box, Brushes and paper were the spiritual core of my Kit.

4.—LADY WITH PARROT. Painted aboard "U.S.S. Westpoint." This is the last picture I painted before my paints and I were torn apart. If ever I paint again God must provide the materials—I am no longer an Artist—I am surrendered as a Prisoner to The Imperial Japanese Army—no longer must I seek beauty openly—I am to be Used—not to be of use——

5.—A God provided the materials through the medium of a Chinese boy, who gave up his box of schoolboy's paints. This is THE INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT AT CHANGI, SINGAPORE. P's.O.W. of all races were incarcerated here. Showing 9 P.O.W. types.

6.—CHANGI, SINGAPORE. The Straits of Johore from Roberts Hospital P.O.W. Camp. On the right is the Royal Artillery Officers' Mess, as it was when this "impregnable" Fortress opened like an unlatched door in a gale. On the left is the Submarine Base.

7.—RUMOUR HILL. We gathered here, spent and weary after the day's grind, to discuss rumours and the possibilities of freedom. Not inside me did I feel convinced—it meant just a bed-time fairy story. Painted with Clay, bound with rice-water.

8.—CLOSE-UP OF RUMOUR HILL. Showing the "Changi Tree," the highest landmark for many miles. British Troops blew the top away at the start of hostilities to prevent it becoming a Range-finding medium.

9.—SPORTS FIELD AND SWIMMING PAGER IN SINGAPORE (southern area). This became a prison camp. I have scrounged some coloured pencils. This is the effort with the Red one.

10.—C. OF E. CHAPEL IN P.O.W. HOSPITAL, SINGAPORE.—The paintings on wall, and all the fittings were the work of our P's.O.W. "Toc H" met here weekly. I borrowed the paints for this picture from a fellow prisoner.

11.—"THE MOUSTACHE EXTRAORDINARY." This hirsute marvel belonged to a British Officer attached to Gurkha's. It appeared to enrage the Japs, who ordered the owner to cut it. He sadly trimmed it.

12.—TRANSPORT WITHIN THE PRISON CAMPS. P's.O.W. hauling rice ration into Changi Camp. Showing also a bombed R.C. Church on right, and one of the Sikhs who went over to the enemy, and who were used as our Guards. (Pencil drawing).

13.—MERCHANT SEAMAN P.O.W. A German from Hamburg, captured with crew of a United States Ship. (Red and Black pencil).

14.—FLAME OF THE FOREST TREES. In background, on top of hill is the site used by the Royal Artillery for their intricate Range-finding instruments. (Paint and wash).

15.—A JAPANESE GUARD. This man demanded a picture, and on completion he signed it. He later brought it back to me for safe keeping because of the presence in the camp of the "Kempi" (Japanese Secret Police) and I noticed he had crossed out his name—how these men were scared of higher-level officials. (Green and Black pencil).

16.—THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, CHANGI, SINGAPORE. A converted storehouse. This was the Church of Padre Stallard, Chaplain, Beds. and Herts. Regt. All equipment was made by P's.O.W.

17.—PAINTING OF A DUTCH P.O.W. I painted this whilst isolated with diphtheria in Changi Hospital. I wondered how Medical folk back home would re-act to Aspirin as the only drug to combat this scourge—in some Hospitals the dispensary contained just Aspirin. But—some of us lived. These paints were smuggled in to me by a Padre.

18.—THE MOSQUE, SINGAPORE. Converted into C. of E. by P.O.W. in the 18th Division Area. This, I believe to be the only Mosque in the world ever used by the Church of England. Paints were lent by a Dutch boy from Java.

19.—INSIDE THE MOSQUE. No. 18. All the furniture and fittings were made by limbless and sick P's.O.W., most of whom were Gunners. The Royal Artillery held most of their meetings here, and the place was called "The Prisoners' University." Religious houses were the only places allowed by our irreligious hosts to be used for lectures. (Pencil drawing—wash made from crushed pencil lead).

20.—ROBERTS HOSPITAL, CHANGI, SINGAPORE. The Ambulances shown were devoid of engines. On right is the wireless transmitting pylon. I believe some messages were sent home from here—there was a whisper it was "Radio Shonan." In that mystic "peace time" this was a Barracks—considered to be the best in the Far East. My coloured crayons were at work here, reminding me of a boyhood passion for these creative sticks.

21.—SUNRISE ON THE BEACH, SINGAPORE. In the school-boy paints of my Chinese friend.

22.—ON THE BEACH, STRAITS OF JOHORE. We were allowed to bathe here at irregular intervals. (Red pencil on notepaper).

22a.—THE SAME BEACH. Showing the limbless bathing. The artificial limbs and crutches lying around were made by P's.O.W. A scene so macabre, that my soul said "hurry." (Red pencil on notepaper).

22b.—THE SAME BEACH.

23.—THE BRITISH CEMETERY, SINGAPORE. Most of the boys lying here were casualties from the Battle of Malaya. Two years later, this was the only piece of ground the little yellow devils left untouched (almost in the centre of their massive Aerodrome). This Cemetery is now beautifully laid out, and is a picture of quiet beauty. There is now another large Cemetery at Kranji, and the remains of my friends are reverently watched over by members of The War Graves Commission. The Chinese boy's paints on notepaper. (I must mention that the Japanese Officer in charge of this Aerodrome was educated in the University of Oxford, and to be fair, must add—he possessed humanity).

24.—SUNSET OVER THE STRAIT OF JOHORE. This piece of paper cost me two dinners—genuine Cartridge paper—a great find. I tried to fill it with beauty, but my materials could never do justice to the loveliness I saw and felt in this sunset—the satisfaction I got did offset the gnawing in my stomach. (Chinese boy's paints).

25.—THE JAVA LINES, SINGAPORE. So called because all P's.O.W. in transit from Java to the Hell Railway in Siam were halted and concentrated here. Many Gunners, some of whom were Oxfordshire men, passed through the Java lines—many never returned. In the foreground can be seen an erection which was used as a Theatre. Whilst painting this picture I was interrupted and distracted by the sight of a British Officer receiving a bashing, for no apparent reason, from a loathsome Korean Guard. "Bashing" is the right word—we were never merely "beaten." There was nothing I could do about it.

26.—TRANSPORT IN CHANGI, SINGAPORE. Four-wheeled tractors were used, dragged by P's.O.W. In the early days, the British Corps of Military Police were still in evidence, and carrying on under Jap orders, as a Police Unit. My picture shows two on Guard at the Sub-area gate. At this time they were smartly dressed in contrast to other Prisoners, whose clothing had been reduced to rags by the heavy work. My picture also shows a British Officer in charge of the party. They retained the smart appearance associated with their rank so long as their clothes held out. Officers were not expected to work at this stage, but were responsible to the Japanese for the carrying out of the work allotted. Their efforts to alleviate the lot of their men often resulted in a bashing from, perhaps, a Japanese private, who took a keen delight in exploiting the animal passions consuming him. The waggon load is wood from the Jungle, fuel to cook our damnable Rice. (Red pencil, black paint, and green tint from crushed leaves. On Japanese notepaper).

27.—MERCHANT SEAMEN IN P.O.W. CAMP, SINGAPORE. It was my intention to make a collection of portraits of all nationalities within the camp, as in No. 5. I could not hoard all my pictures safely, and distributed some among my friends, but men were more fragile than paper, and most of my studies were lost with them. (Green and black pencil. Wash made from crushed green pencil).

28.—THE DREADED TEMPLE HILL DETENTION BARRACKS. This was a Peace-time Prison, and was at this time still controlled by the ordinary staff, who were assisted by personnel from the Corps of Military Police. My picture shows a P.O.W. who had been caught stealing sweet Potatoes from the Ration Truck. Prisoners were strung up to the wall in this fashion for two hours, or more, according to the alleged seriousness of the offence. Is it an offence to want to live? I suppose under some conditions it can be. Some poor devils flung in this cell had passed away the time by playing noughts and crosses on the wall—one had tried to draw a map of England on the wall—I have just put them all down as I saw them, because this is what I know of war—if there are glories in it, my eyes have not ever beheld them. (Painted in Indian Ink).

29.—THE NO ESCAPE INCIDENT. I re-painted this scene from memory, for the original sketch was taken from me by a Japanese Secret Police, the "Kempi." At the end of August, 1942, Colonel Fukue, the Jap Commander, called upon every prisoner of war in Singapore, irrespective of Rank, to sign a certificate saying he would not attempt to escape. EVERY MAN REFUSED TO SIGN. As a result, on the 2nd September the Jap Commander ordered all ranks (except those sick in hospital) to proceed to Selerang. The barracks at this place consisted of blocks of buildings forming three sides of a rectangle, with an asphalt square in the centre. The maximum accommodation was for 850 men, and into this space the Japs squeezed 16,000 men. There were no sanitary arrangements. We were herded here for four days with Machine Guns trained upon us, and then the Japanese stated that unless we signed they would bring the sick into the camp as well. Disease was already rife, and to bring sick men into this compound meant certain death—the Japs were obviously playing upon the sporting instincts of white men in order to force our hands, and to show they meant business they shot a number of men who had tried to escape. We signed the forms under duress, and returned to our camps on September 6th. The Japanese responsible for this incident were sentenced to death by a War Crimes Commission in 1946. (In Indian Ink, on thin packing cardboard). This picture was later damaged in Siam during the Monsoons.

I LEAVE SINGAPORE FOR SIAM.

30.—ON THE WAY TO THE HELL RAILWAY, SIAM. With their tongues in their cheeks, the Japanese asked all us sick men to "volunteer" to go north—to better camps and living conditions. How the little devils lied. These railway trucks shown were normally used for the transport of rice, and were all metal. I know now what it is like to be literally cooked. Into each truck were squeezed 32 men,

and we had to take it in turns to lie down. This could only be done by half squeezing themselves standing at one end of the truck. The journey took five days. No sanitary arrangements were made, and a little rice every other day was issued. We detrained at Ban Pong, 20 miles from Bangkok and only then learned the Japanese joke. We were to march 200 miles through practically virgin jungle to help build the Railroad of death (Ban Pong to Moulmein in Burma). This railway project had, in pre-war days been turned down by both English and German Engineers as being too costly in the inevitable loss of man-power, but the Japs had got us as slaves—they could be lavish with men. We "blasted" that railway, but the Allied Bombers at the end did the blasting that mattered. (Indian Ink, Black and Red Paint). The sketch was drawn in truck and coloured later.

31.—THE FIRST STRETCH OF THE HELL RAILWAY. This was laid through a Rice field about nine months before I reached Siam. For every sleeper laid my country had lost a son. In all, White and Coloured, the casualties are thought to be a quarter of a million. Men were used until they dropped and died from sheer exhaustion, and they died with the Japanese chant "Speedo" "Speedo" "Bugaro" ringing in their ears.

32.—LOOKING DOWN THE VALLEY, SIAM. Truly a "valley of the shadow of death." This shows rice fields and the living quarters of the Thias. This place was on the very edge of the Jungle. I stuck two pieces of thin card together to make this picture, but could not obliterate the paper-maker's mark which appears in centre.

33.—CARRYING OUT THE DEAD, CANCHANBURI BASE HOSPITAL. After five days of this dreadful march, I dropped out with Amoebic Dysentery, and was dragged back to the base hospital at Canchanburi or Kanburi, as it was generally called. This hospital was formed as a dump for men who fell sick on the march. The Japanese boasted it was "the best equipped hospital in Siam," but it had no equipment—it was equipped for the speedy despatch of men who could not work—sick men were dead men to the Japs, and they were not worried. It is true that a meagre quantity of drugs was thrown in by the Japs—always the wrong sort. There was no Emetine for Dysentery. Many Gunners died in this alleged hospital, some of whom were L.A.A. from Oxfordshire's Unit. (In writing ink and Indian Ink).

34.—CONTINUING THE MARCH. I have pulled through, and can stand, so off to work I go. My picture shows British and Australian P's.O.W. on that 200 mile march from Bangkok. Bullock carts were first used to carry baggage, but proved useless through the Jungle—the happening depicted in my picture was boring in its frequency. They were soon discarded, and sick men carried the baggage. From the Bamboo trees in background I took some strips for the new brushes (In blue and black paint on paper obtained from a Thai)

35.—AT THE END OF THE DAY'S MARCH. We slept where and how we could, the Japs didn't mind—they did sometimes give us a drink of hot water, for they were responsible for getting some of us to the end of the journey, and some who were a fraction more than

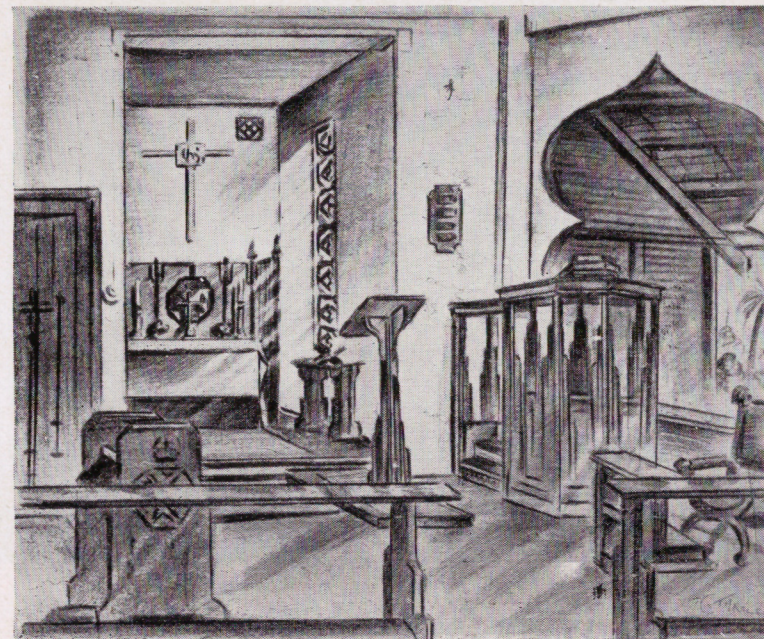
half dead. This is painted on a book cover. I found an Indian with this paint, but he had no idea of its use—it was curious how materials turned up from most unexpected sources.

36.—THE BUILDING OF THE MAIN BRIDGE OVER THE SALWEEN RIVER. This was built at Sonkuri No. 2 Camp. It was built entirely with timber, and with the slave labour of prisoners of war. There were no mechanical devices whatsoever. Our hosts with the whips, had an electric generator which supplied lighting for their huts. We had no light. My picture shows the method of pile driving; 200 of us slaves pulled up the derrick weight, let go, and "crash" another half-inch gone. Hundreds lost their lives whilst on this job—drowned—exhausted—beaten to death by the Japanese Engineers, who were by far the worst type I ever encountered. It was "Speedo" "Speedo" from morn to night, until death became a welcome release. The lower bridge was used for Elephant traffic when not flooded by the rise of the river. (Blue and black ink, tint from Blood—on Japanese rice-paper).

37.—THE BURNING OF THE CHOLERA DEAD. These men died in the hospital near No. 2 camp. Some escaped to get to the river to drink, they died on the banks, and many dead bodies floated down the river to spread the infection to other camps. Parties of prisoners were sent to collect them. Our taskmasters were scared stiff of any disease, and left the Cholera ward strictly alone. It was the only place one could be sure of not seeing them, and some natives volunteered to work among the Cholera patients in order to get away from the Japs. Very few who entered this hospital came out alive. Bodies were burned as opposed to burial, because the Japs were afraid the infection would seep through the soil to infect their drinking water. It was a quick death—very few lived longer than 48 hours after infection. (Indian ink, on packing cardboard obtained from a Thai).

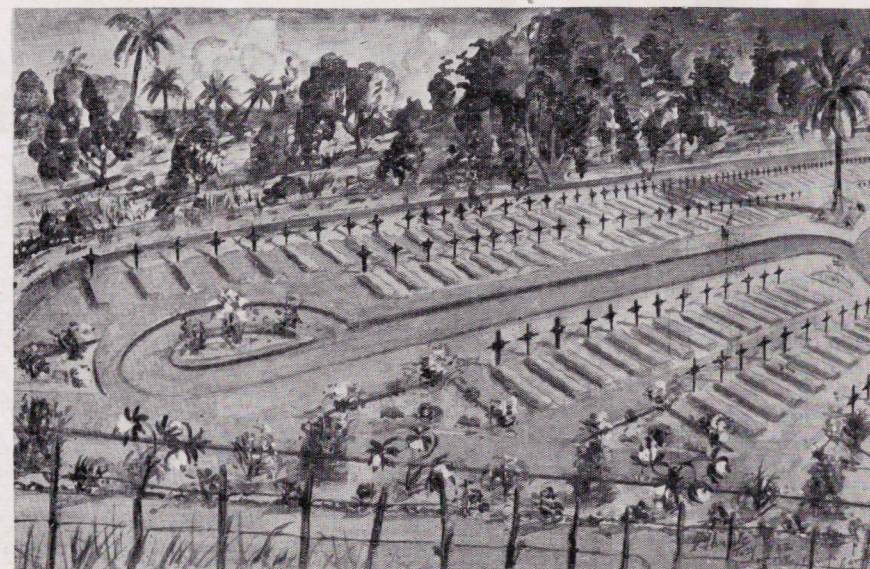
38.—THE MIND OF A PRISONER OF WAR. Seeing a prisoner digging a grave for one of his comrades, made me wonder what his thoughts were, and I came to the conclusion that the unspoken thoughts of all of us were very similar. I have tried to convey these thoughts, hopes, and yearnings in this grotesque figure with its swollen head, full of brain images. It tells my story almost on its own, and it tells the story of us all. You, back home waiting, had knowledge of these thoughts. Ours, a terrible imprisonment, yours, a terrible "freedom."

39.—DOREEN THRALE. Painted whilst in hospital in Thailand. When I left England I knew that if all went well, I should become a father in about two months. No news from home, and my mind continually seeking the image of a girl child—I could not in any way imagine a boy. One evening I was sitting alone, with the jungle close and menacing sapping all my strength. My morale was at low ebb—slowly the vision of my daughter appeared before me, a child I had never seen, and in one swift glance I seemed to see her entire character. I hurriedly made a sketch, and completed the picture in the next four evenings. Now, I had a picture of my daughter—and terrific comfort. It has so happened that the vision "I saw," and the daughter "who was," were at that time nearly identical. I cannot explain it. Paints were borrowed from a Dutch Airman.



19

Inside the Mosque.



23

British Cemetery, Singapore.



25

The Java Lines, Singapore.



29

The No Escape Incident.



26

Transport in Changi, Singapore.

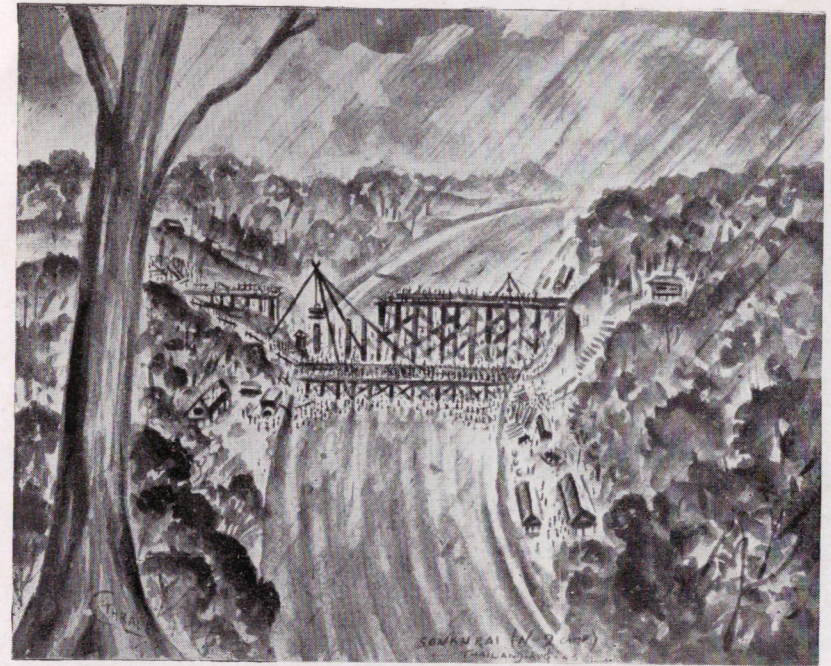


30

The Railway Trucks—On the Road to Siam.



41 The Base Hospital Canchanburi. Exterior.



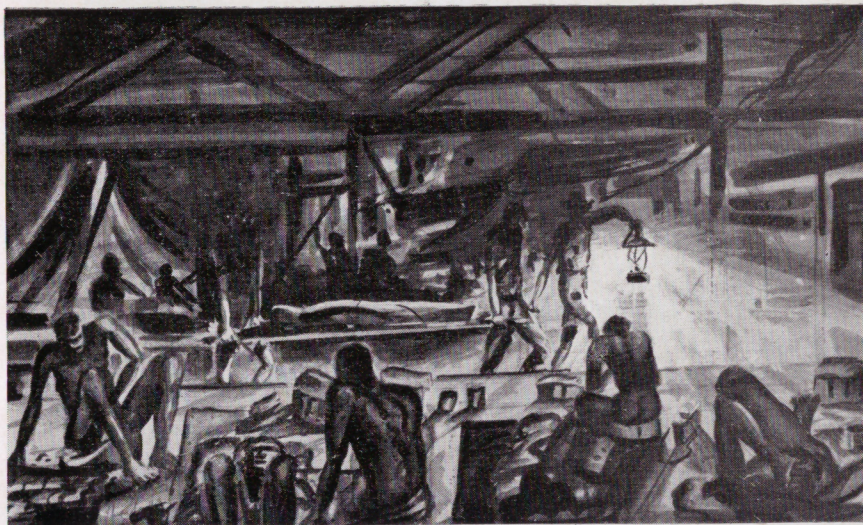
36 Building of the Bridge.



79 Living on the Grid, Changi Gaol.



37 Burning the Cholera Dead.



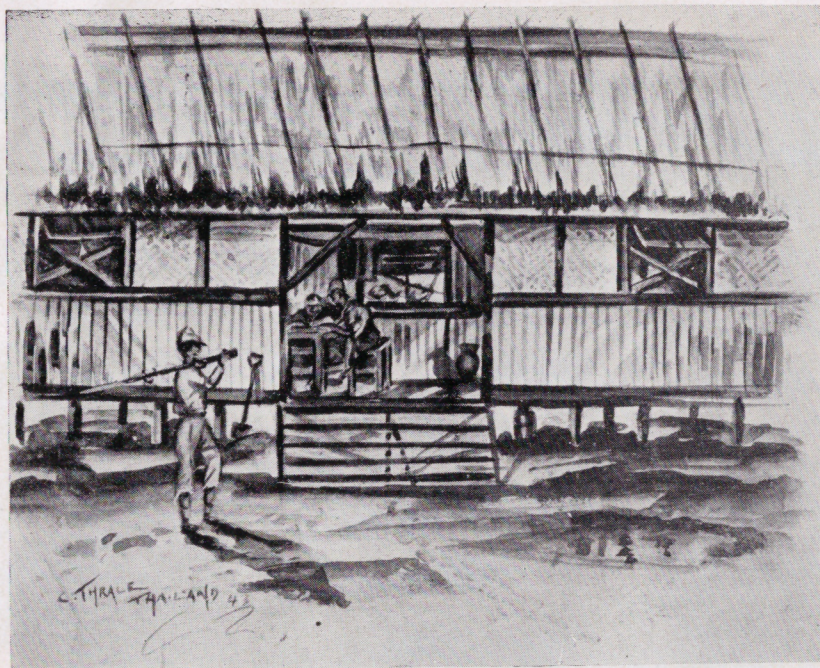
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Carrying out the Dead, Canchanburi Hospital.



65

Major Fagan. The Operating Theatre.



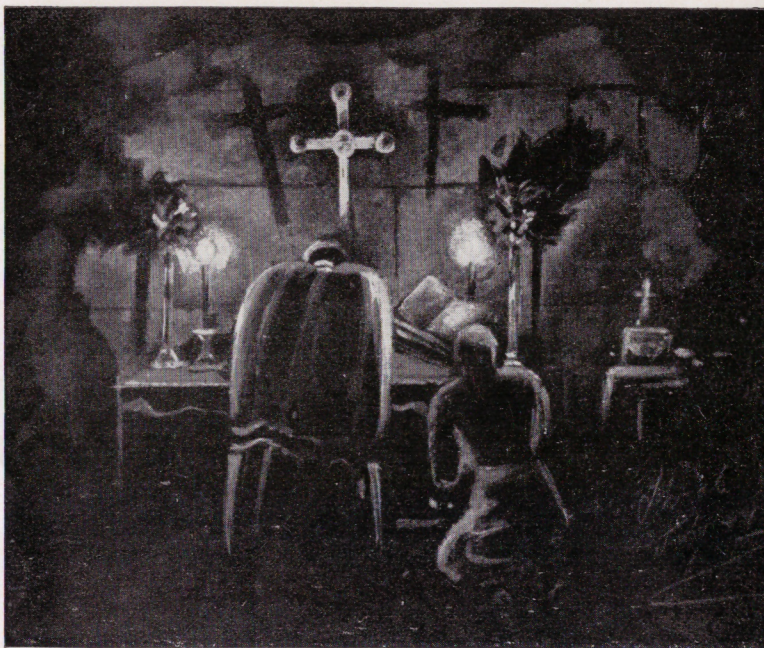
54

Japanese Guardroom.



73

Changi Gaol, Singapore.



83

C. of E. Service in the Courtyard of Changi Gaol.



96

P.O.W. in the Funk Holes of Singapore.

40.—SURVIVORS FROM THE RAILWAY OF DEATH. This party was known as "F" Force. Each party leaving Singapore for the Railway were given an identification letter. "F" and "H" Forces suffered more heavily—they were the last parties to leave Singapore, and were made up entirely of sick men. At this stage, the British successes in Burma were forcing the Japs to evacuate the P's.O.W. who had almost completed the Railway. They were now getting forced labour from the Malaysians.

41.—"F" and "H" FORCE HOSPITAL, CANCHANBURI, SIAM (Exterior). The hospital at Canchanburi. The paints for this picture were borrowed from a Padre who had just arrived with a special R.A.M.C. party, who had volunteered to come along to fight the epidemics. This grand party also looked after the natives—the death rate among whom was so high as to warrant communal burial pits.

42.—INSIDE THE WARD. "F" and "H" Force Hospital, Canchanburi. All the huts were the ubiquitous Bamboo buildings, and the patients lie on Bamboo platforms raised from the ground. This hospital was built in a Paddy field, and the ground was constantly wet. At the foot of one of the patients can be seen a cylindrical Bed-pan. The Pans were Bamboo stem hollowed out, and were reviled by all, but it was "Hobson's Choice." This patient, who was a Gunner, died three hours later—Amoebic Dysentery. I was lying opposite when I painted this picture, my trouble being Bacillary Dysentery. (In Black and red paint).

43.—MAIN HIGHWAY SIAM. THE SALWEEN RIVER. There was insufficient water in the hospital camp for washing purposes, and so the sick were allowed to bathe in this river. Those lucky enough to have hidden money were able to buy Bananas and Fish from the Houseboats which traded on the river, and many times I saw these boats sunk by the weight of ravenous P.O.W. crowding to be served.

44.—A KOREAN GUARD. This man asked me to draw his picture. At the time all I had was a piece of thin tissue-paper. When I handed the sketch to this man I was rewarded by a smack on the face, and was told he was insulted by having his face drawn on such poor paper. The sketch was thrown at me. (In blue pencil).

45.—THE TOWN OF CANCHANBURI. As seen from the well, from which sick men carried water to the more sick in hospital. (Tissue-paper).

46.—THE FOLIAGE AT THE JUNGLE EDGE. Showing the Hawks which were always hovering over death. Paints were borrowed from a Dutch P.O.W. who was a Commercial Artist in Batavia. He was 67, and what life was left in his body was extracted by the almighty Jap.

47.—PRISONERS OF WAR FROM JAVA. (Indian Ink. Clay Tints. Tissue-paper).

48.—EARLY MORNING IN SIAM. A wash drawing. I am told this picture has the touch of the Asiatic Artist. It was not intentional.

49.—KOREAN GUARD. The best-looking Korean I had ever seen. His most precious possession was a piece of mirror, into which he was always peering. This is another request picture. (Red and black pencil).

50.—SUNRISE IN OLD SIAM. Who am I to do justice to this Godlike glory?—Freedom to move around, and paints of quality—maybe I could give a little idea of the beauty seen.

51.—NUDE STUDY OF A BERI-BERI PATIENT. Ten-minute sketch. He died two days later. This prisoner was a Eurasian, married to a Thai woman, who smuggled food to him to try to save his life. He was a conscripted slave. Beri-Beri is a dreadful swelling disease which spread from legs to genital organs, to stomach, and finally to heart.

52.—EARLY MORNING MIST, SIAM.

53.—SUNSET AFTER THE MONSOON, SIAM. Showing the living quarters of the Thais. (Colours obtained by boiling a book cover. The red from theatrical grease paint).

54.—JAPANESE GUARDROOM. The guard is depicted as I saw him—the Japs were slovenly in the carriage of arms. The Guard commander became passionately angry when he saw the picture, tore it from my hand and pitched it in the waste bin. Many days later I crept out and retrieved the sketch. I could not afford to lose them now—they were daily becoming more precious to me. Many times I was asked by the Japs to do some pornographic studies for them—they could not understand why I could or would not.

55.—HAWKS IN SIAM. The Dustmen of the Far East. They are seen near a Japanese slaughter-house. (On the back of Japanese Field Card).

56.—AT THE JUNGLE EDGE. The latrines shown were pits. After some time in this camp, all the available ground had been used for these pits, and it became necessary to open up the pits and bale out the excreta, which was carried a long distance from the camp. This work was a "punishment" job. (On a Jap Field Card).

57.—A JAPANESE INTERPRETER. I cannot turn the other cheek to this enemy. The intensity of my hatred for him I cannot describe. He spoiled my whole story. Telling me there was no room for Art in the Japanese ideology, but plenty of room for work, he confiscated 80 of my most cherished pictures, and forever destroyed the earthly visages of some of my friends. I got him down on paper by sly study of his hated face. From my estimate of this animal's mentality, my pictures will probably be distributed among the Geisha girl quarters. I suppose my lack of wisdom in not distributing them among

my friends was responsible for this loss, but then the friends were lost also—it would have been the same. (Paints obtained from Korean Guard, who was an amateur Artist).

58.—SUNSET AFTER THE MONSOON IN SIAM. We prisoners literally drank these sunsets—our only glimpse of beauty.

59.—PORTRAIT OF A DUTCH PRISONER'S WIFE. Copied from a precious photograph. I did two of these, one of which, I hope my Dutch friend managed to keep. There is a story attached to this picture. A Jap lent me the paints with which this picture was painted, on the understanding that I was to do some pictures for him. I did some, and stole his brushes before returning the box, replacing them with those made with my hair, but lost them a few weeks later. Some time later I met a fellow prisoner, who had been commissioned by the same Jap to do some more pictures—the same paints were loaned, but the prisoner was unable to use my home-made brushes, and told his customer so. He received a bashing, and was told they had been used before without complaint. On American notepaper.

60.—KOREAN GUARDROOM AT ENTRANCE TO P.O.W. CAMP, SIAM. Showing Bamboo being brought into the camp for more huts. Note the two prisoners bowing to the Guard. We bowed for 3½ years to all ranks of the Jap army. It was bowing, or bashing.

61.—DYSENTERY PATIENT, BURMA HOSPITAL, SIAM. It was about this time that I was asked by the Medical officer in charge to execute a number of sickness studies for record purposes, which I understood were intended for the British Medical Association. (In pencil on tracing paper).

62.—DAVID, MY BEST PAL. I lost him. He went abroad the most perfect physical specimen I had ever seen, but died of malnutrition. (Black paint on grey paper).

63.—FOUR MORE CHUMS. Three died. They had only one shirt between them, and I put the same shirt on each. Since I became a free man, I have had the picture photographed, and a copy has gone to each of the parents.

64.—"F" FORCE HOSPITAL AT THE BASE, SIAM. In the evenings we amused ourselves by listening to talks on any subject one of us was conversant on. The talks varied from painting to plastering, from Botany to Burglary. This picture shows an "Aussie" giving a lecture on Australian Law. He wears a towel around his middle, having lent his trousers to a fellow prisoner who was out on a working-party. (In Blue pencil).

65.—THE OPERATING THEATRE, "F" FORCE HOSPITAL, SIAM. There was no space or light inside the hospital, and all operations were done in the open on a Bamboo platform. This picture shows Major Fagan scraping a tropical ulcer with an ordinary table spoon, which was the only instrument available. This Surgeon was one of

the few men there who knew the secret of scraping these ulcers successfully, and many men previous to his coming had lost limbs through these eating sores. Because of knowledge, and a table spoon, many men are to-day walking who would otherwise have been crippled for life. (Painted with Japanese leather blacking on back of music score).

66.—ANOTHER PAL. He died two hours after I had completed this sketch. Cholera. (Pencil drawing on notepaper).

66a.—THE AUSSIE WHO DID NOT WANT TO DIE. He put up a magnificent fight against malnutrition, but died two days later. (Pencil on Jap notepaper).

67.—A DYSENTERY PATIENT. (Pencil on wrapping-paper).

68.—A NEGRO FROM JAVA. The richest man in camp, who was engaged in Black Market deals with the natives. Had nothing to do with white prisoners. (Red pencil on rice paper).

WE ARE GETTING OUT OF THIS HELL, AND ARE BEING HUSTLED TO SINGAPORE.

69.—THE REST CAMP AND CONVALESCENT DEPOT, SINGAPORE. I am back and away from the horrors of Siam. I have again met the Jap Officer in charge of the Aerodrome here who was an Oxford man. He was genuinely horrified when told of our sufferings in Siam, and said he had no knowledge of it. I believed him, for this Officer did all he could to make life easier for us—he was the exception to the rule. Our fellow prisoners in Singapore welcomed us back with open arms, and sacrificed their rations to give us a fighting chance. The memory of those we had left behind on the human bonfires, and in the graves of Siam, was always with us, and always will be, and although for a month life was comparatively pleasant, the memory of the thousands left behind remains a livid scar on our souls. (Painted with dye from trees, clay, and Indian Ink).

70.—TREES OUTSIDE THE CONVALESCENT DEPOT, SINGAPORE. This spot was the beloved Mecca of all the music lovers among us, for it was here we were allowed to listen to a number of gramophone recitals of Classical Music. Life was breaking on our minds as something to fight for.

71.—SPRITES OF FANTASY. Whilst at this rest camp, entertainments were the order of the day for the returned survivors, and I wondered whether the Japs were trying to put something on the right side of the book against defeat and possible reprisals. We were going to stage an exhibition of handicrafts, and this was my idea for a Mural. The creative instincts of us all were being re-born, such is the quick re-action of released souls. My paints were obtained from the Australian Red Cross, who had received some supplies from the only ship allowed to enter Singapore. Perhaps now I can paint better.

72.—PIN-UP GIRL. Not having seen a white woman for over two years, they asked for a Pin-up Girl. This was my effort to fill this pressing need. Reduced to an animal existence for years, we had not lost the memory of the beauty in humanity.

73.—CHANGI GAOL, SINGAPORE. Our rest at an end, we were fit enough to again be used, and we were put to work on the Aerodrome. This was an immense undertaking, and all of us were moved from Changi Camp to the Gaol. The Civil Internees were turned out to make room for us, and went to Sime Road Camp. My picture shows the exterior of the prison, said to be the most modern in the world. My mind questioned whether "modern" could be used in connection with the word "Prison." (Red paint bartered from Malayan, on loose-leaf notepaper).

74.—CHANGI GAOL. THE MAIN COOKHOUSE. The water supply had failed here, and holes were bored to take all the Sewerage. (Red Paint).

75.—CHANGI GAOL. "D" COURTYARD. My picture shows the Guard Post, and the top of the 22 foot-high wall. No one ever escaped from this Prison, and none of us now had the strength to try it.

76.—ONE OF THE CELLS IN CHANGI GAOL.—Four prisoners were squashed in each cell, which normally took one convict. The concrete block in the centre was the convict's bed. A convict to the Japs was a higher being than a prisoner of war, but their hatred of us was intense, and I think our position in the world really was the true cause. An Asiatic latrine can be seen in foreground.

77.—ENTRANCE TO CHANGI GAOL. The gate was of steel, and was electrically controlled. Look-out post on top, 30 feet from ground.

78.—EXECUTED FOR NO APPARENT REASON. The conditions were becoming unbearable again, and this is probably a picture of our minds.

79.—INSIDE CHANGI GAOL. PRISONERS LIVING ON THE GRID. This Grid was a steel netting between the floors to allow the air to circulate, and, more important, to allow the Guards to watch all that was happening above and below. In spite of this air circulation, the air became fetid because of the number of men squeezed in. We just had to sleep this way. (Paint from boiled blue cloth, bound with rice-water).

80.—THE LOWER FLOOR THROUGH THE GRID. Two P.O.W. after work was over. (Yellow pencil on black paper).

81.—BOILER HOUSE, CHANGI GAOL. The boilers maintained steam to cook rice for 4,000 prisoners. The fuel was wood from nearby forest. (Coloured Crayons on black paper).

82.—SOMEBODY'S WIFE. From a photograph belonging to the husband who was a Civil Internee. What photographs we had became almost worn out by continual handling—they were "home." (Pencil and Wash).

83.—CHURCH OF ENGLAND SERVICE IN ONE OF THE COURTYARDS, CHANGI GAOL. "Please God set us free." (Crayon and Wash on black paper).

84.—PORTRAIT OF A FRIEND. Here I again experimented with blood for tint.

85.—THE DISABLED LIMBLESS. Listening to lectures organised to help them to forget. (Dye from boiled book cover. On music score).

86.—A KOREAN GUARD. About this time, the very sick men who were not able to work on Aerodrome construction, were put on to road-making, it being considered lighter work. The road was built solely to enable the Japanese General to visit the whole camp in his car. The Korean shown was a good sort—he took a risk in supplying the means whereby the prisoners could get cocoanuts to supplement the rice ration. (In red pencil).

87.—THE JAPANESE GARDENS, SINGAPORE. In these gardens, very sick men cultivated Tapioca, Spinach, Sweet Potatoes, etc., most of which found its way to the Japanese cooking pots—some, however, did find its way to the prisoners.

88.—THE SAME GARDENS.

89.—THE SAME GARDENS.

89a.—THE SAME GARDENS. The building in this picture was called "Brighton Villa" and was built by an Englishman in Peace Time. How that name tormented us, with its vision of the Palace Pier, the curling sea walk to Rottingdean, and the gay light-hearted crowds. (All four of the gardens in Red pencil).

90.—THE GARDENS OF THE IMPERIAL JAPANESE ARMY, SINGAPORE. Showing prisoners sheltering from the rain. These were very sick men, and the Japanese boasted of their HUMANITY in allowing them to shelter during rain. They knew none of these men could outlive a bout of Pneumonia, and prisoners were getting a bit short by this time.

90a.—P.O.W. HAT STYLES. By their rags we knew them.

91.—SOMEBODY'S MOTHER. Painted from memory and a lump in the throat. She was a Civil Internee I had seen through the wire confining her.

92.—ADAM PARK CAMP, SINGAPORE. By this time, these yellow pigmies were really getting the wind up, and they decided that the defences of Singapore should be made impregnable. Long years ago, down the corridors of time, I seemed to remember that England had thought the Island was impregnable, and learned her mistake. All the prisoners not working on Aerodrome construction were sent to various camps to dig tunnels and gun emplacements in the hillsides. The main job at Adam Park was Funk holes and Mine Pits. There was a curious loosening of the moral rigour, for we were allowed to look for foods to bring back to the camp to supplement the evening meal. All kinds of things were scrounged, and our bag usually consisted of Snakes, Frogs, Roots, Weeds, and sometimes Fruit. Snake, if nicely selected and cooked, can be very appetising, to a Starch-filled tummy. In Indian Ink on manuscript paper).

93.—LIVING QUARTERS, ADAM PARK CAMP, SINGAPORE.—Owing to the pressure on space here, a platform was erected four feet from the floor to allow an extra tier of sleepers. The space allowed each man was the width of his shoulders. Like all our quarters in the Far East, lice were our constant irritant, and beyond burning down our only shelters there was no remedy. (Red pencil and black wash).

94.—WARRANT OFFICERS' QUARTERS, ADAM PARK. The majority of Officers were quartered in the main camp in Singapore, in close proximity to the very sick men. Adam Park camp boasted only two Officers, consequently squads were placed in charge of Warrant Officers, who, in this capacity, supervised only. Normally they had to work like Other Ranks. Through the window can be seen an erection which the Japs affirmed was a secret weapon. We never knew, for the erection was demolished before the Japanese capitulation. (Red pencil and Black paint).

95.—JAPANESE VOLUNTEER FORCE. Japanese civilians, who were recruited from the civilian population in Singapore. The Japanese were now up against it, and every fighting man was needed for the front line, and so these men were brought in to guard the prisoners. They did duty for a week at a time, were men of good education, had not been reduced to bestiality by the discipline of the Imperial Japanese Army. They spoke English well, and the prisoners got on well with them.

96.—THE FUNK HOLES OF SINGAPORE. The whole island was honeycombed with these tunnels, which were really Air Raid Shelters. The party with whom I toiled were nearly all professional miners, and my puny efforts at tunnelling were a matter of ribald comment. The Japanese, strong in superstition, daily sprinkled salt in these mines to keep away evil spirits—the Jap shown on the right one day forgot to perform this rite, and on that day the roof caved in and nearly killed him. We worked in these holes for ten days after V.J. Day. The Jap Commander stated he had not made Peace.

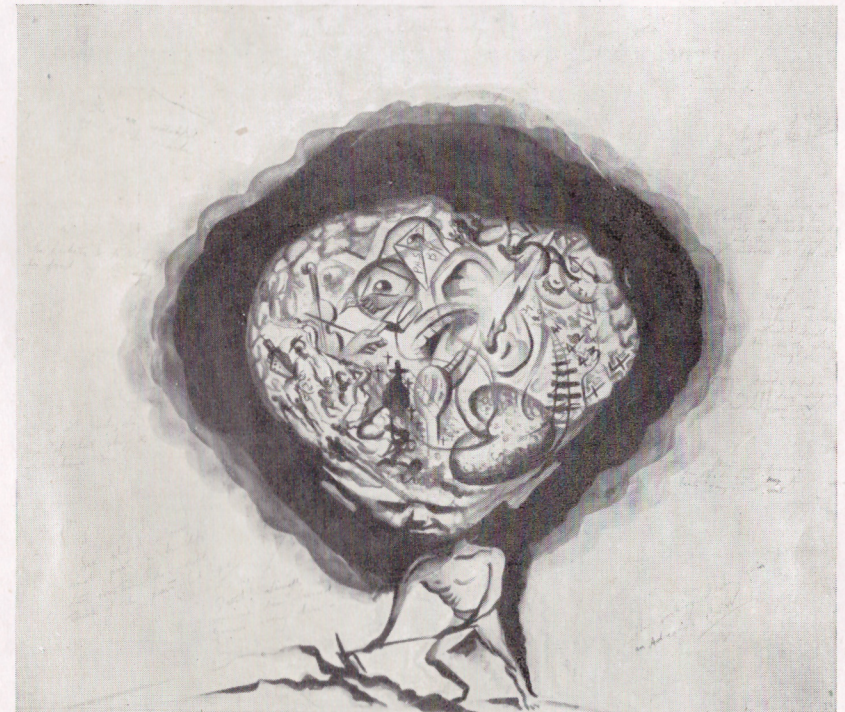
THAT WAS MY LAST PICTURE AS A PRISONER OF WAR.
THE REPATRIATION SHIP IS IN THE HARBOUR AND IN A
FEW HOURS I SHALL LEAVE BEHIND THIS BAD DREAM—
ALL AROUND ME IS DELIRIOUS JOY—WHAT LIES AHEAD?—
SURELY THE NIGHTMARE WILL BE A PART OF ME FOR
EVER AND EVER.

97 and 98.—So strange to feel I am back to where I left off—
strange to see my Easel again—strange to feel there is a place in which
I can create without hindrance. These came from my hand since I
became Charles Thrale, Commercial Artist once again. Have I found
Peace? Have YOU? Aren't we all a part of one Canvas? Will the
picture of Peace be complete unless we are all in it?

Dulwich, London. 1947.

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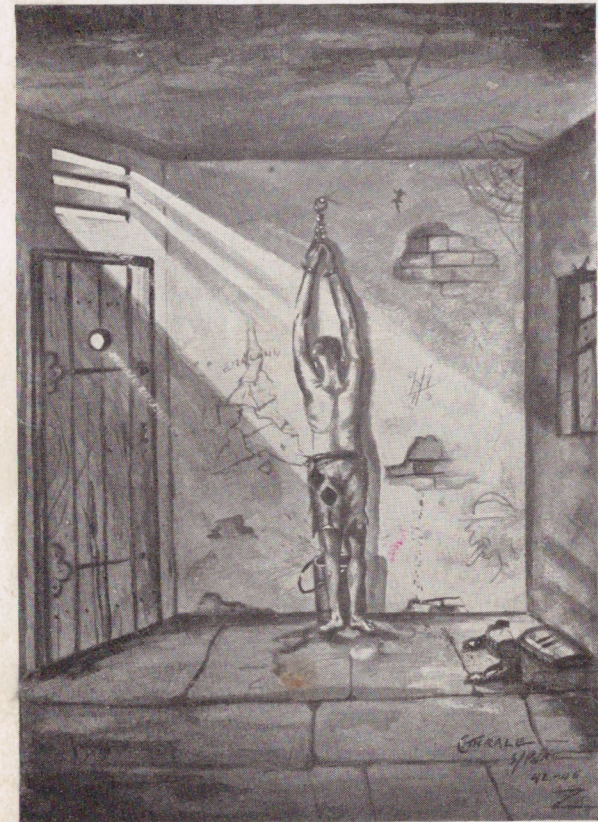


38

The Grotesque Head.

THE ROYAL ARTILLERY ASSOCIATION

The Valleys of The Shadow of Death



28 The Dreaded Temple Hill Detention Barracks

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the "Charles Thrale" Exhibition

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