Captain Francis (Frank) Horatio Evory Townshend [6A26] MC OBE Croix de Chevalier

Frank (left) with his brothers Philip (centre) and Richard (right)



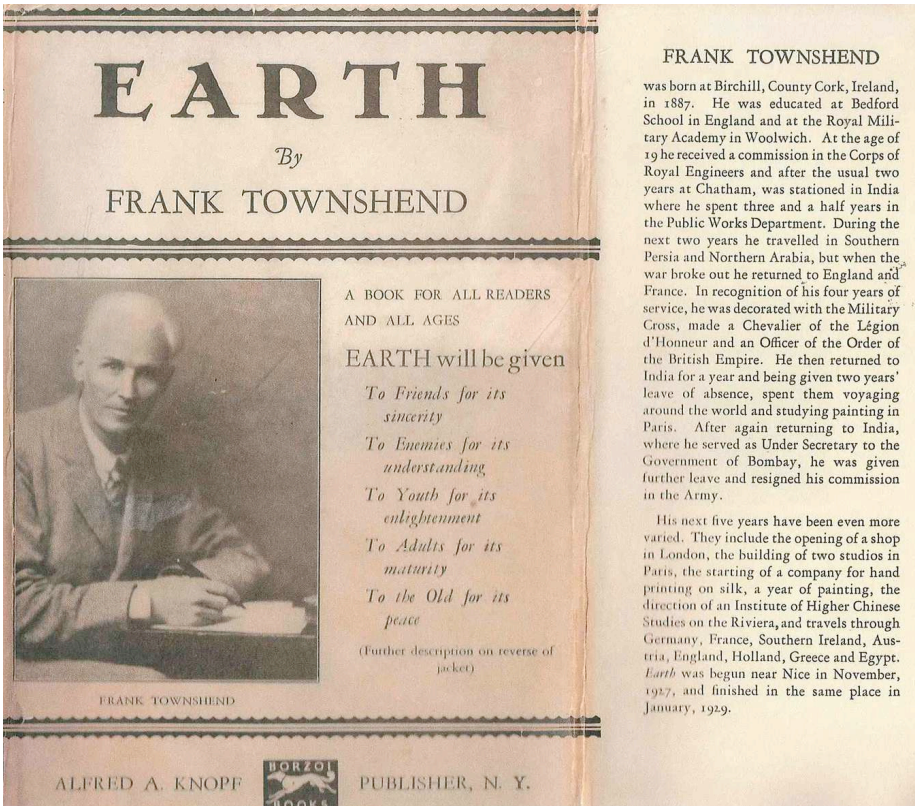
Frank as a young captain in the Royal Engineers



Frank in uniform with his MC and OBE



‘Earth’ one of five book written by Frank



EARTH

By

FRANK TOWNSHEND

FRANK TOWNSHEND

A BOOK FOR ALL READERS AND ALL AGES

EARTH will be given

To Friends for its sincerity

To Enemies for its understanding

To Youth for its enlightenment

To Adults for its maturity

To the Old for its peace

(Further description on reverse of jacket)

ALFRED A. KNOPF BORZOI BOOKS PUBLISHER, N. Y.

FRANK TOWNSHEND

was born at Birchill, County Cork, Ireland, in 1887. He was educated at Bedford School in England and at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich. At the age of 19 he received a commission in the Corps of Royal Engineers and after the usual two years at Chatham, was stationed in India where he spent three and a half years in the Public Works Department. During the next two years he travelled in Southern Persia and Northern Arabia, but when the war broke out he returned to England and France. In recognition of his four years of service, he was decorated with the Military Cross, made a Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur and an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. He then returned to India for a year and being given two years' leave of absence, spent them voyaging around the world and studying painting in Paris. After again returning to India, where he served as Under Secretary to the Government of Bombay, he was given further leave and resigned his commission in the Army.

His next five years have been even more varied. They include the opening of a shop in London, the building of two studios in Paris, the starting of a company for hand printing on silk, a year of painting, the direction of an Institute of Higher Chinese Studies on the Riviera, and travels through Germany, France, Southern Ireland, Austria, England, Holland, Greece and Egypt. *Earth* was begun near Nice in November, 1927, and finished in the same place in January, 1929.

Frank much later in life



Article in Bangkok World 23 February 1970

23 Feb. 1970 BANGKOK WORLD



Mr. John Chen and retired British Army Captain Frank Townshend relax at Mr. Chen's home after their reunion, yesterday. They had not seen each another for 10 years and first met 28 years ago in India when Mr. Chen was a young student. Capt. Townshend enabled young Chen to complete his schooling.

Laotian teachers complete Thai tour

Forty-five Laotian elementary school principals will leave Thailand today following a 10-day observation tour to this country's education facilities.

The principals, from all parts of Laos, toured Thailand under USOM sponsorship.

The group visited schools in various parts of the country in order to obtain new ideas and teaching skills.

Bangkok executive meets benefactor

A Bangkok engineering executive and his benefactor of over a quarter-century ago met again in Bangkok yesterday after 10 years.

Mr. John Chen, 46, was a young teenager in a boarding school in India when he became acquainted with a retired British Army officer, Captain Frank Townshend, now 82.

They met during World War II, 28 years ago, while young Chen was studying at a well-known school in Darjeering and plagued with financial difficulties.

Capt. Townshend, already retired from the military, was writing on philosophy when he heard of the young man's plight. He stepped in and assisted Chen to finish his schooling.

The kindly old English captain, Mr. Chen related, was "intelligent, witty and understanding," and was a profound influence on him which assisted him to achieve his present success.

The two parted after the war and went their separate ways, but never failed to keep in touch. The last time they saw one another was, again, in India in 1960.

Mr. Chen embarked on his career, eventually reaching his current high position, while Capt. Townshend traveled around the world to write a book on philosophy, "Earth, Heaven, Hell, Coming, Amen," which contains his comparisons of various great world philosophers.

The captain eventually settled down in Gloustershire, England, but an urge to write another book again aroused his adventurous nature and he was off to Bangkok.

He plans to complete his new work in Thailand.

Portrait of Frank
written by his nephew Julian Townshend in his 'Memoir'

His main concern was with the state of humanity, and its need for a spiritual regeneration that could live in harmony with itself (mind, body and spirit) and with nature. He was much influenced by Eastern philosophy and even met the Dalai Lama during one of his long stays in Darjeeling. He was a good friend and disciple of Lama Govinda, a German who had taken up Buddhism and had created a cult following. In 1933 he founded a Tibetan Buddhist order outside Darjeeling. There was something 'cultish' in Frank's writings with which I couldn't quite sympathise. He saw Jesus, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Gandhi, Edward Carpenter and many others as 'urthmen' whose writings and actions were central to this spiritual regeneration. Uncle Frank seemed to have a weakness for living 'prophets', not only Lama Govinda. He told me that in the early 1920s he had travelled down to Sicily where Aleister Crowley ran a small settlement of followers. Crowley was a famous mystic, much derided in the British press at the time. Frank said that his settlement had closed just before he got there. In retrospect I can see that he had a point about the importance of human spirituality. He malso had worries about human beings messing up the planet, perhaps more prophetic than he realised at the time. He was a fan of Rachel Carson's Silent Spring published in 1962, which attacked the use of pesticides in agriculture. His book Earth first published in 1929 was widely read and went into a number of editions, and Frank corresponded with several famous people including Henry Miller. By the time I knew him he had difficulty in getting his work published. His way of thinking had gone out of fashion. Nevertheless, a number of composers have put some of his verses in Earth to music. Frank encouraged me in various ways. He helped me to paint and write. He gave me his paint box of oil paints and brushes, along with charcoal and a pad. Whilst staying with him I'd amuse myself by painting imaginary scenes from nature and imaginary portraits of people. More importantly for the long run was his view of writing style. He wrote with great power and simplicity. He was an opponent of jargon, what we might now call verbal 'bullshit'. He encouraged me to read Sir Ernest Gowers' Plain Words, a style-guide for civil servants, which has never been out of print. So nothing pompous like 'implement', just plain and simple 'carry out'! Frank also commended George Orwell's prose. He had always been generous to me. As a kid, when in Jamaica he sent me Victorian stamps, along with silver half-crowns that were still used as currency. He even bought me a Charles 11 double florin. Later, he gave me an original Staunton chess set.