

The Call
of China's
Great North West
Kansu and Beyond

Mrs. Howard Taylor

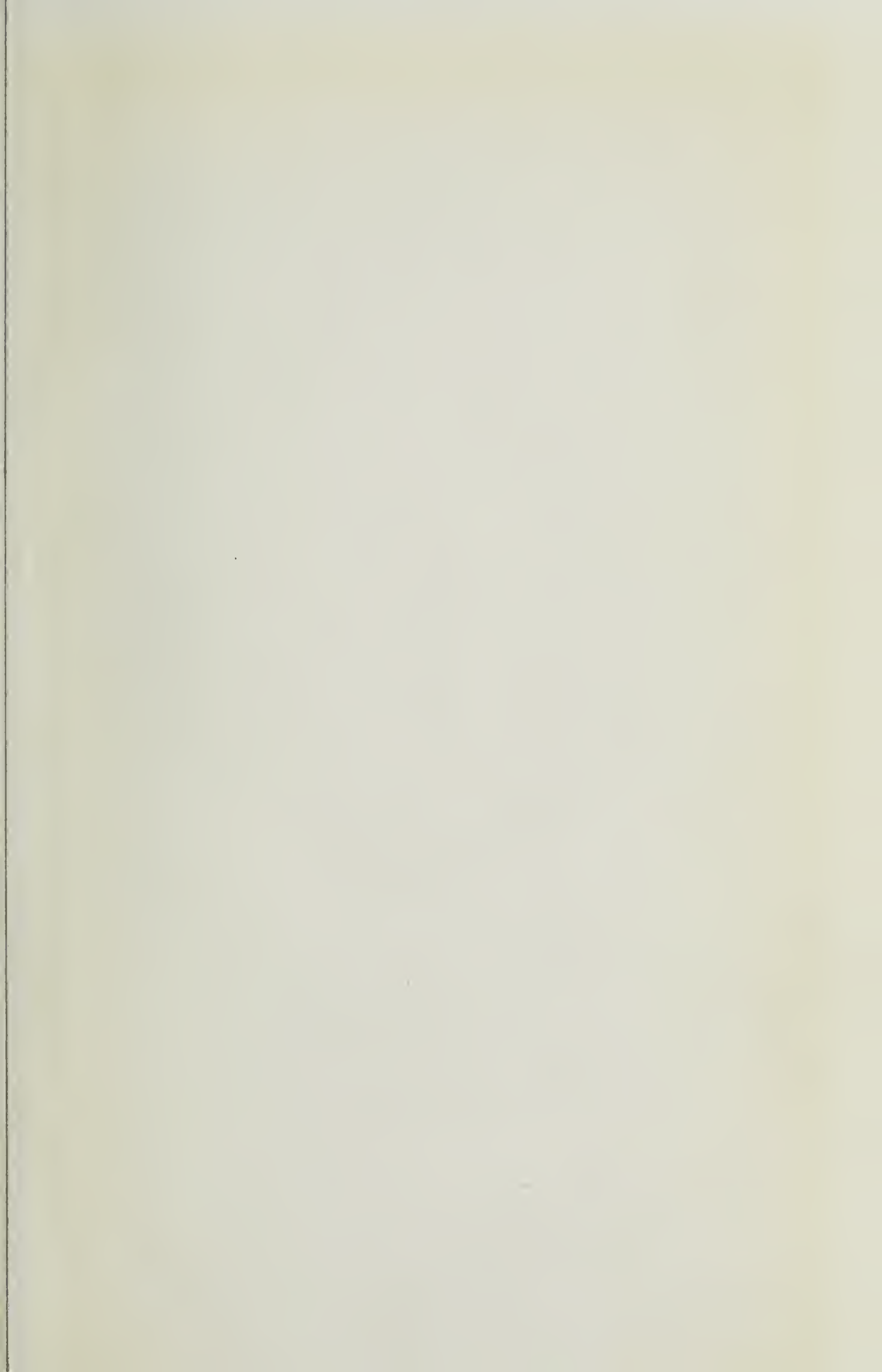




Photo by

THE FRONTIER OF TIBET.

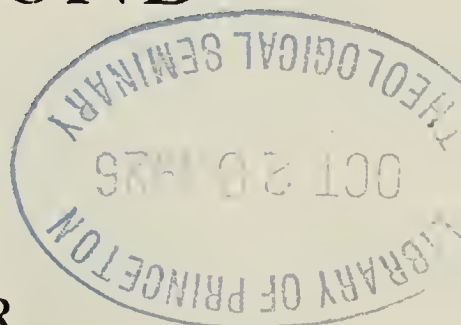
a C. & M. A. Missionary.

“All this entrancing vision of white mountains lost in the clouds, with valleys shrouded in mist opening between them, where steep paths lead to Tibetan homes.” These mountains, photographed from the Kansu side, are from 13,000 to 15,000 feet high.

Frontispiece.

THE CALL OF CHINA'S
GREAT NORTH-WEST
OR
KANSU AND BEYOND

BY
MRS. HOWARD TAYLOR



WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION, LONDON
PHILADELPHIA, TORONTO, MELBOURNE, AND
SHANGHAI
AGENTS: THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
4 BOUVERIE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4

TO

HENRY AND KARL

IN THIS GREATEST DAY OF OPPORTUNITY

THE WORLD HAS EVER SEEN

“ Is it true that a Divine Person came into the world to bless mankind ? Is that a fact or not ? If it is not, then Christianity is a delusion. If it is true, such a fact must be of supreme importance for all men.

“ If the Divine Person came to bless mankind, all men ought to know it : all have a right, a claim, to be told the fact. That settles our duty.”

EUGENE STOCK.

I SOUGHT the secret of Thy will ;
But, LORD, I did not know
Thy lowly life, Thy heavy cross
Life's plan and purpose show.

I thought some special path and plan
Bearing my name I'd see ;
Instead, I found in JESUS' life
Footprints for such as me.

To save the lost His aim, so mine ;
Poor hungry ones to feed ;
The sightless eyes to turn to light ;
The erring feet to lead.

Since JESUS' life reveals GOD's will,
Surely I'm in His way
When choosing rough, dark mountain paths
To find the sheep who stray.

Thus preaching CHRIST where yet unknown,
GOD's world-wide love I show ;
And since for this CHRIST lived and died,
GOD's will for me I know.

GRACE E. WILDER.

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CHAPTER I

LEAVING THE PLAINS

IT was barely six weeks before the terrible earthquake, when, little realising what was about to happen, we set out from the capital of Shensi in North China to visit the very region to be most devastated by that calamity. It was a beautiful November. The air was fresh and bracing—specially at three o'clock in the morning when our active young carter would have us get up—and the sun ran its course through a cloudless sky. Many a day we had watched it rise and set since leaving the railway, lumbering along the dusty track, climbing the mountains and crossing the plain which had brought us to the city of Sian, above mentioned. Once before we had been there, but that was long ago, on our wedding journey. We could no more have recognised the great city from our remembrance of it than it could have recognised us, only with this difference, that while we had been growing older, Sian, strange to say, had grown young, or so it seemed for a mile or two inside the East Gate—very young indeed!

It almost took our breath away to pass under that massive portal and find, instead of the old ruts

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and mud-holes, the irregular buildings and crowded stalls, a magnificent highway running straight ahead as far as eye could see, broad as a Paris boulevard, smooth as a garden path, and lined on either side with two-storied buildings as alike as peas in a pod. Bicycles sped over this highway, telegraph wires, telephones, electric lights, modern shops, soldiers in foreign uniforms, and people in rickshaws hurrying about their business made us feel antiquated in our Chinese dress and old-time cart.

And then the changes in the mission-circle into which we were warmly welcomed! Loved faces were gone, and those who remained of that first group to obtain permanent residence in the city (Scandinavian Alliance) were veterans of thirty years' standing. The little handful of converts had grown to number five hundred baptized believers in and around the city, and many hundreds more in the far-reaching stations opened from that centre. Very interesting it was to see the beautiful church filled to the doors on Sunday, the platform packed with fifty students from the Bible School who helped with the singing. Young workers are in training not only there, but in the Swedish-American school, which has grown up to meet the demands of the missionary circle. The passing of one dear lad from Darkness to Light at the time of our visit was a never-to-be-forgotten experience, bringing a breath of revival over the school in which every boy and girl received definite blessing. Several are now preparing to be missionaries, hoping after they have finished their education at home to return to this great needy field.

But much though there was to learn and to rejoice in—both among these dear friends, Associates of the China Inland Mission, and those of the English Baptist Mission—we could stay little longer than was necessary to prepare for our further journey. For the great North-West lay before us, the vast region stretching out from the populous Sian plain to the rugged lonely distances of Kansu, the province that loses itself in Central Asia. Six days' travelling it would take to reach the border, not counting visits to intermediate stations, and when we entered the province itself (a thousand miles from Shanghai) it would still stretch on a thousand miles beyond, to the frontier of Tibet and the Moslem-peopled heart of the Continent. The loneliness of the mission-stations appealed to us, most of them six to thirteen days' journey apart, on the verge of civilisation as well as of China proper. One thought of them as out of the world almost, and of the few foreign missionaries as buried in distant isolation. Mountain ranges and desert wastes seemed to separate them from the common life of nations, and their ice-bound streams in winter could scarcely be more sluggish than the currents of thought about them. What was our surprise, therefore, after crossing those mountain ranges, to find instead of mental and social stagnation, the living, throbbing tides of one of the great high-ways of the world!

CHAPTER II

SUNDAYS BY THE WAY

OUR first Sunday was at Hingping, and proved a red-letter day indeed—for it introduced us to a living, growing, self-propagating church, a church rich in spiritual gifts, with *three* pastors raised up of its own membership and over nine hundred communicants ; not a perfect church by any means, but one that knows the meaning of prayer and has experienced the power of GOD in real revivals. The welcome those dear Christians gave us was characteristic of their loving spirit, and entirely of their own planning, as we learned from the missionaries. That we did not arrive until long after we were expected hardly seemed to damp their ardour. For ourselves, jolting wearily along at two or three miles an hour, we were still some distance from the city, wondering what would happen if the gates were shut, and reminded by gathering shadows of all we had heard about robbers in that disturbed region. Suddenly a light shone ahead.

“ Is this Dr. Taylor ? ” was shouted in Chinese by some one on horseback.

Assured that it was, he rode off and disappeared.

Presently, more lights and voices. Then a mule was hurried up, two young men fastened it rapidly to the front of the cart, and soon we were going at a gallant pace over the unknown, unseen, uneven road. What mattered jolts and jars as we saw them running cheerily beside us!

Next, more lights and quite a crowd by the wayside. Such bright, kindly faces and welcoming voices! Strong hands were outstretched to help us from the cart and we were led up a steep bank to an open door.

“But this is not the city,” we questioned, for we had not passed the gates.

“No, but you must be tired. We have prepared refreshment here, and after a little rest will take you on to the mission-house.”

It was a sort of fairy palace by the roadside—a private garden as we afterwards discovered—and we were led through trees and flowers to an open space, where a vine was trellised over the entrance to a guest-hall. Inside, a lamp was burning on a table covered with cups of steaming hot tea and plates piled high with confectionery. It was all so clean and radiant and surprising! When we were seated with two of the pastors, a number of elders, deacons, and church members crowded round, and together we gave thanks for this happy meeting. Tea and cakes were welcome, and we were soon on our way again.

The city gates, which had been shut and barred, slowly opened as we approached. Surrounded by our escort, with Pastor Hwang riding on the front of the cart, it was quite a procession as the silent streets re-echoed with familiar hymns. Thus we

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were brought to the mission-house, where others, singing also, came out to meet us. Then a fatherly voice bade us welcome in the Name of the LORD, and we saw Mr. and Mrs. Bergström and Miss Anderson standing among their people.

Words fail to tell the joy of such meetings. After being introduced to many of the Christians and answering kind inquiries as to our journey, we were taken to the building occupied by the Bergströms—a little place, ideal in its home-comfort and simplicity. There at the supper-table, in the pleasant room that does duty as dining-room, drawing-room, and guest-hall in one, divided by an open screen with doorways, we began to learn something of what lies behind the remarkable growth of the Hingping church.

Its missionaries have been simple people, apostolic in their faith and love. Quite in the early days, before the Bergströms came to the station, Mr. and Mrs. Nordlund were there as bridegroom and bride. Their hearts were full of desire to bring CHRIST to the people, but the indifference and opposition were so great that there seemed little they could do but pray. Mr. Nordlund went out preaching and selling books, and Mrs. Nordlund welcomed the women who came out of curiosity to see her, but she was rarely asked into houses as she passed along the streets, and no one seemed interested in their message. One day things came to a climax. A Christian book was thrown in at the main entrance, which was found to be scribbled all over with charges against the missionaries, and wherever the name of JESUS occurred horrible things were written against it.

Stirred with sorrow and indignation, the Nordlunds took the book and, kneeling down, laid it open before them on the ground. Here was a case to plead! Surely the adversary had overreached himself; and for the honour of that precious Name, blasphemed among the heathen, they laid hold upon promise after promise, with faith that claimed a wonderful fulfilment. Such prayer—on and on through the whole afternoon, with many tears! But in those days they just lived to pray. “Hours and hours I have known them to spend on their knees,” said one who became their fellow-worker, “praying for openings, praying for souls, always with many tears.”

One of the things Mrs. Nordlund specially prayed for was that the LORD Himself would speak to people whom they could not reach; speak by vision and dreams, if there were no other way, but work in some hearts directly and bring them to Himself. All the summer she prayed this prayer, and meanwhile the answer was on its way. In a village near the city a woman had a dream. She saw a beautiful being come towards her with hands outstretched, as though offering some gift. The face she could not forget, nor the expression of love and happiness. But never in her life had she seen any one look like that, and how could she suppose she ever would? What was her surprise, therefore, when running with the rest one day to see the much-talked-of foreigner, to find herself looking into that very face with the eyes of love! Little wonder she listened to what the missionary was saying, and that the truth reached her heart. So this was the wonderful gift

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—a Saviour who had died that her sins might be forgiven and who would take her to eternal happiness with Himself in heaven. Whose joy was the greater—hers, as she entered by faith into new life in CHRIST, or that of the young missionary, who was seeing GOD'S own working in answer to prayer?

Ten years later there was a church in Hingping of a hundred and fifty members, but Mr. Bergström was far from satisfied. Most of them were his own children in the faith, and he understood and loved them as only a father can. He had worked assiduously to reach the scholarly men of the district, and quite a few were found among the Christians and enquirers. All this was encouraging, but he longed to see more evidence of spiritual life and power.

“I felt that the Christians were not united,” he said, recalling those days; “that there was not mutual love and a spirit of submission one to another. They were too much taken up with worldly things. The Spirit of GOD had not free way in their hearts, to form in them a Christlike character.”

There was also great need for Chinese fellow-workers, men of faith and devotion, to evangelise the populous plain right back to the mountains. Concerned about these things the only resource was prayer, and to this Mr. Bergström gave himself more definitely. At length there came two years when the burden was so great that he felt he could not live unless his heart's cry were answered. To prayer were added frequent seasons of fasting. A young missionary who joined him at this time was deeply impressed with the way in which the busy head of the station would spend hours in prayer,

fasting usually twice a week. It was revival he prayed for—real GOD-sent revival, such as he had known in Sweden—and that the LORD would raise up among the Christians men of spiritual gifts, and open the whole district to the Gospel.

Wonderful must have been the answer when it came, as we could tell from the results a dozen years later.

“I am a good friend to Finney,” said Mr. Bergström, speaking of that great evangelist’s writings on the subject of revival. “The times we had in 1907-8, both before Mr. Lutley came and while he was with us, were of that order. Our prayers were answered and our joy was full. But I believe in *continuous revival*. I believe in the sort of thing they had in Moody’s church, a revival for eight years, every week souls saved and believers quickened. If we use faithfully the GOD-appointed means—prayer and the Word—it surely would be so, and big revivals would only be a fuller measure of what we have all the time. I cannot say we have reached this state here in Hingping as regards the whole church, but some of the Christians, some part of the church, must be filled with the Spirit, or we should not have the conversions we do have by the blessing of GOD.”

This we could well believe in the services we attended and in daily intercourse with the Christians. What a spirit of prayer there was among them! An Autumn Conference had recently been held at which there had been much blessing, but still the people gathered, hungry for more. Pastor Wang had come in from his tent-missions and Pastor Kuoh

from his out-stations, and with Pastor Hwang took a leading part in the services. The eagerness of the people for spiritual help was what impressed us most—whether healing in sickness, restoration from backsliding, or deliverance from the power of the devil. The latter was just as real to them as any one present ; and it was startling to hear with what directness men and women told their failures and troubles, seeking definite help. It seemed nothing unusual for Pastor Hwang to stop in the middle of an address, or between prayers, to ask some one who had come up and was standing quietly by the platform :

“ What is it? Tell me, and we will pray for you.”

At the close of a meeting there would often be quite a number who had come, without public invitation, to seek restoration, to give their hearts to the LORD or to praise Him for blessing received.

Then the praying! It was different from most praying—far more definite, free, and earnest. It was Mr. Bergström's habit to say at the commencement of a meeting—not only prayer meetings but any and every occasion :

“ Now we will take [literally, “ use ”] a little time for praying.”

He would mention special subjects, two or three at a time, and give opportunity for prayer, when they would immediately be taken up. And the praying was not discursive, about anything or nothing. It was very much to the point, really dealing with the subjects mentioned. At the

Sunday morning service, for example, he began, after a hymn of praise :

“ Now, let us use a little time in praying for the coming of the Kingdom of GOD. The LORD JESUS taught us to pray, ‘ Thy Kingdom come.’ For over nineteen hundred years this has been the prayer of the Church, and many signs show us, now, that that prayer will soon be answered in the coming of the LORD. Let us take a little time to pray for the establishment of that Kingdom which is ‘ righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.’ ”

Two of the pastors led in intelligent, fervent supplication.

“ Let us use a little time in praying for our country,” the quiet voice went on—“ for China, for its rulers and its good in every way.” After speaking briefly on this subject, he asked two of the elders to lead. Much was revealed in the prayers that followed of the habit of intercession that has become natural to these Christians.

“ And now let us use a little time in praying for our families, our friends and neighbours, and the services of the day.”

Some of the evangelists took up these petitions in a way that greatly helped the speakers who were to follow. At all the meetings it was the same. Whether called upon by name or not, those people prayed, barely waiting for one to finish before another began, and in that direct simple way of transacting real business with GOD. Outsiders coming in at such times could not fail to be impressed with the thought that the Christians’ GOD is the one

who hears and answers prayer. "But how has it come to be like this?" one could not but ask oneself. "How have these converts recently gathered in from heathenism learned to pray with so much faith and directness?" The answer was not far to seek, with that quiet, deep-hearted man in their midst, whose whole atmosphere is one of prayer and the presence of GOD.

"I have made not a few mistakes," he said to us in talking about church matters, "but the LORD seems to have worked even through my mistakes. Some have blamed me for baptizing people too readily, though we have always looked for evidences of true conversion; and some have thought me daring in entrusting responsibility to the Christians. But one may hinder the LORD'S work by being too careful. I do not know that it would have been better any other way."

But it was not only the praying that impressed us—there were the testimonies in the great Endeavour meeting. How one did wish that Christian Endeavourers at home could have seen and heard it all! Imagine the big, irregular-shaped church, the white-washed walls decorated with scrolls and paintings by a Chinese artist (a believer who has gone to be with the LORD), and in a corner near the platform the vigorous band that lead the singing. Mr. Bergström himself cannot sing a note, so that the two violins, the guitars, and other instruments have it all their own way, which is quite a Chinese way naturally. Hundreds of Christians are there for the Endeavour meeting, and Pastor Hwang is in the chair.

To touch upon one or two incidents only: The first to speak was a middle-aged farmer, named Kuoh, a fine-looking man with a deep, full voice. He said he had been a Christian for two years, but had not been happy, because he had hidden his light under a bushel. He never could bring himself to speak to others about what he had found in CHRIST. Recently, in one of Pastor Wang's tent-missions, he had definitely sought deliverance in this matter. He had asked the LORD to open his lips, and had *trusted* Him for power to witness to His saving grace. He had left the tent, he told us, determined to speak to the first man he met! He did so, and was encouraged. Then he spoke to another, and another, and such wonderful joy filled his heart! One could see it in his face. The LORD had answered his prayer and given him liberty.

Very different was another who stood up—an old man and half-blind, but equally full of joy. He told a remarkable story. He had so wanted to come in from his village for the Conference meetings, a few weeks previously. But he had no money for the journey or for food. He was a second husband, though he did not mention this, and his wife had married him in order to get a good labourer to look after her land. The arrangement worked pretty well until he began to lose his sight, but since then his life had been a burden. The woman and her sons were hard upon him, and all the more so because he had become a Christian. The very idea of *his* wanting to go to meetings and have money for food and collections! They would let him know that he was nothing but a useless burden, and could not

cut grass enough to pay for his keep. All this we learned afterwards. What the old man said was that he prayed and prayed about going to the meetings. He did so want to learn more of the truth, and to have something to give to the LORD like other believers. But it all seemed very hopeless and he could do nothing but pray.

Then as the Conference drew near, his wife needed some raw cotton to spin into thread, and went to a basket hanging over the brick bed in their room to take a handful. To her astonishment, with the cotton she took out something hard, which proved to be a silver dollar. Nobody knew where it had come from, and the woman and her sons were too surprised to claim it.

“Of course,” said the old man when he knew what was going on, “of course it is my answer to prayer! You would not give me money or flour to go and worship GOD, but He has heard my cry and sent me this piece of silver. We dare not use it in any way but in His service.”

The wife and sons were so much impressed that they handed over this small fortune without demur, and it may be imagined with what joy the old man came in to the meetings. Now, as he told us, his family are wanting to learn about the Gospel, and he is treated with much more respect.

“Truly the LORD has many ways of working,” was Pastor Hwang’s comment. “He pitied this poor suffering child of His and found a way to help him, not only answering his prayer, but doing more than he asked or thought.”

And then, not to dwell upon many other matters

of interest, just as the meeting closed a beautiful thing happened. A woman came forward, entirely of her own accord, and knelt down in front of the platform. She was a nice-looking, well-dressed person in middle life, and seemed much in earnest.

“What do you wish us to pray for?” asked one of the pastors.

Her answer was a little puzzling: “I wish to believe in the LORD with all my house.”

But before anything more could be said, Farmer Kuoh came eagerly round from the men’s side of the partition.

“Oh, it is my child’s mother!” he exclaimed. “She alone, of all our family, would not believe. My old father believes—he is eighty-five. My mother believes, and my son and daughter-in-law. But my wife has been bitterly opposed. Now, thank GOD, she too wishes to become a Christian!”

His face was radiant as he knelt beside her. There was thanksgiving and prayer, and as we rose she said quietly, “Now, I too believe—with all my house.”

It is not easy to come to an end of our recollections of Hingping, any more than it was to close our visit. Long conversations with the pastors must be passed over, with details as to how they were led, each one, to faith in CHRIST. And further reference to the great Revival must be omitted, save for one remark of Mr. Bergström’s about a discovery he made when the Holy Spirit came in power. It was to do with the language. He had felt himself hampered before that time, and

considered Chinese a poor medium for conveying spiritual truth, though he was an exceptionally good speaker. But during those wonderful days that lifted the church on to a new plane in spiritual life, "I found the Chinese language apply itself to the feelings," he told us, "just as any other language. I used to think that it could not be like our home words, so heart-moving and tender. But when the Revival came—oh, what melting! The language was no more any difficulty."

CHAPTER III

SUNDAYS BY THE WAY—*continued*

BEFORE leaving Hingping we were taken to see the Girls' School, in connection with which Miss Anderson has had many definite answers to prayer. Though the need for schools is so great, to train the young people of Christian families for lives of usefulness, the money necessary for buildings and equipment is not always forthcoming from mission funds. Gifts are given for the purpose by the Chinese themselves, and often they come from friends at home who recognise the importance of such work. In connection with the Hingping school it has been encouraging to see how the LORD has provided, sometimes from most unexpected quarters.

On one occasion Miss Anderson learned a lesson that has often stood her in good stead. She was needing money for the support of her family of orphans, as well as for school purposes, and had been much in prayer about it. Funds did not come, and she began to feel that she could wait no longer. Anxiety took the place of faith and led her to write to her brother in America, upon whose sympathy she knew she could count, asking for a certain sum. No sooner was the letter posted than she realised

her mistake. It had hitherto been a blessed experience to trust in the LORD, telling her wants to Him alone, but now she had taken a step which she felt was not for His glory. There was nothing to be done. She could not get the letter back ; and yet, since it concerned His faithfulness, might not the LORD find some way of dealing with the matter so as to overrule even her mistake ?

It seemed a daring thing to pray that He would send the letter back ; but that was just what she did, almost in spite of herself, and the LORD answered in His own gracious, wonderful way. By the very next mail she received a remittance which was exactly the sum she had asked her brother to send, and three months later the letter to him was returned, unopened. It was the only time she ever had a letter to one of her family returned from the post office. Her brother had been away, she afterwards learned, travelling on business, and the unclaimed letter was sent back. Truly we deal with One to whom it matters much that we should learn to trust Him.

Generous giving among the Chinese Christians was another proof of life in the Hingping church. We were specially touched by the dear old Bible-woman, who had made over all her savings and possessions to Mr. Bergström for the work. More than seventy years of age, she was a fine rugged personality, humorous and kindly, and for eighteen years had been invaluable among the women. Her salary had never been large—only a few thousand cash a year in addition to board and lodging. Yet she was a regular giver to the collections and was

always doing good in other ways. When asked how this was possible, she said with a merry look :

“ Well, you see, I work for Si-niang (Mrs. Bergström) all day, and I work for the LORD at night.”

This meant that she denied herself hours of sleep to spin and weave cotton into coarse calico on her hand-loom, and the money from its sale she rejoiced to use for the LORD.

Yet, even a living, giving, self-propagating church is not free from a constant tendency to declension. Mr. Bergström said it alarmed him to see how quickly a church, like an individual, can run down and fall into a cold, backsliding state. At certain seasons of the year, especially, he felt the need for watchfulness and prayer. For if such a process were not checked, a few months would suffice to lower the tone of the whole work and rob it of spiritual power. The summer season, from the fifth to the eighth moon, he spoke of as specially dangerous—the hot months when the harvest is being reaped. People are so busy, hard at it from morning till night, and it seems too hot to come to meetings. When they do come, many are tired and cannot keep awake. Even the New Year with its well-known temptations he considered less perilous to Christian life than those summer months. Mid-spring, again, calls for special care—when everybody goes out to the graves, and there is much demon-worship, feasting, and excitement. These are seasons at which he feels that both Chinese and foreign workers should be specially watchful in shepherding the flock. This tendency to drifting emphasises also the need, not for rare and extraordinary seasons of

revival so much as for a continuous filling and re-filling of the Holy Spirit. To maintain the life of the church at the right level, by the blessing of GOD, through prayer and the ministry of the Word, this devoted missionary feels to be his chief responsibility and privilege.

“ Diversities of operations but the same Spirit ” was a thought frequently brought home to us as we travelled from station to station. In this same district, for example, worked by our (C.I.M.) Associates of the Scandinavian Alliance, an experience came to us that was unique in its way and very precious. We were spending Sunday in the city of Pinchow. The missionaries in charge were away on furlough, but their eldest son and his bride were carrying on the work and entertained us with delightful hospitality. Into their dining-room they welcomed that Sunday evening a group of country Christians who had come a long distance and wanted to have an extra meeting. Such a rough, unkempt, mud-bespattered company they were—small farmers and farm-servants from cave-dwellings in the mountains. Their speech was hard to understand and their stolid faces betrayed little in the way of interest. They were indeed sons of toil, sons of the North, but, as we soon discovered, true sons of GOD.

One of the group, perhaps the roughest looking, had just recovered from a serious illness, and must have found it difficult to come on foot into the city. With evident weakness, yet with something of inward radiance, he told in a quiet, natural way how the LORD had been teaching and blessing him. It

was so quiet and simple that it was a few minutes before we realised that we were listening to one of the most beautiful spiritual testimonies one had ever heard. More and more the inward radiance shone out, until one was lost in thankfulness to GOD for the wonder and beauty of His work in unexpected places. It was an hour to realise, as we often do in China, the meaning of the Master's word: "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first."

He only told quite simply how the LORD had been leading him in the matter of sin and inward victory. He had had three illnesses, and each had been a time of spiritual blessing. In the first there began to dawn upon him a sense of how deep and terrible was the evil of his own heart. One listened almost breathlessly at that point. Yes, a clear, overwhelming conviction of sin had come to him, believer though he was; a sense of guilt before GOD that it seemed all the sacrifice of CHRIST was needed to atone for—even had there been no other sinner to redeem. He told of his resolution to lead a very different life, and of the love to CHRIST that filled his heart as he saw how much he had been forgiven.

Then he went on to speak of a further experience. Recovered from that illness, he had set out on what he felt would be a more consistent life. He was alive to sin in himself as never before, and was determined to overcome it. In the main things were better. He was more watchful and much more conscious of failure. But, alas! his quick temper and impatient spirit were still beyond control. Many things that he now knew to be wrong he had no power to overcome, and the surprise of this discovery was

not less than the pain it caused. Why could he not live the life he longed to live, the life he had come to see a Christian should live ?

Twilight fell in the crowded room, and one could no longer see the toil-worn faces. We forgot that we were there as visitors, as teachers, as anything at all : we were just listeners as the earnest voice went on, telling with a hush of something words could not utter what GOD had done for a soul. It was through another illness—for again he had weeks of suffering when it seemed he could not recover. In that time of weakness there had come to him the understanding that it was only through Another's life, Another's power, that he could become victorious over sin. One longed to be able to write down, just as he said them, sentence after sentence that might have been spoken in a Keswick Convention or a Victorious Life Conference. It was grievous to be losing the Chinese phrases that told of this wonderful experience. For he had entered by faith, then and there, into the life that means peace and power—the Exchanged Life, in which it is “ no longer I that live, but CHRIST that liveth in me.”

And then the third illness, for he had to hurry on, was the illness from which he had just recovered. Doctors had given him up, his relatives had given him up, and his wife was weeping beside him as he tried to tell her what to do for the children when he was gone.

“ But have you not often said,” she sobbed, “ that your JESUS healed people who were sick, and even raised the dead ? ”

“ Yes,” he assented wonderingly.



Photo by

Dr. G. E. Morrison.

THE SOUTHERN END OF THE PASS ACROSS THE
TIEN MOUNTAINS.

“This was the great highway travelled for centuries, millenniums rather, between the rich plains of China and the marts of India, Persia, and the western world.”

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“ Well, I will worship Him if only He will heal you now ! I will be a Christian like you are.”

He was too weak to pray aloud, but she knelt up on the brick bed and began at once to cry to the LORD. She told Him all her trouble, simply as a little child, and prayed for forgiveness for not having decided long ago to be a Christian. From that hour her husband began to recover, and the blessing of his third illness, he told us, was the conversion of his wife.

We had crossed the border into the province of Kansu before another Sunday—crossed it in the white mist of a December morning, seeing little of our surroundings. The road ran along a high plateau, as we gradually discovered, with strange wide chasms falling away on either side, hundreds if not thousands of feet. Big trees lined the track mile after mile, remains of the great avenue planted by the Viceroy Tso all the way out to Ti-hwa-fu, a three months' journey into Central Asia. For this was the great highway travelled for centuries, millenniums rather, between the rich plains of China and the marts of India, Persia, and the western world. For days we had been passing caravans and trains of camels ; carts laden with grain, drawn by many animals ; carts piled with bales of medicinal herbs for the drug stores of great cities ; mules carrying coal in huge lumps, wool in bundles, or long narrow sacks of wheat ; barrows laden with a variety of merchandise ; droves of pigs, or flocks of sheep and goats—all driven and urged on their way by the roughest-looking muleteers, shepherds, and

mountain-men. The carts that travelled with us were a shade more civilised, carrying cigarettes for the American Tobacco Company, though our own Jehu was picturesque enough for any adventure, with his shock of unkempt hair, baggy trousers, yellow leggings, and patched coat of a rich shade of terra-cotta.

Darkness was closing in that Wednesday night as we neared the first city over the border, our carter giving his wild warning cry before entering the narrow defiles by which we had to descend from the heights. Half-way down we emerged at a group of houses—lights and shops on either side—where we had to wait for a train of heavily laden carts coming up from the city. Far below we heard the shouts of drivers and the crack of heavy whips, and suffering in the suffering of the animals could only pray for the coming of that day for which the whole creation groans. We were thinking, too, about the friends with whom we were to spend Sunday and the reception that awaited us. Presently lanterns drew near, climbing the hill, and we heard inquiries for the foreign travellers. Cordial greetings followed from messengers who had come to meet us, and when the road was clear they went ahead to lead the way.

Down and down we plunged in the darkness, coming on flaring lights a mile or so below, where there was a busy suburb of the city, with food stalls, inns, and crowds of buyers and sellers. Slowly we made our way through the throng, turning at last into a quiet street, an open gateway, and a sort of stable-yard. Out of the dark came kindly voices, then Mr. Gjelseth's tall figure appeared, and there

were hearty handgrips, a real Scandinavian welcome ! Mrs. Gjelseth came running from their home across the way, and climbing down from the cart one almost felt as if in a dream—a dream of Norway or Switzerland—for all around were mountains, black against the sky, save where a church near at hand raised a slender steeple, dimly seen among the stars.

The church built by our Norwegian friends had brought good luck, it appeared, to the Chinese city. Ever since its completion Kingchow had prospered. Before that time, the leading merchants had been mostly from other places, but since the church was built, business had largely passed into the hands of local people. Harvests had been good, the city had been free from brigandage, and it had sent forth no fewer than sixteen of its sons as officials to hold rank in other places. So the position of the church, outside the wall and guarding the South gate, had proved exceptionally favourable, and its sonorous bell was heard with satisfaction far and near.

Within the Christian community, though such ideas were recognised as superstitious, there was also cause for thanksgiving. Our own arrival just at that time seemed to be a definite answer to prayer. A Conference had been arranged some months previously to take place that very week, and it was only after the date was fixed that Mr. and Mrs. Gjelseth heard of our coming to the province. They did not know when to expect us or even the route we were taking, a letter having miscarried, but the Christians began at once to pray that we might reach Kingchow in time for the meetings. Day

after day went by and we knew nothing of these prayers, but when we got in late that Wednesday night we found the mission-house full of rejoicing, for the Christians were already gathering and the Conference was to begin on Friday !

Over the precious experiences of those days we must not linger—believers quickened, souls saved, and for us fresh lessons of the power of CHRIST in the lives of old and young at opposite extremes of the social scale.

Rarely had we met a more attractive personality than the charming lady, over seventy years of age, who was living in the mission-house, delighting to serve the LORD as “ a door-keeper ” since she was too old, she said, to do much else. She was the widow of a high official who had been proud of her beauty, which was still remarkable ; for her eyes were as bright and her teeth as perfect as in girlhood. It was only after her husband's death that she came to know and love the LORD, and then, finding a little room opening out of the Women's Guest-Hall in which she could just manage to live, she asked to be allowed to come and give the rest of her days to helping in the work. She longed to win some souls to CHRIST, and though she could not go out preaching, her feet being far too small, she could *k'an-men* at home—that is, look after the household when Mrs. Gjelseh was out and receive the women visitors. It was lovely to see her welcoming with equal grace ladies from wealthy families, children who ran in and out, up-to-date teachers from the Government Schools, and patients coming for medicine. The country Christians loved her, and

would sit for hours with her on the *k'ang*, while the girls of the mission school turned to her as a mother. She took the same food that they did, prepared in the same kitchen, though her brother's family in the city frequently sent her extra delicacies.

Her tiny feet, though unbound as much as possible since she had become a Christian, called forth a story of suffering that time could not obliterate. Her father had been an official of high rank, and so devoted to his little daughter that he could not bear the thought of having her feet compressed. The mother was equally fond of the child and shrank from causing her distress, so she was allowed to run about happily until she was ten or eleven years of age. But then she was so free and like a boy that they became alarmed. Relatives were scandalised. She ran and climbed trees and was as independent as her brothers. There was nothing of the young lady about her at all! So the foot-binding had to come, and was worse than if it had begun earlier. Poor child, her suffering was so intense that for more than a year she hardly slept at night. Her father would walk up and down supporting her for hours, when all the household was asleep, to try and ease the pain, which was intolerable if she kept still. But all his love and all her anguish could not undo the bandages.

Their reward came later, such as it was, when she was the acknowledged beauty of the circle into which she married. Her feet were the distinction quite as much as her face and manner—though now her one regret is that they hinder her in serving the LORD. She has arranged with her family that she

is to live and die in peace among the Christians and is to have a Christian funeral.

Very different were the connections of the young Bible-woman who is one of the treasures of the Kingchow church. Given to Mrs. Gjelseth in childhood, she was saved from a life of misery and shame. For her parents were both opium-smokers, and she was to have been sold to the highest bidder. But the father heard of the missionaries, and through them of One who is mighty to save. He was delivered from his opium craving, and became an earnest, humble Christian. Three months later he sent to ask Mrs. Gjelseth to come to his village, as he was very ill and wanted to make arrangements about his child. She found him alone, dying, in a poor cave-dwelling, and set his mind at rest by promising to keep the child who was already in her care. The father had still another burden on his heart.

“ I do believe in JESUS,” he said with difficulty. “ If I had been in the mission-house now, He would have come to take me, wouldn't He ? But He could not come to such a poor, dirty cave as this.

“ You often said,” he went on wistfully, “ that He would take me to heaven. But do you think He would be willing to come to *such* a place——” And he waited for her answer.

Earnestly she reassured him. JESUS had been poor—born in a stable for our sakes. JESUS had died for him ; he need not fear. JESUS would surely come.

“ Oh, I am so thankful, so happy ! ” he whispered, as the thought possessed him. “ Then I can die in peace.”

After praying with him and doing what she could for his comfort, the missionary left, promising to bring his little girl to see him next day. He was lying all alone when they came, just as she had left him, and on the still face was a smile that said so plainly :

“ JESUS did come, you see, even to this poor place ! ”

The child of that cave-home is a woman now, well educated and deeply spiritual. Her whole heart goes out in love to the LORD and love for souls. To spend an hour with her in prayer was a precious experience. Passing through a bright, busy little city a week or two later, in which there were no missionaries, one could not but feel what a joy it would be to settle there among the people *with that dear girl for a fellow-worker*. One's heart was specially drawn to the people of that place—little thinking that only ten days later the terrible earthquake was to leave a thousand dead beneath its ruined homes.

Our last Sunday on the road found us twenty miles beyond that city (Tsing-ning-chow), and though the inn was of the poorest it was a day for which to thank GOD. Snow and sleet had kept us from doing a full stage, and the place we came to for the Sunday's rest was of the poorest. But there were needy, hungry souls there, who found us out in the inn. All day was spent in hearing their stories and telling them of JESUS. Our words were well understood, and several men and boys lingered as if they could not hear enough of the glad tidings of salvation. Some who were with us that day

doubtless perished in the earthquake, which was particularly bad just in that region, but from one man we subsequently heard by letter as well as through fellow-missionaries. He so definitely gave himself to CHRIST, opium-smoker though he was, that joy-bells were ringing in our hearts that day as well as in heaven. What mattered the discomforts of the dismal inn ; the fear of robbers that made our landlord give wild cries at intervals all night, to show that we were not asleep ; the damp room, so cold that with all our bedding we lay shivering for hours, and so full of smoke when a fire was kindled that our eyes streamed with tears—what mattered lack of privacy or rest if only that precious soul were saved and kept to life eternal ?

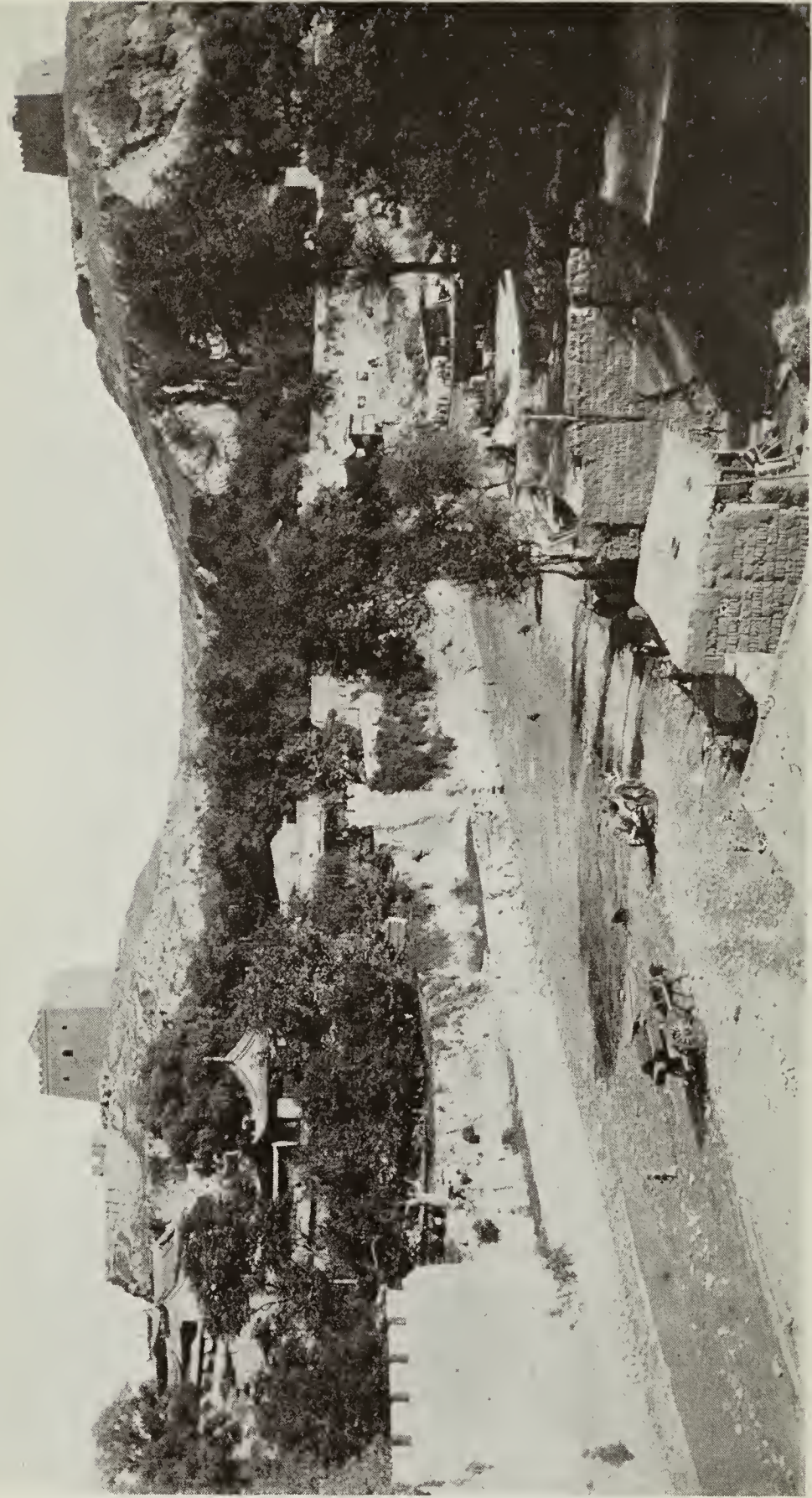


Photo by

FORTS AT LANCHOW.

Two of a chain of forts guarding the western approaches to Lanchow City, the capital of Kansu. It will be noted that the cart track is also a river bed, "one interminable stretch of rocks and stones."

G. A. Rogers.

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CHAPTER IV

LANCHOW AT LAST

IT was the last day of our journey to Lanchow—provincial capital of Kansu—and in some ways the hardest. Up in the dark and cold of that December morning, we were out by 3 A.M. and travelled miles by starlight along a frozen river-bed, one interminable stretch of rocks and stones. Oh, the jolting of the springless cart, the bitter cold of those darkest hours before the dawn! But they prepared us the more to appreciate all that was in store of hospitality and home.

And the welcome came sooner than we anticipated. We had crossed the last range of hills, and were wondering how long it would take to reach the city, when in a little town where hill and plain met, we saw a number of people standing round a cart. What was the attraction? Could it be “foreigners”? A gentleman and lady in Chinese dress but with the look of Westerners were coming to meet us. Mr. and Mrs. Mann—how good it was to see them! The rest of the journey, with one of them and one of us on each cart, was a time of delightful fellowship.

One of the first things we noticed, with something akin to surprise, was that these were not out-of-

the-world, buried-alive people at all. Separated by many a range of mountains and several weeks' journey from the railway, they were as bright and keen as if in the heart of London. Mr. Mann's alertness was stimulating, and Mrs. Mann filled all the time from the foot-hills to the city with interesting information.

Oh, that great plain—populous and far-reaching—what a field for evangelistic work! One missionary's time might well be spent in this alone. Mr. Mann is too busy to be out much, with all there is to be done in church and schools and guest-hall, not to speak of the street chapel. Talking all the way, we hardly noticed that we were nearing the suburbs, until we caught sight of a long line of people on the road in front of us.

“What a nice-looking set of boys! Who can they be?”

“Our scholars and teachers,” was the reply. “They have come out to welcome you.”

My husband alighted at once to receive and return their greetings, and as we passed between the double row in which the boys were ranged, according to ages, we obtained our first impression of the size and importance of the Lanchow schools. Dr. R. Parry and Mr. Botham were there and rode ahead of us on horseback. With several of the smaller boys on our carts and the rest following, we were quite a procession as we entered the city.

Massive gates, crowded streets, a sense of life and activity, fine shops, temples, mosques, and public buildings—could this be far-away Lanchow? On the main street, near the Governor's Yamen, the

mission-house was reached. A crowd gathered about the door, and many of the Christians were there to greet us. Other friends appeared from an inner courtyard, including Mr. and Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Parry, and their children. It was a joy to be there at last and see face to face many of whom we had been hearing, and then to stand together between the church and the fine new buildings of the school and give thanks to GOD for a safe journey and for His work at this important centre.

The first thing, of course, was to see the school, for the new buildings had only been opened two weeks previously. A need for higher education for the sons of Christian families had long been felt, and at a Conference of the three Missions working in the province the Chinese delegates had urged that steps might be taken to meet it. Lanchow was decided upon as the best centre for a Union Middle School, which Mr. Mann undertook to develop by adding the necessary classes to his already well-organised junior department. But funds for suitable classrooms were needed, and much prayer was made about the matter. Some months after the Conference, Mr. Andrew (then Superintendent of the C.I.M. work in the province) was entertaining at dinner his friend, Deacon Kuoh, when the subject came up. Mr. G. F. Andrew—beloved for his own as well as his father's sake—was present, and said smilingly :

“ Well, Mr. Kuoh, what will *you* give ? ”

The prompt reply was, “ Fifty dollars.”

“ And what are you good for ? ” went on the questioner, turning to Mr. Mann.

“ If you give fifty, I will ! ” was the unexpected answer.

Mr. Kuoh, warming up, said that Deacon Li in the Salt Gabelle would surely give fifty. At a dinner in his own house, however, Mr. Li surprised them by going further.

“ Deacon Kuoh must not stop at fifty,” he exclaimed. “ I will give a hundred, and so must he ! ”

This was soon agreed upon and reported to Mr. Andrew, who, while rejoicing in the turn affairs had taken, was obliged to call a halt as far as his own share was concerned, for he had promised to double whatever contribution the church made, little thinking there would be giving after this sort. It was something new indeed, and showed that GOD'S time had come for larger developments.

Soon after, the son of the Governor, a young man who had been much helped by Mr. G. F. Andrew's friendship, said that his father would want a share in the good work. The Governor fulfilled these expectations, not only giving five hundred dollars himself but saying that other officials would help also. The Mohammedan General and several others gave liberally, feeling it a good thing for the city to have a strong Christian school, so that when Mr. Mann returned to take charge of the station he found over seventeen hundred taels in hand, and the total soon reached two thousand.

The building just completed has used about half this sum, but a second structure is planned for, and if by the blessing of GOD the school continues to prosper, large extension will be needed. The opening of the present building, just before we came,

was a great occasion. The Governor, his sons, and seventeen leading officials took part, magnificent in robes and retinue. An amusing difficulty arose about finding a chair spacious enough to accommodate His Excellency, whose proportions are in keeping with his office ; but one was produced at last, and carried with dispatch from place to place, wherever he might wish to be seated. Finally it found its way to Mrs. Mann's dining-room, where a repast had been prepared—a foreign dinner in twelve courses, which had taxed even her ingenuity, but which was greatly appreciated. The new Manager of the Government Bank said to Mr. Mann afterwards :

“ I was not here when gifts were being made for the school. But if you want help in future, please let me know about it.”

With seventy boys on the premises, visitors at all hours, a Girls' School for which there is no place save the inner courtyard, patients coming for medicine, and all the Sunday and week-day meetings of an active, growing church, no wonder the Lanchow mission-house is overcrowded. The premises consist of only two courtyards, divided by the chapel which overlooks both. There is no upper story, save in the new school building, and the rooms at the back in which the missionaries live are somewhat dark and damp. But the situation right in the busiest part of the city is splendid. Whenever the street-chapel is open, usually every day, it is filled with listeners ; and if more time could be given to this work, and to preaching in the country round about, it might become richly productive.

It *is* productive now. For the first fifteen years there was little to encourage in the way of genuine conversions. Up to the dark days of 1900 there were only about ten baptized believers. Now there are more than ten times that number, and they are taking a large share in the affairs of the church, both secular and spiritual. The school, which is entirely self-supporting, is managed by a Committee of three Chinese and two foreigners. Church matters are dealt with by the deacons in consultation with the missionary in charge. They have no Chinese pastor as yet, but are praying for a good man and are prepared to support him. The deacons meanwhile do much of the preaching and pastoral work, without remuneration. They are keen about the new church building that is needed, the present chapel being far too small for the numbers who attend the services. Talking with Mr. Mann about it recently, one of them mentioned that he would give a hundred dollars toward the building. Another deacon who was present added fifty, and the third coming in just then said he would give three hundred. Upon this, the first raised his gift. Others joined in, and in a few minutes eight hundred dollars had been promised. The building would cost much more than this, but the church members are eager to do all they can—though many of them are poor—and will probably subscribe another thousand. More cheering still is their readiness to join in outdoor preaching and evangelistic missions, and to help in the street-chapel on Sundays.

One elderly man came in, soon after we arrived, from a preaching journey. He had promised to give

ten days' work, as he could not afford money, and after six days in the villages had returned for more books, full of joy because many had listened to the message. It was beautiful to see his love and earnestness. Preaching as he went, he had sold out all his books in the first week. The money paid for them he had brought in to give to the LORD, deducting nothing for his expenses.

"I carried bread from home," he explained, "which was all I needed. The people gave me shelter for the night."

With a fresh supply of books, for which he paid in full, he was soon on his way again, eager to carry the message to those who had never heard.

"The barren days for Kansu are past," said one of the missionaries with thankfulness. But how urgently more labourers, Spirit-filled men and women, are needed!

CHAPTER V

ORIENT AND OCCIDENT

To stand in the doorway of the mission-house at Lanchow, or step out on the busy street, was to receive impressions that had not previously come to us in any city in China. The moving crowds were fascinating, and the questions that sprang to one's lips endless. What was it—this sense of having passed somehow into a wider world? In Cairo and Damascus we had seen figures like these, but what were they doing here in a remote corner of China? What connection could this far inland province have with India, Persia, and Turkestan? The Road, the Road—the ancient highway running from this city on the Yellow River to meet in the heart of Central Asia similar roads from the Indian Ocean, the Caspian Sea, and the Levant—we were beginning to appreciate what it meant!

For Lanchow, according to Viscount d'Ollone,¹ is the eastern terminus of the highway which for centuries has united the rich marts of Orient and Occident. At Kashgar, two thousand miles away, though still in Chinese territory, it connects with

¹ Le Commandant d'Ollone, in his recent work, *Recherches sur les Musulmans chinois* (1911).

converging roads from north, south, and west, over which the tides of life and commerce have flowed since the early dawn of history, and are flowing still. Through the Western Gate of China these have poured their wealth into the million-peopled provinces which have had so much to give in return. Thus one learns to meet without surprise in Lanchow streets and market-places the Hindu merchant with his silks and pearls, the Mohammedan pilgrim returning from Mecca, the bearded trader from Chinese or Russian Turkestan, and the turbaned Ch'an-t'eo from the Moslem cities of Central Asia. They bring a sense of far distances, these men with their top-boots and girdles, high hats and turbans, with their long trains of camels and strong-featured faces!

Different again are the red-robed figures we see here for the first time—lamas from the Tibetan monasteries and sturdy mountaineers from that land of mystery and darkness. The latter, clad in sheep-skin, rough-headed and with the shyness of wild creatures, seemed out of keeping with luxury and display of a city like this, but for us they had an attraction far greater than that of the well-dressed crowds. Eagerly we watched for them, followed them as they loitered in the market-place, and listened to the strange language they talked with so much animation. But they were few in number, and there was much else to claim our attention.

It was a surprise to find Lanchow a city of so much style and military importance. One knew, of course, that as the governing centre of a province it would be a rendezvous for the official classes, but we were hardly prepared for the way in which the

new army was in evidence. Officers and soldiers in foreign uniforms seemed in possession of the city. Bugles were blowing at all hours, and near the Governor's residence there was a constant movement of military men. This was partly due, no doubt, to apprehension of a Mohammedan uprising which seemed imminent—all thought of which was swept away, however, by the earthquake which took place five days after we reached the city. Meanwhile, as if unconscious of impending danger, business and pleasure went on as usual. The great enclosure before the Governor's Yamen was thronged with people watching the coming and going of officials of all ranks. Horses, saddled and waiting, were paraded by alert attendants, while through the open doors one caught vistas of wide places, court after court, where matters of importance were being dealt with. Outside the enclosure lay the crowded market, a cosmopolitan bazaar in which everything could be bought from foreign cigarettes to Tibetan butter. Beyond, came the better-class shops of the main street, tempting with their furs and broadcloth made of the finest camel's-hair and dyed in beautiful colours. Shoe-shops and hat-shops were a strange mingling of old and new in the matter of taste, the dignified black satin of former times being largely replaced by yellow leather footgear and knitted woollen caps in startling shades and shapes. It was a relief to turn to stores which were less modernised, and to read over an old-fashioned book-shop the familiar sign, "Walking the Clouds Hall."

As to style, we had never seen anything like it, for the variety of equipages in this northern city and

the severity of the climate gave scope for more display than in the south. Furs and velvets were in common use, and adorned the saddles of riding horses as well as the interior of sedan-chairs and private carts. Some of the latter were fitted with cushions of gorgeous colours and lined with white fox in panels on purple velvet. And the dress of the élite was in keeping. Such furs! from the treasures of Mongolia and Tibet, some of them with leopards' spots and stripes that seemed melting into moonlight, to fleecy lambs'-skins, black and white, and all made up on rich brocaded satins. But these were only passing impressions, caught with many another amid the moving throngs.

First, last, and far more clamant was the appeal of this great city for Christian service. What a centre for the Church of CHRIST to occupy *in strength*! Think only of the young men, thousands of whom are here on business, as students, or in Government employ, away from home and exposed to every temptation. A Young Men's Christian Association, with "Christian" given the right place, is a need of which one is constantly reminded in Lanchow. A man fitted for this work could count upon co-operation from the Chinese Christians, some of whom are deeply burdened about the young fellows pouring into the city, so many of whom are obliged to live in inns, where gamblers, opium-smokers, and singing women congregate. It is enough to burden any Christian heart. Then there are the soldiers of the standing army, many of whom might be reached in connection with such a Y.M.C.A. and with the help of its members.

How this need would have appealed to William Borden, the Yale student who gave his life and fortune to GOD for missionary service, and who heard as few have heard it the call of this great North-West! His early death in Cairo, while studying Arabic with a view to reaching the Mohammedans of this province, robbed Kansu of one of its truest friends and the C.I.M. of one of its most promising workers. The Borden Memorial Hospital keeps his memory fresh here by the Yellow River; but oh for his loving heart, his prayerful Christlike spirit, his ardent youth and splendid manhood, to win for CHRIST the young men of this city! May the Master he so truly loved, and Whose holy companionship made him what he was, fit and call out others for this waiting work.

A visit to the hospital was, of course, one of the first expeditions to be made, and a long business it proved, for it was one thing to get to the river and quite another to cross it. In Mrs. Mann's private cart we had to wait amid the traffic at the bridge-head outside the North Gate of the city, traffic as congested as on any bridge in London. One reason for the delay was that each cart must take its turn to drop on to one of the little trolleys, just wide enough to hold the wheels, by which they are conveyed across the bridge. The trolley, running on tram-lines, is drawn by the animals of the cart, the wheels of which do not come into requisition again until it plunges into the waiting crowd of mules and camels, carts and drivers on the other side. Pedestrians jostle their way through the same blockade to the

footpaths to right and left of the bridge, by which they cross in a few minutes. It is a wonderful achievement in the eyes of the Chinese to have superseded the bridge of boats, only usable at certain seasons, with this permanent, light-looking span, so strong that the heavy traffic hardly seems to shake it, and so high that it is far above the highest water-mark.

Waiting for our turn at the bridge-head we had a good opportunity for watching the people, who were too busy to take much notice of us. We could smile unobserved at an amusing fashion which seemed popular among the younger men—the huge fur collar, standing up all round the head as high as the top of the hat, with just a narrow opening in front for the wearer to look out at! More to our mind were the fur caps in great variety, all of which had devices for covering ears and neck and forehead too, right down to the eyebrows. During the warmer part of the day, these were jauntily rolled back, but no sooner did the sun disappear than they came into requisition again, leaving little to be seen but the eyes and nose of the well-protected wearer.

Waiting in the cart we had also time to take in something of the farther shore. The suburb with which the bridge connects is long and narrow, because the mountains rising from the river-bank only allow room enough for one street from end to end. The chief importance of the suburb seems to be that it is on the great road, which crosses the river at this point and starts with a long ascent on its way to Central Asia. Then there are temples of special interest overlooking the river, for these

northern heights are a favourite resort for pilgrims. Very striking was the scene in brilliant sunshine—temples all the way from water to skyline one above the other, the larger, more important ones being on the busy street and at the summit, while in between smaller ones afford resting-places all the way up. Facing south they have much the same outlook as the hospital, which is farther down the river, some ten minutes' walk from the bridge.

The situation is glorious as regards fresh air and sunshine, though the distance from the city must affect the number of patients. Tier above tier rise the wards on their separate courtyards, like spreading wings, for men on one side and for women on the other. In between stand the doctors' houses, immediately above the central building with its out-patient department. There the operating-rooms and private wards are situated, and a covered bridge connects the upper story with the path to the doctors' houses. It was a joy to stand at those south windows or walk up and down in the sunshine on any of the terraces and look out over that magnificent river, slowly carrying down great floes of ice from Tibet. The wood-yards near the water were piled high with Tibetan timber, and on the farther shore rose the turreted wall, massive gates, and outstanding buildings of the city.

It was a disappointment to see little of the regular work of the hospital, Dr. King's absence on furlough and the intense cold of winter having almost emptied the wards. The patients who were still there were well cared for by Dr. and Mrs. Parry, Miss Knox, and their Chinese fellow-workers, but the chief interest for

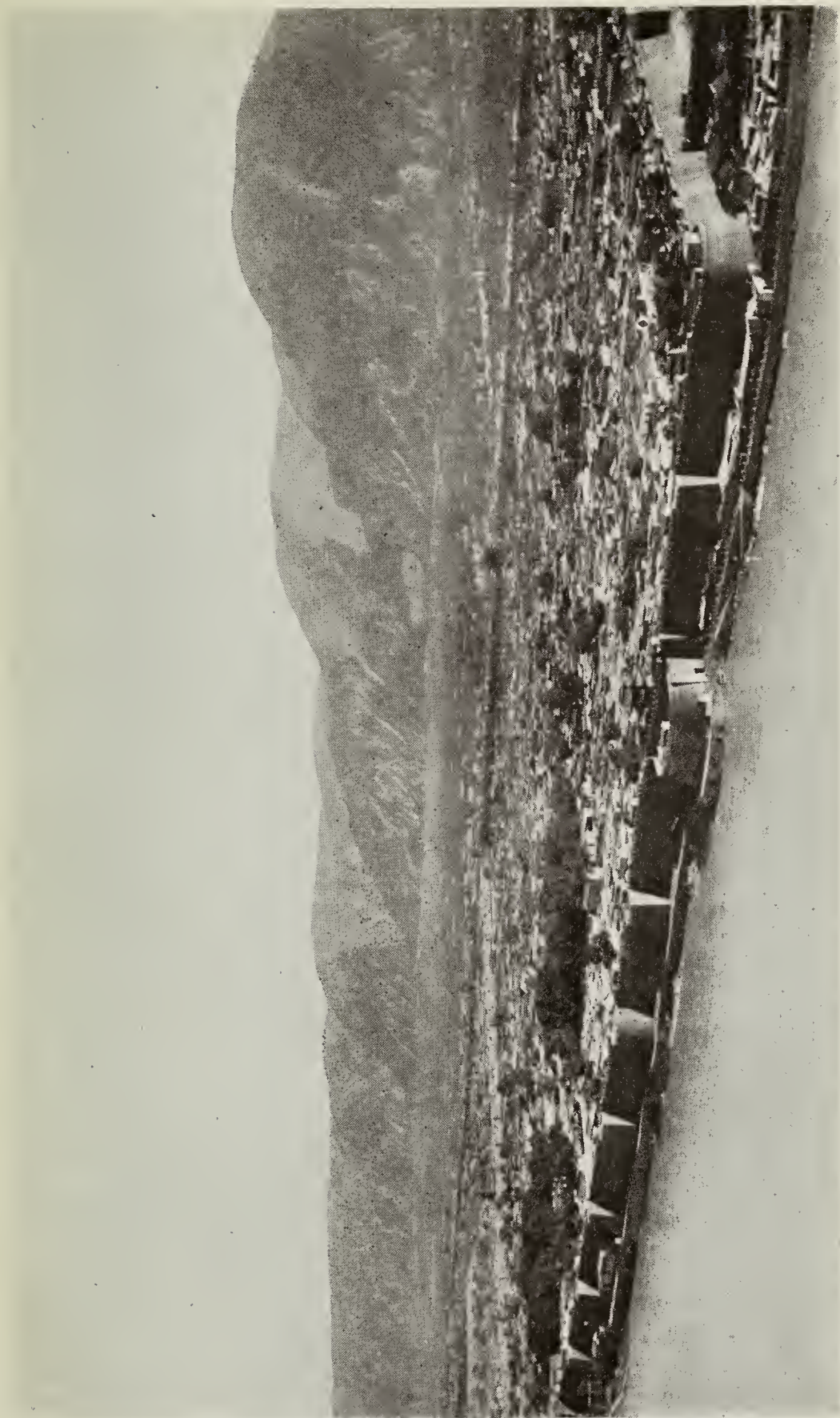


Photo by

THE CITY OF LANCHOW.

G. A. Rogers.

“The wood-yards near the water were piled high with Tibetan timber, and on the farther shore rose the turreted wall, massive gates, and outstanding buildings of the city.” The city has three large Mohammedan settlements in its suburbs.

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the time being centred round the Russian refugees, who formed so striking a party. The tall soldierly figure of the General was erect and steady, though his face showed something of the terrible strain of the past two years. In escaping from the Red Terror he had had to bring his wife and daughters, girls of eighteen and twenty, utterly unprovided for, all the way from the Russian province of which he had been Governor, across mountains and deserts and down the great road into China. How the journey had ever been accomplished was a marvel. But the girls who had gone through so much were modest and charming in their sheep-skin coats and felt boots, and the mother, worn out as she was, only broke down when she heard the singing in the meetings on Sunday. She could not speak English, but asked her daughters to explain that she was not really weeping—it was only that she was so glad to be among those who loved the LORD and to hear hymns again. The worst of their journey in some ways still lay ahead when they left for the coast, provided with all that inland hospitality could supply. For three days later, just when they had reached the district which suffered most, the terrible upheaval came which left them in the midst of death and desolation. They have safely reached the Russian colony at Hankow long ere this, however, and are endeavouring to succour other refugees seeking escape by the same road.

CHAPTER VI

THE EARTHQUAKE

To us, those fateful minutes when the earthquake came were more of a surprise than a terror—one simply did not know *what* was happening. It was a dark, cold December night, and Mrs. Mann's guests were gathered round a fire in the sitting-room. Her three-year-old daughter was asleep near-by, and Mrs. Moore's little boy of five in a room across the courtyard. We had just been talking over a passage in the Bible, and were kneeling in prayer when a strange disturbance began. It seemed to be outside and overhead, like the rumbling of heavy carts, or the thundering toward and then above us of a train on an elevated railway. It was bewildering and almost overpowering, but for the moment we went on praying. Then the floor began to move—and we knew! The parents rushed for their children, while the building rocked and the floor swayed so that it was difficult to reach the door. The courtyard, by the time we got out, seemed to be rolling as if a roughish sea were on. Sounds of creaking timbers, falling walls, and that indescribable groaning of great roofs continued. As we stood, an amazed and silent group in the middle of the courtyard, it

all went on and on through minutes that seemed interminable. A little more, and the buildings must have come crashing down, burying us beneath the debris—just what was taking place elsewhere. Yet we were calm, strangely calm, and were able to reassure the servants and others who had run out of their rooms in terror. Then gradually the earth under our feet steadied, the deafening roar passed away, and we realised that the worst was over.

It was a little while before we ventured indoors, though the cold outside was dangerous. Many lesser shocks were felt during the night, and it was with thankfulness we saw daylight and were able to get news of our friends across the river. Over there on the exposed hillside the shocks had been more disastrous. The temples facing the bridge were some of them in ruins, and part of the hill had slipped into a valley; but the hospital buildings were intact, though the high walls of courtyards had fallen in several places. There had been loss of life in the city, and of course great alarm, but when accounts began to come in of the distress in other places it seemed as though Lanchow had escaped almost untouched. A few days' journey north and east the devastation had been appalling. From the south-east also came heartrending accounts of collapsed cave-homes, landslides, and ruined cities, and a death-roll that according to official figures reached two hundred thousand. Hundreds of thousands more were left homeless—farms and animals, grain and clothing gone, everything gone—to face the desperate cold of those high altitudes in mid-winter.

It was a time when all that could be done seemed little to meet the situation. As quickly as possible an Earthquake Relief Committee was organised with Mr. Mann as Chairman. Mr. George F. Andrew was summoned from the coast to become Field Director, and in the next few months a hundred and twenty thousand dollars were laid out in relief works. For it proved that the immediate suffering was not the worst part of the catastrophe. While it was still a question of burying the dead and rescuing survivors, no one had time to notice that the tremendous landslides had blocked up river-beds in many places, and that when the ice began to melt and the spring rains to fall, disastrous floods must be the result. The threatened danger, when it claimed attention, seemed almost too great to cope with. As Dr. Parry found on his way to give surgical help at Tsing-ning-chow, ranges of hills had moved down, burying road, villages, and farmsteads for a mile or so at a stretch, and heaping up soil and stones in valleys until they had literally become hills. In twenty different directions rivers were blocked in this way. Many miles of road and several bridges had to be remade and safe channels cut for the pent-up waters.

Then it was that the presence of missionaries was valued by all classes. They had been the first to see the situation, and to them the officials turned for counsel and help.

“In some places,” Miss Knox wrote from Lanchow in the spring, “the water is already two hundred feet deep, and rising daily. If this were only in valleys it would not so much matter, but where

the water encroaches upon a plain the danger to life and property is great. In one district, near Tsinchow, over a thousand people have had to leave their homes."

Those among the refugees who could work were organised under foreign supervision, and all the money contributed was paid out in wages.

"We have diggings in ten places at present," was Mr. Andrew's first report, "and are employing thousands of men. My part consists in giving general oversight. At the place from which I write (Ch'in-ch'iang-ih) we have our greatest task. For here a cutting has to be made over two hundred feet deep and about a mile long.

"What about the men we are employing? Come with me and listen to some of the sad stories. You see that finely-built fellow yonder: he is the sole survivor of a family of seventeen. Farm and lands buried under thousands of tons of soil, he now works on the diggings to earn enough to build up a home once more. Out of this particular digging we had previously removed five bodies, when news went round, one morning, that we had come upon the ruins of another homestead. Soon three more, crushed almost beyond recognition, were unearthed, and one of our men received the remains of his father, mother, and sister.

"Here in our office is a fine young man who has been through one of the leading military schools of China. Besides himself, only two members of his family are left. Thank GOD, the divine comfort of the Gospel is softening that sad heart and lifting the bitterness of death which had entered into it.

We have some fine Chinese Christians helping in this work, and as we go our rounds we come to the tent of one of these grand men. Walk reverently here—for this is sacred ground. Within the folds of this tent many weary, sin-laden souls have had the good news brought to them of salvation full and free, and some have accepted it.”

To the terror of the people, earthquake shocks were of frequent recurrence for weeks and even months after the first disaster. In most places no serious damage was done, though in the mountainous region in which Mr. Andrew was working there was further loss of life. Houses fell, and as many as forty people were killed in one of these lesser shocks.

“There is a deep, deep solitude in the mountains to-day,” he wrote, “so deep that it approaches the silence of death. A heavy sense of oppression rests upon the remaining inhabitants of the scattered hamlets. We spend the night in a fair-sized village where, in the early hours of morning, we are awakened by the now well-known roar, like so many express trains rushing on an underground railway—then comes the quake. The house we are in is shaken to its foundations. The whole structure swings and vibrates. But high above the noise of the underground roll and the shaking and rattling of the building can be heard that terrible cry—once heard, never forgotten—of the terror-stricken inhabitants as they rush from their homes and seek safety in the open.

“What a grand thing to come among these people, serving their material interests to the limit of strength and means, and bringing that glorious gospel of



Photo by

Dr. G. E. Morrison.

THE LOESS FORMATION

“A part of the great loess formation, which stretches from central Honan almost to Tibet. . . . It is characterised by deep vertical cracks which form perpendicular walls.”

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Redeeming Love which gives comfort in anguish, joy in sorrow, and the deep, deep peace of GOD which passes understanding.”

The great loss of life in the few minutes of the earthquake must be largely attributed to the character of the loess formation in which the landslides occurred. The chief area of destruction was, roughly speaking, an oval tract of country lying between the Wei and the Yellow Rivers, cut across by the Luh-pan range of mountains—an oval about a hundred miles from east to west and two hundred from north to south. It comprises, as the *National Geographic Magazine* (American) points out, two distinct types of geological formation.

“The southern half of the oval is, with the exception of the precipitous mountain range, a part of the great loess region which stretches from central Honan almost to Tibet. . . .¹ The northern half, from Ku-Yüen to the Yellow River, is a rolling alkali plateau of clay and gravel formation, part of the steppes stretching north to Siberia and west to Turkestan. In this district the soil, being brittle, but of firmer texture than the loess, did not slide, but cracked into intricate fissures.

“It was in the loess area that the immense slides out of the terraced hills occurred, burying or carrying away villages, covering level, farmed valley-floors with a debris of unvegetated dust, damming stream-beds and turning valleys into lakes. . . . Here the

¹ Loess is a mixture of clay and powdered quartz deposited to an immense depth over vast tracts of northern China. It is characterised by deep vertical cracks which form the perpendicular walls of mud utilised for the excavation of cave-houses, in which the population largely dwells.

Chinese, since their vernacular is devoid of a technical or other term corresponding to 'landslide,' have coined the expression—the only phrase they have for describing what happened—"The mountains walked."

How literally this took place may be judged by the description of one valley, five miles long, in which seven great landslides buried every living thing except three men and two dogs.

"The only survivors of this valley were saved as by a miracle—a farmer and his two young sons, whose farmstead instead of being buried was caught up on the back of one of the slides, carried half a mile down the valley to where it was diverted by two streams of earth coming from other directions and, as the resultant of the two forces, was pushed another quarter of a mile up a small draw.

"Like all others in the slide zone, the survivors were unaware of the nature of the disaster which had overtaken them until the following morning. . . . A bitter wind and dust storm, raging at the time, added to the blackness of the night. They say that they heard a tremendous underground roar and felt the shock, which seemed to them to consist of a sickening swing to the north-east and a violent jerk back to the south-west, lasting half a minute. They made all ordinary efforts to save themselves, and between successive tremors following the main shock huddled back into the ruins of their home to await the morning. Not until day dawned and they crawled out to find neighbouring villages obliterated, farm lands carried away or buried, streams blocked and hills of earth towering above them, did they apprehend that the 'mountains had walked,'"

In the more northerly region, "where the brittle ground cracked like porcelain," the sufferings of the people were just as great. With no loess cushion to lessen the force of the shock, whole cities went down like a pack of cards. Caves fell in, burying farm-animals with their owners, and great fissures in the frozen earth swallowed up houses and trains of camels. At Tsingyüan, a Mohammedan city on the Yellow River, half the people were killed and dogs went mad from eating human flesh. From new-made crevasses black water oozed up, covering the ground. Wolves came down from the mountains, and amid the appalling scene robbers were found to prey both upon the dead and the living.

In grateful contrast with such enormities was the devotion of the Tsin-ning-chow Mandarin—the little city which had so much attracted us when we passed through it only ten days before the earthquake. He had been there three years and was beloved by the people. Living simply, he used the money at his command for the establishment of a free hospital, a home for destitute children, a free library, and other undertakings for the good of the district. He had put down gambling, and was tackling opium-smoking and foot-binding with energy. "He is indeed a man among ten thousand," wrote Dr. Parry, who was called to his aid when the earthquake came.

Beside himself with grief and perplexity in those terrible moments, he ordered his soldiers to rush out and call the people from their houses, and returning to his room knelt down and prayed to the Supreme Ruler that his own life might be sacrificed, if need be, to save the city. The walls fell in around him,

even striking him as he knelt, but he prayed on. When the worst was over, he felt that he had been spared that he might help the people, who would have been utterly disorganised without him. Though fasting and mourning, he rendered splendid service, seeing to the rescue of those entombed alive, the burial of the dead, and provision of food and clothing for the destitute. He lent out scores of army-tents, while for days he and his family slept on the ground, without shelter of any kind. And he sent to Lanchow to bring the only foreign doctor in the province to the scene of suffering. Over three thousand people were being fed from official granaries, when Dr. Parry and Mr. Seaman arrived, and they found eleven hundred wounded needing attention. As many more had perished, and the city was practically in ruins, but the devotion and courage of both the official, Cheo T'ing-yüen, and his wife were unailing.

Before long, two experienced lady-missionaries were domiciled amid the ruins of Tsin-ning-chow, living, as an American traveller put it, "in a hovel with earthen floor and a matting roof that would be scorned by well-bred cattle at home," but rejoicing to be among the people, ministering to their needs and bringing the healing of the Christian message for their hearts.¹

In every centre where missionaries were found, the distress of the people proved a wonderful

¹ Miss Wedicson and Miss Skollenberg are of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, associated with the C.I.M. A promising work is growing up around them in that stricken city and district, for which they would greatly value the prayers of friends at home.

opportunity. Some among the heathen were so much impressed by the power of GOD that they gave up idol-worship and became inquirers. Many Christians realised as never before the importance of being ready for the coming of the LORD. Mr. Rist wrote from Tsinchow that heathen people had been heard, during the earthquake, calling upon the LORD JESUS to save them. At some of the out-stations under his care there were large attendances at the services, and not a few outsiders were inquiring the way of life.

It could not but be noticed, also, how generally Christians had been protected in the hour of peril. Very few lives were lost or serious injuries sustained. In one place where a house fell upon a Christian man and his family, the neighbours when they came to search for the bodies were startled to hear a voice calling : " We are all right ! Nobody is hurt."

Instead of being crushed by falling timbers, the brick bed on which parents and children were sleeping had been covered and protected. There was one case in which a Christian woman and her daughter had been killed by the falling of a high house on the roof over their heads. But when the rubbish was removed their bodies were found without any sign of hurt, and with a look of peace, even joy, on their faces. The grandmother had covered the little baby with her arm, and it was quite uninjured.

Wonderful, too, was the escape of Mr. W. Christie and a young companion, members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, who were on a journey. They had put up at an inn and were retiring for the night when the great shock came. Not waiting to

pick up even their outer garments, they rushed into the open, and had hardly got clear of the building when the roof fell, burying everything. It was noteworthy that not a single missionary throughout the province was injured.

But the most remarkable development in connection with the earthquake was one which made the Chinese look upon it almost in the light of a blessing: it put an end to the threatened Mohammedan rebellion. The terrible experiences of former uprisings had taught them that "While heaven slays its hundreds, Moslems massacre their myriads." It is beyond question that such a rebellion was imminent, and with two to three million Mohammedans in the province, and the military forces largely under their control, it was a serious outlook. And then, in a moment, all was changed, and Mohammedan power and prestige were swept away without hand. For the area of greatest destruction was largely populated by Moslems, and one of their chief religious leaders was entombed with hundreds of his followers. Little was known of the fate of this remarkable man until one of his personal attendants came as a patient under Dr. Parry's care. This was at Tsin-ning-chow, some three weeks after the earthquake. Ma the Holy or Saintly, as he was called, was the truly great leader of a sect which he had founded. He had a presentiment, it would seem, of coming disaster. Still he went night by night to the big cave used as a mosque to pray for hours. That fateful evening (December 16, 1920) he bathed and dressed early and went to the mosque with his sons and attendants. It is believed that a

conference of some sort was being held and that hundreds of Moslem leaders were there with this chief. Whether it had to do with the rebellion or not will never be known, for while the service was going on the earthquake came, the cave fell, and no one escaped.

“ His home was in Sa-ku,” wrote Dr. Parry, “ a long valley mostly inhabited by Mohammedans. It is said that about ten thousand were buried by the falling of the mountains on both sides, which have filled the valley up level for miles.”

All this means that the attitude of the Moslem population of the province is far less aggressive than it was previously. The danger of rebellion has passed away for the present, and wider opportunities than ever are given for the proclamation of the Gospel. How long this may last we cannot tell.

“ Now is the day of opportunity,” wrote one of the missionaries engaged in relief work. “ During the quake, mountains and houses were not the only things shaken down. Ancient, deep-seated prejudices were shaken, and the faith of many who believed in gods of man’s manufacture. Now, they drink in the message of GOD’S CHRIST. Personally, I feel the need of the hour is for prayer. GOD has been speaking to me about reaping a harvest here, but the first essential is to prevail in prayer—for only so can the hosts of evil be defeated and the veil lifted from darkened minds.”

CHAPTER VII

A BATTLEFIELD OF HUMANITY

It was New Year's Eve when we left Lanchow, two weeks after the earthquake. The streets looked strangely deserted and a smell of gunpowder was in the air. All the city had been firing off crackers, early though it was, and thousands had gone out with the Governor to take part in a ceremony at the river-side in the hope of appeasing the gods. For earth tremors still continued. As many as fifty had been felt in a single night, and people were distracted with terror. Where the river-bank broadened out below the hospital, a tent had been erected which was the centre of proceedings. There priests were chanting and beating drums and gongs amid much letting-off of crackers, while far up and down the river onlookers were burning the great sticks of incense they had brought in handfuls. The climax of the ceremony was reached when the Governor knelt and made public confession of sin, taking upon himself the blame for all the evils from which the people were suffering. The earthquake, doubtless, was a judgment for many offences against heaven, and who but he was responsible? The paper, for it was a written confession, was read in

the presence of the assembly and then burned for transmission to the spirit-world. Other officials, both civil and military, read like documents, which were also burned. The whole proceedings were costly and impressive, the incense alone representing an outlay of about a thousand dollars.

As we reached the cross-roads in the heart of the city, we met the long procession coming back. The Governor was riding in a magnificent chair, followed by many officials in full dress and an escort of mounted soldiers. Troops, police, and wealthy citizens returning from the river mingled with throngs of business people intent on the work of the day. Passing slowly through the crowded streets we left the city, crossed the bridge, and set out on our seven days' journey up the great road that leads to Central Asia.

And now we were approaching, though we hardly realised it yet, that part of the province which has the greatest mixture of races as well as the most tragic past. Driven like a wedge between Mongolia and Tibet, and affording the only practicable line of communication between the rich plains of China proper and the Tartar and Moslem hordes of Turkestan, it has inevitably witnessed the strife of races, religions, and armies through the centuries. Scenes we were to see and types we were to meet in far-off Liangchow and Sining were arresting in their suggestiveness, bringing before one hints of that terrible past and glimpses of a great Beyond—vast areas yet to be won to allegiance to our Master.

It was of this Beyond we were thinking, as we set out from Lanchow that New Year's Eve. Seven

days' journey—it was but a step, one stage only on the longer journey we would fain have taken all the way to Ti-hwa-fu. For there two brave pioneers, Messrs. Hunter and Mather of our Mission, had for years been holding the fort without seeing a fellow-worker. But Ti-hwa-fu, capital of the new province of Sinkiang, was more than forty days beyond the city to which we were travelling—across the great Gobi Desert and well on the way to Kuldja on the frontiers of Russia. Long had our hearts gone out to those neglected regions with their mingled population, multitudes for whom there were so few to care! But even to have spent a week with Mr. Hunter and Mr. Mather would have meant a costly journey of several months. Other work was appointed us, and very reluctantly we had to convince ourselves that it must not be thought of. But it was something that the friend who accompanied us for the first few miles, cheering our way with brotherly kindness, should have been Mr. Arthur Moore—the only fellow-worker who has visited Mr. Hunter in his far-off station, when he escorted Mr. Mather up to join him in 1914. Riding on the front of our cart he had many a story to tell of following the great road out through the Western Gate of China, of the dangers of the Gobi Desert and the wilds beyond, as well as of the less adventurous stages that lay between us and Liangchow.

One impression only must be given of that seven days' journey, the very one for which we were largely unprepared. The cold, intense, almost unbearable as it was, we had anticipated, for was it



Photos by

Frederick Brown.

- (1) A typical inn in the Great North-West.
- (2) Road and inn between Lanchowfu and Liangchowfu.
- (3) View from the roof of the Mission House at Liangchowfu, showing the three famous pagodas.

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not the dead of winter? The dangerous crossing of high mountains, where the road at that time of year is often exchanged for a frozen torrent-bed, was nothing unusual. Kansu is everywhere a sea of mountains. But we were not expecting what lay beyond the mountains, when the extensive plain of Liangchow at last was reached.

Setting out in the dark, long before daylight, we saw the sun rise morning after morning, when we had already been hours on the cart. The cold of those hours was indescribable, especially when a head-wind was blowing, but it made one appreciate all the more the transformation when the snow-covered mountains flushed into rose, and sunshine flooded the scene with warmth and light. Then one could breathe more freely, realising that the worst was over for another day. It was somewhat humiliating to discover, in those inclement regions, how dependent one was upon shelter at night and such food as the inns could afford. Even on the heated *k'ang* (brick bed) the boiling water with which we filled our teapot froze into a solid lump before morning. We became accustomed to chipping off bits of frozen bread and thawing them in our mouths before we could eat them. This was our daily breakfast on the cart, with scraps of frozen meat or cheese. But sometimes hot soup was to be had—mutton-broth, specially prepared for travellers—and promising hamlets were scanned as meal-hours drew near with no little interest. Thus it was that on reaching the Liangchow plain after several days of "bitterness," as our carter expressed it, among the mountains, we were conscious of some-

what eager anticipations—anticipations destined, however, to be disappointed.

Emerging at Kulang from the labyrinth we had been threading, we obtained our first view of the wide reach of level country that stretches away a hundred miles to the north-west. The plain was far larger than we had expected, and we hailed with joy the sight of towns and villages along the road as well as dotting the country in all directions. Surely at some of these provision would be waiting for hungry travellers! It was only as we went on hour after hour, increasingly cold and hungry, that we found we were in what seemed to be an enchanted region. The walled villages we came to, and there were none unwalled, were finer than any we had seen elsewhere. Their ramparts might have belonged to cities, and the portals where gates had been were massive. But no encouraging wisps of smoke rose on the frosty air; no dogs ran out barking; no children were at play. Silent and deserted, place after place proved to be nothing but walls. There were no roofs at all—only a maze of walls so thick and solid that the earthquake had not disturbed them. Anything more weird, more bewildering, it would be hard to imagine. They were ruins, evidently; but so massive, so many, so entirely deserted!

Then the dwellings we did come to that were inhabited were of a most unusual appearance. They looked like fortresses rather than homesteads. Doorways, usually the one conspicuous thing about a Chinese house, there seemed to be none. The outside walls were long, blank and unbroken.

How they were entered at all was a mystery. And inside, wall rose above wall, twenty and thirty feet high, to a massive tower at the back. It was only later we learned that these were the habitations of clans rather than families. In them the scattered homes of an ordinary village are gathered together for protection. Entrances are as low and hidden as possible. The iron door, studded with nails, gives access not to a courtyard but to a tunnel, guarded by fierce Tibetan dogs. Each court protects the one within, and the tower of refuge is for women and children in hours of peril.

All this tells its own tale; for we had reached that "battlefield of humanity" described by d'Ollone in his recent remarkable work on Moham-medanism in China. Of the very journey we were taking, we found he had written:

"Travelling from Lanchow to Liangchow one advances over ruins. This route, a narrow ribbon of fertile land between the deserts of Mongolia and Tibet, the one and only connecting link between China and the Occidental world, has been from the beginning a battlefield of humanity. The Chinese, depending on this route to reach far back in their deserts the insatiable nomads—scourge and terror of the Empire—and to extend not only their domination but their commerce, for it is the famous *route de la soie*, have covered it with fortifications. Chief among these is the Great Wall, one arm of which is in sight near the road most of the time. Then there are fortified places like the city of Pingfan . . . backed by castles, towers, and signalling posts. Here all breathes war—war which

beginning with history has not yet come to an end. For upon accumulated and successive ruins have arisen ramparts ever more formidable."

We had wondered at the fortresses and the Great Wall as we travelled day by day, and now we were indeed among the ruins. "The place was silent and aware." What campaigns and bloodshed, what massacres and retaliations had it not witnessed! What stories it could have told of the past; what warnings it held for the future! Memory was busy, as we jolted over the stony road skirting the mountains, with the last Mohammedan rebellion and the experiences of our friends Mr. and Mrs. Ridley in the city of Sining, south of those very mountains, during the siege and reign of terror twenty-five years ago. Anything more ghastly than the doings they witnessed and of which they themselves had told us it would not be easy to imagine, but here on every hand were evidences of similar tragedies, enacted on a scale far more terrible.

For in successive wars and rebellions the possession of this highway has been an essential condition of victory. It had to be held or retaken at any price; and the strength of the great rebellion of last century (1862-1874) was that for six long years the Mohammedans retained their supremacy in that region by incessant *coups de main*. "The result was the complete annihilation of the country population and the destruction of city after city." This then was the meaning of the extensive ruins that amazed us, and the explanation of the fortified farmhouses with their long blank walls. And one could not but realise that the horrors of the past are the dangers

of the present. But for the earthquake, we might at that very time have been witnessing an uprising more menacing to China's integrity than any that have gone before, under the fostering influence of a neighbouring power ever ready to supply arms and ammunition.

It was a relief to turn from such reflections to another characteristic of the Liangchow plain, its almost Egyptian or Arabian aspect under that cloudless sky. The same impression had been made upon the traveller d'Ollone, to judge from his illustrated pages. He speaks of the fortified dwellings on the plain—"those feudal castles in the midst of a sunburnt country"—as resembling Palestine in the time of the Crusades. To us they had, at a distance, more the look of flat-roofed villages near the Nile. For all the lines were straight; no roofs were to be seen; and the trees about them, bared of branches till near the top (also for purposes of protection) had the effect of palms in the brilliant sunshine.

So through an unfamiliar country, knowing no one in the city before us, with something of the heart of strangers in a strange land we drew near Liangchow and one of the most beautiful experiences of our lives.

CHAPTER VIII

FAR-OFF LIANGCHOW

IF anywhere love is a power it is supremely so among the heathen. First, last, and most of all it is love that wins, love that interprets rightly the Gospel message and makes real to darkened hearts the love of GOD in CHRIST. Sitting one day among a group of women who had recently come to a knowledge of the truth, in a city which until we went there had never had the Gospel, one was surprised to hear them bring up this very subject.

“ What is it that we feel,” they began to ask each other, “ when we come inside these doors ? ”

It was only a poor little place, a four-roomed mud cottage built round two narrow courtyards, but it was crowded from morning till night with patients and visitors, of whom these were an inner circle.

“ Yes, what is it ? ” said another. “ We all feel it. As soon as we come in here our hearts are peaceful and *k'wan-ch'ow* (broad, spacious: the reverse of worried). We never feel like this anywhere else, not even in our own mothers' homes. Tell us, what is it—this warm, restful feeling ? ”

It was so real and unconscious—the natural expanding of souls under the love of CHRIST—that

it brought tears to one's eyes: and what a joy it was to explain that this was nothing more nor less than *love*! This is what JESUS came to bring; what He *is* in every heart that receives Him. And this in its perfect development is heaven.

“Heaven! Yes, it would be heaven,” they agreed, “to feel like this all the time.”

We had come to Liangchow—the most remote station in China proper, of our own or any mission¹—knowing that the work had been difficult and beset with discouragements. For thirty years the missionaries had sowed in hope, but now the field watered with many tears was showing signs of fruitfulness. From the commencement over one hundred and sixty had been baptized, each soul a hard-won trophy of redeeming grace, and we longed to see the fellow-workers who were thus encouraged. Hard pressed and lonely they must often have been, but loneliness had not narrowed their hearts, as we soon discovered.

To begin with, Mr. Belcher's handgrip was a welcome in itself, when he met us a few miles out of the city. His stories about the Christians, told with loving appreciation, made us feel that we knew many of them, even before they received us with shining faces at the door of the mission-house.

The stateliness of Liangchow buildings had impressed us. Rarely had we seen such handsome houses. But it was not the spacious rooms, open fireplaces, and perfect housekeeping that rejoiced our hearts—though to travellers straight from the

¹ Remote, that is, from railway or steam-ship communication.

road that January night they did seem wonderful! The missionaries were, like ourselves, wearing Chinese dress (Mr. and Mrs. Belcher and Miss Mellor) and were living simply amid Chinese surroundings. It was the atmosphere of love that made that visit memorable—just the inward ease and rest that nothing else can bring. And we found that the spirit of the missionaries was the spirit of the Chinese Christians. Love—how it was lavished upon us! Never had we received such gifts, such provision for our further journey, such cheering expressions of gratitude for our coming! If we had had any lingering feeling that Kansu people were a little cold and rough, like their northern climate, it all vanished before the warmth of that sunshine. Just to sit down in memory at Mrs. Belcher's fireside to-day is to enjoy that sweetness still.

The thing we appreciated most, I think, about it all, was the way in which the spacious, homelike rooms were used for the Chinese. Morning worship, for example, was held in the living-room (sitting-room and dining-room in one), where a bright fire was burning, and night by night during our visit the household gathered there to enjoy hymn-singing with the little organ. Those were hours when the room was filled to overflowing, for many of the country Christians had come in to meet us. But the chairs were drawn up round the table and on three sides forms were crowded in, regardless of floor-rugs and furniture.

What happy times they were, when the darkness of the winter night made the warmth within all the more welcome! School-children who lived on the

premises were very much in evidence, bright boys and girls eager to learn the new hymns. Rough-looking farmers and women from village homes filled every corner, mingling with well-dressed city Christians. Back in the shadows were some who seemed to be outsiders, opium-smokers and strangers who had dropped in and found a welcome. But with few exceptions faces were radiant because they had "looked unto Him."

Never before had we been quite so glad of our "Little Honan Hymn-book," with its music for every hymn. For the dear people wanted to sing; they needed to sing. They all had their own sorrows and cares; and we found united praise to be wonderfully uplifting. The meetings did not begin with the same freedom and glow with which they ended. An hour or two of singing, learning the simple hymns and Scripture choruses, many of which were new to the little company, and talking over the precious truths they set forth made all the difference. The Chinese tunes in the collection were much appreciated, specially that ancient Bactrian melody said to be the oldest air in existence. Difficult as it is for foreigners to acquire, it seems to lie in the subconsciousness of the Chinese. Whether they have heard it before or not, they can sing it correctly after a Chinese fashion, with very little teaching, and its strange deep measures and plaintive repetitions appeal to them in no ordinary way. It was good to hear them in those evening gatherings singing it to the words:

Heaven is my home—homeward then!

There is nothing here below worth anxious care.

Then there was a fine bright hymn about the LORD'S Coming that was often asked for, a hymn so full of Scriptural teaching that its verses were as good as a discourse. Pastor Hsi's hymns with their Chinese tunes had a place all their own, reminding one of the saying in Germany that, if the Scriptures are read and one of Luther's hymns is sung, a service is sure to be profitable, whether the sermon is so or not. But, strange enough, it was a little song intended only for the simplest people that seemed to bring most blessing—a hymn with a Chinese tune and a sweet refrain :

Poor though I am and truly in distress,
The Almighty Saviour loves me with tenderness.

It was touching to see the leading evangelist in the station, with tears in his eyes, ask us to unite with him in prayer at the close of one meeting, as he did want to thank the LORD for the comfort of that hymn.¹

The short winter days as well as the long evenings at Liangchow were full of interest. Mr. Belcher was enthusiastic at the time over the beautiful new structure that was going up for church purposes—

¹ *The Little Honan Hymn-book*, as it has come to be called, is the direct descendant of a small collection of colloquial hymns we had published more than twenty years ago for use in our own stations. Enlarged and republished since our return to China—for nothing had quite taken its place—it has entered upon a new lease of life, with a nicely printed tune book, harmonised by the help of willing friends. Both words and music can be obtained from the Tract Society at Hankow. It is not intended to supersede any other collection, for it only has seventy hymns and choruses, but to help in meeting a need among country Christians and in women's meetings.

an enthusiasm that was contagious. For of recent years the work had been hampered by insufficient accommodation, especially on Sundays, and a generous gift from Scotland had come as an answer to many prayers. This had made possible the purchase of a finely situated plot of ground which, though extensive, had few if any usable buildings upon it. Mr. Belcher had not much left over for construction, but with the eye of a practical man saw that good use could be made of the timber in the old roofs and walls. The vermin-infested houses were cleared away and the beams put through a cleansing process which turned them out like new. Then, with the purchase of some thirty pounds' worth of additional timber, he was able to erect the church and other buildings which we saw.

It was interesting in going over the new premises to observe the care that was being put into the work and the many devices for saving needless expense. The board floor in the church, for example, was being put down without a single nail. Holes had been bored in the planks where the nails would have been, and long pegs of wood were doing duty instead, each one dipped in hot glue and driven home wet and sticky. The sum saved in this way amounted to many sovereigns, for nails are expensive, and the result was entirely satisfactory. The church, capable of seating over six hundred, was boarded throughout and provided with heating arrangements, invaluable in winter. Outside, with plenty of light and sunshine, were the guest-halls for men and women, the big classrooms, of which good use is made for the Sunday School, the street chapel, and even a little

hospital, cared for by a Chinese Christian with some medical training.

But one must not dwell further upon all that was going on in church-building, material or spiritual, nor upon the remaining need in Liangchow itself and far out upon the plain. The work is telling and thousands are being reached, but the opportunities are greater than ever before, and there are so few to enter open doors !

One feature of the women's work that specially impressed us was the way in which the Christians have been given scope and led to take their full share of responsibility. The mid-week class, for example, usually an occasion for teaching on the part of the missionary, has taken on quite another character at Liangchow. It is a women's meeting for prayer and Bible study in which all take part, attended by Mrs. Belcher and Miss Mellor with the rest. If the women of the church are expected to be present, why should either of the missionaries be absent? They both go, and the meeting is taken by one of the Chinese and one of the missionaries alternately, week about. This has greatly strengthened the Christian women, and has developed leadership and gifts for speaking. To give them confidence, an arrangement was made that if there was time one of the missionaries would give a lesson on the catechism at the close of the address. Thus no one was afraid of not being able to fill the hour profitably. They give what they can, on a subject of their own choosing, and it is supplemented or not as occasion requires. Very rarely, as a matter of fact, is there any opportunity for a lesson on the

catechism at that meeting. Moreover, it has grown to be one of the most helpful and popular meetings of the week, with an average attendance of forty to fifty women, and there are eight or ten who can lead it acceptably.

This is partly due, no doubt, to the thoroughness put into Bible teaching on Sundays, and to a system of *home* Bible study to which Miss Mellor has given much attention. The latter has greatly enriched the spiritual life of the Christians, and there are quite a number who are pursuing it ardently, with a view to completing the course and obtaining certificates—a new development indeed for the Chinese wife and mother! ¹

One advance that specially rejoiced our hearts was in connection with the Girls' School, for which a new day seems to be dawning. Splendid premises have been obtained in a part of the city where girls and women can come freely. The whole is well adapted for a training centre for young women, which it is hoped will be of service to all that part of the province. Miss Eltham, who is returning to Liangchow with a view to carrying on the school, has had the unique experience of being in charge, during the furlough of Miss Cable and the Misses French, of the great institution that has grown up under their care in Shansi, in which hundreds of young women have been trained who are now

¹ Information can be obtained about this valuable course from Miss A. Garland of the C.I.M., Tsinchow, Kansu, who, with her sister, Miss Susie Garland, has given years to working it out. It is a thoroughly practical system for helping women, from inquirers up, to form habits of *home* Bible study.

occupying positions of usefulness. It was a heavy responsibility for Miss Eltham, a comparatively young worker, but He who called her to it sustained her in it, and the experience has been invaluable. The position of Liangchow for such a school may seem remote, in a province of vast distances, but there are *twelve cities still beyond it that have never had a missionary*. In that long-neglected region the Spirit of GOD is working in quite a special way. The time, we know, is short. May it not be that before our LORD returns He wants a strong centre here, from which to send forth the light? If so, Miss Eltham must have helpers. Where are those willing, for His sake, to put their lives into this work? It is lonely, far-away and difficult: it is urgent, satisfying, and near His heart.

CHAPTER IX

BEYOND

WE had been in Liangchow about a week and were at table one day when the door opened and a friend appeared—a traveller who had come almost as far on the great road as we had, but from the opposite direction. A breath of frosty air blew in with him and a breath of joyous welcome too. How good it was to see him! The open-heartedness we knew so well, the brightness of manner was all there, but there was a something else, not easy to define, that made us wonder what had come into his life since last we met.

It was not long before, seated at the fireside, he reminded us of our first meeting and told us more than we had known till then of what it meant to him. We had been travelling at the time with Mr. Hudson Taylor, just a few weeks before his Home-going, and at one of the stations in Honan a bright lad had been set free to accompany and help us, a lad who watched more keenly than we realised the family-life of the little party. After some weeks together we came to the railway-line at which he was to leave us. It was dear Father's parting words that so impressed him, carried home by what he knew of the life that lay behind them.

“ The LORD be with you,” was all he said, looking into the eager face. “ I shall be waiting for you in heaven.”

“ Waiting for you in heaven ”—the words would not leave him. Within a fortnight the speaker had passed in to see the King, and the Honan lad, who had given his heart afresh to the LORD after that parting, longed as never before to live for eternity, a life of which he would not be ashamed when his call came. It was the first step in the making of a missionary.

For it was a missionary who had come down to meet us—a missionary from the Great Beyond, six days out into the darkness where those twelve cities wait for messengers of salvation. The story of how he came to be there, so far from his home in central China, and of how the LORD is working in that remote, neglected region greatly moved our hearts.

At long intervals, lines of light had radiated into the darkness, when evangelistic journeys had been taken by Liangchow workers or by missionaries travelling to and from Sinkiang. Such journeys had been few, only two pioneers, as we have seen, having taken up work in those distant regions, though the Chinese who go out to trade and settle are numbered by the thousand. All men, and for the most part young, they are attracted by the prospect of quickly making a fortune. Coming from populous, productive provinces, they little realise the cold and hardships that have to be faced in these high altitudes. Kansu opens their eyes, however, and before they reach its western boundary many wish themselves back in the homes they have



Photo by

KIAYÜKWAN.

Dr. G. F. Morrison.

The western boundary of Kansu. "But all feel homesickness and misgivings when it comes to passing out through the Great Wall and facing the barren wastes of the Gobi Desert."

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left. Some settle in cities by the way, cities like the one in which our friend is working. Others go on with a brave heart. But all feel home-sickness and misgiving when it comes to passing out through the Great Wall and facing the barren wastes of the Gobi Desert. Very pathetic are some of the inscriptions both inside and outside that famous gate. Some are in literary style, some in homely language, like the lines so familiar as to be almost a proverb :

Forth from Kia-yü-kwan,
Eyes blinded with tears—
Looking ahead, nothing but desert ;
Looking behind, the great gate closed.
Wife and Mother far from sight !
Thinking upon them, tears will not cease.

The gate is opened only at certain hours, and the traveller has to register his name at Kia-yü-kwan and pay two hundred cash for a ticket to pass out. He then throws a stone on the ever-growing heap near the tablet of the great General Tso, who reconquered Sinkiang for China, and joins the westward-moving stream—more than a hundred thousand every year, so few of whom return.

This Western Gate of China, twenty miles beyond Suchow, naturally makes that city a place of importance. Government officials, soldiers, settlers, merchants and the long-exiled returning home sojourn in its inns and those of other cities on the road. Yet none of these places, beyond Liangchow, has ever had a missionary. Mr. Arthur Moore, on early evangelistic journeys, had spent days at a time in some of them, meeting with little to encourage,

but a change had come when in 1914 he escorted Mr. Mather up to join Mr. Hunter at Ti-hwa-fu. In spite of the weariness of the long stages, they used every opportunity for preaching, and in city after city found willing hearers.

“Everywhere we have met with respect from all classes,” Mr. Moore wrote, “and have had wonderful times preaching on the streets. The crowds in the large centres have numbered hundreds, and the people have stood listening by the hour. During book-selling, it has taken Mr. Mather and myself all our time to supply the demand for Gospels. In fact, at Kanchow, we had to call one of our carters to help us, in order to supply the people as they came. . . . Listeners, older men especially, have helped us to find suitable places where we could preach to them. Shopkeepers have allowed us to stand outside the closed part of their shops, and have supplied us with forms. . . . Sometimes we have spent three hours in one place, then have moved to another where we have remained till nearly dark, not even returning to the inn for food. I mention these facts that you may in measure realise *the ripeness of these places for the Gospel.*”

That was in 1914, but still the cities west of Liangchow, right out to the border of the province, were left waiting—waiting for the messengers who never came. For not a single Protestant missionary has been even on a preaching tour up the great road since Mr. Moore's visit. Not one, did we say? Yes, *one!* For when no foreign missionary was available, GOD had His messenger ready, and sent the Honan lad.

He was a young doctor by that time with considerable experience in hospital work. Family matters had called him home, and amid a multitude of cares he had lost something of the heavenly vision. A letter from his old chief took him back to his Alma Mater, the C.I.M. Hospital in Honan, where many happy years had been spent. It was there he had received his medical training, and the training in Bible study and soul-winning that he valued even more. There he had learned much about the power of prayer; had been transformed through a definite filling with the Holy Spirit, and had seen a whole church uplifted in a wonderful season of revival. There he had been used of GOD in leading not a few to CHRIST, and had been clearly called to missionary work in the far-off, needy province of Kansu. The hospital had recently been enlarged through the addition of a new out-patient department, and Dr. Kao was soon absorbed again in the work he loved.

And this was the very time of Mr. Moore's return from his long journey, burdened about the cities in which he had found such willing hearers. Dr. Kao was not thinking of Kansu that summer: its appeal had lost the ear of his heart, besieged by nearer, more attractive claims. Friends were many in the provincial capital (Kaifeng), and openings others sought were at his feet. His skill as a doctor was considerable and his popularity dangerous. Flattering offers were being pressed upon him that meant wealth and influence. He had children of his own to provide for, and insensibly was being drawn into a line of things very different from his true ideal.

In his room in the hospital one night he was hurrying over a brief prayer, giving thanks for help and guidance through the day, when, all unexpectedly, a Voice spoke in his heart :

“ Do not thank *Me*. I have not been leading you to-day. Your way has not been of *Me*.”

Startled, he realised that GOD was speaking.

“ All these years, what have you lacked ? Has any good thing failed of all I promised ? This going into official life—is it what I called you for ? Was it for wealth I called you, or to preach the Gospel ? ”

Deeply convicted, the past in all its sacredness came before him. He remembered the prayers, the hopes, the consecration of early years in that very place, and realised how near he had come to missing GOD'S best. With contrition of heart and many tears he came back to the LORD, asking only to know His will, and before he rose from his knees the decision was made—for Kansu.

So to Kansu he came, bringing wife and children, for at the last moment she accepted all that was involved and decided to accompany him. For a young Chinese woman, who had never been beyond her village, to leave home and relatives and with two little children face such a journey, and life in a far-off province where food and language, climate and customs would all be different from her own, required courage of no ordinary kind. That was six years ago, and still the brave little woman holds on, strengthened in GOD and richly rewarded in the work that has grown up around them, but with a heart that often hungers for a sight of home and the sound of her childhood's speech.

At first they lived in the hospital at Lanchow and helped Dr. King in his growing work. Quite as much an evangelist as a physician, Dr. King encouraged Kao's missionary zeal, and set him free from time to time for itinerations. In this way journeys were made north and south from Lanchow and west to the Tibetan border. Each one quickened the young man's longing to preach CHRIST where He was unknown, and finally he made his way up the great road to Liangchow and beyond.

From that time it was wonderful how the way opened up, though he had to strike out alone and, humanly speaking, unprovided for. He had found the place to which GOD was calling—that very city of Kanchow about which Mr. Moore had written—and from the first he realised that the LORD was working with him. What else could have accounted for the warm reception met with, and still more for the faith awakened in many hearts?

In the inn, for example—that first inn to which he came as a stranger—with what thankfulness he listened to the soldier who was talking to his restive horse. Dr. Kao had been seeing patients and preaching the Glad Tidings, and this man had shown no little interest, but in a quiet, retiring way had not said much about the change that had come to him. The horse could not be unconscious of it, however. As he rubbed it down, he was remonstrating over its bad behaviour, little thinking he was overheard.

“ You know very well what I was before I became a Christian,” he was saying. “ You know how I would have beaten you and sworn at you for carrying on like this! Can't you see I am changed?

Come now—you must change too and learn better ways ! ”

Whether the horse understood or not, Dr. Kao rejoiced with a great joy over this first evidence that his preaching had not been in vain. Soon this new convert, Mr. Lin, developed such a love for the Bible that he read it through from cover to cover, again and again. Within the first year he read it three times, and prayer became so natural to him that Dr. Kao was often refreshed by the simple way in which he brought everything to the LORD.

Then there was Wang Fah, also a man of forty who lived in the inn. He was a worker in brass and had a shop at which most of his time was spent, but as often as possible he was in Dr. Kao's company listening to the Gospel. He could not read but began at once to learn, poring over the hymn that specially attracted him :

Heaven is my home—homeward then !
There is nothing here below worth anxious care.

Sitting by his smelting-fire one day, in which was a piece of brass, he was working the bellows and at the same time conning his hymn, wholly oblivious of a group of passers-by who were looking on with delight. For he had forgotten about the brass he was heating, and was singing over and over the words that had come to mean so much.

“ Heaven may be your home,” laughed one of the bystanders at length, “ but you had better mind the fire ! Wait a bit to *kwei-kia pah* (hasten homeward) ! ”

Wang took it in good part and attended to his

business. He attended to his reading too, so well that when Dr. Kao came to live in Kanchow, a year later, there were comparatively few characters in the New Testament that he did not know.

Mrs. Ch'en was another of those who heard, on that first visit, with a prepared heart. Liu, the silversmith, needed special treatment. He had come to Dr. Kao with tuberculosis of the spine, and had been ordered to lie up for three months. Mrs. Ch'en, the mother of a friend, undertook to care for him, and both nurse and patient looked forward to the doctor's visits. It was not only that he was bright and cheery; it was the Great Healer they loved to hear about, the Saviour of soul as well as body. And the best proof of what the Saviour meant to them was that, before long, five others were trusting in Him too, through the silversmith and his kind old nurse.

And so the blessing went on spreading from heart to heart. One of the five, a peddler of silver ornaments, was soon telling the Good News as he went his rounds. Another, old Uncle Yu, was the means of winning his daughter-in-law, the tragedy of whose life was wonderfully softened when they became Christians. For she was the mother of six little girls, and no son had come to mitigate her husband's displeasure. A seventh daughter, indeed, arrived after the grace of GOD had come into the mother's heart, but she received a very different welcome from her sisters. The growing disapproval they occasioned may be judged from their names—the only wonder being, in this heathen land, that they were allowed to live at all.

The first was called hopefully, *Ling-ling* (Lead, lead), for though she was a girl her brother would soon follow. But the second was a girl also. However, as a plain hint, they called her *Ts'ing-ts'ing* (Invite, invite). Surely that would bring the desired response. Alarmed when a third girl appeared, they called her *Kwan-kwan* (Control, control). Would nothing break the disastrous succession! The next is simply *Sï-nü* (Fourth girl), as though nothing could be worse. And so with number five and six. But little number seven has come to a loving home. The father, though not yet a Christian, has refrained from taking another wife, and the mother no longer regards the children as a burden and disgrace. She rises early on Sunday to dress the older ones and send them off to the meeting. Such a business—doing their hair especially! But all the plaits are shining and adorned with red cord in devices suited to their ages; shoes and socks display the natural, unbound feet, and as the little procession passes down the street the neighbours smile and say:

“See, it is Sunday! The church bells are ringing!”

For they have Sunday services now in that city where Dr. Kao is the only Protestant missionary. The church bells are a dream of the future, but the best room in the house he occupies is set apart for meetings, and is filled to overflowing. It was a joy to hear him tell of twenty-five or thirty people of whose conversion he has little doubt, mostly men in business or land-owners in the neighbourhood. As he spoke of the broad, fertile valley, thirty miles wide and over a hundred long, one seemed to see

the villages, one close upon another, among their orchards and abundant trees. Water is so plentiful that rice grows freely, a very unusual thing in Kansu, and the city has three clear streams running down its streets. He told us of many temples, the famous "Sleeping Buddha" of colossal size, of demon-worship that is rampant, and thousands of pilgrims who flock to the great festivals for which Kanchow is renowned.

He told us too of deeper things, some of the things that enter into the making of a missionary. For all has not been easy. Loneliness, poverty, a severe winter in unfinished quarters, lack of friends who understood their circumstances, and the apparent forgetfulness of others whose letters were looked for in vain, all combined to make them feel forsaken. They had come to an empty house which had been mortgaged some time previously, but the outgoing tenants had done more damage to the property than is usual in such cases. Not only had they smashed the *k'angs* (brick beds, heated with flues) to prevent those who followed from taking their "good luck," they had broken down walls and removed doors and partitions. Some of the *k'angs* had been repaired, but there was no way of securing the premises at night or protecting themselves from robbers. The latter could come in anywhere, and the neighbours in consequence were far from friendly.

The position was an unusual one. In giving up his work at Lanchow, Dr. Kao had relinquished also his salary from mission sources. When he and Mrs. Kao went to Kanchow to care for the little company of believers, they did so at their own charges.

The house was one he had himself mortgaged, with help from personal (Chinese) friends, and his intention was to support his family by medical work, although he charged no fees, patients being free to pay as they could or would. This was a step of genuine faith, the more so that the Christians in Kanchow who gladly welcomed them did not realise the situation. Patients were few that winter, and some did not make any return for the doctor's services. Alone in the big, empty house, Mrs. Kao had many an attack of home-sickness. The Christians were mostly men, and the women, though earnest and friendly, were busy as she was herself, and unable to be much away from home. They did not know, nobody knew, that the little family were without sufficient clothing or bedding to meet the coldest months, that they could not afford fires and often hardly knew where the next meal was to come from. The Sunday meetings were well attended and happy; there were many inquirers and endless opportunities for the work they loved. But returning from street-preaching, Dr. Kao would find his wife in tears. The little ones were cold and fretful. The rooms were dreary and the courtyards unprotected. At night thieves came again and again, and the nervous strain was trying. Neighbours were annoyed because they did not rebuild the outside wall.

“Where is your GOD?” was the taunt as Dr. Kao came and went. “Why does He not take care of you, if you are too poor to put up a door!”

It was but for a time, and it was permitted in love. For not only is it faith that is “precious,”

but “ the trial of your faith ”—“ much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire.” Their privilege was great—the only witnesses for CHRIST in so vast and neglected a region! The results of their work were to be great—a bright, witnessing church, from which the light is shining far and wide. The fight is great, greater than they realised at first ; and the patient endurance must be great, if no man is to take their crown. So those long months of testing were permitted at the outset, and when he came down the following winter with the look in his face that went to our hearts, Dr. Kao could thankfully speak of them, in his imperfect English, as “ my nice school.”

CHAPTER X

CHILDREN OF THE MOUNTAINS

IT was a comfort when it came to parting from our Liangchow friends that Dr. Kao felt he could be spared from home a few weeks longer and decided to accompany us to our next stopping-place. Compassed with love to the last, there were few dry eyes when the cart was packed and ready and we stood together—a large company—to commend one another to the LORD in prayer. Beneath the rough exterior of Kansu speech and manner, what treasures we had found of warmth of heart!

And now, though we had to retrace our steps across the Liangchow plain and down the fortified road as far as Pingfan, we were turning southward to the most interesting section of all this interesting province—the region last wrested from Tibet, and still largely populated by Tibetans mingled with Moslems of various sects and races. Mongolians too are found in numbers along that Tibetan borderland, and have their hereditary princes in the city of Sining to which we were travelling, while the mountains we had to cross are the retreat of aboriginal tribes, like those in south-west China, some of them a remnant of the once powerful Huns

who seem to have settled here, despite the barrier of the Great Wall.

“For this province of Kansu occupies an important place in the history of the Chinese empire,” writes one who knows it well, “having been the scene of much fierce fighting and the home of many strange peoples. From here, it is commonly believed, went forth the Huns, who, under their leader, Attila, became the scourge of Europe during the fourth century. Here the Chinese have struggled for long years with the Tibetans and Mongols, and ruins of former days bear silent witness to the bitterness of those wars. Here also, during later years, Chinese and Moslem have met in mortal combat, each striving for supremacy over the other. Blood has flowed like water throughout the province, and the struggle is suspended rather than ended.”¹

It was with our own struggle we were chiefly occupied, however, as we crossed the mountains, for the journey proved a desperate undertaking so near the Chinese New Year. We did not know till afterwards that carts had practically given up that route as too dangerous for wheeled vehicles. The cold in the inns at night was intense, and the torrent-beds up which we travelled by day were almost impassable. For in places where springs abounded the water had frozen as it overflowed, and for miles together the track was just one sheet of ice. Where this was level it could be negotiated, but when the river-bed rose more or less steeply between

¹ From *The Crescent in North-West China*, by G. Findlay Andrew, O.B.E., p. 7.

precipitous banks our situation can be better imagined than described.

And sometimes we were on the top of cliffs, climbing by zigzag paths that were entirely unprotected. With the mountain above us on one side and the river-bed far below on the other, there could be no escape if the cart slipped and the mules were unable to hold their footing. This nearly happened on one icy expanse, when Dr. Taylor could not leave the cart, as some one *had* to sit on the front to keep the shafts weighed down. So steep and slippery was the road that cart and mules slid back, in spite of all that could be done, and there was nothing behind but the precipice. It was a moment for holding on in prayer, and then—just in time—the animals regained their footing, and with the help of other mules that came up we were able to climb the pass.

That same day, coming down on the farther side, the road was worn away at some of its sharp curves until it seemed impossible to make the bend. There was no way to turn the cart, the road was too narrow, cut out of the mountain-side. But how were we to go on? At one of the bends a plank bridge spanned a frozen torrent, and I saw as we came up to it that the road was broken down just where the turn had to be made. The carter, who was walking beside the mules, went straight on and—somehow—we gained the bridge and passed over. Not a sound was made, not a word was said, but a moment later he turned and looked at Dr. Kao who was following on horseback, and I saw that his face was white under the tan. Dr. Kao told us afterwards of the

horror he felt when the outside wheel of the cart slipped over the edge, just before we made the bridge. For a two-wheeled vehicle this should have proved fatal—yet we were kept in safety!

But there were easier times as we reached more open country, and some quiet hours in the inns when we were able to learn from Dr. Kao more about his work and experiences. Gradually we came to know the names of all the Christians at Kanchow and something about their history. He told us also of evangelistic journeys before he went up there, and of his love for the people of the mountains.

One of his first preaching tours had been taken on foot, carrying his own pack, while he was still working with Dr. King in the hospital. From the hills around Lanchow he had seen mountain ranges to the north among which were many towns and villages where the Gospel was unknown. It was difficult to reach them, for strange to say they had no shops or markets, no inns or food-stalls. Nothing, it seemed, was to be bought, save at certain seasons of the year, not even bread. Still his heart went out to the people so that he could not rest, and one winter, when Dr. King was able to spare him for a time, he determined to go and see what could be done.

Dressed like a mountaineer and carrying all the food he could, with his books and bedding, he set out. It was lonely in the mountains, so much so that he bought a little dog to keep him company and watch his belongings when he laid them down. One night they were by themselves in a temple full of idols, but in another the priest came up, saying kindly :

“ You will freeze to death here, all alone ; come and share my *k'ang*.”

The *k'ang* was a small one and the priest was an opium-smoker, so while he lay there in the light of his opium-lamp Kao sat close beside him, telling of One who can deliver from the power as well as the penalty of sin.

He had reached a hamlet called *Siao-kia p'u-tsi* when his supplies ran out, and had forgotten that he was hungry in preaching to a crowd of people standing round a fire on the village street. The warmth was grateful and the interest of his audience drew him on. Among them was an old woman who was a leader, they told him, in idol worship, and very keen about making pilgrimages to famous temples to burn incense. After listening for a time with the rest, she raked the fire together and said :

“ You go on with your preaching ; I am going to get you some tea. And there is a loaf baking here in the fire. By the time you have finished, it will be ready.”

Kao did not know what she meant by a loaf in the fire, but he went on with his address. Presently the old lady returned with a tea-pot and cups. Then, putting a hook into the fire, she produced a small iron oven which she opened, disclosing a loaf baked to perfection. It was round like the oven and had a crisp, brown crust all over it, and such a tempting smell ! The young preacher was hungry enough to think it the most delicious thing he ever tasted. Half the loaf made him a good meal, with plenty of hot tea.

“ Keep the other half,” said the kindly soul.

“ There is no food to be bought up here, and you will need some supper.”

It was with a full heart Kao went on, after that, telling of a GOD who knows and cares about all our needs and Who is a real Father to those who trust Him. When he was leaving at last, the old woman said :

“ Give me a copy of each of your tracts. I want to put them up round my room. Some one may come, some day, who will be able to read them for us.”

Farther back in the mountains, he was going along on the same journey, hungry but happy, when he met an old man who looked at him earnestly and said :

“ Lama, what temple do you come from ? ”

“ From heaven’s temple,” was the unexpected answer, “ and I have brought you this precious Book which tells the way to heaven.”

“ Heaven or no heaven,” exclaimed the other, “ I will go and fetch you something to eat, and then you shall tell me about it.”

He was as good as his word, and listened with others as Kao explained the wonderful tidings of a Saviour’s love.

It is not always that fruit follows from such conversations. The seed still falls on the wayside and on the stony ground, though here and there the messenger is rejoiced by finding a prepared heart. This was notably so in Dr. Kao’s experience the first time he visited the south of the province. On the way to the Choni lamasary, travelled by thousands of pilgrims, he noticed an elderly man in front of

him who looked like a Buddhist devotee. Quickening his pace to overtake him, he dismounted and asked whether "the Venerable Grandfather" would not like to ride. This led to friendly interchange of questions, and in due course Kao inquired what was the traveller's occupation.

"I am a preacher," was the prompt reply; "a preacher of the luminous doctrine of the great lord Buddha."

"Will you not preach to me? This would be a good opportunity."

"Delighted," said the old man. "I am never more happy than when some one will listen to my Doctrine."

Earnestly and well he held forth about vegetarianism and worship of Buddha, while Dr. Kao walked beside him, asking questions to draw out all he had to say. Then the noonday halt was made, and they went together into the wayside inn.

"I have been very discourteous," remarked the stranger as they finished their rice. "I have not yet inquired as to *your* occupation."

"Well," replied Dr. Kao pleasantly, "I am—I am a preacher."

"A preacher! Why did you not tell me? Do you also propagate the great *Fu-tao*?"

"Not exactly. My teaching is somewhat different——"

"Then, brother, let us make a bargain," said the old man, quick to see an opportunity. "If your teaching is better than mine, I will be your disciple; and if mine is better than yours, then you will be my disciple."

“ Good ! ” said Dr. Kao. “ We are of one mind. Let us at once set out. ”

Hour after hour they walked together, leading the horse, for the old man would not ride, and the more he heard the more his interest deepened. Finding that he could read, Dr. Kao got out his Bible, and in the inn that night they turned to many passages that made the saving message plain. They prayed together before going to rest—the first prayer Mr. Ho had ever heard in the Name of JESUS. Next morning at daybreak he awoke Dr. Kao and said to his surprise :

“ Brother, I am not going on to the temple to-day. I am going home. ”

“ What is the matter ? Are you sick ? ”

“ No, I am not ill, but my heart has found the peace it longed for. Brother, your teaching is better far than mine. Henceforth, I am a believer in JESUS. ”

Taking off his long rosary he handed it to Dr. Kao, with other objects used in worship and much valued.

“ I do not want them any more, ” he said. “ But there is one thing—do you think you could give it to me ? ”

“ What is that ? I will indeed, if I can. ”

“ Why, the Book ! Could you let me have it to take home to my people ? ”

It was Kao's own Bible, the only copy he had with him, but he did not hesitate.

“ Take it, gladly, ” he said, putting it into the old man's hands. “ It is GOD's own Word, and He will give you His Holy Spirit that you may understand it. ”

So they parted—the new believer going back to his people with the message they had never heard, and Dr. Kao promising to visit him later, if the way opened.

Words are poor to tell the joy it is to bring the message of salvation to hearts prepared to receive it. Would there be more such hearts if there were more prayer behind the messengers? And where messengers cannot go at present, is there not all the more need for prayer to precede them and prepare the way?

All through the mountains we were crossing on that journey to Sining, thousands of tribes-people are to be found, a hardy, independent race who have never had a missionary. Many centuries ago, it would seem, they came from the far north-east (Chihli) with their prince, Li Chin, to fight against the Tibetans. Most of the province of Kansu belonged to Tibet at that time and until much later. Li Chin was successful and divided the district between himself and his twelve chief officers, hence the present thirteen clans with their hereditary princes.¹ Keeping to their own language and distinctive dress and following their own customs, here are these people to-day, accessible and friendly, but practically untouched by the Gospel.²

¹ Li Chin's grave is still preserved. It is at a place called Hsiang-tang, a day or two south-east of Nienpai, on the short road to the capital of the province. A tombstone marks the spot, around which a protecting wall has recently been erected.

² Amongst them are still found a few of the *T'u-kuh-huen*, descendants of the Huns who seem to have inhabited the region long before the invasion under Li Chin.

The nearest Chinese city to which they come freely is Nienpai, which we pass on this journey. Though not important in itself, it is the centre of a large, populous district, as populous as that of Sining, and is the place from which the tribes-people could most easily be reached. Aborigines and Tibetans live in the valleys and back among the mountains, so that the little city is compassed with them on three sides and has a good deal to do with the suzerainty exercised over them by the Chinese. Five hereditary princes still seem to have considerable standing among the tribes—two of the Li family, two of the Ki, and one of the Lui family or clan. They are supported by taxes received from the aborigines, but are under the control of the Chinese District Magistrate.¹

Very little is known about these interesting people, save such information as Mr. Ridley has been able to gather. Year by year he has gone up to Wei-yüen-pu early in March, when they hold their annual festival, a gathering of the clans that lasts for about ten days. Very gay and animated is the scene when the women come out in all their finery, and there is much music and dancing. The younger people are specially fond of singing. They sit on the ground in a circle, many circles, and have competitions. At times two of the girls put their heads together and sing so closely in unison that it sounds like one voice only. At other times they face each

¹ One of the princes has his official residence in Sining, occupying the house in which Mr. and Mrs. Ridley lived during the Mohammedan rebellion, the first missionary home in the city. We called to see him, but were disappointed to find him away in the mountains.

other and sing. What a power Gospel hymns might be, put into the language of this music-loving people !

Religiously they are Buddhists and worship idols, though they are not given to continual repetition of meaningless prayers like the Tibetans, nor are they so much under the control of the lamas. The men are skilful horsemen, and the women work on the farms. The soil is poor and unproductive, though spiritually a precious harvest might be reaped. But souls have to be gathered and tended one by one, and for this something more is needed than preaching at the fair once a year, important as that has been.

Li Ch'en-pang and his wife had grown old in their little home at the Sining end of the district before the first Christian came to their door. He was a man with a pack, selling books, and as Mr. Li could speak Chinese may not have realised at first that they were tribes-people. In a quiet way he made friends, until they invited him in and asked him to stay the night. Picture the scene after the evening meal, as the old couple listened—two whose hearts GOD opened.

Months went by before the colporteur came again, but the old people had not forgotten. This second visit decided them to become Christians, and soon their sons-in-law, daughters, and grandchildren knew that the idols had disappeared from the old home and that something had brought a joy and peace never known there before. They were near enough to Sining to come in and inquire for themselves—a little over twenty miles—and often on Sunday the men are down at the services. It is more difficult

for the women, but Mrs. Li, one of her daughters, and a grandson's wife are now baptized, as well as their husbands.

One Christian home among the aborigines of Kansu ; one little light amid the darkness ! But for many days' journey the villages stretch away in that great sweep to the Yellow River, with no witness to the love and saving power of CHRIST. Who will, by prayer, prepare the way for the messengers GOD will surely send to these long-neglected tribes of north-west China ?

CHAPTER XI

“ WESTERN PEACE ”

SURELY it was an idealist who gave this fair city its name, or perhaps it was before the days of Mohammedan rebellions. Certainly within recent times there has not been much peace for the inhabitants of Sining or of the large district of which it is the governing centre. Sining should be a queen among cities—standing where four broad valleys meet, watered by as many rivers, frequented by merchants from distant parts of China, and easily accessible to the abundant wool supply, the cattle, horses, gold, and precious stones of Tibet. But it is accessible, too, to the fierce Moslem races who have freely settled in this corner of China—coming down the northern valley from the road to Central Asia, reaching out along the rivers, pushing back the Tibetans into their mountains and establishing themselves in force as far south as the plain of Hochow.

It had been our privilege, shortly after the last Mohammedan rebellion (1895-96), to meet Mr. and Mrs. Ridley from Sining, who, with their fellow-worker, Mr. Hall, had chosen to remain in the city all through that terrible time, that they might *live* CHRIST where, until then, their preaching had seemed

in vain. Through the long months of the siege they held bravely to their post, caring for the wounded of both sides, fighting the successive scourge of small-pox and diphtheria, succouring widows and orphans, and winning a place in the confidence of the people that nothing but such unmistakable devotion could have secured. To this day neither heathen nor Mohammedan can forget that the quiet man with the heart of love who goes in and out among them, perhaps the most familiar figure on their streets, risked his life times without number to help their sick and dying ; that he fed their hungry, clothed their destitute, and in spite of sorrow and bereavement has remained their truest friend for well-nigh thirty years. As his home has emptied, the little cemetery on the hillside has filled, the last to be laid in that God's-acre being the life-companion whose love, faith, and brightness were his chief earthly comfort. But still he lives for the church which has grown up in Sining, rejoicing in the openness of both heathen and Mohammedans to the Gospel, and in some two hundred who have confessed their faith in CHRIST by baptism.

It was worth all it had cost to reach Sining in the depth of winter just to be with Mr. Ridley and his fellow-workers, Mr. and Mrs. Harris, and see not only what has been accomplished but the widely open door of opportunity.¹ From the sunny roofs of the mission buildings, grouped around five courtyards, one could look out over the city and its surround-

¹ Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Learner also belong to the staff at Sining, but to our disappointment were away on furlough at the time of our visit.

ings, and it was eagerly one sought that quiet retreat to think the thoughts and pray the prayers that wonderful outlook suggested. The house is Chinese in construction—one-storied buildings, close together, with the flat roofs common in Sining and which the watch-dogs consider their special vantage-ground. It was curious to see them from the city wall, scouring the roofs of a busy quarter, guarding their own territory, and barking furiously at any intruder below.

The latest courtyard to be added to the mission-house—the only mission-house in Sining—is one in which Mr. Ridley takes special pleasure. For there his Boys' School has room to grow—a courtyard all to itself, with suitable class-rooms and sleeping accommodation. The medical work trenches upon it occasionally; for when he takes in some poor sufferer, Mr. Ridley has nowhere to put him but in one of the rooms on the school courtyard. The cheerful atmosphere of young life is no doubt a help to convalescence. But how a hospital is needed! The little dispensary is a busy place. From far and near the patients come, Moslem and Chinese, Mongol and Tibetan. A doctor here, or a trained nurse, would find a unique opportunity, for few cities in China have a more representative population, drawn from vast regions in which no medical help is available. In the whole province there is but one hospital with a foreign doctor, the Borden Memorial Hospital at Lanchow, and that is six days from Sining by the quickest mode of travel. Many of those who need operations or skilled medical treatment find it impossible to take the journey. Mr. Ridley and his fellow-workers give what help

they can, but none of them have had much training. This means that the work is at great cost to themselves, cost of time and anxiety, and that many opportunities have to be lost.

What an opening might be found, for example, among the aborigines in the district, if patients who have travelled wearily all the way to Lanchow could have been cared for in this city! More than once Dr. Parry has had them in the hospital, but of course the women could not understand Chinese. Their men-folk had managed to persuade them to take the journey, which on foot would lengthen out to ten or twelve days. But though something could be done for them medically, there was no way of reaching them spiritually or of following them up after they had left. They were simple, trustful people, not frightened of foreigners, and they must have told others of the kindness met with, for several groups came. If they would do and bear so much to reach the Lanchow hospital, how readily would they come to Sining to be cared for! And a hospital in this centre might have the help of Christians from among the aborigines themselves, who could keep in touch with such patients afterwards. Would it not be the best and surest way of winning these tribes-people to CHRIST, while as yet no missionary can be spared to settle among them?

Then the Tibetans—whose mysterious, long-closed land lies westward just beyond these mountains—freely come and go in the city, bringing their loads of firewood for sale, their butter, wool, and other produce. Sining offers an admirable centre for reaching them on account of the many lamaseries in

the district, and especially the great lamasery at Kumbum, only one day's journey away.¹ Tens of thousands of pilgrims flock to its shrines, coming from many parts of Tibet and even from Lhasa itself. A hospital here—*if the necessary medical men were forthcoming*—would have a wonderful opportunity for reaching these wild, suspicious people, steeped in ignorance and sin, yet quick to appreciate kindness and generous in their response.

Even more is this a strategic centre for work among Moslems, who form a third of the entire population. The Military Governor of Sining, who is also the Chinese Governor of the whole of Ko-konor and northern Tibet, is a Mohammedan, a man who wields immense power. His residence is within the extensive enclosure we see beyond the near roof of this beautiful temple. With an army of ten or twelve thousand men trained to modern warfare he governs a district larger than any country in Europe except Russia ; and being a Moslem, Islam flourishes under his sway. He has recently brought to Sining a number of *ahungs* (Mohammedan priests) from Hochow, the Mecca of China, who are much more bigoted than the *ahungs* in this city have been. He is friendly with the missionaries, however, and Mr. Ridley, who knows him well, is impressed with the statesmanlike way in which he is handling some of his great problems.

¹ Kumbum is famous as the home and birthplace of "the precious Buddha," Tsong Kaba, a lama and an "incarnation," who was a great reformer early in the fifteenth century. He has been called "the Luther of Central Asia." Much merit comes from worshipping at his shrine, the golden-roofed temple which is the glory of the Kumbum lamasery.

From our outlook here on the roof of the mission-house we can see the West Gate of the city and the more distant North and South Gates, across this expanse of houses, but not the East Gate, beyond which lies the Mohammedan suburb. The latter is worth seeing, and so are the busy streets by which we make our way across the city. Shops and temples, stalls and throngs of people, claim attention, and progress is slow, for Mr. Ridley has much of interest to tell us. More than twenty milkmen, it appears, sell milk every day on these streets, and it ought not to be difficult to live well, as mutton, beef, pork, chickens, pheasants, hares, and fish are all obtainable. The air is clear and bracing, Sining lying at an altitude of seven thousand feet, and among the many products of the district are wheat, barley, oats, linseed, and hemp. So it is no wonder the stalls and shops are busy—warehouses as well, for this is a far-famed centre for the wool-trade and for hides and costly medicines, such as musk and deer's horn.¹

Climbing the broad ascent to the city wall by the massive structure of the East Gate, we look out over the suburb beyond—a great expanse of mud-roofed houses. It is all Mohammedan, and all new and tidy—a city that has sprung up since the last rebellion. At that time this suburb was the chief seat of fighting, and its streets literally ran with

¹ The Chinese inhabitants of the city came originally from Nanking (Chu-tsi-hang Street) in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). They were banished because of acts of disloyalty. Now they have grown into a large and flourishing population which outnumbered the Mohammedans and Tibetans among whom they dwell.

blood. For four months the Mohammedans constantly attacked the city, and the wall was guarded by four thousand men at night. When at last the Chinese gained the upper hand, the Moslems in their turn were slaughtered with terrible cruelty. "On a certain day," as Mr. G. F. Andrew records, "several hundred Moslems were marched naked through the streets of Sining, chanting their own funeral service, and were decapitated as they made their exit through the city gate": this very gate from which we are looking down. But all that is past and seems forgotten now. The wide, main street running straight through the suburb is lined on both sides with new houses, substantial shops, and public buildings, above which rises the splendid roof of the new mosque, built at a cost of twelve thousand taels.¹ Throngs of people are coming and going, many mounted on mules and horses, and business seems more flourishing than in the city.

How can they be reached—these proud, bigoted Moslems? Just as they have been reached in this city in the past. Why is it that in our guest-hall we have more Mohammedans, even, than Chinese? Why was it that, when Mrs. Ridley died, genuine expressions of grief and sympathy came from Moslems no less than from the Chinese?

"On the day we laid her to rest," wrote Mr. George Andrew, "beside her three little ones in the cemetery on the hillside, overlooking the city of her adoption, representatives of every class in society

¹ A *tael* is a Chinese ounce of silver, which varies in value as the price of silver appreciates or depreciates. At the time of publishing it is approximately equal to 75 cents of an American dollar, or three shillings and twopence.

and many different races were present to pay their last respects to one they had learned to love and honour.”

She had served them. She had cared for them in sickness, braved many dangers to succour them in long months of fighting, and had been ready at all times to tell of Him whose love constrained her. Telling and *showing* that love, she had gone in and out among them as one of themselves, and though without medical training had done a medical missionary's work.

And this is the work that needs doing to-day in that great Mohammedan suburb. Where is the doctor, man or woman, who will count it a privilege to put in their life just there, to win the first trophies from among the Mohammedans of Sining to CHRIST? Hard as the field is everywhere among followers of the Prophet, there is this advantage in Sining, that they have had proof of what Christian love is and will do—even unto death. They cannot ignore and do not forget it. Oh, why do we not make the most of our opportunity by providing a suitable and adequate force to follow up the advantage gained at such cost! A hospital to which the Moslems could come freely would have great possibilities, and in addition to the doctor and an Arabic-speaking missionary one or two ladies for work among the women and children are needed. At present we have neither the premises nor the available workers. Who will take this as a call to definite, believing prayer?

An encouraging fact in connection with the situation in Sining is that the LORD has manifestly

called and fitted one of the missionary staff for work among Moslems. Mr. George Harris has it so definitely on his heart that he has undertaken the difficult task of learning Arabic and has made such progress that the Mohammedans themselves often address him as *Ahung*. He and Mrs. Harris would gladly live in or near the east suburb and devote themselves to its Moslem population, but hitherto it has not been possible to set them free from the Chinese work. Meanwhile, the mission-house is at the other end of the city, as far removed as possible from the Mohammedan quarter.

And now as we make our way back, let us go by the wall instead of the street, that we may look down into some interesting courtyards that have a tale to tell of the far-sighted statesmanship of the Mohammedan Governor. The wall is broad enough for us to walk abreast. A carriage and pair would find ample room between its parapets, and many are the travellers who would be delighted with the view it commands. Mountains rise all round the city, in some places close to the wall, and the West Gate to which we are going opens on a broad valley where three rivers meet.

But here near the South Gate we may see something of the developments toward which Ma Ch'i is working beyond those western mountains. He is the sole Chinese Governor, as we have already mentioned, over the northern part of Tibet, including the lake and province of Ko-ko-nor. That immense sheet of water, two hundred miles in circuit, lying at an altitude of more than ten thousand feet, is surrounded largely by Mongol tribes who have



THE GOLOK QUEEN WITH HER SON AND THE WIVES OF TWO OF HER
CHIEF MINISTERS.

“We saw some of the wildest of his protégés yesterday—three boys from the Golok country.” (This photograph was taken outside the tent of the General who had just conquered the country for China.)

settled there among the Tibetans. Blue in summer, amid its emerald setting, the Azure Sea gives its name to a region upon which the Chinese have long cast envious eyes. How to subdue and occupy it, assimilating the wild Tibetan and Mongol tribes, and how to extend that same process to the whole of northern Tibet, is one of the problems with which the Governor-General is concerned.

Hence these remarkable schools near the South Gate with their large courtyards and brightly-painted buildings, their playing-ground, horizontal bars, swings, and other up-to-date appliances. From those far-off regions Ma Ch'i is bringing the brightest lads he can find to tame and train and prepare for his purposes in days to come. He will need interpreters, Government officials, and teachers for schools that do not yet exist out there in the wilds. So the Mongol and Tibetan lads have to learn Chinese, and the Chinese pupils learn Mongolian and Tibetan. Only last year he added a Normal Department, which already has eighty students. The whole is called the Mongolian-Tibetan School, and is part of his far-reaching scheme of government.

We saw some of the wildest of his protégés yesterday—three boys from the Golok country belonging to independent tribes who have never yet submitted to Chinese rule.¹ They certainly were untamed specimens, and scarcely less so their guardian, a woman of middle age, sent with them to act as a mother. None of the party could speak Chinese when they came, and the boys caused con-

¹ For more recent developments concerning these tribes see Chapter XVII. p. 195.

sternation by wanting to embrace the pretty girls they met in the streets ! But now they are learning better manners. How much they have to acquire, poor things ! accustomed to a diet of meat, often raw, milk, and nothing else ; to eating without implements save their fingers ; to wearing one garment only, summer and winter, day and night, and to living on horseback, the stirring life of the border tribe in their moving tents ! But Ma Ch'i has them in hand, and he is working for the future. Some day he will have a province out here in northern Tibet, if his ambitions are realised, larger than any of the provinces of China proper, and Sining will be its capital. Already he is building three new cities, Chinese cities in Tibetan territory—one near the Ko-ko-nor Lake, one out west toward the Ts'ai-dan (Zaidam), and one south across the Golok country, eighteen days' journey from Sining. Post offices are to be opened in these places, and they are to be occupied by Chinese settlers who will cultivate the soil, growing barley, oats, and other products at present unobtainable in those regions.

Colonising, educating, preparing far ahead the men he needs to carry out his projects, this Moslem Governor is undaunted by difficulties. He has his vision. The greatness of the country to be possessed for China appeals to him. He knows something of the strength of its people, of the value of its wool and furs and mineral resources. Gold and precious stones come from Tibet, and first-class fighting men. It is all material and for selfish ends. And yet, does he not put to shame our comparative indifference to the interests in these regions of the Kingdom of God ?

Where is our vision of what this city should be as a centre of Christian influence for the Great Beyond? Who knows or cares whether it is being adequately occupied with a view to the commanding position it holds and will hold still more in days to come? Beautiful for situation, Sining should be a lighthouse, sending forth great, steady beams into the darkness, the blackness of midnight around it on every hand. Where are the schools preparing Christian girls and boys to be evangelists and teachers; the schools to gather in children from the mountains and the plains, win them to CHRIST, and send them back as His witnesses? Do they seem too wild, too impossible—such specimens as these Golok boys? Ma Ch’i does not think so. He sees that something can be made of them, and that, moreover, he cannot do without them. Only through them and such as they can he govern their people. Do we see as far, as wisely? If Tibet is to be won for CHRIST it must be through Tibetans, and especially is this true of the women.

Where are the evangelists, men and women, being trained as Bible teachers for the little churches that will need them? As it is at present, one sunless room in the mission-house is all that can be spared for the women’s work, and there is no one to help the married ladies, whose hands are too full to allow of their giving special training to the women of the church. Yet how much trained helpers are needed, and what it would mean in days to come to have women evangelists to go where we can never go and do what we can never do!

And where is the hospital—or, rather, where are

the medical men, if we may come back to that—for which Mrs. Ridley prayed so earnestly, year after year? Ought not GOD's people to be preparing in this city a well-manned centre for the relief of suffering, where converts might be won who are needed as messengers of healing for the soul as well as body? The fame of such a hospital would draw patients from far and wide, and if its work were carried on in prayer, backed by much prayer at home, can we doubt but that prepared souls would be brought within the circle of its influence?

And there *are* prepared souls around us here, among these mountains and valleys. Many stories might be told of those already gathered in, but one must suffice—the story of an old man who specially interested us at a feast given to the missionaries by the country Christians.

“You cannot come to all our homes,” was their kind thought, “but we will unite in bringing a feast to you in the city.”

Among the deputation of twelve who prepared and served the repast, waiting on us with shining faces, was this bright, warm-hearted farmer in his sheepskin coat and cap with ear-coverings. The way in which he had come to know the LORD was certainly remarkable.

A Chinese Gospel had found its way to a home in a remote village, where a woman who could not read took it into use for her embroidery. The paper was better than ordinary Chinese paper, and the book was tempting as a repository for her many skeins

of silk. But it was covered with the characters which must be revered and not put to any common use. So she cut the stitching and carefully turned the pages inside out—double pages, printed on one side only, according to Chinese custom. When the book was sewn together again it held all her silks and was a useful possession. But what about its message? Surely that copy of the Gospel story was silenced at any rate.

But one day Mr. Li was visiting the house and noticed the book with its brightly-coloured silks. To excuse herself for putting printed pages to such a use, the woman told how she had turned them every one. This made him want to see what sort of book it was. Finally he purchased it for a small sum, took it home, undid the stitching and set to work to read the writing. With growing interest he deciphered page after page, longing for some one who could tell him more. But he knew nothing of either Christians or missionaries.

A little later, one of the Sining inquirers went out to the village to attend a feast. He was not yet baptized, but he wanted to share the good things he had found, so, taking a copy of Mrs. McCartney's *Old Testament History* with him, he talked at intervals through the feast about its wonderful stories. Nobody seemed to care much or want to listen except one old man, and he was eager to learn all he could.

“ Where did you get the book? ” he questioned with interest.

“ Why, at the *Fuh-ing-t'ang* ”—Hall of the Joyful Message.

“ And where is the *Fuh-ing-t'ang* ? ”

“ Come to my house on Monday and I will take you there.”

Carrying a chicken by way of introduction, Li presented himself bright and early at the inquirer's house. It was disappointing to find the latter busy, so much so that he could not fulfil his promise. But he showed his new friend the way to the mission-house, and assured him that he would receive a welcome.

Somewhat doubtfully the farmer came with his offering. Mr. and Mrs. Ridley were just setting out on a journey. The cart was at the door, and they could only stay for a short talk. But Mr. Ridley made an appointment, and the old man came again. Then, at length, he heard enough to satisfy mind and heart. All the morning Mr. Ridley gave to explaining the way of salvation. He understood, believed, rejoiced. Returning home he destroyed his idols, and from that time, rain or fine, regularly attended the Sunday services.

His home was fifteen miles from the city, back among the hills, and seven miles of the way lay through a narrow gorge, dreaded on account of wolves and robbers, if not evil spirits. But so happy was the old man in prospect of Sunday, that on Saturday night he often could not sleep. As soon as the cock crowed he set out for the mission-house, singing all the way, and reaching the city many a time before the gates were opened. Even in the bitter cold of winter he would arrive radiant, his beard and moustache one mass of ice.

The consistency of his life and his testimony have

been the means of leading not a few others into the light. There is no compromise about him. On one occasion his brother came asking the loan of his donkey.

“ What do you want it for ? ” was the natural question.

It turned out that a priest had been invited to chant prayers for the brother's wife, and the donkey was to bring him to the house.

“ No, no, you cannot have it,” old Li exclaimed. “ I will lend it to you for any other purpose, but the devil shall never ride on my saddle ! ”

It was in a strange way, a little later, that the brother learned to treat the old man at any rate with outward respect. He was returning home from an absence, leading his horse up the mountain. Meeting a friend, he inquired about his brother and heard that he had gone into the city to the services. Much annoyed, he cursed his brother, the missionaries, and the *Fuh-ing-t'ang*. A moment later his horse fell over a cliff and broke its leg. He was never known to curse his brother after that.

So the old man lives his faithful life among his neighbours, rejoicing Mr. Ridley's heart by his love of the Truth and his regular attendance at the services. Come up once more to the roof of the mission-house where we can see the chapel and guest-hall near the entrance gate. Both are far too small for the demands made upon them, at any rate by the Sunday congregations. How they come crowding in—Moslems, soldiers, students, visitors to the city, and women and children of all classes! Many well-dressed ladies are among the regular attendants, as

well as many poorer country and city women. The audience is an inspiring one, and it was grand last Sunday to hear Dr. Kao preaching straight to their hearts. It seemed as though they could listen all day, and one longed for more such men, men of the people—of all these different peoples—raised up to tell the saving grace of GOD.

Wonderful opportunities await the evangelist in this city. The moving crowds on the streets are like those of Lanchow, only more fascinating. For here one frequently sees Mongol princes from the Ko-konor, as well as aboriginal and Tibetan chieftains. We met one the other day, a striking figure in his red silk gown, lined with fur and edged with beaver, with a big collar of leopard skin, high boots, and a fur hat. With a dagger at his belt and with the power of life and death among his people, such a man gives one a glimpse into a world other than our own. So does the lama in his red or yellow robes, of whom there are twenty thousand in this district, and the grave Mohammedan *ahung* who may be a pilgrim returning from Mecca.

As the sun sets let us go back over the roofs to the little tower above the school courtyard. The boys have gone home for the New Year's holidays, and all is quiet as we look away to those western mountains—the present frontier of Tibet. There it lies within its lofty ramparts, so near, so real, so impenetrable! This valley, running south, leads in one short day to Kumbum, a centre of Tibetan Buddhism second only to Lhasa in its importance. Thither thousands of pilgrims are repairing, even now, for the great

festival for which the lamasery is famous, to which we too are to wend our way. But to-night let us take a wider sweep and outlook. One cannot but realise here, at this outpost of Christian missions, that we are in the front trenches, so to speak, facing the enemy in his most formidable encampments. Lamaism in its unchallenged power holds sway right up to these walls, dividing with Islam the dark heart of Central Asia. Are there anywhere on earth two more sinister, relentless, CHRIST - opposing powers? Think of the loneliness of the workers here; think of the prayer-forces that should be concentrated on such a position. Do they sometimes feel deserted in these front-line trenches? Do they wonder why reinforcements are slow in coming?

Follow in thought that setting sun. Right out to Kashgar, two thousand miles to the west, there is not another mission-station. South-west, across Tibet, it is further still to Leh on the Indian frontier, where the nearest missionaries are to be found. North-west, a thousand miles, it is much the same—only one group of missionaries between Sining and Siberia. It grows upon one, does it not, what it means to be here; what it means of privilege, of isolation, of hand-to-hand fight with the powers of darkness? Will you not pray for the little band of workers? Do you not long to strengthen their hands, to share their sacrifice and service for JESUS' sake? Is He not “ worthy ” ?

CHAPTER XII

THE GREAT " BUTTER FESTIVAL "

WE had seen comparatively few Tibetans before reaching Sining, but there one met them almost daily on the streets. Whether rich or poor there was a something strangely attractive to us about these people—a look of questioning interest, a touch of the wilds, a sense of mystery due to their age-long seclusion from the rest of the world, and above all a consciousness of their deeply religious nature. It was with special interest, therefore, we found ourselves within reach of Kumbum just at the season of the greatest pilgrimage of the year. Despite the snows of winter, the fifteenth day of the first moon is the occasion when the great lamasery blossoms forth in the " Festival of Flowers," all the wonderful productions that attract thousands to its shrines being made of nothing more nor less than *butter*—tons and tons of butter, given by Tibetan devotees, and wrought into artistic loveliness with the help of lavish gilding and colouring. There we should see Tibet in one of its most characteristic phases—a religious festival planned to replenish priestly coffers, combined with a popular fair and the special celebrations of the New Year season.

Up a frozen river toward snow-clad mountains our journey lay when we set out from Sining in company with Mr. Ridley, Dr. Kao, and other Chinese friends. Festivity was in the air, and the groups we met, gaily-dressed women and children on donkeys with men tramping beside them, were on their way to the city to pay New Year's visits. From village after village on the banks of our ice-road came sounds of music. Behind their high mud-walls families were feasting and entertaining friends. It was a time of general rejoicing, the one holiday of the year, and we rejoiced too, to see everybody happy. The bells of our mules jingled cheerily. A faint tinge of green, the first suggestion of spring, spread over the trees, just distinguishing them from the brown hills on either side. The snow-covered mountains and the icy track before us gleamed white and dazzling under a cloudless sky, and the wonderful, frosty air was a joy to breathe, for the district lies at an altitude of seven thousand feet, and is as bracing as the Engadine.

" At the rate of three or four miles an hour," one wrote as the day wore on, " our rumbling cart has brought us to the foot of those snow-covered mountains. The valley we have turned into, running west, is different in character from the country nearer Sining. It is considerably higher. No trees are to be seen. Cultivated patches are few and small, and the low hills are sparsely covered with brown grass. We have left the river behind. Dust from the mud track fills the cart. Yet, as one looks ahead toward the not-distant frontier of Tibet, there is about it all a wonderful freedom and freshness

that draw one on, till one longs to cross that mighty rampart and make for the blue expanse of Ko-ko-nor.

“ Yes, this is Tibet rather than China ! And here before us, crowning a sharp ascent, is the gateway of the little town (T'a-rī-sī) whose lamasery rivals that of Lhasa itself. Threading our way through its narrow streets we catch glimpses of terraced buildings and temples covering a slope to the south, running up a valley and overflowing to a nearer hill—the sacred precincts of the monastery (Kumbum) with its four thousand lamas of the Yellow or Reformed Sect.”

Mr. Ridley was no stranger in the town, and led us up a steep street to the premises occupied by a Chinese firm dealing in wool with the Tibetans. The young manager, a keen business man from Tientsin, was also a keen Christian. His welcome was as warm as his heart, and the best he had to give was soon at our disposal. It was a pleasure to see his well-spread table and efficient housekeeping, though there was no woman about the place, and still more so to realise that there was the testimony of such a life amid the darkness of T'a-rī-sī.

From the flat roof of the house an extensive view was to be had of the town itself, deep gullies cut by unseen streams, the lamasery beyond and the surrounding mountains. So it was here the adventurous travellers, Gabet and Huc (Roman Catholic priests), sojourned for about a year on their journey disguised as lamas to Lhasa ! Very different was the visit of the first Protestant missionary forty years later (1885), when George Parker preached on

these streets and left Gospels and tracts in the monastery.¹ Since then missionaries have come over from Sining from time to time, including the Cecil Polhills, who as bride and bridegroom found a home here and engaged, as their teacher of Tibetan, an old Mongol who had accompanied Gabet and Huc on their travels. And here in the monastery itself Mr. and Mrs. Rijnhart took refuge when the last Mohammedan rebellion swept the countryside with fire and blood. But it was less of these experiences one was thinking, as the sun set over the little town, than of the hopes and fears of thousands who wend their way hither year by year, muttering their meaningless prayers and seeking a peace they never find. What burdened hearts have come and gone in that long procession, and are coming and going still !

Dr. Kao met one on the road to-day—an old, old woman, leaning on a stick, too weary to go any further. Stopping his mule beside a big stone, he persuaded her to mount and ride, and walking by her side began to talk of common things to see whether she understood his Chinese ; for she was an aboriginal from the mountains north of Sining.

Yes, she had sons and grandsons, and had been three days on the journey. She could understand his words.

So he went on to speak about true happiness and the way to heaven. The old lady did not seem to take in very much until he began to teach her a

¹ Mr. George Parker, one of the pioneers of the China Inland Mission, went out from Dr. Grattan Guinness' Missionary Training Institute in London in 1876. He and Mrs. Parker are still at work in China, having long been stationed at Kintzekwan in Honan.

hymn, every other line of which brought in the refrain :

I beseech Thee, LORD JESUS, to save me.

This awakened her interest, and through frequent repetition she learned the first verse and chorus. Then Dr. Kao sang it for her in his full, natural voice, and she was delighted.

“ *Hao t'ing, hao t'ing teh-hen,*” she exclaimed. “ It is beautiful to listen to ! ” Adding pathetically, “ Far more beautiful than our ‘ *Om mani.* ’ ”¹

But on reaching the town she was eager to make her way to the golden-roofed temple, for had she not come on purpose to *kotow* before the splendid idol ?

“ Shadows are creeping across the valley,” one wrote a little later, “ and pilgrims are coming back from the temples, but there is still time to go over before nightfall, though we may not see much of the lamasery. It is quite a little walk through the streets, across the frozen stream and up the hillside over which many paths are trodden. At every step one is tempted to stay and watch the crowd. How picturesque many of these figures—the men especially, with tall fur hats and savage-looking knives stuck in their girdles ! Plenty of women are here, Mongols and Chinese as well as Tibetans, the latter in sheepskin gowns like the men, only longer, their hair parted in the middle and hanging in a hundred and eight tiny plaits, because that is the number of volumes in the Tibetan sacred canon. Here on the hill-top the fair is held which to-morrow will be

¹ “ *Om mani padmi hum,*” the Sanscrit phrase which is the Tibetan's great magical formula and prayer.

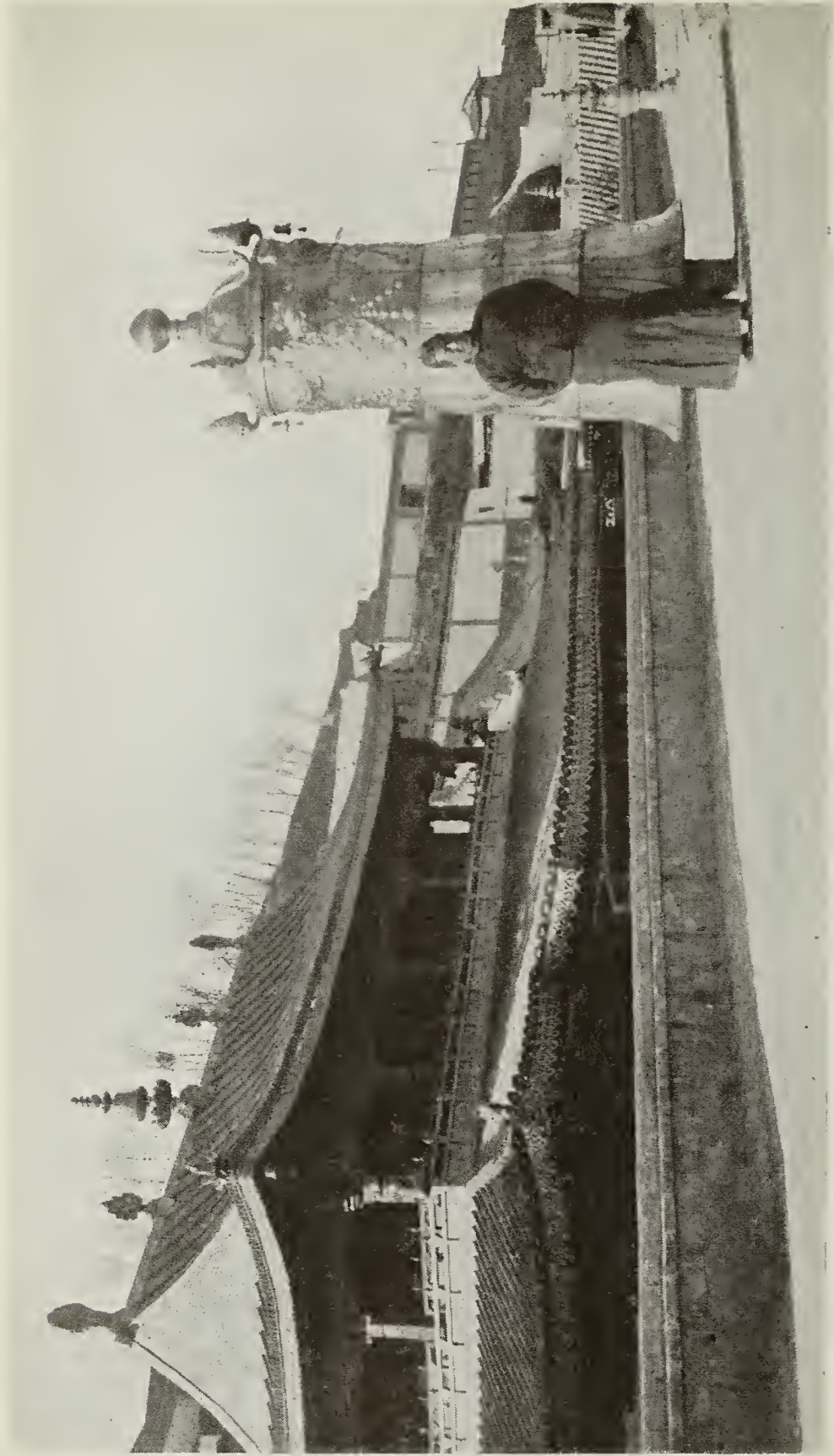


Photo by

THE GOLD-ROOFED TEMPLE.

The photograph is taken from above the Prayer Hall. Dr. Kao is standing in front of a golden ornament.

F. Howard Taylor.

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a scene of indescribable animation. It is noisy enough even now, with flaring lights, food-shops, and late buyers and sellers. Leaving the stalls behind, we enter the main gateway of the lamasery as dusk is falling, and quietly approach the outer buildings and temples. But what is this—this long, moving line on the dusty road before us ?

“ ‘ See,’ whispers Mr. Ridley, stopping us, ‘ look ! ’

“ We are already looking. It needs a little while for the eye to distinguish and the mind to take it in. Writhing, grovelling in the dust, can it be *people* we are watching ? Yes, three women and a man ; we see them as they rise, one behind the other, the women pushing the long plaits back from their faces. They are poor, all of them, dressed in the rough skins that form the one Tibetan garment, bare-headed, dust-covered, and looking so weary ! They are moving slowly toward the gold-roofed temple, measuring their length all the way, as they probably have done for days since leaving their home encampment. See them stand reverently with hands upraised, then kneel and fall prostrate on their faces—hands outstretched as far as they can reach, foreheads on the ground. A mark is made with the fingers, then they rise, walk two or three steps to the mark, stand again with hands upraised, then kneel and fall again on their faces, chanting all the time in low monotonous tones—and so on and on painfully, more dusty, more weary, more virtuous at every step. It is a sad, sad sight—a young man and woman and two older women, probably related. There are other groups also. Why are they doing it, if not because of some inward fear or need ? ”

Heartsick, we went no further than the bridge. Sometimes these poor pilgrims, Mr. Ridley told us, fail to win the approval of the *Fuh-ie* (the lama who is worshipped as an Incarnation, or "Living Buddha"), and he will command them to make the circuit of the entire lamasery thus *three times over*, a sentence that means days of exhausting labour. Oh, how the earnestness of these people puts our indifference to shame! They seem willing for any sacrifice, any suffering. Three young Tibetans we spoke to before leaving the lamasery had come a journey of four months, begging their way, to this festival, over mountains infested with robber tribes, where their lives were in constant danger. Any sacrifice, any suffering—think of the hermits in these Tibetan mountains, living in caves at an altitude higher than Mont Blanc, in cold, hunger, solitude, and peril from wild beasts. Think of the immured monks in not a few Tibetan monasteries, never seeing the light of day or the face of a fellow-creature. Voluntarily they go into the darkness to be entombed for life, their only occupation the turning of a prayer-wheel, their only food a little bread and water for which they reach up a hand swathed in rags when the stone above them is tapped once a day and a glimmer of light struggles in. This alone can help them to keep count of the slow passing of months and years, and some of them live on through a long lifetime.¹ Any sacrifice, any suffering—yes, to obtain the merit that alone can deliver from the

¹ See Appendix A for a graphic account of a visit to a monastery of the Nying-ma sect, whose monks are thus immured, by Percival Landon, Correspondent of the London *Times*.

miseries of existence present and to come. And Buddhism keeps up this system, permitting the deceptions and oppressions of the lamas, who terrorise the people and hold them in bondage.

One man out of every three is said to be a lama in Tibet, and the enrichment of the monasteries that overshadow every town and almost every village is their common aim. The darker and more terrible the horrors they depict and the mystery with which they surround their demon-gods, the better can they prey upon the fears of the people. Thus every monastery flames with pictures of the torments of hell, and in addition to the usual placid-faced Buddha and other idols, they have hidden and terrible gods, so fearsome and indeed obscene that they are kept in secret chambers, or draped in robes that cover all but their inhuman faces. Though they never see them, the people know about them, and fear their power so much that they propitiate them from afar, kneeling outside the monasteries and worshipping towards the place where they are concealed. A dear friend belonging to another mission, who lived for months in a Tibetan monastery, saw this pathetic sight, and found an opportunity of visiting the upper story of the building where these dreaded gods were hidden, though warned by the lamas that it was dangerous to enter that special chamber. We ourselves saw one temple in a city north of the Great Wall, which the lamas had actually destroyed, smashing the idols with their own hands, because the Chinese were so enraged at what they heard of these gods that they were determined to see what they were really like.

Rather than have them seen, the lamas themselves destroyed them.

This and much else was in our minds as we slowly made our way back to the town and gathered round the supper-table with our Chinese friends. How great the contrast of that Christian circle with the heathenism without! When the meal was over our host suggested evening prayers, and as hymn after hymn was sung it did one good to see his face. Thinking himself unobserved, a little behind the rest, he sang through verse after verse of one of Pastor Hsi's hymns with closed eyes, making it indeed a prayer:

When Thou wouldst pour the living stream,
 Then I would be the earthen cup,
 Filled to the brim and sparkling clear.
 The fountain Thou and living spring,
 Flow Thou through me, the vessel weak,
 That thirsty souls may taste Thy grace.

When Thou wouldst light the darkness, LORD,
 Then I would be the silver lamp,
 Whose oil-supply can never fail,
 Placed high to shed the beams afar,
 That darkness may be turned to light,
 And men and women see Thy face.

With the refrain :

My body's Thine, yea wholly Thine,
 My spirit owns Thee for its LORD.
 Within Thy hand I lay my all,
 And only ask that I may be,
 Whene'er Thou art in need of me,
 Alert and ready for Thy call.¹

¹ For a beautiful translation into English of some of Pastor Hsi's best-known hymns, see *The Songs of Pastor Hsi*, by Miss Francesca French, published by the C.I.M. at a shilling, or thirty cents, a copy.

It was just the reassurance one needed.

The crowds in the lamasery next morning were so great that it was with difficulty we could move along; yet the festival was poorly attended, we were told, in comparison with former years. Passing the fair with all its tents and stalls we found the throng much more dense as we neared the golden temple. And what a crowd—vivid with colour, each figure a picture in itself, each face a study!

Here is some one of importance, apparently—a tall, big man, wearing a purple silk gown, a yellow sash or girdle, a green velvet coat, velvet top-boots, and a red satin hat bordered with fur. He carries a rosary in his hand, but is not using it, being as much taken up with us as we are with him for the moment. He seems to be a merchant, but whether Mongol or Tibetan, Mr. Ridley cannot say.

Caught in the whirl we are carried on, passing many equally striking figures, including Tibetan ladies in beautiful simple gowns, girdled at the waist, fur-lined and made of silk in rich shades of green and blue. The jewelry they wear is amazing—gold and silver, amber, jade, and coral, enriched with precious stones and pearls. But most of the crowd are in the usual greasy garments, sheepskins that once were white, with the wool turned inside. This is the universal dress of the poorer class, men and women alike—the one and only article of clothing, worn year in and year out until the skin is black and polished with grease and dirt.

Very fierce-looking are these " wild Tibetans," who are here in numbers. Untamed sons of the

mountains, they are easily distinguishable by their matted locks and defiant, brigand-like appearance. They are robbers of the worst type, yet generous and faithful to those who once win their friendship. And they are among the most earnest of these pilgrims, going from shrine to shrine.

How wonderful this chief temple with its tiles of solid gold must be to these ignorant, superstitious multitudes! Round it are grouped other temples, each with its special idols, but this one contains the colossal Buddha before which six hundred butter-lamps are burning and the lamas are chanting in full chorus. The figure is so immense that one only sees the lower part of it from the ground. It rises amid the gloom of the vast building, surrounded by galleries to which long flights of steps must be climbed. The galleries are not open to-day on account of the crowds, so that we can only imagine the gilded face with placid features and immutable smile.

More impressive to us by far is the sombre Prayer Hall, lighted from above by unseen windows. A forest of pillars support the massive roof, on which there are silent, sunny cloisters and great chambers filled with smaller idols. The Prayer Hall itself has none. The cloisters are beautiful—just a glow of painting and gilding from which one can see the golden roof of the chief temple close at hand. The Prayer Hall is as vast and gloomy as the darkest aisles of some great forest. Eighteen immense pillars support the central part of the roof, each one encased in a carpet from floor to ceiling, woven in one piece throughout. Between these pillars, rich



TIBETAN WOMEN OF CHONI.

“The long plaits of many of them are covered with a broad strip of red material gorgeous with embroidery which hangs right down their backs.”

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in soft colouring, long, low seats cross the hall from side to side, leaving a space in the middle where a sort of divan is placed. Here sits in Buddha-like attitude one of the lamas worshipped as an Incarnation.¹ He is young, robed in yellow satin, inscrutable, immovable. The light is so arranged as to fall upon his figure, which is as much like a golden Buddha as it is possible for a living person to be. Slowly the hall fills up with red-robed lamas, who take their places cross-legged on the long, low seats. A group in the middle, facing the yellow throne, are chanting in solemn resonant tones; those on either side respond. Outside the crowds come and go, but all within is quiet as the droning chant goes on.

Oh, those crowds, as we again come out into the sunlight! We cannot speak to them; they do not understand Chinese. But they chatter away about us and watch our every movement with eager interest. Faces bright, shrewd, clever, sensual, heavy—all are there, and the girls and women who stand in groups apart interest us specially. The long plaits of many of them are covered with a broad strip of red material, gorgeous with embroidery, which hangs right down their backs, decorated with great white shells like those in which children listen to the sound of the sea by our firesides at home. Four or five of these shells, each big enough to fill one's hand, must be a pretty heavy weight to carry by the hair of one's head, but even in Tibet *il faut souffrir pour être belle!* The Mongol

¹ For an explanation of this peculiar feature of Tibetan Buddhism see Appendix B.

girls wear silver ornaments almost equally large and heavy, and dress in brilliant colours. Many of them seem to carry the family wealth on their persons.

But the wonderful part of the festival was still to come when darkness fell and we returned to the lamasery after supper. The frost of the winter night was in the air, and the lamas were not afraid to bring out their works of art, which in any case would perish before morning. One night, one brief night only, was the Flower Festival to last in all its glory. Before morning, the bas-reliefs, which had taken weeks if not months to prepare, would be scraped off the boards on which they were displayed and thrown into a heap of discoloured butter. But to-night—well, what shall be said of their radiant and wholly unexpected beauty!

Hardly could we believe our eyes when, in the light of rows of little butter-lamps, we stood before the first of these peculiar shrines. For each bas-relief, large or small, has an idol for its centre-piece, before which incense is burned and worship offered. To us they were simply wax-works, but wax-works of a delicacy and beauty that exhibitions at home might well envy, even Madame Tussaud's.

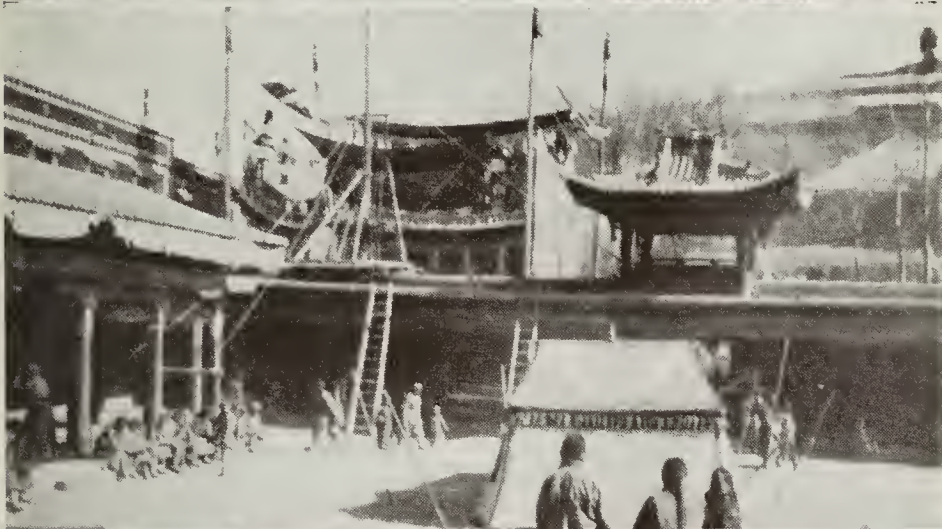
That one most beautiful *chef-d'œuvre*, how we did want to see it again! But the crowds were too great to permit of going back. The frame of the picture must have been some twenty-five feet long by eight or ten feet high. The background was black, as smooth as a fine blackboard. In the centre

a life-sized figure of Buddha stood out, rich in gilding and embroidery in every colour of the rainbow. A glittering crown studded with jewels completed its glory—all made of *butter* ! To right and left were elaborate scenes, figures and animals, birds and flowers, while at either end a wonderful dragon lashed its tail high in the air and raised a fearsome head. The light, fantastic border round the central figure was artistic in the extreme. It stood out a foot or more beyond the rest, and was composed of intertwined dragons in a graceful scroll, wonderfully coloured and lifelike. Then, over the whole, rose a lofty pyramid, tier above tier of great round plaques, each covered with a beautiful design. The entire structure on its black background must have been forty feet high, or with the floating canopy above it some fifty feet. It formed one side of a great square, roofed in with silk and enclosed in fragile walls, made of four tiers of beautifully embroidered banners, held together with a network of silken leaves of all colours and finished at the bottom, six feet above the ground, with a fringe of strips of silk richly embroidered—the whole thing a glowing dream of silk and colour, hanging from unseen supports more than fifty feet high.

Inside it was aglow with the soft light of scores of butter-lamps, three tiers of which were arranged beneath the pictured scene one has attempted to describe. Strains of weird and sombre music seemed to come from the Buddha or the dragons, somewhere behind that shining screen of lamps. The musicians must have been hidden under the wooden staging, and the result was most effective.

Another silken pavilion of the same kind was also the centre of a large crowd. The wax (or butter) works were almost equally fine, and the silken walls and canopy were higher. Then all round the main temple with its golden roof were smaller shrines, each lighted with three rows of butter-lamps and with its special figure of a god. All these were crowned with gold and jewels in most beautiful designs. These crowns, indeed, amazed one more than anything else. It seemed impossible to believe that the lovely filigree work was not real gold, and that the stones were not real jewels. Yet, like all the rest, they were nothing but Tibetan butter !

Opposite the main entrance to the gold-roofed temple were two specially lovely shrines. It was a never-to-be-forgotten experience to stand there in the moonlight, with the shadows cast by closely grouped buildings all round, and to see beyond the crowd of eager faces—Tibetan men and boys and red-robed lamas—those regularly rising and falling figures, facing the image behind the great closed doors. They took no notice of us, but under the eaves of the temple continued their absorbing prostrations. Hours before we had seen them in that same spot, where the boards have frequently to be changed because worn through by pilgrims. We noticed the grooves this morning, two or three inches deep, where the hands slide as they fall and the feet grip as they rise with almost the regularity of clockwork. Accumulating merit, with every sounding thud of the head upon the ground. Accumulating merit : the lamas have nothing more for hungry hearts.



Photos by

Frederick Brown.

THE BUTTER FESTIVAL.

- (1) Tapestry erected at the Kumbum Lamasery for the Butter Festival.
- (2) Main courtyard of Kumbum Lamasery, showing tapestry and small tent in which the Living Buddha presides.
- (3) Tibetans prostrating themselves outside the "Holy of Holies" at Kumbum.

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Watch them as they rise and fall, their bodies ever more weary, their foreheads more bruised and painful. Immense prayer-wheels are turning, turning, under the broad eaves as other pilgrims pass—and over all the silent stars look down.

CHAPTER XIII

A "LIVING BUDDHA"

WE were not saying good-bye to Tibet even when we left Sining two days after the "Butter Festival" and set out for Hochow, the city of many mosques and a zealously Mohammedan population. Mr. Ridley was with us, which made the parting less painful, but Dr. Kao was returning to his lonely field more than a week's journey to the north, and felt the separation as much as we did. Then it was not easy to leave Mr. and Mrs. Harris alone to the great work in Sining, though nothing was further from their minds than self-pity. Brave and thankful, they spoke only of the privilege of being there for JESUS' sake, and one realised afresh how precious such lives must be to Him. For ourselves, it was distinctly comforting that as we journeyed southward to districts populated chiefly by Moslems we should still be among Tibetans, for a few days at any rate.

For the people of the mountains had become very dear to us, and the hardest thing of all was to turn away from their need. What is it about the Tibetans that is so lovable, in spite of their dirt and moral degradation? One hardly knows,



THE DALAI LAMA.

“The uncrowned King of Tibet and spiritual head of two hundred million Buddhists.” (This photograph was sent by the Dalai Lama from Lhasa to Mr. H. F. Ridley at Sining.)

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unless it be their generous, responsive nature and the capacity they have for devotion to spiritual ideals. Other people may be religious and make much of worship at stated seasons, but with the Tibetan it seems his chief occupation, the thing for which he lives. The Moslem prays five times a day, turning toward his holy places. But the Tibetan prays, in a sense, without ceasing—devising means for appealing to the Unseen with his mystic and, alas, meaningless phrase by night as well as day! It is easy to call such praying superstitious and put it down to habit and selfish fears, but what does it indicate of responsiveness to the best they know, poor and low as it is?

Then there is the sense, the uneasy consciousness, spreading even in Tibet, that the religion of the lama church is decadent. Not that the rank and file have any such apprehension; but among their leaders, even the Dalai Lama has given expression to the thought. When this more than royal personage—the uncrowned king of Tibet and spiritual head of two hundred million Buddhists—fled from Lhasa, on account of the coming of the British Mission under Colonel Sir Francis Younghusband (1904), he came to Sining and spent a year in the lamasery of Kumbum. Mr. Ridley saw him several times, and had an opportunity of personal conversation with him. The state with which he travelled was magnificent, from his golden-coloured satin litter, carried by four horses, to the bodyguard in gold brocade, and his pavilion, tents, and enclosing court, all of the same colour. His lama robes were of gold-tinted silk, and as he was borne along with strange, sonorous music,

every one had to kneel before him. But his eyes were restless and uneasy. When Mr. Ridley and an English traveller, Lieutenant Brook, went to visit him at Kumbum, taking as a present a valuable fur, though he received the gift and talked with them through an interpreter, he could not look them in the face. He was staying in a mansion above the gold-roofed temple, and despite the wealth of the monastery and countless other monasteries over which he is supposed to rule, despite the undisputed sway of Lamaism and the demon-power behind it, he said in so many words before returning to Lhasa that Christianity is a progressive force and Buddhism would decay before it.

In the seclusion of many a Tibetan lamasery to-day there are those who, if they spoke truly, would acknowledge the same thought. For though the land is still closed to the missionary it is not closed to the Truth. Many of the lamas are reading Christian literature, which reaches them from time to time by post, and some who are looked upon as Incarnations have written to Mr. Sørensen, who has this work in hand.¹

From his virtual kingdom on the upper waters of the Yellow River, where he rules over thirty-six

¹ At the lonely frontier post of Tatsienlu (province of Szechwan) Mr. Theo. Sørensen has for many years been working at the problem of how to make the Gospel widely known in Tibet. The Tibetan Religious Literature Depot, which he has been enabled to establish, is doing a wide work in preparing, printing, and circulating Christian literature and supplying it for free distribution to all missionaries labouring for the evangelisation of Tibet. They also employ colporteurs and make good use of the Chinese postal system, sending packages of Scriptures and tracts to many lamaseries throughout the country.

lamaseries and all their feudal population, one of these " Living Buddhas " wrote :

To the most learned Doctor of Metaphysics and all the important branches of sacred literature, So-nam-tse-ring (Sörensen).

I, your humble servant, have seen several copies of the Scriptures and having read them carefully *they certainly made me believe in CHRIST*. I understand a little of the outstanding principles and the doctrinal teaching of the One Son, but as to the Holy Spirit's nature and essence and as to the origin of this religion I am not at all clear, and it is therefore important that the doctrinal principles (of this religion) should be fully explained, so as to enlighten the unintelligent and people of small mental ability.

The teaching of the science of medicine and astrology is also very important. It is therefore evident, if we want this blessing openly manifested, we must believe in the religion of the only Son of GOD. Being in earnest, I pray you from my heart not to consider this letter lightly. With a hundred salutations.

That he was meditating upon these things is even more evident from a poem he enclosed than from his letter. Though they lose much of their beauty through translation, the lines cannot but be of interest, coming from such a source :

O Thou supreme GOD and most precious Father—
 The Truth above all religions,
 The Ruler of all animate and inanimate worlds !
 Greater than Wisdom, separate from birth and death,
 Is His Son CHRIST the LORD,
 Shining in glory among endless beings.
 Incomprehensible Wonder, miraculously made !
 In His teaching I myself also believe.
 As your spirit is with heaven united,
 My soul undivided is seeking the truth.

JESUS the Saviour's desire fulfilling,

For the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven I am praying.

Happiness to all.

Having heard of this friend of Mr. Ridley's, it was with no little satisfaction we found ourselves near his home two days after leaving Sining. The journey had been wonderful, for we were in the Switzerland of north-west China, that lofty, lovely region with its scattered Tibetan settlements and winding valleys, over which we gained an extensive outlook from a pass twelve thousand feet high—perennial springs, freezing as they flowed, forming shining glaciers far below. How beautiful it must be in summer when these heights are gay with mountain-flowers and white rhododendrons take the place of snow! Wild strawberries refresh the traveller, and in the valleys Mr. Ridley has found gooseberries mile after mile beside the track.

On the third morning of our journey, walking ahead of the litters, we passed across a valley that runs due south to the Yellow River. There, on the far side of the river, backed by magnificent mountains and not far from one of his lamaseries, the Fuh-ie's home is found. Had it not been Saturday, and that we were expected at a mission outpost for the week-end, we should have been tempted to travel south instead of east and visit Mr. Ridley's friend. Belonging to the Red Sect, he is married, and we could have seen his wife and children even if the Fuh-ie had been absent. As it was, we could only pray for him, sitting waiting for our litters, for him and others like him throughout Tibet, who know the truth in measure, but not its saving power.

We thought of all Dr. Kao had told us of this man's influence and spirit, and how the people of his great territory worship him as a god. Dr. Kao had come over from Lanchow some years previously for evangelistic and medical work, and at Mr. Ridley's suggestion had gone to Kweiteh, a city not far from the Fuh-ie's home, to attempt to reach the Tibetans. But they were shy of the stranger and would not come to his inn, until the "Living Buddha," hearing that he was there, came over. Important personage though he is, he put up at the same inn, and was most kind and friendly. He sent out all round the city to tell his people that the doctor from Lanchow had come, and that they would have advice and foreign medicine. This drew at once, and for two or three weeks Dr. Kao had a constant stream of patients.

He had also the opportunity of watching this supposed Incarnation among the people who came in crowds to seek his blessing. None came empty-handed. In addition to the usual scarf of welcome, butter, pears, bread, musk, silver or copper cash were brought as gifts, and the Fuh-ie received them as his due. Even the poorest brought something, and it was touching to see women offering just a single thread of silk, laid over both hands, when they could afford nothing more. If the Fuh-ie was in kindly mood, he would take the thread and wind it round his finger in token of approval, before putting his hand on their heads in blessing. To be refused his blessing is a calamity these poor people greatly dread.

Among many who heard the Gospel on that visit, none listened with more interest than Ku-rung him-

self, who at times seemed "almost persuaded" to be a Christian. "I do believe in GOD, your GOD," he said to Dr. Kao, and he admitted freely that he was no Incarnation, but "just an ordinary individual such as you are." Only the Spirit of GOD can convict such a man of sin, however, and bring him in humble faith to CHRIST. Think of the sacrifices involved, to his short human sight! Shall we not pause before turning the page and ask, in the all-prevailing Name, that light and life may come to this man who is actually worshipped as a god, and through him to many? ¹

Of the value of medical work as a means of reaching the people, Dr. Kao was much impressed on this visit. He found them exceedingly grateful and generous, but soon realised that to make a friend of a Tibetan you must *chua-chu t'a*, "grip him," and win his confidence the first time you meet him. It is much more difficult afterwards. And this was just what the medical work enabled him to do. The Kweiteh people took him to their hearts, begged him to stay among them, and gave him the freedom of their homes. He soon picked up a little Tibetan, speaking constantly through interpretation, and would have stayed much longer but that Dr. King needed him back at the hospital.

The gratitude of the Tibetans and their religious earnestness profoundly impressed him—their prayer-wheels and constant incantations, sometimes all night long. One man who had benefited by his

¹ Mr. Ridley's graphic account of a recent visit to the home of this "Living Buddha" will be found in Appendix C.

treatment invited him to a feast, not in his own home, which was too far away, but in his sister's house nearer the city. As they were going, this Tibetan, who could not speak Chinese, seemed to be trying to express something of which his heart was full. Stopping again and again, he would point up to heaven, then lay his hand upon his breast. After he had done this two or three times Dr. Kao caught his meaning. For he had been preaching through interpretation about the LORD JESUS, how He left His home in glory to suffer and die for our sins, and now comes to live in the hearts of those who love Him. The bright look on the Tibetan's face was unmistakable as he pointed up, then laid his hand on his heart, and Kao soon managed to let him know that he understood. At the sister's house they were received with cordial hospitality, and the doctor was able to preach again to many hearers. How he longed to accept Ku-rung Fuh-ie's invitation to go to his home for a year or two to learn Tibetan! But with wife and children to care for, and much other work on hand, this did not seem feasible.

One thing he learned that was pressed home on our hearts as we travelled through that same borderland—*the people are accessible, if only we will go to them*. As to their superstition and darkness, we began to realise it in measure on that journey. Every Tibetan home we came to had its prayer-flag fluttering in the breeze—a strip of whitish material fastened round a tall pole from top to bottom, and covered with *manis*, printed or written.¹ They have

¹ For fuller information about this mystic phrase see Appendix D.

them also hanging under the eaves of houses, or stretched across the road in narrow passes or any conspicuous place where the wind comes freely. In a village just over the hills, Mr. Ridley told us he had seen them worked by water—five large prayer-wheels, one after the other, catching the current of a mountain stream. Some are attached to long ropes, so that the grandmother, watching the baby or feeding the fire, may at the same time keep the prayer-wheel going for the family. Then there are prayer-wheels turned like windmills, and others pushed by passers-by. All are filled with rolls of paper, a solid mass, on which is written that one and only cry, whatever it may mean—"O thou jewel in the lotus-flower, Amen!" Then there are small hand-wheels, carried by men and women alike, and little ones fixed over doors and above fires, moved by the circulation of the air. Everywhere and always they are turning, turning, in the unending repetition, "*Om mani padmi hum.*"

And human voices take up the refrain. As Koeppen in his book on Lamaism records, these six syllables, among Tibetans and Mongols alike, "are the first words the child learns to stammer and the last gasping utterance of the dying. The wanderer murmurs them on his way, the herdsman beside his cattle, the matron at her household tasks, the monk in all stages of contemplation. They form at once a cry of battle and a shout of victory. They are to be read wherever the Lama church hath spread, upon banners, upon rocks, upon trees, upon walls, upon monuments of stone, upon household utensils, upon strips of paper, upon human skulls and skele-

tons ! They form, according to the ideas of believers, the utmost conception of all religion, of all worship, of all revelation, the path of rescue and the gate of salvation ! ”

And still, to-day, those empty words are the Tibetan's only hope and consolation. They rise and fall on every breeze that sweeps that dark, waiting land : “ O thou jewel in the lotus-flower—jewel in the lotus-flower ”—that is all ! And the Name that is above every name, the Name that shall endure forever, in which alone is salvation, few of these warm-hearted, superstitious, priest-ridden sons of the mountains have ever heard. The immorality in which they live is appalling, even their gods, the chiefest of them, being indescribable. Oh for the cleansing fire, the liberating power of the Spirit of GOD to transform Tibetan hearts and lives through faith in CHRIST !

I know of a land that is sunk in shame,
 Of hearts that faint and tire ;
 And I know of a name, a name, a name,
 Can set that land on fire.
 Its sound is a brand, its letters flame.
 I know of a name, a name, a name,
 Will set that land on fire.

JESUS, the Name high over all,
 In earth and air and sky ;
 Angels and men before it fall,
 And devils fear and fly.

“ A chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My Name. . . . ”
 Can there be a higher honour, a more glorious invest-
 ment of life ?

CHAPTER XIV

THE SALARS OF THE TIBETAN BORDERLAND

It is a wonderful country—that borderland—with its population of Mohammedans, Tibetans, and aborigines, all under Chinese rule. The little place at which we spent Sunday proved to be a walled city with Government officials. And there we found one family of missionary pioneers, lonely and unconnected with any organisation, full of devotion to the LORD and to the people, and making little of the sacrifices their life involved. Crowded into three small rooms in a native house, opening one into another, the mother was nursing her baby of a month old, doing most of the cooking, looking after the three elder children, receiving visitors, dispensing medicines, and leading the Chinese services as if preaching the Gospel were her one and only work, her husband taking his share in these duties but devoting himself chiefly to the Tibetans.

The little chapel was crowded on Sunday with an attentive audience, the only difficulty being to draw the meetings to a close, for the people stayed on and on to hear more of the preaching and singing. One fine-looking lama interested us especially. He was their Tibetan teacher, belonging to a branch of

the Red Sect called Bonzes, easily recognised by their extraordinary hair, which is never interfered with, but grows as it pleases. It is worn in a heavy coil on the top of the head, protected from rain and dust by a sort of bathing-cap, drawn up and tied under the mass of hair. This lama looked as if he had a large hat on, the covered hair reaching out some distance beyond the head all round. He was good enough before we left to remove the covering and show us the hair itself—a truly amazing spectacle! It had never been cut or washed or combed in his life, and had matted itself into strands, which, through being constantly twisted, had the appearance of a cart rope or ship's cable. It was as thick as a man's arm, and hung almost to the ground although he was a tall person. It was, of course, his pride and distinction, though he was becomingly modest about it and soon restored it to its covering.

A kindly, intelligent man, he was a great help to these workers in their isolation, and seemed specially fond of the children, as indeed they were of him. How impossible it is for friends at home to picture the life of such a family amid the loneliness of such surroundings! The mother had not seen a foreign woman for a year and a half, and the children had no school or companions, nor any place to play save the back courtyard. Yet in those small, comfortless quarters they were just as brave and trustful as could be. They love the people, love the work, and love Him most of all for whose sake they are there. And the LORD is giving them encouragement.

From the crowded mission-house in which these missionaries were bravely holding on, praying for fellow-workers, it was a change indeed to pass, almost immediately, to the solitary splendour of the heights. Up and up we went, until we came to a wide green valley where a few Tibetans were feeding their sheep. Then, climbing still, we found ourselves suddenly on the lofty spur of a mountain range, thrust out into the midst of a wonderful world lying far below—an indescribable vision of heights and depths shrouded in mist, falling away on all sides from the summit we had gained, vast, mysterious, silent; not a living creature or human habitation in sight, nothing but mountain-tops like a surging sea, with valleys deep between and the gleam of a frozen river. It was a place for silence and worship.

A few hours later one wrote: "We have come down to earth again by winding paths that defy description. How we ever descended some of those steps without flying, or rounded some of those curves, where the narrow track before us seemed like the curl of a corkscrew, I do not know. With a precipice on one side, hundreds of feet deep, and upright walls of red clay on the other, I had to keep my mind fixed on the exquisite colouring of the scene to escape a consciousness of nerves. One was thankful for a muleteer at the head of each animal—especially when the one behind seemed slipping down on top of the litter and the one in front disappeared all but its tail."

And now we were in the broad valley of the Yellow River, already a majestic stream though so near its cradle in Tibet. As we looked out over its

level lands, watered by the windings of the river, we could well understand the considerations that induced the Salars to settle here more than five hundred years ago. They are the Turks of China, having come from Samarkand—banished, it is said, on account of their turbulent disposition and free-booting propensities.¹ They must have had courage and determination among other qualities, for they trekked all across the wilds of Central Asia, down the great road to Kanchow, and thence southward to Sining and this district in search of a home. Their guiding star was the charge of a great *ahung* who blessed their departure. He was a direct descendant of Mohammed, and presented them with a box of earth and a bottle of water before they left Samarkand.

“Keep them carefully,” he said, “and when you reach a valley where the earth is like this earth and the water like this water, there settle and multiply. It will be the place GOD has appointed for you.”

They had also a white camel which was regarded as a good omen. A hundred and thirty stages, or more, it travelled with them, until at last they reached and crossed the Yellow River in this romantic spot. Here they stayed for a mid-day halt, the broad stream flowing at their feet, the rugged cliffs at either side and the snow-covered mountains beyond. There was no city then where Sünhwa stands to-day. The valley was unoccupied and silent. Suddenly a cry was raised—

¹ “The Salar immigration is commonly dated back to the reign of the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, A.D. 1368–1399” (*The Crescent in North-West China*, by G. Findlay Andrew, p. 18).

“ The white camel ! Where is it ? ”

It was gone. Hunt for it as they might, it was nowhere to be found from one end of the long caravan to the other. Seriously the leaders consulted as to this strange happening and what it might portend. Then they bethought them of the box of earth and the bottle of water. These were brought out and examined. Yes, the earth was identical with the earth of this valley ; the water was the same as the water of its springs. Here then they must settle. This was to be their home. And as if to confirm the decision beyond a doubt—lo, the white camel appeared above them on the face of the cliff !

It may be seen to-day, we were told, outlined in a stone of lighter colour than the rest, though to us it was not very obvious. But the Salars are here beyond a doubt, spread out in eight “ parishes ” along the river, and still recognising divisions among themselves such as the Kokandi, the Samarkandi, and the Tashkandi.¹ They are still fierce and turbulent as in the days of old, their love of fighting having been kept alive by constant skirmishing with the Tibetans, not to speak of the terrible part they played in Mohammedan rebellions against Chinese rule. It takes a Salar to govern a Salar is a common saying to-day, and even for him the task is difficult.

How it took one back to the cities of Asia Minor to be among these interesting people, with their regular features, great dark eyes, comparatively fair complexions, and strange jargon of a language, much more like Turkish than Chinese ! Some of the women

¹ The final “ i ” in Turkish means “ belonging to.”

were really beautiful, and one was impressed with the intelligence of the children. One noticed, too, the number of their mosques and schools, which were in remarkably good repair even out in the country, but not until later did we come to realise how much love of learning there is among them.

In a Turkish newspaper published at Constantinople, Abdul Aziz of Kuldja gives many details about Mohammedan communities in China, gathered in his travels as a missionary of Islam.¹ He speaks of the Salars as more advanced in education and industry than their Mohammedan neighbours, enlarging upon their noted seminaries, the ability of their teachers, and the fame of their scribes. Grammar, law, interpretation (Koran), and logic are taught in their schools, he tells us, from Arabic books imported from India. They administer their own laws, are skilful in agriculture, and manufacture cotton, silk, and leather goods for export. "These industrious and tireless Turks," as he calls them, "have gained important offices in China. Many of them have visited the Holy Land, Hejaz,² and the glorious place of Mohammed."

One distinguished scholar from the Salar country he had met at Kuldja, as the former was returning from the Hejaz. He had resided for some time in Egypt and Constantinople, and of course had visited Mecca. The dignity and intelligence of this Salar

¹ The articles were subsequently published in booklet form, "by permission of H.E. the Minister of Public Education," in A.H. 1312 (*i.e.* A.D. 1894-95). The book was under the patronage of the Sultan Abdul-Hamid, to whose Court the writer seems to have been attached. See *Islam in China*, by Marshall Broomhall, M.A., pp. 257 to 269.

² The province in Arabia in which Mecca is situated.

greatly impressed Aziz, who wrote of the honour he felt it to make his acquaintance.

“ His apartments were full of the prominent men of the city, and he wisely answered the many questions with which they plied him. It was at once manifest from the simplicity and elegance of his diction that he had an intimate knowledge of Arabic, Persian, and ancient Turkish. He was fascinating all who listened to his speech and his Platonic thoughts.”

His earnest plea was for improved education in Moslem schools and seminaries. “ Until recently I had thought with you,” he said, “ that our schools and educational standards were perfect. But my pilgrimage has convinced me that we need greatly improved methods. In Constantinople and Egypt I visited famous libraries and saw many new books, and of these we have urgent need. I obtained Calendars of the universities of Constantinople and Egypt, and my reason for doing so was to apply the information therein for the betterment of our schools. As soon as I reach my home, I hope to invite all the learned Moslems around to come, that I may call their attention to these Calendars, and with their help may seek to remodel our schools and seminaries. If we are able to do this, we shall lead all the Moslems of China into the right way.”

Further he advocated three lines of advance which he hoped to induce the Salars of Kansu to adopt: after improving the schools, they should invite teachers from Constantinople and India; they should obtain a printing-press from India, so as to print for themselves the books they needed; and

they should publish a newspaper in the vernacular, so as to encourage people to take up education.

“If these things are done,” he repeated with confidence, “the Moslems of China will be raised to a more worthy position; and I have reason to hope that the Chinese Government would, if necessary, encourage or assist such undertakings.”¹

A generation had passed between the return of this distinguished Salar to his Kansu home and our visit to that part of the province. Was he still living; had he succeeded in introducing the reforms on which his heart was set? He had not come into contact apparently, in all his travels, with any one who could put before him the knowledge which is “life eternal.” And still, to-day, in that beautiful Salar country, there is no witness to the love of GOD in CHRIST. This was the thought that straitened our hearts as we crossed the Yellow River opposite the city of Sünhwa and turned our faces toward the mountains into which the Tibetans have been driven back.

Strangely beautiful are the valleys that run southward into those mountains, and magnificent beyond description where they climb the passes thirteen thousand feet high, one of which we had to cross. The road was rarely travelled by foreigners, even

¹ The traveller's name was Menla-abdul-Rahim, and he was a graduate of the honourable Penshenbi Akhoud's seminary in the Salar country. Of this noted teacher, Abdul Aziz, the Turkish missionary, writes: “It is a joy to observe that the students instructed by Penshenbi Akhoud have spread to every part of China and become the leaders of their co-religionists. This prudent man is seventy years of age.”

missionaries. Mr. Ridley had never been over it nor had the muleteers, so it was in happy unconsciousness of what lay before us that we set out in the early dawn of that March morning from our Salar inn.

“ We have left the Yellow River,” one wrote later in the day, “ and are following one of its tributary streams. All day long we have been climbing gradually, until we are near the snow-line, passing irrigated fields, beautiful mosques, an occasional temple, scattered farmsteads, and one little town, passing also very striking Tibetan tombs, probably of abbots, for they were near small lamaseries—and behind it all this entrancing vision of white mountains lost in the clouds, with valleys shrouded in mist opening between them, where steep paths lead to Tibetan homes.

For all along the road the people have been mostly Tibetans. What picturesque groups we have met ! Men with fur-bordered, peaked hats, women with hanging tresses, red-robed lamas with rosaries of heavy beads, and old people, their lips moving as they murmured their never-changing, never-ending prayer. One young couple was most attractive—the tall, active-looking man with a scarf of purple silk twisted round his head ; the girl, turning shyly away from us, in a new sheep-skin gown girdled below the waist, her long hair in scores of plaits covered with a strip of red, hanging like a veil from the forehead. She looked happy and wholesome, a strong, sweet little personality.

Another girl of the same type came and stood by my litter as we were leaving the inn after our mid-day

meal. Her hundred and eight tiny plaits were braided again into one long tress at each side. Her smile was as sweet and bright as it was kindly. They are very attractive to me, these Tibetan women. One feels what a contribution of love and service they might bring to the One who laid down His life for their redemption. How we long to win them to CHRIST!

We were in the snow by that time, the last inn left behind, expecting soon to reach the place in which we were to spend the night. But as we went on, cold and tired, no friendly hamlet came in sight. Indeed we had reached a height at which one could no longer expect to find even a shepherd's hut. Nothing but mountain-tops around us—the white peaks that had looked so beautiful all day, seen from the valley below! Now that we were up among them—travelling on we knew not whither, while the day drew to a close—they somehow assumed a different aspect, forbidding and chilly.

“Is it far to the inn?” we asked a descending traveller.

“Not far, not far—a good road,” he answered, putting politeness before truth as we found to our cost.

The “good road” narrowed and narrowed to a path almost lost in the snow. Then came ice-fields on which the mules could not keep their footing, and a steep ascent among rocks and stones where we had to climb as best we might. But the pass was before us. There from the cairn we should see some place of shelter for the night.

One by one we gained the summit and stood a

silent group. Had it not been so cold and late the outlook would have been magnificent. As it was, our hearts almost failed us. Nothing, nothing, as far as eye could see, but a white world of snow and mist, with chasms of black darkness where precipices descended out of sight and the great valley lost itself among mountain peaks beyond. Go down into it we must ; but where there was any exit it was impossible to tell.

That descent was indescribable, and so also were our feelings when we discovered in the valley, after toiling over miles of rock and snow, that the path, instead of going down, somewhere, anywhere, began to climb again—up and up out of sight. The real pass lay before us : the one behind had been only a step to it.

“ Lo, I am with you all the days ”—how sweet the confidence as we faced that climb in the gathering shadows, counting on seeing some refuge, however distant, when we reached the top !

Sudden and precipitous was the descent on the other side, and far deeper lay the valley beneath us than the one we had just crossed ; but even down by the frozen river, if we could ever reach it, there was not a house of any kind to cheer our sight. On and on stretched the dreary scene—nothing but rock and ice and snow and mist and darkness. But there was a conscious Presence that breathed peace.

Slipping and falling on snow-fields as steep as the roof of a house and as close to sheer descents, not of tens but of hundreds of feet, we came down, somehow. The mules came down too, carrying the empty litters, though how they managed those

zigzag turns was a mystery. It was so dark by that time that we could hardly find the path. We had almost forgotten, in the peril of the moment, the plight we were in for the night. But with what relief we discovered, hidden away under the last drop of the mountain-side, an inn—an inn with fodder for the animals and fire to dry the clothing of the party!

Next day we were on the magnificent plain of Hochow.

CHAPTER XV

SONS OF ISHMAEL

THEY are not Salars—these keen, active, vociferous Moslems who throng the East Gate of Hochow and the suburb beyond. What a scene it is of urgency and excitement! One would suppose that some special fair must be in progress and that everybody saw their chance of immediately making a fortune. But it is only the everyday market on the bridge outside the gate and down the main street of the suburb. To escape the throng and obtain a wider outlook let us take advantage of the city wall, deserted at this hour. From above the gate we can see without being seen, no small desideratum in such a community.

For they are sons of Ishmael, though not Salar or Turkish Moslems. The homes of the latter lie behind us, along the Yellow River; this city on the Hochow plain represents a different and much earlier settlement, from Arabia. The city itself is Chinese and no Mohammedan is allowed to reside within its walls, but the population around it is largely Moslem. And yonder in the mountains another Moslem race is to be found, descendants of certain aborigines of the province converted to Islam long ago, at the point of the sword. Farther

north, as we have seen, the aborigines retain their animistic faith, but this branch of the old stock, isolated by the Yellow River, had no choice but to submit when the followers of the prophet possessed themselves of the plain. Down there among the crowds one may distinguish them by their appearance—sturdy, simple people, poor-looking and dirty from their rough life in the mountains, very different from the quick-witted Moslems of the suburb—teachers, travellers, merchants, and all the bargaining throng.

What is it that accounts for the extraordinary virility of the Mohammedan as compared with the Chinese, for his business shrewdness and sagacity witnessed to by many a proverb? “A Tibetan can eat (take in) a Mongol,” they say, and “A Chinese can eat a Tibetan, but a Huei-huei (Mohammedan) can eat the lot”; and, still more commonly, “A Chinese awake is not the equal of a Huei-huei sleeping.” They certainly are alert, always “on the job” wherever you meet them, and the job seems to be to outdo every one else in the matter of push and profit.

But where do they come from—this so-different race scattered in all the provinces of China? How is it that they are here, and what lies behind the bitter hatred and mistrust with which they are regarded? Side by side they have lived for centuries with their Chinese neighbours, and yet they are as distinct to-day as oil from water—fire from water one might rather say, thinking of their history.

China’s knowledge of the Arabs dates back a long way, and may be briefly outlined in the following stages. To begin with, she knew them as adventurous traders, coming over far seas to the ports of

Canton and Hangchow. This was before the birth of Mohammed—early in the fifth century, when the export trade from Mecca was prodigious in its value. Hira on the Euphrates, south of Babylon, was a great port in those days. Strange-looking junks from China were constantly found there, and details of the course they took are still preserved in the Annals of the T'ang Dynasty, that brilliant epoch in Chinese history (A.D. 618–907) contemporaneous with the rise and culmination of Mohammedan power.

To this period belongs the story of the first Arab embassy to China, said to have been sent during the lifetime of Mohammed. Landing at Canton, the ministers made their way to the capital (Sian), where they were received with favour. They had brought with them a picture of Mohammed which they presented to the Emperor, on the understanding that it should never be worshipped. It is told of a subsequent embassy that when the time came for their return to Arabia a number of them wished to remain in China. They set out with their leaders, however, on the long overland journey by way of this province. Somewhere on the Great Road they parted company. “*Huei-ch'u, huei-ch'u,*” the leaders said, or the equivalent in their own language, “Return, return”—from which in process of time has evolved the name “*Huei-huei,*” by which Mohammedans are known throughout China.

When these “Returners” took up their abode in Sian a difficulty arose as to how to provide them with home-makers. Eligible maidens there were not a few, but their families would have feared “loss of face” in espousing them to foreigners.

The Emperor it was who cut the Gordian knot by ordering a great theatrical performance to be held in the palace. One day was reserved entirely for young maidens, and the "Returners" were in hiding, waiting a prearranged signal to spring out and each one capture his bride. The plan worked well, and the liberal-minded citizens were persuaded to receive the Arabs as sons-in-law.

Later on, the prestige of these Arabian settlers must have increased as tidings reached the Chinese Court of the victories attending the march of Moslem arms. Within a hundred years from the birth of its prophet, "the Mohammedan Empire had spread from the Atlantic on the west to the banks of the Indus and Kashgar," and these marvellous achievements were not unknown to the rulers of the T'ang Dynasty. Their own far-reaching empire held sway over all the countries west of China proper to the frontiers of Persia, and to them the Persian monarch had appealed for help when faced with subjugation to the conquering sword of Islam. It was not much that China could do for Persia in her extremity. She sent an embassy to the victorious Arabs, doubtless to ascertain their strength and their intentions as much as to plead the cause of Persia, whose fate was sealed.¹ Nothing could shake the confidence of

¹ "Firuz, hopeless of regaining the Persian throne, accepted the post of Captain of the Guard to the Chinese Emperor in A.D. 674, and was still courteously styled the King of Persia. Some years later his son also came to Sian, where he was appointed Guard of the Imperial Horse. He died in the city in A.D. 707. Thus the proud successors of the great Chosroes of Persia, fugitives before the erstwhile feeble Arabs, died as protégés of the Chinese Emperor" (*Islam in China*, by Marshall Broomhall, M.A., p. 14).

the ruler of the Celestial Empire, however, in those days of its greatness, and he willingly received the return embassy when an Arab General came with official communications to Sian (A.D. 651).

Little more than sixty years later another envoy appeared in a very different spirit. Sent by the redoubtable General Kutaiba, whose campaigns in Central Asia were spreading terror even into Chinese territory, he refused to *kotow* before the Son of Heaven, and even demanded the submission of China to the world-conquering power he represented. Dealt with more tactfully than he realised, the haughty envoy returned laden with presents for his master, and the assassination of Kutaiba following the death of Walid I., not long after, was doubtless heard of with relief at Sian.¹

Another phase of China's relations with the

¹ "What the consequences to China might have been but for the death, at this critical period, of Kutaiba's patron, Mohammed Kasim, and of the Caliph Walid I. himself, it is impossible to say. It is at least probable that China would have been subjected to a Mohammedan invasion. The presents of the Emperor and his wise counsels generally—for the subsequent events of his reign shew him to have been a wise monarch—probably stayed any immediate collision, and the turn in the tide of Mohammedan conquests which followed upon the death of the Caliph Walid I. and the subsequent assassination of Kutaiba, the overthrow of the Omazide Dynasty by the Abbasides, with all the fury of rival princes and contending sects which immediately broke upon the Moslem Empire, in all probability saved China from the sword of Islam.

"It is a profoundly interesting fact and worthy of special consideration that the events in Asia just recorded nearly synchronise with the Battle of Tours in Europe. We thus see the Arab advance checked in the west by Charles Martel in A.D. 723 and the Moslem progress eastward arrested on the borders of the Chinese Empire at about the same time" (*Islam in China*, by Marshall Broomhall, M.A., p. 19).

Mohammedan power was entered upon when the later Emperors of the T'ang Dynasty sought its aid in suppressing the internal rebellions that had begun to imperil the throne. It was as allies that the first Moslem army marched into the rich provinces within the Great Wall—four thousand men who, like the early *Huei-huei*, decided to settle in China. With their help the Emperor recovered his capital, and the records of the T'ang Dynasty refer to them among the many other foreigners at that time resident in Sian.

Much later China was to know the Arabs as subject with themselves to the rule of the magnificent Khans—the Mongol conquerors who established the Yüen Dynasty (1260–1368). No event in the history of Islam, T. W. Arnold tells us, can compare for terror and desolation with that Mongol conquest, when, “like an avalanche, the hosts of Yenghis Khan swept over the centres of Muslim culture and civilisation, leaving them bare deserts and shapeless ruins.”¹ But “Yenghis Khan spared the learned and those of the artisan class who could be of

¹ “When the Mongol army had marched out of the city of Herat, a miserable remnant of forty persons crept out of their hiding-places and gazed horror-stricken on the ruins of their beautiful city—all that was left out of a population of a hundred thousand. In Bokara, so famed for its men of piety and learning, the Mongols stabled their horses in the sacred precincts of the mosques and tore up the Qur’ans to serve as litter; those of the inhabitants who were not butchered were carried into captivity, and their city reduced to ashes. Such too was the fate of Samerkand, Balkh and many another city of Central Asia which had been the glories of Islamic civilisation . . . such too the fate of Bagdad that for centuries had been the capital of the Abbaside Dynasty” (*The Preaching of Islam*, T. W. Arnold, p. 185).

service to his people, and his sons and grandsons drew such men into their service. From them they chose ministers, governors, generals, doctors and astronomers, etc., and these were Moslems."

Thus it came about that in the days of Marco Polo—which were also the days of Raymond Lull—many Mohammedans occupied positions of influence throughout the Chinese Empire. Mingling with the earlier settlers of the fifth and eighth centuries, they grew into large communities, supplying brains and leadership which were often requisitioned in Government service. Mosques were built, and commerce carried on by sea as well as over the Great Road, many Arab "embassies" coming to bring their merchandise under the name of tribute.

With the commencement of the recent Manchu Dynasty (1644–1912) a remarkable change came over these relations. Intercourse between the Chinese and their Moslem colonists, up to that time peaceful in its character, began to be strained to the breaking point. However it is to be accounted for, rebellions broke out in this province of Kansu, and spread to other provinces, which have continued at longer or shorter intervals up to the present time. In these rebellions literally millions of people have perished, and so terrible have been the excesses perpetrated that the name *Huei-huei* has come to be regarded with horror.

The first of these rebellions, only four years after the commencement of the *Ts'ing* or Manchu Dynasty, was quickly followed by another in the same part of Kansu (not far from the capital) and a third among the Salars in 1785. Then came three rebellions in

Yünnan, the province bordering on Burma. The first of these lasted about a year, the second two years, and the third six years, being suppressed in 1840. These led up to the Great Rebellion in Yünnan, which for eighteen years deluged the province with blood, and the Great Rebellion in Kansu, beginning in the middle of the other and outlasting it by three terrible years.¹

In the Yünnan Rebellion over a million people perished. Trade was largely destroyed, and the province has not yet recovered its former prosperity. In Kansu the desolation was still worse. The population of the province was reduced, Colonel Bell affirms, from fifteen millions to one million—nine out of every ten Chinese having perished and two out of every three Mohammedans. “Rebel bands scoured the country, and great distress, even cannibalism, is said to have prevailed.” In an extended journey through the province he found districts in which “all the villages and farmsteads for miles and miles in all directions were in ruins, and the huge culturable hills were for the most part deserted.”²

This, then, accounted for the ruins that had excited our wonder on the Liangchow plain, and for the deep racial hatred one cannot but be conscious of in the electric atmosphere of the province. Chinese and Moslem, Tibetan and Moslem, are perpetually at daggers drawn, and if it does not

¹ The Panthay Rebellion, as it is called, in Yünnan, lasted from 1855 to 1873; the Tungan Rebellion in Kansu, beginning in 1863, was not brought to a close until 1876.

² The *Asiatic Quarterly Review* for January and July 1896; two articles by Colonel Mark Bell, V.C., C.B.

appear on the surface the danger of a fresh outbreak is never far away.

But we are less concerned with the past and possible future than with the present and its great opportunity. The fact for us, as followers of CHRIST, is that *they are here to-day*, easily accessible—three million Moslems in this one province, ten to twelve millions throughout the empire, and that few if any missionaries are set apart for their evangelisation. There is no society wholly occupied with this problem; no individual even, freed from other claims, giving himself to this supremely difficult enterprise—the adequate presentation of CHRIST and His claims among the followers of Mohammed. What a challenge a city like this, “the Mecca of China,” is to the Christian Church! Whether one thinks of the situation politically, socially or religiously, the call is great and urgent. And the burden on our hearts, on the hearts especially of the missionaries in this province, is that almost nothing is being done to meet it.

Take this important centre of Moslem population, with its fourteen mosques, its theological seminary, its learned Ahongs, familiar with Arabic, Persian and Turkish, its thousands of children growing up in homes where they are trained to avarice and cunning, where women have no liberty, no rights, practically no soul, and too often suffer in mind and body in ways that cannot be described, and let the fact be realised that there is not a single messenger of the saving grace of GOD seeking to bring light into the darkness. There are missionaries in the city—

Mr. and Mrs. Snyder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance—but the fact that they are there for the Chinese and in close contact with them socially cuts them off from the Mohammedans, who regard such contact as defiling. They must have missionaries of their own or none at all, missionaries who will live in the Mohammedan suburb and conform to the usages to which Moslems attach supreme importance, especially abstinence from pork and lard.

Our aim is very practical in calling attention to the need and claims of the Mohammedan millions of this great North-West. They are accessible, friendly in many cases, distraught by internal factions and the bitter hatred of opposing sects, dimly conscious of the failure of their creed to meet the needs of the human heart or the problems of the new order of things in China. Caught in the rapids of this changing time, they are seeking to galvanise their religious system into a life it does not possess, and to make up for its lack of purity and power by education on the one hand, and by a new mysticism and spiritualism on the other. However it may be elsewhere in the great Moslem world, it is certainly a day of opportunity for the Christian missionary in China.

Islam has nothing with which to satisfy conscience and heart. It has no atonement and no Saviour. It has no moral power, therefore, for the uplift either of individual or of family life, the corruptions of which are being recognised as never before by thoughtful Moslems, not only in China.

“We cannot have a very high regard for woman-kind,” writes an Indian Mohammedan, an Oxford

graduate, "with a system which sanctions four wives," and, he might have added, unlimited concubinage. "Polygamy is destructive alike of domestic peace and social purity. Nor can we have a sound basis for family life with our women sunk in the deepest ignorance and a prey to the wildest superstition."

But where is the power that can change men's hearts and make them willing to emancipate womanhood from degrading slavery when their religion encourages licence in its most brutal forms and holds out a paradise in which sensualism reigns supreme?

Tragedies that simply cannot be told lie hidden behind the high blank walls of many a Mohammedan home. Mercifully, here in China, marriages are not consummated as early as in Moslem lands and divorce is not so much a haunting terror, though it may take place for trivial offences and at the will of the husband only. In a Moslem home in Egypt a missionary was pained to see suffering and fear that she could not hide in the face of a little girl under fourteen years of age. There seemed something unnatural about it, but on inquiring what was the matter he could obtain no answer. Finally another girl explained that the father was a poor man and could not keep her at home. "The child was distressed because he was getting her another husband. Her experience with two former husbands had been so horrifying that she dreaded the coming ordeal." Fuller details of what had taken place cannot be given in these pages, but little girls have to endure such torture wherever Islam holds sway, and in Egypt, in spite of British influence, a

Mohammedan doctor asserted that the sufferings entailed were so common that no one took any notice of them.¹

Abandoning woman to such slavery and pandering to the lowest lusts of men, Mohammedanism has no deliverance from sin, no transforming power. Its teachings as to GOD may be a lofty theism, but if its highlands are lifted, as Dr. Henry Jessup puts it, "into the heights of belief in the unity of GOD and comprehension of His glorious attributes, its foothills run down into the sloughs of wickedness and social degradation."

"In the library of a Mohammedan University you meet that contrast on every shelf. Take down books of theology, on GOD and His attributes, His mercy, His compassion, His power, His greatness, His omnipotence, His omniscience, and you can compare them with anything that is taught in a theological seminary on theism; and yet, in those same books you have passages on the traditions and ethics of Islam that are untranslatable because of their vileness."²

Such is the system with which we are face to face here in north-west China, and it needs men of ability as well as devotion, and above all men of prayer and faith, to meet the spiritual foes that are entrenched behind mosque and mullah and Koran. For the strength of Islam lies not in its creed or the bigotry of its adherents. True, they are born fighters, these Kansu Moslems, and in many cases dangerous

¹ See "Islam and Sex Morality" in *The Moslem World* for July 1923, p. 309.

² *The Problems of the Mohammedan World*, by Samuel M. Zwemer, p. 14.

fanatics. "Once a Huei-huei always a Huei-huei" is their proud boast.

"Do you know what we would do to any of our people who embraced your faith?" said one of them to Mr. Andrew with bitterness. "*We would kill him.*"

But there is a stronger than "the strong man armed," and those who know how to bind the arch-enemy through faith in the supreme victory of Calvary can enter even the strong man's house and "spoil his goods."¹

One of Pastor Hsi's fellow-workers in the province of Shansi, an old man who was quite illiterate but full of apostolic power, used to say when faced with seemingly insuperable difficulties: "It is all right—*JESUS is risen from the dead.*" That one fact, the efficacy of which he was daily proving, was the sufficient ground for a confident expectation of victory. "JESUS is risen from the dead: everything He calls us to is possible."

These Moslem millions throughout China may and do present an impossible problem to those who seek their evangelisation. But the Master has commanded it. He is living and on the Throne. That is enough for the believer who is one with Him in death and resurrection and in His place of power at the right hand of God.² While not minimising the difficulties of missionary work in such a centre as this, let us not overestimate them, or lose sight of the victory won, once for all, when "the Son of GOD was manifested that He might destroy the

¹ Luke xi. 21, 22; Mark iii. 27; Isaiah xlix. 24, 25.

² Ephesians i. 18 to ii. 10.

works of the devil." Even here in Hochow we are dealing with a conquered foe, and one who knows it. Fundamentally, under all outward seeming, the Cross has won the field, and, though there may be more or less of suffering for the servant in fellowship with the Master, the eternal outcome is assured.

There is no doubt about the will of GOD with regard to these Mohammedan millions, followers of the false prophet—"GOD our Saviour, who willeth that all men should be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is *one GOD, one Mediator also between GOD and men*, Himself man, CHRIST JESUS, who gave Himself a ransom for all; the testimony to be borne in its own times."¹ And those who follow the movement of His providence, eager to be fellow-workers together with GOD, cannot but believe that His time, His day of grace for this far North-West, for Moslem and Buddhist alike, has indeed come.

As to the part we may each have by faith and prayer—before we leave this East Gate of Hochow will you look down where the houses are less crowded, north of the main street of the suburb? There, by a little stream, is a plot of vacant land waiting for—what do you think? That little plot of land, purchased by Dr. George King of the Borden Memorial Hospital in Lanchow, is a promise and a prophecy. It tells of faith in the doctor's heart that before long the LORD will enable him to open a dispensary there. Well knowing the bigotry of the people, for he has preached to large audiences of Moslems on these streets, he is prepared to come

¹ 1 Timothy ii. 3-6.

over from Lanchow and superintend a settled work to be carried on by his trained students. This means a centre of help and healing to which women and children can come, for the situation is retired, and where in a quiet way the Gospel can be lived as well as preached. There is no building yet, and no fellow-medical, man or woman, in the Lanchow hospital, to free him for this work. But the plot of land is waiting, and we have access to the Throne. Shall we not take it upon our hearts, that funds and needed helpers may be given, and that among the Moslem population of the suburb, hills and plain, including the Salars by the Yellow River, many may be prepared to receive more than healing for the body ?

When Dr. King came with Mr. Mark Botham¹ on the visit that resulted in the purchase of this land, they had stormy times in their inn on the main street of the suburb, and yet wonderful opportunities for preaching the Gospel. Such work needs courage, and the demand it makes upon physical endurance, mental agility and spiritual power ought to call forth our prayerful sympathy. It was a brave venture to announce a series of public lectures on religious topics, but they were not mistaken in thinking that they would get a hearing. The discussions in the inn, where their room was filled

¹ Since this was written, the early and lamented death of Mr. Mark Botham has deprived China of a singularly able worker, possessed of special qualifications for labouring among the Moslems. In view of the urgency of work among the Mohammedans of China, and the scarcity of men qualified for this special ministry, Mr. Botham's death is a loud call for other volunteers.

with eager disputants, became so threatening that the landlord closed his doors, and the evening lectures had to be held on the open street. The visitors had provided themselves with a big acetylene lamp which they managed to suspend in an open place, and there they held their audience of one or two hundred men even when the snow was falling.

For the subjects appealed to their hearers. The first two lectures on Adam and Noah were followed by a medical talk listened to with keenest interest. Then there were lectures on Abraham, Moses and David, and another medical talk before the closing address on the life, death and resurrection of CHRIST. The Moslem has some knowledge of these Old Testament characters, and reckons them among the prophets; he knows too of the life of the LORD JESUS, who appears in the Koran as the prophet "Ersa." But that He is the Son of GOD they utterly deny, saying with vehemence, "Far be it from GOD to have a Son!" They deny also His death upon the Cross, indeed His death at all, saying that Judas was taken and suffered in His stead. "*Verily they crucified Him not*" is the teaching of the Koran and the ingrained belief of every thoughtful Moslem. Mohammedanism thus makes the most of its position historically—the only great world-religion which has sprung up since the Christian era—to deny and seek to supersede the teachings of the Gospel. Mohammed was a greater as well as a later prophet than CHRIST, they say, and the revelations given to him are the last word of GOD.

And yet, plausible as it all is from the Mohammedan point of view, this Saviourless system does

not satisfy their sense of need. It is surely significant, as Dr. Wherry of India points out, that "the history of Moslem theology shows that heterodoxy has nearly always been connected with the desire for a mediator." This longing for an intercessor, an intermediary—never to be met by a dead prophet who acknowledged himself a sinner—has come to the front again in a remarkable movement originating in this very province. Its founder, Ma Sheng-ren, was the great leader killed in the earthquake in December 1920. But the sect he established, known as the Djeheriya, has spread far and wide throughout China.

"One of the essential differences between its teachings and that of orthodox Mohammedans," Mr. Mark Botham writes, "is that its members are deeply impressed by the need for a mediator. It is condemned by Moslems generally, largely on this account. During my visit to Peking (1921) I visited the mosque which is the centre for the worship of the sect in that district. I was received most cordially and pressed to come and live in the mosque during my stay in the capital. . . . The leader in that district said, in the course of conversation, that he considered that this sect was more like Christianity than any other sect of Mohammedanism, because they felt that *for a man to be able to go into the presence of God there must be a man to lead him*. I was received most cordially by members of the sect in every place in which I found them." ¹

¹ From Mr. Botham's deeply interesting report of a recent journey of investigation, in course of which he visited all the large Moslem communities in the eastern provinces.

“ Then there is an atonement for sin ! ” exclaimed a Mohammedan leader, listening for the first time to the Gospel—“ the words are sweeter than honey ! ”

What is needed most of all, if this saving consciousness is to be brought home to many others still in the darkness of Islam ? Prayer, we would answer assuredly, much prayer for the work of the Holy Spirit, and that to the Moslems of China may be given missionaries who shall be lovers not only of the souls of men but lovers of the Cross. Money for their support will be no difficulty if only the right men and women are forthcoming.

“ Our hope is in the Cross,” as a writer in *The Moslem World* well puts it. “ Our fear is lest we should seek to escape it. The Crusaders denied the Cross by taking up the sword. ‘ The sword, even used defensively,’ says Kesley Page, ‘ means the attempt to kill the guilty for the sake of the innocent. The Cross symbolises the willingness of the innocent to die for the guilty.’ The sword produces brutality, the Cross tenderness ; the sword destroys human life, the Cross gives life priceless value ; the sword deadens conscience, the Cross awakens it ; the sword ends in hatred, the Cross in love ; he that takes up the sword perishes by it, he that takes up the Cross inherits life eternal.

“ In winning Moslem lands for CHRIST, the call is for men and women who will follow the way of the Cross with the same courage and abandon with which the soldier serves his country. The sword or the Cross ; self-assertion or self-denial ; might or meekness ; carnal weapons or methods of crucifixion—such are the alternatives. The friends of GOD,

the real friends of humanity, who share the humiliation of the Cross, cannot be defeated.

“ The print of the nails, the mark of the spear, are still the supreme evidence of CHRIST'S resurrection power and deity and the test of our discipleship. The call is for men and women who will *now* offer themselves and their substance for this sacrificial service.”

CHAPTER XVI

“ IF IT WERE NOT . . . ”

IT is easy to be misleading in writing briefly about places and people that are much on one's heart, and to convey an impression that is incomplete. It may be that the reader who has travelled with us thus far scarcely realises how poor and unattractive our Kansu is in some respects. In winter, where it is not covered with snow, the country is one monotonous brown—bare brown hills of loess soil, which yield poor crops compared with the rich plains of other provinces. The mud-built walls and houses are brown, and so are the mud-made roads and mud-coloured people, as to their clothing at any rate. They are so poor in the villages that many of the children only possess one short upper garment, and have to huddle together on the brick-beds heated with flues to keep themselves from freezing.¹ At noon when the sun is hot they come out for an hour or two, and one sees them by the roadside, quite naked but for a ragged jacket, standing about

¹ The fuel used to heat these *k'angs* is often nothing but withered leaves, straw and sun-dried manure, and chimneys are commonly dispensed with, so that one may be literally smoked out while the *k'ang* is being warmed, and there is always more or less smell and grime.

barefoot in the snow with a shade temperature below zero. It is a comfort to know that, as a rule, they have enough to eat, potatoes, wheat and oats being raised in sufficient quantities to support the population, save in districts where such crops are replaced by opium.

We have already touched upon the lack of outward polish characteristic of many Kansu people. It accompanies a somewhat dour and independent disposition which is not always easy to deal with. The climate also is stimulating, too much so for many people's nerves. The cities lie at an altitude of five, six and seven thousand feet, and the wonderful air has a disconcerting effect, at times, on one's temper. People get sleepless, nervous, irritable, and the difficulties incident to the work are increased.

Then the long journeys are a great strain physically. The roughness of the frozen roads in winter, the clouds of dust mile after mile in summer, and the mud-holes in which the cart may stick for hours in rainy weather, are apt to become monotonous. Without braving the highest passes, there are mountains everywhere to be crossed, and that by the poorest of roads. Kansu is one stormy sea of mountains; and as to the inns at night, it is not always one can endorse the tribute of the Chinese traveller who wrote over the brick-bed, in a filthy room with no window, "*Shen wo fuh ti*"—"The body reposes in a delightful place!"

But these are small matters compared with the trials that come in the work itself—friction between fellow-workers, coldness and backsliding in the

church, opposition from outsiders or a stony indifference to the Gospel. To those best acquainted with the province, Kansu seems very specially a region “ where Satan’s seat is.” It is a stronghold of Mohammedanism as we have seen—bitter, bigoted Mohammedanism in places; and the remainder of its population is given up to idolatry. There are districts in which most of the men as well as the women belong to religious societies pledged to worship in the temples frequently, at stated intervals. The influence of lamaism is felt throughout large sections of the province, that most oppressive and degrading of all forms of Buddhism and the most actively opposed to the Gospel. And amid all this there is the isolation, if not loneliness and discouragement, incidental to missionary life in so inaccessible and lonely a region. Not without reason did a veteran missionary say, after many years’ work in the province, “ If it were not that CHRIST has a hold upon us, some of us would have run away from this work long ago.” But then, CHRIST *has* a hold upon us—that means everything.¹

One encouraging feature of the work as a whole is the spirit of unity that exists between the two or three societies occupying the field. For many years the China Inland Mission was alone in the province, and it was a good day for all concerned when it was joined by the Christian and Missionary Alliance from America, one of whose pioneers, Mr. W. Christie, is now the beloved Superintendent

¹ His “ calling . . . purpose and grace ” need never be separated (2 Timothy i. 8-12).

of the C. and M.A. district. A glance at the map accompanying this volume will show the division of the field between these societies, an important section to the east being worked by the Scandinavian Alliance, in affiliation with the C.I.M.

It is to the more populous part of the province, east of the capital, that we would in closing direct attention, with its fifty governing cities, representing as many counties. *Forty of these cities are still without a missionary*—fourteen in the Scandinavian Alliance district, eighteen to the west and south of it, and eight to the north, on the plains near the Yellow River.

Far from the Great Road, this north-eastern corner of the province has been peculiarly isolated and difficult to reach. There is little traffic on the Yellow River, except when great rafts go down composed of lumber from the Tibetan border, and passengers can engage one of the log cabins or huts which form a little street down the middle of the raft, supplementing for themselves such food as the captain provides. But the rafts do not come up-stream. The lumber is sold when they reach the busy mart of Pao-tow-chen, to which point the railway is being extended from Peking. Hitherto the missionaries at Ningsia have been thirteen days' journey from the nearest foreigners by the overland route to Lanchow, and it has been one of the most isolated stations of the mission. But before long, if the project of continuing the railway into Kansu is realised, Ningsia will be brought within a couple of days of Peking, and will be the most accessible city in the province. Great changes will necessarily

follow, and Mr. and Mrs. Fiddler and Mrs. Nyström (C.I.M.), who have held the fort alone so long, will have many visitors.

Meanwhile they have the privilege of being the only witnesses for CHRIST in the city of Ningsia, whose wall, seven to eight miles in circumference, bears witness to its former greatness. The work has always been difficult, partly on account of the terrible past, which cannot but have left its mark on the character of the people. For in the Great Mohammedan Rebellion (1863-76) Ningsia was the scene of the worst excesses. It was taken first by the Moslems with terrible slaughter, then retaken after a long siege by the Imperial troops, who put the entire Moslem population to the sword. None escaped ; and in that section, once largely occupied by Moslems, there are only small communities of some scores of families to-day, and these are new arrivals. The city was left in ruins, and the consequent commercial as well as social and moral reaction is slow to pass away.

The well-irrigated, fertile plains along the Yellow River present a more hopeful field for evangelistic work. Though not able ourselves to visit the district, we learned not a little of its possibilities from Mr. Mark Botham, who had taken advantage of a journey to Ningsia to do a good deal of evangelistic work by the way. For three days south of Ningsia and four days north of it, it was delightful to see the prosperity of the plain. East of the Yellow River the mountains are so distant as to be out of sight, and scarcely a stone was to be found on the rich, well-watered land. The whole was populous ;

over large areas he was never out of sight of farm-houses, and this seems characteristic of the country wherever irrigation is possible from the Yellow River.

And the people of this district are peculiarly accessible on account of their habit of repairing to the large market-towns, one after the other in regular rotation, at intervals of three days. The markets are held on the third, sixth, ninth, etc., of the month, and the farmers follow them round to buy and sell. The missionary, who with his books and tracts could do the same, would meet most of the people of the district without going beyond these market-towns. It forms a splendid field for working in this way, and Mr. Botham found *crowds* willing to listen. He had with him large coloured pictures of Scripture subjects, the Good Shepherd, the Prodigal Son, etc., and used them with great effect. The speaking, of course, was all in the open air, hour after hour, from morning till night. The people forgot that they "could not understand the foreigner's words," and became intensely interested, and many of them very friendly. Some of these markets are larger than the cities of the district, and all are open, waiting—as they have waited so long—for messengers of the Glad Tidings.

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"—does it not apply to these plains? Mohammedans have not been slow to push the claims of their prophet. Up in the Ningsia district Mr. Botham found copies of the Koran (Arabic) nicely bound in red cloth with a flap to tuck in—foreign style—which had been brought by

colporteurs all the way from India. Printed by one of the Mohammedan Forward Movements in that country, they had been sent right across Central Asia, down the Great Road and the Yellow River—painfully carried over deserts and mountains for thousands of miles—and sold on these plains by Indian missionaries who could speak but little Chinese. One of them died alone up here by the Yellow River. And we who know the Living CHRIST, who are His in deepest allegiance, have we no way of reinforcing the only man who is seeking to reach out from Ningsia to the perishing multitudes on these plains, and finds it beyond his power? He has more than one man's work in and around the city, and is doing it faithfully with help from Mrs. Fiddler and Mrs. Nyström. A preaching hall they have recently opened in one large town is filled with willing hearers. But such work might be multiplied indefinitely were there more prayer-power behind it and more preachers.

The same is true of the Scandinavian Alliance district immediately to the south, where the population is largely Mohammedan. In that region, it will be remembered, the earthquake was at its worst, leaving death and destruction behind it over a large area. From the city of Kuyüan twenty-four cart-loads of desperately wounded people were sent down to Mr. Törnvall at Pingliang—the central station of the Alliance in this province, where there is an admirable hospital waiting for a doctor. Mr. Törnvall, the senior missionary in the district, has a great reputation as a physician and surgeon. So

large is his practice that he has gradually added ward after ward to his hospital premises, until now they are almost as perfect as the beautiful church recently erected on the same property. But it is difficult for one man, however gifted, to carry on both church and hospital, especially as Mr. Törnvall is not a doctor by profession. With the help of his son, Mr. Gustav Törnvall, he is doing a far-reaching work, but a qualified medical man is urgently needed, and would find Pingliang on the Great Road a splendid centre from which to reach the many cities in the Alliance district still without a missionary.

Two new stations have been opened since the earthquake by Mr. Törnvall's fellow-workers—the cities of Kuyüan and Tsingningchow, in which there was more suffering and loss of life than in any other places in the province. It was near the former that the Mohammedan leader, Ma Sheng-ren, was killed, with thousands of his co-religionists, when the mountains flowed down and filled up the valleys for many a mile. Mr. and Mrs. Swenson with their children are living now amid the ruins of Kuyüan, and are finding many whose hearts are open to receive the comfort of the Gospel. The same is true of Tsingningchow, where Miss Wedicson and Miss Skollenberg are working. The Mandarin who behaved so heroically at the time of the earthquake has been promoted to higher office in another part of the province. But the ladies have the goodwill of all classes in the city, and there too a new church is growing up in the midst of a district largely Moslem. Shall we not pray that it may include many followers of Islam who in the time of their need

found no help or comfort save from those who came to them for love of CHRIST with His saving message ?

Southward from the Scandinavian Alliance district we come to the corner of the province in which missionary work was first begun. The chief city in this district was occupied long before we thought of travelling to Kansu by the Great Road. Pioneer missionaries at that time came from Hanchungfu, a journey of eleven days on pack-animals or in sedan-chairs, crossing ranges of beautifully wooded mountains. This was the route by which Miss Wilson of Kendal travelled when she accompanied Mrs. George Parker as a bride to the city of Tsinchow, and those two had the honour, amid hardship and loneliness, of being the first missionaries to the women of Kansu.

That was more than forty years ago, and the field in which there were long years of patient sowing has proved fruitful above many. North, south, east and west the work has spread, and there are Christians now in more than thirty centres. It was our privilege to spend some weeks with Mr. and Mrs. Rist and their fellow-workers, and to meet not a few well-established Christians and Chinese leaders.

We were gathering for breakfast one morning at the ladies' house, when a middle-aged man stopped Miss Garland in the courtyard, with a list of names in his hand.

“ It is the colporteur,” she said. “ I must not keep him waiting. It is probably about relief for people left homeless through the earthquake.”

Presently she joined us, looking surprised and

happy. She told us that the colporteur, whose name is K'ang, used to be a necromancer and none too good a character. Now he is a true, earnest Christian, and keen about soul-winning.

“ And what do you think the list was? Not names for relief at all, but a whole series of people he wants me to pray for. He has been up in the Tsinan district, and to his delight has come across many in the city and neighbourhood who seem to believe the Gospel. ‘ Please pray for them one by one,’ he said, giving me particulars. ‘ They truly desire to follow the LORD JESUS.’ ”

This led to our hearing the story of this important but strongly anti-foreign city. Years ago, Miss Kinahan had made a brave attempt to get an opening there. Despite crowding and discomfort, she stayed for three weeks in an inn, but only to find that she could do little or nothing. An unwritten law of the place seems to be that no woman is allowed on the principal streets. It is considered not so much bad for their morals as *bad for business*, and the shopkeepers will not have it! Thus women could not come to the inn, and when Miss Kinahan went out she was only once invited into a house all the while she was there. But her prayers have not been unanswered.

The time came when “ White Wolf ” and his brigands gained possession of the city. Amid the looting and carnage a wealthy woman was trying to protect her only son. He was shot in her arms, the bullet seriously wounding her also. Heart-broken and in great suffering, she managed to come in a day's journey to Tsinchow, having heard that

the missionaries in this centre were caring for the wounded. Here she was received into the ladies' house and made to feel so much at home that she stayed for three months. Touched by the kindness shown her, she found healing for soul as well as body. When she returned to Tsinan she begged Mrs. Rist and Miss Garland to come and stay with her, an invitation they were not slow to accept.

That three weeks was very different from Miss Kinahan's visit. They found themselves welcomed into a pleasant home on a residential street, where women could come freely. Their room was crowded from morning till night, many staying on after dark to hear more quietly. Mrs. Liu compassed them with hospitality, but they hardly had time to do justice to the tempting meals, on account of the number of visitors who wanted to hear the Gospel. For these women did not waste time in idle questions. The foreigners were much like themselves, wearing their dress and speaking their words. It was the message they wanted to hear, the wonderful story of Redeeming Love. Many of them were vegetarians for the sake of obtaining merit, but found in it nothing to satisfy hungry, fearful hearts. So they listened eagerly to the Glad Tidings of merit not our own, but Another's; righteousness not to be worked for or purchased with money, but received through faith.

Again and again the visit was repeated, and each time the ladies found remarkable openings. Something was being done for the men also, Dr. Ts'ao, the earnest deacon of the Tsinchow church, having sent a man over to open a medicine shop who was

as good as an evangelist. He was an attractive personality and made many friends. The shop was almost a street-chapel, and the tall, fine-looking young man preaching CHRIST behind his counter made an impression on the people of the street. Inquirers began to gather, and Sunday services were held, which promised well for the future. But, sad to say, the young preacher developed the disease which is carrying off so many thousands in China, tuberculosis. It is about three years since he died of rapid consumption.

Mr. Rist was able to send out an evangelist at that time who did good work. A couple of rooms were secured in a busy suburb of the city, and some of the inquirers were baptized. The man whose roof fell during the earthquake, burying eight people—none of whom were injured—was one of these, a real centre of light in his village ten miles from the city. But the evangelist too had to leave the work, recalled by still more pressing claims, and the Christians are a little flock without a shepherd.

Yet the LORD is working in the district. Scattered believers have been met with here and there, some of whom heard the Gospel in Mrs. Liu's home years ago, and some who heard from the young medicine-seller. Mrs. Liu herself has gone to be with the LORD, and it is much harder for the women now that they have not her house to meet in. Somewhat discouraged on a later visit in trying to find old friends, Miss Garland met a lady who proved to be a sister of Mrs. Liu's, and who carried her off to her own home. She and her husband were both earnest vegetarians, and with one of their sons and four young daughters-

in-law listened attentively to the Gospel. The old gentleman and lady were so interested that they came to the chapel and began to attend the Sunday services. Passing their door one day, Miss Garland was stopped.

“ Do come in again,” they said, “ if only for a few minutes, just to teach us to pray.”

It was a great advance when, during Miss Garland's last visit, women began to come to the Sunday services. Very shy at first, they plucked up courage to face the busy streets, though the shopkeepers cursed them as they passed. For two weeks she had the place crowded with visitors and the *k'ang* packed on Sunday for the meetings. And how the women did enjoy the teaching and the hymns! That district north of Tsinchow seems just ready for the reaper, but, with so many other places to visit, it is but rarely the missionaries can take the long journey over the mountains. It would be an admirable centre for two women who could live there among the people and follow up the work that the Spirit of GOD is manifestly doing in many hearts.

And there are other places within fifty miles of Tsinchow where such workers are needed. Ten regular chapels have been opened in widely-separated centres, some of which have as many as sixty baptized church members, while others have only few as yet but a growing number of inquirers. Take, for example, the town of Sweet Fountain Monastery with the seventy villages that send their produce there to market. A few years ago there was not a single Christian in that

neighbourhood; now, in out-of-the-way places among the hills, many a little company is found. One whole village seems to be turning to the LORD, and in the town itself there are twenty-two church members. The premises they use for worship have been obtained largely at their own cost, and in addition to the chapel they have rooms for visitors.

When Miss Susie Garland first went to this place, a day's journey east of Tsinchow, there was no friend to visit and no welcome. She and the Bible-woman put up at an inn, and it was almost with a start she saw over the door of their room, "Greetings from H. W. Hunt," in large, bold writing—a paper nailed up by a missionary who had been there long years before. Rain poured down after their arrival, and the Bible-woman, who had gone to a neighbouring village, could not get back for the night. Miss Garland was wondering whether she would have to sleep alone, when an old lady who had come to see her said kindly :

"You will be lonesome in this big, dark room. I will stay with you for the night."

So it was arranged, and the two sat together on the heated brick-bed, but before long the old lady began to get restless.

"I must go home," she said. "I must go home!"

Miss Garland, who guessed the reason, answered quietly :

"There is no need to go home. You can pray to the LORD JESUS here on this *k'ang*, and He will deliver you from your opium-craving."

"Will He really?"

“ Yes, if you believe in Him and ask Him to do so.”

They prayed together and went to rest, and the old lady slept peacefully till morning. Then she was very much astonished.

“ Certainly your GOD has power ! ” she exclaimed. “ I do believe in Him, and will be His follower.”

From that time she set herself to learn, and soon broke her vegetarian vow of many years' standing. She gave up opium-smoking with very little help from medicine, and became not only a warm friend but an earnest helper to the missionaries. She was well off, possessing a beautiful stretch of forest land, with an inn and several houses, twelve miles to the south of Sweet Fountain Monastery, as well as her home in the town itself. Nothing would satisfy her but that the missionaries should go out there to rest among the mountains and help her tell the Glad Tidings, for there were many farmsteads in the valleys round about.

So one hot season they went, and found to their surprise a little Paradise—yes, even in Kansu ! High up among the hills, they were in the midst of beautiful woods with real forest trees. Streams were abundant, clear rushing torrents, shaded by banks of maiden-hair and other ferns. The lilies growing wild over the mountains were exquisite in beauty and fragrance, and there were strawberries, cherries, and blackberries in abundance. There were wolves, too, in the forest, and even leopards, but happily they kept out of sight. Not so the snakes—great beautiful things that probably came after the wild pheasants. They were wonderfully handsome, but

it was a little uncanny to have a whole family of them under the floor of one's bedroom, and to find that they must be spoken of with respect, lest they should be offended! They were poisonous, but well-behaved on the whole, and the people never dreamed of killing them.

In this beautiful neighbourhood it was a joy to find remarkable readiness to hear the Gospel. The visitors were kept busy, old Mrs. Ch'ao always having some one she wanted to take them to, or some one she wanted to bring to the meetings. There are now baptized believers in five or six places connected with Sweet Fountain, and the number of inquirers increases steadily. Not a few of these have been won through the healing in answer to prayer of men and women suffering from demon-possession, such cases being sadly common there among the mountains. One of the first was Mrs. Chang of Tao-huei, who had been possessed for years, and whose whole family were in terror of the spirit. If it was offended, some disaster was sure to happen—accident or fire, sickness and even death, traceable to no other cause. This woman had a married daughter living at Sweet Fountain, who with her husband had been led to faith in CHRIST.

“If my mother could only hear about the Saviour,” she said again and again, “she would be delivered from the evil power.”

At length the son-in-law went off over the mountains to tell the Chang family all he could about the Gospel. They had never heard before, and gladly welcomed any hope of deliverance. The father consented to the idols being destroyed, and when

this was done they knelt down to give themselves to the true and living GOD. They prayed in all simplicity that the evil spirit might depart from their home and trouble them no more. It was a real cry, an earnest cry, in the Name that is above every name, and the answer was just what they longed for. From that hour Mrs. Chang was completely delivered. She could sleep in peace and go about her work unafraid. At first her mind was dull and slow when she tried to learn. But the distress and apprehension, the evil suggestions and attacks of frenzy, were all gone. And very soon her memory improved and her whole personality brightened. For a time her husband's backwardness troubled her.

“ I know that he believes,” she said, “ but he will not pray.”

Now he too is making progress, and both are baptized members of the Church.

The first time Miss Garland went to their home she had an unusual experience. She found it beautifully situated among the hills, and received a royal welcome. Food had been preparing all day, and after a supper that was indeed a feast the women wanted a meeting. It was the biggest of big rooms, and the visitor's candle at one end made a circle of light, while the rest was practically in darkness. Soon the great *k'ang* was crowded with women, eagerly listening and leaning forward. Miss Garland knew that there would probably be a few men near the door, but forgot all about them as she talked on and on in the unusual silence. Such attention she had rarely met with, and the matchless Story was told in all its fullness. It was only when the hour

was late and some one lifted the candle to make a move, that she found the whole room full of men, who had been listening with as much interest as the women. When they saw her astonishment they came forward, bowed and thanked her, and began to ask that she would come to all their homes. Very many wanted help in cases of demon-possession, and some of the stories she heard were indeed pitiful. Next day she was taken to house after house, and was encouraged to find that several people had already been healed in answer to the prayers of the Christians. In one big room crowded with men and women she had a good opportunity of telling of Him who came "that He might destroy the works of the devil."

"*Kiao-sze tso ih-ko tao-kao*," the people said: "Teacher, make a prayer for us."

This she did in place after place, not only praying for them but teaching them to pray. And still the work is going on. On Sunday the Christians attend the service at Sweet Fountain Monastery and learn what they can, but they look forward to the visits of the missionaries from the city as times of special help. Alas, that these can only come so rarely!

Much might be told of other places, and of the difficulties that come to the missionary in charge of such a district. Mr. and Mrs. Rist, away on furlough after years of devoted service, are being replaced by Mr. and Mrs. Whitelaw, who specially need our prayers, being new to the province. From an equally needy district in the south of China, which did not suit Mr. Whitelaw's health, they have come to take up the burden—for burden it is, much

as the missionary loves the work. Think of it : not only the central church with its schools and out-stations, but the unreached population of Tsinchow itself, which is more like five cities strung together than one, and the great unevangelised south-east of the province stretching away on all sides ! Fifteen governing cities in that part of the province are still without a missionary, each one the capital of a county.

Let us come in thought to one of these, the chief city in a populous region south of Tsinchow. On the hills around it are several famous temples, and the place is a noted centre for demon-worship. Spiritism holds the people in fear, and so many were the planchette associations that they were suppressed not long since by the Government, on account of the harm they were doing among all classes. It is in this city of Siho that the men as well as the women are bound together in organised societies for idol worship. In one of these, no fewer than fifteen hundred women are solemnly pledged to go to a certain temple on the hills to burn incense twice every month.

Picture the scene as Miss Susie Garland describes it—when they kneel, hundreds of them at a time, inside and outside the temple, facing the great gilded idol. Each one holds a long stick of incense between the hands raised reverently to the forehead. There they kneel in silence, while slowly, slowly, the incense burns away and prayers are chanted before the unconscious image.

In that same city a Christian died not long since

with the words on his lips: "I am tasting the fragrant love of CHRIST." How many more might enter into that blessedness if only missionaries with loving hearts could come and live among them!

CHAPTER XVII

WITH THE DAWN

WE are moving forward with the dawn. Day is beginning to break over these distant regions. The Call of this great North-west as we apprehend it is twofold: it is not only the call of the need, but that GOD is working to meet that need in these days as never before. "When thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees," He said to David long ago, "then thou shalt bestir thyself: for then shall the LORD go out before thee. . . ." ¹ That sound of "a going," an unmistakable moving of GOD's providence, is heard throughout Kansu to-day.

Even since the chapters of this book were written in their first form—written immediately upon leaving the province—changes have come that remarkably confirm this impression. Had it been published then, it would have lacked much of its message. But now, delayed through our experiences with brigands in Yunnan and by the publication of that story, it comes out at a time when in answer to prayer the evangelisation of the far North-west is taking a distinct step forward.

¹ 2 Samuel v. 24.

Was it ten years ago, at Cairo, that the change began to come? Something happened then connected with Kansu and the Moslems of North-west China that seemed deeply mysterious. Full of life and hope, William Borden of Chicago, having completed his course at Yale and graduated from Princeton Seminary, had set out upon his missionary career. Sane, strong, richly equipped as to gifts and training, he was also the possessor of wealth which was equally consecrated to the LORD he loved. Rarely does a young man enter upon his life-work with so great promise of usefulness. For Borden was a missionary already—one of the founders of the Yale Hope Mission, and skilled as a “fisher of men.” It was to the Moslems of Kansu his life was given, as an accepted worker in the China Inland Mission.

And then, in the midst of his Arabic studies in the language-school at Cairo, where he was throwing all his heart into preparation for his far-off field, the call came—“Come up higher.” Borden was ready. In the short span of five-and-twenty years he had accomplished more than many of us in a lifetime. Above all, he had learned to know the divine Master and Friend whom he loved with an undivided heart and served with uncompromising loyalty. To him it was “all joy,” though the waters of suffering ran deep and the task he had ardently prepared for had to be laid down. With the news of his early death a shock of surprise and sorrow came to countless hearts, for Borden was known and loved round the world. How could it be? what could it mean from the point of view of the work to be done? Such a

life—cut short in its usefulness! Such need in his chosen field—unmet, forgotten!

Forgotten of men it might be, but not of GOD. When William Borden fell in Cairo, fell as a corn of wheat into the ground, was it not to “bear much fruit” according to His faithful promise? “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”¹ There was no mistake, no failure in GOD’S purpose, no loss even for Kansu, though that new-made grave in Cairo seemed to say that Borden’s work was done.

That was ten years ago—April 1913. What would the young missionary have accomplished in these ten years if he had gone to China? He would have learned Chinese and probably Arabic, would have seen something of his chosen field, have begun to get into touch with the people, Moslems especially, and to grapple with the problem they present. He would be ready, now, for the larger responsibilities of his life-work. And what *has* been accomplished in these ten years, apart from any human foresight or planning? Things have moved slowly, but changes have come that are startling us now with the sense of a power at work making for advance. All along the line it may be seen. From the railway reaching out toward Ningsia to the new stations

¹ John xii. 24-26.

occupied on the Tibetan border ; from the " Western Gate of China," included now in a new mission district, to the openness of the Moslems in large areas as a result of the earthquake, all tells the same story—some power making for advance.

Perhaps the most encouraging of these developments has been that of independent Chinese missionary effort. It is a new thing in Kansu to have the Gospel carried far afield by Chinese Christians, unpaid and unsent save by the Spirit of GOD. Dr. Kao was the first, and it is a joy to record that the work at Kanchow grows and deepens. In August 1921 the first baptisms took place, when a little church was formed with seventeen members, two of whom were women. Now there are more than eighty inquirers, and it is all that Dr. Kao can do to shepherd the flock and make time for prayer, without which he realises there is no spiritual power. He speaks in a recent letter of rising at night to pray, and of longing above everything else that GOD would make him and keep him a man of prayer. Meanwhile the light is spreading and there are no fewer than thirteen places around Kanchow in which the Christians are at work.

Very different is another line of advance—that of the forcible opening, on this Kansu border, of the long-closed gates of Tibet. For Tibet is open, though the fact is little known as yet. The Mohammedan Governor, Ma Ch'i, with his foreign-drilled troops, has been more than a match for the brave but poorly-armed Golok tribes who even when we were in Sining were still independent of China. In the

winter of 1921-22 he sent an expedition with quick-firing guns, etc., against these wild Tibetans—tribes ruled by their own kings and in one case a queen—and, of course, crushed their desperate resistance. Now they are subject to the dreaded Governor at Sining, who has thrown open their country to Chinese and other travellers, settlers, merchants, and even missionaries. He has established post offices out there in the Golok country, and is building three Chinese cities far in Tibetan territory. For sixteen days' journey from Sining the country is more open, now, than we are ready to enter.

Though in this matter also progress has been made. For years the devoted workers of the Christian and Missionary Alliance have been seeking to gain a footing among the Tibetan population of the borderland. Twenty to thirty Tibetan converts are gathered in their stations, and in one place a lamasery has been turned into a Christian church. And now, since we were in the province, they have been enabled to open *three new Tibetan stations*, in which the work will be carried on entirely in the Tibetan language. These stations are all near the border, and are regarded as stepping-stones for a further advance.

In the far north, too, out on the great road to Central Asia, the C. and M.A. are following the Guiding Hand. Years of prayer have prepared the way, and only this summer (1923) it has been decided that Mr. and Mrs. Mosely are to occupy the important city of Suchow near the Western Gate of China. *Six days beyond Kanchow*, this city is the starting-point for caravans that go out across the Gobi Desert

to Hami and Tihwafu, where Mr. Hunter and Mr. Mather are working. What will it mean to them to hear that Kansu missionaries are at last following up their brave lead?

And then in a distant province of North China, in the district and one of the very cities in which Pastor Hsi laboured, the LORD has been preparing, through long years, gifted and experienced workers to break new ground in this long-neglected Kansu. Who could have imagined in reading Miss Cable's book, *The Fulfilment of a Dream*, or in visiting the station of which it tells, that the ladies at the head of that great work would be called to leave their home and schools and the hundreds of Christians, even thousands in the country round, to go out as evangelists pure and simple, to carry the gospel of redeeming grace to those who have never heard? Miss Cable and the Misses French have trained hundreds of Christian workers, school-teachers, and Bible-women, who in their turn are reaching thousands. After fruitful years in educational work, crowned with unusual success from the spiritual point of view, their heart's desire is being granted—they are evangelists again, privileged to go to one of the scores of waiting cities in Kansu that have never had a missionary. Could you not envy them the joy, mixed though it is sure to be with much of hardship and trial?

Hardly can we realise that, even since we left Kansu, GOD'S time has come for advance not only in the north and west but also in the east and south of the province. Two new stations now being opened by our own mission will give access to large

and hitherto untouched districts—the city of Pingfan on the Great Road, and that of Hweihsien, south of Tsinchow, the oldest station in the province. This means that one of the forty governing cities east of the capital, that have never had a missionary, will shortly be occupied, D.V.

And in one other of these forty cities, experienced missionaries are now at work—for to Chungwei, on the Yellow River, Mr. and Mrs. Elliott from California have just come. Near them, in a busy town to the south of the river, Mr. and Mrs. Jamieson also have settled, kindling the first light on that populous plain.

Then from the recently occupied stations of the Scandinavian Alliance district come tidings of a manifest working of the Spirit of God. At Tsingningchow the ladies who went to give help at the time of the earthquake are finding openings on every hand, and from Kuyüan we hear of over a hundred inquirers. When one remembers that the population is largely Mohammedan, this is cause indeed for thanksgiving. At the very time of writing these words the first Christian Conference (three days) is meeting in that city, during which the first baptismal service is, D.V., to be held.

“ We are so glad to have come to this needy field of Kansu,” Mrs. Swenson writes. “ The LORD has given us open doors in Kuyüan and its large district. Much more could be done if there were more workers. The meetings are well attended; even quite a number of women come, and some really believe in the LORD JESUS as their Saviour. What joy it is to bring the good tidings of salvation to those who sit in darkness !

So many seem to have entirely lost faith in idol-worship since the earthquake, and they are longing for something to take its place. What a time of opportunity for the neglected province of Kansu ! ”

Even the Mohammedans of this great field are being thought of and prayed for as never before. An advance has been prayerfully determined on, about which it is not wise to say more at present—save that the time has come to pray for men called and prepared of GOD to occupy more than one strategic centre that it is hoped will shortly be opened.

These things are certainly new and largely unexpected. Does it not seem as if some new prayer-power must have been at work ? For these widespread, disconnected happenings, touching all parts of the province and all the missions working in that field, have not come about through organisation or concerted planning. There must be prayer-power behind it all. Such movements do not develop apart from prayer, much prayer. Quiet like the coming of spring, the change is upon us almost before we realise that anything is happening. And, like the coming of spring, it is only the foretaste of what summer will bring. Tibet shall yet open its gates, and Islam its heart. Oh, in this day of opportunity let us press forward, and let us thank GOD that though He took William Borden He did not silence his prayers ! Borden was a man of prayer. All through his college career he was a missionary, working mighty changes in men's lives by prayer. To him, prayer was life : he lived to pray. And can we

doubt but that closer access to the throne of GOD would mean for him a deeper fellowship in the intercessions of CHRIST? Borden's prayer-life was born of fellowship with CHRIST, fed by a growing knowledge of and likeness to Him. May it not have found fuller, freer exercise in His unclouded presence?

And is not *this* the call of Kansu, Tibet, and Central Asia for us to-day? GOD is working—and humbles Himself to seek and wait for our co-operation. What shall our answer be?

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power.”

“The restless millions wait
The light whose dawning
Maketh all things new :
Christ also waits—
But men are slow and few.
Have we done all we could ?
Have I, have you ? ”

APPENDIX A

THE IMMURED MONKS OF TIBET

IN his fascinating record of the British Mission to Lhasa under Col. Sir Francis Younghusband, published in 1905, the Special Correspondent of the *Times* who accompanied the expedition wrote of a visit to the monastery of Nyen-dé-kyi-buk, twelve miles west of Gyantse, more than half way to Lhasa from Darjeeling. The monastery belonged to the Nying-ma Sect of lamas, who practise immurement. This horrible self-immolation is said to be voluntary. The young monks are immured first for six months. They are then left at liberty for a time. The second period is for three years and ninety-three days. The third period is for life.

“Only this morning,” said the Abbot to Mr. Percival Landon, “a hermit died here after living in darkness for twenty-five years.”

It is hard to believe that such cruelties can be practised, but Mr. Landon and his companion were taken to see all that could be seen of one of these ascetics.

“We climbed about forty feet,” Mr. Landon wrote, “and the Abbot led us into a small courtyard which had blank walls all round it, over which a peach-tree reared its transparent pink and white against the sky. Almost on a level with the ground there was an opening closed with a flat stone from behind. In front of this window was a ledge eighteen inches in width, with two basins beside it, one at each end. The Abbot was attended by an acolyte, who, by his master’s orders, tapped three

times sharply on the stone slab ; we stood in the little courtyard in the sun and watched that wicket with cold apprehension. I think, on the whole, it was the most uncanny thing I saw in all Tibet. What on earth was going to appear when that stone slab, which even then was beginning weakly to quiver, was pushed aside, the wildest conjecture could not suggest.

“After half a minute’s pause the stone moved, or tried to move, but it came to rest again. Then very slowly and uncertainly it was pushed back and a black chasm was revealed. There was again a pause of thirty seconds during which imagination ran riot, but I do not think any other thing could have been as pathetic as that which we actually saw. A hand, muffled in a tightly-wound piece of dirty cloth, for all the world like the stump of an arm, was painfully thrust up, and very weakly it felt along the slab. After a fruitless fumbling, the hand slowly quivered back again into the darkness. A few moments later there was again one ineffectual effort, and then the stone moved noiselessly across the opening. Once a day water and an unleavened cake of flour is placed for the prisoner upon that slab, the signal is given, and he may take it in. His diversion is over for the day ; and in the darkness of his cell, where night and day, noon, sunset and the dawn are all alike, he, poor soul, had thought that another day of his long penance was over.”

Lhassa, vol. i. p. 222.

APPENDIX B

WHAT IS A " LIVING BUDDHA " ?

TECHNICALLY speaking, there are no living Buddhas in the present age or *kalpa*, though the lama Church looks for a reincarnation of the great master. Strange to say, they look for him from the West, and the images they worship of this expected one, such as the crowned and majestic figure in the cathedral at Lhasa, are always seated on a throne in Western fashion, not in the cross-legged attitude of the conventional Buddha. The name they know him by is " The Loving One."

The Fuh-ie's or " living Buddhas " of lamaism to-day are supposed incarnations, not of Buddha himself, who has attained Nirvana, but of the five Dhyana or celestial Buddhas who, though not subject to transmigration, are still outside Nirvana. In their great compassion for all living beings they brought forth spiritual sons, or Buddhisats, who through incarnations dwell among men—their chief work being, supposedly, that of intercession for the people by whom they are worshipped, whom they have undertaken to save from the pain of subjection to transmigration.

One of the greatest of these Buddhisats is Avalokitesvara, who was later chosen as the patron saint or saviour of Tibet, to whom is addressed the prayer or exclamation, *Om mani padmi hum*—O thou jewel in the lotus.

The succession is not hereditary, but is kept up by the lamas, who always have an infant in view to whom

the spirit of the incarnation is supposed to pass at his death. The infant is then regarded as a sacred personage and brought up to receive homage and even worship as his due.

Of the origin of this remarkable development Mr. Theo. Sörensen writes :¹

“ The doctrine of incarnation, as far as Buddhism is concerned, is a purely Tibetan invention, and of course contradictory to the Buddhist belief in transmigration as a result of Karma or the ethical retribution.

“ It was a purely political movement, and came about in this way : In the year A.D. 1640 a Mongolian prince, Gusri Khan, conquered Tibet and made a present of the same to the Grand Lama of Drepung monastery, with the title of Dalai or Ocean, who thus became the first king-priest as the Dalai-Lama. His name was Nag-wan Lobsang. Being very ambitious and wanting to combine the rule of the state with that of the church, he declared himself an incarnation of the famous Avalokitesvara, the tutelary deity of Tibet.

“ The Tibetans were no doubt delighted to have as a ruler an incarnation of such a divinity, and the scheme worked well, but in order not to offend his older and in some senses superior lama of Trashi-lhun-po, he declared this lama to be an incarnation of Amitabha—thus establishing the same relationship between himself and the Trashi Lama as exists in the Western Paradise between Amitabha and Avalokitesvara. Amitabha is one of the five Celestial Buddhas who are not able themselves to perform saving acts on behalf of mankind, but whose spiritual sons (Bodhisattvas) become the saviours of the world—and Avalokitesvara is Amitabha’s spiritual son.” Thus the first Dalai Lama cleverly propitiated the Trashi Lama, and at the same time secured for himself a free hand in practical matters. For “ while the Trashi Lama

¹ See Mr. Sörensen’s illustrated lecture on Tibetan Buddhism, published with his annual report of The Tibetan Religious Literature Depot for 1919 and 1920, pp. 8 and 42.

is an incarnation of a higher deity, it is an impassive deity, who cannot meddle with worldly affairs, which are left to his spiritual son, represented by the Dalai Lama.

“ This plan worked so well that all sects in Tibet followed the same idea, and now it would be difficult to find a lamasery in any part of the country where there is not a Trulgu, or Incarnation—though these are not incarnations of gods, but of saints and famous lamas.”

APPENDIX C

A "LIVING BUDDHA" AT HOME

Condensed from Mr. Ridley's account of his visit to Ku-rung Fuh-ie (October 1921) in his palatial residence not far from the city of Kweiteh in Kansu, on the Yellow River.

No part of Kansu that I have seen excels this district for beauty. The whole countryside is covered with trees, whose autumn tints of every shade of yellow enhanced the beauty of the scenery. Here and there in open spaces little Tibetan villages nestled snugly. Our path led down among precipitous red sandstone rocks into a glen, across a stream, up through a wood, and down into another glen. The latter might well have been described as a lovers' glen—and who knows but many a Tibetan lad and lass have plighted their troth among the trees and boulders bordering the little stream! It was a lovely morning as we followed the winding brook, and its merry laughter falling sweetly on the ear was in harmony with the quaint song of Tibetan lassies herding their flocks on the mountain-side. In China, yet not of China—whose wee lassies sit nursing their cruelly bound feet, all play with boys of their own age being strictly forbidden—these Tibetan girls, full of frolic and fun, strong and bonnie, lead a happy, free life in keeping with the semi-wild country where they live. . . .

At nine o'clock we reached Namtso, the private lamasery of Ku-rung Fuh-ie (who rules over thousands

of monks in no fewer than thirty-six monasteries). Here a warm welcome awaited us. They came running to meet us, took our animals, fastened them up, and led us to the best room, where we were soon regaled with steamed bread and tea. Being special guests, besides the milk and salt in the tea, a large slice of butter was added. Not quite fresh? No, not quite—with a distinct flavour of its own! But for special guests it ought to be a little high, as with our Stilton cheese and grouse at home—though one's inner man may wish that it were not so. Conversation flows gaily, and soon the guest satisfies the hospitable heart of his host by disposing of the contents of the basin.

In an opening in the glen stands this little lamasery, surrounded by a few small houses; the background a forest; facing high sandstone rocks, with the stream babbling along the foot of the rocks. A quieter spot for meditation could hardly be found. Built about eight years ago, it is the residence of a dozen priests. The place is in charge of a young lama and his wife, dressed in her handsome gown adorned with many silver ornaments.

The rocks facing the lamasery are remarkable. They are disconnected, and rise to a height of two or three hundred feet, like giant pillars. The whole country for a distance of ten miles to the east is more or less dotted with them . . . and so firmly do they stand that none were overthrown in the terrible earthquake of last year. In the forest musk-deer find shelter and pheasants abound, since it is forbidden to shoot them in lama-land.

Three miles down the glen from the lamasery we again enter the valley of the Yellow River. Here we come into touch with the Salar Moslems, pass the home of a Tibetan chieftain, and finally reach the private residence of Ku-rung Fuh-ie, the first "Living Buddha" of the Red Sect to visit Peking for hundreds of years—since the beginning of the Ming dynasty. At Peking he was received by the President and entertained at a feast in

his palace. He it was also who was sent as a Special Delegate from the Chinese Government to Lhasa last year.

Four years had passed since I visited his home, and the old premises had been replaced by an entirely new mansion built within a high enclosure 360 feet long by 180. A handsome gateway was being erected when we arrived. At the back of the enclosure is a large garden abounding with a great variety of flowers, many grown from foreign seed. At the very end is a conservatory. In the first courtyard, next to the garden, are the rooms of the family, as he is a married man with eight children. A telephone connects with the office of his chief steward. In the same courtyard he has a large dispensary—chiefly native medicines—for the Fuh-ie is a (Tibetan) Doctor of Medicine. On the next courtyard toward the front is the reception-room for guests, and above it the prayer hall. I had never before seen such a luxurious guest-room in China. On the floor lay a handsome Turkestan carpet. All the chairs were covered with richly embroidered red satin covers. The table was spread with a profusion of sweetmeats, and the room was decorated with elegant foreign lamps. All was so grand that it looked more for show than use.

Above, in the prayer hall, were windows of glass and fantastic hanging lamps. Covering the north and east walls were over a hundred little cases with glass fronts, each containing an idol purchased when the Fuh-ie was in Peking and probably of Japanese make, for they were all of white metal instead of brass. On the west side is a little room containing a huge idol, the " Buddha's " chief god. It has several heads and arms, and another smaller god attached to it, making a very obscene object. Yet this idol is considered a test of virtue—for a man is supposed to have his passions and emotion so subdued that as he stands in its presence he is unmoved. No wonder this god is hidden away in some secret corner of many of the lamaseries from the view of the priests, only

those who have reached the stage of perfection being permitted to see it! Rooms for special guests surround the next yard; and lastly the courtyard nearest the entrance contains stables and rooms for pilgrims and guests of less importance.

For months the "Living Buddha" had been besieging me with invitations, so when we arrived we found a very warm welcome. Friends of fifteen years standing, he was glad to see me once more. First I was installed in the best guest-room, but he soon transferred me to his own apartment, where his children waited on me hand and foot and were my constant companions when not occupied with the "Buddha." Happy, merry children they are, and we had many a stroll through the garden and orchard together. All seem to stand somewhat in awe of their father.

The second boy is also a "Living Buddha," and though he has not yet been sent to his lamasery at Pao-an, he is going soon. The eldest son is at our school in Sining, but was at home for the holidays. The eldest daughter, a girl of sixteen, married to a chieftain, was also at home. The "Buddha" and I spent many hours discussing matters Tibetan, Chinese, and foreign. We were three days together.

The morning before we left there was quite a stir in the household: the eldest boy was returning to school. He had had a curtain lecture from his father, and was decidedly gloomy. His mother was busy packing his bag full of good things to eat, and dropping tears as she did so. The children were running here and there, helping mother. Soon it was time to start. Two animals were loaded with goods and bedding, and a third was for the boy to ride. Father and mother accompanied him to the front entrance and said good-bye—but there was no mother's kiss. The sisters and brothers escorted him to the riverside, where a private boat, belonging to the family, was waiting. The boat is simply the trunk of a tree, hollowed out, with a large piece of timber

fastened on each side to balance it. The luggage transferred to the boat and the lad following, the man rowed away amid much waving of handkerchiefs from the shore. As the boy crossed, animals could be seen coming down to the river on the other side, from the tents where the "Buddha's" herdsmen camp, watching his flocks of sheep, goats, yaks, and horses. The boy steps on shore, the animals are loaded, and with a final waving of handkerchiefs he is gone. The three younger boys mount one animal, the bright, bonnie sister of thirteen leading it, running betimes at the merry demand of the lads: and so ends the episode of a Tibetan boy off to school.

The following day we also said good-bye, the "Buddha" kindly making me a present of Tibetan cloth and a scarf of blessing, and the mother asking me to look well after her dear lad. The "Buddha" sent a man with me to see us safely over the ferry, which is in charge of the Salar Moslems.

APPENDIX D

THE MYSTIC PHRASE, “*OM MANI PADMI HUM*”

ON the Sacred Rock of the Ling-kor at Lhasa, facing south and washed by the river Kyi-chu, is engraved the original or “parent mantra of all the ‘*Om mani padmi hums*’ of Tibet.” The whole face of the cliff is covered with Buddhas, carved and brilliantly painted, from two inches to two feet in height. The central Buddha dominates all else, a figure many times life-size, and below him, deeply cut in the living rock, is the mysterious phrase. Each letter is six feet high and rich in colouring, a supposedly sacred sequence being followed—white, green, yellow, slate, blue, red, and dark indigo.

As to the meaning of the words, which are not Tibetan but Sanscrit, the following note by Colonel Yule, condensed from Koeppen’s *Lamasche Heirarche und Kirche*, is of interest. It is quoted from *The Middle Kingdom*, Wells Williams, vol. i. p. 249.

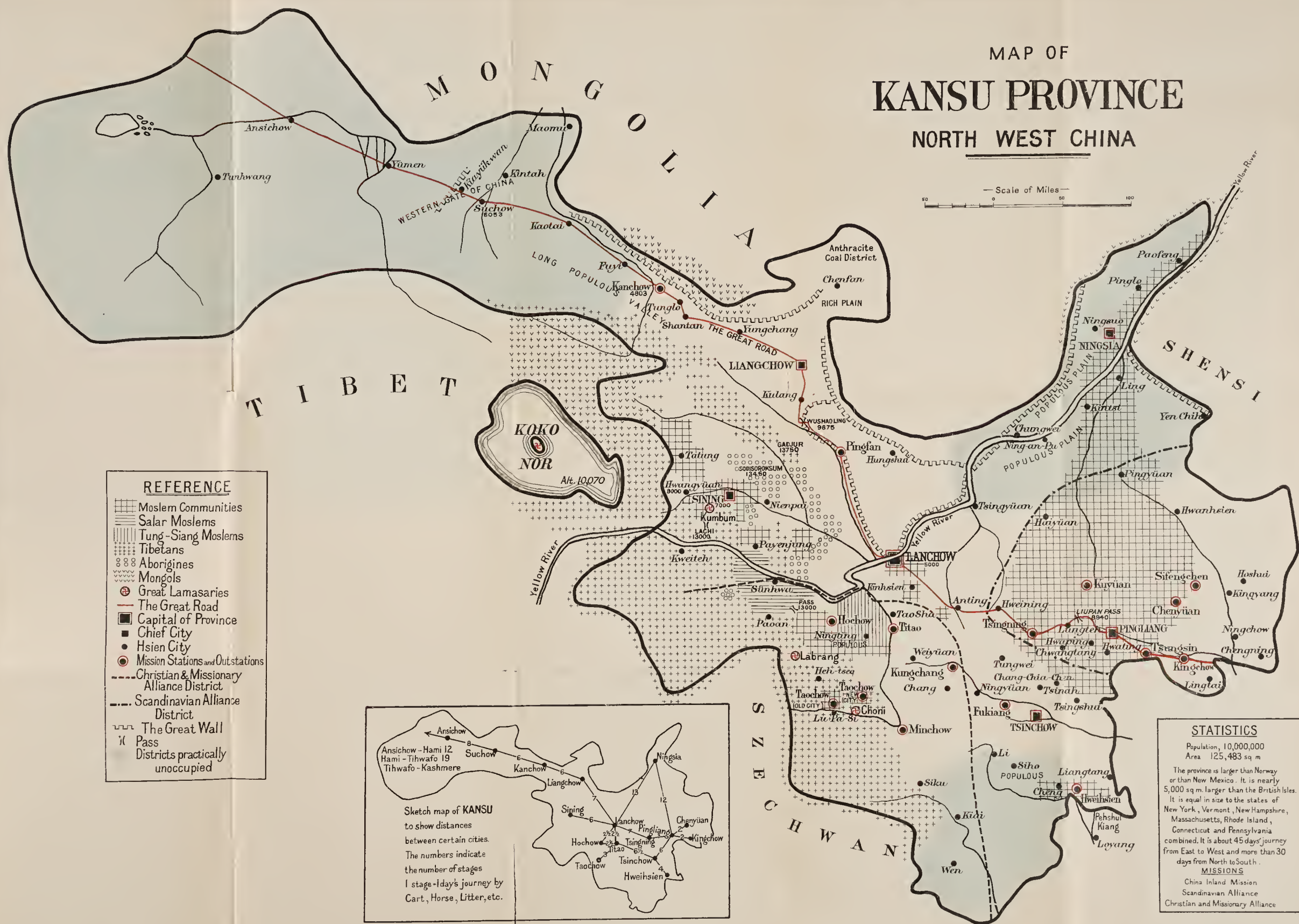
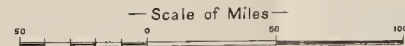
“Properly and literally these four words, a single utterance of which is sufficient of itself to purchase an inestimable salvation, signify nothing more than: ‘O the jewel in the lotus! Amen!’ In this interpretation, most probably, the *Jewel* stands for the Buddhisatva, Avalokitesvara, so often born from the bud of a lotus-flower. Accordingly the whole formula is simply a salutation to the mighty saint who has taken under his special charge the conversion of the north; and with him who first employed it, the mystic formula meant no more than *Ave Avalokitesvara*!

“But this simple explanation, of course, does not satisfy the lama schoolmen, who revel in glorifications and multitudinous glossifications of this formula. The six syllables are the heart of hearts, the root of all knowledge, the ladder to rebirth in higher forms of being, the conquerors of the five evils, the flame that burns up sin, the hammer that breaks up torment, and so on. *Om* saves the gods, *ma* the Asuras, *ni* the men, *pad* the animals, *mi* the spectre world of Pretas, *hum* the inhabitants of hell! *Om* is the blessing of self-renunciation, *ma* of mercy, *ni* of chastity, etc.

“ ‘Truly monstrous,’ says Koeppen, ‘is the number of *padmis* which in the great festivals hum and buzz through the air like flies. In some places each worshipper reports to the highest lama how many *Om manis* he has uttered, and the total number emitted by the congregation is counted by the billion.’ ”

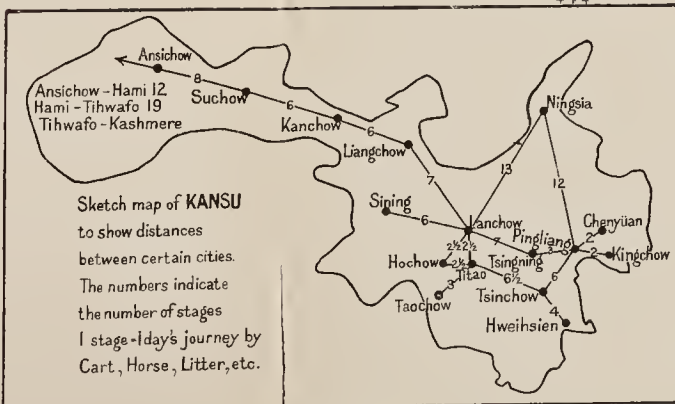
MAP OF KANSU PROVINCE

NORTH WEST CHINA



REFERENCE

- Moslem Communities
- Salar Moslems
- Tung-Siang Moslems
- Tibetans
- Aborigines
- Mongols
- Great Lamaseries
- The Great Road
- Capital of Province
- Chief City
- Hsien City
- Mission Stations and Outstations
- Christian & Missionary Alliance District
- Scandinavian Alliance District
- The Great Wall
- Pass
- Districts practically unoccupied



STATISTICS

Population, 10,000,000
Area 125,483 sq m

The province is larger than Norway or than New Mexico. It is nearly 5,000 sq m. larger than the British Isles. It is equal in size to the states of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and Pennsylvania combined. It is about 45 days' journey from East to West and more than 30 days from North to South.

MISSIONS

- China Inland Mission
- Scandinavian Alliance
- Christian and Missionary Alliance

BW8359 .K2T2
The call of China's great north-west;

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