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THE BIG GAME OF CENTRAL
AND WESTERN CHINA



THE TACTN

Illustration by Frank W. Hall

THE
BIG GAME OF CENTRAL
AND WESTERN CHINA

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF A JOURNEY
FROM SHANGHAI TO LONDON
OVERLAND ACROSS THE GOBI DESERT

BY HAROLD FRANK WALLACE, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S.
AUTHOR OF "STALKS ABROAD"

WITH A FRONTISPIECE, TEN FULL-PAGE AND TWELVE
HALF-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY
THE AUTHOR, AND THIRTY-EIGHT PHOTOGRAPHS

Now the Four-way Lodge is opened, now the Hunting Winds are loose—
Now the smokes of Spring go up to clear the brain ;
Now the Young Men's hearts are troubled for the whisper of the Trues ;
Now the Red Gods make their medicine again !

RUDYARD KIPLING.

LONDON
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TO
GEORGE FENWICK-OWEN
TO WHOM I AM INDEBTED
FOR THE EXPERIENCES
HEREIN DESCRIBED

INTRODUCTORY PREFACE

EARLY in the spring of 1911 Mr. George Fenwick-Owen invited me to accompany him on an expedition into the interior of China, his aim being to secure specimens of the takin (*Budorcas bedfordi*), a rare animal about which little is on record, a collection of small mammals for the British Museum, and any other species of big game which we might chance to encounter. We accordingly left Liverpool in May that same year, and arrived back in England in April 1912.

In the following pages I have endeavoured to convey to those who do me the honour of reading this book some idea of a country which has been but seldom visited by sportsmen, and the strange people and still stranger animals to be found there.

Our original intention, having secured the takin, was to hunt in the mountains in Koko Nor, and to return home through Szechuan and the valley of the Yangtse-kiang. This idea we were reluctantly compelled, owing to the outbreak of the Revolution, to abandon. We had, however, obtained specimens of a number of rare species

which had hitherto managed to escape the attentions of sportsmen. Our united bag comprised less than a score of animals, yet the habits and natural history of these are but little known, and will, I venture to hope, prove worthy of attention. When consideration is taken of the great interest which, of late years, has been exhibited in the large fauna of the world, an interest which may be said to date from the opening stages of the Victorian era, the enlarged facilities for travel, and the increasing numbers of men who yearly scour the globe for fresh specimens, it is matter for comment when one realises that, from the point of view of the big game hunter, China is practically virgin ground. Every one knows that lions come from Africa, and tigers from India; but there are many who, were they asked to name half a dozen species of animals found in China, would fail to answer. With the exception of a few travellers, to be counted on one's fingers, scarcely half a dozen sportsmen have visited the country since Père David in 1869 spent some months exploring the quasi-independent district of Moupin. Many volumes deal with the fauna of Europe and America; books of African sport and adventure are so numerous as to fill the amateur big game hunter of literary tastes with despair. India and Cashmere present an imposing bibliography for the edification of the travelling sportsman. China alone is left out in the cold, for, though one or two books touch incidentally

upon the sport to be obtained, I know of none which professes to deal at all seriously with the large mammals about which so little is known.

China, it may be safely prophesied, will never, under the conditions which have so far prevailed, become a popular country with the modern big game hunter. He cannot dash off for a couple of months' shooting in Kansu as he can to East Africa. The distances are too great, the list of game animals too small to entice him. With the advent of railways, should these ever manage to grope their way through the morasses of official graft and speculation in which they are at present submerged, matters will change to some extent, and we may yet see advertised: "Takin Trips in Twenty Days," and "Take your Camera to Kansu."

The reasons for this state of affairs are many. In the first place, until recently, of the conditions prevailing in the interior very little was known even to long-established foreign residents; the Chinese themselves did nothing to encourage the incursion of foreigners; travel, at the best of times, was slow, tedious, and uncertain; game was and is entirely confined to the mountainous regions, where cultivation is impossible, and its distribution in these regions was known to few.

Lastly, and this point I must emphasise, there is one absolute and indispensable essential to a successful trip in China, a trustworthy and capable interpreter. The foreigner is legitimate prey in

most countries ; nowhere more so than in China. Much of the success of our trip was due to the assistance of Dr. J. A. C. Smith, 320, Avenue Paul Brunat, Shanghai, and those who contemplate following in our footsteps cannot do better than secure his services. Talking the language like a native, he understands the Chinese thoroughly, and has a complete knowledge of skinning and preserving both large and small mammals and birds. I must express my indebtedness to him for much of the information I obtained. Had it not been for his knowledge of the natives and his skill in translating I should have remained in ignorance concerning many interesting points.

With regard to the orthography of Chinese names I fear I cannot hope to have escaped criticism. So far as was possible I have followed the spelling adopted by the Chinese Imperial Post Office.

“There are nine-and-sixty ways of constructing tribal ways
And every single one of them is right,”

and as much may be said of the romanisation of Chinese. Every sinologist has his own opinion on the matter.

In appendices I have given measurements of the different specimens we obtained, a list of birds and small mammals, a rough calculation as to the expenses of a shooting trip in China, and a table of the stages, and distances between them, which we actually travelled. Though of little or

no interest to the general reader, the latter may possibly be of some use to any one travelling over the route we covered.

In addition to Dr. Smith, I must also express my gratitude to Mr. C. H. Steevens, Mr. William Christie, Mr. James Ross, Mr. R. I. Pocock, Superintendent of the Zoological Society's Gardens, and in particular Mr. Fenwick-Owen, for information and photographs with which they have kindly supplied me.

Some of the following pages have appeared in the form of articles in "Country Life," "The Badminton Magazine," and "The Field." My best thanks are due to the editors of these papers for permission to reprint them.

H. F. W.

GLEN URQUHART.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTORY PREFACE	vii
CHAPTER	
I. THE CALL OF THE RED GODS.	1
II. SHANGHAI	9
III. THE FATHER OF RIVERS	13
IV. CONCERNING CHINESE ROADS	20
V. HWA-SHAN—THE FLOWER MOUNTAIN	32
VI. SIAN-FU, THE MAGNIFICENT	39
VII. A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE AND TAI-PEI-SHAN	55
VIII. SOME NOTES ON CAVES AND THE HOME OF THE TAKIN	68
IX. THE TAKIN (<i>Budorcas bedfordi</i>)	69
X. HUNTING THE TAKIN	77
XI. FENSIANG-FU—AN INLAND TOWN	87
XII. TOWARDS THE BORDER	94

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIII. A MODERN REHOBOAM AND HIS CAPITAL	105
XIV. A TALE OF THE BORDER	114
XV. A MOUNTAIN MISCELLANY	127
XVI. THE WILD SHEEP OF WESTERN KANSU	138
XVII. A DAY WITH A RAM	147
XVIII. THE WHITE-MANED SEROW (<i>Nemor- hædus argyrochætes</i>)	154
XIX. TRAVELLERS' TALES	163
XX. A THIBETAN INTERLUDE	172
XXI. THE ROE-DEER (<i>Capreolus bedfordi</i>) .	182
XXII. THE WAPITI OF KANSU (<i>Cervus kan- suensis</i>)	195
XXIII. THE STALKING OF A STAG	208
XXIV. RUMOURS OF WAR	218
XXV. A CENTRE OF TRADE	227
XXVI. ON THE FRINGE OF THE DESERT, AND SOME ACCOUNT ON PRZEWALSKI'S GAZELLE (<i>Gazella przewalskii</i>) .	238
XXVII. ACROSS THE DESERT, AND SOME NOTES ON THE MONGOLIAN GAZELLE (<i>Gazella gutturosa</i>)	250

CONTENTS

<small>CHAPTER</small>	<small>XV</small>
<small>PAGE</small>	<small>PAGE</small>
XXVIII. THE LAST OF CHINA . . .	262
XXIX. A PHANTOM JOURNEY . . .	276
XXX. AN ECHO OF THE CALL . . .	284

APPENDICES

A. FIELD MEASUREMENTS, ETC. . . .	291
B. ESTIMATE OF EXPENSES	308
C. TABLE OF DISTANCES AND STAGES . . .	310
INDEX	315

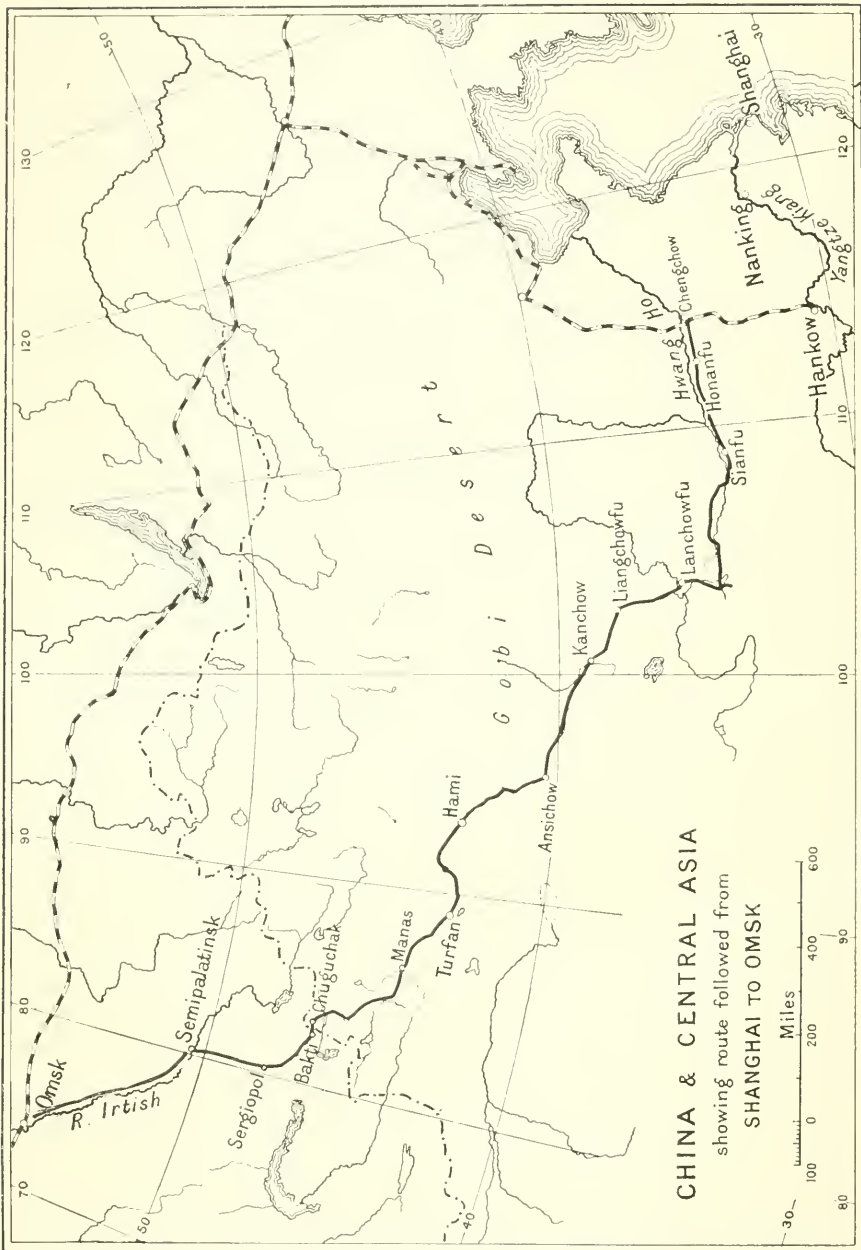
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
THE TAKIN (<i>Budorcas bedfordi</i>)	18
A VIEW ON THE YANGTSE-KIANG	18
TEMPLES ON HWA-SHAN	38
THE CITY WALLS, SIAN-FU	38
OUR CARTS ON THE MAIN ROAD NEAR SIAN-FU	60
OUR CAVE	60
INTERIOR OF THE CAVE	66
TAKIN GROUND	66
TAKIN GROUND	70
SKETCHES OF TAKIN	74
STUDIES OF TAKIN (<i>Budorcas bedfordi</i>)	78
THE LONE BULL	80
MY FIRST TAKIN—AS HE FELL	80
YONG WITH MY SECOND TAKIN BULL	82
TAKIN CHANGING GROUND	130
GORGE LEADING TO SHEEP GROUND	130
CHI-SHI'S HOUSE—ARCHUEN	138
SHEEP GROUND	138
SKETCHES OF WILD SHEEP, KANSU	140
SKETCH OF DEAD RAM, W. KANSU	140
DEAD RAM	148
WILD SHEEP, KANSU	152
A LAST CHANCE	154
WHITE-MANED SEROW RETURNING TO COVER	154
WHITE-MANED SEROW AT BAY	158
WHITE-MANED SEROW (<i>Nemorhædus argyrochaetes</i>)	158
ROE BY MOONLIGHT	162
LAO WEI WITH ROEBUCK	162
WHITE-MANED SEROW (<i>Nemorhædus argyrochaetes</i>)	162
T'É-PU LAMA DANCING	172
TERRACED FIELDS	172

	FACING PAGE
BEAR AND ROE GROUND	172
THIBETAN WOMEN	182
THE BEAR	182
A STUDY IN EXPRESSIONS	182
TYPES OF CHINESE ROE HEADS (<i>Capreolus bedfordi</i>).	184
ROE-DEER ALARMED	184
ROE-DEER (<i>Capreolus bedfordi</i>) ON THE TOPS	190
SHEEP GROUND	194
WAPITI GROUND	194
STUDIES OF KANSU WAPITI	200
WAPITI (<i>Cervus kansuensis</i>), SHOWING MARKINGS ON HIND-QUARTERS	206
WAPITI (<i>Cervus kansuensis</i>)	206
WAPITI GROUND	206
KANSU WAPITI (<i>Cervus kansuensis</i>)	214
OUR CARTS	236
COURTYARD OF THE VICEROY'S YAMEN, LANCHOW	236
AN EXECUTION	246
CAGED—FOR GROWING OPIUM	246
LIANGCHOW-FU	246
MONGOLIAN GAZELLE (<i>Gazella gutturosa</i>)	248
PRZEWALSKI'S GAZELLE (<i>Gazella przewalskii</i>)	248
PRZEWALSKI'S GAZELLE (<i>Gazella przewalskii</i>)	248
IN THE MIDST OF THE GOBI DESERT	252
AN INN IN THE GOBI DESERT	252
"HOW MANY A LONELY CARAVAN SETS OUT ON ITS LONG JOURNEY O'ER THE DESERT"	254
MONGOLIAN GAZELLE (<i>Gazella gutturosa</i>)	254
DESERT COUNTRY	260
CROSSING THE DESERT	260
DOMESTIC SHEEP HEAD, TAOCHOW, W. KANSU	264
FAT-RUMPED SHEEP, TI-HUA-FU	264

MAPS

CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIA (SHOWING ROUTE FOLLOWED FROM SHANGHAI TO OMSK)	1
PART OF CHINA (SHOWING ROUTE FOLLOWED FROM CHENGGHOW TO ANSICHOW)	254



THE BIG GAME OF CENTRAL AND WESTERN CHINA

CHAPTER I

THE CALL OF THE RED GODS

THE love of stalking was born in me, and William the Red ever stood for more than a date tagged to a name. I stalked my little brother behind the table—I must have been a horrid child, for once I bit him in the arm; I stalked the nurse; later on I stalked a thrush and killed it by a lucky throw. That thrush cooked, *more Indico*, over a fire in the wood, feathered and uncleansed as it was, made the most delicious meal for a hungry hunter! On half-holidays I stalked the deer in Windsor Park with a catapult. Once I was surprised, but disarming suspicion by my mild “barnacled” and singularly unstalkerlike demeanour, was remanded with a caution. Still can I recall the awe with which I regarded the small son of a *nouveau riche* proletarian who was pointed out to me as having killed a real live stag! The years go by very quickly in those halcyon days. We do not realise it until later, and it seemed that a vast period of

time elapsed before my long-cherished dream was fulfilled, and I too killed my first stag. He was, by the favour of the gods, the precursor of many. Then, "whilst I peered in maps for ports and piers and roads," by a turn of Fortune's wheel for which in my wildest imaginings I had never dared to hope, came two glorious, never-to-be-forgotten years, despite their sad close,

"And the islands which were the Hesperides
Of all my boyish dreams"

developed into living realities. That virtually settled my affairs in life and laid me under the spell of the Red Gods.

Never will the memory of those years fade! The scent of the pines, most wonderful of odours, borne on cold and austere breezes of the north; the painted, steaming glories of the South Seas and nights beneath the Southern Cross; the languor of eastern islets and the blaze of the tropics; the decaying glories of the past; the strong, bright hopes of lands which are yet to be. It seemed then as if my stalks abroad were over, that never for long years should I see again mighty beasts of the earth wandering amid the silent places, nor stand before the Red Gods and make sacrifice at the trysting-place. Yet even then they were at work, although I knew it not. They took the matter in hand, or so I like to think, upon a gloomy, wet day in Masailand; continued it, three years later almost to the day, through the prosaic medium of a telephone box at the Bath Club; and finally brought me to Prince's landing-stage on the afternoon of May 19th, 1911.

The siren blared, a bell tinkled, the hawser tautened as the tugs gathered way; the landing-stage slowly receded; the line of humanity clustering upon it in a long, uneven line broke into a fluttering sprinkle of handkerchiefs and waving hats; a thin cheer came to us across the widening gap of water; something small and white shone for a second in the angle of a wall, and we were off.

Six months earlier the greatest wish in the world had seemed as unlikely of realisation as that I should be starting on a big game expedition of indefinite duration into the interior of China. Yet here I was, *mirabile dictu*, both my dreams on the way to their accomplishment, as we dropped down the river into the unknown.

Our voyage was much like any other Atlantic voyage, long, cold, wet and rather dreary. A couple of concerts near its close rather enlivened affairs, that in the second class by far the more amusing. One performer was indisposed. The chairman announced that a young lady had kindly offered to recite as a substitute, and on the instant a small black figure in the flapper stage emerged, plunged with no circumlocution *in medias res* and for fifteen long minutes declaimed in a perfectly inaudible and monotonous voice. I caught but two lines, "He raised his flashing brand on high" and "Dead—locked in a last embrace," which did not help me much, though I gathered the theme was not a particularly cheerful one! However, the reciter was rapturously applauded, encored, and continued declaiming for another ten minutes, during which we left.

Deck sports filled up another day. An extremely unpleasant young woman with a horse-laugh carried all before her, and once we saw three birds and a seal ! Otherwise we relied on our fellow passengers, never unentertaining, for amusement.

There were a number of Scots-Canadians on board ; one old couple in particular took my eye. He, silent, white-bearded, with a grave twinkle ; the Scot showing unmistakably : she, silver-haired, rosy-cheeked, with the comfortable walk of a farmer's wife. Both were clad in their best blacks. The snows of many winters were upon them, yet they retained something of the charm of youth. She had a trick of slipping her hand within the bend of his arm, of looking aslant at his face, in a manner which stirred my heart and set me wondering at the days when she was a girl and he, his shrunken frame sturdy and pulsing to the blood of youth, came courting up the glen.

Then there was Horace. He came right through to Japan with us, so we had ample opportunities of studying his eccentricities. His real name was—not Horace, but nothing suited him so well. Something of a mystery, he might have owned to any age less than thirty-five. Tallish, with fair hair and rather nice eyes, his looks were marred by a mouth several sizes too large. However, this he economised talking through his front teeth, employing triple expansion at meal times. His metallic voice was of a peculiarly penetrating quality. From Quebec to Vancouver it roused me from my early morning dreams ; it was the last sound I heard at night mingling with the “ clang clang ” of the engine bell.

George had marked him as we crossed the Atlantic. At Quebec he was well to the fore, darting, their self-constituted protector, hurriedly and fussily in search of various ladies, watched with languid interest by the groups of expert expectorators with whom he got entangled. He was of that type who knows everything about anything, and laid down the law in an authoritative manner on the handling of a ship, an engine, or an aeroplane; the cost of a first-class fare and the degree of comfort to be expected on any line of steamers, railways, or other mode of conveyance in any known sea or country in any part of the globe; the exact method of booking luggage in advance and its advantages—and arrived at Vancouver, to the not unmixed sorrow of his fellow passengers, minus all his belongings save a hand bag and a bundle of rugs. The latter we found unlabelled in our cabin. George returned it to the anxious and perspiring owner with a few words as to the desirability of advertising his name. The ship sailed three quarters of an hour after the arrival of the train, during which Horace wildly ransacked the town in company with several C.P.R. officials on whom he had laid vengeful hands. He arrived on board as the gangway was being withdrawn, tightly clutching a bundle from which shirts, collars, and underclothes protruded in admired disorder.

Apropos of his experience, the captain—I can see him now chuckling over it—told us that on one occasion a lady was placed, through the negligence of the railway officials, in a similar predicament. Her luggage could not arrive before the

boat sailed, so she was given *carte blanche* to go round Victoria and order what she wanted. Seizing her opportunity, the C.P.R. subsequently received a bill for six dozen pairs of necessary silk underwear, six dozen pairs of silk stockings, and the rest of her equipment to match.

The name of the Pacific calls to mind a vision of blue, glittering waves, in which roll shoals of fish, oily and black; of sun-kissed coral beaches, and islands set with waving palms. Such dreams, stimulating to the imagination, do exist, but we saw none of them. Cold wet days again, a grey sea beneath our keel and a grey sky overhead. The passengers could be counted on one's hands, and it was with a sense of relief, despite the skipper's geniality, that we drew near the end of our voyage.

So I come once more to Japan, left four years before with such regret. Japan, the land of cherry blossom and of almond trees; of the God of little children and of fairyland romance! Its very names set the mind running on stirring acts of love and war, on great deeds of patriotism and devotion! They linger softly on the air like the echoes of an old song. Kyoto, with its great bell set in a green amphitheatre of hills; Kamakura, where the Buddha stares serenely out across the pine set bay; Nikko, with its peerless glories and stupendous avenue; Fujiyama, most beautiful of mountains; Nagoya, with its castle and golden dolphins; the shaded groves of Nara; Nagasaki; Shimonoseki. They are but names, you say? Yet such names. No other country save my own rings such soul-stirring syllables upon the ear, and there is much

of similarity in the life and associations of the two. About the hearts of those who love either lingers a charm which nothing can destroy. I thought that the years might have wrought a change—nay, I dreaded it—that the rosy mists of illusion swept aside, would have shown me the God-of-things-as-they-are staring me coldly and relentlessly between the eyes. But the mists were still there and I was happy. I like to think of it as a land of clear-running, laughing streams, of happy polite people who welcome the stranger within their gates. After the free and easy democratic manners of America, where everything has a monetary value—nor is it otherwise exploited by its owner—the extra civility with which one meets in the land of the Rising Sun is doubly refreshing. The willing, red-capped porters who actually take their hats off on receiving a tip, the giggling little knock-kneed lady in the ticket-office, the car-conductor, and the hotel boys, all dwell in my memory very gratefully.

Our stay was short, but it sufficed to see Kyoto, most delectable of cities. Tokyo, hideous and progressive, with its 200,000 inhabitants, yet even now reverencing the graves of the famous Forty-Seven before whose shrines are little twigs of fir and incense, we willingly left in pouring rain.

When I awoke it was to find the country alongside the line divided up into little carefully parcelled parallelograms in which the young rice shone with a surprising greenness. Here and there clumps of trees bespoke the site of a village; a grey stone *torii* and votive lanterns stood sentinel before a temple; whilst in the background a gloomy range

of hills, well wooded and riven by deep gullies and ravines, tore indigo masses of scattered cloud. It was raining too when we reached the old capital, but cleared later as we saw the great temples, and gardens, a mass of irises. In the evening we dined on the lantern-lit terrace of the Miyako, the best hotel in the East. From below came the clicking of *geta* on the cobble-stones and the thrumming of a *samisen*. The western hills glowed purple in the distance. In and out the shadows flickered the fireflies, for ever setting their sparks aglow at the wrong moment, seeking, yet never finding in the darkness, the thing for which they search. Soon, all too soon, we reached our ship, yet it was not to China, whither we were bound, that my thoughts turned, but to the land which lay behind us in the night ; to the grey curved lines of its temple's roofs ; to the mellow booming of great bells about its wooded groves ; to the musical rush of the Kamo-gawa laughing beneath grey stone bridges ; and to the linking of that wonderful chain which had brought me once again within sound of its waters.

CHAPTER II

SHANGHAI

ALMOST the first warning which one receives of the imminence of the Middle Kingdom lies in the discoloration of the bright and sparkling sea by the muddy waters of the Yangtse-kiang. They burst forth after their long journey from the highlands of Thibet with such volume that they are apparent eighty miles and more from the river's mouth.

Shanghai itself is situated on the Woosung, an equally dirty river up which we journeyed in a launch. It was first settled about 304 B.C., and was raised to the dignity of a walled city 1554 A.D., having suffered severely at the hands of Japanese pirates. Captured in 1842 by Lieut.-Col. Montgomery, it is still a settlement, all landowners paying ground rent to the Chinese government.

At the time of our arrival the whole place was in a ferment over the coronation of King George. The streets presented as strangely varied and cosmopolitan a spectacle as no other town in China could show. The Bund was crowded; all the big merchant houses being lavishly decorated with flags, bamboos, evergreens, and floral arches. Across the river, factory chimneys belched smoke into the grey skies, and energetic and laborious tugs tore the waters with yellow foam. The

prevailing colour of the crowd was blue, as it is everywhere in China, but among the blue were blacks, mauves, whites, and greys. Here and there the clean kimono and bright obi of some little Jap woman, tripping along with her peculiar knock-kneed gait, caught the eye, or a couple of Japanese naval officers resplendent with medals. Chinese and Manchu jostled each other, the women with their glossy black hair drawn tightly back and hanging over the neck, plaited, or dressed on a peculiar oblong frame. Stalwart Sikhs with black curled beards controlled the traffic; or, in the French concession, Annamese or Tonkinese in round conical khaki hats. Chinese Roman Catholic priests rubbed elbows with their French brethren, both in black soutanes; or perhaps a fair-haired missionary startled the onlooker with his yellow moustache, blue eyes, and light-coloured queue. At a few corners pale-faced British policemen in khaki, with military helmets, regulated the jostling throng. Bronzed bluejackets, English, French, or German, showed conspicuously. A large motor covered in flowers, driven by a neck-shaved, gum-chewing gentleman from the States, went hooting through the midst of the crowd, to be followed by another driven by a Chinaman, with lolling Chinese inside. Broughams drawn by sturdy little ponies, a couple of red-tasselled Chinamen on the box, carried Chinese women, palely peering above their high, silver-embroidered collars. In some subtle way their expressionless faces conveyed a curious impression of restraint and anxiety. They looked artificial and unreal.

The Chinese quarter was full of strange swinging

signs, emblazoned with Chinese characters in red and gold. Yellow flags, on which the Imperial dragon with horrific mouth pursued the fabulous pearl, represented by a flaming red splash, were the principal features of the decoration. In the open shops rows of Chinese watched the kaleidoscopic crowd beneath. Children, gaily dressed with tufted scalps, howled lustily, for there is nothing the Chinese baby does so constantly nor so efficiently. Coolies, swaying along beneath balanced bamboos, swerved hurriedly to the right hand or to the left as the sharp staccato cries of the rickshaw men cleared the way. Wheelbarrows, those curious contrivances which can carry heavier weights than any wheelbarrows in the world, trundled amid the crowd with their living burdens of men and women. But that which most impressed the spectator was the people. Fat Chinamen, thin Chinamen; bespectacled, clear-eyed, half-blind, or with little almond eyes peering from bloated cheeks; pale yellow and dark chocolate, clothed or half-naked, they surged and tossed in the narrow street with but one feature in common, a common factor for which you would now look in vain, the once universal queue. Broad, long, black and glossy, or thin, wispy, grey, and attenuated, they have gone now with the retiring Manchus.

The Bund at night was a seething mass. From the window of the club it showed as a blue sea on which drifted and swirled white, upturned faces. A couple of bluejackets sturdily ploughed their way through the midst of the surging, swaying throng. From a window on our right a grey-haired gentleman, who had obviously been doing

King George the fullest justice, ejaculated at no one in particular "Hey! Break away. I see you." Below a group of Loyalists with jovial, brazen voices reiterated the statement that they were the Dollar Princesses, the wretchedest women on earth. A compact mob of Chinamen listened from the pavement and clapped delightedly at each encore. Far on the left the Astor House glowed through the night, and the lights of warships shone from the river. Sampans, silhouetted against their glow, glided noiselessly, phantomlike, and unsubstantial. A procession came whirling past. Light horse, scouts, volunteers, the regalia picked out with electric lights, great emblematic cars, Britannia, Japan, Australia, South Africa; Sikhs, fine, soldierly men; they swung by in succession. The Sikhs had won the tug-of-war at the sports after a terrific struggle, and were enthusiastically applauded. Bluejackets whirled madly in and out, two-stepping, waltzing in fours, bunny-hugging, and any other steps which happened to occur to them. They cannoned off groups of Chinese, drove across the road, buzzed through another group, and finally swung round a corner. Then a hundred or so neat little brown-faced Japs, all in white, paper lanterns glowing with the Rising Sun held aloft, came at a quick trot, trim and compact. The old gentleman in the next window stopped his everlasting "Break away," and yelled "*Banzais*" at the top of his voice.

The brown faces shone duskily in the glare of the lanterns. "*Banzai! Banzai!*" they called back. It began to pour with rain, and Coronation day was over.

CHAPTER III

THE FATHER OF RIVERS

BEFORE leaving England George had cabled to Dr. J. A. C. Smith, an experienced collector who had accompanied the Duke of Bedford's Zoological Expedition in 1910. He knew China well, and talked the language like a native, having been in charge of a hospital at Sian-fu for eight years as a medical missionary. He was on the western border of Kansu when the cable reached him, but some hard travelling enabled him to reach the coast before our arrival, and with his help we had, in a few days, procured our stores, extracted our possessions from the maw of custom-house officials, and were ready to start.

We left Shanghai at midnight, and awoke to find ourselves on the broad, brown bosom of the Yangtse-kiang—the Son of the Ocean, the Father of Rivers—which, rising in the highlands of Thibet, rolls its muddy waters for some three thousand miles eastwards. With the exception of the Amazon, it is navigable for a longer distance than any river in the world. Even large battleships and steamers, during the summer months when the river is in flood, can reach Hankow, six hundred miles from its mouth. Its breadth is so great that

at first one can see nothing of the banks which confine it, save a few scattered clumps of trees. Higher up it decreases to two or three miles, and at Wuchang-fu, opposite Hankow, is but a mile or so across. As the steamer draws nearer to one bank or the other a thick wall of reeds, rising to a height of twelve or fifteen feet, fronts the river. They are used for winter fuel, thatch, fences, and a dozen other things. Beyond the reeds are low mud huts and bright green strips of cultivated land. Much of the country was flooded, for the river had risen forty-four feet at Hankow. In 1910, at Chungking, it rose no less than one hundred and eight feet.

The reeds near a village are often cut in long strips. On their margin the current flows swiftly in a line of bubbling, brown rapids. From the thicket beyond, peering curiously from between the stems, come cautiously treading yellow-brown forms almost impossible to detect, bright black eyes all aglow. They gain courage as the steamer slowly forges ahead against the current, and it is then that you see them—little children come to wonder at the strange fire-junk which churns the waters of their river so loudly. As the voyage lengthens—and indeed each day is more pleasant than the last—the river seems to dwindle to a narrow channel. Mile after mile goes by between low banks but a few hundred yards apart, still with the reed frontage, patches of cultivation, and low thatched huts beyond. Then far off, the chocolate sail of a junk, or the red funnel of a steamer shows amid the huts. The channel widens, the island drops astern, and the broad main stream is

again in sight. Flocks of geese and ducks, numbering hundreds, paddle about the flooded lowland where the water buffaloes stretch their perpetually stiff necks and are ridden to and fro by the naked children. All along the bank at frequent intervals stand thatched shelters raised on piles, and before them, overhanging the river, wide nets, dipping to the centre from curved bamboo cross-frames. In the shelters sit patient fishermen, who ever and anon swing up their nets, empty their catch, and resume their monotonous watching.

At times one passes huge timber rafts. Some of them draw twenty-four feet of water, and carry as many as two hundred people in huts built on the timber itself. They come from the inland provinces, and are worked down the river, gradually diminishing in size on their downward voyage until at length no raft is left.

In the autumn, another striking sight is the large flocks of domestic ducks, numbering thousands, guided by a few men armed with long bamboos in small boats, being made to swim their way to market at Shanghai.

In the winter wild duck, particularly at the Poyang Lake, literally darken the sun. Of every variety, they, with pheasants and other kinds of small game, have decreased of late years; since, in fact, the establishment of a cold-storage establishment at Hankow. Before reaching Kiukiang, said to be the hottest place on earth, a solitary pinnacle of limestone forms a prominent feature in the centre of the river. Conical and partially wooded, it serves as a resting place for the temple

which crowns its summit and a crowd of cormorants. It is known as the "Little Orphan."

But the junks were what pleased me most, for they are the most distinctive feature of a Chinese river. You come across them first at Woosung in the shape of a fleet of warships, which carry the mind back to the high-pooped vessels of Henry V., with their low waists, stern lanterns, and old cannon. One flies the red flag of the admiral, and on all are painted leering eyes below the prow, which show the vessel her path upon the waters. Up the river they are ubiquitous. Of every shape and size, great or small, they always, at a distance, charmed the eye. Here would be a big three-masted vessel, with broad brown sail, bowling at a brisk speed down the channel, little sampans bobbing in her wake. There, a fleet of salt-junks lay anchored to the bank, or rested like a flock of tired birds in some self-centred lagoon. Brown, chocolate, grey, or blue, their sails blotted the sky, slipping quietly up some hidden channel amid the reeds, fighting their way inch by inch up stream, or sweeping down upon the full bosom of the flood, broad sails bellying to the breeze, the muddy water churned to yellow foam before their bows.

On the banks a crowd of patient villagers toiled like a swarm of ants to repair some weak spot in a dyke, the breaking of which would mean the loss of their seed for next year's rice crop. One tiny islet a few yards across held a couple of huts and three horses, which looked forlornly out across a turbid waste of water.

Beggars swarm in China, and even on the river

they abound, for when the steamer drew up alongside the hulks which long ago were the P. & O. liners *Bombay* and *Ganges*, dirty sampans came shooting to us. From each a long basket-topped bamboo projected which swayed to the interminable, supplicating whine of those who held them. China is so vast a country, and its eighteen provinces so diversified, that there is considerably more difference between the dialects than between broad Scots and Somerset. There were three Chinamen on board who had to converse in English to make themselves understood! Two spoke broken English, the third Mandarin, which one of the others understood but could not speak. They could not talk together in Chinese, for they could not understand each other's dialect: consequently, if the one who spoke Mandarin wished to speak to the first Chinaman, he had to say it in Mandarin to the second, who translated it in broken English.

We had but few fellow passengers, though the engineer was a great character. He had fought in the Matabele war of 1896, and been through a South American revolution. On the Yangtse itself some years before, river pirates had attacked the ship he was on. He was in Peking in 1900, where, so far as I could ascertain, he spent most of his spare time removing superfluous idols from the temples which he subsequently retailed at five dollars apiece in Shanghai. Considering that had he been caught he would most certainly have died a very painful death, the price does not seem excessive.

Four and a half days after leaving Shanghai

Hankow came in sight. Its many factory chimneys vomit wreaths of smoke across the muddy river and add nothing to the beauty of an unattractive spot. It was here, or rather at Wuchang-fu across the river, that the revolution broke out a few weeks later. The native city which lies just to the west of the settlement is, or rather was, for it was almost entirely destroyed, one of the most unpleasant spots imaginable. Sir Frederick Treves has called Canton a nightmare city. The description applied equally well to Hankow, for it was a place to see and forget. The first thing that impresses one on entering a native city of this kind in China is the overpowering excess of humanity. The coast towns and river ports are the dirtiest. Inland they do not strike with such repugnance, or perhaps one becomes hardened.

That strange person, the man in the street, does not, if his surroundings are set in China, attract the observer. He is, in fact, singularly unprepossessing. His shaven head gives him an air of artificiality which somehow unconsciously prejudices the foreigner; the bound feet and tottering gait of the women increase the feeling which, at the close of one's first walk through a native town, has increased to positive aversion.

Hankow was, I think, dirtier and more repellent than either Shanghai or Canton, and its inhabitants a most unhealthy-looking lot, of whom a large percentage had suffered from smallpox. The usual crowd collected whenever a camera appeared, and amid the unimaginable smells one which was recognisable had almost the greeting of an old friend.



A VIEW ON THE YANGTSE-KIANG.



TEMPLES ON HWA-SHAN.

We visited the Shansi Guild, a kind of Club house, magnificently carved and beautifully kept. On the way home a theatre attracted us for a moment, but foreigners were not popular and we soon left.

CHAPTER IV

CONCERNING CHINESE ROADS

TRAVELLING in China is unlike travelling in any other part of the globe. The country is so old, so tired, and things are so far from being what they appear, that at times one seems to have wandered to a new world, immeasurably more ancient than that which has been left. In any other country tents would be a necessity. In China they are an almost useless superfluity save in the mountains, for there is nowhere to pitch them. It should be one of the most thickly wooded countries in the world. You may travel for days and never see a tree, for they have all been cut down. Dirt at times is undoubtedly an aid to the picturesque. In China it seems but to accentuate the apotheosis of the commonplace. The people, despite their four thousand years of civilisation, are in many respects lower than the African savage (certainly the latter has a great sense of modesty, strange as it may seem), yet they cannot be treated as such. Everything goes by opposites. It is a land of negatives. Even the varnish dries in wet weather, a walking stick is invariably carried by the wrong end, and when a Chinaman wants to beckon he makes a gesture of dismissal! All one's standards

are cast down and set at nought. What is one to think of a nation who bind their women's feet with such tortures that they are incapable of walking normally during their whole lives? The Chinaman holds that it is no worse than tight-lacing; but two wrongs do not make a right. A Chinaman will commit suicide on the doorstep of any one against whom he has a grudge, so that his spirit may for ever haunt the place; he will strew trails of sham paper money to lure off evil spirits from a dead friend; he will hang heavy chains about a sick man to delude the gods who rule such matters into the belief that the invalid is a malefactor and so unworthy their august attention. The women pull hairs out of the centre of their scalps to make themselves look beautiful. The pigs are treated as personal friends, and for them the Chinese will perform the same disgusting offices as they do for each other.

And yet those who lived among them for years say there is no race on earth like them and for every peculiarity which I have set down will adduce some trait in the European character equally obnoxious and striking. Heaven forbid that I should judge any one of whom I know so little as the Chinese; but their characteristics strike a foreigner.

We left Hankow via the Peking-Hankow railway, reaching Honan-fu, whence our real start was made, after a night at Tchou-ma-tien, the following day. The train passes through some high loëss cliffs and ravines burrowed and terraced like a rabbit warren, among which are numerous cave dwellings.

At Honan, George collected some interesting

bits of pottery and glazed earthenware which were dug up during the construction of the railway and were said to be anything from one to two thousand years old. We saw camels, horses, human figures, some of them with quite a Hebraic cast of feature, and vases. One of the latter was really beautiful. Later on we saw similar specimens elsewhere. The luxurious mode of travel adopted by the Chinese official—though to Europeans large carts are far more comfortable—is the chair. In this, borne by four men, he sits upright, staring straight before him, with something strangely reminiscent of a lethargic tortoise in his mien. Next comes the mule litter, a kind of low couch slung on poles and harnessed to a couple of mules. Then the small cart, usually known as the Peking cart, and one of the most bone-shaking contrivances ever invented; then the larger carts, drawn by four mules, one in the shafts and three abreast, hooded and capable of carrying loads of two thousand catties (2,666 lbs.); and lastly a mule, horse or pony. Female mules are used almost invariably to draw carts, the males being engaged with pack trains. We used the larger carts. Our beds were unrolled in the middle, and, the sides being well-padded, made comfortable seats. The drivers managed their teams extraordinarily well by voice and whip. They hardly ever touch their animals and, though the open sores on the latter appal a foreigner, they are, on the whole, kindly treated and well fed. It is, of course, a matter of stern necessity to the muleteer that his animals should be in good condition, for they constitute his source of livelihood.

One hears much of the excellence of Chinese boys; of their quickness, quietness, and aptitude. Though perhaps not hard to get such paragons in the coast towns, it is difficult to induce them to rough it on a long trip inland. Certainly our followers were nothing like as good as the boys who accompany a *safari* in British East Africa in the capacity of personal attendants. They had no initiative, no memories, and no manners. Still, they were perfectly honest, and did their best. The head boy was one Ching-yü, formerly a muleteer, who had been in Dr. Smith's service some years. Ruh-si was cook and his brother syce, whilst an extraordinary little creature called Hsue (pronounced Showee) came as our personal servant. He spoke a little broken English, loved display of any kind, and was rather like a monkey altogether. Të-kwei, an ex-soldier, we picked up at Sian-fu as an all-round man.

The road between Honan-fu and Sian-fu has been described by Baron Richthofen as "one of the most trying pieces of cart-roads in China." It runs entirely through loëss country. Loëss is a solid but friable earth of brownish yellow colour, not unlike loam when wet. It is peculiar to Northern China, and does not extend to the south. To quote Baron Richthofen: "It is owing in a great measure to the loëss that Northern China differs much from Southern China as regards scenery and products, the mode of agriculture, and the means of transportation. In the loëss region the mountain ranges are usually buried in loëss with their lower portions, and the space between two ranges is occupied by a broad trough of loëss sloping very

gently down from either side. . . . In some cases, as on the Wei River in Shensi, there is a gradual slope on one side of the river and a steep mountain wall on the other. . . . The loëss is always completely unstratified. . . . If it did not exist Northern China would be a barren country." It is extremely easy to cultivate, and yields crops without manuring. Manuring increases the yield in grain, but a satisfactory crop is obtained without its application provided the ground receives a sufficient quantity of rain.

"The majority of the people inhabiting loëss regions live in caves. They select with great skill those places where the ground is firm, and many a cave has been inherited down through several generations." Loëss, it may be added, "determines the physical features of a region at least 250,000 square miles in extent."

We would make our start walking in the cool of the dawn; when the sky was lilac and lavender and the little grey-blue clouds in the west were turning pink. These were the pleasantest hours, as I remember them. Tired, dusty Mother Earth seemed for a time to shed her years, and met the eye with the same freshness as that which greeted much-enduring Ulysses setting forth on his journeyings, or even Adam in the green and gold of Eden. Pheasants called in the fields and sparred and fluttered as they met; from beyond the trees came the cheery cry of partridges; hares lolloped to a distance and sat with ears erect; a pagoda broke the sky-line, while against the red soil of the green-terraced fields the blue-clad peasants, labouring even at that early hour, struck

a pleasing and insistent note of colour. Far away rose purple hills, our goal; and once as I looked I gave a gasp of unbelief, for there before me lay "The Warrior." He was stretched full length, staring up into the blue immensity, as he lies about Braulen. There rose the long slope running down to Struy and Ben Viehart, there the Valley of the Glass, and behind a knoll to the west the enchanted garden of my dreams. In a strange land and amid a strange people I felt a stirring of the heart-strings at this shadowy counterfeit, as the far-off, well-remembered names came crowding on my memory.

The Chinese, bound to the soil, get their living from the land. Their wealth is in their fields; they are a nation of small farmers. Nearly every man has his little plot of land, and in the country districts nearly every man is poor. He pays light taxes on his plot; on the road as well should it run through his domain. Often it is a narrow baked ridge, dropping to cultivation on either hand and worn into regular undulating ridges by the countless hoofs of patient mules. Again, it is a deep thoroughfare running down into the friable red loëss, and at the same spot there may be as many as five roads within a few yards of each other. When the weather is bad—and in wet no association of superlatives could do justice to the condition of the main highways—the muleteer placidly drives his team across some unfortunate's crop. Others follow, and the old road sinks into oblivion. It is compensatory justice, they say; for the owner of the land should see to its preservation. An infinity of patience is needed to travel

in China. In dry weather the going is not bad—twenty to twenty-five miles a day, or even more. The dust is stifling, fine, penetrating stuff, for the loëss wears down into gullies one hundred and fifty to two hundred feet deep. China has regarded itself as a civilised country for over four thousand years, but its glories lie in that past which the young Venetian saw when he came travelling to Cambaluc, the city of the Grand Khan, who, “in respect to number of subjects, extent of territory, and amount of revenue, surpasses every sovereign that has heretofore been or that now is in the world.” Evidence of departed grandeur still hangs about the carved bridges and lingers in grotesque carvings by the roadside; but the roads themselves, when they do not resemble the dried bed of a water-course, are a more or less exact imitation of a ploughed field. For the Chinaman, living on the easy and self-satisfying principle that what was good enough for his father is good enough for him, and that any attempted reforms would inflict an indignity on the pious memory of his ancestors, leaves them “to gang their ain gait,” a perpetual reminder to the Westerner of Eastern lethargy. In wet their condition, as I have said, is horrible, and impossible for any means of transport save pack-mules. A sweltering sea of mud and slime, they baffle description. Occasionally a cloud-burst in a narrow gully, the natural drains of a tree-denuded country, brings down a miniature tidal wave eight or ten feet high, which bears men, mules, and carts unresisting in its wake. On the road which we took such a disaster had occurred but a few days earlier. A coolie was

drowned and a missionary lady swept down the road for over a mile. Fortunately she recovered.

Distances are variable, though nominally fixed by the *li* (three and one-third go to the mile), a mysterious abstract as elastic as the conscience of an opium-smoker. In addition, there are in certain districts horrible inventions known as *chia* (ja) *li*, or false *li*. These add eight to every ten! The answer to a repetition of the inquiry, "How far?" is consequently as irritating as the everlasting "*M'wali kidogo*" of the native of Africa.

In July there is an abundance of fruit, though the Chinaman, with the inherent perversity of his race, prefers it raw and hard; and the peaches (sixteen a penny!), apricots, plums, and apples, which coolies bore on baskets suspended on their shoulders from swaying bamboos, were most of them too unripe for a European palate.

After some twenty *li* or so we halted for breakfast in one of the many native villages. *Mitang*, maize or millet soup, native bread and eggs, the latter fifteen a penny, made a sufficiently good repast. We took some tinned foods with us, but hardly touched them until we had left China behind us and were on our way home across Central Asia. For native food is very plentiful, though one has to get accustomed to it. Besides fruit, vegetables are easily procured, and we were rarely without cabbages, egg-plant, cucumber, or some substitute. Tomatoes, however, are non-existent. All the animals one sees are muzzled, not because they are vicious, but for the protection of the crops. Later on our journey we ate the

most delicious melons I have ever tasted, in addition to the other fruits I have mentioned.

During the heat of the day, when the surface of the road did not bristle with rocks, which caused our carts to progress in a series of swaying lurches and spine-shattering bumps, it was pleasant to doze, for the nights were short.

But the interest of the road was varied. A *taotai* or some minor official travelling in tawdry state ; a little Chinese girl, well and quietly dressed, borne on a led donkey to visit her mother-in-law, her cheeks whitened and rouged till she looked like some inanimate doll ; the mails, in little canvas packages tightly bound round a bamboo, swinging and wagging on the bare shoulders of the postman ; the "tunk ! tunk ! t-r-rllunk !" of some old muleteer ; a deserted and tumble-down temple ; the only visible sign linking one to the year of grace 1911, the distorted line of telegraph poles stretching haphazard into the distance. At times the Yellow River—China's Sorrow—its broad, shallow bed muddy, yet majestic, swung into view. Tall reed-beds flanked it, in which frogs croaked and little reed-birds shrilled and called. High loëss cliffs rose on the northern side, a thin strip of unambitious bush at their base ; to the south the Tsin-ling Mountains.

Now and again we passed some high-walled town, entered by the inevitable suburb. How well I remember them ! A line of ramshackle mud huts ; men sitting beneath thatched awnings, drinking tea, or stuffing themselves by means of chop-sticks ; a broken crenellated wall ; a tumbled-down wooden arch ; a hooded gate frowning above

a cracked and disrupted pavement. Then, within the walls, a dusty, dirty street, lined with dusty, dirty booths, tenanted by dusty, dirty men. Black swine, looking like slab-sided, frowsy retrievers, roaming the gutters; and in the shadows, pariah dogs, mangy, with open sores and black with flies, lurking furtively. Through such a scene, as the dusk deepened, our little string would draw near the walls of some odoriferous inn. Many still bore in the blotches of red paint and tattered strips of tawdry paper signs of the Imperial Party's tenancy during their hurried flight to Sian in 1900.

Our first halting-place was typical of the larger class of Chinese hostelries. The courtyard was oblong, entered by a narrow arch. A narrow verandah, marked by wooden railings and large posts which supported the roof, ran round three sides of it. Off this opened the guest rooms; fifteen or so in number, the best at the far end of the yard opposite the arch. In the centre rose a couple of tomb-like excrescences holding flowers, flanked, the one by a peach, in the leaves of which twittered homely-looking sparrows, the other by a pomegranate, bearing beautiful red blossoms. A few native beds were littered here and there, and in one corner a disconsolate and aged pony munched his evening meal. A couple of vulturine-looking fowls dodged in and out between his legs and pecked acidly at each other. Two tables were set with eight or ten pairs of chop-sticks, and beside each pair a china spoon, such as one sees in a sick-room for eating jelly. Blue-clad Chinese in every stage of dress and undress paraded the court

and conversed in loud voices, whilst beneath the verandah eaves swallows came and went continuously. A boy, who had set up a tray laden with cheap cigarettes, at intervals gave utterance in a nonchalant manner to an exhortative howl. Since the suppression of poppy-growing, cigarettes have become very popular with the Chinese, and the British-American Tobacco Company turn out a million cigarettes a day, made of native tobacco, at their Hankow factory. Vicing with the cigarette seller was an elderly man with a tray of disgusting-looking cooked chickens, whose protruding necks and heads, petrified wings and straggling legs gave them a peculiarly indecent appearance. Both they and the hard-boiled eggs which wedged them on the tray were of a chocolate-brown colour, having been boiled in bean-oil. The proprietor, a fat, half-naked Chinaman, pompously paraded the inn. Popping in and out of doors, familiarly slapping his broad back when chance brought them within his peripatetic orbit, were three uncomely representatives of the oldest profession in the world. Pigtails hung down their loosely flapping shirts; white trousers covered their lower limbs, and though their feet were only partially deformed they minced along with the stilted gait of a woman of fashion. Morosely viewing the scene was their manager, a gross, discontented-looking elderly man. At intervals he dashed frantically across the yard to the kitchen, and returned with a teapot. Now and again a muleteer arrived with a clinking of bells, or perhaps a chair. As the evening drew in lights appeared in the windows; the fat proprietor, his queue replaited, sat with his underlings at the

long tables ; the vulturine fowls sought the shelter of the pomegranate, the most beautiful thing in the inn. The three ladies repaired to some youthful guests' rooms, whence came the twanging of instruments ; the monotonous, irritating scrape of a native violin mingled with an affected falsetto voice. Men shouted to each other in the gloom, and a dog yelped dismally as it shot wildly through the gates into the dusty street beyond.

CHAPTER V

HWA-SHAN—THE FLOWER MOUNTAIN

A LITTLE off the main road between Honan and Sian-fu rises Hwa-Shan—the Flower Mountain—one of the five sacred mountains of China. Tai-Shan in Shantung, Omi-Shan in Szechuan, Wutai-Shan in Shansi, Heng-Shan in Hunan, are the others, though Hwa-Shan is not less famous than any.

But few tourists visit it, for but few tourists reach the interior of China. During the summer months an odd missionary or two seek its cool shade, raising their eyes from the sweat holes in which they live, looking to the hills for their help. The mountain rises, a bulbous-looking top set on a spur of hills, surrounded by a curious confusion of jagged green peaks which slope to the Yellow River. Coming from the east one sees a lesser peak set in its shadow shaped like a temple roof. A tremendous chasm tears it from its neighbours on this side, and, to the west, a thousand-foot precipice drops to a tumbled huddle of lesser ridges, which, in turn, give place to green, splayed foot-hills, and the fruit orchards nestling about their base.

The plain is rich, and to reach the mountain's

foot you pass little irrigated squares covered with all imaginable crops. Maize and millet, tobacco, cabbage, rice, two or three varieties of bean, the beautiful little indigo shrub, rowan-like pepper, chillis, cabbages, with here and there the grey stone arch of a *piloh* or some memorial tablet. A walled village, in a sad state of disrepair—the inhabitants took more trouble fifty years back, when the Mohammedans carried fire and sword through the country—raises sunbaked walls, and in the fields around foot-bound women, each with her little stool, pick at the ground like tired but industrious birds. A broad-leaved mulberry gives welcome shade, and round the glossy date trees cluster little rings of cornflowers. There are but few flowers in the plain, but the apple-trees are laden with hard little pink-cheeked fruit, and from the persimmons hang great bunches of mistletoe.

A temple stands at the base. Just behind it a deep ravine plunges into the bowels of the range, holding the grateful coolness of a deep, shaded well.

There are some who say that after a year or so on the plains the great empty horizon grips them so that they cannot bear to lose it; but such as these can never have loved the mountains. After the loëss gullies, the long, dusty road, the parching thirst, and the sibilant whisper of the mosquitoes, the grey rocks, the firs, and even the grasses, gave me the welcome of an old friend. Wild thyme, and sweet-scented, starlike jasmine perfumed the air, and on the emerald banks little scarlet lilies made crimson splashes. Indian pinks nestled by the pathway, and over all lay the solemn, inspiring

stillness of a mountain. We turned a corner, and the murmur which had haunted my ear with its soft undertone burst into full-throated song, for there before us was the burn. It clattered and danced and laughed and sang until I could have cried aloud for sheer delight. For it was water, beautiful, clear, cool water, not the turbid yellow mud of the plains. It slipped round boulders, hid for a moment, sprang with a gurgle over a miniature precipice, and tinkled round a bend. A king-fisher flashed above it. Water ousels darted across its bed, and at the bottom of the clear, green pools the pebbles laughed to see them go. It was a burn, a real burn, and I could scarcely believe it; just such another as that by which the Exception and I had sat—four long years ago. For a time we lost it, and something of the sweetness of the day seemed to have departed, but anon it appeared again, and sang beneath the Japanese anemones and sapphire monksfoot. In the rocks above caverns had been cut, and little shrines, at which the devout burnt tapers. Taoist priests called cheerful greetings, and in the grimy shadows the old gods grinned obtusely at the day.

Butterflies hung fluttering, of every variety. Swallow-tails, admirals, fritillaries, whites with a gorgeous orange under-wing, sulphurs and heather-blues; while overhead the buzzards called, pigeons flashed about the rocks, and from afar came the homely calling of the rooks.

A mile or so up the glen an enormous boulder blocked the path, propped by a quaint superstition, with flimsy little twigs. Carved Chinese characters ornamented its surface.

Thirty years ago there were nuns as well as priests upon Mount Hwa. At that time a certain dissolute *taotai* was appointed to overlook the rebuilding of the temples. At the foot of the mountain he took up his residence, and by his mode of living and licentious acts aroused the wrath of Heaven. The priestesses became his boon companions, and the people dwelt in fear. The Dragon God, born of a great snake and a crane, dwelt within the mountains, and at length, roused to fury, he burst from the rocks and swept down the glen in a tempest of rain and wind. Temples were destroyed, people were slain, the wicked *taotai* and his companions were drowned, and at the spot where it now stands was deposited the great boulder. It is known as the "Fish Stone," for in its terrifying descent the head and tail of a fish were seen to protrude from the interior of the rock.

The flowers increase as one ascends, and mingle with the sweetness of the hill grasses—hydrangea, meadowsweet, vetches, forget-me-not, tiger lilies, briars in masses, grasses with a beautiful purplish bloom, columbine, Canterbury bells, lilies of the valley, and syringa. Nearer the summit, oaks, Japanese maple, and juniper find foothold, and the scent of the pines rises like incense to Heaven.

The rocks upon the sky-line are curiously fashioned. Here a tortoise with mouth agape pursues a frog; the inevitable puppy-dog lion grins at a frowning precipice; and down a ridge in the evening light lumbers a bear.

Half-way up is the Rock of the Fainthearted. Should the devout pilgrim gain its eminence, all

is well, though the most terrifying aspect of the climb confronts him. Shallow steps cut in the rock and clanking iron chains aid him in his endeavours, which indeed would otherwise be useless, for the ascent at times is perpendicular. Two hundred feet of narrow chinnacle leads to a knife edge and more steps. Great merit attaches to those who at last look over "The Precipice of Complete Truth." One there was who did so, and declared his intention forthwith of spending his days on the summit, so greatly did he dread the descent. A faithful servant, however, administered intoxicants, popped him into a basket, and brought him home in triumph.

It seems perhaps a trivial matter on this thin crust of a shell on which we hurry busily to and fro, that man should ascend a few thousand feet more or less; but at the least he is so much nearer to the Heavens. Whatever the religion and however poor a resting-place the god may find, the idea of building a shrine upon a mountain is beautiful. Perhaps it was the thought of attaining, after much toil, peace at last which set the old builders toiling at the rock-cut steps; that the motive which sends a swarm of pilgrims hither in the third moon. Be that as it may, the peace is there.

One hopes that the old gods, if they have any sense of justice or humour, will debit the two fat Chinamen whom staggering coolies were carrying in chairs to the summit, and apportion much virtue to the sweating atoms of humanity who bore them thither with so much expenditure of laborious effort. The last few hundred yards are

easy, and the wild raspberries of the lower slopes give place to masses of delicious little sweet-flavoured strawberries.

There are three or four summits; the mountain does not rise in one peerless cone like Fuji. From them a sea of jagged green peaks stretches away on every side, knife-edged and precipitous. The nearer tops are crowned with temples. From the "Southern Gate to Heaven" one sees upon a neighbouring peak a tiny shrine which is closely connected with the history of the mountain. Six hundred years ago a certain Emperor, by name Chao Kwang Yui, was playing chess with a Taoist priest. He lost far more than he could afford, and by way of payment gave Hwa-Shan to his opponent. The little shrine marks the site of the game. An agreement was drawn up which was engraved on a certain inaccessible slab of rock opposite the mountain as a perpetual memorial. The tablet, though certainly there, is quite blank. It is apparently of sandstone, set in the granite cliff and much exposed to the weather, which may have defaced the characters.

There hangs below the summit a terrifying arrangement of chains and sticks by which the more adventurous defy the face of a sheer thousand-foot precipice. At the end of a nerve-racking span of rotten saplings is another rock-hewn temple, and in an impossible position in the rocks above are cut a number of Chinese characters.

To the north it was possible to see hundreds of *li*. The plain lay sweltering in a purple haze; the willow avenue which in olden days, consequent on a dream, a former viceroy planted from Tungkwan

to far-off Lanchow-fu, made a narrow streak, though its ranks in a country where fuel is so precious are sadly thinned ; west and east the mighty Hwang-ho and its great tributaries wound their dragon-like curves ; the firs rose dark against the salmon and gold of the evening sky ; away to the west lay a blue shapeless blur ; and though the depths would see me on the morrow, I was happy, for I knew that presently I should come again to the hills.



THE CITY WALLS, SIAN-FU.



OUR CARTS ON THE MAIN ROAD NEAR SIAN-FU.

CHAPTER VI

SIAN-FU, THE MAGNIFICENT

WE left Honan with our three carts on July 7th, and, having taken two days off in order to visit the sacred mountain, reached Sian-fu, the capital of the province of Shensi, on the 17th. As we neared the city, watch towers lined the road every five *li* or so, and, before them, five little mud squares. In the old days these were composed of wolf dung, which, being fired, sent up a great smoke and warned the country-side of approaching danger. Lines of graves, the tombs of long-dead kings, stretched like enormous molehills to the dim perspective of the hills. As is the case with most large Chinese cities, one receives no hint of the presence of Sian until on a sudden the splendid walls and gate towers rise above the trees. The country continues just as before. There is not much increase in the traffic; only here large suburbs, which in themselves are small walled towns, though completely dwarfed by the city of which they are the offshoots, relieve the impression of artificial growth and warn the traveller of his proximity to an important centre.

Sian-fu, the Kenzanfu of Marco Polo and ancient capital of the Tang dynasty, is one of the most

remarkable cities in China. Formerly its bounds extended thirty *li* northwards to the Wei River, a tributary of the Hwang-ho, and ten *li* to the south; but the present city, a paltry five or six hundred years old, has contracted within narrower limits and holds half a million or so inhabitants. The walls, about two and a quarter by one and a quarter miles in circumference, and gate towers will, in preservation and magnificence, vie with any in the kingdom outside Peking. They protected the city for many years during the great Mohammedan rebellion. From 1868 to 1870 troops lay thick around and prevented almost any outside intercourse; but they had no firearms and the walls defied them.

Looking on the city from their eminence one sees the Bell and Drum Towers, those imposing excrescences of every large city, emerging from a waving and leafy forest. Down in the narrow dirty streets the trees are gone and no hint of green relieves the eye, for they all, like the women, are in inner courts and yards.

Its commanding position, for it dominates the great arteries which keep up communication with the west, made it the capital of the Empire in ancient times. Indeed, its central position, apart from the lack of railways, admirably adapts it for such an honour. For more than two thousand years, with some intervals, many of the most powerful rulers of China resided here, or in the immediate vicinity. It still retains something of its ancient grandeur. The Mohammedans who now live there are not so numerous since the rebellion, nor have they the same power, living

under severe restrictions. Had the population been given a free hand they would have undoubtedly avenged their fellow countrymen farther west and exterminated the Mohammedans entirely.

We remained a week here, as carts were no longer practicable and we intended continuing our journey with pack mules. These it is not always easy to procure. During our stay we rode out to see the Shiao-yien-ta and Ta-yien-ta pagodas to the south of the city. The former is thirteen stories, the latter nine stories in height, for these characteristic structures have never an even number. The taller cannot be ascended, as it has a large crack down the middle, but the other is in a good state of preservation, and a fine view of the city is obtained from its summit. Large barracks lie just outside the walls to the west, built about ten years ago and capable of holding thirty thousand troops. It was these men who, a few weeks later, captured the city, when ten thousand Manchus were massacred.

The Nestorian tablet carefully preserved here is of great interest, so great that perhaps a brief account may be forgiven me. The Nestorians entered China by Canton. To quote Gibbon, "after a short vicissitude of favour and persecution the foreign sect expired in ignorance and oblivion." The tablet sets forth in Syriac and Chinese characters the early fortunes of the Church from the first mission A.D. 636, a list of its bishops and the protection and indulgence it received from different emperors. It was discovered by Alvarez Semedo, a Jesuit priest at Sian, in 1623 under an old wall.

Voltaire, Julian and Renan stigmatised it as a forgery, but it is now regarded as genuine by sinologists.

The Forest of Monuments, another relic of interest, consists of a vast number of large tomb-like stones on which are engraved the classics of Confucius in 250,000 different characters. They are nearly seventeen hundred years old. Peking holds a similar set. Close by is a statue of Confucius two or three hundred years old and a stone with his likeness carved on the surface. Most of the classics have had rubbings taken of them, but this is now forbidden, as one of the tablets was broken. The reason given for their origin is as follows: The great despot Tsui-chi-hwang (246-202 B.C.) — he who began the Great Wall, and who for the first time consolidated under one rule the whole of what is now China Proper—was persuaded that all the misery and distresses of his kingdom were caused by the *literati*. He accordingly put them all to death and burned their books. The tablets were subsequently engraved to prevent the recurrence of such a disaster.

Having called on the President of the Local Board of Foreign Affairs, we were invited to a meal. The festive table was decorated with hideous lodging-house-looking vases, plates of cakes, peaches, apples and plums, trays of cigarettes and some poisonous-looking cigars. Our host's curiosity was insatiable and the doctor's answers could hardly keep pace with his inquiries. He had the vaguest ideas of geography, despite the position he occupied, and quite believed we came from

a small island off the mouth of the Yangtse-kiang, adjoining others which held

“Anthropophagi,
And men whose heads do grow beneath
Their shoulders.”

Such a belief is common among the Chinese. He professed the liveliest admiration for George as a lion slayer, and on a secretary obsequiously inquiring what such beasts might be was only too delighted to display his superior knowledge.

“Oh,” said he, “just like those stone beasts outside the gate,” effigies which resemble nothing so much as a couple of grossly overfed pug puppies wearing ecstatic grins.

We visited the pawn-shops, those store-houses of strange and wonderful things, and bought some furs and curios. Unfortunately the boat which was taking them back to Hankow was attacked on its voyage down the river, our boxes were rifled, and had it not been for the energetic action of a revolutionary official, we should have lost everything. As it was, one box was lost entirely, though the others turned up in London ten months later.

It was at Sian that I first recollect that familiar sound at night in a Chinese town, the rattle of the watchman going his rounds. Every self-respecting establishment employs such a man, who is supposed to keep thieves from the door. They are paid sums varying up country from seven to nine shillings per month. They very commonly pay over a proportion of their wages to the local king of the thieves, who promises for his part to hold them immune from any burglarious attack. This

strikes both parties as a perfectly natural and satisfactory arrangement, which the watchman makes no bones about admitting. A certain foreigner noticing that after the first outburst of energy on the part of a man newly engaged, things were pretty quiet, asked him why he did not go his rounds. The man at once explained that he had made an arrangement whereby he was not to be disturbed and assured his employer that his goods were quite safe; as indeed they were. We occupied part of a large inn, which was luxurious for China. After the nightly explosions from the Governor's yamen—they nearly blew us up one night returning from dinner with Mr. Henné, the postmaster, who was most kind to us and who, I regret to say, was badly injured during the subsequent troubles—when the gates were locked and the keys delivered, when the “rub-a-dub-dub, slap-slap-slap” of the masseurs, the cries and drums of street-hawkers, and the exhortations of the Baptist evangelist and the Chinese philosopher round the corner had died away, the hot steaming night began. Towards one o'clock it cooled and from the other side of the thin mud wall behind my bed came a confused murmur. It is one thing to kill a beast in fair hunting, another to be the passive spectator of an animal slaughtered for food, and again quite another to find oneself in the small hours an unwilling auditor of the death agonies of half-a-dozen pigs. A dog yelped amid a chorus of weary grunts. Then a man's monotonous voice quelled the murmur, “Leh, leh, leh, leh, leh, leh, leh, leh” *ad infinitum*, calling as chickens are called to be fed. Then a scuffling, followed by a porcine

whimper which, in a second, developed into an ear-splitting squeal. The squeals continued, reached their climax in one more comprehensive, agonised and earsplitting than the rest, after which they died faintly away and expired in a horrible guggling gurgle which made my blood run cold. That marked the end of the first victim, and there were usually six every night, so that I was not altogether sorry when the time came to leave Sian.

The night before our departure some friends of Dr. Smith's invited us to a Chinese meal, the menu of which, at the risk of being thought tedious, I give :

1. Tea, melon and cigarettes.
2. Mushroom soup.
3. Fried Wei River fish.
4. Breaded mutton cutlets.
5. Roast strips of beef.
6. Pork rissoles and cabbage.
7. Shredded chicken with oak lichen.
8. Sea slugs (a great luxury and quite good).
9. Eggs forced with pork and onions.
10. Fat pork.
11. Egg plant.
12. Strips of bacon and boiled pork.
13. Boiled chicken.
14. Peaches and apple jelly (hot).
15. Sweetened pork with fermented rice.
16. Lotus root jelly.
17. Peaches and custard.
18. Apples, peaches, plums, melon seeds, peanuts, salted apricot seeds, and burnt walnuts.

To drink, we had sweetened rice wine in tiny cups, tea, and lemonade which tasted like pear drops.

Our hosts were most courteous, and though we could not speak directly to them, we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

Four days' march to the south of Sian lies the small mountain village of Ling-tai-miao, which we intended to make our headquarters. We left the city by the western gate, which was opened at dawn. Even in the provincial capital antiquated stands of arms, spears, billhooks, and other strange instruments are still placed by the guard-house for the defence of the gates. Little did we think as we rode out that morning past the Governor's yamen, what terrible scenes were to be enacted there so shortly.

On Sunday, October 22nd, the revolution burst on the inhabitants. The city gates were closed at noon, and fighting commenced at once with the capture of the arsenal. The slaughter of the Manchus followed immediately. Foreigners in the suburbs could get no certain news of what was happening. They did not even know whether the outbreak was anti-dynastic, anti-foreign, or anti-Christian. Their danger was much accentuated by their ignorance, for had the policy of the revolutionists been known unnecessary troubles might have been averted.

Firing continued all that day and night. A Mrs. Beckman, Mr. Watney, and six Swedish children were murdered by the mob in the south suburb; but these, so far as I know, were the only foreigners who were killed in Shensi. Mr. Henné, as I have already mentioned, had a very narrow escape, but happily recovered.

For three weeks previous to the outbreak the

Manchu governor of the province was in a state of great anxiety, and did not sleep at all. He hid the keys of the city gates, and at the outbreak of the troubles escaped, but was traced to a place called Ts'ao-t'an, where he was beheaded. The Manchu commander of the troops was spared owing to the regard in which he was held by his men. There were 3,000 trained troops at Sian-fu at the time of the outbreak, and the city was for some weeks completely isolated. The mountain passes were held by troops, and all communication stopped.

On the Sunday of the outbreak—

“The trouble broke out about 12 o'clock. The soldiers first took the arsenal, and served out arms and ammunition to every one who was willing to join them, the badge being white. Unfortunately, this was not sufficiently distinctive, for numbers of bad characters put a badge on, got arms, and used them only to rob and loot. The attack on the Manchu city began soon after, and continued until Wednesday morning, the object being to totally exterminate the Manchus—man, woman, and child. After Wednesday they ceased killing the women and girls, but continued to seek out the males. The position of the Manchus was hopeless from the first, for their quarter was not enclosed by a wall, and though every man is a soldier, they are soldiers of the old type, with very inferior weapons, so, although there were 5,000 Manchu men, they could do very little. The Chinese fired their houses, and then killed all they could while they were escaping. Many climbed up the city wall, and dropped down on the other side, some to be maimed or killed by the fall, others to be killed subsequently, and some perhaps

escaping. I have heard that a great many of the Manchus, especially the women, took their own lives.

“At a low estimate probably 10,000 have been killed. The Chinese have received comparatively few injuries, which is not surprising in view of their superior weapons. There are many Manchus in hiding, and we know of the safety of all Manchu Christians.”

I quote the following account of the death of the Swedish missionaries from a letter written last November by Dr. Robertson, whom we had the pleasure of meeting.

The house where Mr. Beckman lived was situated outside the wall of the south suburb, had a large garden front and back, and was surrounded by a fairly high wall.

“About midnight (Sunday) they were attacked by a band of robbers and bad characters of the neighbourhood. All the servants fled, and in doing so removed the ladder which had been placed ready against the wall in case flight should become necessary. The mission party had therefore to use a barrow, and Mr. Watney got over first; one child of twelve was handed over to him. As soon as they were over Mr. Beckman called to them, but had no reply, and he gathered that Mr. Watney and the child—who was Mr. Beckman’s daughter—had had to run. It afterwards appeared that Mr. Watney and his little companion ran for about six miles, but were then overtaken and done to death.

“Mr. Beckman, his wife, a little baby, and a little girl of seven, with the rest of the children, then took refuge in a little outhouse. Presently

they heard footsteps and knocking, and Mrs. Beckman went out at once with her little girl. They must have caught her and killed her at once, for her husband never saw her alive after that. Mr. Beckman then went out, and found the courtyard empty. The front gate was burned down, and outside was a mob of people. He ran right through, and down to a pool of water two feet deep. Here he stopped for a while, hidden among some thick grass; and when he saw men coming with lamps he moved along a little way to a tree. He heard men asking for him, and presently they left three there to watch till morning.

“All this time he was standing in the water, with his little baby in his arms, and not once did she utter a sound to betray their presence. After a while he saw the morning star, and heard the men say that they would soon be able to find him; he therefore felt about on the north side of the pool, and found a place where he could reach to the top with his arm. Then, though his strength was almost gone, he managed to climb up, and escape from his watchers. He and the child eventually reached the West Suburb, the only two that escaped from the attack. Mrs. Beckman, Mr. Watney, and six children had fallen victims.

“The new authorities are extremely sorry about this. Four men have been executed on account of the outrage, and their heads are hung outside the gate.”

These vigorous measures were evidence of the goodwill of the revolutionary authorities, who also sent out parties of soldiers to bring in the missionaries from their isolated stations at Sui-te-Chou and Yen-an-fu.

The day on which we left was extremely hot. The crows and magpies, of which we saw thousands daily, took advantage of every inch of shade, and stood gaping with wide-open mouths as we passed within a few yards of them. We also saw snipe, duck, and some large white birds with red, curved beaks, which we took to be ibis.

All inns are not such as the one which I attempted to describe in a preceding chapter, and often the best of those where we halted had already been occupied before our arrival.

Often we put up in a small room, opening off a narrow, muddy passage; but it is wonderful how soon one gets accustomed to surroundings which a few months before would have seemed impossible. Our advent invariably called forth the entire population of the village, who regarded us with slack, vapid, open mouths, and expressions of loutish stupidity. As everything in China is reversed it may be that their faces denoted the liveliest satisfaction!

The pleasantest sight was the fathers playing with their little sons. For this they always have time. Little boys are sadly spoiled in China, though girls are of small account, and are usually alluded to as "little guests," for will they not in time marry and go elsewhere? The Chinese baby is a pot-bellied little creature on sturdy legs. His stomach decreases inversely with his years, and the bent, shrivelled old men, who in a western country would be but in their prime, seem to have but little physical kinship with their descendants.

We often used to get into conversation, and the

inquiries and remarks which Dr. Smith translated were a never-failing source of interest. One man wanted our field-glasses—the thousand-mile glass, he called it—to find his wife, who had run away. He quite thought that with their aid he would be able to see through the mountains and intervening obstacles which separated them.

A popular belief is that foreigners have the power of looking into the ground, and seeing what minerals lie below the surface.

Of their ideas concerning geography I have already spoken. We were frequently taken for Japanese, with whom they apparently see no resemblance to themselves. We were informed that from islands adjoining our own, of course at the mouth of the Yangtse, came men with holes through their middles, who, when they went on a journey, slipped a pole through their centres and were borne comfortably by two carriers. Another was inhabited entirely by the fair sex.

The crowds were nearly always decorous, quiet, and not obtrusively rude. It was very unpleasant, after a long, hot, dusty ride, to sit down at a table in the open and be instantly surrounded by a crowd of half-naked Chinese and that peculiar unmistakable odour which emanates from Eastern humanity. Still, it might have been a great deal worse; and a few words from Dr. Smith usually relieved the situation when it began to get unbearable. In Africa and India it is possible to travel, even if one can speak nothing but one's own language, with a native interpreter, and get along fairly well; in China there is one absolute

and indispensable essential for a successful trip, and that is a trustworthy and capable guide, interpreter, headman, whatever you like to call him, who knows Chinese well and something of the geography of the country. Such a *rara avis* is hard to find. So recently as 1910 a party of Americans went through a certain district accompanied by native interpreters. The latter were enjoying themselves, which is more than can be said for their employers; in fact, they stated that, for a nine days' journey between two important towns they had found it necessary to expend three thousand taels (roughly, £375). The same journey, with such comforts as were available, accompanied by three large carts and five Chinese boys, cost us under two hundred taels. This was entirely due to Dr. Smith's careful management, his thorough knowledge of the country, his appreciation of the native, and his command of the language. Having travelled with him for nearly a year, it is unnecessary that I should draw attention to the article!

Our "spectacles without legs" were a never-failing source of amusement and delight; for the Chinaman, above all others, considers it an honourable and fitting finish to his appearance to go "barnacled." No light steel framework for him, but—and this is by far the most important item in the affair—a good solid front of heavy metal, as imposing and substantial as the railings before some large suburban dwelling. It holds a couple of squares or oblongs of, as like as not, cracked and broken glass; certainly no aid to vision, though this is a minor consideration. It strikes one with

astonishment at first to encounter some lean and scraggy old toiler, his business apparent in the hoe upon his shoulder, benevolently gazing through such monstrosities, when it seems that he should rather be poring over some learned tome in the quiet refuge of a library.

The 1st and 15th of the month are feast days, and we met, during one day's march, a curious crowd of old ladies, hobbling with the aid of dragon-crutched sticks to the temple to pray. They looked, in the distance, for all the world like some queer kind of wading bird, with their tapering limbs and stilted, mechanical action.

Sometimes in the crowd who swarmed around our halting-places we saw a face wearing the sallow, sodden, hopeless look of some poor wretch who had become an habitual eater of opium, which is about five times worse than smoking it. In spite of Imperial edicts, a certain amount of land in out-of-the-way mountain regions, which happen to be controlled by a slack Governor, is under cultivation of the poppy. The *yamen* underlings, to whom the Governor trusts to bring him information, are bribed, the Governor hoodwinked, and the opium grown, as we saw from the bundles of dried poppy-stalks, in various places. The craving for opium is about the greatest curse which can fall upon a man. Its victim sticks at nothing in his craving; he will sell his land, his goods, his wife or child, rather than be without it. We came across one man who had originally been well-to-do for a country man. He acquired the opium habit, and when we saw him was a penniless beggar in rags. He was quite happy, and refused Dr. Smith's

offer of a cure, which, though difficult, was still possible. He had mortgaged all his land, and occasionally did a little work, in order to get money to buy the drug. He hardly ate any food, and was content, even in winter, with a bundle of straw, in which he burrowed like an animal.

CHAPTER VII

A MOUNTAIN VILLAGE AND TAI-PEI-SHAN

LING-TAI-MIAO is a pretty little village, lying beside a brawling mountain torrent, fringed by shaking poplars, ash-trees, and some magnificent willows. The way was pleasanter than heretofore, through green rice-fields and clear-running streams, which flowed on beds of gritty sand and not the horrible red loëss. Snipe rose from the marshes, and the wild duck brought a sense of home, for there is no bird so evocative of old associations. The heat was very trying, and we panted for the hills, lifting our eyes with greater fervour than did ever the Israelites of old.

On the fourth day after leaving Sian-fu we passed, by the rocky medium of a river-bed, among the foothills, and presently saw our destination lying in the valley below. We received a warm welcome—or rather, our companion did, for the people knew him well. They were most friendly during the whole of our stay; but the highlanders of any country, once their initial reserve has been overcome, are far pleasanter to deal with than the dwellers in the plains.

Over 50 per cent. of the people we met here suffered from goitre, which seems very prevalent

in the mountainous districts of China. Cretin idiots are by no means uncommon.

We put up at a small temple. The caretaker—it was impossible to dignify him with the name of priest—a deaf but voluble old rascal, lived in a small room in one corner. Opposite, a miserable old woman had taken up her quarters, and over the gateway an opium-smoker dragged out his days beside a grinning god. Otherwise we had the place to ourselves. Dr. Smith's old friends brought presents of vegetables, cucumbers, potatoes, and eggs, usually refusing payment. A crowd of small boys followed our every movement with bated breath, until we turned their superfluous energies to account by sending them out to collect raspberries, of which there were great quantities growing wild. They got twenty cash (rather less than a half-penny) per pound, and kept us well supplied during our stay. Even more than cash they prized empty cartridge cases. Large numbers of pigeons used to roost in the old stand for theatrical performances which is part of every self-respecting temple, and here we used to shoot them when our menu wanted a change. There were also doves here—pretty little birds, with a ring of blue-spotted white feathers round their necks, hares, and pheasants. In the winter these latter furnish good sport.

One morning I was awakened by the banging of drums and the clanging of gongs. It appeared that a man in the village had had about 60 ozs. of opium stolen (at 650 cash per oz. this would be valued at 25 taels—rather over £3), and the astrologers were hard at work endeavouring to find

the thief. The spirits having been invoked, a small box, containing an assortment of numbered bamboo slips, was produced. One was drawn from the box at random and the number referred to a book of questions and answers. For example, "Is the thief twenty *li* from here?" "Yes." "Is he ten *li*?" "Yes," and so on, narrowing down the inquiry. On a previous visit the doctor's money and clothes had been stolen during his absence, the thieves gaining admittance by cutting a hole in the mud wall of his room, a very favourite method. Indeed, during our stay, poor old Count Fosco, as we called the caretaker, was attacked in this manner. He was a thorough-paced old rascal with a perpetual grievance, who did a little mild stealing on his own when he thought there was no chance of detection. The penalty for stealing over fifty taels' worth of goods is death, occasionally enforced, and he took good care to keep well within the limit. Unfortunately for him, he was very deaf, and the thieves quietly removed his clothes, bedding, a bag of flour which he kept under his pillow, and everything else they could find. Meanwhile, the old gentleman slept peacefully on and never discovered his loss till the morning, when the hulla-baloo he raised brought every one rushing out to see what was the matter. On the doctor's loss being made known, an old man who lived over the mountains near by, known as Shan-langyie, *i.e.* the old mountain wolf-man, was called in. He was a kind of clairvoyant, and his performance merits description.

He and his assistant having made their preparations, every one repaired to the temple. Paper

images of the gods were set up, surrounded by lighted tapers and incense. The old man and his assistant took hold of opposite sides of a bushel measure, a square box capable of holding about 53 lbs. They then twisted it round their heads, at the same time indulging in a kind of dance, such as is often seen on the stage. They were imitated in all their movements by two young men, who waved the handle of a knife from which the blade had been removed. Gradually they worked themselves up into a frenzy and approached the god, holding out the measure as though imploring him to enter. For two hours this continued, while one man beat a gong monotonously and another kept praying, "O Spirit! we beseech thee to enter the measure," "O Spirit! we beseech thee to enter the measure." At length the two holding the measure whirled out into the yard, through the room from which the money had been stolen, out of the court at top speed, through the watching crowds, and into the temple again. Time after time the dance was repeated, until finally they tore out of the temple to a distance of ten *li*. Here they entered a mill inhabited by a decrepit old man; also an inn where dwelt a man well known for his honesty. Being thus apparently at fault, they said the thief must have been there, and next day tried again. On this occasion the measure led them to a man who eventually turned out to be the brother of the thief. He, immediately after the robbery, had stolen a small pig by way of proving an alibi!

On another occasion this old mountain wolf-man was called in after 50 ozs. of opium had been stolen. He actually led the crowd a distance of

40 *li*, when the stolen drug was discovered under a stone in the river bed.

His assistant, whom the doctor knew, said that he could not explain the matter in any way, but felt that he had to go wherever the measure directed him.

For some days after our arrival mist and cloud covered the tops of the surrounding mountains. These rose to a height of over 11,000 ft., whilst the summit of the lower ridges, blotched and scarred, marred and torn as far as the eye could reach by patches of cultivation, were some 3,000 ft. above the river. My sympathies are with the toiling peasant, but I abominate his handiwork. Maize, wheat and barley were the principal crops. I have never seen such masses of wild flowers as grew on the crest of these foothills. There were lilies, red and yellow, spotted and plain; some over six feet high, others but a few inches above the ground; gentians, pinks, irises—these of course not in flower; jasmine and a quantity of other varieties whose names I did not know. Above them fluttered hundreds of butterflies, which seemed particularly fond of a beautiful mauve flower growing on a straight stem. The largest of these butterflies were of a blackish green, with pink under wings and swallow tails. They must have measured nearly four inches across.

These foothills are fine hunting ground for roe (*Capreolus bedfordi*) in the winter. During the summer the grasses and undergrowth are too luxuriant to render their pursuit at all a hopeful undertaking. We tried one day and jumped a buck which I missed; while George shot a female

for food. Wild pig are also to be found, but though we came across their wallows we never encountered the beast himself.

On his first visit the doctor heard of a leopard with some cubs close by. He sat over the den and managed to capture the two young ones, but the mother never returned. The cubs, after living for a day or two, died.

The Goral (*Urotragus goral*) appears to be very widely distributed. I saw a skin at Hwa-Shan, and was told by a missionary there that he had seen one. The weather being so bad at Lingtai-miao during our stay, and the undergrowth so dense, we decided not to hunt them there, as we were confident of getting specimens farther west. This turned out to be a mistake, as we never saw one in Kansu at all.

A few days after our arrival, some men, hearing of our desire to hunt, came and offered their services. We engaged two; Yong, whose heart, in the expressive Chinese phrase, was "not in the centre," but the best takin hunter for miles, and Lou-loo, an inveterate slacker, with an engaging smile and magnificent calf development. He won something of my liking, for though obsessed with an abhorrence of any kind of work, the love of hunting filled his mind to the exclusion of everything else. Yong had been wounded years before by a takin, which the natives consider a very vicious animal. He had hit one and followed it up, his old native gun still unloaded. According to his own account, as he passed a rock the takin, which had been lying in wait, dashed out and with a twist of its head ripped his thigh open. The scar



OUR CAVE.



INTERIOR OF THE CAVE.

was certainly there, and on the whole there seems no reason why his story should be false. The takin is allied to the ox, which, in a wild state, is notoriously vindictive.

Two of these animals were caught when young and kept in a village through which we passed. One died, but the other lived for two or three years, when it turned savage and had to be killed. Having secured our hunters, we left the village on August 1 at 5 a.m. for Tai-pei-shan. About 10.30 a.m. we had reached the bamboos, and half an hour later thickets of rhododendrons. We intended if possible to reach the summit of the mountain and camp in a cave of which the doctor knew. However, the porters with our possessions did not arrive until 3 o'clock, so we decided to spend the night in another cave, situated at an elevation of about 8,000 feet. It was very still up there. Even the ceaseless whirring grind of the cicadas, with its peculiar little run-down at the end, had ceased; and in place of the whispering murmur of the willows was the clean, aromatic scent of pines. From the cave we looked out into a dense sea of bush, from which limestone and granite pinnacles, streaked and gashed, broke their way. Far below rose the red mud hills which fringed the river, a curving white streak at their feet. Mud-walled cottages dotted the green of the paddy fields, and beyond again rose more foothills, stained red with the everlasting, persevering patches of cultivation. They rose in spurts of enthusiasm nearly to the summits; then died fitfully away, exhausted by the effort. Beyond, the great plain of Sian-fu baked and sweltered in its

purple haze. On its vast expanse the Wei River wound a dragon-like course. Up in the heights all was clear and fresh and beautiful. In the valley below fireflies flickered about the temple roof, and in the darkness the opium smoker lay huddled beside his god.

CHAPTER VIII

SOME NOTES ON CAVES AND THE HOME OF THE TAKIN

I AM ready to take Dr. Smith's opinion on any matter relating to China, save only as regards caves and the gastronomical qualities of musk deer! "Ah!" he said; "wait till you get to the cave! Beautifully dry inside, a grand outlook, and good shelter!" I have always longed to sleep in a cave. I suppose every boy has. "There is nobody under thirty so dead but his heart will stir a little at the sight of a gypsies' camp," and when one becomes a gypsy oneself the feeling is so far intensified as to render, for the time, no other life worth the living. What I wanted was just such a cave as the doctor described. I had pictured it all a hundred times. The grey rocks; the couch of fir boughs; the leaping flames of the camp fire; the strange figures of the native hunters, now red and strong in the glare, now hidden in the shadows; grinning skulls in one corner; the clarity of dawn in the mountains; the solemn gathering of the shadows at evening. How seldom does anticipation accord with the reality! The doctor knew the cave in winter, and we occupied it in midsummer! The

weather had been fine, but on the very day we left Ling-tai-miao it broke, and there was an abundance of rain. Our shelter occupied a space about 18 ft. by 14 ft., but scarcely a foot of it was dry. Facing south, and partially sheltered by an overhanging rock, it protected us to a certain extent, for from this quarter came the prevailing wind, but I do not think I have ever experienced a wetter or a more uncomfortable time. We were wet when we rose from our soaking beds; wet when we sought them after a soaking day. We had about twelve hours' hunting in all, and for the remainder of the time sat on damp coffin boards in a swelter of mist and rain. As the Chinese sage remarks, "Appreciations come by contrast and experiences are the ladder of truth." Certainly when we left we were in a position to appreciate even the mud walls and squalor of a Chinese inn. At the least it had a roof, and we had to go outside to get wet!

The men—there were twelve of them the first night, for our porters were with us—huddled beneath a rock; the doctor found an overhanging slab, whilst George and I essayed shelter some yards lower down the hill. We curled ourselves into a miscellaneous collection of garments covered by a thin native waterproof sheet—a purely courtesy title—and hoped for sleep. Never were hopes more sadly misplaced. I awoke after what seemed to me half an hour and heard a stifled groan from George. A cold, clammy chill permeated my back, and, hearing a floundering splash, I knew that my worst fears had materialised. In addition to a burn, which trickled gaily from the upper cave

and continued its ever-augmented course beneath the fir boughs on which we lay, in addition to pouring rain and driving mist, from which we had practically no protection at all, a large waterfall discharged its contents with great precision into the pit of George's stomach, whilst lesser tributaries playing about my legs hinted at the discomfort which he was suffering. No wonder he groaned! We never had our clothes off for a week, and slept in them, plus pyjamas, a sheepskin coat, and Burberrys. George showed great ingenuity in varying his night apparel. I know a pair of Jaeger trousers tucked into his socks was about the only permanent factor, whilst nightly he grew more bulky about the waist. The lowest which the thermometer registered in the valley had been 69° , whilst in the cave it was 39° . Nothing availed, and in the cold, grey dawns, pelting, pitiless, and penetrating, so different from my imaginings, three haggard, unshaven objects crept from their respective lairs, and converging, half-suffocated, on the miserable ashes of a wood fire, compared notes as to their respective experiences.

There was nothing to do during the day save dry our clothes, read, and stare blankly into the grey wall of mist, which rose grey and forbidding to the very mouth of the cave. Occasionally it parted, and we could see jagged slopes and granite cliffs, with dense bush, far below us. Gusts of wind would tear it into shreds, and send boiling, swirling masses of vapour into the chasm confronting us. Rarely, very rarely would a glint of blue sky tantalise us into momentary cheerfulness. Then the curtain would roll down once more, and shut

us off from the world. Always there sounded in our ears the deadening, monotonous drip, drip, drip of falling water. Drip! drip! drip! it fell; drip! drip! drip! At times we lost consciousness of it, as one does of an oft-reiterated sound. Then it would spring suddenly to life, and we became conscious once more of its percolating murmur presaging horrors for the coming night. Still it was a grand opportunity for reading, and I shall always feel grateful to *Gil Blas* and the immortal and ever-cheery R. L. S. for their companionship during those long wet days.

At length one evening the mists began to thin, our horizon, which had hitherto been bounded by the top of a stunted larch a few yards from the cave, extended, and we were able to see what our resting place might have been. Before us lay a deep gorge. Granite slopes and jagged cliffs whose battlemented crests hung poised above great slides of rock emerged. Below them lay thickets of rhododendrons. It was possible again to maintain a sense of distance. Ridges stood out, greyly at first, but later with a stronger definition. The nearer larches, no longer flat masses in the foreground, put on delicate tints and shaded boughs. Through strips of opalescent cloud the half-veiled sun shone with a pearly lustre. The sky grew full of the most wonderful shades of colour; here, glowing with the softened brilliance of a shell, there, a pale, argent blue. Over all hung an atmosphere, unreal and impalpable, as though one looked at a silver point delicately tinted and endowed with life. Drifting mists swept across the valleys, softening the deep, glowing emeralds and



TAKIN GROUND.

(We shot the Takins above the stone shoot in the centre of the picture.)



TAKIN GROUND.

purples of the hills to an ethereal brilliancy. In places they coalesced, and laid themselves athwart the tops in rosaries of tiny clouds, strung on invisible threads; again some grim old peak would stand above them grey and lonely, emphatic of their symmetry and colour. Far below, blanketing the main valley, white masses gathered, and shut it from our sight. The larches and hill-grasses held a myriad subdued points of light, as though winter had on a sudden come and a chill morning's hoar frost greeted us, not the remnants of a long, wet day. The hills were of an extraordinary steepness. Grassy ledges sheltered amid the rocks, and from far, far below came the hollow roar of many waters. A woodpecker tapped industriously. From behind a rock-splintered crag an eagle swung. Rotting stumps and moss-grown boulders lay amid the flowers. Birch, rowan, larch, fir, huge currant bushes, and other shrubs made variety with gigantic rhododendrons. Here and there an entire hill-side would be covered with the latter, at times straggly and overgrown, but more generally of an uniform size, seven or eight feet in height. Azaleas gleamed amid the rocks, the mountains in May and June presenting such a blaze of colour as no country in the world could equal. Intersecting dense thickets wound the narrow, unseen paths of woodmen. On the rocky promontories overlooking each gully and chasm sweet-scented myrtle grew thick; flowers mingled with banks of wild strawberries in a riot of colour; about them hovered butterflies by the score.

To the west lay a large basin, its salient feature a series of enormous slides of rock, grey and

menacing. Their component parts seemed small and insignificant until the glass revealed colossal granite boulders of every shape and size. Some, and these apparently the most solidly balanced, were so nicely poised that it needed but a touch to send them crashing and roaring into the stream below. Interspersed among these slides, sprawling over the hill-side in fantastic elongations and splashes, were patches of bush, the same stunted larches whose average height did not exceed eight feet, and flowering shrubs. These only partially revealed the rocks beneath, and served not only to conceal the game, but by their very nature gave them timely warning of any invasion of their solitude. The basin sloped steeply to rocky canyons and ravines, the lower ledges smothered in a mass of dwarf bamboos. A thin streak of blue sky beyond a far distant ridge silhouetted the low roof and grey walls of a temple 12,000 feet above sea level, to which even then the first pilgrims were flocking. As the mists cleared the low, ridged valley from which we had come loomed grey through its folds, the saddle we had crossed, and the wide river-bed leading to the plain beyond. Far into the haze stretched range upon range of hills, all save the topmost peaks looking like nothing so much as the presentment of mountains on a large topographical map.

Such is the country of the takin. In the next chapter I shall give an account of the habits of this rare and little known animal.

CHAPTER IX

THE TAKIN (*Budorcas bedfordi*)

THE takin is a strange beast inhabiting a strange country. No animal that I have ever seen is so difficult to describe, and none of the rare accounts which I have read in the least prepared me for his appearance. In this, an age of big game hunting, probably no creature in the world save his congener, the musk ox, has so seldom been an object of pursuit by the white man. Some years ago Professor A. Milne Edwards suggested an affinity between the latter animal and the *Budorcas*. The two genera were subsequently placed in juxtaposition by the late Professor Rütimyer. Dr. Matschie developed the idea, and regards them as forming a sub-family by themselves—the ovibovinaë. As indications of their mutual affinity he notices the short and broad front cannon bones, the structure of the skull and form of the horns, the small ears, the hairy muzzle, the short tail, the clumsy main hoofs, and the large size of the lateral pair.

Mr. Blanford has placed *Budorcas* in the neighbourhood of the serows (*nemorhadus*), and with this view Mr. Lydekker agrees.

The takin has, in China, been killed by few

save native hunters. Mr. Meares, the companion of the unhappy Lieutenant Brooke, who, a few years ago, was murdered in Lolo-land, claims to have been the first white man to shoot a specimen. Major Malcolm McNeill, D.S.O., has successfully stalked them near Tatsien-lu in Western Szechuan, as also Mr. Zappe, an American; Dr. J. A. C. Smith, our companion, killed one in Shensi in 1910, but otherwise, so far as I am aware, none have been killed by Englishmen, though specimens of young animals have been obtained, probably from native hunters, by the American Museum of Natural History at New York. There are several known varieties.

1. The typical form found in Assam and Bhotan (*Budorcas taxicolor*).

2. That found in Western Szechuan and Eastern Thibet (*Budorcas tibetanus*). *B. sinensis* and *B. mitchelli* are regarded as synonymous with this species.

3. *Budorcas bedfordi*, found in Shensi.

In the Tsinling Minshan ranges, a practically continuous mountain range running due east and west, they are in certain districts common, ranging from Chow-chih in the east to Li-shien in the west. Due west of the westernmost extremity of the Tsinling Mountains there appears to be a gap, the Peshui River, as the upper reaches of the Kialing are called, being their boundary in this direction.

4. They are said, on good authority, to be found in the mountains of Northern Shansi, due west of Peking.

5. Takin are known to exist near Pie-kou in Southern Kansu. To our great regret we were



Frank Wallis
1915

SKETCHES OF TAKIN.

unable to hunt them here, owing to the outbreak of the revolution. I think it is not unreasonable to suppose that this variety may be found to be intermediate between *tibetanus* and *bedfordi*.

6. Mr. R. Kingdon Ward tells me that he found the skull and horns of a takin among the Lutzus, a tribe living near the Salween River. They and the Chiutsus, another tribe, speak of them as "yie-nu," *i.e.* wild cattle, and shoot them with crossbows and poisoned arrows.

That variety (*Budorcas taxicolor*) inhabiting the Mishmi hills on the northern frontier of Assam was discovered and described by Brian Hodgson in 1850. Mr. J. Claude White, C.M.G., has rendered many familiar with its appearance, for he sent the first living specimen to reach Europe to the Zoological Society. It can be seen any day in the gardens in Regent's Park. The Chinese takin, however, differs considerably from the typical form found in Assam. The prevailing colour of the latter is blackish brown, the whole of the upper side of the body being sprinkled with greyish yellow. There is a dark spinal stripe. It was in reference to the light or greyish hue of the upper side, correlated with the dark hue of the underside and legs, that this specimen was named "taxicolor" or "badger-coloured." I quote Mr. R. I. Pocock: In Szechuan, the Assamese form is replaced by a lighter one (*Budorcas tibetanus*), described by Milne Edwards, which is mostly yellow or grey in colour, with a blackish muzzle, ears and tail, a short dark spinal stripe and blackish or iron-grey legs. The prevailing colour of the Shensi takin, which again differs in coloration from the

Szechuan variety, is golden yellow, and it may be taken that this is the most specialised representative of the genus *budorcas* yet discovered. To quote Mr. Pocock again—and I am indebted to him for much information on the subject—“the main character in which this Chinese animal deviates from the Assamese one is the extension of the pale coloration over the greater part of the head and its intensification everywhere.” There is no dark spinal stripe, though its remains are found in a longer ridge of hairs, of a slightly darker tone than those of the body, approximating to those found on the necks of the males. It is interesting to note, however, that this dark dorsal stripe is very prominent in the young, varying in colour from dark grey to chocolate brown on the neck and tail. The young have also dark hairs round the fringe of the curiously shaped ears and a dark muzzle. The legs and hind quarters are also considerably darker than in the adult. Even in the Szechuan variety the young are very materially darker than adult specimens. The cows stand about 42 inches at the shoulder; a full-grown bull about 51 inches. The legs are short, enormously thick, and seem small in proportion to the body. The hoofs are large and very splayed. The hair is coarse.

In sunlight they are a conspicuous golden yellow, though the females are considerably lighter and more silvery in tone, like the yellow in the coat of a Polar bear. The bulls are much larger and have a decidedly reddish tinge about the neck, not unlike the colour of a lion. The back view of both sexes, owing to the length of hair, the formation

of the hindquarters, and comparative concealment of the short, broad tail, is absurdly like that of a Teddy bear. Much larger in size, they reminded me very strongly of the Rocky Mountain goat (*Oreamnus montanus*), both in their heavy build and apparently clumsy, lumbering gait. On occasions they can cover the rough ground on which they dwell with the agility of a rhinoceros. The head, normally, is carried low, the point of the muzzle being considerably below the line of the vertebræ. The eyesockets are prominent, close up to the horn, the curve of the nose decidedly Semitic, and the nostrils large and well formed. The colour of the young is yellowish grey, shading to a darker tone, mingled with brown on the flanks. The belly is brown, the hair soft and fluffy; the hind legs dark grey, a lighter brown on the inside of the thigh. The upper part of the foreleg is dark grey; the lower part of the leg brownish yellow.

According to the natives, those found to the south of Tai-pei-shan are much darker in colour and not so yellow, but there seems no reason why this should be so. They also say that the calves in their second year are black and white and gradually turn yellow. No doubt the latter part of the statement is correct. The rut takes place towards the latter end of July and the beginning of August. The calves, usually one at a birth, are dropped towards the end of March or early in April. The summer excreta resemble those of domestic cattle; the winter, ovoid, are like a deer's. They feed in the winter on bamboos and willows; in the summer on birch shoots, a kind of

elm, grass and a strong-smelling herb with a yellow flower of which they are very fond, called, I believe, *senecio*. When they descend, as they sometimes do if alarmed, into the bamboos they are very difficult to approach. Their pursuit under such conditions becomes very arduous in hot weather.

In the winter they separate into small bands, but in summer collect and have been seen in herds of over a hundred. Indeed, Lou-loo said that on one occasion he was in hiding, when a herd passed him numbering at least a thousand, but one must always make a big allowance for native exaggeration. When suspicious they give each other warning by a kind of hoarse cough, and during the rut utter a low bellow. The natives, as I have already mentioned, credit them with great ferocity. In the winter they are to be found among the dwarf bamboos which cover the hills at an altitude of seven or eight thousand feet. In summer they retreat farther into the recesses of the mountains and spend their time on the rock-scattered slopes and battlemented crags which tower above the rhododendron groves and thickets of the 'Tsinling range. On being alarmed, unless badly frightened, they do not go very far, but stop at a little distance and start feeding again. The old bulls are very cunning and always the hardest to approach when alone. They will lie with outstretched necks in the densest thickets and refuse to move until the hunter is almost on them.

They are local in their habits, and will not wander far unless much disturbed. We saw two bulls on the same hill-side, almost on the same spot, day after day.



STUDIES OF TAKIN (*Budorcas bedfordi*).

The horns of the old bulls do not harden into a solid central mass, but separate, and, though tapering at the tips, become worn and flattened in front. Those of the younger bulls are jammed close up against each other, and are soft at their bases. When the horn growth is complete these harden and become more widely separated. Size of body is a just criterion to excellence of head. In other words, a big bull will almost certainly carry a big head; though the difference between a big head and a very big head is, in the case of the takin, only a matter of a few inches. The horns of the cows are considerably smaller than those of the bulls.

Of their senses I cannot speak authoritatively. It is a mistake as well as an exposure of ignorance to lay down the law concerning the care with which any animal may be stalked on an acquaintance extending over a few days. One may or may not be lucky, the animal obliging or the reverse. I am inclined to think that, apart from the weather, the takin is not a very difficult animal to approach. The country which he frequents in the summer, though necessitating a good deal of hard climbing, is otherwise easily stalked; the animal itself certainly not, from our experience, unduly on the alert, and easily "picked up" with a glass. To judge an animal's faculties fairly one must have had him under observation *when he knows that he is an object of pursuit*. The takins in China, as we saw them, were so accustomed to the noise and passage of woodcutters that I do not think they were unduly alarmed at the proximity of man. Those which we afterwards secured were in full

view in the open half a mile or so away when first seen. They made no attempt to move, and betrayed no uneasiness, though it would have been easy for them to see us; and wild sheep under similar circumstances would have been over the hills and far away in no time. Mr. Fergusson records the following notes: Each herd follows an old bull, who is the leader. To such a pitch do they carry their blind obedience that, on a native hunter shooting one, which fell over a cliff, the whole herd threw themselves over after him. In the spring the cows travel alone with their young, which can follow anywhere at three days old, and are weaned at one month. In Szechuan they collect about salt licks, to which they make regular broad beaten paths, but in Shensi we did not come across any such spots. Where they exist the hunting of any animal is rendered comparatively easy. All that the hunter has to do is to conceal himself near the lick, when he is almost certain to obtain a shot.

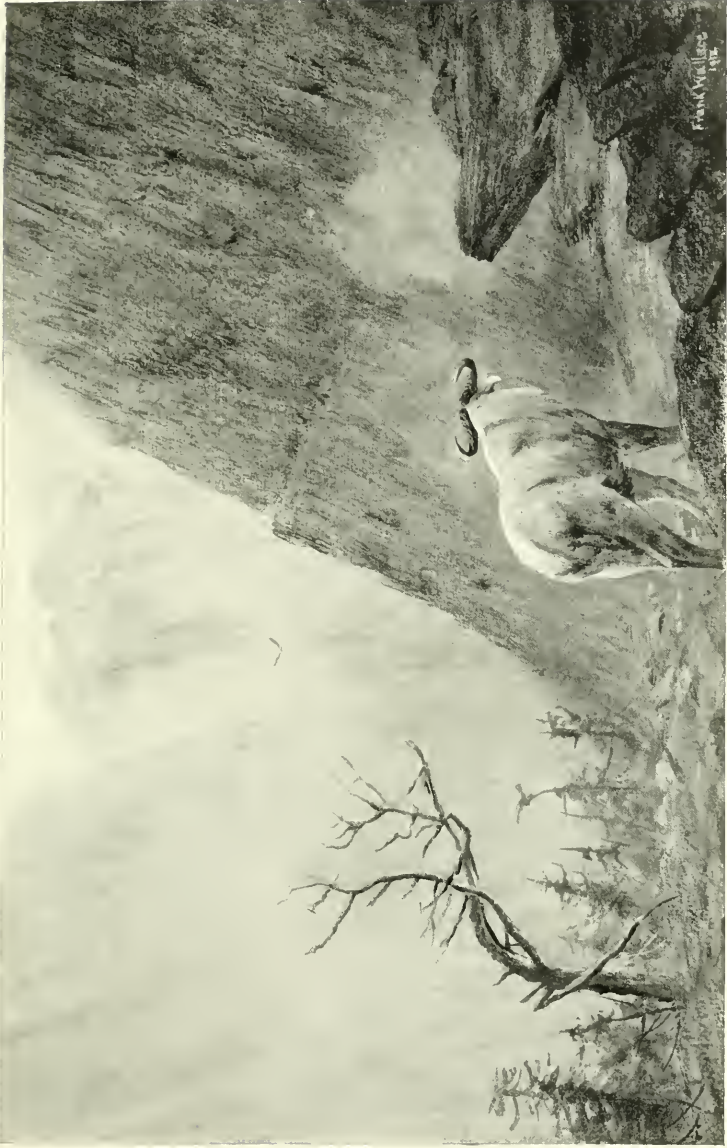
CHAPTER X

HUNTING THE TAKIN

It was on August 6th that our hopes were at last realised. The night, cold and bracing, had shone with a beautiful clear moon in a cloudless sky, and we woke to a lovely sunrise and every promise of a glorious day. By 5 o'clock we were climbing the hill-side to the top of the ridge. The road lay for the first mile or so through meadows thick with stunted larches, whose grotesquely twisted branches blended with the grey rocks which showed amid the long wet grass. At one time I was reminded strongly of pictures of caribou country in Newfoundland, at others of nothing so much as of those rhododendron thickets which are so often seen about the policies of an old Scottish home. Presently we struck a narrow, knife-edged ridge, which on the east descended abruptly in a series of spire-shaped pinnacles to deep gorges with bare and naked sides. Swiftly running mountain streams gleamed like silver threads below. To the west lay the large basin, a portion of which we could see from the cave. At the far end it swelled gradually to rolling tops, typical sheep country, though there were no sheep, which again descended to similar country on the far side. From the

narrow ridge where we stood a magnificent view was obtained. Range after range stretched away to the west, a few fleecy clouds resting on the highest peaks; a wide valley extended far below us to the north, and all, save where the rocks and slides made pronounced grey and white splashes, was of a vivid green. We halted for a spy, the hunters squatting native fashion, while George and I pulled out our glasses and settled ourselves among the rocks. For a few moments no one spoke, and then George quietly remarked, "I've got them!" We made them out, two great yellow forms moving amid the rocks on the far side of the basin. They were our first takin, and never shall I forget that moment. Their colour, I fancy, is what struck us all more than anything in their appearance. It was the reincarnation of the Golden Fleece.

I have already described their appearance at some length, so that it is unnecessary to dilate upon it here. We watched them moving in a rather clumsy, lumbering way about the hill-side, and then set about getting closer. The wind was from the east, and a detour round the top of the basin our only means of approach. The actual distance was not long, but it took us an hour to reach the spot from which the descent had to be made. Here a higher and even rockier top than those which we had already traversed confronted us. From its side sprang an enormous jagged spur, which stretched into the depths of a deep gully on our left. Stopping again for a spy, the doctor almost immediately detected a herd of takins. They were lying about in the sun directly above



THE LONE GOAT.

an almost perpendicular stone shoot, or narrow gully, which seamed one side of the spur and descended in an unbroken drop for over a thousand feet. We made out eight animals altogether—three bulls, three cows, and two calves. Two of the bulls were sparring, while the calves played about among the rocks. They were in a much better position for a stalk than those which we had previously seen. We accordingly decided to go after them. An hour and a half later we reached the summit of the mountain, attaining an altitude, I suppose, of between 11,000 and 12,000 ft. The ascent was very similar to the country over which we had already come. In the saddles, open grassy patches. Leaning on the stunted larches which bordered the edge of these little glades rested long roof poles and coffin boards, for the country swarmed with woodcutters. No tree was of any size, for in a country where fuel is precious every large tree, with a happy disregard for the future, is chopped down and cast into the fire. Others are sliced into coffin boards and carried down the hill-side on men's backs, and so by mule to Sian-fu. Replanting is unheard of, and to exemplify the deforestation of the hill-sides the first remark a Chinaman will make on seeing any well-timbered country which is new to him is, "Ah, there are some good roof poles!" or "What splendid coffin boards!" according as he is of an optimistic or a pessimistic turn of mind.

Conspicuous on one tree we passed was a notice in large Chinese characters imploring a thief who had stolen some roof poles to make restitution, the vengeance of the god of the mountain having been

invoked with much burning of incense, should he fail to do so. Bluebells, gentians, vetches, forget-me-nots, orchises, poppies, edelweiss, and many varieties of little rock plants grew scattered above the rhododendrons and azaleas; meadow pippits darted about the rocks; a Siberian mink (the Chinese call them "yellow rat-wolves") flung himself headlong across our path; a blood-pheasant called from the valley below, and was answered by the flippant cry of a fir-crow. Ever and anon the unmistakable scent of a fox was borne to our nostrils.

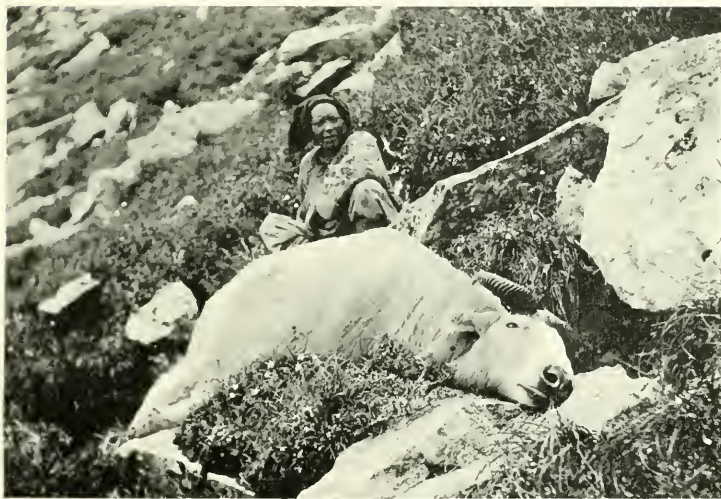
Both hunters were very excited; Lou-loo laughing and gesticulating, urging us forward, rushing about in his rope sandals in a manner highly aggravating to any one in heavy shooting boots.

We were now in a position to spy the takins. They had moved from their original position and were lying among the rocks scattered over the hill-side. One bull was considerably larger in the body than the other two and seemed an older animal, though these were both full grown; his horns, too, looked bigger. He was lying somewhat apart from the others, overlooking the stone shoot, in an ideal position for a stalk.

We continued our advance until we had gained a position with the game some four or five hundred feet below, the ground rocky and extraordinarily steep. Here we put on some spare hemp sandals, which, though very small and uncomfortable, were a necessity, as it would have been impossible to get within shot in our own footgear. Even so, while descending I was within an ace of dislodging a large boulder, but fortunately managed to replace



MY FIRST TAKIN—AS HE FELL.



YONG WITH MY SECOND TAKIN BULL.

it in time. We drew for shot, the lot falling to George. He accordingly decided to go for the big bull. On hearing his shot I was to fire at one of the smaller bulls, which were lying fifteen yards to the right of his prospective victim. A steep crag of rock, sloping into lesser pinnacles, rose immediately above the bank of dwarf rhododendrons sprinkled with wild flowers on which they lay. George, the doctor, and Lou-loo went to the left; I and Yong to the right. Though only twenty yards apart, the rocks hid us from their sight. In Shensi—at any rate, when the animals are in the open—nearly all shots at *pan-yang* or “precipice oxen,” as the natives call them, are taken at close quarters. I was, however, rather startled, on looking over my peak, to see a bull and two cows lying in blissful unconsciousness of danger within twenty yards of me. The big bull was hidden, the third tucked away beneath an overhanging rock lower down the slope.

I cautiously thrust my rifle over the rock, took a fine sight at the bull's neck, and waited. It seemed an age before George's shot rang out; but at last it did, and before my bull could spring to his feet he was dead. I heard a crash from below; the two cows dashed past me, and as they did so I had a second shot. A calf suddenly appeared, and with it the doctor's final injunctions about meat; for the roe, which had held out bravely, was almost exterminated. The calf disappeared behind a rock, and a second later fell fifty feet below me, though I did not know this until later. As another full-grown animal galloped across our front, Yong seized my arm and waved wildly.

Thinking it was the cow at which I had fired my second shot, I fired again, and apparently missed, for the beast carried on. I tried again, as he blundered over some rocks stern on, and had the satisfaction of seeing him fall.

George appearing below, I joined him. He had killed his bull with a shot in the brain. It had pitched straight over the ledge on which it lay and lodged in the centre of the stone shoot two or three hundred feet below. Unfortunately, the tip of one horn was broken. Whilst he told me this, a cow—I do not to this day know where she came from—suddenly shot into the air within a few yards of us as though propelled through a stage trap-door. I gasped, the doctor yelled, and George in his rope sandals dashed round the corner in pursuit. Very shortly I heard two shots; my companion came clambering back, and we compared notes. He had the big bull, a cow which he had just shot, and a youngster at which I had made some very bad shooting earlier. The cow had pitched a good fifteen hundred feet over rocks, trees, and shoots, being subsequently discovered by the indefatigable doctor smashed to a pulp. I had the bull killed by my first shot, a calf, and the animal which, as I thought, had been wounded by my second shot, and afterwards, on reviving, killed. Yong, however, who had been indulging in some mysterious manœuvres on his own account, came up and said he had found this animal, a cow, lying beside the big bull in the shoot. The other beast which I had killed turned out to be the second bull, with a slightly better head than the first.

Though the bull George had killed carried a



TAKIN CHANGING GROUND.

better head than either of mine, and was a much larger animal in every way, as may be seen from a comparison of their measurements, I had had all the luck ; for none of my three heads were damaged at all, whilst one of his bull's horns was broken and the cow's absolutely ruined.

Thus ended a somewhat exciting five minutes, in which we secured specimens of a very rare animal. We had in all three bulls, two cows, and two calves. No particle of the meat was wasted, for the natives, woodcutters, and such-like, hearing of our success, collected and carried it off in basket-loads. Takin meat, though good, is decidedly tough, and we retained that of the calves for our own use. Almost immediately after we had ascertained the death-roll, heavy folds of mist which had been gradually collecting enveloped us completely, and we spent the rest of the day in their damp embrace, reaching the cave about six. The following morning I returned to the dead animals to make some sketches, while George went after a big bull which we spied on the far side of the basin. The animal was very restless, and they "jumped" him in dense rhododendrons, when he went off like a streak of greased lightning, stopped once, and then started on again.

George had another day after them in dense bamboo cover. He found a herd which, though aware of his presence, did not seem much alarmed. They pattered on in front, stopping to graze after a bit and then going on again. He killed a cow and wounded a bull ; which, unfortunately, he was unable to follow up owing to an attack of cramp. It was impossible to force a way through the

bamboos, as small firs, birches, etc., grew thickly in between. It was very hard luck not killing a male, as he was out for fourteen hours and had a terribly hard day. Old Yong enjoyed it, for he found some roots which were supposed to be good for his tummy, his liver, or some other portion of his anatomy. He was always digging about, and was as keen as a pig after truffles. In the middle of a stalk he would suddenly dive into a hole, or some patch of undergrowth, grub for an indefinite period, and emerge, no dirtier than before, for that was impossible, but heated and triumphant, with some beastly little root, which he secreted in his rags.

He and the other hunters quite believed that animals were able to understand human speech, but that by the interposition of the monosyllable "leo" this interesting faculty was frustrated. Thus, when two hunters were together, one would call across a gully to the other, "Game coming up to you, leo-leo-leo!" or, "Go to the right, leo, leo, leo!"—a pleasing and unsophisticated belief.

He was much taken with our rifles, and described their powers to each wandering wood-cutter. "Before you could put a cup to your lips," he said, "they have killed a *pan-yang*; before you can drink, another; and before you swallow, a third."

"The most patient people grow weary at last of being continually wetted with rain," to quote the "Arethusa," and after eleven wet days and nights, during which we saw the sun for about eight hours, we had had enough of it, and so, as we had got our beasts, returned to Ling-tai-miao.

I have endeavoured in these two chapters to give the reader some idea of the takin himself and of the country which he inhabits. He is not a graceful animal, but intensely interesting, while there is still much to learn about his habits and his distribution. The country is unspoilt, and there are plenty of takin for future hunters. Their pursuit, apart from cold, would, I think, be much easier in the winter than in the summer, though it is no use travelling to Shensi at any season of the year unless prepared for a long tedious journey and some really hard climbing.

China is in convulsion. Now that she has cast her old slough of Manchu, sloth and avarice, it is impossible to tell what her future may be. None were more surprised than those who knew China well at the suppression of the opium habit, Men who had lived in the country all their lives said that it was impossible, unheard of, and bound to end in failure. Yet China did it, and in doing it did that which would have staggered any country in the world. It may be that in our own lifetime we shall see even greater marvels. The journey, which occupied long, dusty days of slow travelling, may in the not too distant future occupy but a few hours. The Chinese Government may welcome the travelling sportsman, and takin heads become as common as those of waterbuck and mule-deer. In conclusion, let me say one word. I have remarked that the country is unspoilt. This is true in two senses. It is unspoilt as a game country save for the depredations of the native hunters, and they have only seriously harmed one animal, the wapiti ; it is unspoilt for the sportsman of moderate

means. I make an earnest appeal to all travellers, and especially to our cousins "across the pond," not to ruin China as many other countries have been ruined from a sporting point of view. A sum of money represents to the native of the interior at least ten times its value in our eyes. Everything is cheap, where eggs and peaches are sixteen a penny! It is the greatest possible mistake to pay European prices or to tip on a Western scale, only exhibiting the one who does so as a person to be marked down for loot, and spoiling the market for the next comer.

CHAPTER XI

FENSIANG-FU—AN INLAND TOWN

It was on August 17th that we left the village after pouring wet days. It was on the same evening that we ignominiously returned, for the river was unfordable. The morning following it had sufficiently subsided for us to cross, and after a long day's travel we reached a crowded inn, where a large mob awaited our arrival. The country was very fertile, and we rode through fields of giant millet, twelve or thirteen feet high, maize, buckwheat, tobacco, and other crops. George's pony was a troublesome little brute, affected with nerves, and not above letting him down in the middle of a river. I rode a Cromwellian animal which nothing seemed to daunt, while the doctor's mule, though a very useful animal, was afflicted at times with fits of obstinacy which refused to yield to the hymn-like exhortations of its rider.

The next day we crossed the Wei River, riding across a narrow channel and negotiating the main stream in a big flat-bottomed boat. It was steered by means of a large rudder and six men with enormous sweeps in the stern. Early in the afternoon we arrived at Fensiang-fu, where we were

most hospitably entertained at the mission station by Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Steevens. Their beautiful garden, full of roses and lovely flowers, had just been completely wrecked by a bad hailstorm which devastated the south-west corner of the city and left the remainder untouched. Several cave dwellings outside the walls had been inundated and ten or eleven people drowned. It was most refreshing after the discomforts we had recently suffered to sit down to a table charmingly laid and decorated with flowers and dishes of ripe fruit. The city walls are built in a manner which is supposed to represent a phoenix, as the name of the city implies. The irregularly laid northern wall outlines the breast, the north and east gates being almost in a line when viewed from the north-west corner. The greater portion of this end of the city is devoted to agriculture, nearly all the crops of maize and millet at the time of our stay being laid low by the storm.

There are a number of wolves in the country round, which do not hesitate to come within the walls, where they are sometimes killed. They frequently attack people. One strong youth refused to be dissuaded from making a journey in the winter and set out, laughing at his friends' warnings. All they found was his skull! Their favourite method of attack in the summer months is to creep up behind a man as he works in the fields and jump on his bent back. They often steal babies from before the doors where they are playing. They are common nearly everywhere in the interior, and the winter is the best season to hunt them. In January, when at Ling-tai-miao, Dr.

Smith told me it was possible to come across them any morning among the rocks of the river bed. At a place called San-yen, one day's march from Sian-fu, wolves had been doing a good deal of damage in 1902. The villagers found three cubs one day and, fearing to destroy them for superstitious reasons, put out their eyes and left them. The mother, on finding them in this condition, went mad with rage and killed a number of children before she was destroyed. In times of famine they are particularly bold, and I have heard of twenty children being taken in a month from one village. One old hunter, who had been crippled by a wolf in his youth, made a practice of sitting up at night in a tree. He had made a peculiar whistle which never failed to attract the animals which he hated with such vehemence, and he would sometimes kill as many as three in a night.

We went for a walk one evening on the city wall and saw two dogs eating something in a beaten-down maize field. This turned out to be a poor little baby which they had disinterred. Babies, at least females, are not often buried in China, but wrapped up in a bundle and left in the streets. Even in so large a town as Tay-in-fu the doctor found one. They are usually devoured by the morning.

Mr. and Mrs. Stevens were both very popular with the Chinese. Old ladies collected from all sides on Sunday mornings to get Mrs. Stevens's advice, and brought the most intricate domestic troubles for her to solve. One such difficulty, she told the applicant, was beyond her, and remarked, "No, no, we can't interfere in this way; it would be against all reason,"

“Reason! reason!” screamed her visitor, “never mind about reason! Just listen to what I say!” which goes to prove that feminine nature is much the same all the world over.

Mr. Steevens taught in the Prefectural Normal College for over a year, and was much interested in educational work. The old ladies in the yamen were on very friendly terms with his wife, who often visited them. They had abandoned gaily-coloured garments and dressed in more sober colours. They had also agreed to unbind their feet, and though of course the deformed members could never regain their natural growth, their owners, who had formerly never stirred without the aid of a maid, skipped gaily about without any extraneous assistance, in shoes of foreign model.

One of the high officials, the prefect of the city, who held office a few years before our visit, had been a most enlightened man, and joined strongly in the anti-foot-binding crusade. He was in the habit of going round to fairs and inveighing against the ills of the practice. On one occasion he was getting very worked up, shedding coats in all directions, and exhorting his hearers to make their womenfolk abandon the habit.

“All the ailments from which your wives suffer come from this curse,” he exclaimed, “and they do suffer, do they not, from many ailments?” He repeated this two or three times to give it emphasis, and inadvertently caught the eye of a countryman who thought he was being addressed. On its third repetition he roared out, “No, she doesn’t! My old woman’s as sound as a bell!” which rather disconcerted the speaker.

In spite of Imperial edicts advising its abolition, foot-binding is still prevalent all over China. The native women in the west, that part of the country where the great Mohammedan rebellion arose, must be excepted, for so many women perished there owing to their inability to flee, that their descendants have allowed their feet to grow in a natural manner. They conform in some degree to popular taste by wearing shoes very abruptly turned up at the toes, which, though hindering their freedom of action, does not distort the foot in the unnatural manner prevalent farther east.

Long accustomed to it, the Chinaman regards an artificially deformed foot as a thing of great beauty. No well-to-do Chinaman of the old school would think of marrying a girl with natural feet, and as marriage is the great aim and object of a Chinese woman's existence, popular feeling will have to undergo a very radical transformation before the practice can be stamped out. That it will be stamped out eventually is no longer a matter for speculation; but it will take time.

Those who picture the life of a missionary in China as one of leisured ease ought to have seen Mr. and Mrs. Steevens, for during the whole of our visit I do not think I ever saw them unoccupied. Patients were continually dropping in in the morning to be cured of various ailments. The constant reference to east and west in the conversation of a Scot is apt to strike the casual Sassenach. The Chinese carry their geographical terminology to an even greater extent, for a patient, when asked to locate the exact position

of the pain which troubled him, replied, "In the east end of my stomach!"

We left this hospitable mission station with feelings of genuine regret, a regret which was doubly intensified when we learned that on the outbreak of the revolution the mob had risen, set fire to it, and burned it to the ground with all its contents.

Our kind host and hostess, with their daughter, barely escaped with their lives, and after great suffering and many privations, eventually reached Shanghai, with the loss of all their worldly possessions.

Mr. Steevens was kind enough to write, giving me some particulars of the revolution at Feng-siang, which are sufficiently interesting to bear repeating. The restrictions on opium growing had caused widespread dissatisfaction—a feeling which was augmented when the report was circulated that the Mandarin himself, while supposedly carrying out the restrictions, was secretly buying as much of the drug as he could and reselling it at a big profit. The news of the outbreak at Sian-fu was the match which fired the mine. The officials were helpless; the local city Mandarin was loathed for his avarice and injustice; the county Mandarin was a Manchu, and no soldiers were available for defending the city. The secret society of "The Elder Brothers"—the Ko-lao-hui—had great influence in the district, and their aims—anti-Manchu, and at the same time anti-progressive—complicated the issues at stake. Their idea is to rid China of everything Manchu, foreign and progressive.

The rioters began operations about October 27th by destroying the Custom Houses and burning and looting other places in the suburbs as well. The city gates were shut. The defenders, expecting trouble from the east, concentrated their attention on that quarter. Consequently, on the following day, the rioters gained entrance at a weak point at the north-west corner of the wall. They then made their way to the west gate, killed the guards, and opened the gates to the mob outside. The city Mandarin was caught, and though his wife handed them the seals of office to spare his life, they cut off his head and carried it round on a pole. Their residences were set fire to; the Government schools were wrecked, some of the professors (Chinese from other provinces) narrowly escaping with their lives. The mission house, as I have already said, was burned, and the missionaries themselves hunted. For about a fortnight the Prefect of the city eluded the search which was made, but was then discovered, his head split open with an axe, and his two little boys murdered. Some time afterwards the true revolutionaries arrived and took possession of the city, executing the leaders of the rioters and gradually bringing the condition of affairs into something like order.

CHAPTER XII

TOWARDS THE BORDER

I CANNOT subscribe to Mr. Chesterton's epigram that "It is not only nonsense but blasphemy to say that man has spoilt the country," for in a wild hill country cultivation is hateful. It is, I know, a necessary evil, but I could wish that it were carried on without marring the beauty of mountains. In the low country it is another matter, and waving fields of corn spread about a plain produce a soothing and very pleasing effect upon the mind, turning it insensibly to thoughts of a home and the swelling of church bells. Particularly is this the case if the observer reflects upon such a scene whilst on a journey. The fields move past him in one soft, easily-moving panorama. The monotonous tedium of everyday life is abolished, and over the dullest prospect is thrown an air of romance which, were the traveller to investigate at first-hand, would melt at his too corporeal touch as the fanciful realities of a dream melt at the coming of the day. For romance is ever intangible. We snatch at it with eager fingers as it flies before us, an elusive will-o'-the-wisp. But the homesteads we see, bowered in trees, within sound of running waters, fixed and

steadfast amid yellow fields, harbour those whose sheltered, sunny lives seem far removed from the petty, mundane worries which ever crowd upon the harassed voyager.

So it comes about that as the sliding landscape moves before his eyes, it seems the most natural and enjoyable thing in the world, an occupation of which he would never tire, that he should make hay in the warm sunshine, or walk in flowered and leafy lanes, with no thought for the morrow. Romance is but a playing with possibilities, which, as realities, lose much of their charm. All of which dissertation has arisen from a contemplation of cultivation in the low countries. Among the hills it is another matter. Artificiality seems out of place and the futility of man's ordered efforts when opposed to nature is palpable and obvious. Relentless forces are at work; their operation becomes apparent. Man ceases to labour for a space, and, like the resistless sea, Nature effaces his puny scrapings and scratchings with effortless ease. Soon all that is left to remind one that a fellow atom once toiled and struggled are a few green mounds, a few half-obliterated scars. As on many a Highland moor, purple heather covers the stones and knolls about which men toiled and laboured, so about the sloping summits of the bare hills of Kansu, you see here and there straight terraced lines. They are all that remain of old efforts at cultivation. Dominated by them are little conical heaps in the valley which endure for a short generation or so, and then give place to the resting-places of the sons and grandsons of those who lie beneath. Hills terraced and

cultivated from top to bottom are a commoner sight. Humanity swarms omnipresent, paying but little heed to its inevitable end. To really enjoy China one must possess "a suffocating passion of philanthropy," and although the proper study of mankind is man, the philanthropist there gets such a surfeit of his passion that he has to travel far to study anything else.

For the whole distance between Feng-siang and Choni, a small town on the Thibetan border from which we intended to make our next hunting trip, is densely populated, though nothing compared to some of the Southern provinces.

At first the country was not very interesting. We passed for hours through the same monotonous fields of maize and millet, the latter here used almost entirely to make wine. Up the valley of the Wei River, shut in on each side by ridged and terraced hills, the natives chattered like daws from their hollowed cave dwellings above the road. Later, fields of buckwheat, splashes of *rose du barri*, relieved the monotony of their drab surroundings.

The Wei River is the greatest affluent of the Hwang-ho, and the Wei basin the greatest agricultural country of the west. "Northern Shensi comprised in former time all the territory situated between the north and south reach of the Hwang-ho to the east, the Great Wall to the north, and a line of high mountain ranges to the south-west." When the province of Kansu was created, Shensi was considerably diminished in size, though the two provinces are under one viceroy, who resides at Lanchow-fu. "All historical, political, strate-

gical, commercial and social interests of Northern Shensi, centre in a large *loëss* basin, through which lies the lower course of the Wei River." During the Mohammedan rebellion, which left such terrible traces in Shensi, the destruction was greatest here, for here the hills were more remote and the wretched inhabitants had no refuge to which they could fly. The loss of life was estimated by millions. Although many years ago now, one often hears of it; and travelling through a country of the antiquity of China, it seemed to me that only a few short years had elapsed.

In one place were some really magnificent weeping willows, which must have measured over twenty feet in circumference. For the first few days after leaving Feng-siang, our route was entirely through *loëss* country. We crossed one narrow gully by means of a frail bridge constructed of mud and sticks. No Chinaman would ever dream of repairing such a structure save for his own personal convenience. It seemed pretty shaky as we went over it, and almost immediately afterwards collapsed beneath the weight of a mule litter. Litter, occupant, and mules were shot down in a smother of dust, and after a little difficulty extricated. Fortunately they were not hurt.

The western border of Shensi is a great fruit-growing district. Peach orchards gave variety to the landscape, and we constantly met men with baskets of the fruit balanced on bamboo poles. We also ate some most delicious melons, which possessed as delicate a flavour as any hot-house specimens.

The third day after leaving Feng-siang we crossed into Kansu and found ourselves on the fringe of a Mohammedan population. Strings of mules coming down with hides from the west passed us. From Feng-siang they are conveyed by cart to Sian-fu, thence by mule to the Han River and so to Hankow.

The male mules utter a horrid neigh if they see a horse, and try to go for him, getting up close so that he is unable to kick, when they bite and savage him.

The Mohammedan Chinese strike the observer as a much more vigorous lot than their countrymen who have not adopted the religion of the Prophet. They are more assertive and, in crowds, rather inclined to be boisterous. In many parts of China they are not allowed to settle save under very severe restrictions, but Kansu is their stronghold. They are non-smokers, and wear little white biretta-like caps, or soft round black ones without the distinctive red button of their compatriots. Their towns are wider and cleaner than those farther east. Round their graveyards they are in the habit of planting firs. The ignorance of some of the country people is astonishing. We were asked casually one day to which nation Kansu belonged. The doctor replied that it was part of the Chinese Empire.

“Oh,” said his interrogator, “I thought it had been given to England or America.” It would have made, apparently, not the slightest difference if he had been told that the Sultan of Zanzibar was going to take possession, though probably no such person had ever been heard of. My tattooing

came in for a lot of attention. One old gentleman at whose inn we stopped for breakfast, declared he had lived for eighty years and never seen anything like it. George told him that I was tattooed all over—a gross libel—when the poor old boy nearly collapsed from over-excitement. Fearing his curiosity might get the better of him on recovering, I left hurriedly.

On the hills above every town of any size stood walled refuges or forts, built of mud, to which the inhabitants fled when danger threatened. During the great rebellion the rebels lit fires of capsicum, and under cover of the smoke undermined the walls. When the wretched fugitives went to ground in their caves, they smoked them out like rabbits and knocked them on the head.

On August 30 we reached Fukiang-fu, where we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Mann, who were in charge of the mission station. By the city gates hung some little wooden cages containing the shoes of popular officials who had left the district. This is a mark of great popularity.

An oily and diseased-looking scoundrel in leg-irons appeared on the evening of our arrival with "rascal" written all over him. He told us a long and complicated story, explaining that he had been mixed up, very much against his will while trying to do a friend a good turn, in some illegal marriage contract or divorce. According to his own account, he had been made the scapegoat, and while all the other parties in the transaction had come off with flying colours, he had dropped in for ten years' banishment—a fate which, judging from his appearance, he richly deserved.

He rather fancied himself as a traveller, and said "Good evening" in English.

Asked who he was, he gave the luminous answer, "I am Paul at Philippi—unjustly in chains!"

By a most unfair dispensation, he and fifty-four other blackguards were allowed, on market days, to take a cupful of grain for every measure which was sold. They were not above helping themselves to two or three extra dips. Consequently, when, for instance, there was a drought, these ruffians often thrived while honest men suffered. As may be imagined, they were not popular in the town!

After a prolonged drought the Chinese have a custom of blocking up the south gate of the city. We passed one town where this had been done, but for some other reason. They also wreath their heads with leaves and go to their god praying for rain. Sometimes they take him summarily from where he gesticulates in petrified abandonment amid the shadows, and place him in the full glare of the sun, as who should say, "There! See what it feels like!"

Outside Fukiang, in a recess cut out of the hillside, stands a large mud figure of the Buddha. It is not easy to make out from the road, as scaffolding hides it.

There is not much variety of bird life, but we saw two large red-billed cranes, ravens, choughs, pheasants, and thousands of pigeons, while a superstitious person would have found himself in a whirl from calculating the effect of the number of magpies he had seen, and whether his luck were up

or down. We encountered several men carrying hawks on rests. They hunted pigeons, pheasants and small birds. A little bird called the rock thrush, of which we afterwards saw great numbers, is attractive. They have white heads, dark bodies, and red tails, which they are for ever flirting up and down.

We met funeral parties on different occasions. The real procession kept on its appointed course, whilst a false trail of paper money and little white flags lured unsophisticated devils away from the deceased! A white cock was tied on the top of the bier, for the spirit of the dead man is supposed to find a resting place in the bird.

Soon after we had passed through one of the small country towns which dotted the country, two prosperous merchants jogging sedately through the west suburb were set upon by highwaymen armed with sticks, heavy iron chains, etc. Not content with robbing them, their assailants gave each a sound beating; then, mounting their horses, rode off and escaped scot-free.

Leaving the plateau (about 4,500 feet) on which we had been travelling, we rose to 7,000 feet or more a few days before reaching our destination and found ourselves in the district of flat roofs, prayer flags and other signs of Thibetan influence. The remains of fine natural fir woods, in the shape of sacred groves, showed what splendid forests must once have covered these hills. Though, as I have said, the scenery improves towards the western border, I have never seen anything in the shape of a hill which appealed to me less than the terraced excrescences through which one travels in this part of

the country. They are simply thousands of acres of dried mud.

Baron Richthofen, from whom I have already quoted, considered the extermination of the forests a primary cause in the decadence of the Northern provinces of China as compared to the Southern. It naturally affects the climate in general, besides being the cause of an immense amount of destruction which would not take place if the hills were wooded. The results of any interference with the laws of Nature are more difficult to trace and less easy to observe among the civilised nations of Europe. After many weeks of travel through a country like China they are very forcibly impressed upon the traveller; the essentials of life are brought home to him.

If the hills had not been denuded of trees, the rains, instead of merely washing the soil from the rocks and pouring, unresisted, down the hill-sides, would be stored up in the ground and penetrate into the dusty earth. Extensive regions would not be rendered unfit for agriculture, and would support a greater population under better conditions.

Fuel is now getting scarce. Dried shrubs and roots dug carefully from the ground are precious things, and dung a treasure to be hoarded. This too in districts where coal is plentiful but unknown.

“It is painful to see how much animal power is wasted, on account of the imperfect construction of the roads.” Only those who live close to a coal-mine can afford to use it as fuel, for the cost of transport entirely cuts off the remainder of the population from one of the chief necessities of life. The few feeble attempts which we saw towards

replanting are hardly worthy of note, and everywhere in wooded districts trees are being cut down with the same happy disregard for the future as was shown in the past. Not only are they being cut down, but a tremendous amount of waste goes on. As, however, we came across practical results of this devastation while hunting, I will leave the subject for the present.

The day before reaching Choni we crossed the Tao River, a swiftly flowing stream of comparatively clear water just outside the town of Chung-tsai-chi. Another sign that we were drawing near the border lay in the yak carts. The animals which drew them were gaily decorated with red tassels. Large bells, usually three in number, hung beneath the axle, their deep booming note echoing sweetly along the road. The canine population, too, was growing in size and becoming more mastiff-like. Some animals had the appearance of enlarged Guisachan retrievers with rough yellow coats. Never, in my wildest nightmare, did I ever imagine such a mixture of types as was presented by the dogs we saw. They reached their climax after we had left Lanchow, though our previous wanderings had done something to prepare us for the monstrosities with which we were then confronted. A white beast would sedately waddle from a doorway like an animated clockwork toy. Following it came a creature which, at a hundred yards through the wrong end of a telescope, bore a faint resemblance to a long-haired dachshund. An Irish terrier with the head of a black-and-tan suddenly developed as it changed its position into a cross-bred setter with the posterior of a bob-tailed sheep dog. They presented

a series of types which always varied and never failed to surprise. Never did we see two alike, and never one of a recognisable breed. Still they visit me in my dreams and, with a faint echo of surprise, I see protean shapes shoot dustily from darkened doorways in the glare of sunlit village streets.

CHAPTER XIII

A MODERN REHOBOAM AND HIS CAPITAL

YOU come to Choni—the town of the Two Pines—by way of Taochow, the New City, a mushroom growth of some six hundred years, not the Old; that lies farther to the west. The wall of New Taochow (it is pronounced Tow-jo) straggles up a hill-side and round a sharply rising knoll which makes a fine natural watch tower. Two-thirds of the area enclosed is devoted to cultivation, while the town itself, flat-roofed, and in some cases two-storied, meanders about the lower slopes. It is almost entirely inhabited by Thibetan Mohammedans, and is in reality the border town between Thibet and China, though Thibet proper lies a day's march to the west. A few *li* from the city a low pass gives a magnificent view of the Minshan Mountains. They look down on a mass of gradually lowering hills, torn and intersected by green, rushing mountain streams from which radiate an interminable series of birch and fir-clad gullies. From the summit of the pass one drops between narrow grass-covered corries to the Tao and to the little town—if such it can be called—of Choni (pronounced Jornee). I was reminded of the lines:—

“ From hills that looked across a land of hope,
We dropped with evening on a rustic town
Set in a gleaming river’s crescent curve ; ”

for they describe the place exactly. Incidentally one passes from lackadaisical, inert China into a stimulating atmosphere of border feuds, mediæval raids, pine-covered, snow-capped mountains and a wild race of Highlanders. It is a quaint little place, nestling like a pigeon’s nest in a cluster of red cliffs. Frowning above the town is a lamaserai holding six hundred monks, as dirty and evil-looking a lot as most of their tribe. The capital of the Prince of Choni, it is the only town within his dominions. These cover an area about half as large as Scotland. A half-caste Thibetan aged twenty-three, he furnishes a very pretty parallel to Rehoboam. His predecessor, the eighteenth of his line and a popular and wise old ruler, adopted him. On his death the present Chief turned away the old men who had hitherto helped to govern the forty-eight wild tribes over which he ruled, and substituted the young men with whom he was in the habit of gambling and generally making merry. He was, at one time, much addicted to the opium habit, but at the time of our visit had abandoned the practice. Yang-ching-China, for that is his name, is dependent on China, and under the authority of the county official, a man of slight importance, who, again, is under the Provincial Governor, who is responsible to the Viceroy of Shensi and Kansu. He pays no tribute, but has to supply two thousand irregular—very irregular—cavalry if called upon. If he desired he could easily raise 15,000. On our arrival he and two hundred of his men were away fighting the

T'é-pu, a wild aboriginal tribe who inhabit the country to the south of the Minshan Mountains. The only casualties were a large number of sheep and pigs. One man had a hole blown in his leg by an enthusiastic friend who was explaining the mechanism of a foreign rifle; and the Prince lay on his back, and looked at the sky, and wished he had never gone.

We called on his return and received a warm welcome. Asked his opinion of the state of affairs in China, he assumed a wise look, saying, "The foundation of the throne is in the heart of the people. The people's heart is not true now. The Manchus must go," which I thought was original, but found out afterwards was cribbed from Confucius. A temple was in course of construction near Choni to which he was asked to contribute, but refused. The holy man who had begged for the subscription instantly had a fit and declared that great disasters would follow unless a handsome donation was forthcoming. The Prince, who is very superstitious, promised a sheep, but when the time for delivery came substituted a goat as being cheaper. The holy man on hearing this was again possessed and subsequently got the promised sheep from the reluctant ruler.

The T'é-pu are a wild lot, as I have said. They are divided into fourteen clans and are much dreaded by the Chinese, who only venture through their country once a year. They then organise a big caravan of merchants with guards and hurry through the dangerous hill country as quickly as possible. The T'é-pu are very hostile to strangers, and it would probably be as much as one's posses-

sions were worth to venture into their territory alone. A clan protects its own friends and the friends of its chief, but not those of another clan, who are looked on as legitimate prey. Any stranger whom they happen to hold in great reverence and affection they have a custom of adopting as their father. As illustrating their character the following story is interesting :

The grandchildren of a certain convert to Christianity had been kidnapped by them. The man was in despair, for no one had the courage to make any attempt to rescue them. In his trouble he went to the then Prime Minister, who was subsequently turned out of his office by Yang. Having been adopted by about forty T'é-pus as father, he told the unhappy man that he would try to get back the kidnapped children. He accordingly started off alone on his dangerous errand, and after a few days returned unharmed with the children. The T'é-pus are not agriculturists and live chiefly by barter, coming into Choni occasionally for provisions. We saw a number of them later on, including a lama, who performed a monotonous and somewhat senseless dance for our edification.

At times they dash down in a sudden raid as the Chonians are watering their horses and live stock at the river. These they whirl away into the hills before their owners have time to recover from their astonishment. One of their priests was imprisoned in the yamen. Six of them set out to rescue him and had the courage and impudence to walk into the Prince's yard and cook their food there !

At Choni we stayed with Mr. and Mrs. William

Christie. From all the missionaries whom we met in China we received kindness and hospitality. I can pay no greater tribute to that of Mr. and Mrs. Christie than to say, that even had their old friend Dr. Smith been absent, their welcome to us would have been the same. Almost entirely cut off from the outside world, utterly out of reach of the comforts and luxuries of civilisation, they have given up their lives to the wild hillmen of the Thibetan border. It must be some consolation and satisfaction to them to know that they are universally loved and respected by all the natives for miles. It is very largely, if not entirely owing to their tact and to the friendly relations which they have established with the Prince and his people that we were enabled to hunt for weeks in the mountains round Choni without a harsh word or a disagreement of any kind with the natives. Mr. Christie is a model to all missionaries. His knowledge of Thibet and the border people is thorough, wide and most entertaining. It is a thousand pities that he does not make public some of the information which he has collected during a long residence among people whose folk-lore and character are but little known in Europe and are of the greatest interest.

He took us over the lamaserai and proved a most well-informed guide. All Thibetan monasteries are built on the same plan. A prominent feature of the main court is the large brass "wheel of life" of which Gautama spoke. He, of course, used the expression in a figurative sense, but the Thibetan mind is not capable of grasping an abstract idea, hence the brass wheel. At Choni,

two deer act as supporters; scattered about are prayer wheels galore. It is a common sight outside the villages to see a large prayer wheel continually turned by the action of the mountain stream near which the village is built.

In the lamaserai at Choni is an immense prayer wheel about ninety years old. It is twenty-five feet high and consists of three stories. These contain the Buddhist Bible, commentaries and classics. After one revolution a bell rings automatically. The Bible is a colossal work. It is printed at only three places, Peking, Lhasa and Choni, and, with the commentary, which is about twice as bulky, costs six hundred taels (about £75). The two together run to a hundred and eight large volumes and furnish loads for a dozen mules. The Choni edition is considered the best. When a field is unproductive the owner goes to the lamaserai and implores the abbot's aid. For a suitable fee the vast work is taken on the backs of men or animals in solemn procession round the sterile ground. This is supposed to restore its productivity.

There are three sets of Buddhists: the Black—the original sect—the Red and the Yellow. Those at Choni follow the latter religion if such it can be called. In every family one son at least enters a monastery, for no race is more priest-ridden. Once a priest, he can only be bought out for a sum of fifty taels. The boy starts as a novice and after rising to catechumen and ordained priest becomes a lama. In every large monastery are one or more "living Buddhas," reincarnations of Buddha. The lamas are dressed entirely in red; red togas and red shoes with red soles. Many carried mystic

keys to lock out evil influences. The Abbot must be of the House of Choni. The office has been vacant for thirty years.

Phallic worship is intermingled with their religion, which is anything but pure. Many of the paintings and images which adorn the walls of the temples are most indecent. In the tenth moon a great festival and dance are held at Choni. One tableau represents the discomfiture of the Great Enemy, a former king of Thibet who nearly exterminated Buddhism. He wished to uphold the ancient Ban religion of fire and Devil-worship (some of the T'é-pu, by the way, are Bans to this day ☩ being their symbol), but was killed in battle, the whole country having risen against him. This was looked on as a just punishment for his sins, inflicted by the Buddha, and the incident is exemplified in the dance. The Yellow sect worship a reformer who arose some five hundred years ago. Before the advent of this reformer the Goddess of Mercy had been worshipped for two hundred years. He told his followers she was to be reincarnated. They accepted this, and having established the belief, he put forward his nephew as the reincarnated Goddess. This boy was the first Dalai Lama. In Thibetan he is known as "The Great All-Seeing Precious One." Some Chinese scholars have identified the Goddess of Mercy with the Virgin Mary, whence arises an interesting field for religious controversy. Among the many images which crowd the lamaserai I noticed none of Gautama, and Mr. Christie told us there was not one. In venturing on these remarks with regard to Buddhism I feel I am on dangerous ground, never having

properly studied the subject, and relying solely on what I heard.

At the time of our visit the lamas were very uneasy, and more hostile than usual to the Christian religion. The following legend in their books of prophecy accounted for it :

When Gautama, the historic Buddha, was on earth, another Buddha arose whose name was Everlasting Love. They met, and a dispute arose as to which was the real Buddha, each maintaining his claim, and stigmatising his opponent as an impostor. At length they decided on the following test. Each was to procure a pot, and fill it with earth. They were then to retire to rest. A flower growing in the mould was to be a sign that the owner of the pot was the genuine Buddha. He was to remain on earth and diffuse his religion, whilst his adversary was to depart and leave him in peace.

Gautama, so the story goes, being rather apprehensive as to the result, got up in the night to see how things were going. To his disgust, he found that while his own pot remained in exactly the same condition as that in which he had left it when he retired, from that of his rival a beautiful flower was beginning to sprout.

He accordingly quietly transferred the contents of his own pot to that of Everlasting Love, and substituted the flower in their place. He then sneaked back to bed, anticipating triumph in the morning. He awoke to find Everlasting Love quietly contemplating the two pots.

Gautama pointed triumphantly to his own, exclaiming, "See! there is the flower. I am the true Buddha!" His rival regarded him sternly,

and then said, "Cheat and liar, your words are false. I know that you substituted your earth for my flower whilst I slept. Be it so. I will go hence. You shall remain; but so long as your teaching endures, so long shall cheats and liars endure on this earth. In the future I shall come again and establish the true faith, and when that time comes your supremacy will end." So saying, he disappeared. His second advent, according to the books of prophecy, is due within the next few years. Hence the lamas' hatred and fear of anything which will destroy their influence.

CHAPTER XIV

A TALE OF THE BORDER

AT the foot of the wild huddle of mountains, clothed on their northern slopes with pines, bare to the south, situated on the borderland between Thibet and China, nestled a small village. It consisted of the usual filthy street slightly raised above the level of a brawling mountain stream, a dozen or so flat-roofed houses straggling beside it and falling gradually away to the main road, which ran down the valley. In the largest of these houses dwelt an unimportant Thibetan chief called Lao. The Chinese Government was supposed to give him a salary for the official position which they had conferred on him, but in Lao's eyes this was a small thing. He relied on the power which his office conferred as a means of squeezing anything and everybody with whom he had dealings.

His father was dead, but had married, on the death of his first wife, a woman who still lived. Lao cordially detested her, and though they lived in the same house she returned the compliment.

Morality in its Western sense has but little meaning to the Thibetans. Indeed, the children of an unmarried girl are given as warm a welcome by their grandparents as though their entrance into

this wicked world had been as orthodox as ceremony could make it. Their mother carries no stigma, and is looked on as something of a catch, for will not her encumbrances presently grow up and work for her husband, who can thus live in comfortable idleness? Owing in great measure to the prevailing licence, the border people, whatever is the case with the true Thibetans, are rapidly degenerating, childless families being the rule rather than the exception.

Lao's old stepmother was an amorous old lady. Even at the age of sixty she was convinced that much of her youthful charm was still in evidence, and though enjoying to the full her position as a widow, had no desire that her wayward fancy should become crystallised into permanency by a second marriage ceremony.

At the end of the village street, next door, in fact, to the house of old Kwan-fong, a Chinese scholar, dwelt Wei-sha. He was not an unattractive young man. When he smiled his beautiful white teeth, which are so common a feature among the Thibetans, lit up the whole of his face. Of late, however, his smile had been less frequent, and he would spend days shut up alone in his house, which reeked with the fumes of opium. At one time, before the opium craze seized him, he had been a great hunter, and spent days in the mountains with Lao in pursuit of sheep, roe, and wapiti.

One day when drinking tea with Lao and his old stepmother, for on the border the strict etiquette of China is replaced by free and easy intercourse between the sexes, he had noticed his host's old stepmother furtively watching him.

On the next occasion that he visited the chief she met him at the gate. Wei-sha was for passing on, but she stopped him.

That night Wei-sha came stealthily up the village street, and stopped at the house of Lao. A muffled figure opened the door to him, and after shutting it led him up the rickety ladder to a room overlooking the roof. That visit was the first of many, until almost every night the door was cautiously and quietly opened, and he creaked up the ladder. After every visit he added a little to the store of opium which gave him such wonderful dreams in the dirty little room at the end of the village street.

Out beyond the outskirts of the village lived a man who had been a friend of Lao's father. He was quite a poor man, honest as men go in Thibet, but weak and without strength of any kind. He had one great grief, his youngest son, a man of twenty-five. Tsi was weak, too, but viciously so, and without any of his father's good nature. He drank when he got the chance, brawled, consorted with women of loose character, defied his father's authority, and, generally speaking, lost no chance of a short cut to the painted devils who grinned in the temple shadows.

He had married a girl who, though certainly not a model wife, had some affection for him. Tsi's father thought there might be a chance of getting him to lead a decent life, and went to him.

"Come!" he said. "Bring your wife to my house, and we will all live together, as we should. Your brothers will welcome you. I will give you food and lodging. Be content."

Ts'i, however, reviled him openly, refused his offer with curses, and told the old man he was going his own way. Finally he entered the house during his father's absence, stole his gun, and one or two odds and ends he thought might be useful, and departed with his wife to a solitary hut on the mountain side.

Wei-sha never hunted with Lao now, for he was useless and thought of nothing but his opium pipe. Also Lao gave him black looks whenever they met, and consorted openly with Ts'i, who had always been Wei-sha's enemy, and was jealous of his reputation as a hunter.

Now he laughed at him, and said that he could not even stalk the tame yaks which grazed on the hill-side.

One day a neighbour came and told Ts'i's father that Lao and his son were down in the fields, for the harvest was drawing near.

"Ah," thought the old man, "I will go and see if I can find my gun in the hut of that rascally son of mine!" So off he went.

The hut was empty, for Ts'i's wife was in the fields also. The old man searched in vain for his gun amongst the litter which cumbered the room. A pile of bedding lay in one corner, and there he looked last. No gun was hidden amongst it, but from one corner of the quilt fell a little twist of paper. Wong, that was the old man's name, picked it up. He turned it in his hand, this way and that, but could make nothing of it, for he was no scholar, and the strange, sprawling characters conveyed no meaning to him. For some time he puzzled over it, and then putting it into his deerskin

tobacco pouch, went to the door. No one was in sight, so, replacing the quilt as he had found it, Wong went home. All that night he pondered over his find. He was dying to know the meaning of the characters, but could see no way to do so. He did not wish to confide in his sons, for they would see to it that he was no gainer if there was any money to be made.

At length he resolved to consult Kwan-fong, the old Chinaman. Accordingly to this worthy he repaired.

After some time had been consumed in compliments and small talk, for Kwan-fong was a punctilious old gentleman, Wong produced the paper.

"I have here," he said, "a paper. Upon it are certain characters to which I am a stranger. You, O Kwan-fong, are a scholar of much learning. I pray you to decipher them for me that my mind may be at rest." Thereupon he handed the paper over.

Kwan-fong took it, and peered for some time through his great horn spectacles. Not a muscle of his face moved. At length he spoke. "You have done well, friend Wong," said he, "to bring me this paper. Some of the characters are strange to me, but I will examine them well, and when I have considered their meaning will let you know at what conclusion I arrive."

Wong did not much like leaving the paper, but as the Chinaman refused to give any further explanation, he had no alternative.

Kwan-fong had his full share of the cupidity which is one of the great characteristics of his

race. Also he was a bit of a scoundrel, though he probably regarded his next step as the only natural one in the sequence of events which led up to it.

Having thoroughly mastered the meaning of the paper, he made a careful copy of it, and locked the original away in a private box.

Next day he called on Lao's stepmother. The old lady received him, yelled for a small girl to bring tea, and begged him to be seated.

Half an hour or more Kwan-fong expended in the ceremonial politeness which he considered an inevitable prelude to the real object of his visit.

"Wei-sha is an agreeable young man," he remarked at length.

His hostess blinked over her cup of tea, and gave a guarded assent.

"I fear that his habits have changed, and that so much time spent indoors may injure his health," continued her visitor. "I fear, I greatly fear that serious illness threatens him."

"What serious illness do you fear?" asked the old woman.

"The night air is so bad for him," rambled Kwan-fong. "In all day and out all night; it must injure the strongest constitution. Of course, you must know that he smokes much of the drug. I fear the taotai would be grieved to hear it; and then his friend is so good to him, and the drug so expensive. I fear he will fall seriously ill. I much fear it." And he shook his head, and looked straight at her through his horn spectacles.

Lao's old stepmother began to get uneasy.

"Yes," he went on, "the night air is so bad

for him. I fear some evening he may contract an illness to which he will succumb. Your son Lao is anxious about him, I know. Ah! the night air is bad. Very bad for young men!" He wagged his wicked old head.

"What do you mean?" asked the old woman, now visibly perturbed. "My son dislikes Wei-sha."

"His loss would indeed be great to you," said the Chinaman, who now thought that he might be a little more explicit. "I have here a paper which contains a certain cure for the illness threatening this estimable young fellow. If, as I believe, you take an interest in his welfare, you would perhaps be willing to invest in it," and he pulled out a copy of the paper which Wong had found.

"Let me see it," said the old woman.

"Before I let you see it," replied Kwan-fong. "it were better that you should let me know what sum you would be willing to spend on a cure. This prescription is of great value, and—mark me!—known only to myself. I shall not therefore feel justified, seeing that I have a wife and children, in parting with it for less than—three hundred taels."

The old woman began to laugh. "Three hundred taels!" she cried. "Three hundred fiddlesticks! It is quite true that I take an interest in the young man, for I have known him since he was a child. I am prepared to spend a small amount in buying your prescription since you consider that illness threatens him. But three hundred taels is absurd."

Kwan-fong began to get rather nettled.

"You would probably consider it absurd also

when I tell you that your son Lao would give twice that sum for my prescription," he said.

The old woman laughed.

"Lao would not give you three cash for the thing if it was to cure Wei-sha," she cried contemptuously. "Let me see this wonderful prescription of yours."

She stretched out her hand for the paper. Kwan-fong handed it to her, and sat quietly watching. The laughter died from her lips as her eyes fell on the quaint, scrawling characters.

"What is this?" she gasped. "What?"

"It is the copy of an agreement," hissed Kwan-fong, "between your son and Ts'i to murder Wei-sha. Lao suspects your relationship with him. Pay me the money, or I will go to Lao and tell him all. I know when Wei-sha comes to you at night. I have known from the first, for he lives next door to me. Choose quickly"; and he rose and stood over her.

"I will pay! I will pay!" cried the wretched old hag. "Lao will kill me. I will pay! But not three hundred taels. It is a fortune. I will give you all I have. I will give you two hundred. It is my all. The savings of a life-time. Only spare me. Oh! Lao! Lao! Mercy! Mercy!" and she fell on the floor.

Kwan-fong went to the door. "Quick!" he cried. "Get the money ready. I will take the two hundred. On my return to-night, when I have received the money, I will hand you the original of this." So saying he left her.

That night he returned to Lao's house, got the two hundred taels, and handed over the paper.

He considered it prudent to retain the original, and handed over a very excellent copy upon which he had spent the intervening time. Staggering back with his booty, for two hundred taels is a heavy weight, he spent the rest of the night chuckling at his own astuteness and inventing a satisfactory lie with which to stave off the inquiries of old Wong. A few days later the Chinese official who lived ninety *li* from the village received a visit from Lao's stepmother. After a long conversation she departed.

On his arrival back from the fields on the following evening Lao was greeted by half a dozen dirty yamen runners and soldiers, who told him they had been sent to fetch him.

Lao, on his arrival at the yamen—to make a long story short—was charged with plotting to murder his stepmother! Though somewhat taken aback and nonplussed, he retained enough presence of mind to deny the accusation. Proof, he knew, was superfluous. His stepmother would bring a number of witnesses against him. Deprived of his official position, his power would be seriously shaken. There was nothing to be done but put his hand into his pocket and recoup himself when opportunity arose.

He assured the *taotai* that his suspicions were entirely unfounded; that the information laid against him was absolutely false; that, pained as he was, he had only to look at the *taotai* to feel sure that a man of his integrity and penetration would look at the matter in its true light; a bit of spite on the part of a woman. Finally he told his accuser that in the course of a long and varied

career, in which he had met, he praised Heaven, many just and upright men, he had never met any one whose character had impressed him as being so nearly perfect and flawless as the gentleman before whom he then stood; and that, as a small token of his gratitude at having been so privileged, he proposed giving the *taotai* a small mark of his esteem.

The *taotai* expressed himself as being quite overwhelmed at such praise. At the same time business was business, and a plot to murder rather a dangerous affair to be mixed up in. Lao, of course, he could see, was a very sterling fellow, though things looked black against him. Finally he delicately hinted that the exact sum which Lao considered adequate to his merits had not yet been named.

Lao said five hundred taels appeared to him about the right amount.

The *taotai* said that five hundred taels was a nice little nest-egg, but that they could not value good men very highly in Lao's locality.

Lao thought perhaps they were rather a mean lot, and that personally he considered six hundred taels nearer the mark, only he was afraid of going against public opinion.

The *taotai* rejoined that of course he was immensely flattered, but, after all, he was there to dispense justice, and that Lao's stepmother had struck him as being a very well-balanced woman.

Lao made a plunge, and said that in taking everything into consideration, and the fact that Heaven would probably never gratify him again with the sight of so perfect a being, he had resolved

to offer his all, seven hundred taels, as a token of gratitude.

The *taotai* replied that one mustn't always judge by appearances, that from the first he had always regarded the charge as absurd, that he would take care to nip any such rumours as came to his ears in the bud, and implored Lao not to let it weigh on his mind.

They then parted with mutual expressions of esteem, the *taotai* even coming to the gate to see Lao off, and inwardly praying that murder cases might come his way every day. The latter jumped on his horse, galloped off cursing his luck, his step-mother, the *taotai*, and the unknown person who had betrayed his plot; on arriving home thrashed the old lady within an inch of her life, and drowned his sorrows in native wine.

Meanwhile Ts'i, having discovered the loss of his paper, and realising that, in spite of Lao's silence, things must be getting rather warm for him, went off to the nearest missionary station. Here he professed great anxiety to learn the rudimentary teachings of Christianity, describing himself as a man who had lived a bad life owing to a faulty bringing-up, but was resolved at last to mend his ways and reform. The missionary in charge knew something of Ts'i, and a good deal more about the people amongst whom he lived. A few inquiries confirmed his suspicions. "The best advice which I can give you," he said sternly, "is to leave this part of the country altogether and try to live a decent life amongst people who do not know your past. I warn you frankly that I shall do nothing to protect you from the punishment you deserve."

In vain T'si begged and implored. He declared that he was a convert, an inquirer after truth, and ought to be protected. The missionary was firm. At length T'si departed, seeing that the foreign devil, as he contemptuously termed him in his own mind, was firm. Twice he sent his brothers, with whom he was on more friendly terms than with poor old Wong, to intercede. The missionary returned the same answer. T'si should receive no protection from him. He was not going to allow Christianity to be used as a cloak for malefactors, to be cast aside when danger was past. T'si must go, and he himself would denounce him to the authorities if he were troubled again.

On the following Sunday the missionary went to a neighbouring town. The congregation had already assembled when he arrived. He looked round on the people who had adopted the Faith he came to preach; the men and women who had stood firm during the dark days of 1900, the teachers who had proved their faith, the converts who had just begun to grasp its meaning, and then, in the back row, he saw T'si.

He was sitting in the corner throwing quick glances here and there, as though doubting what to do. The preacher had made up his mind long ago, and in a few brief words he asked the congregation to excuse him. Then he sat down and wrote on his card. This done he sent a boy with it to the yamen, and began to preach. And all this time T'si sat in his corner. One last chance he had. The preacher spoke of the difficulties which had beset the early Church. He told his congregation how there had always been bad men

amongst the believers, whited sepulchres who used the true religion for their own base ends; wolves among the sheep. "Even now," said he, "even now in this very room there is a wolf amongst the sheep," and he looked at Tsï.

But Tsï refused to move, and sat stubbornly on. As the preacher continued, there came a blow on the door, and three men in the tattered uniform of yamen underlings entered.

They bowed to the preacher, who asked them their business. "We have been sent," they answered, "to arrest a bad man. Do you know if he is here?" "Yes," said the missionary; "that is the man!" and he pointed to the trembling Tsï.

Resistance was useless, for the soldiers were all big men. They led him off, struggling at first, to the yamen, loudly protesting his innocence. Here he was tried, beaten, and finally imprisoned.

Early in 1911 anti-foreign riots occurred in Sining, a town on the Thibetan border of Kansu. Placards were posted enumerating the eight deadly crimes of foreigners, but the revolt was soon suppressed and its leaders executed. Many of their followers shared the same fate.

So much the European papers told their readers.

They did not mention a certain ruffian, one of the last who fell beneath the executioner's sword. His hatred of all foreigners, especially missionaries, had marked him from the first, and he had been loud in expressing, with awful curses, the fate he intended for those who fell into his hands.

His name was Tsï.

CHAPTER XV

A MOUNTAIN MISCELLANY

WE remained for a week at Choni, making arrangements for hunting. The Border Thibetans are all keen sportsmen, and we had no difficulty with regard to guides. The mist was low on the hills when we woke the morning after our arrival, a sure sign of fine weather. It cleared about 9 a.m., and we enjoyed a beautiful day. Just beyond the southern wall of the little town flows the Tao River. It divides two entirely different types of country. In place of the rolling mud hills, to which we had become so accustomed, terraced and cultivated, with scarcely a tree to be seen, rise slope after slope of grass-covered mountains. From any of the rolling summits above Choni, pastured by yak, one saw on looking to the south, ridge after ridge, green and well wooded. The T'é-pu from the stone battlements of their confining mountains must look on grass-covered slopes, gradually diminishing in height, topped by a thin dark line of conifers. For the trees grow all on the northern slopes, and where the fierce rays of the sun directly beat, no tree will live. The hard dividing line of firs running along the summit of each ridge gives the landscape a quaint air of artificiality. Wild

sheep—a form of the burhel—serow, goral, wapiti, pig, musk deer, roe, bear, leopard, and, I believe, a variety of sika, though we never came across them live amongst these mountains.

Young-sha, a proverbially lucky hunter, put in an appearance and agreed to come with us. Later on, George engaged another man called Lao-Wei. We went out one afternoon for roe, which Young-sha said could be found on a hill close to the town. We saw a doe and a fawn, but no buck. This man had several times, so the doctor told us, performed a rather remarkable feat considering the clumsiness of his weapon—namely, shot a roe, reloaded and killed a second. Thibetan guns are far superior to the old pistol-stocked weapons of the Chinese, which give their owner a severe blow in the eye whenever they are fired. They have a long barrel, the usual stock, and a fuse with which the charge is ignited. Below the barrel is a double prong of hardened wood, sometimes shod with steel or iron. This is hinged on to the weapon, and stuck into the ground before firing. It makes an efficient rest, and the Thibetans make very straight shooting with their weapons up to two hundred yards. For a really good gun the owner will ask as much as sixty or seventy taels (£8 or £9).

We tried for a bear one evening, but it came on to rain so hard that we had to return to Choni without seeing a sign of one. There was a dear little girl in Mr. Christie's house, his cook's daughter, aged eight, who was already engaged to be married, the prospective husband having reached the mature age of five. Her father, some years before, had been smitten with the gambling

mania and sold her for twenty-four taels. The only hope she had of being saved from a life of hopeless drudgery in the fields lay in the fact that Mrs. Christie refused to allow her feet to be bound, which was a great drawback in the eyes of her future relations.

Our host's old doorkeeper had been a Buddhist priest. At their coming to Choni he had saved them much annoyance at the hands of the lamas, who were very hostile.

"You may turn them out if you will," he said, "but more will come even though you kill them."

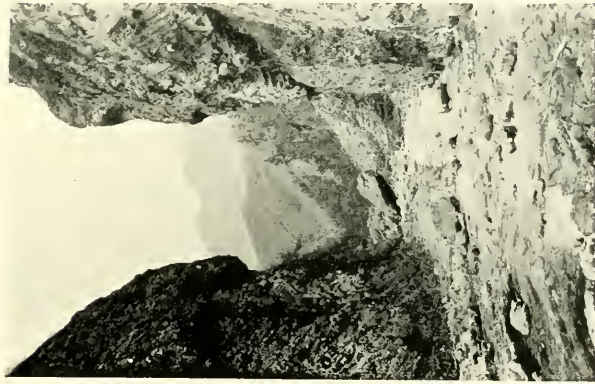
He had one invariable greeting for strangers—all the English he knew: "Good morning! The dog has many fleas!"

The Thibetans are tremendous walkers, and as illustrating their powers in this respect, one servant of Mr. Christie's walked from Honan to Choni, a distance of 2,300 *li* (roughly 760 miles) in eighteen days, carrying a load of 20 lbs. He did this twice, averaging 127 *li* a day. This same man walked from Choni to Lanchow and back (360 miles) in six and a half days.

On September 11 we left Choni, and after a ten hours' march reached the little village of Archuen. We crossed the Tao by a typical Thibetan bridge, underneath which was hung the severed head of a bullock, a supposed deterrent of cattle sickness. For a mile or so the road lay down the main valley of the Tao, side valleys cultivated for a few *li* stretching into the hills on the south bank. In one of these, the Poayükou, we afterwards hunted wapiti and roe. The woods

were just tinted by the autumn cold, and against the green of the thickets, burberries made splashes of scarlet. Leaving the river, we crossed a ridge into a large valley running north and south, and travelled south-east all day. It was cooler, for we were about 9,700 feet above sea level; Choni itself is 8,000 feet. We lunched in a beautiful grove, whilst a water prayer wheel industriously spun at a short distance. It was turned by a small mountain burn which ran into a clear mountain torrent, down which we saw many logsmen steering rafts. They went at a great pace, and managed their rickety-looking crafts with great skill in the rapids. Many places looked ideal ground for roe; swamps, willows, firs, and rocks. The side valleys were said to be good ground for wapiti. The scenery reminded me very much of the valley of the Beaulieu and Strathglass, whilst at times we might have been in Japan, Switzerland, or America. All mountain scenery has common characteristics which, when grouped in a certain setting, remind the traveller of places he has seen thousands of miles apart. Right up to Archuen itself, we passed through waving fields of yellow corn. Indeed, in my opinion, this universal continuity of cultivation is one of the great drawbacks to travel in China, extending as it does up to the very haunts of the game.

The hunters got in some time after our arrival. They had heard a pheasant calling about ten miles from the village, and went to investigate. Some animal, which they thought was a fox, raised its head above a tuft of grass, when they realised it was a large leopard. One of them fired at it with



GORGE LEADING TO SHEEP GROUND.



CHI-SHI'S HOUSE—ARCHUEN.



SHEEP GROUND.

no effect. It was heard on the other side of the valley some days later, but never seen.

We lodged in the house of one Chi-shi. He was a keen hunter, a little thin wiry man with a pleasant face. He seemed chronically cheerful, despite a wife who appraised herself considerably above her real value, and boxed his ears when he smoked opium. Her husband had been induced to pay 300 taels for her, and of her morals the less said the better—

“For the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of
Khatmandu,
And the crimes of Clapham chaste in Martaban,”

or, one might add, in Archuen. A most masterful lady, she ruled Chi-shi with a rod of iron. We had to warn her not to invade the sanctity of our chamber at certain hours, otherwise she and the rest of the village, in particular the juvenile population, crowded to what they considered a show organised by a beneficent Providence for their especial benefit, in and out of season. The Thibetan houses are far cleaner and more tidily kept than those of the Chinese. We occupied the large family room which they all contain, and were really very well off. A long wooden box-like structure extends for about two-thirds the length of the room, holding two or three big copper vats in which all the cooking is done. Many of these coppers are very fine, ornamented with designs of fish, formal rosettes, and other decorations. They are made by the natives. There are usually one or two dressers, the wealth of the family being

gauged by the display of copper pots, plates and vessels which they hold. A huge spear eight or nine feet long usually occupies a corner of the "hall," and at the entrance the section of a tree hangs, which is supposed to keep out all witchcraft and evil influences. Overhead, in the big beam running across the room, were the eight precious things, gold, silver, and jewels which are always to be found in Thibetan houses. In the larger houses, which, from above, resemble enormous cardboard boxes with a raised lid in the centre, a gallery runs round the upper story, containing rooms. The "well" in the middle is left open. The roofs are flat, and on them the corn and grain are winnowed.

We stayed at Archuen for a week, our main object being to obtain specimens of the mountain sheep. The climbing was pretty stiff, grass slopes and saddles leading one to rocky tops 11,000 to 12,000 feet above sea level. We calculated that the big stone range to the south must have been something over 15,000 feet at the highest point which we could see. The highest point we reached was probably a thousand or fifteen hundred feet below this. I saw one lot of sheep on my first day out. The ram had one good horn which I could clearly see as he stood on a pinnacle of rock on the skyline and looked down on us. We tried a stalk, but the sheep were too quick and slipped down a cleft in the rocks which I should have thought impassable to any living animal just as we reached the top of the cliff. George saw twenty-two sheep, including three good rams, but could not get a shot. I hunted this ground for several days, but saw

no sheep, though we found their tracks, also those of serow and goral.

Starting early one morning, I had only climbed to the top of the first ridge when, on looking over, I saw two roe-deer (*Capreolus bedfordi*). I pulled out my glass and saw that one was a buck, evidently an old beast, for his horns were twisted in a curious manner and "going back." He was within shot, and my first bullet broke his foreleg high up, while the second killed him. I shall not say much about him here, as we were not really hunting roe, and I saw many more afterwards, though I never killed another. This buck weighed $54\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and was still in his bright red summer coat (September 16th). I sent Lao-Wei back with it, as we were close to the village, and went on up the hill. I expected him to join me in an hour or so, but he did not turn up till nearly one, as he had stopped to enjoy a meal in the company of Chi-shi's wife. He was quite convinced I should kill another roe, for my victim had died with its eyes open and had its tongue out when he reached Archuen, "which meant it was expecting another one." We saw nothing in the way of big game till the evening, but I shot a variety of snow fowl which the natives call *shuechi* (pronounced "shuergee"). They are about the size of a hen capercaillie, and make a curious squeaking noise as they run about among the rocks. We went on around the tops of the ridges, eventually descending into the glen up which George had sallied daily.

How he did it I could never make out. The scenery was beautiful, indeed magnificent, but I, unfortunately, was in no position to admire it. I

scarcely dared raise my eyes, glued perforce to the faintly wavering line which ran before me, called by courtesy a path. During the two unhappy hours it held me I realised, as I had never realised before, the eminence to which the late M. Blondin had risen. A Chinese herb picker, attempting to go along this road a few months previously, slipped and fell into the river. It was in flood, and the unfortunate man's body was never found. The path zigzagged in and out of bushes, shot suddenly and almost invisibly across smooth faces of rock, rose amid the tangled roots of trees, then slipped towards the rocks beside the river. A turmoil of blue waters, icy cold, scarcely covering projecting rocks, raced beneath. Spanning the gulf were a couple of polished bark-shaved poles, on which my guide invited me to trust myself. With quivering legs I essayed the task, collapsed and ignominiously and ingloriously punted myself over astraddle. This obstacle surmounted, I found myself perched on an enormous boulder, quite out of reach of a small snagged pole, presumably placed there to aid the descent. I half fell, half slipped to a pebbly beach and was confronted by two more poles propped perpendicularly against a wall of rock. They were notched at intervals after the manner of those which one sees in the cages of performing mice and such-like animals. I never felt less like a performing mouse in all my life, but somehow or other reached the top. Once only did I really enjoy myself as we crossed a level bank of green, about which grew burberries, clematis, rowan-like bushes with berries of white, azaleas, rhododendrons, and junipers. I heard a bark across the river, and there

among the graceful red birches, so like our own silver birches, but with a beautiful pinkish red trunk, stood a buck with long, widely curving horns a foot or more in length. Just as I started to creep down the bank as a preliminary to fording the river, he gave another bark and trotted into the bushes.

I shall always admire George for resolutely setting out on that nightmare of a path morning after morning, its difficulties enormously increased by a night of frost.

He slept for two or three nights in a shallow cave at the head of this glen, the better to reach his ground early. In a short note, reminiscent of Mr. Pepys at his best, he informed us the evening after his departure from the village that he had had a stalk after the herd on a rocky spur thickly grown with rhododendrons; Yung-sha having poked his head and most of his body round a corner to "see what was happening," had put off the ram when they were within fifty yards of it. This herd evaded all their efforts, and had eventually to be left. Though very nice fellows, these hunters were not stalkers in the proper sense of the word. Indeed, they broke the elementary rules of stalking with the utmost *sangfroid*. When three steps would place Lao-Wei out of sight he would walk cheerfully along the top of a ridge in full view of the opposite slope; career gaily over a skyline, my rifle blazing on his shoulder in the sun, an outward and visible sign to any animal with eyes in its head for miles that danger was abroad; whilst, in the middle of a stalk, the whistles of a peripatetic marmot would fill him with an innocent and child-

like joy, and he would settle himself comfortably to listen until the whistler had disappeared. Their own method of hunting consists in five or six of them marking an animal down, at least in the case of the wapiti, which is their most important quarry, returning for a big feed and a council of war, then sallying forth that evening or the next day, posting themselves at various points and trusting to luck that between them they will bring their victim to bag.

Whilst we were hunting, the doctor had been collecting birds and small mammals, a list of which I give in an appendix. On his first visit to Archuen two years previously the natives had been very suspicious. When they saw him stuffing specimens for preservation they asked if we had not got any such animals in England that he took so much trouble, and if he made them alive when he got them home!

When they have a grudge against an enemy they make an image of sticks and clay and transfix it with sharpened twigs or burn it, after the fashion of witches in England many years ago.

They kill a few sheep and roe-deer, and snare the latter, and very occasionally young wapiti, as follows: Finding a deer path, they bend a young sapling and fasten it with a notch by the side of the run. At the end of the sapling is a cord of hemp or flax, and for this purpose they are clever at making strong cords. The loose end terminates in a running noose, which is fastened to the sides of the path with bits of grass. The roe is caught by the neck and soon strangled, or sometimes by the foreleg. They also catch musk-deer in this manner.

I saw one of these traps, and while at Archuen they brought in a young roe, and a musk-deer which they had caught.

Another method of trapping wapiti is to prop two young pines in a V-shape, the tops overlapping and forming a fork. A third pine is balanced in this fork, with a hemp cord fastened to the projecting end. This again terminates in a running noose set in a deer path. The unsophisticated animal which is so ill-fated as to get caught by the leg overbalances the log, cannot go far attached to so cumbrous a weight, and is soon overtaken by the hunters.

A smoking joint was placed on the table one night, which the doctor carved with an air of joyful anticipation. I took a mouthful, and wondered why he looked so pleased. Then George followed my example, and an awful look of pained surprise dawned on his face.

"Isn't that delicious?" demanded the carver, who had been so busy with the joint that he had not noticed our expressions.

"I never tasted such beastliness in my life," said George, and the doctor was only pacified when we discovered that the animal from which our dinner came had been hanging in a snare for about a fortnight, and, I should imagine, for another fortnight in the house of the man from whom we bought it. As a matter of fact fresh musk-deer meat is very good.

On September 20th we moved from Archuen, and camped some distance up a side valley to the east, where we had news of sheep.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WILD SHEEP OF WESTERN KANSU

IT is a remarkable and noteworthy fact that those animals, with but few exceptions, which in a wild state are most wary and intractable, become when degraded by generations of domesticity more docile and dependable than any. The ox tribe are notoriously fierce and vindictive in a state of nature, yet—in the East particularly—when impressed into the service of man they perform such useful services that without their aid the poorer classes would scarcely be able to endure existence at all. Similarly, the wild sheep, whose domesticated relations furnish food and clothing to a large proportion of the inhabitants of the globe, when an object of pursuit amid his natural surroundings, high mountain slopes and unscalable precipices, calls into play every particle of skill and endurance which the hunter possesses. From a stalker's point of view he is the king of game animals. It may be taken as an axiom of mountain stalking that the essence of success lies in getting above the quarry. In the case of wild sheep, living as they do at great altitudes, this usually involves several hours' hard climbing in a rarified atmosphere on the part of their pursuer. Their powers of vision are only



SKETCHES OF WILD SHEEP, KANSU.

equalled by such animals as the prong-horn antelope of North America and some of the plain-dwellers of Africa; whilst so closely do they assimilate with their surroundings that it is no difficult matter, as they stand motionless amid the rocks, to pass them over, even with the aid of a powerful glass. The sheep of Western Kansu is no exception to these remarks. In size and weight a full-grown ram is about equal to a fallow deer, standing some 36 inches at the shoulder, and weighing ten or eleven stone. His blue-brown body and legs are handsomely marked with black and white, whilst his graceful curving horns are more reminiscent of the goat tribe than of the species of which he forms a somewhat aberrant member. Closely allied to the burhel (*Pseudois nahura*) of India, he "not improbably represents a distinct race," according to Mr. Lydekker. Burhel have been recorded from Szechuan, though I am surprised to find them mentioned as also coming from Shensi. I fancied Kansu was the easternmost limit of their range.

According to Hodgson, the burhel differs from the typical sheep by the absence of face glands and the pits for their reception in the skull, this being a feature in which it resembles the goats. The tail is more like that of a goat than a sheep. The angulation of the horns is less marked and their direction is more outward than in ordinary goats, but in this respect they are paralleled by the horns of the East Causasian tur (*Capra cylindricornis*). There are glands between the hoofs of all four feet, and in this respect it agrees with the sheep and differs from the goat, as in the fact that the males have no beards. Mr. Blandford writes as follows:

“This animal in structure is quite as much allied to *capra* as to *ovis*, and is referred to the latter genus mainly because it resembles sheep rather than goats in general appearance, and hence has been generally classed with the former. Hodgson distinguished it as *Pseudois*, and there is much to be said in favour of the distinction, but the sheep and goats are so nearly allied that an intermediate generic form can scarcely be admitted.”

The burhel probably indicates the transition point from the sheep to the goats. Mr. Lydekker—from whose book, “Wild Oxen, Sheep, and Goats,” I have quoted—says: “The difficulties of the case may be fairly met by regarding the bhara (or burhel) as the representative of a sub-generic group in the direction of the goats.” Bhara is the Hindustani title. Its Ladaki name is *na* or *s'na*. The natives of Kansu call it *'ngaiyang*.

The horns which I saw in the native houses and those of a ram which I shot were said by the hunters to be of the largest size. Much inferior in length to the Indian species, the best horns of the two varieties seem to approximate pretty closely in girth and width, though somewhat different in shape. The horns are smooth, growing more or less at right angles to the skull, and curve upwards and backwards at the tips. The males are handsomely marked with black on the forelegs, with white patches on the knees and above the hoofs. A black stripe runs up the hind legs to the point of the thigh. The hoofs are also black. The chests of the older rams are of a similar colour, speckled with white on the neck; the black marking extends between the forelegs. There is a



SKETCH OF DEAD RAM, W. KANSU.



DEAD RAM.

black stripe on the side extending from the point of the thigh to within a short distance of the elbow. The tip of the tail is black. The general colour is grey-brown, though in certain aspects there is a decidedly blue tinge. Hence the name "blue sheep." The muzzle is dark to a line between the eyes, turning to a red-brown tone at the edges, where it merges into the general grey of the face. The animals are rather clumsy-looking about the quarters, and have a curiously lanky appearance when moving over the bare grass slopes on which they feed.

The animal I killed was not at all strong-smelling, which is a characteristic of the Indian variety, though George said he noticed a distinct odour from the herd out of which he killed a couple of rams.

The native hunters declared that these sheep rut in January and that the lambs are dropped in May.

No sooner had we moved camp than we experienced those alternations of bad weather which are the despair of the hunter. Snow, mist, hail and rain succeeded each other with monotonous regularity, and though there were occasional breaks, for many days we pursued our quarry with unvarying ill-success. The hunters were nearly as aggravating as a Highland stalker when asked their opinion of the prospects for the day. "Well, it's rather dull (pouring rain and mist!), but it may clear," etc. They invariably sought refuge in the commonplace platitude, "If it is wet we shall not be able to use the long glass, but if it is fine we shall have a beautiful view."

We both saw sheep, but never a good head.

One morning, early, the doctor dashed into the tent and said that the hunters had found a herd quite close to camp. We scrambled into some clothes and rushed off, to find a small ram and some ewes, pretty nearly invisible, amid a cluster of rocks. I missed the ram, which I took to be two hundred yards off, but was nearer three; and after an unnecessary expenditure of good ammunition, secured an animal for the pot.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, the usual bad weather, there were one or two days which will always stand out in my memory. One in particular I recall. Lao-Wei and I lay on the summit of a hill in the warm sunshine. The sky was like a frozen sapphire; against it the grey rocks stood rugged and menacing, a few corners and irregular ledges carpeted with grass, a few, wider or deeper, giving foothold to stunted rhododendrons, whilst the splintered pines below us emphasised the harshness of the scene. Stone slides, narrow and cruel, ran steeply down the mountain meadows to the woods below. These, sprinkled now with autumn gold, showed birches, willows, and aspens amid the firs. Similar ridges to that on which we lay rose across the valley, down which trickled the clear green waters of a snow-fed stream. The northern slopes and those unsuspected ridges facing in the same direction were dark with trees; the southern slopes were grass-covered, with outcroppings of rock which thrust sharp grey points towards the heavens, here in a tremendous serrated peak a couple of thousand feet high, there in a few tiny pin-pricks which scarcely served to break a passage to the air.

For the most part it was still, with a stillness which is only to be found among great mountains, but at times a boisterous wind came shouting round the tops like a rollicking boy out for an unexpected holiday. On the grass slopes one could see his approach from afar as the yellow plumes swayed and bent. Then came a murmur and a little fitful breeze. Louder and louder it swelled, until, with a rush and a roar, he was over us and away, rioting down the glen, while tall trees sang at his coming. Then, in the warm sunshine, everything would grow still and silent again; bees hummed and murmured as they do on a Highland moor; butterflies, strangely out of place amid the little sheltered patches of snow, fluttered and danced in a pathetic make-believe that spring was near, and the iron grip of winter far away. Occasionally, out of the nowhere, like the white soul of a dead child, floated a little speck of thistledown, pure against the blue immensity of the heavens. It hovered for a space and was gone again into the vast beyond; and all the while silent, sentinel peaks, their ledges and sheer precipices slashed and streaked with snow, looked gravely on from afar at me, the butterflies, the wind, and the thistledown, as the gods looked down from Olympus at the doings of the men of old.

It was pleasant to lie there three thousand feet above our temporary home; to watch the grey rocks and the withered grand old pines—was it not Stevenson who said: "Thank God for the stems of the pines!"?—stately wrecks amid the glory of an autumn wood. It was pleasant to

watch the marmots, perkily erect, as they whistled cheerily about their burrows, and Lao-Wei's child-like delight at their antics. The sheep were not there that day, it is true; but about me, encircling, enveloping, was the God-sent grandeur of a September day—so who was I to grumble?

Later we saw a ram and a small band of ewes in the early morning sunlight, but they had seen us too, and we never set eyes on them again.

Our camp was set down close to a track which led far off into the mountains. On several occasions wandering parties of T'é-pus passed with their guns, women, and cross-bred yaks. It was a curious sight to see the great shaggy animals wandering along laden with side-packs. Cattle disease had broken out below Archuen, and the villagers drove a large number of their cattle up into the hills beyond us to be out of the way of infection.

A couple of T'é-pu lamas were our most entertaining visitors. They were on their way to Sung-pan, a border town between Thibet and Szechuan, having just completed a pilgrimage to various lamaseras. They came into our camp and begged for some rice and potatoes. On receiving these they signified their thanks by holding up both thumbs, scratching their heads and bowing. The more important of the two offered to perform a dance in return for a bowl of rice. He accordingly donned a cloth mask with eyelet-holes. It was decorated with a wispy moustache, one side black, the other white, a thin black beard and a cluster of red and yellow ribands at the back. He then began a monotonous

and dreary chant, which described at length how he had always worshipped the spirit of fire and kow-towed to him. Then, for no reason which we could discover, he embarked on an endless dissertation concerning a little stick, represented by a small red wand he held in his hand. How, when he was a boy it was small, and he rode it as a horse; then, as he grew to manhood, the stick grew until it was ten feet long. This, with much pantomiming of hands, twiddlings and jumpings. How he always carried it wherever he went as his constant companion; all the time chanting in a continuous, dreary monotone. It lasted about ten minutes, and was excessively dull.

On another occasion a band of medicine collectors passed camp on their way over the mountains. They were looking for rhubarb. These men are always very badly paid by the medicine-buyers at Minchow, where they take their wares.

That same evening we experienced a bad thunderstorm, just as we were turning in. The noise of the hail on the tent was terrific, and at one time we could not hear each other's voices, though but a few feet apart. The boys had found some phosphorescent wood, which shone quite brightly. We heard in the morning that the cook had been talking in his sleep, when he suddenly woke up and saw this wood shining. He was very frightened, and said to the doctor: "No wonder I talked nonsense in my sleep. It must be dead men's blood!" We never quite unravelled the connection!

George one day killed a female musk-deer

(*Moschus sifanicus*). These little animals stand about twenty inches at the shoulder, and are called by the natives *hsiang*. The Kansu variety have only recently been discovered. They resemble the Himalayan species in general characteristics, but the ears are longer and differently coloured. The value of the musk-gland was at one time very high, but I believe of late years it has decreased.

He also shot a couple of *machi*, a large species of pheasant with a handsome tail. The four tail-feathers were formerly in great demand for the hats of military officials; since the adoption of a Western style of dress the demand has died out to a great extent, though we saw many of these birds kept in captivity for the sake of the feathers. They are caught in traps by the natives. The trap is a pit, over which a lid of brushwood fits. Some grain is fixed to a fine thread inside the pit, the other end of the thread being tied to a prop, which supports the lid. When the bird pecks at the grain the lid falls, and he is a prisoner. The tame ones provide three lots of feathers a year, which are much superior, as might be expected, to those grown by the wild birds. They are sold for two taels a set. The price of the wild birds' feathers varies, being so low at times as one hundred cash for the four. The crops of those which George shot were full of iris roots and dirt.

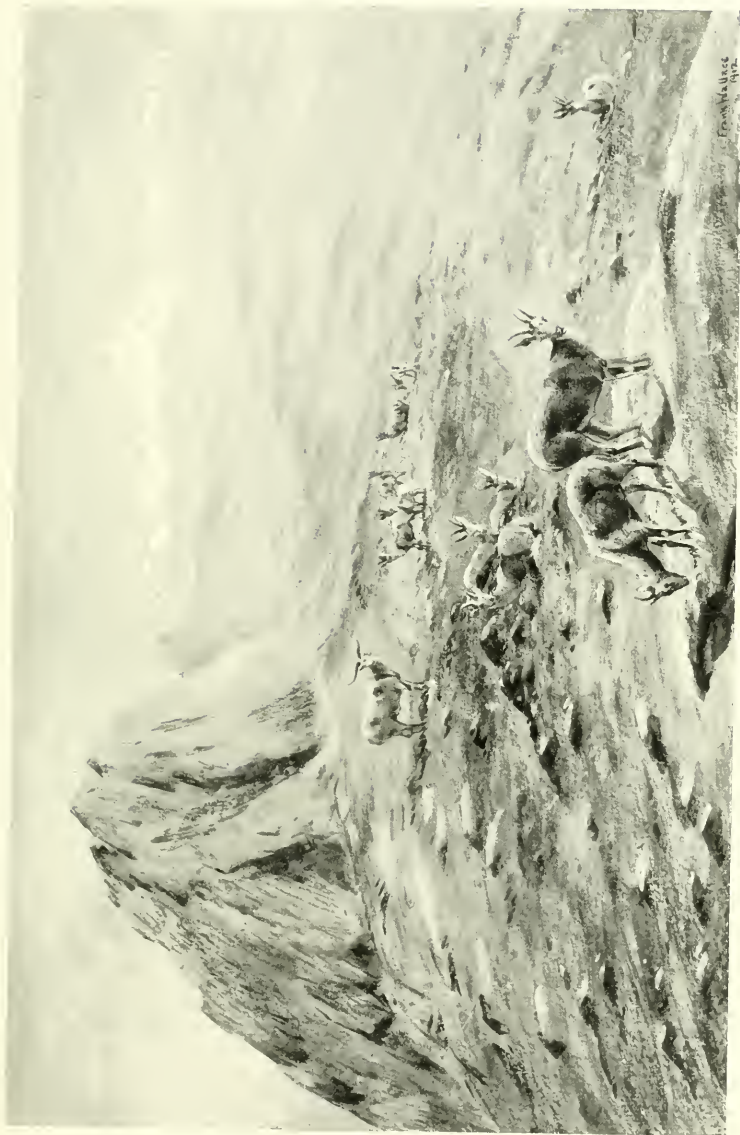
CHAPTER XVII

A DAY WITH A RAM

It was on September 25th that our luck turned. The morning dawned clear and bright, and we were off at sunrise, our way lying for the first mile or so along the banks of the little mountain river on the north bank of which we were camped. We had settled the night before that George was to hunt on the "Matterhorn," as we had christened the snow-covered triangular mass of rock which rose at the far end of the valley. I branched off to the north with Lao-Wei, as I had seen a number of ewes with a ram on this ground a few days before, without being able to get near them. We went for half a mile through thick bush, past a woodcutter's camp, and presently emerged on a small flat from which a steep ridge gradually rose to the higher tops. Hardly had we pulled out our glasses when my hunter exclaimed, "*Ngaiyang!*" Far, far above me, where the first rays of the morning sun were just striking, I saw four ewes. They were leisurely walking over the skyline, stopping to nibble every now and again and gazing down into the shadows of the valley below them.

We hurried on through the belt of trees which grew along the lower slopes of the valley, and at

our next spy saw the whole herd of a dozen animals lying amid the rocks, surrounding a ram whose head was silhouetted in magnified magnificence against a background of deep blue. The stalk was an easy one; the wind strong from the east and the ground favourable. Though not over-prone to count my heads before they have fallen, I confess that I felt very sanguine as to getting a shot at him within the next two hours. I accordingly set out on the climb which lay before me. When about half-way up Lao-Wei suddenly remembered he had left my camera. I sent him back for it, climbed on, and spied again. The herd were still lying peacefully on the crest of the ridge where we had just seen them—a good view of the corrie before them, the wind on their flank, and the pinnacle of rock rising 120 yards behind them from which I expected to obtain my shot. I turned to look for the hunter, and saw him wildly gesticulating and waving on the slope below. At a loss to understand these frantic signals, I followed their direction, and was horrified to find no less than three Thibetans, bent double beneath their loads, wending their deliberate and fore-ordained course immediately through the centre of the corrie. The sheep were bound to see them, and my hopes sank to zero. I am loath to confess it, but I have in the past entertained feelings of aversion to several individuals. I hated a Scotch shepherd who appeared on the skyline within fifty yards of a very fine stag I was stalking; I hated a Mormon baby in whose company I once travelled to Salt Lake City; I hated a man who got to windward of me on a rough day crossing the



Franklin
1912

WILD SHEEP, KANSAS.

Channel; but never did I hate any one as I did those three wretched Thibetans! I rushed up the hill ("rush" is a purely metaphorical word), Lao-Wei rushed after me. The three miscreants, seeing a foreign devil armed with a rifle, his empurpled and streaming visage lifted towards them, and understanding—which I did not—the guttural anathemas of his follower, rushed precipitately over the crest of the hill, and the sheep, alas! catching momentary glimpses of these events, leisurely disappeared over the ridge. It took us a good half-hour to reach the spot. Very cautiously we peered over each crest; very stealthily we crept along a knife-edge of rock, overhanging a big basin, and spied; Lao-Wei even threw rocks down in his disgust; but not a thing stirred, whilst a great eagle swept around us in ever-widening circles, silently contemplating the scene.

On our way up the hill we had seen a couple of ewes, with their lambs. They had whistled derisively at us; but, in spite of my companion's earnest solicitations, I had refused to shoot. The sheep we were after seemed to have vanished. We could see them nowhere in front, so, as a forlorn hope, we retraced our steps to the ewes. They placidly fed where we had left them, and no ram gladdened our eyes. Had the herd passed them they would certainly have moved, so it seemed that, after all, the ram must be somewhere in front of us. We clambered back up the hill—after I had made a sketch or two of the ewes, much to Lao-Wei's disgust, for his bloodthirsty mood had not evaporated—reached the top, and sat down to eat our sandwiches. Then it was that, very faint and

far away, I heard two shots. George, at any rate, had had some luck.

The corrie, down the opposite side of which we had so stealthily crept an hour or so earlier, lay fronting us. The eastern side was overgrown with rhododendron bushes, the western presented a chaos of rocks, slides, small patches of grass, and an ineffectual covering of bushes and stunted firs. In desperation I pulled out my glass for one last spy—and found it focussed on five sheep. There was no ram amongst them, but the rest of the herd could not be far off. I pointed them out to my companion and held up five fingers. He took the glass and held up nine. It was ten minutes before I made out the rest, and then discovered twelve in all, including the ram. They moved slowly and with agility across the face of the cliffs, reached the slope of the face and turned helter-skelter back, for no apparent reason at all. In a few minutes they settled to feed up a narrow crevice in the rocks and we, crawling out of sight, pounded up the slope down which we had so lightly dropped in the morning. They were in full view when we reached the summit, feeding away among the rhododendrons 300 yards below us. It seemed certain they would cross into the corrie from which the three men had dislodged them in the morning, so we continued our way, and presently lay safely sheltered among the rocks. Every second I expected the leading ewe's head to appear, but half an hour passed in silence and the suspense became too great. We crawled down the hill to a spot which commanded a view of the basin and looked over. There we saw them, well out of shot, their old course abandoned,

working steadily away from us. Back we went and round the shoulder of the hill, then down the ridge which they had to cross to leave the basin.

As I peered through the grasses I fully anticipated seeing them within shot. Not a sign of a sheep anywhere! Lao-Wei declared that they had already crossed and that we were too late. It seemed scarcely possible that they had had time to do so, but he seemed certain of it, so I sent him back to a spot from which he could spy, to see if they were still below us. He disappeared over the rocks, and presently I saw him, a diminutive figure, far back on the ridge. He moved stealthily from rock to rock, peering into the mass of boulders beneath him, then straightened himself. He was right and I was wrong! Up the hill I went again, and he joined me. Hope still flickered within me, but it was faint. The evening was drawing in, and as I looked over into the corrie where the sheep had fed in the morning, I felt anything but sanguine. There it lay, and there too within shot of me, as I realised with a gasp of surprise, were the sheep. Placidly feeding after all the fluctuating fortunes of the day, it seemed as if they had never moved from the spot where I had first seen them. These are the moments which come back to one, and that is the moment which dwells in mind as I conjure up again the grassy corries and rocky tops of the Kansu sheep ground. Those last few yards, how exciting they are, when the stalker's skill and experience, pitted against the marvellously acute senses of a really wild animal, seem at last as if they are about to triumph! The big ram was there, a smaller one, the ten ewes and the two mothers with their lambs.

Back I doubled, round the hill, Lao-Wei after me. Three minutes later we lay in a convenient hollow, sheltered by a rock within a hundred yards of our beast. He was partially hidden by a dip in the ground; another three yards would have brought him broadside on in full view, when the aggravating animal lay down. I could just see the tip of one of his horns. There we lay for half an hour, suspiciously watched by a malignant and youthful ram. The wait was enlivened by a violent altercation with Lao-Wei, carried on by signs and grimaces, which ended in his sulky subsidence. His object was to induce me to fire at the small beast, whose attention he had gratuitously attracted by his gesticulations, and to take my chance at the big one afterwards. I was equally determined to wait until a good chance at the latter presented itself. The light was fast waning, and at length, somewhat reluctantly, I made my follower pitch a few small stones on to a rock-slide which ran down the hill on our right. The first had "absolutely no effect whatever," as my wine merchant at Oxford used to say of his favourite claret. At the third the small ram leapt from his rock as if shot from a catapult, the alarm spread and the whole herd made off. The big ram, mercifully alone, stood for a second—and I ignominiously missed him! As he galloped after the ewes I again pulled the trigger. Result—a miss-fire! Just on the edge of the corrie—the ewes were already streaming over—he paused for a last look. As I fired a couple of stragglers came up, and they dashed out of sight in a bunch. We tore to the crest of the ridge. A second later the sheep appeared. In vain I scanned each head.



A LAST CHANCE.

The ram was missing. Who has ever adequately depicted the mingled waves of hope and fear which fill the stalker's heart at such a moment! And yet my hopes were strong, for unwounded he would have been well to the fore. For a moment or so we stood there waiting, whilst Lao-Wei openly expressed his grief at my miss. Then, from behind a tuft of grass, emerged a horn. It swayed, drooped, and was followed by a head. It was the ram. He walked a few paces very slowly, wavered, hesitated, then his legs collapsed, and with gathering speed he rolled five hundred feet to the foot of the gully.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WHITE-MANED SEROW (*Nemorhædus argyrochætes*)

THE shots which I had heard came, as I thought, from George's rifle. He had killed two rams, one with a very pretty head. Wishing to kill a really good one, he and Chi-shi went up the glen to a cave at the foot of his ground and stayed there for two days. I returned to Archuen, where he joined me on September 30th without having had a shot. My efforts after roe proving equally hopeless, we determined to try for a white-maned serow (*Nemorhædus* or *capricornis argyrochætes*).

He is a strange beast, with enormous ears like those of a roan antelope and an elongated melancholy-looking face. The mane from which he takes his name is long, and appears quite white at a distance, though this varies, of course, with the individual. There are many rufous hairs mingled, which gives it a decidedly reddish tinge at close quarters. The name was given to this variety by Père Heude in 1888.

The general colour is a dark blackish grey, shading to burnt sienna on the lower part of the forelegs. The hindquarters are distinctly reddish in tone. The tail is short and dark. The eye is



WHITE-MANED SEROW RETURNING TO COVER.



WHITE-MANED SEROW AT BAY.

rather small, with a small but prominent gland beneath. The hoofs are about the same size as those of a red deer, but considerably more splayed. The short black horns are curved, ringed at the base and as sharp as needles.

Serow are said to be dangerous animals when cornered, and in "Adventure, Sport and Travel on the Tibetan Steppes" Mr. Fergusson mentions a Chinaman who was killed by one. Speaking generally, he is a handsomely coloured beast, a clumsy-looking mover and a first-rate climber.

The hunters collected a scratch pack, for to hunt the animal with dogs provides the best chance of getting a shot. They were a motley collection. There was a little black and white bitch of a friendly disposition, with a pretty taste in food; a persistent black female, the best huntress of the lot; a wolf-like yellow dog with a broad head and a wicked eye; a sad-looking white beast with a pink nose; and a fat old grey brute who did absolutely nothing except eat any pheasants we happened to shoot for the pot. They were all tailless, and at night they howled as if their hearts would break.

Serow inhabit thick fir woods which clothe the northern slopes of the ridges south of the Tao River. They feed on the grassy southern sides during the early morning and retire early into the recesses of the forest. I was posted on a hill-top, while George commanded a wild corrie, a fir wood at his back, a steep precipice on one side and a frowning range of cliff, scattered with firs, larches and undergrowth opposite. When chased with dogs the serow, if it plays the game, makes for a

wall of rock, where it may the more easily defend itself.

The hunters and dogs entered the wood below me, and though it seemed as I looked down on them that the winter undergrowth, stripped of leaves, could conceal nothing, the twisting line of men and hounds vanished where invisible cover lurked, appearing and reappearing as the undulations of the ground alternately hid and revealed them.

Far, far below me, where the green waters of the river, swollen by rains boiled and swirled, I could see tiny figures steering tiny yellow logs through foaming rapids. They looked like pygmies playing at spellikins seen through the wrong end of a telescope. Logs jammed between the rocks, were sheered off by the spellican players, slid through a turmoil of waters, and swung gracefully into an eddy, where a growing pile awaited them.

The murmur of the waters came up to me faintly, in a confused roar and I fancied a dog barked. The sound came again, a dry, hoarse staccato note, and I peered anxiously into the wood below. An old crow sailed across the gulf, chuckling derisively, and my momentary excitement died away. Then long-drawn cries diverted me, and were answered and re-echoed from the hill-tops. A dog yapped, a shrill excited yelp, and the yells redoubled. Then sudden silence, with only the noise of the river below. The sharp crack of George's rifle came from the opposite ridge, and, a second later, a chorus of yells and shouts. He had something, at any rate. A quarter of an hour later Chi-shi, appearing on the ridge, yelled, '*Sangu*'

—the native name for serow. It was most extraordinary luck getting one at the first drive, though I was far from being as optimistic as to future results as a man I know who went to a little Irish inn for a few days' salmon fishing. He sallied forth on the first evening of his arrival, and at his second cast hooked and landed a fine, clean run 15 lb. salmon. Highly excited, he rushed back to the inn, overwhelmed the landlord with his jubilations, instantly secured the sole fishing rights of that beat for the whole of his six weeks' holiday—and never rose another fish!

It appeared from what I subsequently learned that George had sat on the top of the precipice for some time and then, thinking he might place himself in a better position, moved a few hundred yards higher up. Soon after he heard the dogs yapping, and the little black and white bitch appeared at the edge of the wood. He saw no serow, but a moment later the hunters emerged and pointed excitedly at the opposite side of the corrie, beneath the rock wall. He then made out a serow, its back to him, moving slowly along beneath some larches. It suddenly stopped and, knowing he would get no other chance, George brought off a very fine shot at nearly three hundred yards, killing the beast dead. It was a full-grown male with a fine mane and a good pair of horns.

The next day, hearing of another, we started off in the opposite direction and, as usual, drew lots for positions. I was on a ridge. A large wood faced me, at its foot a running stream which wandered out of the valley between high walls of rock and after passing through a small birch-copse hurled

itself, with much pleasant splashing, into the main river.

George was below the far wall of rock and above the birch-copse. The particular serow we were after was a cunning old beast and had, I suspect, been hunted before. It was a long time before his tracks were discovered in a distant fir wood. Then he came lumbering out, galloped, so they told me, like an overgrown calf, across a wide-open hill-side, made for the precipice above George, was turned by the hunter's yells, passed through the birch-copse, the rock walls, up the bed of the stream, completely hidden from me all the time by the dense undergrowth, and found refuge by keeping to the water all the way, thus drowning his spoor. He had taken the only course by which he was hidden from me, though had I known where to look I might have seen him for a few brief moments as he crossed the open a quarter of a mile away. All I did see was the pink-nosed dog and his sable companion wildly questing round the foot of the rock walls where the spoor was lost.

The next day we tried for him again; George occupied my old position, whilst I went along the ridge farther down the valley. I sat and meditated on the futility of human hopes, particularly when connected with serow driving, for some three hours or more, when I suddenly beheld a tall figure struggling up the hill-side above me. It was George. The serow, as his tracks showed, evidently knew the ground—and our exact positions—like a book. He had sneaked up behind George, who, had his attention not been distracted by the yells of the hunters on the slope opposite, might have seen



WHITE-MANED SEROW (*Nemorhædus argyrocætes*).



ROE BY MOONLIGHT.

him for perhaps five seconds, at a distance of two hundred and fifty yards, walked leisurely up the hill and disappeared.

That night a fortune-teller put in an appearance, introduced by the superstitious Chi-shi.

He was a dirty old ruffian who chanted monotonously as he sat on the floor inhaling the smoke of a fire of juniper twigs and twiddling some little forked sticks. After manipulating these, speaking in a low, rapid voice, and, at the close of the performance uttering several prayers in an earnest tone of supplication, he delivered his prophecy. The serow was a certainty—provided we went to the right place! George, also, was to see a big ram, but not get a shot. We were to get plenty of wapiti, have great success wherever we went, and arrive home safely to find our businesses (neither of us has any!) flourishing and dwell for ever in a dream of Utopian bliss. This seemed satisfactory as far as it went, but George's ram rather stuck!

Despite the forebodings of Chi-shi, who evidently regarded such an offer as tampering with the moral probity of the gods, we offered the old humbug another bowl of rice if he would guarantee fine weather and a nice fat ram with long curly horns.

The oracle flatly refused to commit himself to any definite statement about the weather, wherein he showed his wisdom. I would as soon prophesy as to the climatic conditions on the west coast of Scotland. His Delphic utterance—and it was really rather smart—amounted to this. If—if, mark you!—it cleared *and* George read his prayers very earnestly, he would get a good sheep!

It didn't clear, George didn't get his sheep, and

I didn't get a serow. Perhaps George didn't read his prayers earnestly enough, and we must evidently have gone to the wrong place for the serow. The dogs killed a young musk-deer, and that was the total bag.

We stayed for some days more at Archuen, trying to drive serow every day. The weather turned very cold, and it was trying work waiting for hours in the open for serow which never put in an appearance. The glen up which we had journeyed but a fortnight before to our sheep camp presented a very different appearance. I have never seen so sudden a change. Then it had seemed the height of summer. The river babbled and chuckled with a pleasant, cooling murmur, grateful to the ear. The trees were smothered in a bravery of green. Through gaps in their rich mantle the sun filtered on to the mossy carpet of the woodland floor, and amid the emerald hues firs showed pointed and dark. Now it was so changed that it seemed impossible a few short days could have wrought the miracle. Swollen with heavy rains, the river tore and roared through the gorges. The hill-tops were swathed in mist. Jagged spires and pinnacles of rock were thrust from the lower slopes into its dense folds. The verdure of the woods was gone. No sunlight splashed on the mosses. Dead yellow leaves fell sadly, and revealed a delicate tracery of branches purple with bloom as of the vine. The firs stood dark and threatening, dominating the leafless trees. The grasses which covered the southern hill slopes, no longer opulent with the mature charms of summer, were stained to melancholy browns and

ochres. Autumn had come, suddenly and like a thief in the night. It is usually a sad season, this waning of another year. So much it leaves behind it, and promises so little in the immediate future. Yet now it seemed to me that I found an added friendliness in the hills around me; they looked less aggressively alien, and more like those hills I had known and loved for years.

We got on the tracks of one or two serows, but never had a shot. They always treated me rather scurvily, and I only saw two. One was a mile off standing on the edge of a slope, and gazing intently down into the valley, a position which he maintained without stirring for three-quarters of an hour. The other gave me a poor chance, as he lay with his back to me on the other side of a gully grown thickly with trees. A wretched little hawk pursued me with the greatest malignity, squeaking above my head, and fluttering round till his attention was attracted. To my lasting regret I missed him!

The doctor never failed to see one when he was after pheasants. An old male walked straight across a bare hill-side in full view of him one evening, and completely defeated the diminishing remnants of the scratch pack on the following morning.

George came suddenly on a female whilst after wapiti. She disappeared very rapidly down a precipice without giving him a chance, and a few days later, whilst waiting for a stag to emerge from the wood below, he saw another. It stood motionless at the edge of some firs on the far side of the valley, and looked superciliously at the corner

round which a native hunter had cautiously stalked a few moments earlier, whilst just below a couple of roe seemed to join in the joke.

Though not plentiful in the sense that roe- or musk-deer are, I should not call him an uncommon animal; but he is a very difficult beast to get at, and will long survive amid the woods and shaggy precipices where he makes his home.



LAO WEI WITH ROEBUCK.



WHITE-MANED SEROW
(*Nemorhaedus argyrochaetes*).



T'É-PU LAMA DANCING.

CHAPTER XIX

TRAVELLERS' TALES

WE left Archuen on October 11th with many regrets, for it was a dear little place. We had some excellent sport with the pheasants on the way down to Choni. With a couple of good dogs and a few beaters who knew their job, we could have had first-rate covert shooting and killed a big bag. We saw literally hundreds, but contented ourselves with a dozen or so, as we could not have used more.

As illustrating their numbers in many parts of China, a certain celebrated Ananias was recounting the details of a ride where birds were plentiful.

“Suddenly,” he declared, “my horse shied. My gun was slung on my back. Both barrels went off. I looked round, and there were three dead pheasants in the road!”

Another story in which this gentleman figured is too good to miss. His father, though a foreigner, had resided for many years in China, and was alluded to by his son as “Poppa.”

One day the conversation turned on well-known travellers. Poppa's name—he was dead—cropped up; so did that of Marco Polo. This was a chance not to be missed.

“Marco Polo!” said the son in a casual manner, flicking off the end of his cigar. “Oh yes, my old Poppa was his guide. A nice man! He came from Russia. How old was he? Well, I never saw him myself; it was before my time. About forty-five, I should say. He had a grand horse he brought with him all the way from his own country. He gave it to Poppa, but the poor beast died from grief when the old man pegged out!”

“The mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure.” Doubtless the son of Marco Polo’s guide endorsed the statement of the fraudulent Lord Chancellor!

Mr. Christie was away when we arrived, but returned the following evening. The welcome we received was so genuine and hearty that we might have been old friends instead of casual acquaintances.

Missionaries in China as in other countries keep open house, and it is seldom that their hospitality is abused.

There was one gentleman, however, who travelled all over China from one missionary to another, and claimed their generosity and services on the ground that they were fully requited by the advertisement (though the word is an odious one in such a connection) which he gave them in his writings.

“You help me,” he said, “and in return I put *twenty per cent. of Christianity into my books.*”

He foisted himself on one wretched man, who rose at an unearthly hour “to speed the parting guest,” and provided him with a substantial breakfast of eggs, bacon, coffee, etc. The latter, arriving at the house of his next victim, com-

plained of his host's stinginess "as he had only had four eggs for breakfast!" On another occasion he persuaded a very well-known missionary who has worked for years in China to accompany him on a trip down the Yangtse. Not only did he overwhelm him all day and most of the night with a torrent of questions, to which he expected an answer in the form of a typewritten report, but actually expected his companion to get up early in order to clean his boots!

There is a certain type of man who looks upon self-satisfied blatant advertisement, to use the word in its proper sense, as a form of patriotism. Every nation, unfortunately, is compelled to claim such individuals. Such men have themselves photographed in front of sacred idols, quite regardless of the feelings of those who regard such objects as sacred; entertain their friends at champagne picnics on historical spots; and would carve their names on the walls of Westminster Abbey, Notre Dame, or St. Peter's if they got the chance. To such a class did another traveller belong.

He burst one day without any warning into the study of a certain missionary. The latter was not unnaturally rather surprised at the huge apparition who suddenly confronted him. A fist like a leg of mutton was thrust under his nose.

"That, sir," exclaimed the visitor, "is not the hand of a well man."

His unwilling host could think of nothing to say except "Oh!" which was non-committal and expressive.

"No, sir, it is not. And I have come to you to be cured!"

The missionary thought it might be as well to start at the beginning and enquired his visitor's name.

The latter flung himself into a chair and regarded his interlocutor with an expression which intended to convey wonder at the ignorance of so distinguished a guest's proximity and pride at the announcement he was about to make.

"Do you mean to say, sir," he began impressively, "that you do not know the author of 'A Yankee in Yak-land,' 'Yaps from the Yangtse,' and 'Hell—how to avoid it'?" "You see before you," he went on, "one who has stood on the last brick of the Great Wall of China. On that brick, sir, I was photographed as a representative of our great and glorious country holding at arm's length 'Old Glory.' Then, sir (still accentuating all the unimportant syllables), I took that brick and with my own hands I hurled it in—to the Yaller River so that no other feet but mine should ever pollute its surface."

He then proposed himself as a visitor for some days, informed his host that he would thank him for a concise report of the industries, population, geography and customs of the surrounding district, and was at last seen brandishing an enormous revolver at the terrified carter who was to travel with him for the next stage. Mr. Christie, who, I should perhaps add, was not a participator in any of the foregoing events, had had several unpleasant experiences during his long residence in China.

Once he was attacked by robbers near the great monastery of Labrang. They dashed out of a hollow where they had lain in concealment,

knocked down the first man they saw, and only released him when Mr. Christie confronted them with a revolver. They then apologised for attacking a foreigner and rode away! Another adventure which might have terminated very unpleasantly befell him shortly after he first came to Choni. His business took him to a town a hundred and fifty miles to the north which it was important he should reach quickly. Thirty *li* from his destination lay a valley. Seven years before the inhabitants of the upper portion had stolen a goat from those who lived at the lower end. They had stopped on their way home, not fearing any pursuit, when just as they had killed the goat and were eating it the real owners suddenly appeared on the scene. One of the raiders was killed in the encounter which followed, and the feud was kept up. On reaching this place Mr. Christie found that a fight was in progress. He knew the combatants, and on reaching their outskirts, called one of the men and asked if he could get through. The road ran beside a little river from which rose a succession of terraced fields, among which the fighting was going on. The inhabitants of the lower end of the valley seemed to be getting rather the best of it, but, hearing that Mr. Christie was in a hurry, they agreed to cease fire whilst he went through the lines. Accordingly they shouted across to their enemies, who hoisted a pole with a white flag at the end.

“Now gallop!” they cried to Mr. Christie, who, with his two followers, dashed down the valley. As they did so the men from the upper end of the

valley advanced down the hill. The intruders had only traversed about half the line of battle, when down went the flag and bullets began to fly. The lower party becoming demoralised, gave up the contest and followed in their tracks.

Before long they overtook them and soon Mr. Christie was surrounded by a mob of angry men, brandishing their weapons and shouting, "He is responsible for our defeat!" "Kill the Russian!" "Kill him!" Matters looked rather ugly, and Mr. Christie began to feel apprehensive, when, suddenly, a man forced his way through the crowd which surrounded him, seized the pony's bridle, took off his cap and cried in English, "Yes! Yes! Backsheesh! Backsheesh!"

Very much surprised, Mr. Christie asked him who he was.

"Yes" and "Backsheesh" exhausted his English, but he turned out to be a man who had spent eighteen months in Darjeeling, of all places. He explained to his companions that Mr. Christie was no Russian but an Englishman; that the English were good people whom he knew well; and that they always gave Thibetans backsheesh.

The temper of the crowd changed at once and the men who, a few moments before, were clamouring for his blood, now patted their visitor on the back, stroked his clothes and shook hands with him. A small present of cash to the traveller from Darjeeling called forth profuse expressions of gratitude and thanks, and the incident ended pleasantly for all concerned. But it was a wonderful coincidence!

We were anxious to procure a few curios, and our host kindly helped us.

One man brought a gilded copper model of a choten. They are curious bulbous-looking erections surmounted by a ball and crescent, and are supposed to ensure good luck and riches to the owner. If turned with the side towards the house of an enemy, his luck is supposed to be dominated and suppressed by the choten, which is sometimes expressly built in this manner.

When Mr. and Mrs. Christie first came to Choni the Prince had the choten in his yamen thus turned in order to keep down their influence.

We saw one later on, erected on the actual border of Thibet by the orders of a certain "Living Buddha" to resist the influence of missionaries, whom he had resolved to defy.

The model shown to us was similar to those found in every monastery and rich man's house, and was supposed to contain the ashes of that paradoxical personage, a dead "Living Buddha." It also held the eight precious things to which I have already alluded. The original price asked was 30 taels, but the owner eventually came down to ten taels, which was not excessive, as model chotens of this description are not easily obtained.

It is curious to watch a couple of Chinamen or Thibetans bargaining. When the vendor mentions a price he extends his hand, which is hidden by the long sleeve of his coat. In such deals each finger has a particular value. The buyer grasps one of them considerably lower in the scale than the price named, and so the

haggling goes on. We also bought some of the copper pots, which are very ornamental, and George invested in a Thibetan gun and some very fine cart bells.

Unfortunately we had to leave most of those things behind us when the revolution broke out, as we had to travel as light as possible. Whether we ever see them again is somewhat problematical.

We went to one fur shop. Outside the door several dogs were lurking, when the proprietor suddenly dashed out, seized one by the scruff of its neck and hurled it into an outhouse, remarking, "I can't afford to have your excellencies bitten! You are worth money!" which was rather comforting under the circumstances.

I bought a horn, which the shopkeeper told me was that of a *maloo*, as they call the wapiti. In this he was quite wrong, for, unless I am mistaken, it is that of a sika. We on several occasions heard of a deer which is called by the natives *yung-loo*, or sheep-deer. They were described as larger than a roe and smaller than a wapiti, spotted in summer, reddish on the sides, and dark on the back. They become much darker in the winter, and carry four points on each horn. Another horn with four typical points which I saw had a small piece of skull with the skin attached. As soon as the owner found I was after it he asked me an absurd price. He admitted it was that of a "*yung-loo* from the far west," so there is a chance for some future hunter, as they have never been obtained by a foreigner in Kansu. We heard of them as being found seventy *li* from Minchow, but an old

hunter said that it was very difficult to make them break cover even with dogs.

Other animals of which we heard, but never saw, were the wild oxen of Thibet. They are found twenty to twenty-five days' journey in the interior of the Golok country.

The natives call them *Brong* (pronounced *Drong*). They were described as being larger than the largest yak, black in colour, and very wild.

The natives hunt them in the following manner: A herd having been located, a deep hole is dug, in which the hunters conceal themselves. When an animal comes within range they open fire on him. It seems a somewhat uncertain, not to say unsportsmanlike, method of shooting.

Their horns are long, 6 in. and more in diameter at the base, hold over 20 measures of corn, and are used by the Goloks for this purpose. At Taochow George procured skins of the golden-haired monkey (*Rhinopithecus roxellanae*). Mr. Fergusson writes as follows: "These monkeys are remarkable animals; they have bright blue faces and dark brown eyes; their nose looks as if a bright blue butterfly was sitting with its wings open in the middle of their face; they have a long golden mane down their back. At Kwan-hsien (Szechuan) I saw a skin with hair 18 in. long and valued at £12 15s. These skins are collected and sent to the Imperial Family, and when made up into garments are allowed to be worn by them only."

CHAPTER XX

A THIBETAN INTERLUDE

TAOCHOW, the Old City, 2,000 ft. above sea level, of indefinite age, and inhabited by a mixed population of Thibetans, Chinese, and Mohammedans, lies on the borders of Thibet and Kansu. It is a quaint little walled town, and wandering through its streets one feels at the other end of the world. The chief object of interest is a fine Mohammedan mosque, surmounted by a double cupola with curved roofs. There is a curiously unbusinesslike, unconventional air about the place. References are not asked for nor required, and the open shops with their miscellaneous contents invite enquiry. Bears' paws, dried, with the claws intact, for they are otherwise valueless, swing mournfully amid bundles of deer's sinews; eagles' wings, *machi* feathers, wapiti horns, roe heads, yak bells, swords, daggers, and I know not what other curious objects, attract the foreigner's attention. They hold, too, a wonderful variety of skins. Half a dozen species of cat, from the splendid lynx, valued at seven or eight taels apiece, to the common domestic brute worth a few cash. Fox and wolf hang side by side, whilst in the wholesale houses lie hundreds of sheep and lambskins, of



TERRACED FIELDS.



BEAR AND ROE GROUND.

which the ordinary winter clothes of the people are made.

The people, too, present a strange spectacle to the gaze of the foreigner. Lamas in their once-red robes mingle with half-clad Thibetans in sheepskins. The women walk swiftly, in shoes with upturned toes, for they ceased here to bind their feet after the great Mohammedan rising sixty years ago. Vendors of furs chaffer with Chinese-garbed shopkeepers; here you may see a patient receiving from the proprietor of a medicine shop a packet of mysterious ingredients; there a wild-looking Drocwa tribesman bargains over the skins hung from his saddle; one and all stop and gaze curiously at the foreigner, for they see but few in Taochow.

We stayed one day only, and were off the next morning just after sunrise, our objective being the village of Meiwu, situated in Thibet proper, some 35 miles distant, whence we hoped to hunt the goa, or Thibetan gazelle.

For a time our road lay along the dried bed of a river. It wandered down between the flat-roofed houses and clumps of aspens quivering with autumn gold, through the main street, and into the market place of the city itself, where fat, oleaginous ducks squabbled for precedence in its muddy pools. An insignificant, mud-walled village hung poised on the spur of a mud cliff; three deserted forts lay in the valley's mouth; a white choten glimmered on the hill-side, and on the neck of the ridge straddled a wall. It was the boundary. Beyond lay Thibet; Thibet, despite the unveiling of Lhasa, still one of the mysterious countries of the world. The Chinese claim the allegiance of its inhabitants, and

though the little village for which we were bound is but a few miles distant from Taochow, where the civil official, its nominal ruler, resides, his real authority could not have been more ineffectually displayed had it been hundreds of miles farther west.

The Wall, of course, at which a poll tax of 5 cash per head is levied on every passing Chinese and Thibetan traveller, marks no real change of country. High, grassy hills sloped steeply to a little burn. The lower slopes were cultivated, and on these enormous bundles of straw, apparently of their own volition, wandered aimlessly about. It was not until, with long-drawn yells, their owners drove the yaks which bore them down the valley, that one realised the motive power. Two or three villages clustered near the valley's mouth, and from every yard dogs barked at the passer-by. Big brutes, half mastiff, half collie, they are, when free, a great nuisance to travellers.

One came charging out at George's pony, but a passing Thibetan mounted on a shaggy little steed dashed up, and, from a regular arsenal of stones secreted round his waist, hurled volleys at the brute, making excellent shooting with his left hand.

A little farther on we came upon yak-hair tents, low, black structures, with the inevitable dogs on guard, and little round patches of dung, drying for fuel. The road was good, the grass hills rising to about 2,000 ft. on either side. At times one had but to look back from the patient string of donkeys to imagine oneself back among the high peaty tops of any Inverness-shire deer forest.

Then a wild-looking, mounted Thibetan, half naked, his leopard skin collar rolled back, his long gun with its forked rest sticking over his shoulder, sword in belt, and a great dog on an iron chain trotting by the pony's side, would pass us, and the illusion vanish.

Near a yak-hair tent we stopped for some food, and were surrounded by a crowd of friendly Thibetans, who were much interested in our rifles, spy-glasses, and cameras. From one of the women at the tent we obtained some milk. They wear their hair in a great number of small plaits, which hang down the back and are gathered in at the waist. The unmarried ones have their hair done into a small roll behind the ear. They all carry large triangular leather pouches, ornamented with brass studs, in which are kept the yaks' hairs they weave. The right breast is usually left bare.

Whilst having our food, a really pretty girl came up, evidently the daughter of a well-to-do man. Her ornaments were superior to any we saw, and she had on a fine fox-skin cap which completed the barbaric splendour of her attire and made me think of the dusky Indian maids of whom I used to read in Mayne Reid and Ballantyne. She was very shy, but had beautiful eyes and teeth, which she flashed at us from a respectable distance. Many Thibetans we saw had remarkably fine teeth and strong features; a contrast after those of the lax, impassive Chinaman.

Whilst endeavouring to cross a small burn, my pony tried a short cut and got hopelessly bogged. I managed to extricate myself and my rifle with no greater harm than a wetting. A little later,

one of the boys who was riding George's little white pony met with a similar mishap, and rejoined us looking as if the old gentleman in "Struwwelpeter" had dipped him into his inkpot! On the owner's forcible remonstrances, he sat on a stone and burst into floods of tears!

Among some thornbushes we came on a large covey of hill-partridges, very much like the little brown bird at home, and killed two or three brace. I do not think they can ever have had a shot fired at them before, as they refused to rise, and with more cartridges we could have bagged the lot.

Reaching the crest of the hill, we found ourselves on a high, rolling plateau, bounded to the north and west by hills, looking very much like an American prairie. It was ideal antelope country, pastured by herds of half-bred yaks, ponies, and big flocks of sheep with curiously twisted horns, growing at right angles from the skull. These are the property of the nomad Thibetans or Abrogba (Drocwa).

Snow falls on these high plateaux in September and does not melt until May; June, July, and August are the only really clear months.

The afternoon drew on, we still passed flocks and herds, and towards evening found ourselves among low, stony knolls, and small, grassy valleys. It was dark when we stumbled out of these, and heard the distant barking of dogs. A small wooden bridge led us to an indistinct cluster of houses, and the only inn of Meiwu received us for the night. It was not a palatial hostelry, and one low-roofed, mud-walled room sheltered our three selves and the five boys.

We woke late the next morning, and during breakfast various reports announced that the headmen were complaining at our presence. The doctor and his companions had met with a similar reception on a previous visit, so we were not quite unprepared. The real trouble, however, began when we tried to get guides to show us the best gazelle ground. We were met with a flat refusal. The "Living Buddha" of the local monastery had, it appeared, issued a prohibition against the killing of any animal; an infraction of his decree would, we were told, result in a recurrence of the cattle disease, which had been very prevalent, and of which the inhabitants stood in mortal dread.

We argued that such a prohibition did not extend to foreigners, and that we would go and find the gazelle ourselves, after an interview with the Buddha. This gentleman, it transpired, had gone on a pilgrimage to Lhasa three months previously, leaving no one with any authority to remove the ban. He had also taken with him the small local official to whom our escort—a solitary half-bred Chinese-Thibetan soldier—had been properly accredited by the official at Taochow. This was cheek with a vengeance, as the headmen, particularly one grey-haired old ruffian, absolutely refused to let us stir from the inn. They said that if we did, and killed gazelle, the local cattle-breeders—semi-nomads—would descend on the village and wreak their vengeance on them and their people. We asked for a representative cattle-breeder, and were finally checkmated by being told that it was impossible to know where such a person

could be found. The only concession they granted was that we might stray for two days, the headmen and lamas guaranteeing the behaviour of their people for this period. Then we must go. It was not the least use staying in the horrid little place unless we could hunt, so we decided to leave on the morrow.

The dislike of these people to foreigners is not altogether unnatural. But few can talk their language, and they do not understand us. A German explorer boasted that during his journey along the border he had had thirteen "battles" with the Thibetans, in one of which he knew for certain he had killed four men.

The day was filled up by entertaining relays of inhabitants, who came pouring in to inspect us and our belongings. The Drocwas, in whose country we were, are a fine-looking lot, at least, the laymen, and, with their jauntily-worn sheepskin caps, leopard-skin collars, long swords, steel-sheathed dirks, and touches of barbaric finery, are as wild a set of semi-civilised barbarians as I have ever seen. One young fellow in particular, dressed as I have described, with a frank, open face, was very friendly, and received with joy a couple of pears. To mark his appreciation he drew his finger across his throat and held up one thumb. Another gentleman produced a large .450 revolver from the depths of his waistband, fully loaded. I hope for his own sake that he is never compelled to use it, for it will prove quite as dangerous to himself as his opponent.

There was another old worthy among the crowd busily knitting. He was much interested in my

knickerbocker stockings, and fingered them with the air of a connoisseur.

The shaven-headed lamas are in a different category altogether. Thibetan Lamaism is about as corrupt and degrading a form of Buddhism as is to be found; Thibetan lamas, forced to undergo the restrictions of a compulsory monastic life—for each family with a son devotes him to religion—are almost as corrupt, degraded, filthy, and evil-looking a crew as it is possible to imagine. They were, however, friendly on the whole, though some of the younger ones badly wanted kicking, and expressed child-like and unfeigned pleasure at the doctor's removable teeth, a magnifying shaving-glass, telescopes, and field-glasses.

So the day passed, while an old gentleman sat and watched the crowd from a corner of the roof, said his prayers, and pointed out our strange ways to a naked child, who seemed, in his arms, to experience no discomfort from a chilling wind. From another corner an aged female appeared at intervals, screamed out a remark and vanished.

Early on in the proceedings the old villain of a headman, who had taken a look through the telescope with a seemingly grateful smile, dashed into the crowd, and with a few hoarse shouts caused all the villagers to disperse, leaving a sediment of lamas who did not recognise his authority.

After lunch we had a little mild excitement. Our enemy sent in to say that we must go at once. We refused, and told him we would leave at daybreak. A sudden uproar caused us hastily to enter the courtyard. There was the old headman, his garment off, stripped to the waist, setting

about our escort in a most professional manner. He, poor wretch, expostulated. The amateur prizefighter spat on his hands by way of answer, and regularly went for him. A crowd of followers joined in, and they started to hustle the representative of law and order towards the outer gate. Once outside he would undoubtedly have come in for a sound beating. However, some Mohammedan merchants staying in the inn separated the combatants, and peace was restored. Such an incident might, however, easily have grown into an ugly fight.

Next morning we were up at 2 a.m., and in the dark and mist started back for Taochow. We had some little difficulty in finding the way as we wandered down the hill; shallow depressions developed into huge gullies, low knolls were exalted into mountains, and the shadowy pack-train into the advance guard of a host. It grew lighter by degrees, and by the time the sun was up we were well on our way, so, sending the pack-train ahead, we started on a small detour in the hope of falling in with some gazelle. The tops of the hills which composed the plateau were still in mist, but we made out some indistinct forms and George tried a stalk. The gazelle, however, took the alarm and fled over into a hollow. To make a long story short, we saw several scattered groups of from nine to five, but no buck save that which George had stalked. They are pretty little animals, about the size of a roe-deer, and not at all unlike one in appearance. Their colouring is much the same, and they have a similar white rump patch.

Whilst from an eminence we watched several small herds, that nearest us suddenly broke into a frightened gallop, and a large wolf cantered sedately out of a hollow on our right. He was a fine-looking beast, grey and tawny, but unfortunately out of shot. I fired at a female gazelle later, as we wanted meat, but exaggerated the distance and went over her back. They were rather wild, but had we been able to hunt them properly from the village I have no doubt that on a fine day, with care and patience, we should have killed two or three bucks. However, as we killed gazelle crossing the Gobi Desert, I will say no more about those we saw here.

Shortly after we joined our ponies it began to snow, and continued bitterly cold all the way to Taochow, which we reached about 4.30. So ended a trip that was a failure.

The superstitious reader may perhaps derive satisfaction from the knowledge that our start was made on Friday, October 13th.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ROE-DEER (*Capreolus bedfordi*)

ON October 17th we got back to Choni, and two days later, accompanied as before by Yung-sha, Lao-Wei, and an old toothless hunter who had spent sixty years of his life in the pursuit of wapiti, roe, sheep, and bear, we camped in the Poayü-kou Valley some twenty *li* from Choni, which was said to be good for both wapiti and roe.

That same afternoon we tried for the latter animal. Owing to a stupid muddle on the part of the hunters, I crossed over into the corrie where George was stalking a buck, disturbed a doe and fawn and spoilt his stalk, for which I was very sorry. He killed a couple of does for meat on his way back to camp, but neither of us encountered another buck.

Native hunters always go up the bed of a gully in preference to the ridges. It has one advantage, the game cannot see you unless they happen to be feeding out on the open hill-side; but this argument cuts both ways, for neither can you see the game. In addition one usually has to advance up the rocky bed of a stream, stooping all the while to avoid the interlacing boughs overhead. The going is sometimes very bad, and



THIBETAN WOMEN.



THE BEAR.



A STUDY IN EXPRESSIONS.

noise is inevitable. On the whole, I think the best plan is to go up the ridge on the side of the gully farthest from that in which you intend hunting. Of course, there may be game in the gully below you, but a certain amount of risk is unavoidable. By adopting this plan the gully in which you suspect game is undisturbed; you will not be seen, and are safe from the wind. Having skirted the top of the side gully, you can choose your own place from which to spy, and all your ground is below you. The wind is always variable, and it is impossible to rely on it when making plans in advance.

Roe-deer (*Capreolus bedfordi*) are widely distributed throughout China. They are rather larger than the European variety (*Capreolus caprea*), standing about 30 in. at the shoulder. There is no white patch on the nose, at least I never saw one thus marked. In summer their coats are very red, changing in the winter to a dark brownish grey.

We saw plenty of these little deer in the Poayü-kou Valley, but found it an extremely difficult matter to get a good head, though there were several about. However, I shall have something to say about this later. Mr. A. W. Purdom, an experienced botanist who had been travelling in China for two years collecting specimens, and whom we met at Taochow, tells me there is a very good roe ground four days to the north of Sian-fu. They are also plentiful one day's journey from Minchow. The altitude at which they are to be found varies considerably. The greatest height at which we met them was between 10,000

and 11,000 feet. They do not collect in large bands like the Siberian roe, which may number 300 to 500 head in a herd, but remain in small parties like the European variety. The horns are shed in November, and are fully formed in May. These are of some value in the eyes of a Chinaman from a medicinal point of view, though to nothing like the same extent as those of the *maloo*.

We saw a good many horns, still attached in some cases to the skull, in the medicine vendors' shops. We bought one or two, and whilst at Archuen several more from the natives.

Not, of course, to be compared with the magnificent antlers of the Asiatic roe (*Capreolus pygargus*), the best horns of the Chinese species surpass those of the European variety, with the exception perhaps of the Swedish. Of these latter I have never seen a collection. The roe-deer in the Thian Shan have grown horns of 18 inches, though this is unusual; a good Scottish horn is about 9 inches (12 inches is, I fancy, the record), whilst the longest of the West Kansu herds which I measured was $12\frac{3}{4}$ inches. I saw perhaps twenty, and I have no doubt that they exceed this length. George killed one with $10\frac{3}{4}$ in. horns, whilst mine was $10\frac{1}{4}$ inches, though I saw a very much larger head.

Attempts have been made to cross the Asiatic (*pygargus*) and European races, but I have never heard of such an attempt being really successful. Mr. J. Hamilton Leigh, an enthusiast where roe are concerned, carried out some interesting experiments, and came to the conclusion that the best cross would be a Scots buck and a Siberian doe. A half-bred buck crossed with pure Siberian does



TYPES OF CHINESE ROE HEADS (*Capreolus bedfordi*).



ROE-DEER ALARMED.

would probably give good results. If some Chinese roe could be imported, which should not be a very difficult matter, and crossed with Scottish roe, I see no reason why the cross should not be a success. Not so large as the *pygargus*, and slightly bigger than the European variety, a buck of the latter species crossed with a Chinese doe should produce an animal growing a very fine head.

The shape of the horns of the *bedfordi* varies considerably, as will be seen from the illustrations. One pair is almost exactly like a miniature *pygargus*, whilst others might easily be mistaken for a good Scottish head, long, rough, and inclining to the lyrate form. I never saw a head with remarkable brows. They were nearly always short.

From the east side of the valley in which we were camped branched a number of side valleys, running up to the main ridge, ten thousand feet or so above sea level. They were, in some cases, narrow, one side, as usual, thickly wooded, the opposite slope being covered with long grass; in others, the ground opened into big corries, sparsely scattered with trees where the sun permitted, but, whatever the configuration of the ground, exceedingly steep and arduous to climb. The wooded northern slopes were the natural home of the roe. They feed early and late, and, so far as my experience goes, near the tops of the ridges. This might be expected in the case of such animals as sheep and wapiti, but I was surprised to find the roe, not among the bushes at the foot of the gullies, where a trickling stream usually wandered, but, on the contrary, near the summits. Whether this is a natural habit or one induced by the incursions of

woodcutters, whose hideous clatter was to be heard hourly in the main valley and at frequent intervals in the side corries, I cannot say.

There is practically only one hour in the day during which it is possible actually to stalk roe, namely, from 4.30 to 5.30 in the afternoon. It took about two hours to climb to the top of the ridge, a coign of vantage which it was absolutely essential to reach unless favoured by an extraordinary piece of luck, consequently early morning stalking was out of the question.

I never saw one lying out on the open hill-side, and the earliest at which I ever saw one come out of the wood was 2.30. Usually they move about a little at noon, and then lie up again till late in the evening. The bucks seemed to me more alert than the does; their heads were never down for more than a few seconds at a time. As a rule they stand at the edge of the wood, hidden by undergrowth, and make quite sure the coast is clear before venturing forth. George killed two bucks, right and left, at one o'clock, not far from our camp, without any stalk at all. They were both in their winter coats, though the younger of the two had not entirely completed his change. The muzzle was black, and there was a black patch on each side of the lower jaw, which was white. The edges of the ears were black, and the legs were dark in colour. The white patch on the throat was very conspicuous, extending as a rule for some way down the front of the neck, and not making two distinct markings as in the European variety.

Though by far the commonest game animal we encountered during our whole trip, I consider it

more difficult to make certain of getting a good roe head in China than any other trophy. But then the head you want most is sure to be the one to elude you! To start with, the corries which they frequent are most difficult to spy, covered as they are with long dry grass. I am speaking, of course, of winter hunting in October and November; in the summer, when the grass is long, roe-stalking must be pretty well an impossibility, for no spying, however careful, would reveal the game in such thick cover. The roe are very small, and the corries are very large. I shall never forget one evening when Lao-Wei and I were coming back to camp. He suddenly stopped and said "*Pao-loo!*"—the native name for roe. I looked and looked, but could see nothing. At last, four or five hundred yards off, I saw what, even through the glass, looked like a little patch of grey fur; it was only after some minutes, when he moved, that I distinguished a buck, so completely dwarfed was he by his surroundings.

A great difficulty to contend with when spying, and one which is practically insurmountable, is the steepness of the sides of the gullies. This, coupled with the long grass, renders it impossible to spy the bottom of the slope on which you stand. The only place from which to get a clear spy is from the opposite ridge.

In winter the valleys are in shadow comparatively early in the afternoon, and this again makes spying no easy matter from the sunlit tops. The great essential when after roe-deer in Kansu, or anywhere else for that matter, is careful spying.

We saw deer nearly every day, but in the sixteen

days during which I strenuously endeavoured to get the one particular buck I coveted, I only saw one other head which approached his in excellence. I could have shot two or three smaller beasts, carrying six points, it is true, but no better than an ordinary Scottish head. I did not fire, because I was afraid of frightening the big buck, whom I knew would not desert the ground unless he were thoroughly alarmed. I had two stalks after him, but never got a shot. The other good buck had already taken the alarm, though he had not seen us. He was slowly making off down the hill, when he suddenly stopped, and with cocked ears stared into the wood in front of him. Almost immediately another buck emerged and began walking towards him. He passed my buck, when the latter suddenly whipped round and charged up the hill after him. Another ten yards and I should have had a splendid chance, but alas! it was not to be. They both dashed into the wood, and I never saw either of them again.

The little deer has always been a great favourite of mine. Small as he is, he was my first big game, and I love him for that, if for no other reason. It was a dark deed, the slaughter of that unfortunate yearling, and I have often regretted it. Still, a schoolboy of sixteen, armed with a gun, and suddenly confronted by a real live roe—big or small—looking to his excited imagination the mucklest of muckle harts, cannot at so supreme a moment be harshly judged for forgetting the ethics of sport. That little head has hung in my bedroom for years, and though I am not proud of it, it has a special value in my eyes, for it marks my

entrance into the happy hunting grounds which have since become my chief delight and interest.

But I love the roe for other reasons as well. He is such a dainty thorough-bred little beast, albeit a bit of a misogynist in captivity. There is something fairy-like and unsubstantial about him, whether he is watched at his pretty love-making, delicately stepping amid the greenery of summer, whilst his lady-love, red as himself, flashes between the birch stems; or, when his white patch goes bobbing and dancing through the thickets in late October. With the possible exception of some of the smaller African mammals, such as the impala, or Grant's gazelle, there is no beast of the chase which for his size bequeaths so splendid a trophy to his slayer as the roebuck.

I was almost over-anxious to secure a really good head in China, but the Red Gods averted their faces and I experienced a run of ill-luck which nothing relieved. But a stalker must always make up his mind to one thing; however fine the trophies he may have secured, he will ever have the rankling recollection of a head or heads beside which his own pale into insignificance. Was there not once a stag in Eskadale? and even Mr. Selous saw a finer lion than any he has killed.

‘Hope springs eternal in the human breast,
Man never is, but always to be blessed.’

And so we go on always hoping, for, though the head of heads to-day is feeding out of range, there is ever a to-morrow. There was, too, a ram on Yarlakan of which I have written elsewhere; now

there was a roe, for this also is the tale of a failure.

I saw him first as I panted and stumbled up a hill-side. He was feeding with a doe at the bottom of a corrie where the berberis bushes and thickets of willow and tamarisk softened the hard line which divided the forest on the northern slope from the dull ochre of the ridge beyond the little stream. His horns were not enormous, but they were finer than any I had seen, long, rough and widely spread with dull white points which gleamed against the dark background. I gloated over him, as he fed all unconcerned in the sunlight, for, though long, the stalk seemed easy. Alas! it was the first time that I pursued him on that treacherous ground, and experience left me a tired and wiser man!

In Scotland roe-stalking is despised by the many and appreciated by the few who really know what fine sport it affords. There, it is no easy matter. In the huge corries of Kansu its difficulties are enormously increased. In the present instance, apparently all that we had to do was to finish our climb—a matter of an hour or so—skirt the top of the ridge, gently descend under cover of the strip of wood which crowned it, and obtain an easy shot. All this we faithfully carried out—and found the corrie absolutely vacant. Then I remembered an eagle which had given me a momentary qualm as we ascended; for our quarry was hidden once our climb began. Whether the bird had put them off, or the dry, crackling grasses had betrayed our presence, it was impossible to tell. The one thing certain was that they were gone, and that finished



ROE-DEER (*Capreolus bedfordi*) ON THE TOPS.

Act I. Next day I had a solitary walk, and owing to the fickleness of the wind jumped another buck, carrying quite a nice head, which galloped off in disgust at the unpleasant odour assailing his nostrils and never stopped until hidden by an intervening knoll.

On the morrow, faint but pursuing, I toiled up the hill shortly after midday, and for several hours lay awaiting the arrival of my prospective victim. Sure enough, about 4.30 Lao-Wei developed an enormous smile and dug me gently with his elbow, ejaculating "*Pao-loo.*" From the edge of the wood below us appeared the buck. He skirted its fringe, fed for a few seconds, then raised his head. Next, a doe cautiously emerged from the bushes, and they quietly fell to feeding. At every other mouthful the buck would sharply raise his head; indeed, nowhere have I seen the little deer so much on the alert. I was all for going down at once under cover of the fir-wood on our right, but my companion negatived this, intimating that they would see us. Whether he was right or wrong I shall never know, though I like to console myself with the thought that my plan might have been successful. As it was, we waited for half an hour, then, the roe never having advanced more than a few yards from the fringe of the cover, made our descent. All went well at first, though the dead leaves and fallen branches with which the woodcutters had plentifully bestrewn the ground made the most hideous crackling at every step we took. My heart was in my mouth, but at length we gained a knoll a few hundred yards from our quarry and saw their white sterns showing palely

amid the long yellow grasses. It was too far for a shot, so descending the hill we crept on in an endeavour to gain the shelter of a farther knoll. There are two great enemies of the stalker on this kind of ground—the wind and the long grass. The former—nearly always those “baffling mountain eddies” which chop and change so unexpectedly—gives him away at the most ticklish moments and in the most uncompromising manner; the latter, tall, dry and brittle, is as confusing to his sight as it is deceitful to his footsteps, for while perplexing to the one its dry unmistakable crackle alarms the game at almost as great a distance as the scrunching of frozen snow.

So it was in the present case. We gained the knoll and peered through the waving tops. The little glade was empty; we mournfully descended into the valley, and that finished Act II.

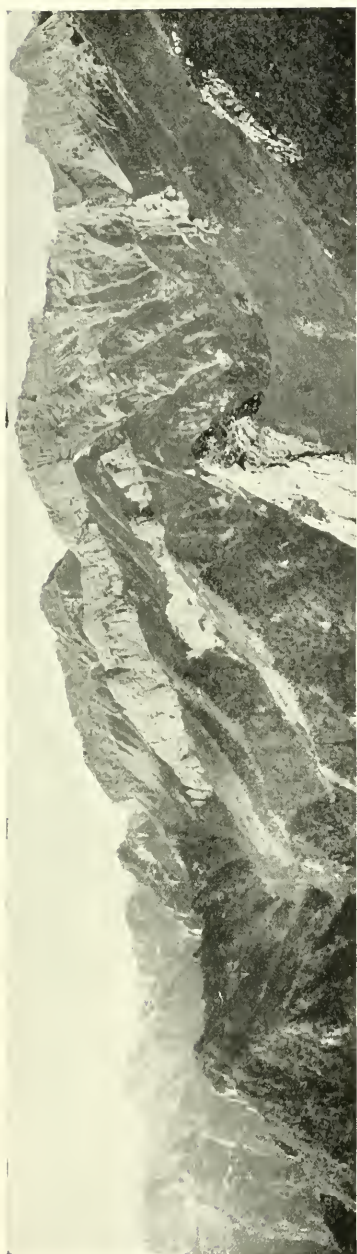
Like all good comedies—though I pictured a tragedy in my lighter moments—there was a third act. Again I climbed the hill, again I waited; and yet again on the succeeding day. An immature and guileless stripling thrust himself repeatedly in my path and practically asked to be killed; a one-horned veteran allowed me to approach within one hundred and fifty yards; but I was firm. It was my own particular buck or his equal which alone would tempt me to dye my hands in gore, and the stripling and the veteran were alike spared.

Yet I saw him again. It was the evening before we broke camp. Saddened and resigned to his loss, I was returning down the hill. It had been a perfect day, diamond weather and overhead “the

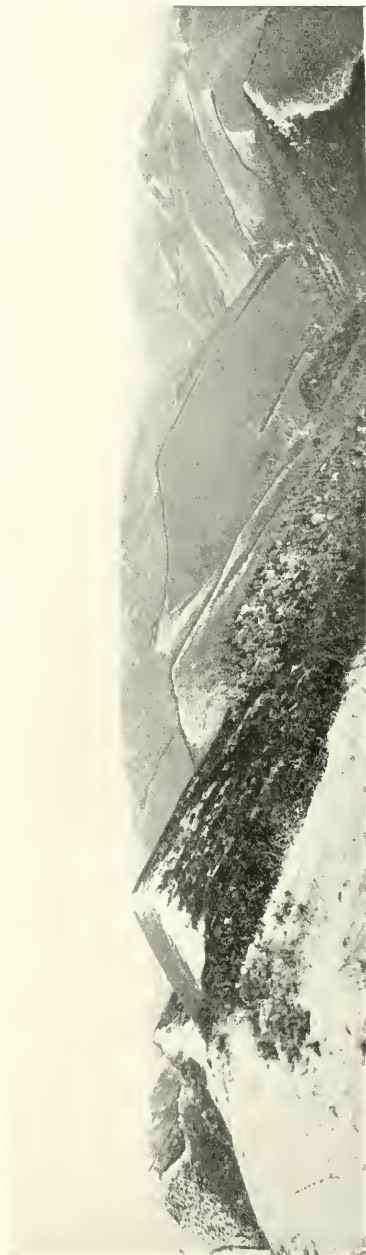
high unaltered blue." We had had a long round, and, roe or no roe, I had thoroughly enjoyed it. Of all kinds of hunting, that which most appeals to me is in partially wooded, mountainous country. The scenery is so varied; one is indulged in a constant succession of surprises, for behind each knoll, each belt of woodland, lie unknown and wonderful possibilities. A fresh hill may tantalise you into advancing beyond the imaginary boundary you had marked down for yourself (for there is nothing so alluring as a hill), or a wide vista of hill and dale, strath and glen may delight you even beyond your expectations. So it had been that day. I had outstripped my companion, I had forgotten about the roe, and in spirit was back on such another day, three years before in Inverness-shire. A whistle from Lao-Wei made me turn. There he was, my buck, though he was never mine save in the series of beautiful pictures which his grace endowed, framed in firs, silhouetted against the sky. For a moment I meditated a hasty scramble through the wood below in a wild endeavour to obtain a shot, but an instant's reflection convinced me of the madness of such a manœuvre, and I stood to watch him. He had, I fear, sacrificed his affections to his safety, for the doe fed timidly with upraised head in the open below him. It was almost dark as I reached the foot of the hill, but far above me I could see his pale patch glimmering on the hill-side.

I never saw him again, though he often fills my thoughts, as in that last moment when he stood clear and sharp against the sky and his splendid horns filled me with a wild regret. Now, far

away, I cannot banish a hope that my attacks have taught him wherein lies his safety, for no native hunter could properly appreciate those rugged little antlers, and that perhaps hereafter, in the happy hunting-grounds beyond the distant hills, we may yet meet and my shadowy bullet bring him to a shadowy end.



SHEEP GROUND.



WAPITI GROUND.

CHAPTER XXII

THE WAPITI OF KANSU (*Cervus kansuensis*)

WHILST I had been devoting my whole attention to the roe, George had been so fortunate as to kill a bear on the very first day's hunting from our new camp. He saw it about four hundred yards below him in a little clump of bushes which grew in a sheltered patch on the rough and stony hill-side. The ground was very steep, but he got down the hill to within one hundred and eighty yards of the bushes, when he distinguished a head and neck. He made a very good shot, when the beast ran some way and disappeared. Yung-sha, his hunter, did not apparently realise what they were after until he followed the tracks into the thicket, whence he shortly emerged looking very scared, and expressing a desire to go home. George, however, went on, and they found the bear lying dead.

These bears are said by the natives to mate in April after hibernating. They go into their winter quarters in the ninth month, after the first fall of snow ; the female bear emerging with a cub two or three months old.

Next day they brought him in and skinned him. Unfortunately the skin was left lying on the ground

that night, and when morning came we found the dogs had irretrievably ruined it, though fortunately the head skin was undamaged. It was most annoying, but, relying on the old hunter's assurance, we thought the smell would have kept them off.

Later on, after George had killed his wapiti, he, Purdom, who came and stayed with us in camp for a few days, and the doctor returned to Archuen to have another try for a big ram. Whilst they were away Yung-sha, with the old hunter whom they had left behind, went off, without saying anything to me, and killed a female bear and a cub in the next valley. These skins arrived home safely and are similar to one from Thibet or Szechuan which was noticed by Mr. Lydekker in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society for 1897. "It was then suggested that this bear might be a local race of the little blue bear (*Ursus pruinosus*) of Thibet, but it is now evident that it is a much larger and apparently distinct animal." Three days after the death of the bear we heard on October 23rd the first news of the revolution and the secession of Wu-chang, a fortnight after it had taken place. The Viceroy of Lanchow withdrew the leave which he had granted to Purdom and four gentlemen who called themselves, or perhaps I should say objected to being called, "Pentecostals," to cross the border into Thibet, and for many weeks we and other foreigners in the interior were to be the prey of alarming rumours and conflicting reports. Four days later we heard that Hankow had fallen, the native city being burned to the ground. We indulged in several serow drives without any

success, but as I have already described this form of hunting, I will say no more about it. I killed a musk-deer, but it was not full grown and had no tushes.

George wounded a roebuck, but though he took the dogs up next morning, they were absolutely useless at tracking, paying no attention to the spoor and careering wildly all over the country.

The doctor, paying the penalty of his profession, went off to Minchow, a distance of about 130 *li*, in order to see a child who was ill with scarlet fever. The poor little thing—she was the daughter of a missionary—rallied a little after his visit, but died a few days later. The doctor having rejoined us, we moved camp 12 *li* higher up the valley as being a more convenient centre from which to hunt the wapiti.

It is with this animal, in many ways superior in interest to any which we encountered, that I now propose to deal.

All those who take an interest in the large fauna of the world know it to be a sad but undeniable fact that it is everywhere, with more or less rapidity, vanishing. Civilised countries, by framing game-laws, are striving to check its decrease; but good game-laws are as easy to frame as they are difficult efficiently to enforce.

In Europe, the big game which still survives is, in the majority of cases, preserved on the estates of large landowners. In Great Britain, the only large game which we possess, namely the red deer, is practically confined, with the

exception of a few herds in Somersetshire, the Lake Country and Ireland, to the Highlands of Scotland.

In South Africa but a fraction remains of the vast herds of game which roamed the high veldt in the days of yore; in the more unhealthy central districts of the Dark Continent it still abounds, whilst in British East Africa it is yet possible to form an estimate of the picture which Nature presents in a country favourable to the increase of game when the hand of man is absent as a destroying element. Whether such will be the case in the near future is a question which time alone can answer. Vast reserves have hitherto preserved the game, yet during the past few years sportsmen and sportswomen have flocked there annually in greater numbers; and, however stringent the regulations, such a slaughter as goes on season after season, with but slight intermission, is bound to tell.

In America the bison has long since departed to the happy hunting grounds; the pronghorn antelope is rapidly following him; and the wapiti, most magnificent of all the deer tribe, is vanishing with frightful rapidity. In large measure the disgraceful destruction of this noble deer during recent years is largely owing to the fictitious value placed upon their canine teeth by—and the designation is paradoxical to the point of absurdity—the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks. Wapiti, I may add, are universally mis-called elk in the United States. It was certain that the bison had to go, but that the wapiti, which roam over steep hill-sides unsuited for any

purpose save as haunts of wild game, should follow them is an indelible disgrace to all real American sportsmen.

In the words of Mr. H. A. Bryden, "a more shameful and wanton waste of animal life was never perpetrated in any age or country."

There remains Asia. In India, particularly in Kashmir, thanks to stringent game-laws capably supervised, game is, if anything, on the increase. On the private preserves of the great rajahs enormous bags of tigers, bison, buffalo and deer are made.

In the high mountainous regions of Central Asia, sheep, ibex, wapiti and roe are still plentiful. Until comparatively recent years wapiti were supposed to exist in a wild state only in America. In addition to being found in Central Asia they, or a very closely allied species, are also to be met with in certain districts of China. The huge forests which originally existed on the borders of North-Western Thibet, have, during the course of centuries, been fearfully depleted. The natural home of the wapiti, providing cover and secure shelter during the hard winters, deforestation alone, even to the enormous extent to which it has been carried, would have had but small effect upon their numbers. They have, however, been reduced to an even greater extent than have the firs and pines which form their home. Nor is the reason far to seek. Whatever the true medicinal value of hartshorn, its efficacy has been magnified a thousandfold by the Chinese. The wretched wapiti have but practically two months' immunity from slaughter in the year, namely May and June. They shed their horns in April and

therein lies their sole safeguard, for minus their horns their commercial value is small. So soon, however, as the new horns have attained a respectable length the hunters are again hot in pursuit, and far from wondering at the comparative paucity of their numbers it is a matter of astonishment that they have not been totally exterminated long since. No deer that I have ever met with has so hard a time, for in no other country are a deer's horns, when in the velvet, of any substantial commercial value. They therefore, even in the absence of game regulations, have rest for a considerable, if not a greater portion of the year.

The natives of a district abounding in game seldom, as a general rule, produce any appreciable effect on its numbers. Their methods of destruction are too primitive, and the incentive to hunt is confined to the necessities of food and clothing.

Given, however, a race of hunters (and nearly every man on the Thibetan border possesses a gun), plus a powerful motive for the killing of game, and its annihilation becomes inevitable. It may take generations—some exotic factor such as the importation of modern rifles may hasten it within an inconceivably short period—but that it will sooner or later disappear, unless the evil is checked by drastic reforms, is as certain as the setting of the sun.

Time is a matter of no consideration to the native hunter. He takes his gun, his coat, and a handful of food, finds his game, sleeps anywhere, and eventually bags his beast. It is pitiable, but it is inevitable.

No sympathy can be felt for the educated and



STUDIES OF KANSU WAPITI.

so-called sportsmen of a civilised nation who permit the wholesale destruction of a noble beast for purely fictitious reasons. One feels nothing but disgust for a class of persons without a single sporting instinct, the majority of whom, never having seen a wild deer in their lives, are, nevertheless, responsible for the destruction of one of the finest of created animals. In the case of the native hunter it is a different matter.

One can appreciate the reasons which prompt a half-civilised barbarian to give vent to his natural love of hunting when by doing so he can realise far more by the death of a single animal—for a good pair of wapiti horns in the velvet will fetch as much as 50 or 60 taels (£7 to £8)—than he could otherwise in all the rest of the year.

A feeling of resentment is, however, aroused in the mind of the Anglo-Saxon when he reflects that neither age nor sex is spared, that the native hunter is merely out for blood and filthy lucre, and estimates his success, not by the magnificence of his trophy, but by its commercial value as reduced to *avoirdupois*. After all, it is his own country, to which one comes as an alien. The feeling of resentment may be illogical, but human nature is not governed by logic.

According to the old hunters, even within their own lifetime, a noticeable decrease has taken place in the numbers of the wapiti. Had the natives the advantage of modern rifles and good glasses—though the latter is a minor consideration, for they all have wonderful sight—there is no doubt that the wapiti of China would have gone the way of the dodo, the quagga, and other extinct forms of animal

life. As it is, he may survive for a few remaining years.

A good pair of horns in the velvet, if large, thick, and of good quality, are worth, as I have said, fifty or sixty taels to the man who shoots the beast. George's old hunter said the largest stag he had ever killed carried horns weighing seventeen double catties (about 43 lb.), with seven points on each horn. He sold it for sixty taels. This was many years before we met him, and I heard of no such head having been killed recently. The hunters sell their heads to dealers, who resell them for from seventy to eighty taels.

Of the numbers killed annually some idea may be gained from the fact that Dr. Smith tells me that while crossing the Kialing River, he saw on the ferry-boat a string of about fifteen mules loaded entirely with wapiti horns. They were bound from Sining to Hanchung-fu. The horns were in the dry state and were intended for eye-medicine. An average mule-load is between 300 lb. and 400 lb. Taking the horns at 20 lb. per pair, it gives fifteen to twenty pairs per mule. This gives between 250 and 300 pairs of horns in one string, though doubtless many were 'shed.' It is possible, of course, that some of these came from Central Asia, but it in any case gives some sort of a basis on which to make a calculation,

This mule-train, of course, only represented male deer, but a very large number of females and young are also killed annually. In addition to human hunters, a persistent enemy of the wapiti is a species of wild dog called *tsaikou*. Smaller in size than a wolf, but deadly foes to deer, they

will quickly clear a valley. I never saw one alive, but we came across some skins which are red in colour.

An adult stag stands about 57 inches at the shoulder, and weighs (approximately) 530 lb. A North American wapiti will scale about 700 lb. In appearance the Chinese beast is very much like a Scotch red deer, though of course larger in every sense. He has, however, more or less similar dark markings on the haunches and tail, instead of the uniformly coloured rump patch of his big relation. He is in the winter brown-grey all over, and has not the distinctive dark neck and light body of the American animal. The legs are darker than the body. The hinds are relatively smaller, and I was much struck by the apparently abnormal size of their ears.

I saw only three stags and cannot, therefore, speak with authority as to their horn-growth. They shed in April, the horns being complete in September. They are said to start roaring about the third week in October, though we did not hear one until the 1st of November.

Their roar is quite different from the wonderful ringing bugle of the North American wapiti, which is one of the most musical sounds emitted by a wild animal. It resembles the sound made by a red deer, but is rather deeper in tone, and in the case of one or two stags I heard there was just a suspicion of "bugling" at the end of the roar.

We were very uncertain until our return to England to which species of deer the stags we had killed belonged.

Dr. Smith killed a hind in March, 1911, which

was described by Mr. R. I. Pocock in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society under the name of *Cervus kansuensis*. The matter is of such interest that I quote his remarks at length :

“The colour is a tolerably uniform earthy brown, relieved by fine close set speckling due to a subapical pale annulus on each hair. On the sides the main shaft of the hairs is greyer and less brown than dorsally, and low down, towards the belly, the subapical annulus is longer, so that the general tint is markedly paler. The belly is white, but not the chest. On the neck the hairs are longer, with longer apical annulus, the shaft of the hairs being browner along the nape than on the sides of the neck, so that there is an ill-defined dorsal stripe as in *Cervus macneilli*; the front of the neck (throat) is paler than the sides, the legs are fawn brown down the front and sides, paler behind. The forehead is brown and closely speckled; the lips and chin are fawn brown, unspeckled and without white, and the black patch below the corner of the mouth is well marked. There is a blackish-brown unspeckled croup disk, as in *Cervus macneilli*, and the hairs of this disk become more and more white towards the root of the tail. This is probably also the case in *Cervus macneilli*, but I was unable to touch the mounted specimen of the animal in the British Museum. The white on the buttocks is of the same extent approximately as in *Cervus macneilli*, but the tail itself is much whiter than in that animal, since it merely has a narrow median dark stripe, as in most examples at all events of *Cervus hanglu* (*i.e.* the Kashmir stag or barasingh). The ears are long and pointed, with apparently a sinuous upper edge, such as is seen in *Cervus wallichii*. . . .

“The coloration of the Kansu specimen, however,

is not identical with that of *Cervus affinis*. I do not think it safe on the evidence of one skin to trust much to the greater uniformity of the colour of the body as shown by the absence of a distinct darkening of the back and of the sides to which Hodgson refers in *Cervus affinis* (i.e. the Shou), but the large size of the dark croup patch and the smaller extent of white at the base of the tail are probably more dependable. It is in both these particulars especially that the Kansu stag resembles the Szechuen stag *Cervus macneilli*. Since, however, it differs from the latter in general coloration and in the greater amount of white in the tail; from *Cervus affinis* in having no white above the root of the tail and a larger dark area on the croup; from *Cervus wallichii* in having no white on the croup at all, except such as is concealed by the overlying ends to the hairs; and from *Cervus hanglu* in the dark colour of the chin and upper lip, the Kansu stag seems to deserve a name, and I propose to call it *Cervus kansuensis*."

In the *Field*, October 26th, 1912, Mr. Lydekker wrote as follows :

" Apart from the matter of locality, the speckled brown coat of these stags is of itself quite sufficient to show that they belong to *C. kansuensis*. In describing the hind referred to, Mr. Pocock considered that it represented a species near akin to one which I described in 1909 from Szechuan (also from the skin of a hind) as a local race of the Kashmir hangul under the name of *C. cashmirianus macneilli*, but raised by Mr. Pocock—and, from the evidence of Mr. Fenwick-Owen's specimen, I think rightly—to the rank of a species. For the antlers of the Kansu deer are very unlike those of the hangul, and approximate in a considerable degree

to the wapiti type, having the three terminal tines nearly in a plane parallel to the long axis of the skull, although the fourth tine is relatively smaller than in typical wapiti; indeed, so wapiti-like are the antlers that Mr. Wallace calls the Kansu deer a wapiti and has given a figure of the head in the *Field* of August 17th last. Hitherto nothing has been known with regard to the antlers of the Szechuan deer; but I possess a figure (reproduced from a photograph and published many years ago in *The Asian*), of the head of a stag from Upper Yun-nan, in which the five-tined antlers are indistinguishable from those of Mr. Wallace's Kansu deer. The head in question was originally referred, with doubt, to the shou; but from its resemblance to that of *C. kansuensis*, coupled with its locality, there can be no doubt that it is referable to *C. macneilli*, or, at all events, to a race of the same. The Kansu deer is probably only a dark-coloured race of the Szechuan and Yun-nan *C. macneilli*."

Speaking generally, I should describe the stags we saw as resembling red deer in shape and build, but more uniform in colour, much larger, with the roar of a Scottish stag and the horns of a wapiti.

They are found in the Minshan Mountains over an area of about fifty by twenty-five miles. They do not extend to the north, east or west, but are said to exist to the south beyond the mountains.

They are kept in captivity by the Chinese, who saw the horns off annually when they are in the velvet. Many of these animals are in wretched condition, being haltered to a stall. Their hoofs when thus stabled attain great length and render walking difficult. One we saw at Taochow was known to be over thirty years old, and grew miser-



WAPITI (*Cervus kansuensis*).
Showing markings on hind-quarters.



WAPITI (*Cervus kansuensis*).



WAPITI GROUND.

able horns. He was simply skin and bone. The Prince at Choni had a fine stag which was in splendid condition when we saw it; also a very tame hind, which he begged us to accept. Our plans being very uncertain and having no means of getting the animal home, we were unfortunately compelled to decline his kind offer.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE STALKING OF A STAG

HAVING described the Kansu wapiti at some length, I now come to his pursuit.

The first stag I saw was a young animal with only seven points; it was late in the evening, and in any case I should not have fired at him. This was on October 25th. Four days later George came across a good eleven-pointer with four hinds. We had heard no roars, and the deer kept in the timber, refusing to show in the open and lying very low.

Our hunters of course had told us the most wonderful yarns of enormous stags on every hill-top whose deafening and continuous roars would effectually banish all sleep. We naturally took these stories with a grain of salt, but I was not altogether prepared for the true state of affairs. The usual method of hunting is to start before dawn, locate a roar, return home, hold a council of war, and start out again in the afternoon. On the last day of October it started to snow, and at daybreak next morning Lao-Wei and I were on the ridge above our camp. Resounding roars from the slope opposite cheered us on our way, and with the coming of the dawn dim shapes were apparent below

the skyline of trees. As the light grew stronger I made out three hinds and a stag. They were very restless, and it was some time before I could count five points on his left horn and four on his right.

After watching him for some time I began to think we might make a move, for I knew that they would soon go back into the wood. I made signs to my companion, but he hesitated, shuffled about, and laid his hand on my arm whenever I attempted to move. Rather at a loss to understand his manœuvres, but concluding that he had some plan of his own, I waited. Finally getting tired of it, I looked at my watch and found that three-quarters of an hour had been wasted. Then, in spite of Lao-Wei's agonised expression, I started off up the hill, intending to come round the top of the ridge and get in above the stag under cover of the trees. He roared away with great vigour as we toiled up the ridge and seemed, as we reached its summit, to be making for the top of the corrie. I could hear him two hundred yards below me, but owing to the steepness of the ground and the thick belt of trees dividing us, could not, of course, see him. Then, like a curtain, down came the mist. Lao-Wei chose that identical moment to drop my rifle in the snow and sit down with a bang on the stump of a tree. The stag stopped roaring, and there was nothing for it but to go back to camp. It was very irritating as, had we started when we first saw him, I should most probably have got a shot. I found out afterwards that the hard-and-fast rule followed by all the native hunters was to locate their stag in the morning, return to camp,

and try for him in the evening. When once they have reached the shelter of the bush the deer do not go far, but lie up and come out to feed in the evening, very often close to the spot at which they entered it in the morning.

I followed this stag that afternoon, but found by the tracks that he had left the corrie and gone into dense timber on the other side of the ridge. George had been after his eleven-pointer down the valley, but had seen nothing. Next morning Yung-sha went out early to look for tracks and came back saying that he had found some crossing the valley above the camp. Accordingly George and Purdom, who was staying with us, went off together. Lao-Wei and I tried the east side of the valley, but saw no game, as a leopard had been all over the ground and disturbed everything. As we were coming down the hill in the evening we heard a stag roaring in the corrie behind the camp where we had seen the nine-pointer and, shortly afterwards, a shot. George came in presently, having killed an eleven-pointer. It had long curving horns and was altogether a very pretty graceful head.

The day following I went up beyond the corrie where he had killed it and saw a nice ten-pointer with three hinds late in the afternoon. He was in a very bad position for a stalk, but we tried to get in and almost succeeded. However, he saw us crossing an open hill and sulkily moved his hinds off over a ridge out of sight. He was not much alarmed, and I cherished some lingering hopes that we might yet see him again.

It was a bitterly cold night. Soon after daylight George, Purdom and the doctor started to walk

over the hills to Archuen, and a very stiff walk it was, the doctor and Purdom being quite done up on their arrival that night.

Lao-Wei and I, directly after their departure, carried out the plan we had formulated the night before. He thought it likely that the stag had made for the adjoining valley, which went by the name of Mirgo. It was a long tiring walk to the top of the hill, but after two hours' steady going we found tracks where he had crossed the ridge. Snow still lay deep in the shadows, but the sun had melted patches in the open, and at times the spoor was difficult to follow. Still more difficult is it to explain the geography of mountainous country in such a manner that the reader is enabled to follow a particular series of events.

Our camp lay on the west side of the main valley. From behind it ran a ridge which swept round in a narrow horseshoe forming the corrie where I had seen the nine-pointer. At the far end of this corrie extended another ridge, descending on the right into a large pine-covered basin where hundreds of deer might have remained invisible, and on the left into a series of rugged gullies. These merged finally in a fork of the main valley, the junction being a few hundred yards above our camp. The ridge forming the southern end of the large basin turned slightly to the north-west on leaving it and formed the backbone of a number of smaller corries and basins which emanated from the Mirgo Valley. This lay parallel to the one in which we were camped. We had left our ten-pointer at the top of the ridge just above the big basin. His tracks, with those of the hinds, plunged down into

the wood, so continued for half a mile, crossed the open slope of the basin, and here, owing to the melted patches of snow, we lost them. My hunter, by signs, intimated that the stag was in the wood below us, so for two hours we sat watching and waiting, with never a roar or the sign of a beast to encourage us. I pulled out my glass and searched every opening in the trees and every little patch of snow on the opposite side of the basin. Not a sound broke the stillness. My glass rested for a second on the crest of a distant hill-top across the valley. A wild-looking figure suddenly crept into the focus and peered cautiously round. A long gun, with its conspicuous pointed fork, stuck above his shoulder; his flowing garments fluttered in the wind; in his hand was a long-stemmed, tiny-bowled pipe. A native hunter, now that the harvest was over, out for *maloo*!

Presently, as the glass swung round, I saw another squatting immovably among the rocks above a likely-looking patch of timber. I prayed devoutly that our side of the valley was not infested and thanked the Red Gods that these two at all events could not cross that evening. Far away in the main valley I could see the shining stems of young trees neatly laid in rows, which told of the ubiquitous woodcutter. The forest, as I have said, was thick, but sadly thinned compared with what it was of yore. In every patch were trees rotting as they had been left, stumps as high as a man's chest still resisting frost and snow, and down in the valley thousands and thousands of trees of every size, but none of any girth. Each was neatly nicked at the end and pierced with a chiselled hole. Each

day with the early dawn past our camp came strings of patient yaks, to return a few hours later dragging behind them a trail of logs. The woodcutters themselves are miserably underpaid and 'squeezed,' while the big timber merchants make fortunes. Logs which are cut in the forests near Choni are barked, marked and floated down the river for 40 cash apiece (rather less than one penny). The same log at Lanchow is worth 1,000 cash to any of the log merchants 'in the ring.' Only about the villages stand sacred groves of noble trees. These are exempt from the destructive havoc which goes on around them and which, in time, must make an end.

However, the deforestation of Kansu troubled Lao-Wei not at all. He collected a handful or two of grass, took off his shoes—narrow strips of raw hide with a running thong round the top—repaired their linings, replaced his putties and settled himself to sleep.

It seemed a long time that we lay there. Shadows began to gather in the valley and the wind blew softly in our faces up the hill. Then from the corrie, over the ridge at our backs, I heard a roar. It was faint and muffled, more of a grunt than anything else, but only one animal could make it, and I ruthlessly roused my hunter from his slumbers. He sat up, rubbed his eyes, listened and shook his head. Ten minutes later there came another roar. This time the sound was clearer, and we both turned, locating pretty accurately, as was proved later, its position. For half an hour we waited to ascertain if the stag was moving, when he roared again from the same place.

We could see nothing but a dense mass of pines and rhododendrons from the top of the ridge, so made our way in the direction of the sound.

“ Big stag ! ” I said, throwing out my arms.

Lao-Wei shook his head, and put two fingers close together to indicate the insignificance of the roarer.

I was rather damped, but still stuck to my opinion, fostered, I admit, by inclination, that it was my friend of last night.

Half an hour's walk over the same ground which we had traversed in the morning brought us to the edge of the wood. My companion motioned me to sit down and wait. I had just taken a photograph, when, simultaneously with the click of the shutter, came a magnificent roar from the opposite slope.

We were at a great disadvantage, for the frozen snow in the wood made a horrible noise, the trees were sparse and the leaves of the rhododendrons rustled loudly whenever we came in contact with them. However, we managed to reach the edge of an opening, and there, on a bare patch five or six hundred yards away, with his three hinds, was the stag we had seen the night before. He was standing rather morosely below a tree, with drooping head, and I had a good view of his fine forks and strong horns.

We now experienced a most anxious time. The evening was drawing in—by 5.30 it would be almost too dark to shoot; and we had to move very cautiously, for the deer were making for the edge of the wood, on a course which would bring them within a hundred yards of us. We had to



KANSU WAPITI (*Cervus kansuensis*).

get to the edge of the wood, for it would otherwise have been impossible to see, and at times I despaired of doing it without raising the alarm. The stag roared again; but a stick, despite all my care, cracked beneath my foot, and a hind swung suspiciously in our direction. Her lord and master roared again, as though suspecting a rival; but she seemed to impart some of her fears to him, for after a while he gave vent to his feelings, only in suspicious and spasmodic grunts. By dint of great care we at length managed to reach the edge of the trees, and, hidden by some stunted rhododendrons, waited in the snow for the deer to emerge. The ground sloped from us to a little dip, then rose abruptly to a steep knoll, after which it fell steeply to Mirgo.

At length a hind came quickly forward into the open beyond the dip, and began to nibble a bush. Almost at once she whisked round and dashed back into the wood. She had neither seen nor heard us. It was only an instance of those involuntary and unaccountable actions to which deer are subject, and which all stalkers have had experience at times. I lay low behind our rhododendron, though I could see nothing, as I had made up my mind to give Lao-Wei a free hand. Though very slow, and rather hesitating, I am bound to say he made a most excellent stalk. His splendid eyesight served him well. We crept back into the wood, and crossed the intervening patch which separated us from the dip by making sudden darts across exposed openings. Through a gap in the first I saw the stag, standing with his back to us on the skyline two hundred and fifty yards off. He

seemed uneasy, and walked quickly out of sight. The light was atrocious, and my hopes were down to zero. We dashed down through the wood, and getting off the snow in the open, ran up the opposite slope as fast as we could to the spot at which he had crossed the skyline. I fully expected to find the deer moving away from us out of shot; for it seemed, to my anxious ears, that we had made a deafening noise. Then, just as I was crawling up to the top of the knoll, he roared loudly close at hand. I was very blown, my hands were like ice, and my heart thumped like a sledgehammer. I peered over the knoll. The three hinds, their great ears cocked, were staring straight at me within sixty yards. I knew the stag must be close, and yet I could see nothing save the hinds. Then, below me, down the hill, I saw him—head up, with antlers widely branching. I could not sit down, nor could I lie, for the long grass nearly hid him. Half crouching, half kneeling, I drew a long gasping breath and fired. The stag never moved.

Hastily I reloaded. As I did so, he turned and trotted slowly off. Then he swerved as I fired again, but kept steadily on, and the next second was out of sight.

Any stalker will sympathise with my feelings, though doubtless in his heart of hearts he will say, "Ah! if I had only had his chance!" These are the moments which fill one with a wild despair; these, perhaps, are the moments which make stalking what it is. If only it were possible to put the clock back two minutes, even a minute; if only it were possible to have the chance again!

How different it would be, not only in stalking, but in everyday life! How you would control that shaking hand, steady that tumultuous, gasping breath, billet your bullet in the right place, and live happy ever after! Miserable, self-accusing, and despairing, I tore down the hill. I reached a knoll, and was confronted by another; reached that, and groaned aloud, for I could see nothing.

“Oh, you fool!” began the little accusing voice within me; “you utter fool, after all that long stalk! He was yours, and you missed him. A little more care and you’d have got him. Now you’ll never have another chance. You’ll——” And then I saw him. His horns just showed amid the long grass below me, and I sank down rejoicing. One moment blank, hopeless, utter despair, and then at a bound to the heights of Olympus. Down I crept—very, very softly; but quiet as I was, his dulled senses caught the sound, and he was up and off. Then he fell once more, rose and fell again; and up on the darkening skyline Lao-Wei, whom I could have caught and hugged like a brother, danced and sang in an exaltation of barbaric delight.

CHAPTER XXIV

RUMOURS OF WAR

THE morning following was very misty, with sharp storms of hail and snow. I was rather tired after a very long day, for we did not reach camp till eight o'clock, so had a rest, wrote up my diary, and sketched.

The men went up to fetch in the head and meat, reaching camp at nine o'clock the same night. On November 7th I got a note from Mr. Christie, saying that the revolution was spreading; that Sian-fu, which it seemed we had so recently left, had fallen amidst horrible scenes of rapine and murder; that all Chinese warships on the Yangtse had joined the rebels, and that the valley of the great river was in a blaze. A postscript added that Hankow had fallen, and that 15,000 troops at this place had gone over to General Li Yuan Hung, who had been proclaimed head of the Republic at Wuchang.

This was grave news, and it became apparent that, so far from being troubled by minor sporadic disturbances, the Manchus were faced by a serious, well-directed, and wide-spreading revolution. Mr. Christie wrote that he had sent the news to George, so I moved back to our old camp to try

for roe. I shot some blood-pheasants on the way down—beautiful birds! the cocks having gorgeous plumage of pink and green. They are very good eating. That afternoon I saw a doe and four bucks, one with a good head; but could not manage to get near him owing to the frozen snow, which made a horrible crackling. I heard a stag roar on the ridge behind camp, and presently the banging of native guns. However, on the hunters coming in that night, it transpired that they had accomplished nothing beyond disturbing a large area of ground. Lao-Wei was rather sulky because I had gone after the insignificant *pao-loo*, and not his beloved wapiti.

Another note from Mr. Christie announced that the Mohammedans were supposed to be rising, and that in consequence the Chinese, as distinct from Thibetans, were flocking into Choni. For the next two days I tried hard for a roe, and saw the serow which I missed. Then—it was November 11th—on my return to camp very dispirited, I found a letter from the doctor saying that we must leave Choni at once, and it became apparent that our hunting in the Minshan Mountains was at an end.

I reached Choni by noon the next day, getting a few pheasants for the pot en route, and cracking the stock of my gun as I slipped on a frozen bank when after a wounded bird. We had bad luck with our guns, though mine was not past repairing. One of the boys fell off the doctor's mule, and smashed one of his weapons; the doctor broke his second at the grip owing to a similar accident to that which had befallen me; and George's had

a dent in the barrel. Fortunately we had more luck with our rifles, and they came through unscathed.

Choni was full of rumours. The Ko-lao-hui, or "League of the Elder Brother," which owns a vast number of adherents all over China, was strong in the neighbourhood. For the most part their bands are nothing but organised collections of bandits. Military in its inception, the League was started by General Tseng-kuo-fan, the Imperialist commander, during the siege of Nanking, with the express purpose of resisting the influence of "Chinese" Gordon and the "ever-victorious" army under his command. Originally recruited from among the patriotic soldiers of Hunan and Honan, it has since spread all over the country. Mr. Percy Kent writes of its members as follows: "Their motto might well be 'War on Mankind.' A salutary dread of the law may keep their evil propensities dormant; but, the law once relaxed or become powerless, all their savage instincts burst forth, the rest of mankind become a prey: they scour the country in bands, terrorising, pillaging, killing if it please them, and burning." Some of these local ruffians had intimated that within the next day or so the missionaries' house was to be the object of an attack and that all foreigners were to be killed. Naturally, Mrs. Christie, in the unavoidable absence of her husband, was nervous; for she had been through the troubles of 1900, and knew the Chinese. We heard later that the heads of this Society had signed an agreement promising not to go against the revolutionaries, but to aid them, and to protect foreigners and "good people"!

The boys sent in a deputation to say that, as they knew we should bolt and leave all our belongings at the first sign of danger, they must have horses, or they would not accompany us any farther! Ching-yü, however, refused to associate himself with their views, and eventually accompanied us across the Gobi desert to Omsk. Hsuié was in a dreadful state of nerves, and, in a closely fitting black suit which he had donned for the occasion (he was the spokesman of the party), swollen eyes, red nose, and general air of being very sorry for himself, looked as though he were preparing for his own funeral. George informed a crestfallen quartette that our funds would only last until we got to Lanchow-fu; that he could not get them horses, and would not if he could, and that if they deserted us now their chances of getting home safely across a robber-infested country were absolutely nil, a peroration which reduced the ringleader to tears, and stamping with rage, they descended to their own quarters. The only apparent relief to their feeling lay in abusing Ching-yü, but that solace was very speedily denied them! We stayed at Choni for three days more. News filtered in but slowly, and was very uncertain. The revolutionists were said to have executed two hundred men at Wuchang for looting, and a number at Sian-fu. We did not, however, apprehend any danger from the revolutionaries themselves, but from the crowd of ruffians who infested the large cities and surrounding country.

The Prince was ordered by the Viceroy to provide 1,000 cavalry to guard the passes of

Shensi and Kansu. He merely laughed at the order, which, in any case, seemed rather superfluous, as the revolutionists were already over the border. He was also ordered to drill his men, but, as he pithily remarked, "My men can't drill. They only know how to advance or retreat;" a concise summary of the movements of troops in war from its earliest days!

Although we knew little of what was going on in the great centres of Eastern and Northern China, vibrations from the storm were felt in even the westernmost extremities of the Empire. Some threw an interesting sidelight on the difficulties with which the provincial Manchu governors had to cope.

At Taochow was stationed a certain Colonel Li, a man of great influence, who, on account of favouritism and the suspicion with which he was regarded by the Viceroy, had been kept in a very subordinate position. In his extremity the latter now asked Li to raise a troop of men, and come to Lanchow in order to protect him. Li agreed on the condition that he might raise four hundred cavalry from Taochow itself, to be supplied with modern arms from the arsenal at Lanchow. The Viceroy agreed, Li raised his men, armed them with the rifles which had been sent, and, being a revolutionary at heart, refused to move, in spite of repeated orders from Lanchow.

On November 16th we said "Good-bye" to all our friends at Choni with real regret. Lao-Wei brought a parting present of eggs and milk, and I felt quite a wretch at parting with him, for we had had many a good day's hunting together.

Mr. Christie and Purdom came to the city gates to see us off; soon the walls were hidden by a fold of the hills, and we had started on our return journey.

Snow had fallen, and, the day being bright, there was a strong glare. Many of the travellers we met protected their eyes by means of spectacles of woven horsehair, and their ears with little heart-shaped pads lined with fur. Crossing the pass above Taochow (New City), we had a magnificent view of the Minshan range and the hunting ground which we had left. In spite of fingers benumbed by cold, we managed to get a pheasant and a partridge; the latter a different variety from those we had killed on the way to Mei-wu. On these hills gazelle are to be found, but I am uncertain to what species they belong.

On the third day after leaving Choni we crossed Lian-hwa Shan, the Lotus Flower Mountain, where the effects were beautiful, the pines and leafless trees being completely hidden by masses of glittering snow. The mountain itself is rather disappointing, though it boasts some fine rocky peaks, on one of which, needless to say, is perched the inevitable temple. On this day's march we saw a number of pheasants near the banks of Tao. The river flows due east to Minchow, but there makes a right-angled bend, and flows north until it empties its waters into the Hwang-Ho. We branched off into a side valley two hours before reaching our destination for the night, but met the river again next day, and crossed to Titao-chow.

This is a large city and one calculated to irritate the unsuspecting traveller to the verge of

desperation. It comes into sight, seemingly close at hand, lying in the plain beyond the river. Two weary hours dodging round corners and up unsuspected hills must elapse before its gates can be reached. Not the least formidable obstacle which intervenes is an appalling bridge of boats moored across the river and covered by loose and slippery saplings. Several of the mules collapsed and swung helplessly across these poles until released.

No Mohammedans are allowed to live inside the city walls, which would be no privation if they were imbued with Western ideas of sanitation, for the streets are as narrow and filthy as those of the majority of Chinese cities. Outside the northern wall extends a desolate waste of brown deserted suburbs. The district suffered terribly during the great rebellion, and, to quote Baron Richthofen again, whose words are as true now of certain spots as when he penned them, "Among the ruins of villages which counted their houses by hundreds, there are frequently no more than half a dozen inhabited at present."

Nearly all the inns were crowded with newly enlisted soldiers, which did not add to our comfort. One man told us that 200,000 revolutionaries had crossed the border into Kansu.

The women we saw on this part of our journey were notably unfeminine. I was once at a dance accosted by a lady with a coy smile and a, "You don't know who I am?" With great presence of mind I thought of the ugliest man I knew, chanced a shot and retorted "Of course, you are Miss C!" which was the correct answer. She

still remains plain according to Western standards, but an absolute Venus compared to the sexless caricatures we daily encountered.

Leaving Titao the road follows the valley of the river for some distance and then strikes due north. It was bitterly cold and the inns were very poor. We usually slept in the same room with our fifteen mules, three ponies and a floating population of pigs, poultry, children and curs. We seldom got far away from a howling baby, and I so far forgot my manners one night as to throw a tobacco tin at one which kept emitting doleful howls all night with the regularity of minute guns. It had, however, no effect.

The country through which we passed was not very interesting. A cold wind drove down over the low mud hills and chilled us to the bone. It whistled through the long gullies, broken and worn by long winters, frost and snow, with a mournful whine. One big hill, I thought the mules would never descend in safety. Frozen, with a surface like glass, it was a miracle they managed to keep their feet. Indeed, in some cases an old veteran who had travelled the road many times before stuck out his forelegs, sat calmly down and negotiated the slope successfully.

One poor beast refused to budge on reaching the bottom and shivered violently. A muleteer produced an enormous nail, which he proposed jamming into the wretched creature's eyelid, on the principle, I suppose, of a lesser ill being cured by a greater. However, on being told that no "cumshaw" awaited him at Lanchow if he persisted, he gave it up, and the mule presently recovered.

On November 21st we reached Wa-kang, a small straggling muddy town, entered by an arched gate at the end of a long ravine. It is in the centre of a large coal district, and the male population are either colliers or tile-makers. A Chinese collier somehow strikes the observer as an incongruity.

It was at this place during the preceding year that an Indian surveyor who accompanied the Clarke expedition was killed.

Just as we were leaving the next morning, a dirty-looking ruffian suddenly rushed up to the doctor, seized him by the ankles and began kow-towing and grovelling, all the while pouring out supplications and prayers which we were at a loss to understand. It transpired that his assistant, succumbing to overwhelming greed, had appropriated an empty bottle which had once held curry powder. The doctor had threatened to report him to the officials at Lanchow, and the suppliant was imploring mercy on his behalf. Leaving him prostrate, we set out and, five hours later, reached the capital, exactly one week after starting from Choni.

CHAPTER XXV

A CENTRE OF TRADE

LANCHOW-FU, seat of the Viceroy of two provinces, centre of great trade routes and by far the most important town in the west, is situated on the banks of the Yellow River in a valley eight miles long by almost fifteen at its widest point. The Hwang Ho flows immediately below the northern wall and is spanned now by a modern iron bridge. From the south a range of hills runs in a slanting curve into the west suburb. On their summits, commanding the city below, are three forts, capable of holding 300 men a-piece; the only means of ingress, ladders. The city covers an area of ground 9 *li* by 7½ *li*, and holds a fixed population of about 80,000. There is a large floating population, for merchants come hither to trade from all quarters of the Empire. Some remain for many months and then return to Sian-fu, Tientsin, Chungking, Lhasa, Ti-hua-fu, Kashgar, Samarkand and many another far-distant bourn. From it set out caravans on their long journey across the desert, mule-trains, strings of donkeys, mincing camels, and great waggons. Roads stretch in every direction: to Thibet,

Szechuan, Russia, Mongolia, Manchuria and the East. To it came, with his father and uncle, a young Venetian who, thirty years later, wrote a book, still, after a lapse of six and a half centuries, one of the greatest books on travel ever written. There, on the outskirts of a great Empire, I seemed to see them bronzed and weary crossing the broad river and entering the city which has so little changed. In imagination I saw them setting out again towards the east, to riches and honours and the city of the great king. Theirs was a different road from that by which we made our approach. As we drew near, the ravine, whose steep sides shut us in, became choked with a struggling mass of men, carts and animals. Long strings of camels, looking clean and fit in their splendid winter coats, waited with an insufferable air of self-appreciation for a way to be made. Patient little donkeys pattered conscientiously in and out between carts with wheels six foot and more in diameter. Women and children peered curiously at us from houses far above our heads. Men shouted, swayed and surged; we were back in the Middle Ages, obvious anachronisms among the relics of a primitive civilisation.

Then, amid these strange surroundings, appeared a little party of Europeans. It transpired that most of the missionaries were leaving for Titao on account of the troubles. Mr. Ross, however, the postmaster, and Mr. George Andrews, jnr., were returning to the city. It was obvious as we entered the west suburb that something had disturbed the populace. The streets were literally

packed with people, and it was difficult to make any progress. Outside the Viceroy's yamen, marked by four huge red masts, and painted lions petrified apparently by their own ugliness, surged an enormous crowd. Everywhere were bustle and confusion. Judging by the faces of the ruffians who composed the dregs of the mob, a hard task lay before the revolutionary army, when it did arrive, in suppressing rioting and keeping order. In certain aspects the human form is, no doubt, divine. Ignorant, superstitious, improvident, and debased, their lives wholly occupied by some form of manual labour, it is small wonder if any such likeness is effaced from the appearance of the lowest orders of the Chinese race. It is difficult for any one who has never seen a really low-class crowd in China to realise in how singularly unattractive a mould humanity may be cast. Even the poor little children are usually dirty and unprepossessing, and nearly all young animals are attractive. More often than not they are howling with grief or anger, and form an unpleasing contrast to the juvenile population of Japan; but there "the babies are the kings!" The only occasion I can remember on which I heard a Jap baby crying was when we ran down a junk in the Straits of Shimonoseki. A bewildering confusion of lights confronted us. Suddenly from the bows a voice cried "Junk dead ahead!" "All right!" called back the captain; next minute came a splintering crash, a tearing of sails, and a prolonged crackling as the bamboo mast went by the board. A man began shouting monotonously, a dark mass swung under our bows, I heard a child's whimper and a

mother's soothing croon. It soon ceased, but it was half an hour before we got clear.

"Are you all right?" called the skipper.

A man's voice answered. "He says he's all right, but he doesn't like floating about in the straits at midnight with no mast," called some one.

I sympathised with his feelings, but of course he had no right to be there.

It was a far cry to the Straits of Shimonoseki, but I always remember that little frightened whimper in the darkness so soon comforted.

The telegraph wires were hot with messages, and from Mr. Ross we gathered all the latest rumours.

The revolutionary authorities had telegraphed to the Viceroy to request all foreigners to leave, as Lanchow was to be invested. Three armies were said to be converging on the city from Sian-fu to the east, Tsin-chow to the south, and Ningsia-fu to the north.

Chang-i-Chien, the artilleryman who was in command at Sian-fu, had sworn to capture Lanchow or raze it to the ground. The Viceroy, on condition that he evacuated the place, was promised his life; as, though a Manchu, he had the reputation of being an honest and unselfish man, who had not used his official position to enrich his own pocket. Ma-an-Liang, the son of the great Mohammedan leader who had given the Chinese government so much trouble fifty years before, and had finally, after twelve years of war, been bribed with high office, is the leader of the Mohammedans in Kansu. They are well armed, aloof, and make much better

fighters than the Chinese. There are many people who think that dreams of a Mohammedan kingdom in the west of China are not yet dead, and that when the moment arrives there will be another great rebellion. The rumour was current that though Ma-an-Liang had promised to aid the Viceroy personally, and had sent some of his men to the capital to guard against rioting, he and all the leading Chinese gentry had agreed to help the revolutionists.

He had called on the Viceroy and asked him in a boasting manner how he would have Chang-i-Chien, alive or dead? "If dead," he exclaimed, "I will bring you his head; if alive, in a cage." However, on returning home he received rather a shock. Between his own apartments and the guest room lay a hall where hung a large picture of himself. Across this, during his absence, had been pasted the following legend: "Ma-an-Liang! you think you are very clever in offering to bring Chang-i-Chien to the Viceroy alive or dead. If you go to Ping-liang (a place half-way between Sian-fu and Lanchow, where the revolutionary army was reported to be encamped) he will cut you into mincemeat!"

The officials were all at loggerheads, and used language to the Viceroy which, three months before, would have called from that outraged dignitary's lips the Duchess's famous exclamation in "Alice in Wonderland." The Provincial Treasurer was reported to have wired to Peking that the Viceroy was inefficient and should be removed; the Viceroy wired that the Provincial Treasurer was a hopeless bungler who ought never

to have held office. Peking wired back that the Viceroy should speak "good words" to his subordinates, and that all should agree together! After prolonged consultation, we decided that only one road home was open to us. The Szechuan route, via Chengtu, Chungking, and the Yangtsekiang, was unsafe owing to the operations of robbers on the Kansu-Szechuan border. Always a hotbed of bad characters, in times of disturbance and disorder such a journey became really dangerous. The Sian-fu road ran right through the middle of the fighting lines. The northern road to Tayin-fu via Ningsia and Yulin was again barred by organised bands of banditti. They had recently made a rich haul of 30,000 taels, the funds of war. Seven Belgians, armed to the teeth with rifles and revolvers galore, had left by this route just before our arrival, and, we subsequently heard, failed to get through, returning to Lanchow. There remained only one way open by which we could leave, that leading across the Gobi Desert, Chinese and Russian Turkestan, to Siberia.

The difficulty of finding carters who had not been commandeered by officials and were willing to take us now began. Had it not been for the assistance of Mr. Andrews I doubt if we should have secured any. He was staying with Mr. Ross at the post-office, and kindly allowed us to put up at the mission house, where we were most comfortable. After a long search he found some men who agreed to come with us to Ti-hua-fu for the sum of 156 taels (just under £20) per cart. Officials had been trying for days to get conveyances, but they were unpopular employers, exacting a maxi-

imum amount of work for a minimum wage. The muleteers who had brought us from Choni were seized upon at once to convey arms to Tsin-chow. Two days after reaching Lanchow we heard that Mr. Henné had been killed at Sian-fu with his wife and children. Happily at a later date this rumour turned out to be false, for, though suffering from eleven wounds, he recovered, whilst his family were uninjured. Apropos of this, I cannot refrain from quoting the remark made by a Manchu official on hearing that Mr. Henné had been murdered.

“Ah!” he exclaimed, “that is the best news we have heard yet! Now the foreigners will interfere and we shall be saved.” Rather rough on poor Henné!

In addition to Mr. Ross, who entertained us both materially and mentally in a manner which I shall always look back upon with feelings of the greatest gratitude, Fathers Van Dyke and Pinell were most kind. It was a pleasure to visit their mission, situated just outside the city walls, and see their beautifully decorated chapel and artistic home. The former of these two gentlemen was no mean artist, and with the simplest materials had really worked wonders. We had lunch here one day, and enjoyed some excellent red wine made by themselves.

One afternoon we were taken to dinner with an old Chinese ex-official. He was a remarkable, active old gentleman and, roaring with laughter, showed us a huge steel crowbar, weighing about 20 lbs., with which he went through javelin drill. When not so employed he used it for

beating his wives, of whom he had four. By all accounts, the lady who had recently presided over his house stood in need of some correction. Being annoyed with him one day, she stood at the door of his official residence and howled abuse in a voice which brought all the neighbourhood flocking round to find out the cause of the uproar. This reached the Viceroy's ears, who, sapiently remarking that if a man could not manage his own household, he certainly could not undertake the responsibilities of an official position, turned him out. However, he seemed quite happy, and gave us an exceedingly good meal.

One invariable concomitant of a meal in China, especially if served by Chinese who are unaccustomed to Europeans, lies in the guttural explosions which frequently resound in the ears of the diners. Nor are these phenomena confined to those who wait, for the natives have a disgusting habit of showing their appreciation of their host's cuisine and, at the same time their own good manners, by loudly expelling through their mouths in a succession of loud grunts the air with which they have surcharged their interiors. Civilisation has much to answer for, but at least it covers the amenities of social life beneath a decent gloss.

Before leaving we called on Peng-ying-chia, who had recently been appointed Provincial Treasurer of Sian-fu, a post which he was in no hurry to fill. He received us most kindly, big gates open, retainers lined up and a personal escort to the outer door. Very progressive and a friend to foreigners, he owes his life to a British officer.

Captured in 1900 by the Germans in Peking, he was to be shot at dawn, but a missionary hearing of his plight and knowing him to be innocent of the charges brought against him, induced Major P—— to intervene, and he was liberated. The most absurd stories were rife as to our presence at Lanchow. Some said, "These men are forerunners of trouble. They were at Sian-fu. See what happened there directly afterwards. Now they come here. What is the meaning of their arrival?"

After our visit to the *Neotai*, it was all over the city that we had negotiated a Russian loan for £5,000,000!

Hearing that we were about to leave, fifty or sixty applicants arrived and wished to come with us as an escort.

Food, formerly more expensive at Lanchow than in most parts of China, owing to the large amount of ground devoted to the growth of the poppy, had been, since the enforced restrictions, considerably cheaper. Tobacco is the chief industry of the surrounding country, though many other crops are under cultivation since the suppression of opium. At the time of our visit, however, bread, which at Sian was sold for 18 cash, was up to 48, owing to the civil war.

The latest rumours which we heard before leaving were that all the Manchus had been massacred at Ningsia and that the revolutionary army was advancing on Liang-chow-fu, the first important town through which we should have to pass.

The Ko-lao-hui were said to have burned the

mission station at Taochow (old city) and Mohammedans to have burned shops and looted near Titao.

A Dr. Laycock, with three missionary ladies and a small infant, was reported to have been murdered by Mohammedans on the borders of Kansu and Shensi, but this turned out to be false.

We intended starting on November 30th, but did not give sufficient notice to the innkeeper who was responsible for our carts. Fearing that they would be seized by the officials, he sent them some distance away from the city, and it was not until December 1st that they appeared at our gates.

George had dismissed all the boys, with the exception of Ching-yü, in addition to which we had to abandon many of our superfluous belongings, owing to the need for travelling with as few encumbrances as possible.

Just as we were about to start, a diversion was caused by the doctor announcing that one hundred taels had been stolen. A small packet containing the small silver "shoes" of Chinese currency, which he had weighed out to the required amount, had been left lying on a table in our sitting-room. The room was left empty for no longer than a minute. In that minute the packet vanished. Some days previously Hsue had complained that his revolver had been stolen. We searched every nook and corner, and though we discovered a pair of Zeiss glasses belonging to George secreted in the ash-bin and a variety of smaller articles, the money had gone for good, and Hsue never saw his revolver.



OUR CARTS.



COURTYARD OF THE VICEROY'S YAMEN, LANCHOW.

I have little doubt that a sanctimonious old humbug who had been left in charge of the mission house was the culprit. Ching-yü on seeing him appropriate certain of the missionaries' catables a few days before and remarking on it, was greeted with the answer, "Oh! I haven't taken nearly as much as the other man." Seeing the packet of silver, he probably thought it was a good opportunity to make up for lost time and come out well ahead of his friend.

We could not afford to delay any longer and so, having lunched with Mr. Ross, who came over the bridge to see us safely off, about three o'clock, amid the howls and tears of our erstwhile retainers, started on our long journey.

CHAPTER XXVI

ON THE FRINGE OF THE DESERT, AND SOME
ACCOUNT OF PRZEWALSKI'S GAZELLE (*Gazella
przewalskii*)

THE journey from Lanchow to Ti-hua-fu, Urumtchi or Hung-miao (lit. Red Temple), for by all these names is the one place known, falls naturally into three divisions. The first is from Lanchow to Suchow; the second from Suchow to Hami; the third from Hami to Ti-hua-fu. Each of these stages, travelling in heavy carts drawn by a shaft horse or mule, with three abreast in front, occupies, under normal conditions, eighteen days. Allowing for delays on the road and inevitable trouble on the Russian frontier, we calculated that we should not reach the railway in whatever direction we eventually travelled, whether north *via* Tarbagatai and Semipalatinsk to Omsk, or west *via* Kuldja to Tashkent, under 110 days. The correctness of our calculations was apparent, for, including nearly a fortnight wasted at the frontier of Russian Turkestan, the journey occupied 115 days.

A small itinerary printed at Sian-fu for the

use of travellers gives the following table of distances :—

	<i>li.</i>	Distance according to information obtained en route.
	<i>li.</i>	<i>li.</i>
Lanchow to Suchow .	1,450 .	1,455
Suchow to Hami .	1,560 .	1,570
Hami to Ti-lua-fu .	1,670 .	1,580
Total .	<u>4,680</u> <i>li</i> .	<u>4,605</u> <i>li</i>
	(= 1,560 English miles.)	(= 1,535 English miles.)

To recapitulate in detail our slow and halting progress for the next few months would not only prove wearisome and tedious to the reader but would serve no good purpose. All I can hope to do is to give some idea of the stupendous natural features of the country through which we travelled, of the impressions which were left on me, and of the minor incidents of the journey. These, occupying as they do so much of one's mind at the actual time, sink into comparative insignificance if not oblivion afterwards. And yet it is these minor details which focus one's thoughts. "Trifles make the sum of life." The Chinese Empire may be tottering to its fall, but unless pinned beneath its ruins it is of abstract importance to the individual.

Of the many roads radiating from Lanchow that on which we found ourselves on the morning of December 2nd is not the least important. Before reaching Suchow it passes Liangchow and Kanchow, both prefectural or "fu" cities; afterwards, through the Kia-yü-kwan Gate of the Great Wall to the oasis of Hami, at the eastern end of the Tian-Shan range. Here it forks into two branches, one, the Tian-Shan Nan-lu, following the southern, and the

other, the Tian-Shan Pe-lu, the northern foot of the range. The latter, passing through Barkul and Kucheng, is often obstructed during the winter months by snow, but is somewhat shorter than the southern road which we took, though the number of stages is the same. Since time immemorial commerce has flowed along these natural roads to and from Cathay. Fourteen centuries before Marco Polo travelled on it to Lanchow, along the Nan-lu the fame of the Tsin dynasty was borne to Persia and to Rome. With the dominion of these roads went the dominion of Central Asia. For two thousand years that portion of it east of the Kia-yü-kwan has been guarded, and, at times with great personal loss, defended by the Chinese. It is the only practicable military road to countries farther west, and by their possession of it they kept asunder the different tribes who, once the road were abandoned, might in all probability have coalesced and presented a united front to the common enemy. This narrow channel, hundreds of *li* long, capable of cultivation in the more fertile parts, colonised and guarded by the Chinese, formed a barrier which it was beyond their strength to overcome. The steppes on the northern side, inhabited by a fierce and warlike tribe, much more numerous then than now, were further shut out by an extension of the Great Wall. "Where the channel ends to the west, the Kia-yü-kwan Gate was built. In many epochs of its history the Chinese Empire was effectually locked up, by closing that gate and opening it expressly for those only who had permission to enter." (Baron Richthofen).

Since the Han dynasty the Chinese have en-

deavoured to cling to those distant colonies and cities in the west which then had their origin. Now it seems that after two thousand years the hold is weakening, the grasp is being relaxed. Through this historic district we travelled, and at times it was the personal details which occupied my thoughts to the exclusion of the past.

From the day we left Lanchow until we reached Hami I hardly had my clothes off at all. We changed our boots when not walking and wore thick socks made of sheepskin, with the wool inside. At Lanchow we had obtained large fur cloaks stretching to our heels, with high collars. In these we slept, our bedding rolls being laid on top of our possessions in the carts. These, the carters calculate, will carry 1,000 lbs. of baggage in addition to a passenger. Our personal belongings, provisions, etc., amounted to under 2,000 lbs., but, with the enormous loads of grain and fodder which it was necessary to carry through certain districts where it was impossible to obtain food at a reasonable price, we were sufficiently heavily laden. George and I each had a cart to ourselves, whilst the doctor and Ching-yü slept in the third. The carts consisted simply of two strong shafts connected by a gridiron arrangement of stout wooden bars slung on a wooden axle. Four posts to support the tops rose from these shafts. Our boxes, gun-cases, etc., were packed on the "grid" and securely roped round. Then the tops were adjusted. These were composed of felt-lined matting, with a felt curtain which could be rolled up in front. George and I, being rather long, protruded beyond the curtain when stretched at full length, but on the whole managed

to keep fairly warm, unless the wind happened to be dead ahead. At such times I would have given a good deal for the Norwegian reindeer sleeping bag which I used on a trip in British Columbia some years ago. Such a bag would prove invaluable to any traveller in these parts. We had also procured fur caps with flaps, which were an absolute necessity. Now we appreciated the tinned stores which we had brought from Shanghai as it was difficult at times to get food. One tin of salmon came to an untimely end. The doctor had placed it near the fire to thaw, but had unfortunately forgotten to puncture the lid! The consequence was a report like a bomb, a large slimy pink splash on the mud wall of our room, and a reduced menu.

Our great anxiety on reaching an inn for the night was to secure a hot *'kang*. We despatched Ching-yü ahead to prepare the way, but even so had usually to wait half-suffocated whilst a blear-eyed underling stuffed the *'kang* with fuel, or, freezing with the cold, await the end of his labours in the inadequate shelter of the inn-yard. The smoke from these wood-fires which hung in a dense pall above our heads or enveloped us as we sat, like gods upon Olympus, was calculated to give one "a mouth" quicker than any known combination of drinks which I have ever sampled. Ching-yü really reaped the benefit, for, when we, having finished dinner and a pipe, retired to our carts to sleep just as the *'kang* was nicely warmed, he slept on it. However, we much preferred the carts and plenty of blankets, as then we did not have to turn out in the chilly mornings, but slept, or tried to sleep, placidly on as the carts got under weigh.

We started at all hours of the day or night, as the carters wished. Our great amusement was the variations we adopted in the construction of our beds. George's cart, as being the leader's, had a large bell slung to the axle. This was sensitive to his every movement, and by its note I could tell pretty well at what stage in the manipulation of his couch he had arrived. First would come a clang as he jumped up on the shafts; subdued jangle as he crept inside. Then a slight tinkling as the blankets were arranged. Terrific bang as he extended himself in a recumbent position, followed by a slight jingle as he settled down for the night. We had often during the latter stages of our journey finished our day's march quite early in the morning. In December we usually travelled all day and rested all night, starting in the dark at 5 or 6 a.m. About three hours' walking a day kept us fit, and as we had been provided with a large selection of books by Mr. Ross, we spent a good deal of our time reading. Judging by the contents, the passing travellers who had enriched his library at Lanchow had been of a somewhat neurotic and pessimistic turn of mind. In the first book which I devoured the hero broke his neck and his wife's heart; in the second, the heroine married a brute to save the man she loved and lived unhappy ever after; in the third the heroine drowned herself on the last page and the hero, one of those "strong, silent men" with hair slightly silvered at the temples and a horrible habit of chewing nothing, "went out into the empty night"; and in the fourth the heroine again committed suicide by means of an overdose of morphia. This latter was

a most nauseating production (written by a woman) and it was a great relief to turn to "David Copperfield" and other of the great master's works. It was in the Gobi Desert that I first learned really to appreciate Charles Dickens.

Soon after leaving Lanchow we passed into a land of dusty hills, bare and verdureless. Dust was everywhere. The houses were made of it; the road lay smothered in it; the people, covered with it as they were, but typified our mortality and dusty origin. It seemed that we had come to the world's end and that the next dusty corner would mark the sudden cessation of the finite and a step off into infinite space. For that is the chief impression which is felt on the mind of the traveller in Asia—infinity. Civilisation and the handiwork of man cramp and confine to one dead level. Here everything was boundless, immense, indefinite. We knew not where our journey would end, nor its duration. Nothing was certain save uncertainty. Beneath our feet the road stretched endless, and overhead was the cold and cloudless sky.

At eventide, with the lengthening of the shadows, everything around us melted into one grey half-tone. The hills near at hand were, it is true, as brown, as dusty and as uninteresting as ever. But the greater the intervening distance the greater the power of that wonderful magician, twilight. Softly glowing violets and greys covered their nakedness and hid their shame in wonderful clothing. Their harsh outlines were softened into the impalpable barrier of an enchanted land. The knolls of frozen mud, bleak and bare, which

seemed the fitting environment of all the strange brownies and hobgoblins that the distorted fancy of man had ever conjured, became on a sudden the abode of fairies; beyond their boundaries a man might reach, if ever, that country of which we all dream but which no map defines. A thin streak of river shone argent in the light of the young moon. It endowed the scene with life and made it for the moment beautiful, as the face of a plain woman surprised by some transfiguring emotion.

Through many mud-walled villages we passed. Nearly all lay in ruins, showing in their now dilapidated towers and crumbling walls the evidence of a vanished prosperity. Each was indistinguishable from its neighbour. They rose to meet us out of the dusty plain, sank behind, and rose again a few *li* ahead with the same walls, the same dogs, the same pigs, the same dirty old men and children collecting fuel in the road, and the same group sitting, sheltered, in the sun busily engaged in removing the superfluous population from its component parts. Out of the wind and in the sun it was possible to sit in comfort, minus even the protection of an overcoat. Once outside in the open, the biting wind chilled to the bone and froze the breath on one's moustache.

Now and again we came upon the home of some well-to-do country farmer, double-walled, picturesque with its corner towers rising above a belt of trees, and the cosmopolitan and cheery twitter of sparrows beneath the eaves. At times the Great Wall, shrunken to miserable dimensions, mournfully meandered alongside the road. A few towers

showed in ruins along its imposing height, but here it was difficult to realise that it was the same imposing erection which lords it over the hills of Chihli.

Little colonies of pigmy hares, their towns situated in similar localities to those of the prairie dog of North America, dotted the surface of the ground; pigeons swarmed, literally in thousands, as did magpies and jackdaws; and outside the villages flocks of sheep with magnificent horns ending in a double spiral, straight, or twisted, picked up a precarious living.

It was bitterly cold, and water spilled a few inches from the fire instantly froze. At one place the inhabitants, frightened at the rumours of war, fled to the hills, leaving their village deserted. Many of them were frozen to death.

On December 8th, in lovely weather, we reached Liangchow. It is a fine city with splendid gate towers and walls, above which rise two conspicuous pagodas. The imposing appearance of the walls of Chinese cities is usually spoiled by the mass of suburbs which huddle beneath them. One sees the walls and towers rising in the distance; then they are swallowed by a sordid collection of squalid buildings, and the splendour of the impression they create is ruined. For though the walls of by far the greater majority are not worthy to be compared with the magnificent fortifications of such castles as Nagoya and Osaka in Japan, they are in the case of really big cities built on so colossal a scale that they leave a very vivid recollection of regal stateliness on the mind of the spectator.



AN EXECUTION.



CAGED—FOR GROWING OPIUM.
After being thus exposed for three days he died.



LIANGCHOW-FU.

The walls of Liangchow are to a great extent unobstructed and vie with those of almost any city we saw. Outside the northern wall lies a mass of graves. *Yin* the female, and cold influence blows from the north; *Yang* the male, or warm influence, from the south. Many of these graves were sheltered, according to the instructions of the geomancer from one or other of these quarters; for the Chinese attach great importance to such matters. Indeed, unless the omens are propitious a corpse may lie for years in the upper room of the house. The coffins are of enormous thickness and such an infliction is less offensive than it sounds. Hundreds of taels are spent on a father's funeral even by poor people, who frequently mortgage what land they have and beggar themselves to properly honour their dead.

All the rumours which we had heard as to the massacres at Ningsia were denied at Liangchow. The place was quiet, though in the expressive Chinese phrase "the hearts of the people were troubled." Two days before our arrival three men—a Szechuanese and two natives—went to a big farm 40 *li* from the city and told the proprietor that they were revolutionaries. They said that a large body of troops was arriving on the following day who were to encamp near his farm, but that, if he would provide them with three horses and guns, they would see that he suffered no further loss. The farmer provided them with the horses and guns, but would not allow them to leave. Next day, no sign of a revolutionary army! Down came the farmer and his friends on the three

impostors and marched them off to the official at Liangchow, who was a man of prompt action. Consequently, on our arrival, to parody Charles Kingsley, "three corpses lay out in the muddy streets," and the inhabitants of the city were lying very low.

A favourite pastime of the district was the chopping down of telegraph poles, these being a convenient form of fuel. Ten miles of these useful articles having been demolished outside the city, telegrams were forwarded over this distance in a more or less unreadable condition by mounted messengers. Two or three men had been executed at Kanchow, this being the only effective deterrent. We saw one head nailed up in a wooden cage outside the walls.

The plain in which Liangchow is situated gradually narrows, low hills drawing in on each side. At a place called Shia-kou, on December 11th, about half-way between Liangchow and Kanchow, we saw gazelle. These turned out to be Przewalski's gazelle (*Gazella przewalskii*). They stand about 26 inches at the shoulder. Discovered by Colonel Przewalski, the species was named in his honour in 1890. Closely allied to and rather larger than the goa or Thibetan gazelle (*Gazella picticaudata*), the main characteristics of both varieties are the extremely short tail, and the absence of horns in the females. The strongly hooked tips to the horns of the males render them easily recognisable. The ears are short and pointed at the tips. They are yellower in winter than in summer, and the adult bucks may be distinguished by their darker markings. The nose is dark and gives rather a



MONGOLIAN GAZELLE
(*Gazella gutturosa*).



PRZEWALSKI'S GAZELLE
(*Gazella przewalskii*).



PRZEWALSKI'S GAZELLE (*Gazella przewalskii*).

“puggy” expression to the face. The hair is long, the legs thin, and the general appearance rather squat. There is no tuft of hair on the knees. The young are born in May.

Those we saw were scattered about the hills which rose on the far side of what was left of the Great Wall, half a mile from the road. George stalked a small lot of eight or nine, and after some manœuvring killed a very nice buck, the only one of the party. I walked on and saw a big lot, which I managed to stalk pretty easily. I had unfortunately left my glass and could not distinguish their heads with any certainty. However, I picked out what I took to be a buck at about two hundred yards, and on going up found I had also knocked over a doe with the same bullet. The buck was not fully grown, but showed the strong hooks at the tips of the horns which is a characteristic of the species. They are excellent eating and kept us in meat until we got to Ti-hua-fu.

Kanchow, which we reached on December 14th, is the centre of a great rice-growing district, all the surrounding country being under irrigation. George killed a duck near here and some pheasants. These latter were more sandy in colour than any we had seen, with light heads and a white ring on the neck.

A few days later we saw sand grouse, but never succeeded in shooting any.

On December 19th we reached Suchow and completed the first stage of our journey.

CHAPTER XXVII

ACROSS THE DESERT, AND SOME NOTES ON THE MONGOLIAN GAZELLE (*Gazella gutturosa*)

WE stayed at Suchow, which, by the way, endured a three years' siege during the Great Rebellion, two and a half days, for the animals wanted resting and, the gauge of the road changing, we had to have new axles fitted to the carts. We were not sorry to have a rest, for the going had at times been very rough, and we were well shaken. One stage to the westward used to stand the Kai-yü-kwan Gate, which shut barbarians from the sacred soil of the Middle Kingdom. Now the chief feature of the landscape to strike the traveller is the number of large flat stones which stretch for acres on every side.

For the week following we experienced very cold weather, the climax coming on Christmas Day, when we had to cross a long open stretch of country, with no shelter, in a fierce wind. It is the wind which every traveller in Central Asia dreads. On a still day in warm sunshine the cold is not noticeable, but once let even a slight breeze spring up, sweeping unchecked over endless miles of frozen plain, it numbs him to the bone. We came, from the outcroppings of unambitious mud knolls—

they could not be dignified with the name of hills—into a wide and arid plain. Tufts of scrubby grass stuck here and there in small patches above the sandy soil, like the straggling growth upon an old man's chin. Whirls of dust sprang up as though some invisible magician had caught and set them spinning. The dust from the cart wheels rose in a thin sandy spume, and the hair was frozen to one's upturned coat collar by a biting wind. Its sigh and moan whistling around the thin telegraph wire—the only sign linking this strange country with the present—seemed like the mournful wail of some great stricken beast. The telegraph poles themselves stood bleak, bare and irregular above the flat surface of the plain and were swallowed up in the unwholesome haze which shut in the horizon. Overhead a pale wintry sky showed sickly and blue. One no longer wondered that men and animals should often perish beneath its inhospitable and anæmic brilliance. At times low hills, sharply drawn against the horizon, seemed, so blue and flat was the plain, as though they rose from an azure sea, whilst the white lines of drifted snow or encrusted alkali took the semblance of crashing breakers. One looked for the smoke of tall ships to rise out of the mists beyond a purple headland, to mingle with the snows of lofty peaks which rose beyond the straits.

Early in the afternoon, across the yellow grasses and the dusty patches of snow, rose a mud wall, topped by some magnificent poplars. It stood there impassive in the tearing wind, never getting any nearer, though by degrees it grew larger and larger until, at the end of a couple of hours, we

found ourselves entering the broken-down gateway which pierced it. I have never seen places so elusive of approach.

Dodging furtively among the grasses, ere we rejoined the carts after our walk, we one day saw two large wolves. Splendid-looking brutes despite their somewhat hang-dog appearance, they were invisible by the time we had secured our rifles.

We reached Ansi-chow on December 29th, and remained for one day, repacking our carts and resting the animals. Ansi = Western Peace, being the characters transposed of Sian, which means Peaceful West. There is a wide river, the Bulun-zir, five *li* from the city, which we had some difficulty in crossing. It was frozen hard, but the ice was thin at the edge and the carts broke through. However, by partially unloading them we got safely over, harnessing seven mules to each cart in turn. George had taken on an extra boy as far as Ti-hua. He was very willing and a good worker. Crossing the river he got his feet wet and next day one of his toes was frost-bitten, but he soon got all right. The "rose red of the long-departed sun" threw into strong relief a string of camels coming down for their evening drink, and reminded me of Egypt. It was very cold, but the moon was bright and we spent New Year's Eve tramping about on the borders of the Gobi Desert, our only immediate excitement before turning into our carts being the prospect of a couple of buns and a few raisins. Having crossed the river at 6.30 p.m., in which we were more fortunate than some other travellers who, in spite of unloading, had their carts firmly frozen into the ice, we



IN THE MIDST OF THE GOBI DESERT.



AN INN IN THE GOBI DESERT.

reached our next stopping place, Paituntze, at 6.30 the following morning. At Hung-wu-an, where we arrived on January 2nd, a few gold washers managed to secure dust to the value of about 500 cash a day. Chwan-chen-sa, three stages farther on, is the easternmost boundary of the "New Province" of Sin-kiang, and near here we passed through the long low range of hills crossing the Gobi Desert. It was very cold, but, in spite of a good deal of snow, there was a bright sun. The water, during these stages of our journey, was, at times, very salt and bitter.

On January 11th we reached Hami. Although between Kanchow and Hami we saw no gazelle belonging to the same variety as those which we had already shot, almost daily we saw small bands of the Mongolian gazelle (*Gazella gutturosa*), known to the natives as *hwang-yang*, or yellow sheep.

This species is larger than Przewalski's, and stands about 30 in. at the shoulder. The Russian explorer Pallas described it in 1777, though its existence was known to Russian naturalists at an even earlier date. The tails of the specimens which we shot are much longer than those of the former animal and quite black, as may be clearly seen in the photograph. In comparison to the flanks the sides are dark, and the face very light, with the exception of a dark line from the eye to the jaw. There are tufts of long hair below the kneecap. The rump is white and the hair on the edges of the flank distinctly dark. The inguinal glands, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep, are a noteworthy feature of both sexes. The females are hornless; the horns of

the bucks are straighter than those of Przewalski, with a slight backward curvature. The young, usually two in number, are born in June. The necks of the bucks are considerably swollen during the pairing season. When in pursuit of a female the buck holds his tail straight up in the air.

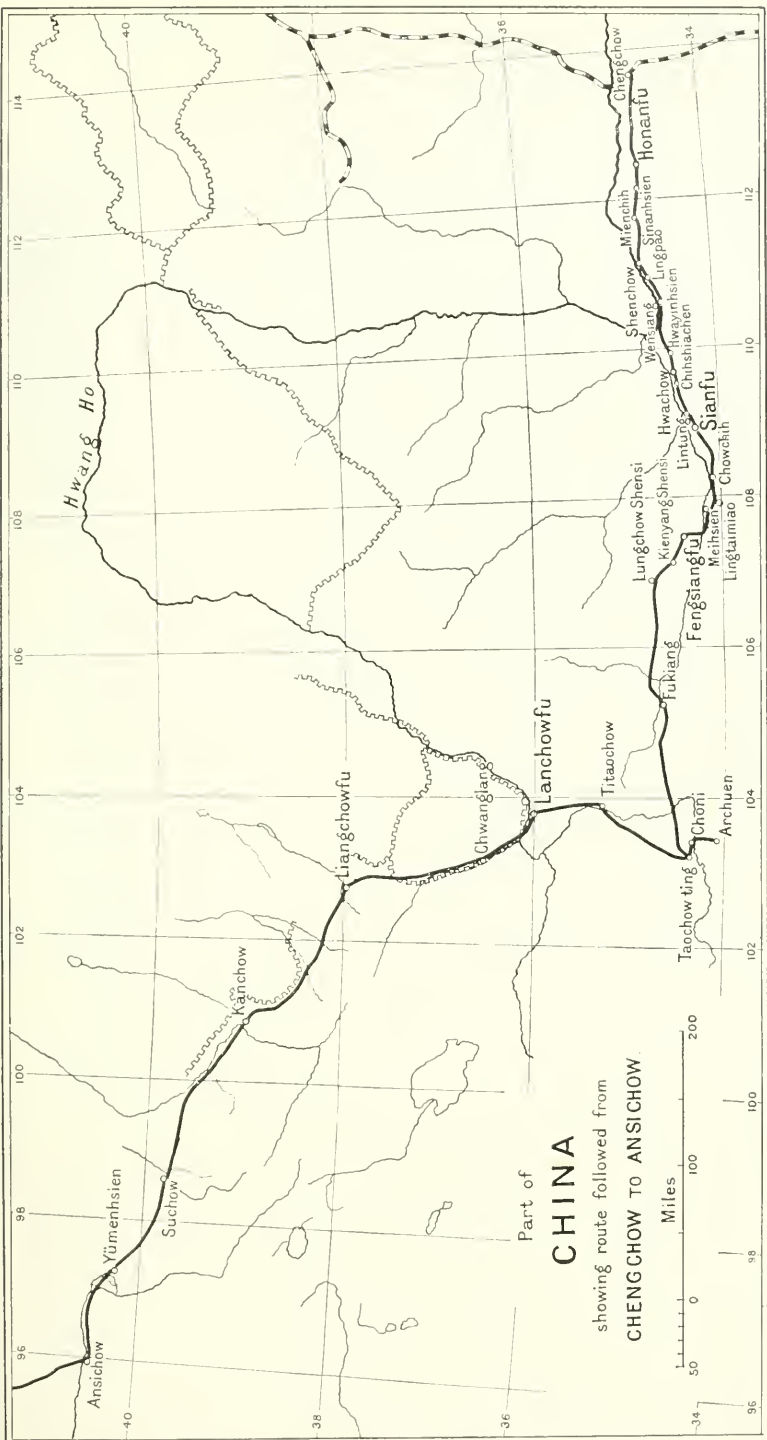
The rising sun was usually the signal for us to get out and walk, and we very frequently saw these graceful little animals feeding within sight of the road. Sometimes they would be on absolutely level, stony ground dotted with miserable, stunted bushes, behind each of which lay a gradually tapering mound of snow; at others they pottered in and out of hollows, half-hidden by clumps of long yellow grass. Always wary and difficult to approach, they seldom allowed us to get within two hundred yards. I killed two bucks, one at three hundred yards and the other at a slightly greater distance. The first was on an absolutely bare and open plain. I had vainly endeavoured to get within reasonable shooting distance of a buck and half a dozen does, finally having to leave them, as they made a bee-line across the plain at right angles to the road. Under such circumstances there was no alternative, for they were leading me farther and farther from the carts, which I could see in the distance slowly dragging across the plain. Walking parallel with them for a mile or so, I made out a buck and a doe, which gave greater promise of a successful approach. When within five hundred yards the buck saw me, and I sat down behind a stunted bush. He trotted towards me, for they are inquisitive animals. I waved my handkerchief



“HOW MANY A LONELY CARAVAN SETS OUT
ON ITS LONG JOURNEY O’ER THE DESERT.”



MONGOLIAN GAZELLE (*Gazella gutturosa*).



Part of
CHINA

showing route followed from
CHENGCHOW TO ANSICHOW



slowly behind my cover, and he came a little nearer. Seeing that he would not be lured any closer I crept on, and managed to get him. Just after the shot I saw a wolf trotting off, but he was a long way off, and was soon out of sight. The second buck I killed three days later. I had had a long walk, and seen a good many gazelle in broken, grass-covered ground. None would allow me within shooting distance, when I spied three does on a distant ridge. Keeping out of sight, I managed to get up to them, and finding a nice buck feeding with three more does in a sheltered hollow, killed him. George secured a very nice head, and though we saw some more after leaving Hami, the last on the day before reaching Ti-hua-fu, we did not shoot another male.

Hami, or Kumul, is an oasis set in the middle of the desert backed by a high range of mountains—the Karlik Tagh—topped with perpetual snow, where wapiti are said to be found. Northwards runs the Barkul range. The people are Chantos, ruled by the Prince of Kumul. Among them he is supreme, but pays an annual tribute, usually of horses, to the Chinese Emperor. The olive-coloured complexions and regular features of the Chantos are a pleasing contrast to those of the Chinese. Many of the children are good-looking; all the older men wear beards, whilst the women walk with a free and erect carriage, the more graceful in our eyes after the tottering, maimed crawl to which we had become accustomed in China. To the south of the Chinese city rises the mud palace of the Prince, dominating the

Turki town. Everywhere trees showed how beautiful an Eden this must appear to the parched traveller arriving from the desert during the summer months, with its glittering springs by which the oasis is irrigated.

The whole of this region is extremely interesting, whether from an ethnographical or from a geographical point of view. From neither standpoint am I qualified to speak, being but a field naturalist with a love of travel. Judging by the intensely interesting article which my friend Mr. Douglas Carruthers contributed to the June number of the *Geographical Journal* (1912) entitled "Exploration in North-west Mongolia and Dzungaria," the book on which he and Mr. Jack Miller are engaged will add to his already great reputation and tear the veil from what is practically a *terra incognita* to the average educated Englishman.

Leaving Hami on the day following our arrival, we travelled all night and reached Erpu on January 13th. This again is a charming little place with many trees, about which flew jackdaws, crows, and pigeons in great numbers. Our inn-keeper informed us that he had been to England, but on a little cross-examination it transpired that he had not got farther than India. We were often greeted with this tale of wonderful journeys, but "England" usually turned out to be Hong-kong or Shanghai.

That by which I chiefly remember Erpu was a magnificent wapiti head adorning the mud walls of a little mosque. It was just the sort I had hoped to shoot! A fifteen-pointer with long, curving brows and fine tops, it must have reached

a length of nearly fifty-five inches. This is only guesswork, as it was high up, embedded in the wall where we could not get at it. Sheep horns and skulls of ibex formed an imposing dado; but the wapiti killed "many tens of years ago" was one of the finest I have ever seen.

Not far from here coal is found in great quantities, and if, in the future, Lanchow is connected to Europe by rail, there should be no scarcity of fuel. The inns were far from luxurious, and we sampled a variety of *kangs* and over-ventilated hostelrys. Their one common factor lay in the multiplicity of dogs and their extraordinary forms. They all had puppies, which never resembled their parents save in the fact that they were dogs. I saw one poor brute minus both its hind legs walking on its front feet, its body balanced aloft, as may be seen in any performing troupe at a music-hall. Another, with the head of a ferret and hairless rat's ears, looked as if it had become entangled in a hearthrug early in life, and having failed to extricate itself, was bent on making the best of a bad job. Yet again, as we were quietly dining, a thing, I can call it nothing else, suddenly appeared in the doorway, wearing an arrogant and lofty expression. One extremity terminated in the head of a pug, the other in the feathery tail of a setter, whilst a fox terrier's legs supported the body of a dachshund. At one inn a big white dog prowled round the yard, snarling at any and every object which it encountered, snapping at the heels of the mules, and making itself a general nuisance.

At Ansi-chow we had exchanged one of the

animals which had not been very well in the doctor's team for a little undersized white mule. None of the other animals took to it, and the poor little brute had a very bad time. When they were being fed there would come a stamp and a jingling of bells from the manger, and poor little Ishmael would come shooting out into the open yard, a pathetic picture of animal misery. There it would stand in an attitude of utter dejection until the old carter came up with some food, when it would run back to him pleading to be fed. We never thought it had any spirit at all. However, having been turned out by its companions at the inn I have mentioned, it strayed round the yard till a warning growl from the white dog warned it of danger. It slowly and thoughtfully turned its back, the dog made a snap, but at exactly that moment the little beast let drive with his heels, and caught the dog fair and square on the point of his nose. He was still howling when we left the inn!

Several of our stopping places were indicated by an inn alone, set down in the midst of the great hungry desert. Wild sheep, we were told, came down from the hills to water during the summer, and the tombs were decorated with their horns and those of ibex. Once by the side of the road we found the skull of a young ram. Nearly every day we passed long strings of the great Bactrian camels, the weight carrier of the desert. Fine, shaggy, supercilious-looking brutes, they ninned sedately on their way with a cynical side-glance of absolute and complete contempt for anything or everything not a camel.

On January 21st we passed through groves of trees, poplars in some places forming regular avenues. The people seemed to be much interested in our appearance, and said they saw but few foreigners. Those few who have been in these regions travelled by the Northern route, the Pe-lu, whilst we were now trekking on the Nan-lu, or Southern high-road.

The women's dress was very picturesque. A long red coat, above a short green one falling to the knees, revealed a brightly coloured vest and kerchief. Long boots, below coloured knickerbockers, completed the attire. Young girls plait their hair in many tails. They marry very young, at twelve or thirteen years of age; they are often mothers at fourteen, sometimes when but thirteen, years old. A Chanto man may have two wives; and not infrequently a half-brother marries his half-sister. Even Chinese who are regarded as unbusinesslike and slow by their more astute fellow-countrymen, are able to pick up a good living in Sinkiang. At one place we were told, that so lacking in a mercantile spirit were the Chantos that they would pawn fifty taels' worth of goods to procure eight taels cash, if that happened to be the sum of which they stood in need at the moment. Chinese money-lenders reckoned on making at least 100 per cent.

The Chinese official at a place called Hsien-shan, a small town situated in terribly bare, stony, and deserted country, overwhelmed us with kindness. Not content with pressing tins of biscuits and bottles of wine upon us, he wanted to lend us money, and extended a pressing invitation to

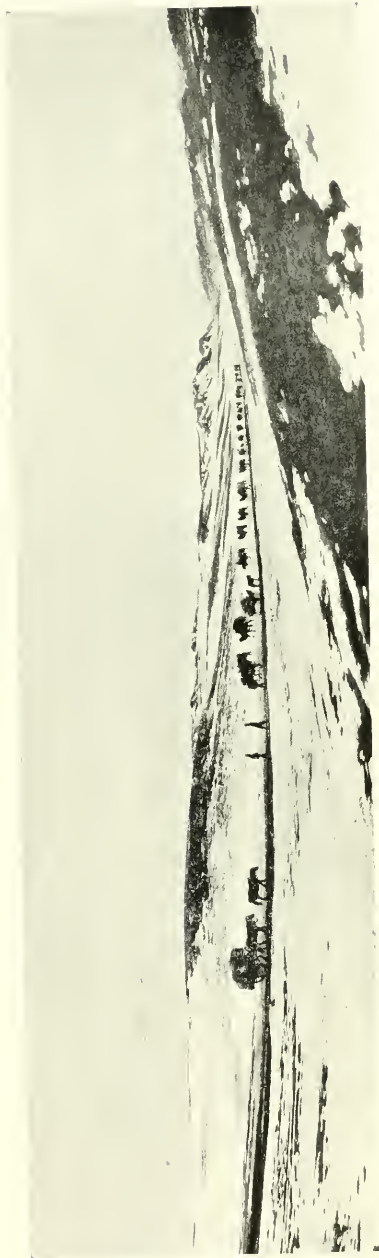
the yamen. It was very late, however, so we declined. They had had no rain here for two years, and the road, as may be imagined, was exceedingly dusty as we set out the next morning.

At Turfan, the most important place on the Nan-lu, we only remained one day. My chief recollection is of a very good new inn, and a large number of children flying kites amid prodigious quantities of dust. The next stage was smooth easy-going for 70 *li*. The stages were usually either 70 or 90 *li*, but at times stretched to 110, 120, 130, and once 180 *li*. We must have averaged 25 to 30 miles a day. Once, on asking the length of the next stage, we were told it was 70 *li* there, but 90 *li* back! The return journey—of course, on the same road—was uphill; hence the discrepancy! As we only occupied thirteen hours on the 180-*li* stage, I fancy some such error must have accounted for the estimated distance, though the road ran on a bare plain on which no snow lay. The relative positions of the 5-*li* posts, though they had dwindled away almost to nothing after leaving Kansu, were as uncertain as the scansion of my Latin verses, which is saying a good deal.

A few days after leaving Turfan I had a long walk after a single gazelle, which led me a tiring chase and eventually defeated me altogether. I reached our destination, San-kech-wan by name, to find the carts had already arrived. It is a desolate spot, noted for the terrible wind, which makes it one of the most dreaded places on the road. Recently fourteen camels had been frozen to death, and for men to perish by the same fate is by no means uncommon. Our inn we shared



DESERT COUNTRY.



CROSSING THE DESERT.

with four detectives, in pursuit of a murderer who had committed his crime in Shensi two years previously. They were reduced to one miserable little donkey, which carried their personal belongings and a weird collection of instruments, with the aid of which they hoped to arrest their man. These comprised an iron hook called an "eagle's claw," to grab the victim; a kind of glorified stage-dagger, blunted, so that the prisoner could be captured alive; and a couple of wicked-looking flails 18 inches in length, shod with iron. George finally persuaded them to part with the lot, though they were rather reluctant at first.

As we drew near Ti-hua-fu we found ourselves shut in by the Bogdo-Ola range. Sheep and ibex are found here, though, of course, in midwinter it would have been useless for us to attempt to hunt them. We had to content ourselves with four or five brace of partridges and a couple of hares. There is a steep ascent to the summit of the pass, necessitating two teams to each cart. However, we negotiated its difficulties successfully, and passed the next day into more level country. Here two hundred Chanto irregulars overtook us, from Hami. They were proceeding to the capital, as were all the troops on whom the Governor could rely. Very pleased with themselves, they said: "Now we Chantos are coming the Ko-lao-hui will all run, for they know we can shoot."

On January 31st, exactly two months after leaving Lanchow, we reached Ti-hua-fu.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE LAST OF CHINA

AT Ti-hua-fu we found a larger number of Europeans than we had encountered since leaving Hankow. They were all living in the Russian concession, just outside the town, so as to avoid complications in the event of trouble. Mr. Hansen, a mining engineer, with two Spaniards, who had left Lanchow on the day we arrived there, had been in the town for nearly a fortnight. Mr. Peterson, the Postmaster, who was due in Peking, had also been detained; whilst, on the day following, Major Pereira arrived from Kashgar. Mr. G. W. Hunter, a member of the China Inland Mission, had resided here for some years, and had travelled extensively in Sinkiang. His journeys, as was remarked in the "Field," afford another example of the romance of Bible distribution, and of the value to geographical and ethnographical science of the work of the missionaries.

The air was full of rumours, the roads were declared to be unsafe, and we had again to make up our minds to a period of inaction. Our carters, who had declared their willingness to take us anywhere—to London if we liked—hearing of wars and rumours of wars, announced their intention of

returning. We accordingly had to find some other mode of conveyance, and after some trouble secured three small Peking carts, into which we managed to stow our possessions. George had sold the horses at Lanchow for what they would fetch. They are cheap at Ti-hua-fu, and one can get a good one for between fifteen and twenty taels. Such an animal, ridden across the desert to Lanchow, could be sold there for a sum which would pay for his cost and expenses in addition to those of his vendor. I noticed in the streets one day a fine specimen of the fat-rumped sheep of Central Asia. This variety differs from the fat-tailed breeds of India and Somaliland, the tail being quite rudimentary.

Duke Lan, a member of the Imperial family, had been exiled to Ti-hua for complicity in the Boxer rising of 1900. We called on him before leaving, and were shown some of the many excellent photographs which he had taken. Those of horses, especially, were quite up to a professional standard. Having heard that the troops at Kuldja had mutinied, and were marching on Ti-hua-fu, it became apparent that the road to Tashkent was closed. The Imperialist army was in a position just beyond a place called Shi-hu or Wu-su. At this point the road divides, one branch running westward to Ili and Kuldja, and the other to Tarbagatai or Chuguchak. Once past Shi-hu, as far as the revolution was concerned, our troubles would be at an end. The stages between Ti-hua-fu and Chuguchak can easily be travelled in fifteen days if the roads are in fair condition; but in winter one would have to be very lucky to

accomplish the journey in this time. On February 8th we left Ti-hua, and in the next seven days travelled 700 *li*, arriving at Shi-hu on February 15th. At first the country was semi-wooded in character, not unlike England, though the trees thinned out after a time. The snow was sufficiently deep to delay us in several places, particularly as we were following in the tracks of the Imperialist army. At one small town we came up with about four hundred troops, infantry and cavalry. They were faring better than the first detachments, who had been despatched without proper clothing, in consequence of which many were so badly frostbitten about the legs that they died. At Manas, which seemed to be in a state of great unrest, judging by the crowd of evil-looking idlers who watched our arrival, we crossed the river, making ourselves somewhat unpopular with the army while so doing. Strings of carts and waggons were drawn up on the bank, and it was only by exercising a good deal of "push" that we managed to force our carts to the front. Many of the ammunition waggons were over their axles in the frozen ice, and, judging by the confusion and shouting, it would be some time before they were extricated. Shortly afterwards we saw a wolf standing about 150 yards from the road. A number of soldiers in a passing cart also noticed him, and one gallant lad, fixing his bayonet, started in pursuit. The wolf, however, thought discretion the better part of valour, and decamped. At Shi-hu we heard that there had been a fight a few days before. Hundreds were said to have been killed and wounded, though victory eventually rested with the Loyalists, who



DOMESTIC SHEEP HEAD, TAACHOW, W. KANSU.

The existence of a sheep growing such horns—entirely unlike all other known breeds with the exception of the Wallachian—in a remote part of China, is remarkable.



FAT-RUMPED SHEEP—TI-HUA-FU.

The remarkable point about this sheep is the mane, which is not developed to this extent in any other breed of fat-rumped or domesticated Asiatic sheep.

were stronger in artillery. Some of the rebels were beheaded after the battle, the remainder being sent in chains to Ti-hua. All the rifles I saw seemed to be old, about .350 in the bore, using lead paper-wrapped bullets, with Mauser action. One cartridge I examined, evidently recapped, was dated 1877.

It was still cold, and the inns, however rough, gave shelter and a certain amount of warmth. One night, in a very small room, we had stoked up the *kang* and retired to rest. I woke about 3 a.m. feeling as though I were being roasted alive. The *kang* was stoked from the outside, and I was sleeping next the window. On investigating matters I discovered that the dried mud composing our bedstead was nearly red-hot below my feet. Indeed, the straps of my bedding were charred to a cinder, and how the canvas escaped was a marvel. Shortly after leaving Shi-hu we arrived at our night's resting-place, to find the whole of the only available inn occupied, and tents, horses, and all the impedimenta of troops on the march strewing the ground. It appeared that reinforcements were on their way from Chuguchak, so we had to make the best of our carts for the night. It was a pretty sight as we dropped down from a ridge into the valley to see the tents gleaming in the fading light, the camels ostentatiously finishing their evening meal, the horses, donkeys, and the rough-looking soldiery. The æsthetic sense, however, was rather damped when we viewed the filthy little room, occupied by eight or nine men, which was the only dining-room we could secure. The old opium-smoker who was supposed to look after the telegraph poles—anomal-

ous situation!—was too busy looking after his own needs to bother about anything except the top of the salt-cellar, which he stole when we were out of the room. George told him any one who smoked opium in England was shot on sight, but he only leered placidly and went on manipulating his mutton fat and lamp, kneading the black, sticky little pellet of opium the while. Dogs barked all night; a cow kept bumping into my cart; the carter woke me twice from a wakeful doze to unearth corn from below my feet to feed his animals; the sifter of a corn grinder ticked loudly with the monotonous regularity of a grandfather clock, suddenly spurted, stopped, only to begin again a moment later; so that it was with a sense of relief that I heard two buglers giving a most inefficient imitation of a bugle-call, and knew that it would soon be time to start.

We were passing through Mohammedan country, and though the followers of the Prophet refused to give us bowls, even for drinking, they cannot be described as rigid sectarians. If a horse should die by the road, two or three men prop it up; three or four others rush at it, knock it down, beat it with sticks, cut its throat in the approved manner, say a prayer or two, and then eat it. Many of them eat pork, keep dogs, smoke and drink.

We passed through a long, narrow gorge which, at times, is one of the worst bits of the road. We had heard of it ever since starting, but fortunately we travelled that stage on an absolutely windless day. Mr. Hansen, following us, was not so fortunate, and encountered bad weather. On February 22nd, after passing this gorge, the carters

refused to start, saying that the wind was getting up and that we might be frozen to death if we ventured out. Sure enough, an hour later the loose snow was drifting and whirling in an icy wind against which no horses could have stood. It died down towards noon, and we started. Even then the carts got badly stuck, and needed a great deal of manœuvring to extricate. One little incident which George saw, though I missed it, impressed us both. It occurred at an inn just before we started for our day's march. A Chinaman and a Russian had a quarrel. The former hit the Russian and spat at him, but without the latter making any attempt to avenge the insult. At this same inn one of the crowd said something about "foreign devils" in allusion to ourselves. The doctor was up in arms in a moment, quite rightly, and his scathing remarks drove the abashed orator out of the inn. It came out afterwards that he had not meant to be insulting, and had used the phrase in ignorance. I think we only once heard this expression during the whole time we were in China. Before 1900 it was, if not common, at least used frequently. We had accompanying us, since leaving Lanchow, an escort. In any kind of disturbance such a man would usually be worse than useless. He is simply sent to show that the traveller is under Government protection, and is usually the dirtiest and most ragged-looking individual about the purlieus of the local yamen. His uniform, if he has one, is a blue coat with a broad red edging, but his clothes are usually so dirty that it is impossible to distinguish any colours. Of all the tattered demalion scarecrows who accom-

panied us during the different stages I only recollect two. One was a very nice-looking young Chanto, the only escort we had who really attempted to perform any little services for us; the other a gentleman with a straggling beard, a fur cap of peculiar design, and a wild eye. He invariably started any remarks with which he was overburdened by a loud yell, and had a conciliating way of cooing gutturals. One evening we derived a good deal of amusement from his geographical and astronomical ideas, which, to say the least, were original. The points of the compass, north, south, east, west, and middle (where you happen to be!) we were not unprepared for; but when he propounded, with an air of profound cunning, the following, we were defeated.

“Why,” he asked, “does your hair grow up, your beard down and your whiskers out each side?” wagging his head and looking sideways at us out of a bloodshot eye.

We could not hazard an answer.

“Like a tree,” he added encouragingly.

This did not help us.

“Shall I tell you?” he cried, for all the world like any child. “Why, they follow the compass! Just like a tree. Trunk north, roots south, and branches east and west; hair north, beard south, and whiskers east and west!” As though to say, “Nothing could be simpler.”

George tried him with an Arab riddle.

“If you dropped an orange into a hole in the rock which would only just hold it and into which you could not get your hand, how would you get the orange out?” said he.

“But I never did drop one in,” said the escort with a happy smile.

“Suppose you did,” said George.

“In what?” asked the riddle-reader.

“In a hole in the rock,” said George patiently.

“Yes,” said the idiot, “but supposing there isn’t a hole in the rock?”

“Well, there is,” said George.

“How deep is it?” was the next question.

“So deep that you could not reach the orange,” said George.

“There never was such a place,” this with an air of deep conviction.

“Well, suppose there was,” said George. “You have an orange which falls into a hole in the rock which is too narrow for you to get your hand in. How would you get the orange out?”

In a tone of great contempt George’s victim remarked, “If I had an orange I should never put it into a hole in the rock.”

“If you had an orange—” began George, but the room was empty and we felt that we had gained the victory.

Just before reaching Chuguchak, although the going was rather heavy, we made good progress, as some heavy carts had beaten a path through the snow. We killed a few partridges, very like the home bird, and on February 25th, after a long stage of 90 *li*, through a mist of snow, walls and gate towers rose in the distance, and we had arrived at the frontiers of the Russian Empire. At Tashkeng, as it is called by the Chinese, we took up our quarters, after some delay in the house of an old Khirghiz. Here he lived in patriarchal

style, with his son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren. The Russian Acting Consul at Ti-hua-fu had referred all business matters to M. Dobroff, the Consul at Chuguchak. This gentleman was most kind to us, entertained us at dinner, and wired to St. Petersburg for permission to allow us to proceed. The British Minister at Peking had obtained leave for British subjects to travel through Russia, but unfortunately the only road by which it was practicable for us to continue our journey was not specifically mentioned. Hence, by the universal laws of red-tapism we were "done." In summer the matter would have been easy. Three days' journey to Altai would have taken us to the Irtysh river and three days more to Omsk. Now, a long sleigh journey, even when we had obtained the requisite permission, lay before us, for the river is not opened by the ice-breaker until May.

Mr. Peterson had passed us in a sleigh a few *li* from the city gates, having done the last two stages in one day. Mr. Hansen and his party arrived shortly afterwards. Having been in the employment of the Chinese Government, they had not so many difficulties to contend with in the matter of permits and passports. Part of the road on which we intended to travel was under the authority of the Governor-General of Tashkent. It was absolutely essential to obtain his permission to use the post-road, and in spite of the telegrams which George had sent from Lanchow, it seemed as if we should never procure it. On February 29th we hired a sleigh and went out to Bakti, the actual frontier station, eighteen miles distant. It had

been snowing every day for the last three months, and the streets of the town were in a dreadful condition. Many sleighs, of the roughest workmanship, were traversing the country in every direction, some drawn by bullocks, the majority by shaggy little horses. We took all our heavy luggage, our heads and trophies, and though at first the Customs authorities were very suspicious, as soon as they knew we did not intend proceeding that same day their attitude changed. They made a very perfunctory examination of our goods, books claiming their chief attention, and allowed us to have everything packed in matting, roped, sealed, and forwarded by Klemenski and Company, the forwarding agents.

On March 2nd our long-expected passports arrived. We were jubilant, but alas! our joy was short-lived. There were no permits for firearms and, what was still worse, no pass for the post road. Messrs. Peterson and Hansen left with Duke Lan's son, who was travelling to Peking. Mr. Hansen, however, was stopped at Bakti, as he had no permit from the Governor-General, and detained for one day. I only mention this incident to show that the difficulties of travelling in Russia are not exaggerated. Every detail must be thought out months before. Telegrams are cheap in Russia, though as the average telegraphic operator's knowledge of English is nil and telegrams are sent phonetically, the orthography is pretty well mauled in transmission. I should not like to say how many wires George despatched, but on March 6th in desperation we decided to leave for Bakti. It was, at any rate, "a day's march nearer home,"

even though the march was a short one. Our old Khirghiz host had agreed to provide us with sleighs to Semipalatinsk ; and though, referring to expenses, he opened his palms and said, " I am an old man. I am sixty-eight now. In a few years I shall lie down to sleep. What is a little money between me and thee ? " he was uncommonly keen at a bargain all the same. However, off we started in three sleighs about 9 a.m., and soon the walls of the last Chinese city we were to see faded away. George and I were in one sleigh, a rough contrivance made of wood with a canvas back and sides. Our beds rolled up made good seats. The doctor and Ching-yü occupied the second, and our remaining baggage filled the third. We had an old red-bearded man with weak eyes and the appearance of a Scottish elder as driver. The doctor was driven by the Khirghiz' son ; and the latter's servant, a gigantic man with blue eyes, a fist like a leg of mutton and the strength of a horse, acted as Jehu to the baggage sleigh. On arriving at Bakti the Customs officials were all smiles. Permits for the rifles had arrived half-an-hour before and for one brief deluded moment we thought all was well. Then, fatal stumbling-block, I heard these ill-omened words, " Gubernator : Tashkent. "

Over the doorway of each custom-house in Russia should be inscribed in plain letters in every language " Abandon hope all ye who enter here. "

Almost immediately there was a bustle at the door, a military gentleman in a green uniform, stiff collar, gold epaulettes and belt, clanking sword,

white gloves, patent boots, medals, a cigarette and a bristling moustache, strode in, followed by a couple of satellites in grey overcoats. One had pince-nez; his hair, moustache and beard were all brushed in different directions, whilst his companion appeared to be suffering from adenoids. They brought an atmosphere redolent of the Burlington Arcade in their wake. The bristly gentleman, after a rapid exchange of spitting gutturals with the satellites, decreed with an air of Jove-like solemnity that the permit for our rifles and baggage did not include us and that we must continue to inhale ozone at bright and breezy Bakti until one arrived.

I would have given worlds for plenty of room and a free kick as he clanked pompously out. He was the only Russian official we met who showed gratuitous incivility.

All that day, all the next and the next we passed in helpless rage. We occupied one small room belonging to a Russian merchant, where we slept and fed with our sleigh drivers and any odd man who happened to turn up. Our only relief consisted in watching the "Scotch elder" prepare for the night. He gradually shed various coats (incidentally losing a marvellous waist), after which he repeated the process with the garments clothing his nether limbs. He eventually arrived at a series of fancy waistcoats and a pair of gauze trousers decorated with a blue pattern which would not have disgraced the leading lady in a Turkish musical comedy. As a covering to his skinny little limbs they caused us a good deal of amusement.

We were much encouraged during our enforced

delay by the tales of the wonderful distances we were going to travel when we did start. The weather being fine, three or four stages a day would be an ordinary run.

On the evening of March 8th George had just remarked, "We may have to wait for the steamer after all!" when a tousle-headed youth burst in and announced that the green and gold gentleman desired our presence. At last that almost mythical personage the "gubernator" had responded to George's voluminous telegrams, and we were free to proceed. We were off before nine the following morning, only to find that our troubles had but started. The "Scotch elder," adorned with a quaint little pair of smoked motor-glasses to keep off the glare, was jogging peacefully along, immersed in a design for new gauze trouserings, when he was suddenly twitched violently off his seat and George and I were confronted by a huge apparition foaming at the mouth, weeping, yelling, screaming, and brandishing his arms on high. The driver of the baggage sleigh, blind drunk! I thought he was going to hit George, but having disposed of the "elder," he hugged the horse round the neck, kissed it, dragged it and the sleigh and us off the road into deep snow, and started to take off his trousers! George rose to the occasion nobly. He jumped out, soothed the drink-maddened maniac to a state of slobbering imbecility, and got him back to his sleigh.

Later on, when sobered, he had no idea of what had happened. George and I often laughed afterwards at the picture he made, shouting, yelling, foaming, scragging the "elder," kissing the horse,

debagging himself, and finally being violently ill over the side of the sleigh. It was no laughing matter at the time, for the leg-of-mutton fist could have put in some very useful work, and George deserved a greater reward than the thanks he got for his prompt action.

CHAPTER XXIX

A PHANTOM JOURNEY

OUR journey from Bakti to Omsk comes before my mind now in a long series of phantom sleigh drives linked together by incidents chiefly connected with the difficulties we encountered on the road. The drunken driver was only the first of these episodes. All the fine talk with which we had been regaled of the drivers' energy and skill died away, and it seemed that their main object was to provide themselves with a good meal as often as occasion should offer. We had been advised to put up in the houses of the natives *en route* in preference to the official posting houses, and this advice at first we followed. The invariable procedure on arriving at such a house was as follows: A bowl of stewed meat was placed on the floor, from which our drivers helped themselves with their fingers, with much mouthing and gnawing, picking of teeth and loud throaty expulsions indicative of the liveliest satisfaction; thus the meal progressed, the fragments of bone being placed in a dainty heap on the tablecloth when finished with. We got used to it in time, but it was rather trying at first.

There was no knowing what you might find

under the beds in these abodes. We bolted a couple of lambs one evening; babies were common, and cats of no account.

Credibility in a Divine Providence is common to the majority of mankind, but it is intensely irritating when Heaven is invoked as an excuse for earthly incompetence. In the first week of our journey, in answer to any enquiry we made as to the number of stages we might reasonably expect to cover during the next day's trekking, the invariable answer was, "Heaven only knows. We cannot say; it would be unlucky."

As we all slept in the same room, after the removal of the débris from our meal, in the hope of going to bed early we would enquire about five o'clock if our drivers intended having any more meat. "Oh no, no more meat to-day," they replied. "We have had our last meal." Two hours later, just as we were preparing to turn in, they would announce another meal, and the talking and scrunching and smacking of lips would go on till 9 or 10 o'clock. Truly they were a maddening lot.

The first excuse for not travelling more than one stage a day was that the horses must be gradually accustomed to the work. "After a couple of days, then you'll see! only two hours' stop anywhere. Their Excellencies must sleep in the sleighs; we shall do three, four, five stages straight off."

We started our second stage one afternoon about 3 o'clock, got stuck behind a string of eighty sleighs laden with cotton wool, and passed the last one at six o'clock the following morning! It was

bitterly cold in the night, but we could not get off the road, the snow being four or five feet deep in places. This cotton wool was bound for Semi-palatinsk from Turfan and Kashgar. Each sleigh carried 700 lbs. in large bales.

The "elder" was always upsetting our sleigh. He only weighed about six stones, and never attempted to balance us with the little weight he had. After a time we knew the symptoms, and prepared for the worst. There would come a bump, the sleigh would tilt; we both threw our weight on the up side in a frantic endeavour to restore the balance. Sometimes we were successful. More often the "elder" would slip slowly off backwards into the snow, where we usually followed him. There was always some excuse with which they foisted off our enquiries; the next stage was bad going, and could not be travelled in the dark; the wind was too great; or the horses were tired. We were detained one day, as the wind really was bad, and the next stage was unusually bad country. Three days previously the mail had been "held up," and two horses frozen to death. There was only one passenger. The men cut their horses free from the sleigh, and rode into the post-house where we were stopping. When they went back for the passenger he was so ill from exposure that he had to remain for three days without moving. The country through which we passed had suffered severely from a famine. Many horses were dead, and lay, gnawed by dogs, at the roadside. One man told us he had lost 1,200 beasts; and between Sergiopol and Semi-palatinsk thousands of cattle, sheep, and horses perished. Many villages were reduced to two or

three houses, into which all the inhabitants gathered, using their old homes for fuel. Great drifts of snow, 12 or 18 feet high, were piled on many of the huts. Man seemed very small on those vast fields of snow. Nature was pre-eminent. Ridges were swept bare to the gravel by the wind alone. So naked and raw did they look that it seemed as if the force which swept away the snow had bruised and scraped the very ground by its violence.

On March 15th we reached Sergiopol. Here our drivers said that they could come no farther, as they did not think they would be allowed in the post-houses using private horses. Also they feared that the Hassas or Kazaks would kill their horses for food. They had charged 160 roubles for the three sleighs, and were to have received 80 roubles in addition had they taken us to Semipalatinsk. George gave the *chang-kwei-ti*, the son of the owner of the sleighs, six roubles for acting as interpreter, and the drunkard, who had quite redeemed his lapse and been most useful, a small present. The "elder" came hirpling up when he thought there was something to be made, but to his own intense disgust and our unqualified delight, departed empty-handed.

We went to the post-house, and found we could get all our belongings into two post sleighs drawn by three horses each. Having laid in a supply of black sausages, as our tinned provisions, which had held out so bravely, at length showed signs of coming to an end, and some long felt boots—those boons to a traveller in this part of the world—we started again on our journey.

Leaving Sergiopol at 4 p.m., we travelled five stages practically without a stop, being fortunate enough to find horses at each post-house. The ground is very quickly covered, provided all goes well on the Russian post road, but only too often the foreign traveller is delayed by the exigencies of the mails, officials, or a prior arrival. Sadly he watches the back of a departing sleigh, realising that he may be detained for hours, if not days.

Many of the horses were in wretched condition—mere studies in osteology—and how they got over the ground was a mystery. Once, unable to get post horses, we hired some private animals, which collapsed and walked slowly, very slowly, towards our goal, until relieved by a relay. Dead horses were common—I saw six in one day—and at times the cold wind and loose, blowing snow were very trying.

One stage from Semipalatinsk we had to abandon our large covered post sleighs, and transfer our baggage to two of lighter make. We covered the last stage in three hours, to find Mr. Peterson and his party and Mr. Hansen already in the town. The latter had arrived nearly a week before, but had been delayed by the wind, which had blown unceasingly for nine whole days, and rendered travelling impossible. He had travelled the whole distance in the sleigh in which he had left Chuguchak. We had been friendly rivals all the way, but here we parted for good, as he had not reached Omsk when we left for Moscow.

Semipalatinsk is quite a large place, and we seemed to have reached civilisation once more, with steamers, telephones, and high buildings. We

travelled day and night, and got over the ground well. Our main standby was a small book of Russian phrases which George had unearthed from somewhere. We were compelled to burst into post-houses which we had never seen before, at unearthly hours. Once we roused a "flapper" in deshabelle, who informed us that she was the post-mistress, at the dreadful hour of 1 a.m. She was very shy and confused, and we all felt rather brutes, but kept hammering away. "Loshat?" (horse). "Niet," she replied. "We must have some loshats," we chorused, and somehow or other we managed to get six. Soon after leaving Semipalatinsk we found ourselves in the region of huts made of logs dove-tailed into each other, whilst in every village, big or small, rose at least one green-roofed, gilt-topped church.

One sleigh-driver stands out in my mind from that strange medley of sleighs, snow, post-houses, and horses in which we seemed to live. A bold, blue-eyed, buccaneering sort of a person, with a game leg and a roaring laugh. What horses he had! and at what a pace he drove! He whirled out of the yard with a crack of his long-thonged whip like a pistol shot. The log hut slid past. We were over a mound of snow, round a corner, and out on a vast expanse beneath the silvery moon. Birch covers, all of the same age and of a size, loomed hazily in the distance, or showed dark on the bosom of that wonderful country, which is unlike any other I have ever seen. Pretentious churches, domed and spired, impressive in the distance, but tawdry to a degree on closer inspection, dominated each cluster of houses.

On we dashed, the two outside horses cantering, the shaft horse trotting, all three anon breaking into a hard gallop, which set the sleigh bells tankling and jerking, whilst the long-drawn cries of our driver rang out across the frozen expanse. Far off a string of little black dots swung into view. Momentarily they grew larger. Their outlines became less blurred. Then we distinguished sleighs, four, one behind the other. Our driver gave one of his full-chested roars. Nearer came the advancing sleighs; but they made no haste to vacate the road. We were going full gallop, our driver, the reins at arm's length, back-braced, talking to the horses between his cries. On we went, faster and faster, and still the obstructing sleighs held on their course. A crash seemed imminent. "Hold on!" cried George. The sleighs were right on us. Then, yelling like a fiend, our buccaneer swerved across the front sleigh, and crack went his whip across the driver's back. I saw an avenging lash fly up against the moon-lit sky, but it buried itself harmlessly enough in the snow behind us, to the accompaniment of its owner's curse. Crack again, across the third man's knees; then we were back on the road again, and I caught a gleam of white teeth in a bearded face as a great roaring laugh went echoing back to a confused tangle of men and sleighs. It was a superb piece of driving.

On we went in our mad career. In front again joggled another sleigh. Almost before its owner realised our existence we had flashed past him, there was a slight shock, and I saw him flounder backwards into the snow. His foot caught as he

fell, the old horse jogged placidly on after a first start of surprise, all unconscious that the prostrate form of his driver furrowed the snow, jerking and twitching like a badly-hooked fish.

Never shall I forget that drive. After our slow and uncertain progress it seemed the perfection of motion. It came to an end at last. Then a short rest, a cup of tea from the ubiquitous *samovar*, a change of sleighs, good-bye to the buccaneer, and off again. He had done more than drive. He passed us on to a friend with horses not much inferior to his own. He again to another friend, and so on in succession. Birch coppices, villages, towns, river banks, they slid by and faded into the distance. Now beneath grey skies, now in a gleam of sunshine. The snow shone clear and bright beneath the waning moon, or we moved in a pall of darkness, relieved only by the white carpet, which was our salvation. For the thaw was at hand. It could be felt in the air. At times the sleigh runners gritted on bare earth or slid through muddy pools.

Yet on, on we went without a stop, save to change our sleighs, during four days and nights. In that time we covered 677 versts. Then on the afternoon of March 25th we saw a plume of smoke moving across the horizon. For a time we were puzzled. Then to the north, from a low and confused mass, rose tall buildings, railway sheds, roofs and glittering domes. Before us lay Omsk.

CHAPTER XXX

AN ECHO OF THE CALL

“CURIOSITY, the inquisitive desire to come to close quarters with what is out of sight, primarily accounts for the passion for travel and exploration,” writes Mr. Sidney Lee.

Deep in the heart of every man worthy the name, there exists a longing which dates far back into the dim red dawn of all created things. Some there are who never suspect the existence of so troublesome a possession. It dies stillborn, and they fatten like stall-fed oxen during sleek years of self-imposed indulgence. Others, and these are the most to be pitied, feel it strong within them. Bound, perforce in the fetters of a commercial age, they must shut their ears, and throughout a lifetime are unable to satisfy its craving.

It is a longing which affects mankind in different ways. It lies dormant, unsuspected, till on a sudden it wakes at the glory of a brown-red moor backed by purple hills; a touch of winter in the autumn woods; the call of a wind in spring time; the lilt of an old song; or the light in a woman's eyes. Warfaring men, to whom comes no rest, are driven forth by it to found empires or die unknown deaths.

It is a longing hard to define in set and formal phrase. It has in it something of the primeval love of hunting, something of the "*wanderlust*," that restless, roving spirit which drove onwards Raleigh, Drake and Grenville; something of the romantic call of the open and hatred of that which lurks about great cities embodied by Kipling in some of his noblest verses. Certain it is that no one can answer such a call and return to the shibboleths and narrow conventionalities of his kind unchanged. He should find himself a better and cleaner man. Those who search "behind the ranges" have their price paid them "ten times over by their Maker." To wander awhile among the untrodden ways focusses a man's view; it enables him to distinguish the gold from the dross; he learns elemental truths by which to order his life. "A great mountain," says Stevenson, "is like a great cathedral . . . it sets you preaching to yourself—and every man is his own doctor of divinity in the last resort." Amid boundless and infinite plains, vast rivers and towering ranges, the wanderer realises his own pettiness and unimportance in the scheme of Nature. His own appalling insignificance strikes him with the force of a physical blow. For Nature is like the one woman in the world in this, that she makes a man feel what he is, and perhaps, what he may be.

Such were my thoughts as the plains of Siberia swept before the rushing train and the cities of the West drew nearer.

I felt it impossible that another year could have flown, carrying with it so many strange and wonderful happenings.

“ I seemed to move amid a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream,”

whilst the man whose year it was, still moved out there in the great mysterious land whose future none can tell. I saw again the hot sweltering plain, the jolting carts half-hidden in a haze of dust ; the cries of the drivers mingled hoarsely with the crack of whips as they urged forward their sleepy nodding mules. Mountains, cloud-flecked and aloof, brooded over deep valleys ; strange animals moved about the trackless heights ; and from beyond the smoke of camp fires strange faces peered. Again, above a belt of trees, a great wall, with crumbling battlements and shattered towers, reared its still imposing bulk ; lonely inns, dotting a vast expanse, rose on the horizon, gave shelter for a time, sank behind and were forgotten. Their yellow mud walls, so splendid a foil to the inexpressible blue of a desert sky, melted again to loveliness at twilight ; or stood, black and clear-cut, from the shadows beneath the austere purity of the moon. Telegraph poles stretched in endless perspective to the horizon ; caravans, silent and soft-footed, minced past to the clangorous murmur of camel bells at the dawn. The long walks ; the hard climbs ; the blistering heat and the chilling hail ; the moments of utter joy and the moments of as blank despair. They were over now. Still the kaleidoscopic medley passed before my mind. Cave-dwellings, robbers, great walled cities set in the midst of rich champaigns, bounded by mighty rivers, shadowed by snow-clad peaks. Does not romance stir at the sound ? And yet at the time

romance halted. Unattainable and unrealised, it dwells for ever amid the Delectable Mountains at the other end of the rainbow.

We conjure it before our eyes from the shadows of long-dead years. Those who follow us will in their turn summon it from the age in which we live. Future generations will accomplish in a few hours journeys on which we have spent weeks and months. "Ah!" they will say, wagging their heads, "that was the age in which to live. What chances existed then for an adventurous spirit! What uncouth and wonderful beasts roamed the earth! Romance is dead!" But romance is not dead; romance is the unknown, and those who listen may hear at times the flutter of its elusive wings. They beckon to us from the mystery of strange lands, and though railways and the civilisation of the West have already begun to pierce the mists which have so long shrouded China from the eyes of outer barbarians, she still has more than her share of mystery and romance. We exist, it is true, in a hideously practical and work-a-day world. The cry is all for progress and the annihilation of time. Machinery hems us in, its roar is for ever in our ears. The wise man shuts his ears to the throb of the machines and the cries of the money-market. He grasps, however, vainly at the golden illusions of his childhood and lives for some all too-brief moments in a world of make-believe.

For every man must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling. It is a better thing, it seems to me, when all the world is young and trees are green, while hot blood still courses through the veins, to see the world as God has

made it and store up memories for old age than to sit stodgily in an office all day, lurk about the Law Courts in attendance on aitchless and petti-fogging solicitors, be beggared of all natural emotions, and end with a superfluity of adipose tissue and a bank balance which may or may not be satisfactory to one's heirs.

And yet to the civilised man there must come sooner or later a desire for civilisation! It is enough that he has known the sensations of his primitive ancestors, the warm sun and winds "austere and cold"; rain, cooling as the finger-tips of the beloved, dew and frost. To have seen the blue cloud-navigated sky by day, and the twinkling stars set in the open vault of heaven by night, this is to know life and to come at the real heart of things. Though he be of them and their roots strike deep in his heart, there comes a time when he realises that the long, long ages of progressive civilisation have modified his original nature. He begins to long for the faces of his own kind, to walk again on smooth lawns, to hear the rooks calling above the lilacs and laburnums and the sound of bells amid a Sabbath calm. So he returns.

.

Opposite the window at which I write the blue waters of a loch ripple in the evening breeze. Beyond them a grey old birchwood stretches. On the skyline I can see a herd of deer, and just below their graceful forms the knoll from which I shot my first stag. It is a scene of which I never weary, for it is typical of the land I love.

One journey is over and yet I have but started

on the longest and most wonderful journey in the world. It will seem all too short, I know, for there goes with me one to share the road, that road which stretches onward to the distant hills whose peaks in all my wanderings I have never seen.

APPENDIX A

FIELD MEASUREMENTS AND NOTES OF CERTAIN SPECIES OF LARGE GAME KILLED IN CHINA, 1911

THE TAKIN (*Budorcas bedfordi*). Tsinling Mountains, Shensi.

Native name, *Panyang* (in Shensi), lit. Rock-goat.

„ „ *Yienu* (in Kansu) „ Wild Ox.

N.B.—Some allowance should be made for one or two of these measurements, notably in the case of the female, as the animals were lying in positions which rendered the correct use of the tape a matter of great difficulty.

	♂ Killed by George Fenwick - Owen, Esq., Aug. 6.	♂ Killed by the Author, Aug. 6.	♀ Killed by the Author, Aug. 6.
Length of body (straight line—nose to root of tail) .	74 in.	71 in.	— in.
„ „ „ (following curves)	88 „	82 „	66 $\frac{1}{4}$ „
Height at shoulder (allowing for weight when standing)	52 „	51 „	41 „
„ „ hindquarters . . .	48 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	47 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	— „
Tail	8 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	7 „	6 „
Girth of body behind shoulder .	76 „	60 „	56 „
„ „ neck	— „	38 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	— „
„ „ forearm (6 in. above knee)	20 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	15 „	13 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
„ „ knee	12 $\frac{3}{4}$ „	11 „	10 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
„ below knee	9 $\frac{3}{4}$ „	8 „	7 $\frac{3}{4}$ „

	♂ Killed by George Fen- wick-Owen, Esq., Aug. 6.	♂ Killed by the Author, Aug. 6.	♀ Killed by the Author, Aug. 6.
Length of foreleg (from elbow— stretched)	25 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.	24 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	22 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
„ „ hindleg (from point of thigh)	— „	30 „	24 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ „ hock to hoof	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	16 „	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ „ head (centre of horns to dip of nostril) (back of horns)	18 „	15 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	—
„ „ „ (to lower edge of upper lip)	20 $\frac{3}{4}$ „	18 „	—
Breadth across eye-sockets (unskinned)	9 „	8 $\frac{1}{4}$ „	—
Weight (head and scalp) (head and whole skin and feet)	103 lb.	45 lb.	—
Skin (without feet)	—	24 „	—
Total weight (allowing 12 lb. loss of blood, etc.)	435 „	665 „	—

ROE-DEER (*Capreolus bedfordi*), Tsinling Mountains, Shensi.

Native name, *Paoloo*, lit. Galloping Deer.

♀ Shot by George Fenwick-Owen, Esq., July 29th.

Length of body (following curves)	41 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Height at shoulder (allowing for weight when standing)	25 $\frac{1}{4}$ „
Tail	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Ear	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Weight (with gralloch—allowing 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. for loss of blood)	46 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb.

♂ Shot by the Author, September 16th, Minshan
Mountains, West Kansu.

Length of body (straight line)	. . . . .	40½ in.
Height at shoulder (allowing for weight when standing)	. . . . .	28 "
Weight (allowing 3 lb. for loss of blood)	. . . . .	54½ lb.
Head measurement—		
		R. L.
Length	. . . . .	10½ in. 9¼ in.
Circumference	. . . . .	3⅜ " 3 "
Tip to tip	. . . . .	5 in.

♂ Shot by George Fenwick-Owen, Esq., October 31st,
Minshan Mountains, West Kansu.

Length of body (straight line)	. . . . .	42 in.
" " " (following curves)	. . . . .	47 "
Height at shoulder (allowing for weight when standing)	. . . . .	30½ "
" " hindquarters	. . . . .	33½ "
Girth of body behind shoulders	. . . . .	30 "
" " forearm	. . . . .	7 "
Length of foreleg (from elbow—stretched)	. . . . .	19½ "
" " " (from knee to tip of hoof)	. . . . .	10¼ "
Ear	. . . . .	5 "
Head (to nape of neck)	. . . . .	11 "
Weight (uncleaned)	. . . . .	67 lb.

The weight of a second buck killed just afterwards was 59 lb.

BURHEL. Native name, 'Ngaiyang, lit. Precipice Sheep.

♂ Shot by the Author, September 25th, Minshan
Mountains, Shensi.

Length of body (straight line)	. . . . .	48 in.
" " " (following curves)	. . . . .	55 "

Height at shoulder (allowing for weight when standing)	. . . . .	35 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
Tail	. . . . .	8 "
Length of foreleg (elbow to tip of hoof)	. . . . .	28 "
Girth of	„	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ „ „ (below knee)	. . . . .	4 $\frac{1}{4}$ „
Length of hindleg (point of thigh to tip of hoof)	. . . . .	25 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
„ „ „ (from hock to tip of hoof)	. . . . .	19 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Girth of body (cleaned)	. . . . .	42 „
Approximate weight	. . . . .	160 lb.
Weight of skull and horns	. . . . .	9 „
Skin (with scalp)	. . . . .	12 „
Measurements of head just after death—		
		R. L.
Length	. . . . .	20 in. 19 in.
Circumference	. . . . .	12 „ 12 „
Tip to tip	. . . . .	28 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.

WHITE-MANED SEROW (*Nemorhædus argyrochætes*).

Native name, *Sang-yu*.

♂ Shot by George Fenwick-Owen, Esq., October 3rd,
Minshan Mountains, W. Kansu.

Length of body (nose to tip of tail)	. . . . .	56 in.
„ „ „ (following curves)	. . . . .	66 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Height at shoulders	. . . . .	42 $\frac{1}{4}$ „
„ „ hindquarters	. . . . .	41 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
Girth of body (behind shoulder)	. . . . .	53 „
„ „ upper arm	. . . . .	17 „
„ „ forearm	. . . . .	11 „
Length of foreleg	. . . . .	24 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
„ „ hindleg	. . . . .	28 $\frac{1}{2}$ „
„ „ „ from knee	. . . . .	13 $\frac{1}{4}$ „

Approximate weight (allowing 50 lb. for loss of
blood, heart, and liver, etc.) 200 lb.

BEAR. Native name, *Ma-shiung* } lit. Horse Bear.
 In Thibet, *Jer-mu* }

The natives also distinguish *Ren-shiung*, lit. Man Bear.
 Wha-shiung, „ Piebald Bear.
 Go-shiung, „ Dog Bear.

In Thibet, *Do-coo*, a small black variety
said to be found in the T'é-pu country.

♂ Shot by George Fenwick-Owen, Esq., October 20th,
Minshan Mountains, W. Kansu.

Length of body (nose to tip of tail—straight line) .	61 in.
" " " (following curves)	62 "
Height of shoulder	40 "
" " hindquarters	36 "
Girth of body (behind shoulder)	32 "
" " upper arm	17 "
" " forearm	14½ "
" " forepaw	12 "
" " hindpaw	10¾ "
Length of foreleg	17½ "
" " hindleg	15 "
" " head to nape of neck	17 "
" " ear	5⅜ "
Weight of skin (without scalp)	35 lb.
" " head (uncleaned)	12 "
Approximate total weight (allowing 12 lb. for loss of blood)	242½ "

WAPIPI (*Cervus kansuensis*).Native name, *Ma-loo*.♂ Shot by George Fenwick-Owen, Esq., November 2nd,
Minshan Mountains, W. Kansu.

Length of body (nose to tip of tail)	. . .	75 in.
" " " (following curves)	. . .	85½ "
Height at shoulder (straight line)	. . .	57½ "
" " hindquarters " "	. . .	59½ "
Girth of body	. . .	65 "
" " neck	. . .	44 "
" " forearm	. . .	14½ "
" " upper arm	. . .	19 "
Length of foreleg	. . .	31½ "
" " hindleg	. . .	36½ "
" " " from knee	. . .	17½ "
" " " " hock	. . .	22½ "
" " ear	. . .	9 "

Weight—

Skin	. . .	24 lb.
Head, scalp and horns	. . .	50 "
Entrails only	. . .	51 "
Hindlegs	. . .	73 "
Liver	. . .	12 "
Blood	. . .	20 "
Heart and Lungs	. . .	15 "
Kidneys	. . .	2 "
Forelegs, carcass, etc.	. . .	272 "

Total weight . 529 lb. = 37 st. 11 lb.

MEASUREMENTS OF HEADS as given by ROWLAND WARD

Owner.	Species.	Sex.	Points.	Length of Horn R.	Length of Horn L.	Circumference R.	Circumference L.	Widest Inside.	Tip to Tip.	Widest Outside.
George Fenwick-Owen	Takin *	♂	—	22 $\frac{3}{4}$ in.	—	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	—	—	9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	—
The Author ...	" "	♂	—	20 "	19 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	12 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.	11 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.	9 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	15 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
" "	" "	♀	—	15 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	15 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	10 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	10 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	12 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
" "	" "	♂	—	20 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	—	11 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—	—	8 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	—
George Fenwick-Owen	" "	♀	—	19 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	—	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—	—	10 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	—
The Author ...	Roe-deer*	♂	2+3	10 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	9 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	3 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	3 "	5 "	5 "	—
" "	Burhel	♂	—	18 "	—	11 "	—	—	27 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	—
George Fenwick-Owen	" "	♂	—	17 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—	10 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	—	—	24 "	—
" "	White-maned Serow	♂	—	7 $\frac{7}{8}$ "	—	4 $\frac{7}{8}$ "	—	4 $\frac{7}{8}$ "	—	—
" "	Roe-deer	♂	3+3	10 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	—	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—	5 $\frac{1}{8}$ "	—	—
" "	Wapiti	♂	5+6	43 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	—	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—	38 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	37 "	41 "
The Author ...	" "	♂	5+5	41 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	—	5 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	—	34 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	29 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	37 $\frac{1}{4}$ "
" "	Przewalski's Gazelle	♂	—	9 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	—	4 $\frac{5}{8}$ "	—	—	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	—
George Fenwick-Owen	Ditto	♂	—	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—	4 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	—	—	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—
" "	Mongolian Gazelle	♂	—	13 $\frac{3}{8}$ "	—	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—	—	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	—
The Author ...	Ditto	♂	—	12 $\frac{1}{4}$ "	—	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—	—	5 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	—

* These measurements after death with a steel tape.

Amongst the birds secured were the following, for the scientific names of which I am indebted to Mr. R. W. Ogilvie-Grant, of the British Museum.

1. COMMON GREY PARTRIDGE (*Perdix perdix*), from S. Dzungaria, about 18 marches east of Kuldja, represents the *Perdix robusta* of Homeyer and Tancre, which is supposed to be a slightly larger form of the Common Partridge.

Most of the other birds were shot in West Kansu or the neighbouring mountains; they were:

2. PRZEWALSKI'S PARTRIDGE (*Perdix sifanica*), a small species with a black-barred breast.
3. SEVERTZOFF'S HAZEL-HEN (*Tetrastes severtzovi*).
4. DUSKY PHEASANT GROUSE (*Tetrasthis obscurus*), a large grouse-like bird with wide white tips to the tail.
5. TIBETAN SNOW-COCK (*Tetraogallus tibetanus*).
6. SATSCHEN RING-NECKED PHEASANT (*Phasianus satschenensis*). Satschen is to the north of the Nan-shan Mountains.
7. STONE'S PHEASANT (*Phasianus elegans*).
8. NORTHERN BLOOD-PHEASANT (*Ithagene chinensis*).
9. GRIFFON VULTURE (*Gyps fulvus*), 30 miles S.E. of Choni.

Through the kindness of Mr. Oldfield Thomas I am enabled to include the following list of Small Mammals from the ANNALS AND MAGAZINE OF NATURAL HISTORY Ser. 8, Vol. x., October 1912.

On a Collection of Small Mammals from the Tsin-ling Mountains, Central China, presented by Mr. G. Fenwick-Owen to the National Museum. By OLDFIELD THOMAS.

(Published by permission of the Trustees of the British Museum.)

DURING the late summer of 1911 Mr. G. Fenwick-Owen, to whom the National Museum already owed some valuable collections of mammals from French Gambia, made an exploring and collecting expedition into Central China, into

Southern Shen-si and Kan-su, with the intention of exploring the mountain-ranges between those provinces and Eastern Tibet. Owing, however, to the breaking out of the recent revolution in China, Mr. Owen's party had to shorten their work and to come home through Tibet and Russia in Asia, by which route they were fortunately enabled to transport in safety such collections as they had made before the revolution broke out.

The small mammals, which Mr. Fenwick-Owen has now presented to the British Museum, were all prepared by his companion and interpreter, Dr. J. A. C. Smith, who had already accompanied Mr. Malcolm Anderson into this region, and had also made collections on his own account, so that both country and fauna were well known to him.

The collection consists of 68 specimens, belonging to 18 species, of which 7 are new, thus again showing the richness and diversity of the fauna of this wonderful region.

Of these by far the most striking is the new mole, *Scapanulus oweni*, representing a new genus more allied to the American moles than to any previously known in Asia. Other valuable accessions are the *Zapus*, the *Sicista*, and the new shrews of the new genera *Blarinella* and *Chodsigoa*.

Mr. Fenwick-Owen and Dr. Smith are to be congratulated on the amount of novelties yielded by the collection, which forms a most valuable supplement to the series obtained by Mr. Anderson during the Duke of Bedford's Exploration of Eastern Asia.

1. *Scapanulus oweni*, gen. et sp. n.

♂. 59. 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou, Kan-su. Alt. 10,000'.

♂. 72. 23 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 9000'.

"In mossy undergrowth in fir-forest."—*J. A. C. S.*

SCAPANULUS, gen. nov. (*Talpidae*, subfam. *Scalopinæ*).

Manus broadly expanded, nearly as much so as in the true moles, more so than in *Scaptonyx*. Claws rather slender for a mole; those of hind foot thin, rather straight, except that of the hallux, which is curved. On both sides in both specimens the hallux is peculiarly twisted away from the other

digits, but this may possibly be due to distortion in drying. Tail comparatively long and thickly haired. Skull about as in *Urotrichus*, the pterygoid region less inflated and with better developed pterygoids than in *Scapanus*. Tympanics incomplete. Interparietal broad, less tapering forwards than in *Urotrichus*.

Teeth $\frac{9}{9} \times 2 = 36$, these being apparently

$$I. \frac{2}{2}, C. \frac{1}{1}, PM. \frac{3}{3}, M. \frac{3}{3}.$$

As to the individual homologies of the teeth, I would tentatively suggest the following as the complete formula of the permanent dentition:—

$$I. \frac{1.2.0}{1.2.0}, C. \frac{1}{1}, PM. \frac{1.0.3.4}{1.0.3.4}, M. \frac{1.2.3}{1.2.3}.$$

In this the premolar formula is not very certain, since it may possibly be 1 . 2 . 0 . 4, as in the *Urotrichus-Uropsilus* series of genera; but I am quite confident about the lower incisors, which are 1 . 2 . 0, as in *Desmana* and the American moles, as compared with 0 . 2 . 3 or 0 . 2 . 0 in *Urotrichus*, *Uropsilus*, and their allies.

The most salient points of the dentition are: (1) the total number of 9 above and below, elsewhere only found in *Neurotrichus*, and (2) the *Desmana*-like character of the lower incisors, which are subequal, strongly proclivous, the second equally with the first abutting upon and being worn down by the hinder surface of the large anterior upper incisors.

I^1 large, about as large proportionally as in *Scalops* and *Urotrichus*, therefore larger than in *Scapanus*, but very far from as large or as specialized as in *Desmana* and *Galemys*. I^2 and p^1 subequal, small, the canine between them rather larger, double-rooted. P^3 of about the same length and twice the bulk of the canine; p^1 about four times the bulk of p^3 , with a well-marked internal cusp. Molars with their internal ledge subtrilobate, about as in *Scapanus*.

Type. *Scapanulus oxeni*, sp. n.

Dividing, as I should, the family *Talpidae* into five sub-families—the *Desmaninae*, *Talpinae*, *Scalopinae*, *Condylurinae*,

and *Uropsilinae*—this most interesting new genus falls obviously into the *Scalopinae*, within which it belongs rather to the Scalopine than the Urotrichine series of genera. But with its rather less modified manus and pterygoids and comparatively delicate skull it adds another to the links which bind these two series of genera to each other. From *Scaptonyx*, the only allied genus geographically near it, it is at once separable by its more modified manus, fewer teeth, much larger i^1 , and its Desman-like lower incisors.

Scapanulus oweni, sp. n.

Bulk about half that of *Talpa europæa*. Colour of body exactly as in that animal, the lower surface almost imperceptibly lighter than the upper. Head rather paler. Hands pale brown above, with whitish edges. Feet brown proximally, white on the digits. Tail long, thick, well-haired, grey-brown with rather lighter tip.

Skull and teeth as described above.

Dimensions of the type (measured in flesh):—

Head and body 108 mm.; tail 38; hind foot 14.

Skull: greatest length 28·2; condylo-basal length 27·5; greatest breadth 13; zygomatic breadth 10·6; interorbital breadth 5·5; palatal length 12·7; upper tooth-series 12·3; molars only 5·2.

Hab. as above.

Type. Adult male. B.M. no. 12. 8. 5. 2. Original number 72. Collected 31st October, 1911.

I have great pleasure in naming this most interesting new mole in honour of Mr. Fenwick-Owen, to whose interest and kindness the Museum owes this valuable accession to its collections.

2. *Sorex sinalis*, sp. n.

♂. 8, 11, 12, 13, 16; ♀. 5, 7, 14. 45 miles S.E. of Feng-siang-fu, Shensi. 10,500'.

♀. 71. 17 miles S.E. of Tao-chou, Kan-su. 8900'.

“Rocky mossy mountain-top.”—*J. A. C. S.*

A large plain-coloured species, with a long tail.

Size one of the largest of the genus. Fur about 5 mm.

long on the back in summer specimens. General colour uniform greyish brown, with scarcely any tendency to a tricolor pattern; under surface drab-brown. Hands and feet brownish white. Tail long, slightly pencilled at the tip, brown above, lighter below.

Skull large, with long muzzle; brain-case not specially broadened.

Unicuspid slightly but evenly decreasing backwards. Concavities behind molars well marked.

Dimensions of the type:—

Head and body 70 mm.; tail 55; hind foot 14.

Skull: condylo-incisive length 21; condylo-basal length 20.3; greatest breadth 9.6; upper tooth row 9.1; front of i^1 to front of p^1 4.2; front of p^1 to back of m^2 4.5; breadth between outer corners of m^1 4.8.

Hab. 45 miles S.E. of Feng-siang-fu, Shen-si.

Type. Adult male. B.M. no. 12. 8. 5. 3. Original number 8. Collected 10th August, 1911.

This large but rather delicately built shrew has a decidedly longer skull than the other large Eastern plain-coloured species *S. unguiculatus* and *shinto*. It has nothing of the remarkable development of tooth-pigment characteristic of *S. daphænodon*.

3. *Sorex cansulus*, sp. n.

♂. 68. 15 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 8500'.

♀. 56, 65. 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 9800-10,000'.

S. annexus-centralis group, paler than the former and without the long muzzle of the latter.

Size as in *S. centralis*. Fur of back about 4 mm. in length. General colour above greyish brown, about as in *S. centralis*, much greyer than in *S. annexus*, which verges towards Prout's brown; sides in one specimen tinged with buffy, but no definite tricolor pattern present. No trace of a darker dorsal stripe. Under surface drab or broccoli-brown. Hands and feet brownish white. Tail dark brown above, lighter below.

Skull slightly longer than in *S. annexus*, its muzzle not specially lengthened as in *S. centralis*.

Dimensions of the type :—

Head and body 64 mm. ; tail 38 ; hind foot 12.

Skull : condylo-incisive length 19·2 ; condylo-basal length 18·1 ; greatest breadth 9 ; upper tooth-row 8 ; front of i^1 to front of p^1 3·7 ; front of p^1 to back of m^2 4 ; breadth between outer corners of m^1 4·6.

Hab. (of type). 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou.

Type. Adult female. B.M. no. 12. 8. 5. 13. Original number 56. Collected 23rd September, 1911.

This species connects the Korean *S. annexus* with the Central-Asian *S. centralis*. It is much paler in colour than the former and has not the lengthened muzzle of the latter. While the skulls of all three are of about the same bulk, the muzzle, as measured from the front of p^1 to the front of the large incisors, is in *S. annexus* 3·5 mm., *S. cansulus* 3·7 mm., and *S. centralis* 4·2 mm.

4. *Sorex wardi*, Thos.

♂. 42, 43, 45 ; ♀. 46. 42 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 10,000'.

♂. 58, 63, 64. 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 10,000'.

♀. 29. 30 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 9000'.

In summer pelage. The type, which is in winter pelage, came from 10 miles S. of Tao-chou.

5. *Chodsigoa lamula*, sp. n.

♂. 66. 40 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. Alt. 9500'. 1st October, 1911. B.M. no. 12. 8. 5. 22. *Type.*

"Picked up on path in forest."—*J. A. C. S.*

Allied to *C. hypsibia*, but smaller.

General proportions and comparative length of tail about as in *C. hypsibia*, but size decidedly less. Fur close and soft ; hairs of back about 3·5 mm. in length. General colour above "mouse-grey," scarcely paler below. Hands and feet white, a slightly darker shade edging the latter externally. Tail greyish above, glossy whitish below.

Skull smaller than in *C. hypsibia*, its interorbital region even lower and flatter than in that species.

Dimensions of the type (measured in flesh):—

Head and body 67 mm. ; tail 54 ; hind foot 13.

Skull: condylo-basal length 18 ; condylo-incisive length 18·7 ; greatest breadth (c.) 9 ; upper tooth-series 8·0 ; combined length of p^4 - m^2 4·7.

Hab. and *Type* as above.

The species of *Chodsigou* are all very closely allied, differing mainly by size and length of tail. This is the smallest and shortest-tailed as yet described.

6. *Blarinella griselda*, sp. n.

♀. 41. 42 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 10,000'. 17th September, 1911. B.M. no. 12. 8. 5. 23. *Type*.

"On mossy bank, in birch-wood."—*J. A. C. S.*

Smaller, greyer, and shorter-tailed than *B. quadraticauda*.

Size rather less than in *quadraticauda*. General colour above "mouse-grey," rather paler and more drabby below. Hands, feet, and tail all dull greyish, not dark brown as in the allied species ; tail decidedly shorter than in that animal.

Skull rather smaller than in *quadraticauda*. Second upper unicuspid evenly intermediate in size between the first and third—in *quadraticauda* the second nearly equals the first and is conspicuously larger than the third.

Dimensions of the type (measured in flesh):—

Head and body 68 mm. ; tail 33 ; hind foot 11.

Skull: condylo-incisive length 20 ; condylo-basal length 18·6 ; greatest breadth 9·4 ; upper tooth-series 8·6 ; front of p^4 to back of m^2 4·5.

Hab. and *Type* as above.

This second species of the genus *Blarinella* is easily distinguishable from the Sze-chwan form by its smaller size, greyer colour, and shorter tail.

7. *Mustela astuta*, M.-Edw.

♂. 40, 73. 25 and 40 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 9000-9500'.

The marked narrowness of the frontal region distinguishes this weasel from the Tibetan *M. temon*, Hodgs., which it resembles very closely in external characters. The type was obtained by David at Moupin.

The species had not previously been represented in the Museum collection.

8. *Eutamias asiaticus*, Pall.

♂. 62. 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 9800'.

9. *Apodemus speciosus peninsulae*, Thos.

♂. 21, 22, 23, 24, 47, 53, 67; ♀. 25. 15 to 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 8500-10,000'.

10. *Microtus malcolmi*, Thos.

♂. 10; ♀. 6, 9, 15. 45 miles S.E. of Feng-siang-fu, Shensi. 10,500'.

♀. 19, 49. 40 to 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou, Kan-su, 9500'.

11. *Microtus oniscus*, Thos.

♂. 18, 50; ♀. 27, 31, 35, 36, 37, 38. 40 to 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou, Kan-su. 9500'.

12. *Microtus (Caryomys) eva*, Thos.

♂. 28, 32, 54, 55; ♀. 17, 39, 57, 69, 70. 17 to 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 8900-9500'.

13. *Myospalax smithii*, Thos.

♀ (immature). 44. 40 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 9000'.

The second specimen known of this species. Though immature, it already shows evidence of the cranial and dental characters distinguishing *M. smithii* from *M. cansus*.

14. *Sicista concolor*, Büchn.

♀. 30. 35 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 9000'.

♀. 33. 44 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 10,000'.

The type locality of this species is the Alps of Si-ning, also in the province of Kan-su. No example of it had hitherto been in the Museum collection.

15. *Zapus (Eozapus) setchuanus vicinus*, subsp. n.

♂. 61; ♀. 52 to 60. 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou, Kan-su. 9800-10,000'.

Similar to the Sze-chwan form in essential characters, but with longer tail, entirely white belly without central line (one specimen with a few pale buffy hairs along the mesial line of the belly), and with the tail usually black above to the tip.

Dimensions of the type (measured in flesh):—

Head and body 78 mm.; tail 144; hind foot 28; ear 15.

Skull: greatest length 23·2; condylo-incisive length 20; zygomatic breadth 12·7; nasals 9; interorbital breadth 4·2; palatilar length 8·7; palatal foramina 4·6; upper tooth-series 3·6.

Hab. as above.

Type. Adult female. B.M. no. 12, 8, 5, 62. Original number 52. Collected 22nd September, 1911.

These are the first specimens of the Asiatic *Zapus* received by the British Museum, and, so far as I know, the first that have been obtained since the Paris Museum received the examples from Sze-chwan described by M. Pousargues. They are therefore a most acceptable addition to the Museum collections.

The Kan-su form is evidently closely allied to that from Sze-chwan, but has a longer tail (126, 137, and 144 mm. in three specimens as compared with 95, 103, and 120) and is practically without the ventral stripe characteristic of the latter. One specimen (no. 60) has a few of the mesial hairs of the abdomen washed with buffy, and this indicates the affinity of the two forms. In a similar way one specimen (no. 61) out of three has a white tail-pencil, like all three of the true *setchuanus*.

16. *Ochotona syrinx*, Thos.

♂. 34. 42 miles S.E. of Tao-chou, Kan-su. 12,000'.

The typical specimens were obtained at 10,600' on Mount Tai-pei-san, some 200 miles further east on the same mountain-chain.

17. *Ochotona cansa*, Lyon.

♂. 48, 51; ♀. 20. 40 to 46 miles S.E. of Tao-chou. 9500–10,000'.

These specimens are slightly darker in colour than examples from nearer Tao-chou, the type locality, and are therefore to some extent intermediates between the true *cansa* and the subspecies next following.

18. *Ochotona cansa morosa*, subsp. n.

♀. 4. Tai-pai-san, 45 miles S.E. of Feng-siang-fu, Shen-si. 10,500'. 4th August, 1911. B.M. no. 12. 8. 5. 68.
Type.

Size slightly greater than in typical *cansa*. Colour darker, the hairs of the back more heavily blackened terminally. Under surface with all the hairs broadly washed with dark buffy, instead of, as in true *cansa*, only those of the middle line being so coloured, the sides of the belly being whitish. Hand and feet darker and more uniformly buffy above and more blackish below, the whitish fringes on either side of the feet, so marked in *cansa*, less developed and dull buffy in colour, so that practically the whole of the sole appears sooty brown.

Skull with rather more strongly convex frontal outline, broader interorbital space, larger brain-case, and broader palatal bridge than in any of the specimens of true *cansa*. In the type the projecting point representing the posterior part of the septum of the palatal foramina is more developed than usual, but this may be an individual peculiarity.

Dimensions of the type:—

Head and body 149 mm.; tail 8; hind foot 27; ear 18.

Skull: greatest length 36; condylo-incisive length 34.3; zygomatic breadth 18; nasals 11.2 × 4.4; interorbital breadth 4.1; breadth of brain-case 14.2; palatal bridge 2.6; upper tooth-series (alveoli) 6.7.

Hab. and *Type* as above.

In its dull colour this Pika has some resemblance to the *O. tibetana* of Sze-chwan, but is smaller, with larger bullæ and a more bowed frontal outline. Much more material is needed before the true relationship to each other of these allied forms of *Ochotona* can be clearly understood.

APPENDIX B

The following may be taken as a rough general estimate of a six months' trip into the interior and west of China on much the same lines as that described.

Calculated on the basis that the party consists of two persons, white interpreter, and boys.

		£	s.	d.
Week in Shanghai	at 250 taels	23	0	0
Stores, cooking utensils	240 „	33	0	0
Fares to Hankow and 2 days there	100 „	13	10	0
Railway Expenses to Honan, fares and baggage	150 „	20	0	0
Three Carts, etc., to Sian-fu	200 „	27	0	0
General Expenses for 4 months in the interior	1500 „	200	0	0
Boat and Railway Expenses (return journey)	750 „	100	0	0
Boys' Wages, and expenses not al- ready included	300 „	40	0	0
Salary of White Interpreter and Manager at £60 per month		360	0	0
		£816 10 0		

The tael varies, but, roughly speaking, 8 taels equals £1.

If a native interpreter were taken the expenses would be reduced by about £250 on paper. In reality, a native would probably regard such a trip as a heaven-sent opportunity for

putting by a nest-egg in anticipation of his return to the coast. In addition to such a sum, for which a liberal allowance might be made, any one ignorant of the language and the natives would find an interpreter of this description a constant source of worry and anxiety.

If only one person undertook the journey, the expenses would be lessened to the extent of £100. The cost of stores will naturally vary with the taste of the traveller. If he is able to live mainly on the products of the country, as we did, he will avoid the expense and bulk of quantities of tinned and bottled foods.

Generally speaking, £100 per month will amply cover all expenses for a single sportsman after arrival at Shanghai. This allows for many luxuries and comforts. An additional £30 per month will provide for another person.

APPENDIX C

TABLE OF DISTANCES AND STAGES.

FROM HONAN TO SIAN-FU.*

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
1. Honan to Sinan-hsien	85
2. Sinan-hsien to Mienchih	95
3. Mienchih to Chī-cheng	110
4. Chī-cheng to Ling-pao	90
5. Ling-pao to Pan-tao	90
6. Pan-tao to Hwayin-hsien	80
7. Hwayin-hsien to Chih-chia-chen	100
8. Chih-chia-chen to Lintung	100
9. Lintung to Sian-fu	50
Total	<u>800</u>

FROM SIAN-FU TO LING-TAI-MIAO.

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
1. Sian-fu to Lao-tien	80
2. Lao-tien to Chow-chih	75
3. Chow-chih to Chi-chia-tsai	100
4. Chi-chia-tsai to Ling-tai-miao	75
Total	<u>330</u>

* The *li* of Shensi are longer than the ordinary *li*; 250 are equal to one degree. Three *li* may roughly be taken as equalling one English mile.

FROM LING-TAI-MIAO TO CHONI.

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
1. Ling-tai-miao to Kao-tien	90
2. Kao-tien to Feng-siang	90
3. Feng-siang to Kien-yang.	70
4. Kien-yang to Lung-chow	90
5. Lung-chow to Kuk-wan	60
6. Kuk-wan to Yien-chia-tien	70
7. Yien-chia-tien to Ling-shau-chen	70
8. Ling-shau-chen to Suan-si-toa	70
9. Suan-si-toa to Wang-shang-kwa-ling	70
10. Wang-shang-kwa-ling to Fu-kiang	70
11. Fu-kiang to Loamen	70
12. Loamen to Fuchia-men	85
13. Fuchia-men to Yien-ching	70
14. Yien-ching to Tat-soa-tan	80
15. Tat-soa-tan to Chung-tsai-chi	70
16. Chung-tsai-chi to Ha-ka-can	70
17. Ha-ka-can to Choni	40
Total	<u>1,235</u>

	<i>Li.</i>
From Choni to the Poa-yü-kou Valley is	20
" " " Archuen	90
" " " Taochow (Old city)	40
" Taochow to Mei-wu (in Thibet)	110

FROM CHONI TO LANCHOW-FU.

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
1. Choni to Panchiao	70
2. Panchiao to Kankou	55
3. Kankou to Ting-chia-tan	80
4. Ting-chia-tan to Titai-chow	80
5. Titao-chow to Shalung	80
6. Shalung to Wakang	80
7. Wakang to Lanchow-fu	40
Total	<u>495</u>

FROM LANCHOW-FU TO SUCHOW.

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
1. Lanchow to Chung-pu	20
2. Chung-pu to Hsia-chia-twsei	75
3. Hsia-chia-twsei to Ching-shi	75
4. Ching-shi to Wuchengi	95
5. Wuchengi to Chen-ching-iang	90
6. Chen-ching-iang to Kulang	90
7. Kulang to Ta-hoi	100
8. Ta-hoi to Si-shi-li-pu	70
9. Si-shi-li-pu to Pa-pa	60
10. Pa-pa to Shwei-moa-kwan	80
11. Shwei-moa-kwan to Shiakou	85
12. Shiakou to Shan-tau-shien	80
13. Shan-tau-shien to Ku-cheng	70
14. Ku-cheng to Er-shi-li-pu	65
15. Er-shi-li-pu to Fui	90
16. Fui to Hei-chuan	90
17. Hei-chuan to Yien-chih	80
18. Yien-chih to Lin-shei	100
19. Lin-shei to Suchow	40
Total	<u>1,455</u>

FROM SUCHOW TO HAMI.

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
1. Suchow to Kia-yu-kwan	70
2. Kia-yu-kwan to Hwei-hwei-pu	90
3. Hwei-hwei-pu to Chi-ching-shia	110
4. Chi-ching-shia to Yu-men-hsien	90
5. Yu-men-hsien to San-tao-kou	50
6. San-tao-kou to Pu-lung-chie	90
7. Pu-lung-chie to Shia-owan	90
8. Shia-owan to Ansi-chow	70
9. Ansi-chow to Paituntze	90
10. Paituntze to Hungwan	70
11. Hungwan to Tachwan	80

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
12. Tachwan to Ma-lien-ching	70
13. Ma-lien-ching to Shing-shing-hsia	90
14. Shing-shing-hsia to Sachwan	90
15. Sachwan to Kushwei	70
16. Kushwei to Yienkung	140
17. Yienkung to Chang-lui-shwei	70
18. Chang-lui-shwei to Hwan-lung-kwan	70
19. Hwan-lung-kwan to Hami	70
Total	<u>1,570</u>

FROM HAMI TO TI-HUA-FU.

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
1. Hami to Erpu	90
2. Erpu to San-tao-ling	110
3. San-tao-ling to Liao-fung	90
4. Liao-fung to I-wan-chien	90
5. I-wan-chien to Chi-ke-ching	130
6. Chi-ke-ching to Wu-tung-wao	40
7. Wu-tung-wao to Hsi-yien-chi	120
8. Hsi-yien-chi to Chi-ko-tai	180
9. Chi-ko-tai to Hsien-shan	90
10. Hsien-shan to Mien-mi-ching	80
11. Mien-mi-ching to Shen-chung-kou	90
12. Shen-chung-kou to Turfan	90
13. Turfan to San-kech-wan	90
14. San-kech-wan to Ho-kou	70
15. Ho-kou to Ta-pan-shen	40
16. Ta-pan-shen to Tai-woa-pu	90
17. Tai-woa-pu to Ti-hua-fu	90
Total	<u>1,580</u>

FROM TI-HUA-FU TO TUSHENG (CHUGUCHAK).

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
1. Ti-hua-fu to Chang-chi-hsien	100
2. Chang-chi-hsien to Kou-tou-peï	90

Stages.	<i>Li.</i>
3. Kou-tou-pei to Tu-hu-hu	90
4. Tu-hu-hu to Manas	90
5. Manas to San-tao-lao	140
6. San-tao-lao to Kwei-cheng	140
7. Kwei-cheng to Shi-hu	70
8. Shi-hu to Kou-tai	90
9. Kou-tai to Hsia-tao	140
10. Hsia-tao to Han-san-tai	90
11. Han-san-tai to Mao-er-kou	140
12. Mao-er-kou to Yie-ma-tai	150
13. Yie-ma-tai to Tu-li	70
14. Tu-li to Lao-feng-kou	90
15. Lao-feng-kou to Er-tao-chiao	90
16. Er-tao-chiao to Ho-shang	40
17. Ho-shang to Kwai-tien	70
18. Kwai-tien to Tu-sheng (Chuguchak).	90
Total	<u>1,760</u>

From Chuguchak to Sergiopol is 258½ versts. (11 stages.)

From Sergiopol to Semipalatinsk is 272 versts. (12 stages.)

From Semipalatinsk to Omsk is 755 versts. (30 stages.)

1 verst equals $\frac{2}{3}$ of an English mile.

INDEX

- Adventure, sport and travel on
the Thibetan Steppes, 76, 154
- Andrews, Mr. G., 228
- Ansi-chow, 252
- Archuen, 129, 132, 163
- Astrologers, 56, 58
- Blanket, 206
- Bakti, 270, 273, 276
- Bear, 128, 195, 196
- Beggars, 16, 17
- Beckman, Mr., 48
- Birds, 34, 50, 55, 56, 57, 100,
206
- Blanford, 69
- Bogdo-Ola, 261
- British-American Tobacco Co., 30
- Brooke, late Lt., 70
- Buddhism, 110-13
- Budorcas bedfordi*, vii., 59, 133
- *mitchelli*, 70
- *taxicolor*, 70, 71
- *tibetanus*, 70, 71, 76
- *sinensis*, 70
- Burhel, appearance of, 139
- classification of, 139, 140
- horns of, 140
- hunting of, 147, 153
- in Kansu, 132
- range of, 139
- smell of, 141
- young of, 141
- Butterflies, 34, 59
- Camels, 258
- Capreolus bedfordi*. See Roe
- Carruthers, Mr. D., 256
- Chantos, 255, 259, 261
- Chang-i-Chien, 230, 231
- Chao Kwang Yui, 37
- Chesterton, Mr. G. K., 94
- Chinese, bargaining, 169
- carts, 22, 232, 241, 263
- caves, 61, 63-65
- cave dwellings, 21, 24, 88
- chair, 22
- children, 229
- cities, 28, 39
- civilization, 26
- contrast, 20
- crops, 33, 59, 87
- crowds, 10, 11, 50, 51, 53, 229
- cultivation, 94, 95, 96, 130
- curios, 22, 169, 170
- customs, 21, 28, 34, 43, 50, 52,
100, 101, 247, 248
- distances, 27
- dogs, 89, 103, 170, 173, 257, 258
- flowers, 33, 35, 59, 67, 80
- food, 27, 28, 30, 45
- fruit, 27, 37, 56, 97
- hunters, 60, 127, 135, 141, 182,
200, 201, 208, 212, 219
- ignorance, 43, 51, 97
- inns, 29, 50, 242, 257, 265
- milestones, 39
- Mohammedans, 40, 98, 224,
230, 231, 266
- officials, 22, 42, 70, 233
- opium smoking, 53, 92, 235, 265
- post-roads, 238, 239
- roads, 23, 25, 26, 102
- thieves, 236
- Sacred Mountains, 32
- travel, 20, 28, 52, 97, 225, 228,
241, 243, 250, 251, 252, 260,
261, 267
- travellers, 164, 165, 166
- trees, 97
- vegetables, 27, 97
- Ching-yü, 23, 221, 236, 272
- Chont, 96, 105, 130, 163, 219, 222
- Choten, 169, 173

- Christie, Mr. W., xi., 109, 164, 166,
167, 218, 219, 222
Chuguchak, 265, 269
Cloud-burst, 26
Confucius, 42
- David, Père, viii.
Deforestation, 79, 102, 199, 212,
213
Dialects, 17
Dobroff, M., 270
Drocwas, 178
Ducks, 15, 249
- Escort, 267, 268, 269
- Fensiang-fu, 87, 88, 92, 93
Fergusson, Mr. W., 76
"Fish Stone," 35
Foot binding, 21, 90, 91
"Forest of Monuments," 42
Fortune teller, 159
Fukiang-fu, 99, 100
Funerals, 101, 247
- Gazella gutturosa*, appearance of,
253
— — home of, 254
— — pursuit of, 254, 255, 260
Gazelle: *Gazella przewalskii*, 248,
249
Gobi Desert, 252, 253
Goitre, 55
Gold washing, 253
Golden-haired monkey, 171
Goral, 60, 133
Great Wall, 42, 245
- Hami, 253, 255, 256
Hankow, 15, 18, 21, 196
Hares, 261
— pygmy, 246
Heng-Shan, 32
Henné, Mr., 44, 46, 233
Honan-fu, 21, 39
Hunter, Mr. G. W., 262
Hwang-ho, 28, 227
Hwa-Shan, 32, 38
- Japan, 6, 8
Japanese children, 229
Junks, 16
- Kanchow, 249
'Kang, 242, 257, 265
Karlik Tagh, 255
Kenzanfu. *See* Sian-fu
Kia-yü-kwan, 239, 240, 249
Kiu-kiang, 15
Klemenski & Co., 271
Ko-lao-hui, 92, 220, 235
Kumul. *See* Hami
- Labrang, 166
Lamas, 106, 109
Lanchow-fu, 227, 235
Lan, Duke, 263
Laycock, Dr., 236
Leigh, Mr. J. Hamilton, 184
Leopard, 60, 130, 210
Liangchow, 246, 248
Lian-hwa Shan, 223
Ling-tai-miao, 46, 55
Little orphan, 16
Li Yuan Hung, 218
Loëss, 21, 23, 96, 97
Lydekker, Mr. R., 69, 139, 140,
196, 205
- Machi*, 146
Mammals, small, 136
Manas, 264
Mann, Mr. and Mrs., 99
Marco Polo, 26, 163, 228, 240
Matschie, Dr., 69
McNeill, D.S.O., Major Malcolm,
70
Meares, Mr., 70
Medicine collectors, 145, 148
Meiwu, 173
Milestones, 39
Miller, Mr. J., 256
Milne-Edwards, Prof. A., 69
Mink, Siberian, 80
Minshan Mountains, 70, 105, 206,
219, 223
Missionaries, 164, 196
Mohammedan Rebellion, 33, 40,
91, 97, 99, 173, 224, 250
Mohammedans, 40, 98, 224, 230,
231, 266
Mongolian Gazelle. *See* Gazelle
Mules, 22, 98, 225
Musk deer, 128, 137, 146, 197
- Native sandals, 80, 213
Nestorian tablet, 41

- Officials, 22, 42, 70, 233
 Omi-Shan, 32
 Omsk, 283
 Opium, 53, 92, 235, 265
 Owen, Mr. G. Fenwick-, vii., xi.
- Partridges, 176, 223, 261, 269
 Peking cart, 22
 Peng-ying-chia, 234
 Pereira, C.M.G., D.S.O., Major G., 262
 Peterson, Mr., 262, 270, 271, 280
 Pheasant, 163, 219, 223, 249
 — blood-, 80, 219
 Pig, wild, 60, 128
 Pinell, Father, 233
 Pocock, Mr., R. L., xi., 71, 72, 204, 205
 Post houses, 279, 281
 Poyang, Lake, 15
 Prayer wheels, 110, 130
 Prince of Choni, 106, 107, 221
 Przewalski's Gazelle. *See* Gazelle
Pseudois nahura. *See* Burchell
 Purdom, Mr. A. W., 183, 196, 210
- Revolution, The, 46, 92, 93, 196, 264
Rhinopithecus roxellanae. *See* Golden-haired monkey
 Rhododendrons, 61, 67
 Richthofen, Baron, 23, 102, 224, 246
 Roe-deer, appearance of, 135, 186
 — — beauty of, 189
 — — crossing of, 184
 — — habits of, 184-85
 — — home of, 185
 — — horns of, 184, 185
 — — hunting of, 183-87
 — — in Shensi, 59
 — — malform, 133
 — — natives and, 128
 — — numbers of, 187
 — — stalking of, 188, 189-94
 — — traps for, 136
 Ross, Mr. J., xi., 228, 233, 237
 Russian Turkestan, travel in, 270, 271, 272, 273, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280
 Rüttimeyer, Prof., 69
- Sacred Mountains, 32
 Semipalatinsk, 280
- Sand grouse, 249
 Sergiopol, 279, 280
 Serow, white-maned, 154
 — — appearance of, 154
 — — driving, 160
 — — hunting, 155, 159
 — — numbers of, 162
 — — stalking, 161
 Servants, 23, 221, 234
 Shanghai, 9
 Shansi Guild, 19
 Sheep, domestic, 176, 246
 — fat rumped, 263
 — wild, 258
 Sian-fu, 39-41, 46-49, 61, 218
 Sika, 128, 170
 Sleighs, 270, 280, 281, 282, 283
 Smith, Dr. J. A. C., x., 12, 51, 52, 54, 56, 63, 70, 89, 146, 197, 202, 203
 Snares, 136, 137
 Stevens, Mr. G. H., xi., 88, 89, 90, 91, 92
 Suchow, 249, 250
- Tai-pei-Shan, 61, 73
 Tai-Shan, 32
 Takin, appearance of, 69, 73
 — — affinity with serow, 69
 — — — musk, 69
 — — breeding of, 73
 — — colour of, 72, 78
 — — fierceness of, 60, 74
 — — food of, 73, 74
 — — habitat, 74
 — — habits of, 74, 76
 — — height of, 72
 — — home of, 66, 68, 77, 78
 — — horns of, 75
 — — hunting the, 77, 80-83
 — — in captivity, 61
 — — killed by few Europeans, 70
 — — natives and, 60, 84
 — — numbers of, 74
 — — range of, 70, 71
 — — senses of, 75
 — — varieties of, 70, 71
 — — young of, 73
 Taochow, 105, 172, 180, 181, 222
 Tao River, 103, 127
 Tay-in-fu, 89
 Tchou-ma-tien, 21
 Tents, 20
 T'ê-pu, 107, 108, 111, 117, 127, 144
 Thibet, 101, 105, 172-81
 Thibetans, 129, 175

- Thibetans, customs, 136, 144
 — houses, 131, 132
 — manners, 167
 — oxen, 170
 Ti-hua-fu, 238, 261, 262, 264
 Titao-chow, 223
 Tsinling Mountains, 28, 70
 Tsui-chi-hwang, 42
 Tungkwan, 37
 Turfan, 260

Urotragus goral. See Goral

 Van Dyke, Father, 233

 Wapiti, appearance of, 203, 204,
 205, 206
 — head of, 256
 — home of, 199, 211, 212, 213
 — horns of, 202
 — hunting of, 199, 200
 — in captivity, 206, 207

 Wapiti, numbers of, 203
 — range of, 206
 — roaring, 203
 — species of, 203, 204, 205, 206
 — stalking of, 208, 214-17
 — traps, 137
 — value of, 199, 201
 Ward, Mr. R. Kingdon, 71
 Watney, Mr., 48
 Wei River, 24, 61, 87, 96
 White, C.M.G., Mr. J. Claude, 71
 Wolves, 88, 89, 181, 252, 255, 264
 Woods, 20
 Woosung, 9, 16
 Wuchang-fu, 18, 218
 Wu-tai-Shan, 32

 Yaks, 103, 144, 174, 176
 Yangtse-kiang, 9, 13, 14

 Zappe, Mr., 70

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