

FROM YUNNAN-FU TO PEKING ALONG THE
TIBETAN AND MONGOLIAN BORDERS, including
the last journey of Brig.-Gen. George E. Pereira

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IT will be fresh in the minds of every one from the lecture given by Sir Cecil Pereira that in the winter of 1922-23 Brig.-Gen. George Pereira made his memorable journey from Peking to Lhasa on foot, and it was on his return from that expedition as he passed through Yunnan-fu that we laid our plans for another journey, which he quite intended should be his last. For myself I had long wanted to visit the Tibetan border, and thus we joined forces and left Yunnan-fu on July 17.

The journey may be divided into six parts: the first, from Yunnan-fu to Likiang; the second, Likiang to Batang; the third, from Batang across the Washi country to Kantse; the fourth, across the eastern end of the Golok country to Sotsong Gomba at the bend of the Yellow River; the fifth, Sotsong Gomba to Lanchow; the sixth, Lanchow to Paotow and thence by rail to Peking.

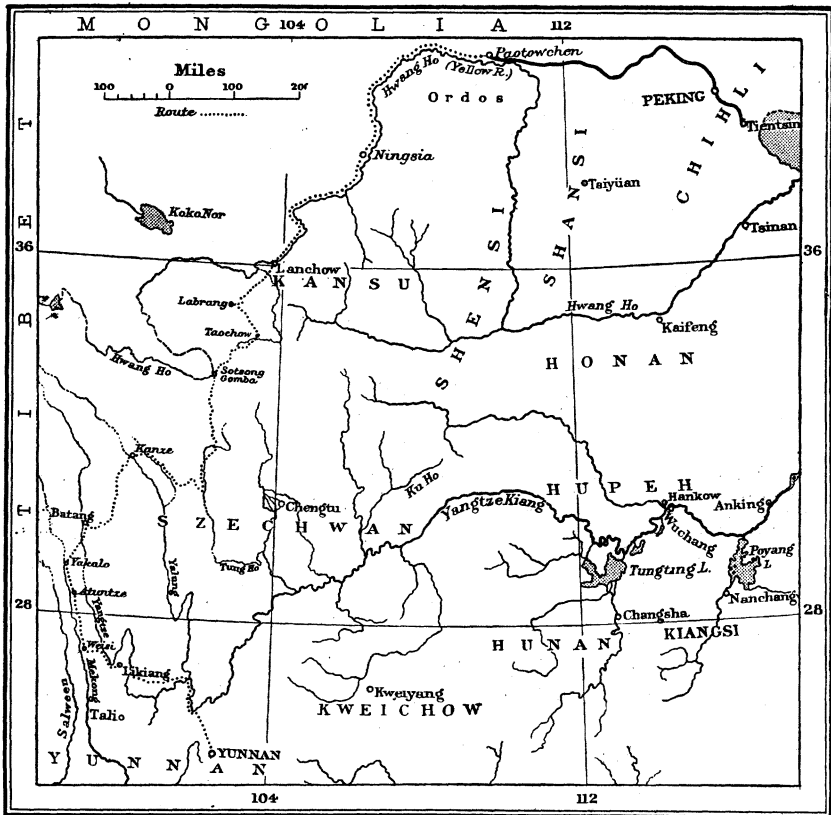
Although we each made our own notes, we divided the duties of the journey roughly as follows: The General made a compass traverse of the route, while I was responsible for the altitudes and the photography; while whenever we stopped for a rest-day, I took the opportunity of promoting goodwill by seeing patients and helping them in body and soul.

Wherever we stopped, when the people knew that I was a doctor, they flocked along with their sick and suffering imploring help. At one little market town where we rested one day I saw 250 patients, and to my mind medical work is a golden key to unlock the doors for peaceable exploration.

The first section of our journey was from Yunnan-fu to Likiang—twenty-one stages. We did not follow the usual road, which is *viâ* Talifu, but struck north-north-west to the Soling, which joins the Yangtze where it gives its most southerly bend. Taking a route about 10 miles from the right bank of the Yangtze we went almost due north, crossed the Yangtze by ferry at a little place called Hsin Chuang, and from there in five stages, going almost due west, we reached Yungpeh—a Hsien city with a good wall, but the city itself in rather a dilapidated condition.

From Yungpeh two stages took us to Tzuli, where, as far as we have been able to discover, is the only bridge spanning the Yangtze. We stayed at Tzuli village, and the next morning at 6.30 started on the last stage to Likiang. It was a beautiful morning, and 2 miles' tramp brought us in view of the great river away down below. On the face of the steep cliffs opposite was a small village, and a temple with white

walls lay glistening in the morning sun, while zigzagging upwards was the track which we should have to follow after crossing. It was a descent of 1500 feet to the river-bank where the dark brown waters, eddying and swirling in great whirlpools, passed under the bridge. It is remarkable that this mighty river, with a course of over 2000 miles, has apparently only this one bridge—a suspension bridge with two pairs of six chains slinging the boards, with a railing along the side, the whole in a very fair state of repair. It is true that there used to be another near Chaotung,



Sketch-map of Dr. Gordon Thompson's route from Yunnan-fu to Peking.

but on account of raids from the independent country to the north whereby Chinese were carried off into slavery, the Chinese broke down the bridge, with the result that at Tzuli is the only one left.

After crossing the bridge we began to climb the hill and cliff—a tremendous pull up of over 5000 feet, passed through the village of Tui Lao Koh and reached the top at 12 noon. From there it was a steady gradient down into the Likiang plain.

We arrived at Likiang at 7.30, and the first section of our journey was over. Here we learned that Mr. D'Arcy Weatherbe, who was travelling

by the main road, had been captured by brigands a few days before, and we felt thankful that we had come by this unfrequented route, and so missed the robber band. At Likiang we engaged Tibetan muleteers for the next three weeks' journey.

It should never be forgotten that more than half of the inhabitants of the Province of Yunnan are not Chinese but tribes-people, each with distinctive language, dress, and customs, quite different from the Chinese. Of the tribes with which we came in contact during our journey probably the most numerous were the Mosu, or, as they call themselves, the Nashih. Where the Mosu came from is somewhat obscure, as they do not appear to be connected with the Tibetan tribes on the west side of the Min river.

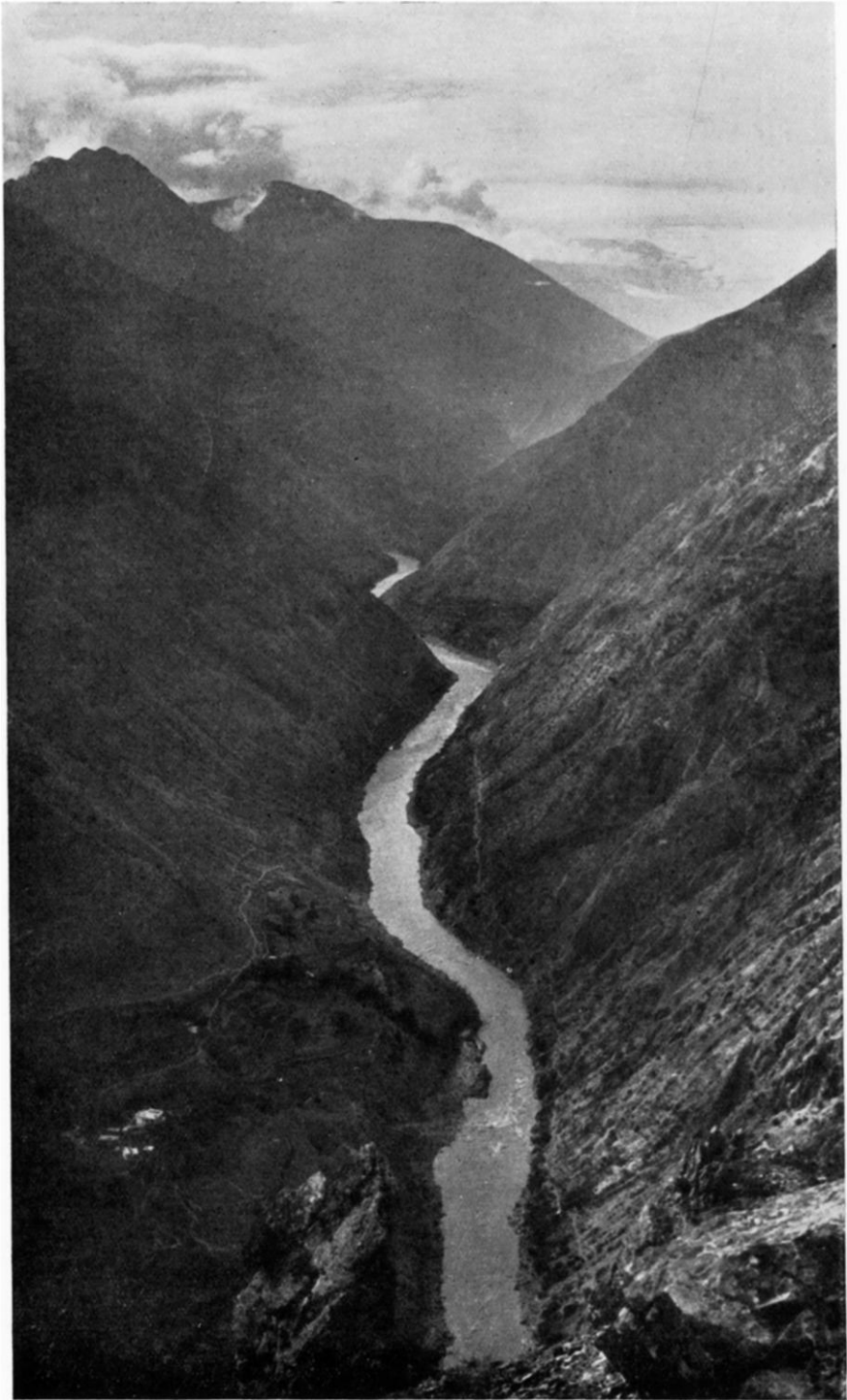
Likiang is the old Mosu capital, and inscriptions relate how, nearly four hundred years ago, the Mosu king drove back the Tibetans, who were encroaching on their territory, and established themselves right along the valley of the Mekong. In the eighteenth century the Mosu king allied himself with the viceroy of Szechwan, hoping to become paramount over the district from Batang to Likiang, but the Chinese, following their custom prevalent even to this day of trying to set off one party against another, divided the country into two parts and attached one to Yunnan and the other to Szechwan. The last of the Mosu chiefs—a woman—welcomed a Chinese official, to whom she practically handed over the sovereignty, and the sub-chieftains were retained in their official posts to assist in the administration of the country. The Mosu, or Nashih, people are thus to be found right up the valley of the Mekong and in the country round Likiang.

The Lisu tribes-people are more aboriginal in character. Driven up to the hills, they inhabit pretty much the same region, but are scattered in the fastnesses of the mountains, while in addition there are Loutze, La-ma-jen, with an infiltration of Tibetans from across the frontier.

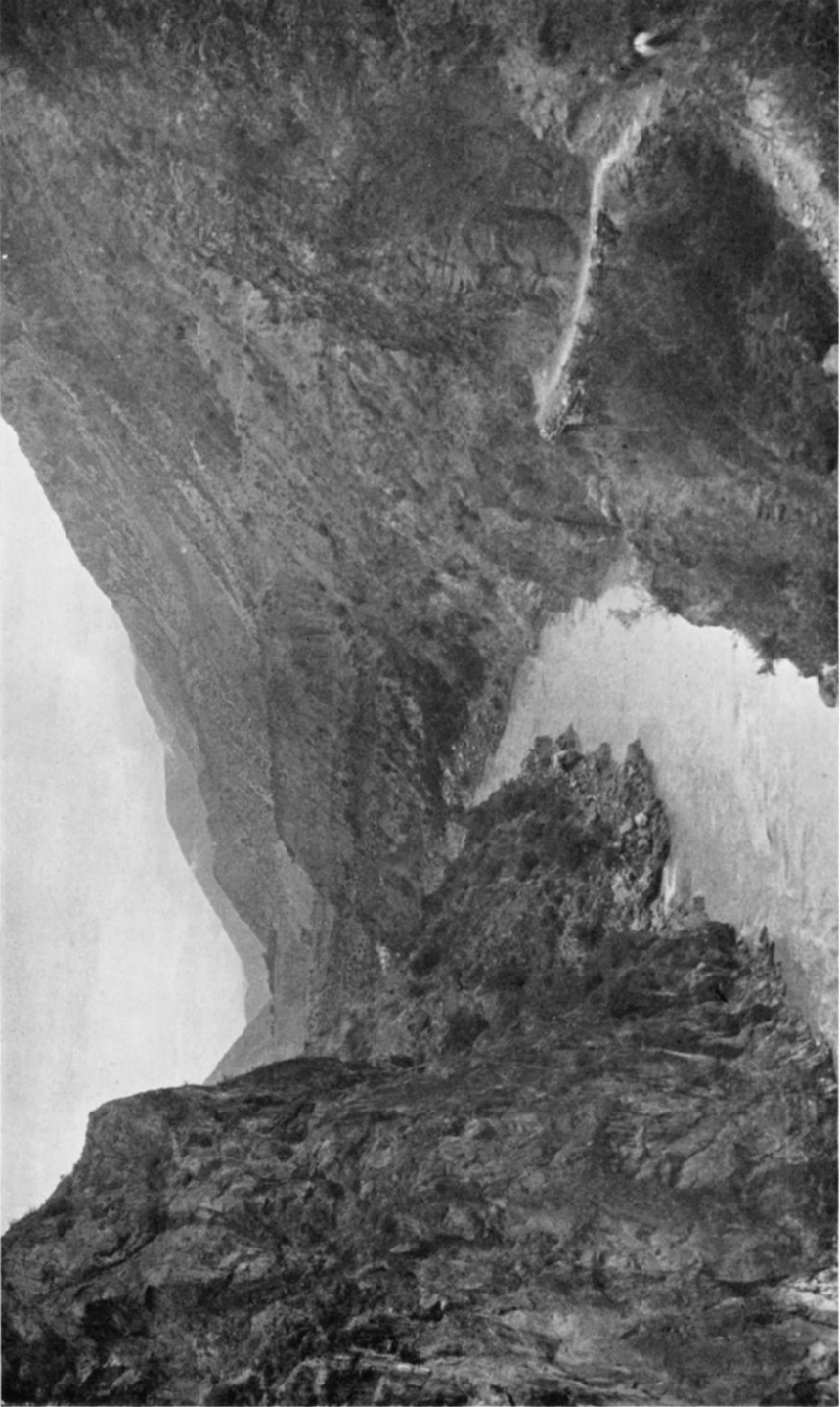
I was interested to notice the presence of cowrie shells, especially among the Lisu people. On inquiry I found that they had come from Burma and India; that they are valued at 100 to the Chinese tael, are sometimes used for barter, and are largely used for decoration of the headresses of the girls, being looked upon as a kind of dowry.

We left Likiang after a few days' rest, and crossed the divide between the Yangtze and Mekong by Litiping—a beautiful little plateau about 5 miles in length, carpeted with flowers, with pine woods along its border and great flocks of sheep grazing on the pasture land.

The valley of the Mekong, with its rope bridges, its narrow tracks, and its landslides, has been so frequently described that I will pass rapidly over this part of the journey. We were fortunate in that although we were travelling in the rainy season we did not have such excessive rains as to make the track impassable; but at the time of our journey there was a severe form of malignant malaria prevalent along the Mekong



THE MEKONG VALLEY LOOKING SOUTH



THE MEKONG NEAR ATUNTZE

valley, which the Chinese call the "chang chih," and which is generally very rapidly fatal. Halfway up the Mekong valley our chief Tibetan muleteer developed this malignant malaria and, in spite of intra-muscular injections of quinine, died within thirty-six hours. We had to bury him by the roadside.

We were glad to get away on our journey again after the delay caused by this fatality, and found our last few days before reaching Atuntze very trying. The mules were getting played out, and the road, in places only a handspan wide, was made all the more dangerous by the rains, and a slip of a mule would have meant straight down to the Mekong and the loss of one of our loads. The day before reaching Atuntze one of the mules died, and another was so exhausted that it had to be left behind at a wayside Tibetan house, the occupant giving a sum equivalent to ten shillings for it in the hope that it might recover. A few days' rest in Atuntze, which is 10,300 feet above sea-level, was most welcome.

Leaving Atuntze on September 5, a further climb of 1180 feet brought us to the Chu La, 11,480 feet, and from there the road makes a steady descent, following the Dong River until it again joins the Mekong, the left bank of which we followed for four days until we arrived at Yen Ching (the salt wells) and Yakalo. Each day of this part of our journey was memorable for the magnificence of the scenery. On the third day I have notes as follows in my diary :

"After reaching our highest point, 10,199 feet, we had a most glorious panorama. Behind and to our left was the great sacred mountain of K'a-Ka-Pu, now about 35 miles distant, the top covered with snow. From this ran the range of the Mekong-Salween divide, also snow covered. Further north a great peak stood out glistening white in the sun—this mountain is Ta Mi Yung. Below the peaks were banks of white cloud, lower down below the snow-line the reds and greens of the hillsides sloped sharply down to the Mekong, visible as a chocolate-brown streak away below, with patches of vivid green in the lower valleys, where there was land to be cultivated."

On our sixth day we crossed the frontier between Yunnan and Szechwan, and our escort, which on leaving Yunnan-fu was thirty soldiers well armed with repeating rifles, had dwindled down to an old woman, who carried in one hand our precious hurricane lamp and with the other held my pony while I was taking a photograph or carried the official paper to hand on to the headman of the next village.

The salt-wells at Yakalo are on the banks of the Mekong, and the openings of the wells are covered by the river during the rainy season, so that work has to be suspended for several months each year. The brine is drawn from the wells and then poured out to evaporate on the flat terraces built specially for this purpose.

After three days' rest at Yakalo, where we enjoyed the hospitality of Père Goré, who not only provided us with most useful information, but

also arranged for further transport, we started for Batang. It was first necessary to cross the Yangtze-Mekong divide, which we did by the Cha-La pass. This we made 14,130 feet—a stiff climb—5500 feet above Yakalo and 6800 feet above the Mekong River. From the Cha-La one could look back to the Mekong basin with the snow-capped peaks of the Mekong-Salween divide and forward to the Yangtze watershed. Our route was now a gradual descent with one or two smaller passes, in one case rising to 13,111 feet, and the Bong-la 13,054 feet, until at last as we emerged from the Bum valley the Yangtze could be distinguished in the distance away below as a shining ribbon with numerous bends.

The track now descended to the Yangtze, and we stayed at Gunra, a little village 7997 feet above sea-level, and about 150 feet above the river. From near Gunra, looking north, there was an excellent view of the bends, and our route kept close to the right bank until we crossed by the ferry at Drubalong, where we spent the night. After following the left bank for another 13 miles we slowly left the river and crossing a spur of hills were in the valley of the Batang River, and a few hours later were in Batang itself, fifty-five days after leaving Yunnan-fu.

Batang is a small town with from two hundred to four hundred families. We made the altitude 8276 feet. Although the Chinese have a small garrison there, they are hemmed in on all sides by the Tibetans. This is also the case at Litang, halfway between Batang and Tatsienlu. Batang is on one of the main trade routes between China and Lhasa, but although at present most of the trade goes from Tatsienlu by the northern route, yet there is no doubt that Batang is of considerable importance.

A monastery of the Bon sect was founded in A.D. 600, and the district was conquered in turn by Mongols and the Mosu—the Tibetans drove out the Mosu in A.D. 1650, and later the Chinese came into and kept possession, though the population is almost entirely Tibetan.

In 1905 the Chinese Amban, returning from Lhasa, was killed just outside Batang, and in revenge Chao erh fung, the viceroy of Szechwan, destroyed the monastery and beheaded the chief Lama. The Lamasery belongs to the Red sect.

Between Batang and Kantse, our next objective, lies the territory of three important Tibetan tribes—the Lengkashi, the Washi, and the Nyarong. It had been our intention to reach Kantse by a circuitous route more to the north, parallel to the Yangtze, which had been traversed before by Mr. Eric Teichmann, but the Tibetan magistrate at Gartok refused permission, and as it was just inside the Tibetan frontier this route was therefore ruled out.

The usual road due east to Tatsienlu *via* Litang was closed by brigand bands of Lengkashi, who were reported to be attacking Litang, and as

we were quite determined not to return by the way that we had come, the suggestion was made that we should attempt to cross the Washi country. This was the more attractive as the Washi country had not previously been crossed by Europeans, yet it was known that the sources of several large tributaries of the Yalung, which in turn pours its waters into the Yangtze, were in this hitherto unexplored country.

With the kind help of Mr. MacLeod and Dr. Hardy of the Tibetan Christian Mission, who had been of service to the Queen of the Washi tribe when she was a fugitive in Batang, we secured Washi tribesmen who expressed their willingness to assist us to cross their country. The Chinese commander of the garrison did his best to stop us making the journey, but after General Pereira had interviewed him and written him a very stiff letter, he gave way on condition that we each signed and sealed a document, in which we stated that we were going against his advice and relieved him of all responsibility for our lives and property.

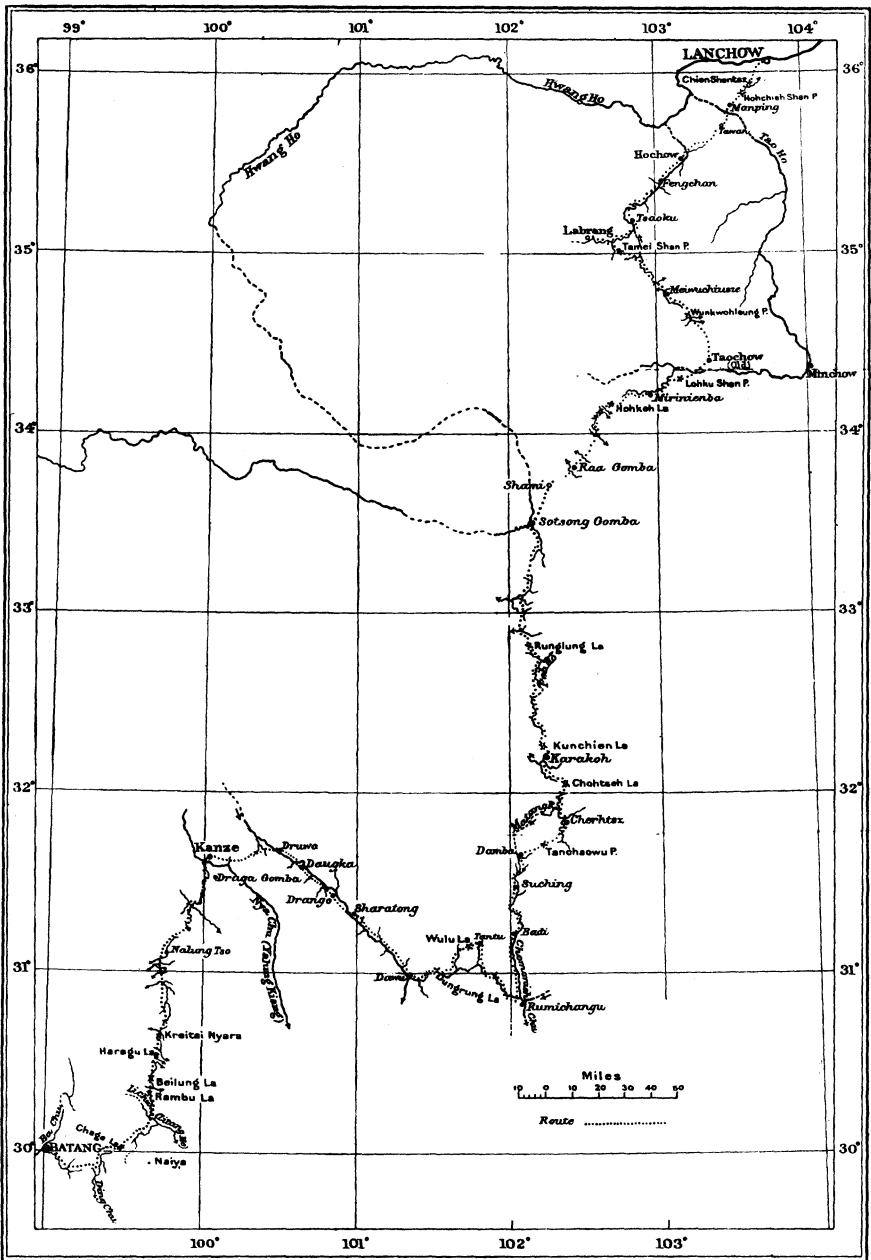
The Washi are divided into three districts, called the Monia or Mao Ya, the Dei Yung or Ko tun, and the Tsong Hsi, each with its separate chief, but all owing a loose allegiance to the Queen.

The Queen of the Washi was written to by MacLeod, and replied that her people might take us to Kantse; she *thought* the road was all right, but it was best to keep our eyes open.

Twelve days were spent in Batang making preparations. As it was all nomad country we had improvised tents of Chinese calico, and at last, on October 5, started with four riding-ponies, fifteen yaks for baggage, and six Washi, mounted and armed.

It was raining as we drew out of Batang and made our way up the valley of the Ba Chu. Our course lay south-east, following the Litang road, and as we entered the gorge with its high rocky hills, at first bare but later covered with trees, it did indeed seem gloomy in the extreme. Only a short distance from Batang we passed the place where the Chinese Amban returning from Lhasa to Peking was killed in 1905. It is marked by an inscription cut in the rock. We crossed the stream four times by rickety bridges, and Pereira said that by the one at the top of the valley a handful of men could hold up an army. The stream, flooded by the rain, roared on its way, and it was difficult to get the yaks across. During this first day we travelled only $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles, but mounted 1260 feet, and at night stayed at a little place called Militing, where was the last house before we got across the Washi country.

The next day, again following the Ba Chu, we saw the traces and passed the place where four days previously a fight took place between the soldiers of the Batang garrison and one of the lamas who was wandering about the country raiding the weaker villages, attacking travellers, and incidentally trying to pay off an old grudge which he had against another of the powerful lamas in the district. Several of the yaks were



Sketch-map of the route from Batang to Lanchow.

NOTE.—The longitude of the great bend of the Hwang Ho is from the observations of Capt. de Fleusselle on the expedition of Major D'Ollone (*Geo. Journ.* 36, 357, September 1910).

particularly obstinate during this day's journey, and one of them took a plunge into the stream with my precious box of photographic material and a leather box containing my warm clothing. However, shortly after we reached a good camping-place at 12,321 feet the sun came out, and we camped at Pangdramo, a sheltered spot where were the ruins of two houses. I was able to empty the saturated boxes and dry off the contents in the sun. The next morning we were off at 7 a.m., and after 6 miles going almost due east we branched off from the Litang main road, and, still steadily mounting, began to get out of the deep and thickly wooded valleys and above the tree-line. We ascended a wide-open valley till at last we came to the pass called by the Chinese Ta Sa Shan and by the Tibetans Tsangbunga La.

There was some snow on the ground, and a cutting wind was blowing over the pass. We wanted to get the height by the boiling-point. The caravan went on while we were fixing up the apparatus, but on attempting to light the lamp match after match went out with the wind until only one was left. I persuaded Pereira and the Tibetan boy to lie on the ground, then I stripped off my raincoat and threw it over them with the hypsometer inside. The last match was struck inside this tent, succeeded, and the altitude proved to be 15,610 feet.

As we crossed the pass, twin peaks with some snow on their summits came into sight, and were typical of this wild and barren country. After a descent of 1700 feet we camped by a beautiful little stream, a tributary of what was sometimes called by our Washi Tibetans the Ding Chu and at other times the Ta So.

According to the map "Tibet and Adjacent Countries," the Ding Chu is shown flowing past Ta So. This therefore was probably the Ding Chu, and the next day we followed it up to its source at the pass called the Chaga La

There was some doubt as to whether this so-called Ding Chu was not the Lamaya, but we were forced to the conclusion that the Lamaya, into which the Ding Chu is always described as pouring its waters, almost certainly takes its origin in the southern slopes of the Nai Ya snow range, as suggested in Bacot's map of the Pic Desgodins.

The Ding Chu valley was well wooded, and along this part of the route there were the remains of houses which had been destroyed by Tibetan raiders. As we made our way up this valley our Washi headman, who with another of the Yak drivers had been out scouting, came to tell us that he had heard that the Tibetans were attacking the Chinese garrison at Litang, and that probably the Lengkashi tribesmen, with whom the Washi were not very friendly, would be on the war-path. However, he thought it was best to go on, but keep a sharp look-out by scouts sent on ahead.

About two-thirds of the way up the Ding Chu valley we obtained a good view of two snow-covered peaks between which the track from

Litang to the Lengkashi country enters their territory. Fortunately, we did not encounter the Lengkashi raiders.

The pass called the Chaga La is 14,930 feet high, and not only forms the Ding Chu-Li Chu divide, but also is the boundary between the Batang district and the Washi country. We were now right in the country of the Monia Washi and near the sources of origin of the Li Chu or Litang River.

As we descended from the pass called the Chaga La, we followed a small stream which in turn emptied into the Shara Chu, one of the three main sources of the Litang River. By this tributary of the Ding Chu we pitched what we called our Sum-ba-a-la camp, 1700 feet below the pass and 13,900 feet above sea-level. Looking back up the valley, bare wild rocky moraines with patches of low scrub characterized the view. Looking forward, in the distance running almost at right angles to this valley was a high snow-range, with Nai Ya as its highest point, forming part of the system of which the Pic Desgodins is probably the highest point, variously estimated at from 19,000 to 25,000 feet high. The Shara Chu takes origin on the northern slopes of the Nai Ya snow-range, and here we saw our first Washi nomad encampment. There were about twenty-two tents—twenty black ones and two white lamas' tents—with about six hundred yaks, besides sheep and goats. We crossed the river and passed through the edge of the camp where the sheep and yaks were grazing. With considerable difficulty, owing to the opposition of our Washi yak-drivers, I secured a photograph which shows this camp with the Nai Ya snow-range and the origin of the Shara Chu, one of the sources of the Li Chiu.

The valley, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile wide, was grassland with good pasturage, but no trees. We chose a sheltered spot a little lower down the valley and camped, the altitude being 13,450 feet. It was October 9, and the penetrating cold winds from the north swept the valleys. From this date we had practically no fuel except yak-dung.

The next day we moved on down the valley about 4 miles, and after crossing by a ford 25 feet wide by 2 feet deep to the western side of the Shara Chu, camped close to one or two nomad tents, whose owners were friends of our guides. Our Washi yak-drivers took this opportunity of exchanging three of their yaks which were getting somewhat tired, and we were all glad of a short stage and a day's rest.

As we crossed the Shara Chu we noticed a main track going off to the east, and were told that this was the small road to Litang. Our route was now more directly north. We emerged from the Shara Chu valley into a plateau with low hills covered with a coarse grass; higher up was limestone rock, and away to the west a snow-peak called Dun Sha. In this grassy Monia plateau three streams—the Monia Chu from the north-west, the Heimu Chu from the north, and the Shara Chu from the south-west—united to form the Li Chu, or Litang, which flows for 300

miles to its junction with the Yalung, a tributary of the Yangtze. The Monia plateau was about 8 miles each way; on the higher grassy slopes were herds of gazelle, while on the lower parts of the plateau near the small rivers were numerous black tents and thousands of sheep and yaks. In one encampment alone I counted twenty-seven tents.

The Monia plateau and the valley of the Litang river is the main centre of the Monia section of the Washi. Unfortunately we did not see the Queen of the Washi, as she was half a day's journey down the valley. We pushed on due north up the valley of the Heimu Chu till we camped at the foot of the pass called Rambu La. It was a barren spot and bitterly cold. Just as we were turning in I heard a gentle patter on the tent, and found it was snowing hard and blowing from the north. During the night I heard Pereira calling for the Tibetan boy, and looking out I saw that the front of our flimsy tent had collapsed with the weight of snow and the wind. It was fixed up somehow, and soon morning dawned. We struck camp at 7.30 a.m. and struggled up a long steep climb till we reached the top of the Rambu La—about 14,400 feet. Here we had a most wonderful view: looking south we could see range upon range, and in the far distance a very high snow-peak, probably the Pic Desgodins. Northward was a valley with hills surrounding it covered with snow and a river flowing to the east, probably a tributary of the Ho Chu.

I tried to get the boiling-point at the Rambu La, but unfortunately our last bottle of methylated spirit was found to be broken, and in spite of trying to get the tiny cup of water to boil by a continuous supply of matches and some of the fur out of my fur lining, we had at last to give it up and take 14,400 feet as the approximate height.

A descent into the valley and a climb up the opposite side brought us to the next pass—the Beilung La, about 400 feet higher than the Rambu La. This was a very narrow pass, and northward from the top was an amphitheatre of hills with a small stream running out at its eastern side and a high rocky peak to the west. We skirted this circle of hills and crossed another ridge by a pass called the Tachi.

Between the two passes Pereira's pony went lame and something went wrong with his compass. However, one of the Tibetans let him have his pony and I supplied him with a prismatic compass, and so we managed to get along and keep our records. I spent an hour or two fixing up the hypsometer to work with a candle instead of methylated spirit, and found that the boiling-point gave the altitude of our camp as 14,470 feet. It was a bitterly cold night, snow and a strong north wind; hardly any fuel to be obtained, and Pereira beginning to feel distinctly unwell.

We continued down the valley, crossed a small river flowing west—evidently a tributary of the Ho Chu—and then continued across a great open valley now covered with snow. About $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles from the start we

crossed the Haragu La (about 14,400 feet), and descended a few hundred feet down a valley into a big open plateau surrounded by mountains except at a gap at the north side and another at the south, where a small river, the Tzeku Chu, found its way in and out. The whole of this plateau, about 2 miles wide and 7 long, was one large grassy peaty surface with black mud in between the hummocks of grass, very tiring for the animals. There was no sign of life except a few gazelle on the hillside.

We left the plateau by the gap on the north, a low pass called the Creitei Nyara, and after another mile and a half camped in a valley called Jouriku. Again the only fuel obtainable was dried yak-dung, and as all the cooking had to be done in the open, often with snow falling, the little dough cakes which the boy contrived to make were literally dough in the centre, and these and everything else tasted of the smoke from the abominable fuel, and Pereira was ill and was feeling it difficult to take food of any kind. Several inches of snow fell in the night, but in the morning the sun came out and it was a little warmer. We pushed on down the valley and then over a low pass—the Jyarai La, about 13,650 feet.

We had seen no sign of human beings for several days except the remains of old nomad camps, but just before reaching the foot of the pass a Chinese, who had asked if he might join our party from Batang to Kantse, attempted to take a short cut across a spur of hill and through a small valley. He rejoined us and, trembling with fright, told us that he had seen the dead body of a man bound hand and foot close to his path. Our head Washi muleteer immediately took the best pony and went scouting ahead, but nothing happened, and although our path now went through a narrow defile with great cliffs on each side, we crossed the pass without any trouble. The Washi seemed to think the man was probably the victim of one of the blood feuds for which the Tibetans are famous.

Another low pass, the Sama La (13,750 feet), was crossed without difficulty, and we began to get down to the Lung Chu plateau. The valley of this river was quite deserted, but we passed a big camping-ground where I obtained a picture of one of the stone fireplaces which are to be found all over the nomad country. When they strike camp either to move their grazing-ground or to get to lower levels for the winter months, the fireplace is left behind, and is thus ready when they return the next season and erect their tents in the same place.

Before crossing the Sama La we had a sharp fall of snow, and on coming down into the plateau, which was about 6 miles long by 2 wide, it again began to snow heavily, and we had quite a blizzard from the north. The plateau is like sponge, with the usual black peat-like surface about 15 inches thick broken into small islands with patches of boggy water in between. It was difficult to see owing to the blizzard, and intensely



THE MEKONG NEAR PAH-TIH



UPPER VALLEY OF THE YANGTZE NEAR BATANG

cold. However, we made our way slowly across to the west side, and though it was still snowing reached a little firmer ground, pitched our tents, put oil-sheets on the ground, and tried to make ourselves as snug as our calico tents would allow.

The General was very unwell. He tried to eat some soft-boiled rice with milk; but it was of no use. Everything was smoked and hardly anything was cooked. The boy had a frightful job to keep his fire going in the snow and wind. Fortunately, before leaving my wife had put in one or two special things in case of emergency, so with great difficulty I produced some food free from smoke which he could take. Thereafter I kept him going with a simple invalid diet, some of which he managed to retain.

We struck camp in several inches of snow, and at 8 a.m. were under way. A little later, after crossing a shoulder of hill, we entered a valley bearing to the north, and after a steady descent came in sight of two chorten at the end of a good-sized plain about 5 miles by 2, with a number of tents, sheep, and yaks. We were now approaching the region of the Nyarong or Chantui nomads, and our Washi guides were uncertain about the reception we should get. The latest news was that there was a band of forty to fifty robbers between us and Kantse. Pereira asked if we could go by any other route so as to miss them, but the reply was "No, there was no other road." We talked it over, and as I could see that his condition was getting serious, I suggested that we should risk going straight on through and not delay, urging that in robber country it is always good to be ahead of the news about one's own caravan. Heavy clouds everywhere looked like more snow, and I felt that with Pereira failing the sooner we could reach some kind of place with four walls and a roof and a good fire for warmth and cooking, the better. We pushed on, and passing a spur of hill entered a valley, which we mounted steadily till we reached a pass called the Chaolung La (12,885 feet); down the other side, past a Nyarong nomad camp of about six tents, where the dogs were very fierce, and on till we camped in a valley at a height of 12,835 feet, the lowest camp we had had for ten days. The days were getting short, and night soon fell. We had just turned in when suddenly it began to blow hard, and I really thought the tent would either be blown away or be torn from the guy ropes. The pegs were driven in, and then it began to rain, and this turned to snow. However, the night passed, and we were off next morning at 7.30 a.m.

From this point on during the next day's journey we crossed five small rivers, but all were flowing westward and were apparently going direct to the Yangtze. The Creitei Nyara was thus the pass over the Hochu-Yangtze divide.

Two of these small rivers flowing westward take origin in small lakes; the first called Nanlung Tso, about 1 mile long by $\frac{3}{4}$ mile wide, was very pretty, and almost like Lake Louise in the Rockies. We crossed a

shoulder of hills called the Tsaimi La, and followed a larger river called the Chugu Chu to the second lake, the Nalu Tso about $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles long by 1 mile wide. Here we camped; the altitude was only 13,111 feet, so it was more comfortable, and the General seemed distinctly a little better.

The following morning, just as we were breaking camp, a great herd of about one thousand yaks with Nyarong tribesmen went past. They were changing their grazing-ground. A young girl with her hair done in numerous plaits woven into round silver plate-like ornaments, with her brightly coloured high-top boots and sheepskin coat and cap, made a picturesque figure as she rode at the rear of the herd. The General, using the Tibetan boy as interpreter, inquired about the road we were to follow. They gave us good news, for they said that the road was clear of bandits. We followed up the Nalu Chu to its source at the foot of the Yangtze-Hochu divide, and crossed by a pass called the Momu La (14,244 feet). Beyond were great rolling stony slopes gradually descending to the valley of the Ho Chu. In the distance could be seen a high snow-covered range running north-west to south-east, which formed the Hochu-Yalung divide—evidently the continuation of the big range described by Teichman in 1922 as beginning south of Jyekundo and continuing down to the south-east, first as the Mekong-Yangtze and later as the Yangtze-Yalung divide, continuing to the neighbourhood of Tatsienlu and the Yunnan border. Approaching this range from the south, one rocky peak called Nashi or Dumbola—covered with snow, but so perpendicular that the rocky face could be plainly seen—reminded one of the design for the new Liverpool Cathedral, for the peak rose in the centre of other rocky crags like the huge tower that is soon to be seen at Liverpool. The track we were following now gradually descended, and soon we were at our camping-place, 13,790 feet.

We were off at 7.30 the next morning, going steadily down to the valley of the Ho Chu, whose headwaters were formed by the confluence of four small streams, the two principal being the Aseyindu Chu and the Luni Chu; the moraines were noteworthy for the extraordinary size and number of poised rocks on the crests of the lower hills forming the valley boundaries. After crossing the Ho Chu we entered a small side valley which led round the base of Dumbola, and finally after a very stiff climb we crossed the Hochu-Yalung divide at the pass known as Luma La, which we made to be 15,152 feet. There was deep snow on the pass, and as I was getting the boiling-point Pereira came up. He had ridden the pony nearly all the way, but the last 200 feet of the pass was in such deep snow that he had to get off and do it on foot. He seemed in good spirits, for this was, we were sure, our last high pass, and as he went by me he called out to say how much better he felt that morning. After I had taken some photographs I followed him down the valley, a little east of north, until at last we camped at Rajisumdo, under the shadow

of a great mass of grey rock which towered above us crowned with snow and streaked with yellow.

The next morning we started at 7.45. Pereira seemed a little better, and had some milk and cream cracker biscuits for breakfast—more than he had had for days. I took the precaution to fill a thermos with hot chocolate, for though we hoped to reach Kantse, I wanted to be prepared in case of any delay in crossing the river Yalung. It was a weird valley that we were following: moraines with great landslides, the broken rock showing out through the snow, which was still falling; driving banks of mist rolling up the valley, sometimes obscuring everything, sometimes lifting and revealing great rocky crags towering up above us. At 11.30 the valley opened out, and on the hill opposite was a lamasery called Dorga Gomba, with a peculiar lot of hovels, looking very much like cave dwellings built with mud walls on the side of the hill just below.

At 12.5 I was with the muleteers accompanying the first lot of nine yaks when I was told that Pereira was on the ground. I turned back and found that he had had to get off his pony owing to a sudden attack of severe pain. We were only $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Kantse, so I gave orders for the caravan to go on and get across the river Yalung, while the Tibetan boy remained with us. The General was very collapsed, but after fifty minutes he seemed easier, and insisted on going on. With difficulty we got him on to a pony and made our way slowly down to the river. We crossed by the coracle ferry, and then, after fixing up his camp bed and lashing the tent poles on to the sides for carrying, he rested comfortably. The pain became less, and we tried to get passing Tibetans to act as bearers up to the town, only $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles away. It was of no use—not even our Washi yak-drivers, who had been with us from Batang, would help to carry a sick man. As time was getting on and it would soon be dark, I sent the Tibetan boy on ahead to find a house for us to stay, and then, as the General thought he could manage on the pony, we lifted him into the saddle and slowly made our way into the town. At 5.20 we arrived at our destination. His bed was soon ready, and in a few minutes we had him snug with hot-water bottles and every comfort that we could give him; but he was very weak. At a quarter to nine he asked for the light to be put out and he would try to sleep. After thanking me for all my trouble he dozed a little and wandered in his sleep, sometimes talking in Chinese, sometimes in English. At 1 a.m. I helped him to turn on to his side, and he talked to me quite rationally; but after a few minutes there was a sudden change, he became unconscious, and ten minutes later he passed away peacefully in my arms. So died a brave soldier, a remarkable traveller, and a devout Christian.

The Tibetans dispose of their dead either by throwing the body into the river or by putting it out to be eaten by vultures; but the Chinese traders in Kantse had a small plot of ground which they used as a

cemetery. The Chinese official offered me a site for a grave, and so I laid him to rest there, under the shadow of the Great Kantse Lamasery and within sight of the great snow-range forming the Ho chu lung divide. Sixteen Tibetans carried the coffin to the grave.

After Pereira's death I decided to continue the journey as we had planned it, aiming to cross part of the Golok country and reach the Yellow River either along the southern part of the bend or at Sotsong Gomba, at the bend of the river. On making careful inquiries I found that the Goloks directly north of Kantse were at war with the Seta nomads, and also they were those who had made the most stubborn resistance when Ma-Chi, the Muhammadan Chinese general, had subdued their country and forced the rest of the Goloks, including the Golok Queen, into submission. These die-hards had settled down on the southern bank of the bend of the Yellow River and had entirely stopped all traffic from Kantse to the country due north, waylaying and plundering any Chinese who attempted to enter their territory. I therefore decided to adopt our alternative plan, which was to go east for a certain distance and then strike north for the bend of the Yellow River, crossing the eastern end of the Golok country. I was fortunate in securing the services of a Muhammadan trader who had been across this country before, and on October 25 said farewell to Kantse and was once more on the road. It seemed strange to be alone, but my time was fully occupied, for in addition to seeing patients when we stopped for a rest, I also was kept busy making a prismatic compass traverse of the route, getting the altitudes, and trying to keep a photographic record.

I followed the usual route towards Tatsienlu for six days until we reached Dawu. Here I got Ula transport and attempted to strike across to Suching. On leaving Dawu I continued along the Tatsienlu road for 8 miles and then entered a side valley going north-east, at the top of which was a pass to Dungrung La. There were numerous hot springs in this valley, and the stream which we were following disappeared and reappeared in the most extraordinary manner, part of its course being below ground. We camped at the foot of the pass at 13,167 feet. Heavy snow fell during the night, and the next morning the pass was several feet deep. It was a hard struggle crossing. I made the altitude 15,316 feet. Steadily we descended from this, the divide between the Sha Chu or Nya Chu and the Taking rivers. The village where we lodged for the night was only 10,755 feet, so we had come down 5000 feet, and it was much warmer.

The next morning we followed up the Kula River, aiming for the little village of Tan tu. To get there we had to cross the pass called the Wulu La. It was November 3, and as we went up the snow got deeper, and the Tibetan drivers declared that the pass was impossible. One or two of the yaks went down in the deep snow, and it was difficult



CONFLUENCE OF SUMBA-A-LA RIVER AND DING CHU



TWIN PEAKS AT TSANGBUNGA LA



LOOKING SOUTH TO TACHI LA, WASHI COUNTRY



THE HOCHU-YALUNG DIVIDE

to know where the track was. It was a knife-edge pass, and with a bitter wind and driving snow was one of the most difficult we had to tackle. Every few steps we had to stop and rest ourselves and the animals, but at last the top was reached and with great difficulty the boiling-point obtained. The altitude was 14,770 feet. Then the snow stopped falling, the mists lifted, and I got a bearing with the compass. It was a descent of 4500 feet from the pass until we reached Tan tu, a village of sixty families, where the Tu Sz, or headman, is a woman. I managed to persuade this old lady to let me photograph her, with the two lamas who were her private domestic chaplains.

There was such difficulty in getting transport direct to Suching that I decided to follow the small Tan tu River down to near Rumichango, and then the Taking River up to Suching and Damba. Ula were obtainable along this route, but the road was so narrow and difficult along the side of the river that pack-animals could not be used, and our riding-animals had difficulty along some of the track. At Damba I took a course towards the north-east, crossing the Tan Chao Wu pass at 14,130 feet, and reached the Taking River, here called the Matang River, at Cherh Tsz. The house of the Tu Sz at Cherh Tsz was more like a small fort and typical of several which we saw *en route*. From Cherh Tsz on to Sotsong Gomba our continual difficulty was transport. We had decided to hire animals as we went along, but the difficulty was that the drivers would only go two or three days' journey and then wished to return to their homes. The reason was obvious, that as soon as they got away from their own people they did not feel safe. At Cherh Tsz the representative of the Tu Sz came and wanted me to go *viâ* Somo and Matang. I asked the reason, and found that there was a feud between two of the lamaseries on our route, the one two days, and the other four days north, and they thought we would not get through.

I put on my severest look and said, "Well, if we alter our route I will make inquiries as we go along, and if I find it was not necessary when I get through I shall be very annoyed," and I tried to look as if my annoyance were a most awful thing to reckon with. After further discussion they gave way, and we started thirty-six hours later. My endeavour was to keep as far west as possible, and we therefore followed the Matang river westward for about 4 miles, and then struck north up the Talung Chao valley until we crossed the divide between the Talung and the Runga rivers by the pass called the Choh Tseh La (13,676 feet). From the top of this pass, far away to the north-west on a bearing of 120°, a high mountain peak could be seen standing out in marked contrast to the rest of the mountain range of which it was the highest point. I came to the conclusion that this was Mount Yabainkara, in the Bayan-tukmu range.

The track now followed the hillside until after a descent of nearly 3000 feet Tatsang Gomba was reached. This was a lamasery with

about two hundred lamas. They had never seen a foreigner before, and were very suspicious. At first we were told that it was quite easy to get yaks for the next two or three days, but after I had paid off the ones which had come from Cherh Tsz the acting headman, who is of course in the power of the lamas, became very difficult, and we could get no one who would provide us with pack-animals, while the only shelter we could get was a shed where refuse was dumped. It was a most awkward position: our retreat was cut off, and we could not go forward. However, by tact and courtesy and by the gift of one or two small presents I managed to gain the friendship of the Living Buddha of the lamasery, and he gave me a room in his house to stay in, but would not help us with transport. Then a happy idea occurred to me. I showed him some photographs and offered to take his picture. He consented on condition that it was done on the flat roof of the house where none of the other lamas could see. The photograph was taken, a print hurried through and duly presented, and this turned the scale. Our host personally took up the matter of transport, secured yaks for us, and came to see us off on our journey. Moreover, he sent his own personal servant with us to help us when, after two days, we must again change animals. The buildings of this lamasery were different from anything I had seen before. In the walls were layers of reeds laid crosswise with the ends cut off evenly, giving the appearance of a stucco. Pereira described this in the *Geographical Journal* of March 1911 as occurring in the Labrang monastery, but he thought it was unique. The roofs are of slate of irregular shape, but give the appearance of a slate roof in England.

Leaving Tatsang Gomba, we stayed overnight at a little village called K'a Ka Koh. The houses were most peculiar. They were mostly five storeys high and had the appearance of a tower, the two upper storeys projecting with a kind of veranda closed in with twisted reeds. The people at first barricaded themselves in their houses, but as soon as they knew we were friendly with the Living Buddha of Tatsang Gomba they took us in.

The next day we crossed the pass called the Kunchien La (13,298 feet), which is part of the divide between the Yangtze and the Yellow River. Although this pass was lower than several we had negotiated before, it was not easy, for it was November 24, and driving snow made it difficult to see the track. I tried to get the boiling-point, but had to descend 300 feet before I could get some slight protection for the hypsometer, and then it took half an hour to get a steady reading. When we had descended a little farther and this downfall of snow had ceased and the cloud lifted, a glorious view burst upon us: a great valley running almost due north as far as the eye could see, the upper slopes entirely, the lower partially, covered with snow.

This was the source of the Peh Ho or White River, which we followed for that and the following two days. The people here were apparently

a mixture of Goloks and Ngaba, the Golok country being more to the west, the Ngaba more to the east, of the White River. A large proportion of the people were nomads with great yak-hair tents, but at intervals we came to groups of mud-walled hovels which might by a stretch of imagination be called villages. These were associated with large stockades where the yaks and ponies could be herded, so that cattle raising seemed to be the one occupation of the people. They spoke a fairly pure Tibetan according to our Tibetan boy, who was readily understood. Fuel is almost entirely dried yak-dung.

On the first day and a half, following the White River, which was full of drifting ice, we found its course was almost due north; but on the third day, after being augmented by numerous small streams the river was of considerable size, and its course was now almost exactly north-east. In places the valley widened out into grassland as at Dorma, where the plain was about 5 miles long by 3 miles broad, and here I counted seven camps or mud-hut villages, and there was splendid grazing for yaks, sheep, and ponies.

At the end of our two and a half days by the White River we had again to negotiate for transport, but as we were told that the lower reaches of the White River were infested with robbers, we took an alternative route more to the westward, and therefore more into the Golok country. Leaving the White River, we struck up a side valley to the Runglung La (12,772 feet).

We were now in the eastern part of the Golok country, and our new yak-drivers evidently knew their countrymen fairly well, for one of them was invariably about half a mile ahead scouting. We could see his mounted figure making its way up a pass, and hesitate at the top while he dismounted and carefully peered over the top before he beckoned us on. On crossing the Runglung La a solitary horseman appeared on the hillside and then disappeared. A little later three armed mounted men entered the valley down which we were making our way and came rapidly towards us. Our scout, who was quite close to us at the time, shouted to them to stop and say who they were, but they took no notice and came rapidly on. We had only one rifle, a shot gun, and two revolvers in our party, but we got ready for emergencies. However, as they approached our scout found they were friendly, and they gave us information that a band of robbers were just beyond the next bend of the valley. We took counsel and turned up a side ravine, where we concealed ourselves in the hope that they would move on. This apparently happened, and the next day when we continued our journey we passed the place of the robbers' bivouac, but were not molested.

Mile after mile of low hills was the characteristic of this country; no trees, but excellent pasture in the valleys. We travelled all day without seeing a sign of life—no yaks, no sheep, no tents. Suddenly, on turning the spur of a hill there was the dead body of a man put out

for the vultures. It gave one a curious feeling that probably we were being watched all the time. That evening we had just camped in a lonely spot by a small river called the Gia Chu, which our guides told me flows into the Yellow River direct, when two mounted men came over the crest of the hill, looked at us, and, when I sent the Tibetan boy to investigate, disappeared again. The same thing happened again with a single horseman, who came, looked, and disappeared. We posted a sentry that night, but although nothing happened our guides urged us to be on the move next morning the moment we could see, and so we struck our camp in the dark and were a mile or two on our way by day-break. Another day's journey brought us to the Lohtsz Nyara (a pass of 11,904 feet), and after crossing this we camped only a day's journey from Sotsong Gomba. On two other occasions we had an alarm of attack, but we displayed the fact that we were armed and were not molested.

These nomad people—the Goloks and Ngaba—all carry something for protection. If possible they have a gun, which is always provided with the double-pronged rest hinging about halfway along the barrel; and the saying is that "a Golok never wastes a shot." Some have spears about 20 feet long with a sharp iron point; they often use the butt end for driving their yaks.

We were now nearing the lower reaches of the White River, and crossed a great plain from 15 to 20 miles in length and about 6 miles wide, bounded on the west by a range of mountains, the highest peak of which was called Ar Chia. We reached the left bank of the White River about 14 miles from Sotsong Gomba, and 10 miles further on the great Yellow River itself burst into view. It was November 30, and floes of drift ice were coming down both rivers. We forded the White River with difficulty, and then followed the right bank to where it joins the Yellow River. Two miles beyond the confluence, on the banks of the Yellow River, is Sotsong Gomba. This consists only of the rather miserable buildings of the lamasery. The lamas were very anti-foreign, and the only place that we could get as a shelter was a kind of underground cowshed. Nevertheless, the fact that we had got safely through from the south to the bend of the Yellow River—a spot which had only been visited before by about three Europeans—was a source of satisfaction.

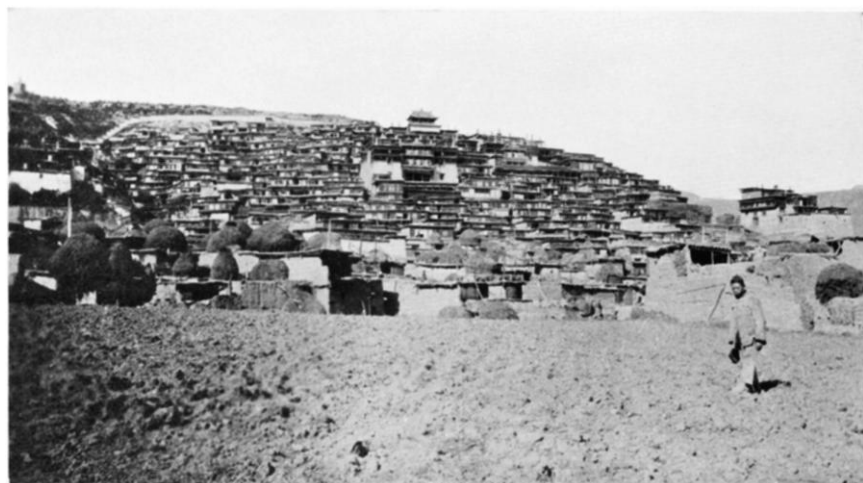
There are numerous sharp bends in the Yellow River to the southwest of Sotsong Gomba, but after the White River joins it the river for the next 5 miles does not take such a sinuous course. The lamas seemed so hostile that I was glad when we got away. I had intended to make my way along the northern arm of the bend of the Yellow River till I reached a little place called Ni Ma, then cross the river and attempt to reach Hwong Mo Ru, the place where the chief Golok camp is generally situated, but at Sotsong Gomba we found that for several reasons this



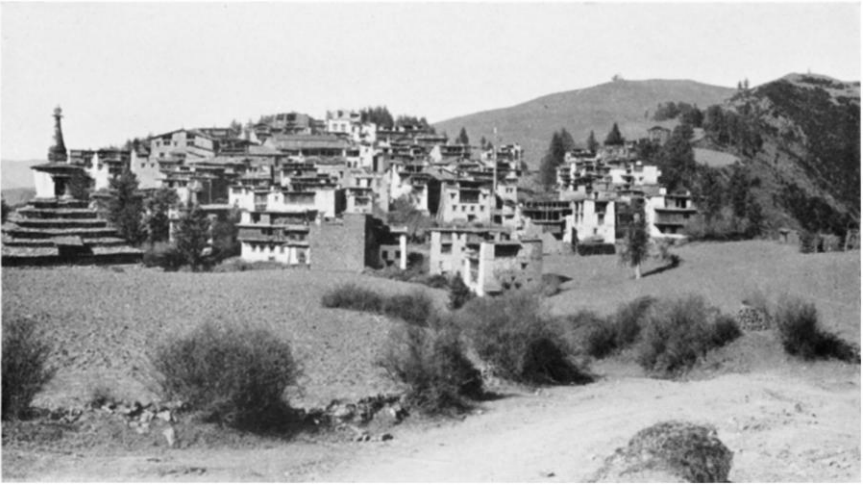
DESCENDING FROM RAJISUMDO CAMP, WASHI PLATEAU



SOURCE OF YALUNG, MONIA WASHI COUNTRY



KANTSE



TATSANG GOMBA, NORTH OF CHOHTSEH LA



HOUSES IN K'A KA KOH VALLEY



GOLOK COUNTRY FROM SOURCE OF WHITE RIVER

was impossible. We heard that there was civil war in this part of the Golok country, and the Queen of the Goloks had taken refuge in flight. All communication was interrupted, and even the Muhammadan traders, who usually have free access, taking in tea and bringing back wool, did not dare to venture into this region. We were now into December, and the cold was becoming intense. The altitude of Sotsong Gomba was 11,090 feet, and Hwong Mo Ru would be much higher. Our stores were practically exhausted, and we were living largely on what we could get as we went along. I therefore decided to make my way to old Taochow, and thence to Lanchow, making a *détour* in order to call at Labrang Monastery *en route*.

From Sotsong Gomba for the first $17\frac{3}{4}$ miles the track gradually leaves the Yellow River and going due north passes through the large grassy plain which borders the Yellow River, and at the end crosses some low hills which hide from view the Tibetan village of Tawa and its associated lamasery Shami Gomba. I stayed at the Shami Gomba, which as far as I could find out had never been visited before by a foreigner, and had a most uncomfortable time with the lamas. By the time we reached Raa Gomba, which stands on the Black River, the river was frozen over, and we crossed on the ice.

From Raa Gomba, going 30° east of north, we crossed a plateau of grassland about 11 miles wide which sends its waters westward by the Tan Chu into the Black River and so into the Yellow River, and then passed through the mountain range on the north by a low pass only about 500 feet above the plateau. This pass was on the west side of a huge rocky crag having a marked resemblance to a lion's head, visible from any part of the plateau, and so a splendid landmark. I found that the mountain range forms the Yellow River-Yangtze divide, for the small stream on the other side of this low pass flowed eastward and was a tributary of the Pai Hsui, eventually going to the Kia Ling, which joins the Yangtze at Chung King.

Konserh Nien Ba is the name of the next lamasery, which stands on a small river. To reach old Taochow we had again to cross into the Yellow River watershed, and the divide in this case is the mountain range known as the Min Shan. As these mountains are supposed to be infested with robbers, we were advised to ask the lamasery to provide us with four lamas to travel with us the next two days, for it was said the robbers would not dare to attack a caravan having lamas; they would be too afraid of their curse. We therefore hired four of these scoundrels to join our caravan, and they kept me awake most of the night by sitting round my tent and howling to each other, the idea being that robbers in the vicinity would know that some one was on the look-out. However they piloted us through the Min Shan range, and got us up at 3 a.m. on the second day in order that we might reach the top of the pass by dawn—before, as they said, the robbers had begun to stir. The pass called

Hohkeh La had three crests ; it was 12,300 feet high, and certainly was an ideal spot for robbers.

We crept up to the top of the pass as silently as possible with just the faintest glimmer of moonlight ; then rapidly the twilight before the dawn came, and as we reached the top the sun began to light the highest peaks. We were soon hurrying down the other side of the pass, and the danger was over. At parting I presented these four lamas with two empty biscuit tins, and they went back delighted with their present.

Our track now followed the Cheh-Ba-Ku river till it joined the Tao. There was plenty of game—pheasant, partridge and wild duck—in this part of our journey, and after crossing the Tao to its northern or left bank, a few miles brought me to old Taochow on December 9, where it was good to meet the missionaries and again hear good King's English.

The road on from Taochow to Lanchow has been traversed so often that there is no need to describe it. I branched off to visit the great monastery at Labrang, where there are over 4000 lamas. When General Pereira visited Labrang over ten years ago it was impossible to gain access to any of the buildings, but on this occasion the father of the Living Buddha, who is acting as regent, received me quite graciously, and sent one of the under lamas to take me through the lamasery. The great chanting hall with its rows of cushions on which the lamas sit to chant the sacred books was a most impressive place ; there were alcoves at the side, each with an image with the usual row of butter lamps and cups for wine, and in front of each a row of white-looking pyramids which I discovered were made of snow. I took a flashlight picture of one of the alcoves, but the old lama did not like it, and politely requested me not to use that bright light again. I managed however to secure time-exposure photographs of the private chapel of the Living Buddha, where the little fellow is brought to recite the sacred books. Here again were the snow offerings. It was so cold at Labrang that these have to be renewed only every three or four days. On the hillside behind the lamasery were a number of whitewashed huts, which I was told were " cells for the little lamas who do not learn their lessons."

From Kantse, where General Pereira died, to Lanchow I had made a prismatic compass traverse of the route all the way, but having arrived at Lanchow I decided to follow the Yellow River through Ningsia and Inner Mongolia to Paotow—the terminus of the Peking-Suiyuan Railway, and then get the train to Peking. This route is so well known and has been so often mapped that I decided not to continue the mapping. With the help of Mr. Andrew of Lanchow I obtained carts to take me through, and on December 27 started on the final section of the route.

All went well until three hours from Paotow, practically the end of this rather long journey ; but there two hundred and fifty bandits came along and took me prisoner. As a captive with the brigands we crossed the Yellow River on the ice. The incessant moving about, sometimes

by day, sometimes by night, the intense cold—20° below zero—the loss of camp equipment, blankets, etc., the difficulty about food, made this an experience that I am not anxious to repeat. We spent eight days in the neighbourhood of the Ordos desert, until, with the help of the Chinese officials, I managed to escape, and travelling all night once more crossed the Yellow River on the ice and reached safety.

I was fortunate in being able to save all our maps and important records, which I kept on my person. Photographic records also I saved by posting them to Shanghai from various places *en route*, but all else went: camp equipment, geographical and surgical instruments, etc., were all lost.

There were many difficult experiences on this long and somewhat strenuous journey, but the saddest was the loss of that brave and adventurous explorer, Brig.-General George Pereira, of whom it may truly be said, "He feared man so little because he feared God so much."

Before the paper the PRESIDENT (Dr. D. G. HOGARTH) said: I have to introduce to you Dr. Gordon Thompson, who has been, I believe, for nearly thirty years a medical missionary in China, and who joined General Pereira on his last journey. Those who have attended the meetings here and who have kept abreast of the progress of exploration, will well remember General Pereira's remarkable tramp afoot from the capital of China to the capital of Tibet, from Peking to Lhasa. It was on a subsequent journey that Dr. Gordon Thompson joined forces with General Pereira; and together they undertook a most remarkable journey into the practically unknown borderland between Tibet and China which Dr. Gordon Thompson will describe to you to-night. The journey entailed the greatest hardships, much greater, I fancy, than you will realise from the account that Dr. Gordon Thompson will give. The journey also entailed a tragedy; for before it was over General Pereira was dead, and Dr. Gordon Thompson had to continue alone. It ended in his capture by brigands and his being kept under extraordinary circumstances for eight days in their hands until he had the good fortune, by a series of events which one thinks could only possibly happen in the East, to make his escape. Moreover, the journey was one requiring the utmost resolution and fortitude, and it is a very great tribute, to the explorer who will speak to you to-night, that he continued that journey and that he carried it through. He has a long story to tell you, and I will not stand between you and him but call upon him to give the account of his remarkable experiences.

Dr. Gordon Thompson then read the paper printed above.

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid we are rather unfortunate to-night in not having any one to add anything on the subject. That, of course, is the penalty of travel into countries so unknown as that to which General Pereira and Dr. Gordon Thompson went. I had hoped that Lord Ronaldshay would have been able to say something in general, and Sir Francis Younghusband in particular, about Tibet; but as they live in the country, they have both been obliged to leave to catch trains which, apparently, have no successors until about 2 a.m. Moreover, had General Abbot-Anderson been present, I gather he would have said something. We should have asked also Mr. Archibald

Rose, who is well known in connection with Chinese matters, and Mr. Weatherbe, who has been mentioned by the lecturer as having been taken by brigands, to speak; but neither of them was able to be present. So I must just issue a general invitation. Is there any one present who would like to say anything about the Chinese or Tibetan country, or to ask a question which the lecturer may answer? There seems to be no one who wishes to speak, and therefore I can only, in your name, convey our very cordial thanks to Dr. Gordon Thompson, not only for a most interesting lecture, but for certainly some of the very best photographic views that I have ever seen in this hall or anywhere else. It certainly has been an amazing piece of good management, supplemented, I imagine, by a great deal of good luck, that, considering what happened to Dr. Gordon Thompson in the end, has enabled us to see those photographs. It appears, as he told you, that at every point at which there was anything like a post—certainly not anything like the post we know—he sent off such films as he had already exposed, and by the greatest good luck every single roll came to hand except two which he had taken just before he was captured at the end of his journey. The result is that we have been able to see these astonishing photographs, so extraordinary in their clearness, with perhaps exception of the panoramic photographs which always lack a little definition.

I think the most conspicuous feature of the lecture was the author's extreme modesty and reticence. One would not ask him for a moment to revive the most bitter of his experiences, the experience to which he so feelingly referred, and which has made this meeting almost into a Pereira Memorial Meeting; but I am a little disappointed that he should not have told us more about that very remarkable experience of his towards the end of his journey, namely, his capture by brigands and his sojourn with them. He has told me in private a little about it, enough to make me want to hear a great deal more. It certainly was one of the very oddest experiences, with all kinds of details almost like comic opera but at the same time with an element of possible tragedy; such an experience, in fact, as one could not imagine happening anywhere except in China. As no one has spoken on the subject of the lecture, perhaps the lecturer will tell us a little more about that strange experience. If he does, he will only add to the gratitude which is already felt most keenly by all present. I am sure we are most grateful to him for having come through, and, in spite of the very modest and reticent way in which he has told his story, we are all most appreciative of the courage and endurance which carried him on to the end. In conveying to him your thanks, which you have already expressed most cordially by acclamation, I will ask Dr. Gordon Thompson if he can tell us just a few more details rather of the less formal, less purely geographical kind.

Dr. GORDON THOMPSON: The brigands came along only three hours from the end, one might say, of the journey. In fact, we were within 10 miles of Paotow, the terminus of the Peking-Suiyuan Railway, when we were ambushed by a mixed company of about two hundred and fifty Chinese and Mongol bandits. I was travelling at the time in a cart. There were two things which made the experience most uncomfortable: firstly, the intense cold, the temperature being 20 degrees below zero; and, secondly, the constant moving about. We would arrive at a place, and I as a prisoner would be thrust into a farmhouse or some building and sentries placed outside the door and on the flat roof. We would not know how long we were to stay; sometimes it would be only a few minutes, sometimes a few hours. Occasionally we travelled

all night, whilst sometimes, by changing horses, we travelled all day and all night, so that when we stopped one would not know whether to settle down and try and get sleep or whether it was not worth while because we might be moving on again almost at once.

The great difficulty when the brigands took me prisoner was to get and keep in touch with the outside world. The journey had already lasted over six months, and although I had sent word through to Tatsienlu and so to Peking of Pereira's death, nobody knew by which route I was making for Peking, or expected us in that neighbourhood. When my Chinese servant came and told me that everything was smashed up and all our things were looted, a happy idea occurred to me. I decided to go on a kind of "hunger strike," and when the bandits came and offered me Chinese food, I shook my head and said, "I am a foreigner. You Chinese eat Chinese food. We foreigners eat foreign food. I must have foreign food." They were rather nonplussed, and asked what they could do. I said, "If you don't want me to die, the best thing you can do is to let me send a letter into the town" (three hours' journey away) "and ask for food." They kept me waiting all night, and then they consented. I called the Chinese boy whom I had with me—the only servant left—and having first ascertained that none of the brigands understood English, gave him a letter. In the letter, after asking for some food, I described who I was and how I came to be taken. I requested that Peking should be informed, and after giving as exactly as possible our position, urged the Chinese authorities to attack the robbers and look out for me if I attempted to escape. The boy was to take the letter to the nearest town, and as he was leaving I whispered to him not to come back, because I thought if I got the chance to escape I would not like to leave the boy in the brigands' hands. The boy was very pleased with his instructions; he obeyed them exactly, for he went away and did not return. Then I had to keep myself going with food, because as I had once started I had to keep it up. I managed to subsist on scraps picked up unknown to my captors. We came to one farmhouse, and when I went into the courtyard and stumbled over what I thought was a pile of stones, I found they were actually frozen potatoes. I pocketed about six and went to the room in which I had been put as prisoner. There was a pan of tea boiling on the fire, and when the brigands were not looking, I dropped the six potatoes into the boiling tea. About a quarter of an hour afterwards I managed, when again they were not looking, to get those potatoes out, and then went and lay down. I covered my head up as if going to sleep, and made my supper of boiled potatoes! So it went on, and each day I requested that a messenger be sent to ask for food, and, strange to say, several messengers which the bandits themselves sent out with my letters did not return. Thus I was able to keep the authorities in full possession of all our movements and give them much valuable information, while to the bandits I pretended to be getting weaker and urged them to open negotiations.

We reached one farmhouse, and by this time they were getting rather desperate at my apparently weak condition, so they came and asked me whether I liked pigeon. I replied, "Yes, if it is cooked in foreign style." Thereupon they called my cart-driver and handed to him a pigeon and said, "You must know something about the foreigner because you have been driving his cart for a fortnight or more; see what you can do." He plucked the pigeon, and then came into the place where I was prisoner carrying the pigeon and a pan. He chopped the bird up and put it with potatoes and vegetables into the pan on the fire, and there was very soon a most delicious smell of pigeon stew. I

rather longed for some of that stew, so I asked if he had put any salt in it. When he said he had not, I told him to go and see if he could get any. The brigands were out of the room, and whilst the carter was also away I seized a handful of the stew and put it into my pocket. When he had put the salt in I suggested some sugar might improve it, and whilst he was getting that I pocketed another handful of stew. A quarter of an hour later he said it was ready, but after tasting it I refused to have any more, saying, "You don't know how to cook European food; you had better put it down." He did so, and went out. I could not resist that stew, for I was really getting very hungry, and having disposed of it I put the bowl on the floor. The usual Chinese dog came in and sniffed round, and when the carter returned the dog was eating up the bones. I said, "Anyhow, the dog likes it." I heard the carter go to the brigands and say that he certainly could not prepare European food properly, for I had given the stew to the dog. He did not know I had had a very good supper.

The matter ended in this way. My letters had been received, and first a Catholic priest came to the bandit camp. He had been promised safe conduct by the brigands if he would bring me food. He tried to negotiate, but he had had to leave because another Catholic priest was in captivity only 8 miles away. That poor man had an awful time. He was a captive for about eight weeks, and when eventually they got him away he only lived two months, dying as the result of his experiences.

Then the Chinese sent an agent over, and he tried to bargain with the bandits for my release. You may be interested to know, as the President has asked for more personal details, what they wanted in the way of ransom. They demanded \$10,000, 150 rifles, 50 automatic pistols, 4 machine-guns, and a whole district to control! I managed afterwards to get the paper on which these demands were written, and I brought it home with me and presented it to my wife, saying, "There, my dear, that's the value of your husband." The Government agent found that he could not make any impression on the bandits, and that it was impossible to argue with them or beat them down. He came to me and said that he must leave as he could not come to terms, and once again one expected to be on the move. But that night, at half-past nine, I was expecting the guards to come in and say they were off on the move, instead of which two crept in and said they were going to help me to get away. I was somewhat suspicious, because I saw behind them the Government agent, whom the Catholic priest had warned me was really a bandit. Therefore at first I refused to go. They went out and talked it over and got very excited outside. Finally, they came in with a rush and got hold of me, and there was no question whether I would go or not. One man held me by the wrist, and with his revolver in the other hand we started out and went, in the darkness of the night, over the frozen country for 2 miles until we came to a farmhouse. They knocked, and we went in. Inside the farmhouse was very brilliantly lighted. There I found the rest of my guards and once again the Government agent. I began to think they were really helping me to get away. I told them that if they were acting true I would help all I could. Ponies were soon ready, and we trekked away to the north, crossed the Yellow River on the ice, which was about 3 feet thick, reached a village at 3 o'clock, rested until daylight, and then mounted our ponies again, striking north as fast as we could go. Finally, at nine o'clock we reached a village where there were 250 troops waiting to take us into safety.

When we reached the town I was received by the son of the Governor and

the Chief of the Staff, who had planned how they would help me. The latter was a Christian man, and he took me aside into a little room, where he knelt down and thanked God for my escape. It was a most touching experience, and when I could find words I said to him, "It is an extraordinary thing that you have done. Why did you send a man who was a bandit to try and help me to get away?" His reply made everything quite clear. He said, "Nobody but a bandit would dare to go into the bandit camp; we had to employ a bandit for the purpose, and his instructions were that when he got into touch with the bandits he should bargain with them, and if they would not come down in their terms, then he was to give some money to the guards and ask them to help." That was what had happened, and the guards were ready to help me to escape. I was very thankful that the time in the hands of the brigands was not longer, and I must say this before you all: that I believe that God Himself overruled things and delivered me out of the hands of the bandits.

The PRESIDENT: Well, ladies and gentlemen, we have heard a good deal in the course of the last two or three years about people being taken by Chinese bandits, but I do not think any of us have ever listened to such a story at first hand as that which Dr. Gordon Thompson has just told. It only makes us feel more warmly towards him, if possible, than we felt before.

THE ORIGIN OF THE TUAREG

Francis Rodd

Read at the Afternoon Meeting of the Society, 16 November 1925.

BEFORE discussing the subject of this paper—The Origin of the Tuareg—it will be advisable to describe the people themselves. They are so little known in Europe, and especially in England, that some definitions are necessary.

The indigenous peoples of North Africa (one must not go too far back and talk about aborigines) are usually called Berbers. But the description is misleading, as it conjures up many popular fallacies and misconceptions. I therefore propose to substitute for this name the geographical term Libyans, which Herodotus first introduced, in speaking of the population of North Africa, by which is meant the whole area west of the Nile basin and north of Equatoria.

Among these Libyans there are certain nomads who inhabit the Sahara or inner parts of North Africa. European travellers first called them the tribe of the Tuareg, or Tawarek, adopting the Arab name which they heard in current use. Although described as a Libyan tribe, these nomads seemed nevertheless to differ from the sedentary inhabitants of the coastal districts along the Mediterranean. At least they possessed some quite remarkable peculiarities of their own. As the Sahara became better known, Tuareg were reported in places as far apart as in the Fezzan or along the Niger. Their striking individual characteristics, their wide extension and the comparatively large numbers of their complex tribal organization, were slowly realized in the course