

THE RED LAMA



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O thou jewel in the lotus



THE RED LAMA

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AND
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IT was December 1925 and the high fortress which seals the north-western extremity of the Great Wall of China lay under deep snow. The enclosure within the massive walls was filled with ruins and tumble-down mud buildings ; only here and there had one house been sufficiently repaired to shelter the family of an officer of the garrison. At this point the Wall, which had coiled like a monstrous serpent through valleys and over mountaintops for one thousand five hundred miles, took an abrupt turn westward and crossed the arid plain which marks the commencement of the great Gobi Desert, throwing out one arm as far as the foothills of the Tibetan Alps.

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In the space between the two great enclosing gates lay the Mandarin's Yamen and the soldiers' barracks. The sentry on duty took shelter from the storm behind a low brick wall, whose first intention had been to protect the town from the attacks of troublesome demons, but which now served to supply a welcome shelter from the biting wind.

From time to time the sentry walked to the high-arched doorway and stood listening, hoping to catch the sound of some distant cart, for at this place an echo caught and repeated a faint rumbling murmur when a cart was still fully three miles away ; but to-day no traveller had ventured on the road, and he only heard the howling of the wind as it rushed through the tunnel-like entrance of the fortress, with a noise which seemed to him like that of a horde of demons let loose.

From where he stood he saw the illimitable arid expanse which stretched outside

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the Gate, and over which lay the faint cart tracks indicating the line of the great caravan route toward Urumchi and Kashgar.

All through the summer months the caravans had come and gone — camels, donkeys and horses, besides numberless mule-carts laden with all the merchandise of Central Asia. Those were cheerful days, when news was brought by word of mouth from all the great cities of China, and when merchants of Kashgaria would sit and tell of the wonders of their native towns — Khotan, Yarkand or Tashkent ; but now the terrible winter had come, and the sentry shivered, and wondered when his chance would come to leave this desolate, demon-haunted, isolated outpost.

Within the precincts of the Yamen every courtyard was deserted. Only a little slave-girl in torn cotton clothes lifted a door-curtain and crossed from one room to another, carrying a tray on which were laid an opium pipe, a little hemp oil

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lamp and the necessary implements for manipulating the sticky opium paste.

Huddled against the outer side of the opposite wall lay the few shops, temples and inns which formed the Eastern suburban street. Down this road a man drove a donkey saddled with wooden buckets, from which water splashed at every movement of the little beast. He had struggled out to fetch this load of water from the spring at the foot of the steep hill on which the town was built. The path would soon be too slippery to allow him to fetch more, and he was anxious to secure a day's supply.

Over one inn-gate was a sign with the words, "Camel Accommodation", and within the rows of camels reclined, chewing the cud and regarding the world at large with supercilious and spiteful glances.

The inn-yards were filled with heavy carts, some of which carried merchandise and others passengers. These latter were fitted with a high wooden framework

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which converted them into a simple gypsy-waggon holding a little front door which admitted the occupant to a low compartment, the floor of which was spread with wadded quilts and the roof lined with thick felts. Here the traveller might lie and sleep through the long weary hours of the desert stages.

Inside the wretched rooms earthenware platters were piled with flaming thorns, and round the braziers the drivers crouched, their heavy sheepskins thrown over their shoulders and the long-stemmed tobacco pipe, ending in a tiny bowl, held between their teeth. The air was heavy with clouds of wood and tobacco smoke and with the sickening smell of opium fumes, while the cow-dung warmed *kang* emitted its own peculiar acrid smell through the cracks in its dry mud surface. From the rafters hung long festoons of coagulated dirt which, swaying in the draught, resembled the tendrils of a hitherto unclassified vegetable growth.

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The windowless room was lighted only by a hole in the roof, through which the smoke made its escape.

“No one can start to-day,” chanted one man in a high-pitched falsetto drawl.

“It’s a bad look-out for the weather,” said another.

“We shall lose money on this trip,” added a third. “Last winter a blizzard overtook me and I lost two horses. The Gobi *gwei*¹ had me that time.”

Thus the talk of weather prospects, of food and fodder prices and of financial profit-and-loss, alternated with games of cards and whiffs at the opium pipe. From time to time one of the group would slip his arms into the sleeves of his sheepskin coat and, struggling against the wind, make his way to the stable to fill up the troughs with chopped grass mixed with a measure of dried peas and bran moistened with water.

The monotony of the tedious hours was

¹ *Gwei*—disembodied spirit.

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relieved, on this particular day, by an unusual incident which supplied talk in barrack-room, Yamen parlour and inn-shelter. Two evenings previously a band of men had appeared in Kiayükwan for the purpose of preaching a new religion. They called it "Good News", and they certainly were a cheerful, lively, talkative set, who neither swore, quarrelled nor smoked tobacco. On arrival they had covered the dirty walls of their room with pictures, which they were ready to explain to anyone who cared to listen, and their talk had been of one Jesus, whom they called "Son of God". They had produced parcels of books and of bright-coloured printed papers and sold them at a price which evidently could bring them no profit, and their goods had been bought up very quickly by an interested crowd of travellers, soldiers and residents.

One of the carters, for the twentieth time that morning, unfolded a large coloured picture which he had bought,

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and which represented a road-side well, by which stood a wayfarer laden with bundles, and evidently hot and weary. The tired man was begging a drink from a young peasant who had just drawn up a bucketful of water. Beneath the picture was written :

Jesus said: "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

The whole poster was a delight to the group of men who knew so well the hardships of long desert stages in the heat, and they commented on every detail of the scene depicted. Then the talk drifted off to the entertainment of the previous evening, at which a "picture lamp" exhibition had been given, and crowds had gathered from neighbouring villages to the open-air theatre-stage, where a large white sheet was stretched, on which, to

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the amazement of the company, coloured pictures had appeared in constant succession, while the man who was leader of the band had spoken about them.

“ Ai ya ! That man *could* talk ! He had the Honan gift of the gab all right. That story of the flood ! That was true to life ! The picture of men gambling and fighting just before the waters came down and drowned them. And that wedding party scrambling up the hill-side to get away from the water. How he turned it round upon us ! It's true enough, and we ought to think about these things ! ‘ Man's many plans break down before one word from heaven ’.”

Meanwhile soldiers in the guardroom were discussing the same event and poring over hymn-sheets, from which they tried to sing the Christian song which fitted the tune of the National Air used daily on the drill-ground.

From inside the Yamen buildings the Mandarin, his wife and their attendants

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looked out on the falling snow—the first storm of the season—and realised with dismay that the long, dark, ruthless winter was on them, during which there would be no one to see and nothing to do, until the early spring festivities would call them to Suchow, the centre of life and gaiety, only thirty-five miles away, but necessitating a rough, bleak drive not to be faced during winter months.

The *tai-tai* listlessly fingered her mah-jong cards, and called the young slave-girl to prepare and bring the water-pipe. Meanwhile her little boy and girl told and retold the wonders of the picture lantern which had shown them big ships, steam-engines, distant towns, foreign children, beside many other things which had delighted them beyond measure ; but nothing had so completely captured their imagination as the picture of the man who stood down in the lions' pit and stroked the heads of the great beasts, which never so much as scratched him. They remembered that

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man's name, it was *Dan-i-li*, and the reason why the lions had not eaten him was because God protected him.

On the table lay a new leather-bound and gilt-edged copy of the Scriptures, and whenever their father strolled into the room he picked it up and, casually turning its pages, read a few paragraphs.

Meanwhile the band of Christian preachers was fighting its way homeward, towards Suchow, through storm, wind and whirling snow-flakes. They congratulated themselves again and again on having secured the two fine days before the weather broke for their evangelistic campaign, and though on the previous evening a cold wind had given warning of the coming snowstorm, yet the whole population of Kiayükwan had turned out to hear the Gospel proclaimed from the central public rostrum of the town.

The party had left the inn long before dawn, for at 2 A.M. a call from the leader

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warned them that they must be up and moving if the seven hours' tramp was to be accomplished in time for them to attend the morning session of their Bible School. In a moment the tiny oil lamps were flickering, and before long the mule had been watered and was harnessed to the small cart. In half an hour they were on the homeward path. The first flakes of snow were already falling and they saw that they were in for a heavy storm; but these strong young countrymen were inured to hardness, and they tramped four hours before they broke their fast at the half-way shelter, where each man bought a bowl of hot water and a piece of dry bread.

The road was an arid, stone-strewn plain until they touched the border of the Suchow oasis, and with a sense of relief saw the castellated city wall with high trees showing above. Half an hour later they were within the North suburb exchanging greetings with the Mongolian

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camel - drivers, who gathered in knots around the porches of the spacious enclosures where their camels were resting.

Most of the shops had only just taken down their shutters and, normally, the street would have been nearly deserted, but this morning something unusual was taking place : a crowd of men and boys had collected round some object of interest, and the sound of shouting, jeers and laughter was heard. In a moment the young men, unable to restrain their curiosity, had joined the crowd and were eagerly enquiring the cause of the disturbance.

“ A Tibetan Lama has gone mad and murderously attacked an inn-keeper,” was the information given.

In the centre of the group stood a tall, broad-shouldered Tibetan ; his bare arms were fastened with iron chains and his ankles were secured with a rope. Shouts of laughter rose from the crowd as they saw his frantic efforts to free himself of

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his bonds. He was a man of great physical strength, long-limbed and athletic, and he towered above the circle of his tormentors who, from time to time, scattered with wild shrieks as he strained on the chains which seemed as though they must snap under the pressure of his Herculean efforts. He wore a dress of faded maroon cloth, and his cap was distinctive of the Religious Order known as that of the "Red Lamas".

"What is all this about?" sounded the ringing voice of the Christian leader.

"He's mad! He's mad! and must be chained," was the answer from the crowd.

"If he *is* mad you are doing all you can to make him worse," said the Chinese Christian doctor, and, stepping forward, he laid his hand on the Lama's arm.

"You need not be afraid, Lama. I am a doctor, and if you come with me I will take care of you."

With rolling blood-shot eyes the Samson-like figure looked down on the man by his side, and, as their eyes met, the Lama

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fell on his knees and gave a *kow tow* to his deliverer. Then, with incoherent words, he began to pour out a tale of having been robbed, beaten, chained and ill-treated, the crowd meanwhile laughing and jeering at his distress.

“ You can tell me all that later on,” said the doctor, “ but now be quiet and no one shall hurt you.” Then, turning to his own men, he said :

“ Loosen the ropes from his feet and we will take him home with us.”

The crowd was silenced and, his feet released, the Tibetan quietly walked between two of the Christian students towards the Mission Compound.

Two hours later, safe from his tormentors and soothed by a sleeping-draught, the Lama was lying on a clean *kang*, sleeping off the effects of his excitement, while the doctor was busy investigating the details of the case. There was little difficulty in ascertaining facts. This Lama was a member of a wealthy family and had come

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to Suchow to transact some business involving a deal of several hundred dollars. He brought with him from the mountains a load of valuable furs—fox, bear, leopard, lynx and marmot skins—besides peacocks' feathers, gold dust, and a heavy lump of silver which was to be converted into hair-ornaments for the women of his tribe.

The Tibetan falls an easy prey to the astute Chinese business man, who systematically betters him in a bargain, for although the opium-pipe presents no temptation to him, he is only too ready to let himself be treated to strong drink. Some unscrupulous dealers saw in this simple-hearted Lama an easy prey to their cupidity, and before the end of the interview he was uproariously drunk.

After the night of merry-making he fell into a drunken sleep, from which he awoke angry and irritable, to find that his horse was not in the stable, his bundles of skins had disappeared, his gold and silver were missing, and that even his personal belong-

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ings—the knife and chopsticks from his girdle, the bowl he carried in his bosom and the teapot which was his most valued possession—had been stolen.

In a frenzy of anger he seized the landlord's furniture and flung it into the courtyard; then, smashing the kitchen crockery, he tore down the paper-windows of the inn and, with loud cursing and swearing, called upon the gods to avenge him of these "dogs and devils".

"He's mad! He's mad!" yelled the landlord.

"He's mad! He's mad!" shrieked the wife.

"He's mad! He's mad!" came from the gathering crowd, and in a few moments, by force of numbers, they had overcome him, chained his hands, roped his feet, and were driving him out of the city when they met the band of Christian men.

Thus did the Red Lama become a member of our household.

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For some days after his rescue he was kept quiet by means of sleeping-draughts, but gradually his condition improved, and though still excitable, he began to mix freely with the students and to resume normal conditions of life. The memory of the loss of his valued personal property still rankled deeply in his mind, and if abuse and indignation could have injured the inn-keeper and the others who had led the attack on him, their lives would have been of little value. His excited imagination also worked fiercely on the subject of the petty tyranny exercised over his countrymen by the minor officials of the custom-house, whose duty it was to levy a tax on all merchandise entering the city.

“They are a pack of cannibals!” he would shout aloud. “They live by sucking the blood of poor but honest men.”

On one memorable occasion he evaded the vigilance of his student-guard and, an hour later, was seen heading a procession of the town beggars, whom he was

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leading to the office of the skin-goods customs.

It transpired that, on leaving the Mission House, he had made his way to the East Gate, where the beggars congregate in a sunny reach under a sheltered wall. Going from one to the other he asked each mendicant if he would like a good meal. Needless to say, every one answered in the affirmative, and, followed by the ragged crew, dressed in the unspeakable garments worn by the Chinese professional beggar, and displaying every form of physical infirmity and disease, he proceeded to the custom-house and demanded a word with the official on duty.

“We have all come here for dinner to-day,” he said. “We know that you live on the people, and here are the people asking for some of their own back again.”

The infuriated officer gave orders that the Lama should be seized and beaten, but he was too quick for his pursuers,

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besides which, public opinion was in his favour and made the carrying out of the order no easy task, so that his long legs soon carried him out of the underlings' reach.

Meanwhile the band of beggars had settled down in rows before the door, nor would the poor wretches move until each one had received a coin in compensation for his trouble in coming.

In due course the Lama was allowed to satisfy his curiosity and attend the daily evangelistic service to which the children of Suchow gathered in great numbers. His first appearance was under the care of two students, when he took his place on the front bench in the large tent where the meeting was held. The proceedings were of a free, easy and hilarious nature. A group of children, supplied with tambourines and mouth-organs, formed an amateur orchestra, which led the singing with rhythmic accuracy, but chaotic disharmony. Verses of Scripture and a large

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variety of cheerful and simple hymns were sung with the uttermost *entrain* by a large congregation. The Lama was entranced. The words were unfamiliar, but he opened his mouth and tried to sing, then, like the children, clapped his hands and stamped his feet in abandonment of joy.

The children no more fascinated him than he them, and the orchestra played more merrily, and the children clapped their hands more joyously as they saw his unfeigned delight at their performance. In a few days he had learned the words of the simpler choruses and began to sing with the understanding also.

How great was the contrast in religious expression with the rituals of the Lamasery where he had been trained from a child. In accordance with Tibetan rule he, being the eldest son of the house, had been dedicated to monastic life. From the age of eight years he was handed over to the care of the priest-in-charge and began his initiation into a life of idleness and sin.

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The Tibetan Lama has no incentive to work, for he is fed by the offerings of the faithful. For several hours each day this child gabbled liturgies, breathing the incense-laden air in the gloomy temple hung with faded embroideries, sitting at the feet of a gigantic image of the inscrutable Buddha.

As he grew older he learnt the secrets of priestcraft, and how to gain and hold sway over the lives of men in the crises hours of life and death. To him this represented religion, and he knew no other.

As it brought him power, gain and influence, he liked it well. He became expert in exacting the uttermost dues from the surviving relatives of deceased men who, terrified on hearing that the body still remained on the mountain-side, untouched by wolves and vultures, were ready to pay any price so as to secure the soul's release from the torment which it was evidently enduring, since even the

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birds and beasts refused to touch the flesh of so great a sinner. The Lama's prayers alone could help that soul in the nether world, and these must be paid for with sheep, horses and yaks.

The rulers of the Lamasery were the Living Buddhas, of whom the chief had reached his eighth human incarnation. On several occasions a Living Buddha had died, and the search for the infant into whose body his spirit had passed was pursued by the senior men. The official astrologers were consulted, who, by means of divinations and the exercise of occult powers, sought to follow the path of the discarnate Buddha spirit in its search for a new abode. As test the rosary and bell of the deceased man were brought within the line of vision of a child born at the very hour of his death, and if the baby hand was outstretched to seize the bright object, he was proclaimed, with rejoicing, to be the successor of the spiritual son of the Buddha, who once more turned

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from *Nirvana* to bring succour to the sons of men.

The Red Lama's conception of prayer was indissolubly connected with the use of mechanical devices, such as wheels, flags or bones, all of which were contrived so as to secure the more frequent repetition of the mystic phrase, "Om mani padme hum".

The stream which flowed at the foot of his own monastery was made to turn a prayer-wheel, whose finely carved oblong box contained the endlessly repeated invocation, "Om mani padme hum"—Hail ! thou precious jewel of the Lotus Flower !

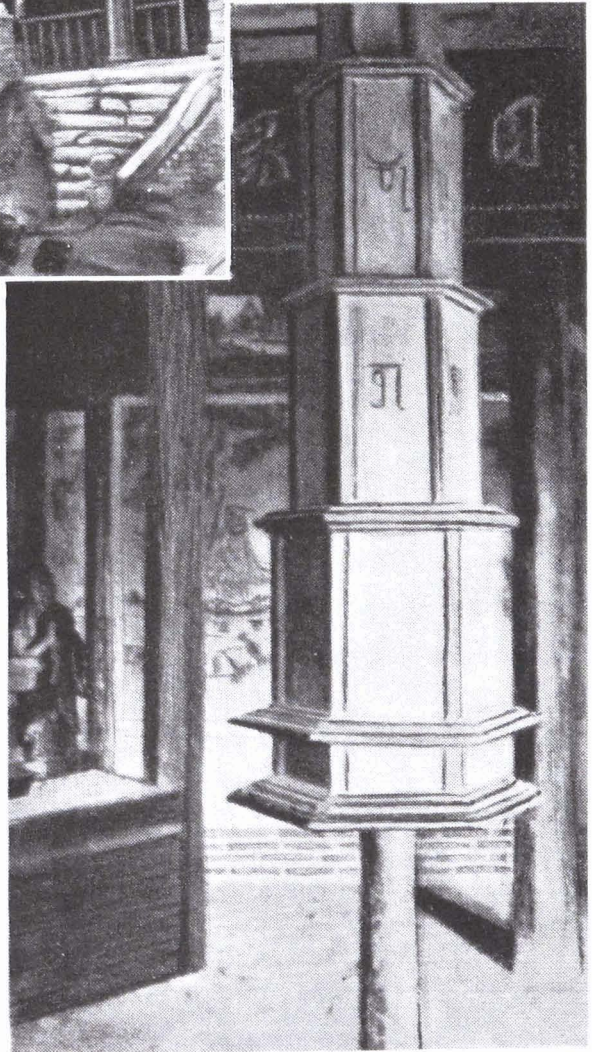
Even while the Lamas slept, their merit was being accumulated through the work of the restless stream, and by the rustling wind which disturbed the prayer-flags and shook the boughs from which dangled the bleached prayer-bones.

The only discipline of his training had been that entailed by sitting for long hours in one position, reciting this same empty



A
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phrase, "Om mani padme hum", until the mind was hypnotised by the monotony of its repetition.

From such scenes he passed into the atmosphere of the tent meeting, and with the children learnt to reverently fold his hands, close his eyes and sing the simple evening prayer :

Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me ;
Bless Thy little lamb to-night ;
Through the darkness be Thou near me ;
Keep me safe till morning light.

When we knew him better, and he became a frequent visitor in our house, he would stand gazing with rapt attention at the picture of Lhasa which we had cut from an illustrated paper and pinned to our mud wall.

"When I was a young man I travelled twice to Lhasa on pilgrimage," he told us. "It was a long, long way, and each time it took me a full year to accomplish the journey."

He related how, day after day, he had

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walked barefoot, sometimes over vast reaches of grassy pasture-land, where the tent-dwellers would welcome him and give him the best they had to eat and drink—rich yaks' milk, tea into which the ground, parched corn and oily butter were stirred, hunks of boiled meat and thin cakes, which the women made with rennet from the stomach of the calf. When he left them again these hospitable people would replenish his bag with sun-dried meat and strong-flavoured, granulated cheese.

Often the way was over high mountain-passes where the snow lay all through the year, and where he must have lost his way but for the road-directions given from one Lamasery to another, until at length the tall buildings of Lhasa rose before him. His eyes glowed as he spoke of the assembled crowds, the glory of the great processions and the sumptuousness of the rituals :

“ Lhasa is the finest place in the world, and I never saw so many people in my life

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as when the crowds assembled for the temple festivals. But", he added, "the Christians are cheerful all the time, and the Children's Tent Meeting is the happiest place of all."

The tracing of the Lama's stolen goods did not present insuperable difficulties. The incident was much discussed in the town, and public opinion decided that he had been badly treated. The inn-keeper, anxious to clear himself of blame, immediately came forward with information, and had, according to his own account, merely "kept a few things safe until such time as 'Lama' should be quite well again, and able to take charge of his own property".

An interview between the doctor and some local skin-merchants resulted in payment being handed over for the goods already delivered, but no restitution brought the Lama such joy as did the return of his beloved teapot, knife and

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chopsticks. In celebration of the unexpected good fortune, he insisted on buying a whole sheep and inviting the Christian household to a meal of steamed rice and stewed mutton.

From the first the Red Lama was deeply interested in the three foreign women missionaries of Suchow. As soon as he recovered from his temporary insanity he loved to sit at the back of the class-room while the singing lesson was in progress, and in a well-pitched sonorous voice he would try to follow the leader's instructions, while with his long arms he imitated her every movement in conducting.

He, quite naturally, referred to us as "foreign devils", and asked the doctor how he should address us when he came to make a formal presentation of the offerings which he had prepared in token of his gratitude.

"I should not address them as 'foreign devil'," said the doctor, "for devils only

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do men harm, whereas these ladies are here in order to do good.”

“ That’s true,” agreed the Lama, “ they are good devils right enough. If I say ‘ Good foreign devils ’ would that be all right ? ”

“ We call them ‘ teachers ’ .”

“ A splendid name ; they stand on that platform and teach till their throats are dry. I’ll call them ‘ teachers ’ too ! ”

Accordingly *Giao-hsi* we became to him, as we were to the rest of the compound.

His first visit to our guest-room was on the occasion of offering the presents referred to above. He carried a *khada* of red cotton, which he laid respectfully over the hands of one of us, and then produced a handsome silver Tibetan hair-ornament, which he presented with a leg of mutton and a bowlful of dried cheese. After this we all drank tea together, and with great appreciation he sampled our home-made cakes.

From this time he became a frequent

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visitor and brought a succession of most interesting acquaintances to call on us. Sometimes they were aboriginal tribesmen from a distant Tibetan border, handsome young men with light-brown eyes and almost fair hair. At another time it was a Living Buddha and his retinue, travelling from South Kansu to a distant Lamasery in the Altai mountains, in fulfilment of a vow.

Through him we became acquainted with Tibetan and Chinese half-breeds, who handled both languages with equal facility. All his friends showed great appreciation of the tea and rock buns with which we entertained them, for, whereas Chinese convention demands that a visitor should barely touch the refreshments offered on a first visit, and a Moslem is too fearful of contamination to risk partaking of food in a Gentile house, the Tibetan is delightfully free from any such scruples, and eats all that is set before him with undisguised pleasure.

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Many a time did we hear the sound of the Lama's heavy raw-hide boots as he came running across our courtyard to bring some news or introduce a friend. Sometimes our cook would stop him at the kitchen door and warn him that our meal was only just served.

"That's all right," he would answer, still making for our room.

"The teachers have been busy all day and must have time to eat," the protesting voice would continue.

"Never mind, never mind, never mind. I won't stop them eating," and this unconventional simple child of nature would take a stool, sit down with us, and take his share of whatever we were eating.

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Meanwhile a transformation more radical than the restoration to normality of his mental being was in progress. As he learnt more of Christ's teaching, he ceased to tell his beads and recite liturgies, and gradually all the religious

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forms connected with his old life were abandoned.

In the folds of his red shawl he now always carried a copy of the New Testament, the Book of Emancipation, the Word which proclaimed his redemption from the service of Satan and his release from the remorseless revolutions of the Wheel of Reincarnation. Such a transformation could not pass unnoticed, and a certain Living Buddha, to whom he owed allegiance, visited Suchow and departed in great wrath because the Red Lama had refused to worship him.

Then, gradually, the word passed round : “ The Red Lama has joined the Christians ”.

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In early spring the Lama left us on a visit to his *niang-gia*.¹ The winter

¹ *Niang-gia*—“ Mother’s home ”—is a term exclusively by women and priests to indicate the home they left to espouse, in the woman’s case, a husband, and, in the priest’s case, a religious vocation.

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encampment of the family was pitched at a comparatively low altitude in a sheltered fold of the hills, four days' journey away, which journey he took on horseback. Life among his own people bore no resemblance to that in the Lamasery, for Tibet is a country where the sharpest division is drawn between the standing of the Lama and the laity, although each family gives up one son to temple service.

The monastic system claims one-sixth of the total population, and, trained from infancy to hate reform and innovation of any kind, whether secular or religious, the hierarchy, under the headship of the great Dalai Lama, rules the country in absolute despotism. The laity, on the other hand, are conspicuous for spontaneous, simple, free expression of life, but also for their blind, unquestioning acceptance of priest rule, which claims as votive-offering the best of the flocks, herds and produce.

As soon as he caught sight of the group of tents, the Red Lama dismounted, and

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waited by his horse's head until the men-folk, attracted by the barking of the watch-dogs, came out to meet him. The camp-fires were burning, and in a few moments he had joined the circle which sat around the great pot from which the boiling tea was served.

The group of nomads looked with pride on the Lama who represented his clan in the powerful Lamasery to which he belonged. Information had already reached them of the ill-treatment to which he had been subjected, and of the robbery he had suffered, and there were high words and threats of revenge from the younger men. But when he spoke of the kindness shown him by the Christian community, of the doctor who had restored him to reason, and of the hospitality which had given him shelter ever since his misfortune, they nodded their heads in approval, and the great strong men laughed like children and shouted with delight at the thought of his enemies, the hated custom-house

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officers, having been tricked into giving money to the beggar-band !

Many questions were asked as to who these Christians were, to which enquiries the Lama answered : “ They do not worship our gods. They treat people well. They always speak the truth.” Then from his own small knowledge of the Christian religion he told them what he knew, and they listened with fascinated attention.

During the Lama’s absence from Suchow persecution had broken out against the Church, and the Christian doctor had been thrown into prison. On his return the Lama first heard of this, and his indignation knew no bounds. Following his first impulse, he rushed to the town jail to demand the release of his benefactor.

The doctor, from the inner cell, heard a loud altercation in the court, and recognised the well-known tones of the Red Lama’s voice. Fearing, above all things, the interference in his affairs of his impetuous friend, he summoned the turn-

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key and sent the peremptory message that "Lama" should go direct to the missionaries for instructions, and that he must obey every word they said.

Obedient to the order, he arrived in our guest-room breathless from the helter-skelter through the town, and offered his services for purposes of revenge.

"Let me go," he panted. "I have friends in this town, and if we march in a body to the prison we will soon have the doctor out! Those officials are no better than cannibals, they live by eating men."

The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, which were holding in check the burning indignation of the young students, he frankly confessed, did not appeal to him, and he made no pretence of admiring them.

However, after many exhortations to patience, he yielded to that which he still considered our poorer judgment, and promised to keep away from the prison

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building. Nevertheless, the Red Lama was never in life required to exercise such self-control as when he refrained from raising a band of men to rescue the man who had rescued him.

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One day he came to our room with his fingers laid on his throat, making the peculiar gesture used by the Tibetan when he is asking a favour. Pulling the loose skin of his neck with thumb and forefinger, he said : “ My own people salute you, they thank you for your kindness to me, and beg that you should come and teach them your religion so soon as the snows have melted and the roads are passable. When I was with them I gave them the books which you sent, and now they ask you to come and explain them.”

A few weeks later he left us to report himself at a Lamasery, where his attendance was required, and from there he went again to see his family.

“ In the fourth moon I will come again

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and fetch you," he said, "and we will go together to my own people. They will provide horses for you to ride, and you will escape the heat of the plain, for our mountain pastures are cool all through the summer, and there are flowers everywhere."

"Good-bye, Lama," was our answer. "You will find us ready when you come in the fourth moon. Farewell, God be with you."

He stood for one moment in the courtyard waving his rider's whip and shouting a last good-bye to our servants, then turned and disappeared through the door.

We never saw him again.

The fourth moon came and went, but the Red Lama had vanished. A band of the young men of his clan came to Suchow enquiring if we had seen anything of him. He had visited the Lamasery, spent some weeks at home and had left them on horseback, at the appointed time, to fetch us, as he had promised. It was ascertained

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that he never passed the portal of Kia-yükwan which stood between his mountain home and Suchow, but disappeared among the lonely ravines of the Tibetan Alps.

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Some weeks later a curious figure appeared in our midst, on Sunday morning, at the hour of Divine service. His shoulders were draped in heavy cloth, and on his head he wore a pagoda-shaped hat of golden lacquer, whose quaint curves were singularly becoming to the face which they framed.

The figure was that of an old man, sturdy and weather-beaten. The face, which was deeply lined and bronzed by exposure to the elements, harmonised with the mellow tones of the fantastic lacquered hat. The eyes looked almost pale in so tanned a face, and wore the look which is only acquired by those who make the art of meditation the pursuit of a life-time. As he sat motionless on the high wooden form, which was the only

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sitting-accommodation which the Church provided, the soul of the man would suddenly appear and look, quick and animated, through the windows of his eyes, then withdraw into deep spirit recesses, leaving the whole countenance blank and lifeless.

When the service was over he made himself known to us as an emissary from the great monastery of Kan-tung, from whence he had been deputed to collect information concerning the mysterious disappearance of the Red Lama, who was his kinsman.

His enquiries proved quite fruitless, and no single item of information regarding the lost man has ever come to hand. The more hopeful side of the incident is that no dead body was discovered, nor riderless horse captured, and the old Kan-tung Lama shook his wise head and said :

“ It may be that he became aware he would never reach you alive, and has

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turned away to Lhasa, where his enemies will not follow him.”

Rising, he lifted his upturned palms with a graceful, inviting gesture, and added :

“ The chief of my monastery sends you his greetings. He thanks you for your great kindness to my kinsman, who was a favourite with all of us. If your travels ever lead you near Kan-tung Lamasery, it will be our honour to receive and welcome you.”

ALMIGHTY GOD, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, send forth, we pray Thee, Thy light to lighten the darkness of the people of Tibet, and Thy truth to deliver from superstition and error those who rule over them. May they know the liberty of those whom the Son maketh free, and may the day be hastened when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

TIBET—THE GREAT CLOSED LAND

Area : 463,200 square miles.

Estimated Population : 3,500,000 souls, of whom one in six is a priest, called Lama.

General Elevation : 11,000 feet above sea-level. Much of the country exceeds 16,000 feet above sea-level.

It is stated that, in not very remote geological times, Tibet formed part of the bed of the China Sea of the Pacific Ocean.

The word "Tibet" is derived from sTod Bod (pronounced Tö Pöt) or Upper Bod, which is that division of the country which contains Lhasa and Tashilhunpo, which are the chief centres of Lamaism.

Tibet is ruled by Lamaism, heading up in the Dalai Lama, who is the despotic ruler of the country.

His rule controls the people through the monasteries called Lamaseries, which shelter the Lamas.

The lay population is composed almost entirely of nomadic shepherds, who move their tents according to the requirements of the season and the conditions of pasture land. These nomads are wholly unlearned.

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Tibetan is an alphabetic language constructed from Sanscrit in the seventh century A.D. by the Tibetan minister, Tumi, during the reign of King Srongstan Gampo. The spoken differs greatly from the written language, and dialects vary according to the districts.

Tibetans belong to Turko-Mongol stock.

The priests of Lamaism are many and the missionaries of Christ are few ; but the printing-press has placed the Christian Scriptures within the reach of all who can read.

The pioneer Moravian missionary Jäschke almost finished the translation of the New Testament before he died in 1875. Redslob completed what his teacher and friend had left undone.

A cordon of missionary outposts is being drawn round Tibet, extending from Kashmir along the northern frontier of India, and reaching up to the north of China. There are, in fact, some thirty or forty missionaries on the borders of this vast unevangelised country, waiting for an opportunity of entering as soon as the rigid policy of its rulers is relaxed.

Pioneer work among Tibetans was commenced by members of the China Inland Mission in the year 1877, when the late Dr. Cameron visited most of the places on the Szechwan border.

Tatsien-lu, a very important Tibetan centre, was opened by the China Inland Mission in 1897, and a printing-press for issuing Tibetan Christian literature has been established there.

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Volunteers for missionary work in Tibet must be prepared to face the following difficulties :

1. The food question. The food of the Tibetans is such that a foreigner finds it very hard to eat, and still harder to digest.
2. Excessive loneliness and the opposition to the Gospel by the whole Lama system.
3. Unsafe travel because of robber bands.

VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE AFRAID TO EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO HARDSHIP AND EVEN DANGER NEED NOT APPLY FOR TIBET.