measure thus obtained is 2 lbs., Chinese, eight tsiens. A pound is worth thirty sapecks. The salt is sent to Teng-Yueh and Yung-Tchang, but does not go to Tali. Work is only carried on for seven days in a month, and about 3,000 lbs. of salt are despatched in that time. The workings are common; anyone can share in them by paying to the mandarin a rent, which varies according to the number of labourers.

As we left Tien-eul-tsin we noticed pagodas on the hillside above some rocks, on which were engraved inscriptions. In the middle of them appeared a figure of the goddess Khou-an-yn, in the pose of a madonna with flowing drapery: the head was in profile, with a hood encircled by an aureole. Similar designs exist in Japan. Farther on we passed another salt-mine village, from which arose columns of smoke, before coming to Yün-long-cheou, a town only by virtue of its administration. The mandarin, who entertained us, had a garrison of but thirteen men. Here we were on the bank of the river Pi-kiang, which flows from the mountains of Likiang into the Mekong at two days' distance.

The directions furnished us as to the route to follow were vague. They were to the effect that we ought to reach the Lan-Tsang-kiang (Mekong) in two days, and should be able to cross it by a bridge. But on the other side we should find ourselves in the territory of the "barbarians," according to Joseph, and with paths impracticable for mules. The approaches to the Salwen were regarded with dread. A local proverb says, "He who would cross the Loutze-kiang should sell his wife before he starts." Our men did not seem to make any actual demur to going forward; they doubted our persisting to any distance, but, on our attempting to procure an extra mafou for three more mules we had bought, we found it impossible to induce

anyone of the district to follow us farther in a westerly direction. One of our other mafous prepared himself for all eventualities by offering to the gods in the pagoda where we were, rice, tchaotiou, and pork, and by burning candles before the two altars with repeated prostrations.

From Yün-long the route ascended over a low shoulder into a wooded and turfy country, in which we passed through a Lolo and Minchia village of long arched dwellings. Straw was drying in the yards stacked on horizontal bars in layers to a height of 19 feet, and covered by a small pent-roof. As the village was crowded with another caravan, we encamped beyond in a fir-grove hard by a torrent, and enjoyed the seclusion and magnificent prospect at a height of 7,800 feet. This enjoyment would have been more generally shared by the rest of our troop could they have divested themselves of some foreboding for the future. Only that morning, in conversation with Joseph, I had learned of a road which branched northward from the bridge over the Mekong. "But," said he, "we must not think of taking it, because there's sickness in the district; because the mountains are stupendous; because, in a word, the Lissous are there!" I was content to abide the issue, and let them talk.

The 26th (June) was very hot, and the glare from the slaty rock trying; but in the afternoon we came in sight of the muddy Mekong, and presently joining its course, turned up the left bank. The volume of its waters that came tumbling down with tumult and in waves shouldering each other as if panic-driven strengthened our previous conception of its force. We found the bridge a little farther; it was merely a footway on chains between two stone piers such as we had seen before, with the river forming a boiling rapid underneath. The bridge

itself was sixty-six paces in length, but, reckoning from the edge of the wood where the piers commenced, the width of the river at this point was about seventy-six yards. Going northward up stream this is the last bridge on the Mekong before those which span the two arms at Tsiamdo, on the main road between Pekin and Lhaça. After crossing the river a large gateway confronted us, through which we entered the street of the village of Fey-long-kiao. On either side the regular white buildings with their grey roofs, backed by the darker hills and coffee-coloured water, imparted quite a charming air to the place. Within, it was the same as other Chinese towns, squalid and dirty, like a woman who hides the ugliness of age beneath a showy dress.

We put up in a room above the gateway, reached by a narrow ladder stair. The basement was given up to idols. But instead of the tawdry images we had grown used to, with grotesque features staring at you in ranks like dolls at a fair waiting the day of destruction, I was astonished to find myself before deities of a much more venerable aspect. On the right was a little old figure, with a cowl like a monk's upon a gilded head adorned with a flowing white beard. He reminded me of Father Christmas. In the middle of the altar was another, indistinguishable save for some traces of a former gilded splendour in the dark wood of which he was graven. At the feet of the large ones were minor divinities, or they may have been priests, in a sort of cassock, and black with age. These austere gods seemed to watch with the same air of immovable disdain the damage of the wasting years, while the river without repeated in its ceaseless roar the unchanging tale of centuries which rolled before their feet.

Naturally, our first care at Fey-long-kiao was to put questions regarding the route. The replies were uniformly discouraging.

"South-west there were roads leading into Burmah,"—thank you for nothing. To the north?—There was but one, and that ascended the left bank of the Mekong. But in proportion as they insisted that it was impossible to travel by the right bank, that the country was impassable, perilous, peopled by savages, so our desire to make the attempt increased. The farthest Chinese village was two days' march north-west of Fey-long-kiao. We would attain that, and then it would be time to see what more could be done. Anyway, I was determined to go on till some more real obstacle than the fears of our men should stop us.

As predicted, it took us two days to reach Lao. We went up by a fairly good zigzag path over the chain that divides the Mekong basin from that of the Salwen. The first night we halted in a hut about 1,000 feet short of the summit. We were astonished to find here Manhao, the mafou who at Mienning had stabbed the makotou. He related that the latter, recovered of his wounds, had gone back to Mongtse with François, and preferred a request to be taken back into our service. It may be imagined what reception I gave to one who had proved so ready with his knife. Throughout the latter portion of our ascent we were escorted by two soldiers, as a protection against attack from Lolo or Lissou robbers. I confess I placed more reliance in my revolver than in the cross-bow and trident which formed the armament of our warriors. On the col I remarked on either side of the path a row of small sharpened bamboo stakes buried in the ground to pierce the bare feet of possible brigands. The Moïs of Annam use a like method of defence.

We dropped down into the Salwen basin between wooded hills that sheltered rare hamlets. Round them the fields under cultivation were fenced with palisades of interlaced bamboo against the

incursions of wild animals. The fauna of the mountains was rich in deer, chamois, monkeys, and wild oxen, but we heard of no tigers.

We stopped at Lao, where the gaping crowd of Chinese had a more cut-throat look than usual. They could give us no clearer information than at Fey-long-kiao. One route led to the Salwen, which they called the Cheloung-kiang, but it was not possible to go farther north because of the *jejeu* (savages). We resolved to see for ourselves, and next morning moved off slowly, for it behoved us to be patient with our mafous, who, though tired, were performing their work well. The way wound up the defile of the torrent we had begun to follow on the day before ; brushwood and boulders obstructed the passage, and the mules had to pick their footing cleverly among the treacherous shingle. At sundown the column was checked for half an hour at an abrupt landslip. The makotou, who had been in advance, came back with the news that the path was choked by a mass of rock, and that several of the animals had rolled down the slope. As night was approaching, we camped where we were, on a bank of shale. Above, the mouth of the gorge was dimly outlined against a triangular patch of sky, and the dark bushes that lined the channel were lit with dancing fireflies. The men beneath the sheltering pack-saddles talked together in low tones by the glare of the fire till far into the night, while without the circle of light the shadowy forms of the mules moved or lay among the reeds. Little by little silence fell over the camp, and the echoing torrent alone broke the stillness.

Apart from the arduous nature of the road, the day had offered little of incident. We had sighted some natives fishing down stream with bamboos, to which a bunch of worms was tied ; they thrust the rod under the large rocks, and netted the catch in an

osier basket with the other hand. The fish thus landed averaged about 8 inches long, the breast and belly were broad and the head flat, with a wide mouth like a dog-fish. The flesh was palatable.

It was on leaving the shingle camp that the real struggle began against obstacles more formidable than we had yet encountered. The path got worse and worse, and the men had to precede the mules, pick in hand, and break a track across the shoot of rubble and loose stones. By this means we won a precarious foothold, though in some places the projecting crags thrust us out over dangerous declivities. Stepping cautiously in Indian file, we escaped any worse accident than the fall of one mule, which luckily recovered itself unhurt.

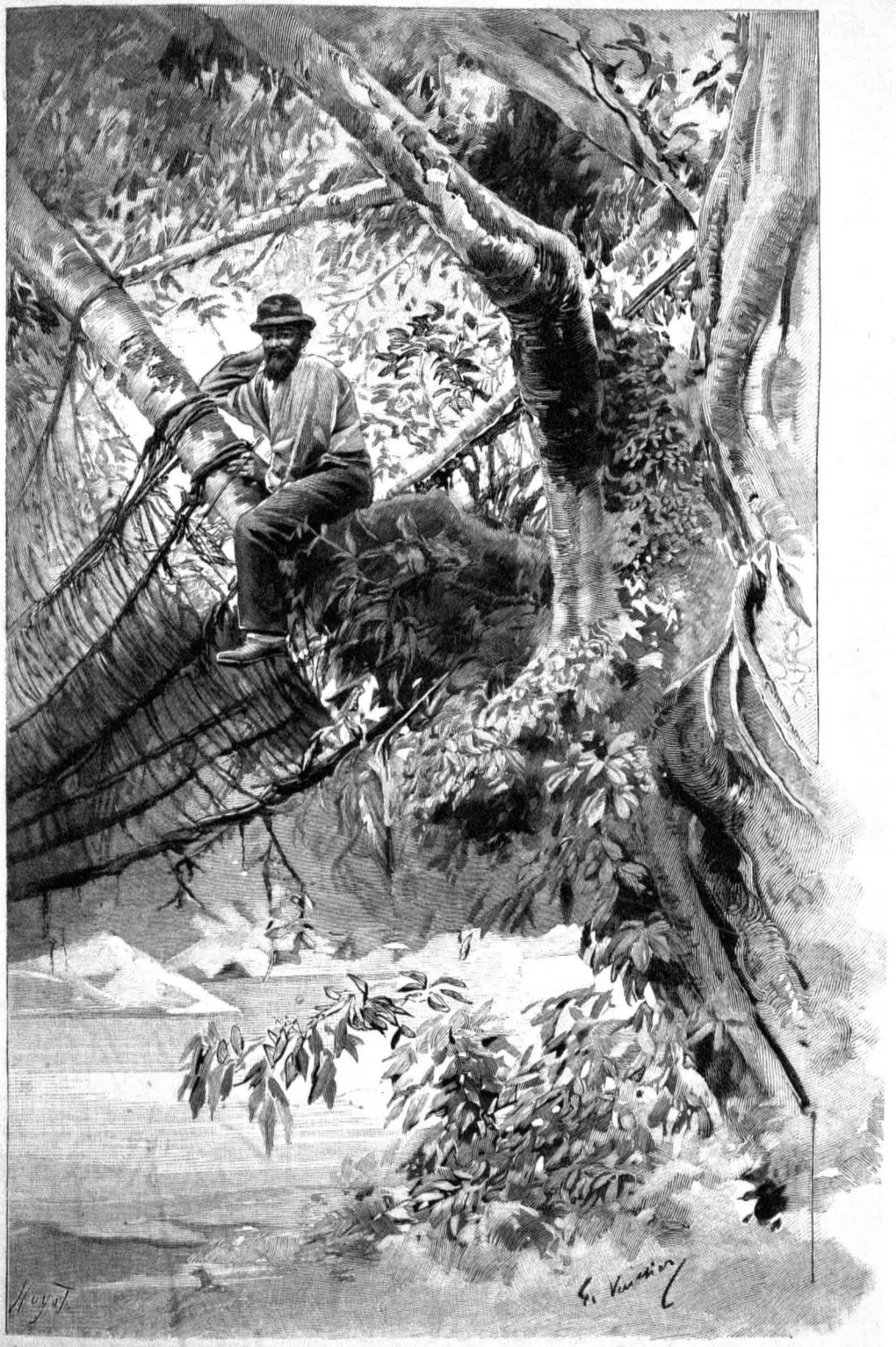
The valley flora was unlike that of the 5,000-feet plateaux we had traversed. Here the trees had dense foliage, their lower boughs often covered with fruit; acacias grew close, and fig-trees smothered in gigantic creepers and a broad-leaved moss. On every side were orchids, and ferns with spiral fronds twining round the central stem. The prolific forest teemed with plants of rare grace and tropical profusion. But its sunless depths and rank undergrowth exhaled miasma and a fever-laden moisture; so that, although the temperature was not high, we perspired in the damp heat at each heavy step, and breathed a tepid vapour that made us believe the reputation for insalubrity given by the Chinese to the valley of the Salwen.

Our camp of the 29th (June) was still by the torrent. Our men had exhausted their provisions—a lesson to them to be more provident, and to attend to our orders that they should always carry three or four days' supplies. Fortunately, we had a ham and some rice to share with them. In the morning, as I went to bathe in the river, I discovered a liana bridge swung from

two mighty trees, a tight-rope dancer's line above the flood. A wild-looking being was just about to step on to it, emerging from I know not where. At sight of me he stopped short in startled amazement; then abruptly faced about, and, scrambling down the left bank, plunged into the reeds and disappeared. The whole scene called up before me descriptions I had read of travellers in South America, and I pictured myself in for an adventure with those ferocious savages of Aymard, who with snake-like glide and stealthy bird-call creep upon you unawares. Putting aside fancy, it seemed like enough we should make acquaintance with savages. We were now in really undiscovered country: no European had ever hitherto penetrated so far.

It was near noon before we debouched upon the valley proper of the Salwen, the gradients of the sides being less steep than those of the Mekong. The Cheloung-kiang, Lou-kiang, or Salwen, as it is variously called, flows at its base in an average breadth of 120 yards; its waters are easily distinguished from those of the Lan-tsang-kiang (Mekong), for while the latter are reddish brown, the Salwen's are a dirty grey. At the point where we struck it the current seemed less rapid than the Mekong; the temperature of the water was 66° Fahr. The level of the Salwen is only 3,087 feet, or 1,625 feet lower than the Mekong. Without admitting a shallower depth than is the case, it is difficult to believe that so great a body of water can issue from so short a course as that indicated by the latest English map of Thibet, published in 1894. The impression we derived was of a large river coming from far.

We ascended the valley by a well-defined path to the neat village of Loukou, built after the Chinese model. It was girt with maize-fields guarded by palisades or mud walls. The



Briffaud on the Liana Bridge.

population consisted of Chinese, Minchias, and Lissous. The natives are ruled by a Lissou toussou. This magnate, after an exchange of cards, invited us to lodge in his house; but we preferred the open plain outside the village, as the search for some missing mules necessitated a halt of two days instead of one. We made the toussou a present of a handkerchief, some pictures, and a box of powder, and he paid us a visit, dressed in white and with his hair long, a sign of mourning. He was a half-breed, with more of the Chinese than Lissou in him, and of much intelligence. His family had migrated hither from Setchuen with the coming of the Mings. To his official occupation he added that of a trader, with thirty mules and six men employed in the traffic of salt from Yün-Loung to Yün-tchang and Teng-Yueh. This toussou knew the district well, and gave us useful information beyond our expectation. He said a path, which though insignificant was practicable, went hence in a northerly direction. It was confined for several days to this valley, trending first towards that of the Mekong and afterwards back on to the watershed between the two. The route scaled one high mountain, but without snow. For eight days' journey we should find subject Lissous, then for two or three the *jejeu*, "*qui reguntur a nullis hominibus et vivunt ut animalia*," as Joseph put it. The friendly toussou promised us a letter to a neighbouring colleague, and provided us with a guide who would also act as an interpreter among the Lissous. This new member of our caravan, who likewise served as a mafou, was a tall, erect man, with a marked aquiline nose and straight-set eyes; in his copper complexion he resembled a Redskin. Among the inhabitants of the village we observed many who seemed to have little in common with the yellow race. One woman I

noted: she was bronzed, with a projecting brow and arched eyebrows. Her eyes, instead of being lustreless, were deep-set and straight, and the underlid was fuller than those of the Chinese. Her nose was short, and wide at the base, and her face broad at the temples and tapering to a pronounced chin. Her whole countenance denoted greater sensibility and vivacity than the Chinese, and was nearer in its general aspect to the European type, reminding me of gipsies I had seen in Russia. She was a Lissou.

The toussou gave us particulars about other routes. According to him, there existed a path by the right bank of the Salwen, which traversed first a large watercourse known as the Long-Song-kiang, then the My-le-kiang, and ended in the Long-Tchouan-kiang. It was difficult to identify these rivers. This route was peopled by the Lansous, noted for the beauty of their women, and the Pou-Mans, who live not by agriculture but by hunting. We employed our rest in questioning the guide as to the tribe to which he belonged. I studied the Lissou dialect, which resembled that of the Lochais and the Lolos. By his account, the Lissous came here four (?) generations ago from Nang-king, which accorded with a similar tradition among the Lolos. Farther on we were to learn that the Lissous themselves spoke of a country where they had formerly lived, where there were elephants. They must, then, have come from the south.

Our mules being all collected by the 4th (July), and our men rested, on the morning of that date we again moved forward. For the whole of that day we were in the Salwen valley; now above, now beside the river. Few people were to be seen, and little cultivation; rice, maize, and cotton in flower, which must be annual, as the plants were little more than a foot high. In

all directions were strewn limestone fragments amid scanty herbage, with here and there a cactus to give the scene a likeness to Africa. The river alternated between broad reaches lapping sandy bars and foaming rapids like the Mekong. The spectacle formed by the misty spray of the cataracts was grand in the extreme. The Salwen bore down on its bosom large trunks of trees which, caught in the eddies, or held in the backwaters, accumulated in every creek. The water had begun to rise.

We continued on the 5th (July) the ascent of the same well-wooded valley, passing a Lissou village, Oumelan, where the house-walls were chiefly composed of horizontal logs, to which were hooked wicker hen-roosts, and small wooden shelters for the pigs; the lofts were raised upon piles. On one post I perceived a coarse white drawing of a quartered bird, no doubt intended, as among the Hou-Nis, to ward off evil spirits. To our request for chickens, answer was returned that there were none. As they were running about in all directions, some moral suasion, backed by money, was required to overcome the scruples of the owners. The site of our camp would appear to have been a common one for wayfarers from the smoke-blackened rocks. We were in a clearing beside a leaping cascade; behind, on the slope, rose a monster tree, whose roots served as an arbour, and whose twigs made our couch. In one corner Nam established his kitchen, by the light of a lamp of antique shape; a little farther Chantzeu, curled up among the roots, sought oblivion of the world in opium; below, the mafous were stretched beside the packs. Under a white covering Sao nodded over his pipe, and as he dreamed of the palms of Tonkin probably consigned the whole celestial race to perdition—a sentiment which I could cordially indorse. By the water's edge some logs from the mafous' fire still flickered, showing the philosophic Fa coiled in a

hollow tree which he had selected for his bed. The mules were allowed to stray among the scattered herbage, under the guard of three mafous, who, having fired their pieces into the air to scare the wild beasts, straightway went to sleep. We slumbered under the protection of the gods, in the shape of three painted images on a stone in a niche, before which remnants of egg-shells, feathers, and a few white rags fluttering on the bushes bore sacrificial witness to their holy character. We felt almost as barbaric as their worshippers.

Heavy rain woke us in the night, and did not abate with daylight. We were now entering the rainy season, and had a pleasant prospect for the next few weeks.

6th (July).—Still threading the Salwen valley. We passed out of the jurisdiction of the toussou of Loukou into that of Ketsouy, a miserable village, where actually the chief was absent. But his wife attempted to supply his authority with considerable urbanity, and sent us eggs and goats gratis. *Apropos* of toussous, we learned that the dignity is hereditary, and in default of direct heir a successor is chosen from among the other members of the family. As in the province of Yünnan, he receives rents from his subjects, but nothing from the Chinese Government. Every year he must remit an impost in kind, or some articles of value, to an itinerant Imperial functionary, or attend in person at Tali for the purpose.

Another day on the 7th (July) of the same work, up hill and down dale. The valley was tortuous, and we were occasionally high enough to get superb views; the course presented similar bold features to those of the Red River. The ridges dividing the tributary gullies were of limestone origin, and scarred the face of the valley with crags and cavities, often encroaching on the bed of the stream with grey seamed brows draped with bushes. But the clouds

hung low and hid the peaks. The conditions were unfavourable to photography, and we passed, a draggled train, through the Lissou village of Oua-ma-ti, where the men wore their hair in pigtails and the women in two small horns above the ears. The bad weather lent our troop a strange appearance. Sao's get-up, a motley of European and Annamite equipment, was highly grotesque. On his head was a wide Chinese straw, on his body a shrunken blue jacket made in Tonkin, and on his legs a pair of my old pantaloons. The shoes and gaiters I had given him made him a groom in his lower extremities, while revolver, gun, and bandolier transformed him into a soldier above. Add to this the scientific air lent by my photographic apparatus on his mule, covered with a yellow mantle, and at a distance it would have been hard to say what he was.

Lissou Woman.

Stress of weather made us glad of the shelter of a hamlet called Lotsolo, in the midst of maize and indigo culture. Here the men

wore Chinese garb. The women had a dress with parti-coloured sleeves, an armless waistcoat, blue with minute white checks and a brown border, and an apron and broad sash. Their costume was completed by a turban of, in some cases, a blue and red scarf, fringed with cowries. Almost all had small coral ear-rings, said to be peculiar to these Lissous, who were known as Koua-Lissous (Lissous of colour, cf. back, Koua-Lolos), in distinction from the Ain-Lissous of Loukou. Some of these women were not bad-looking. One girl we caught sight of with quite regular features, and in the morning she was induced for a few needles to parade for our inspection. She answered to the gentle name of Lou-Méo.

At Lotsolo we met with a good reception, and I began to feel quite friendly with the Lissous, of whom we had heard such alarming accounts. I went into one of their houses, and found the occupants squatted round the fire warming tchaotiou, a rice spirit of which they are great connoisseurs. They had never seen a Yangjen (European) before, nor yet mules; our arrival therefore was an event which they celebrated as a fête. They invited me to drink, and we observed a custom here which we met with farther on. Two people quaff together out of a two-handled bamboo vessel. Each holds one handle and incites the other to imbibe more than himself. This mutual loving-cup is regarded as a pledge of amity and alliance. In answer to my questions, the natives could not recollect hearing of their tribe having come here from elsewhere. They knew the Lolos possessed a writing, but they themselves had none. A curious marriage custom is observed among them. The wedding feast over, at nightfall the betrothed retires with her parents into the mountain, and the swain has to seek them; which quest successfully achieved, the parents withdraw, and the newly-wedded couple remain till morning upon the hillside,

when they return to their homes. They have to repeat this ceremony for three nights before they may settle down. This custom naturally precludes any marriages during the rains. They admitted in confidence that the bridegroom was generally in the secret as to the direction in which he might find his party. Joseph recounted a like custom as prevailing among the Lolos of Lower Yünnan in the neighbourhood of the Yangtzé.

On leaving Lotsolo we at last quitted the valley of the Salwen for one of its affluents, by a slippery path, which often called for the services of the pick. A light rain continued to fall, and I pitied the mafous, whose toil was severe. To add to our discomfort at night we were tormented by clouds of mosquitoes, that effectually murdered sleep.

On the 9th (July) we held on our upward course. The men, accustomed to fine weather, seemed down-hearted, and scarcely one of them was capable of good collar-work, so that they loaded up in dejected silence, which boded ill for the harder times yet in store. Some distance from our camping ground we came on a really bad bit of path, where we had to scale a veritable rock stair. It took three mafous to hold up each mule, and one of the latter having been arduously hauled to the top, took it into his head to try and re-descend. He lost his footing, and in a moment was rolling head first down the declivity with his load bumping at his sides. The fall looked fatal, and we made our way to the bottom of the ravine, expecting to find him in pieces. There he was, however, miraculously sound, save for some cuts and scratches. The example seemed contagious: first one and then another went down, till four had followed suit, and we began to wonder if it would be our turn next; it was perilous to stay in a valley where it thus rained mules. We had to turn

all hands into mafous, ourselves included, and by dint of great exertions, and forming a chain to pass the scattered contents of the packs from hand to hand, we eventually picked all the cases out of the bushes and torrent and got them to the top, where we were rewarded by finding that the rest of the animals had strayed into the woods; where most of them passed the night. These contretemps meant a short stage and much grumbling, hardly allayed by a ration of tchaotiou. The next day was therefore devoted to a rest, and to preparations for climbing the mountain which reared itself before us. We also got out our thick clothes, for it might have been winter, and we longed to reach a less rigorous climate.

On the 11th (July) we made an early start, as the ascent had been described to us as hardly to be accomplished in one day. Also our guns and carbines came out of their cases, in readiness for the savages who were said to be likely to assail us half-way.

The road at first entered a forest, and though the gradient was steep it was less severe than I had expected, and the mules got on fairly well. The woods were beautiful, and reminded me of some parts of Thibet; the mighty boles were hidden under a coat of moss, and the long grey beards that hung from their boughs seemed a mark of venerable age. At the base of some we found small altars formed of branches, erected by the superstition of the Lissous to ward off evil spirits. As we mounted, the trees grew more stunted and gnarled, and presently gave place to lean bamboos overtopped by Alpine larches. Here and there I was surprised to notice fine magnolias side by side with the red and white bark of the wild cherry. At the end of four hours, during which, notwithstanding the prevalent moisture, we had not found a spring, we came out upon the grass of the summit.

We had ascended so far faster than we had anticipated, and without hindrance from other sources than those of nature. A report had spread among the Lissous that we were devils, and so we were respected. On the col we were at an altitude of 11,463 feet, and astride the watershed between the basins of the Mekong and the Salwen.

The pass as well as the mountain is called Fou-kou-kouane, in Lissou dialect Lamakou, the "Gate of the Tiger." A post consisting of a few Lissous dignified with the name of soldiers occupied a bamboo shanty, ostensibly to ensure the safety of the route, which was further guarded on either side by the buried bamboo splinters before described. The crest was marked by scarred and jagged rocks, amid which the track led on to a small plateau covered with long grasses, where the rich flora testified to a constant dampness. I saw two beautiful species of lily, white and red, myosotis, yellow ranunculus, sage, and several kinds of orchids. We did not find here the short grass usual on high summits, nor any gnaphalium. We pitched at the head of a green slope on a narrow shelf overtopped by a big rock, from which, when I climbed it in the rain, the caravan was so entirely hidden by the high grass that no one passing within thirty yards would have suspected that the grey mass sheltered fifteen men. The weather was execrable; we were in the clouds; the thermometer stood at 50° Fahr., and it was hard to believe is was July.

Next morning the men were depressed; they had no idea of bearing up against external influences, and the route was resumed in silence. After proceeding a short distance we came to a stream running into a pool, whose rim lipped the base of a cliff. Taking it as a guide, we turned aside, and after a few

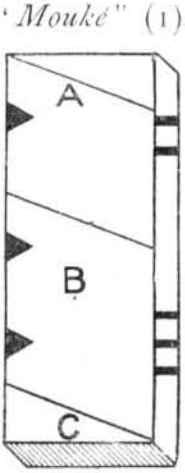
steps found ourselves confronted by a stupendous wall of black and grey seamed rock, which stretched above us and below. The rivulet, leaping in cascades from stone to stone, bored through a fissure in the scarp, and disclosed a recess in shape like the prison of Dionysius' Ear. Peering into the entrance, we discovered a vaulted cavern, under which the water ran over a bed of white pebbles. Scared by our intrusion, birds of blue plumage flew out into the retreats of the mountain. The spot had an air of wild grandeur, which suggested some subterranean home of primitive man; but here was no trace of humanity. In China such a cave would have been decorated with statues of Buddha. Instead, the adornment was by Nature's hand: grey rocks strewn upon verdant mounds, thickets of shapely rhododendrons, larches with their horizontal boughs dark below and vivid green aloft. A veritable faëry ring, and spot of witchery; the scene it might have been of some Walpurgis revel, with its environment of high mountains, deep woods, and quaint rocks, with the chasm dimly descried in the mist, and over all a sense of awe.

From here the route was a descent; at intervals posts, with cross pieces marked with notches, indicated the whereabouts in the undergrowth of the sharpened stakes, but these in the dark would have been invisible. As there is no writing among the Lissous, they adopt the following method of conveying their messages or transacting business: — For a contract between two parties, they take two bits of wood about 12 inches long by 1½ inch wide, care being had that they should be identical in all points, and cut on each face a similar number of notches, generally a little larger on one side than the other. The "*mouké*," as the Chinese call this tally, is thus a reminder. Each notch signifies a word or phrase. In cases of

an agreement made before witnesses, should one of the contracting parties break a clause, the other may call upon him to produce a "*mouké*," and verify it in presence of witnesses. If used as a letter, the messenger must repeat the meaning of each notch. Here are two examples :—

No. 1 "*mouké*" has reference to a Lissou custom. A thief has been expelled from a village; a residence is assigned him under the patronage of someone who will be answerable for him.

"*Mouké*" (1).



The toussou has said . .
. . The toussou has warned me off
. . and forbidden

if you have a patron . .

you may dwell in this place . .
. . to dwell in this place
. . because I have robbed
. . he is always stealing mules and horses.

A and *C* are spaces on the board representing the arbitrator.
B represents the patron.

"*Mouké*" (2).

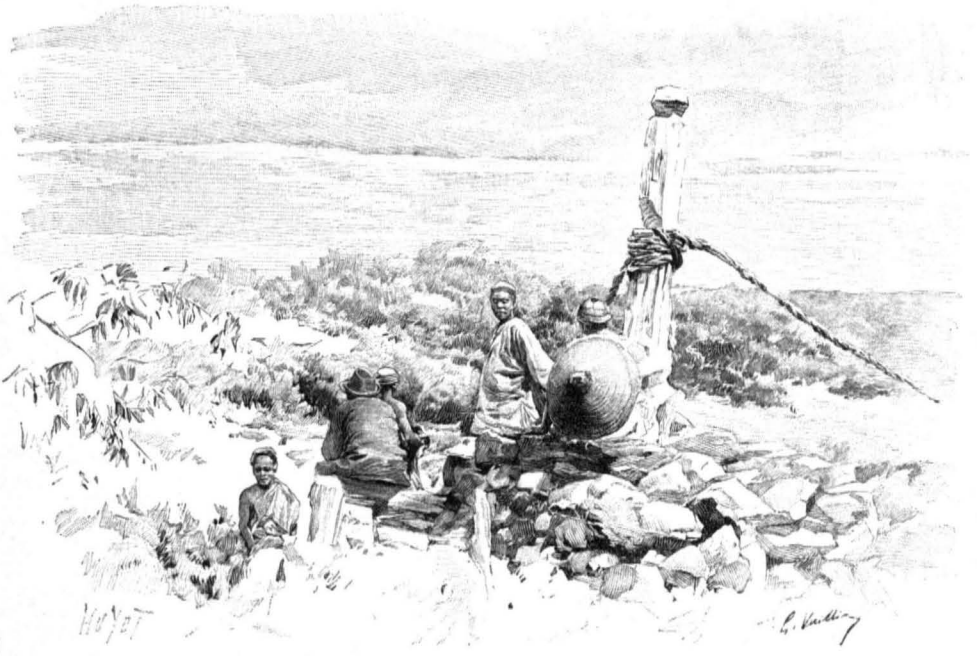
. . The toussou has given (me)
. . to me . . . (here follows name of bearer)
. . his daughter
. . eldest (or 2nd, 3rd, etc.)
. . to wife
. . age of wife in years
. . „ „ months
. . „ „ days
. . date of her birth.

After this digression let us resume. In the afternoon we entered woods of pine and holm oak, the latter a speciality among the trees of Thibet. At night the men made a great fire, for there was no stint of fuel, and a picturesque oval-shaped camp was formed round it, while we took a long rest before the morrow.

13th (July). — Descent continued; we shortly sighted the Mekong again running in discoloured rapids. Coming so recently from the Salwen, it seemed small, and its valley more confined and less green than the latter. Hamlets, with a few rice-fields, began to appear, and near them large drying stacks like gibbets. We stopped in the Minchia village of Piao-tsen, surrounded by a white mud wall with half-demolished flanking bastions. When we entered the enclosure there were but few houses to be seen, and the ground was chiefly occupied by tobacco plantations. Here we were only a three-days' foot journey from Fey-long-kiao; but I did not regret the elbow we had made, since it had allowed of our exploring the Salwen, and deriving much useful information towards the solution of an important geographical problem.

At Piao-tsen we installed ourselves in a pagoda, and here we celebrated the Fourteenth of July with a sweet omelette and cigars. For eighteen days we had not seen what the Chinese term a *ta tifan*, or place of any size, and our regaining a little more comfort was the signal for four of our men to abandon us. I made no attempt to prevent them; our troop must weed itself out into the survival of the fittest for the still more arduous work remaining. Among the deserters was Chantzeu, a man who had been with us ever since Mongtse, and who had had less toil and more indulgence than the others. We had been

particularly good to him, giving him more pay than he was entitled to; and yet here, in the prospect of increased labour, the ungrateful hound left us without even a word of parting. The makotou continued to give us satisfaction, and, after two days' suffering from what we at one time feared to be a whitlow, was now nearly fit again. The only fault to be found with him was

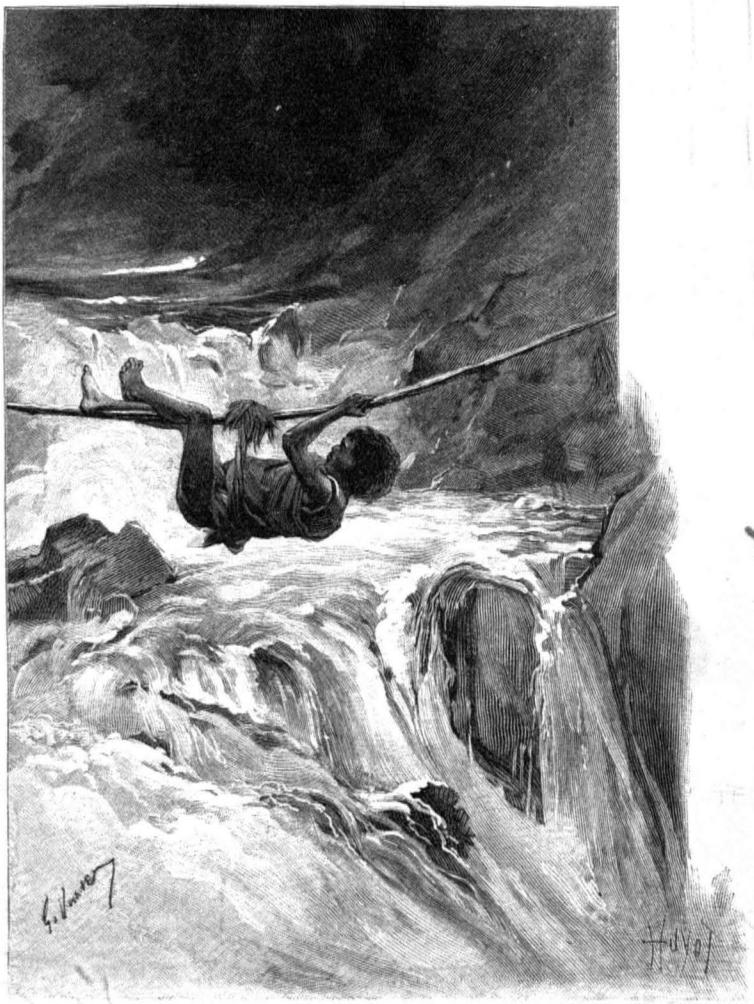


Attachment of Cord Bridge at Piao-tsen.

his inability to make the mafous obey him; when they refused a task, he did it himself.

The defection was supplied by four Minchias, and we were again able to set forward. As we left Piao-tsen we saw the first cord bridge over the Mekong. It was constructed of two hawsers of twisted bamboo, made fast to a stake on either bank, propped by big stones. For the crossing a small wooden saddle, called *liou-pang*, was attached to a running line (*liou-so*), and the person secured in it by leg and shoulder straps. It behoved

you to keep your hands clasped on the saddle, clear of the friction of the rope. Once mounted and set in motion, it was a slide down one side, and a pull and scramble up the other by



Mode of Crossing on a Single-line Bridge.

hands and feet. In some narrow channels there is a double cable, and it may be done at a single rush. But at Piao-tsen the crossing took a quarter of an hour, and a considerable expenditure of energy.

We held on our way up the right shore of the Mekong, and

this continued for more than a month. The scenery in the valley was remarkable. In one bend, where there was opposite a small military outpost, the red-tinged river made a regular series of serpentines, above which the path clung to the cornice of the cliff, whence we looked across to a barren mountain-side streaked with many-coloured strata, like a painter's palette. This blending of desolation and rich tones was the despair of the photographer. It reminded me, as well as the others, of certain aspects of Africa.

In the evening Joseph explained to me the meaning of some little withered firs we had noticed stuck before the houses. The tree is planted on the 1st of January as a sign of gladness, and is supposed to bring luck and money. They call it *lao-tien-chon* (the tree that shakes the sapecks). This Chinese custom recalls the European Christmas-tree.

On the 15th (July) we halted in a village called Tono. The inhabitants designated themselves Tonos. This was a tribe we had not yet encountered. Their dress was Chinese; but their eyes were wrinkled and their faces wider than the Chinese. Questioned by us, they professed to be the only ones of their clan, and that their ancestors had come here a long time back; their dialect was akin to the Lissou. Their reception was friendly, but their information untrustworthy: according to them it would be impossible to proceed with mules on this side of the Mekong. As only that very morning our caravan had by making a détour successfully circumvented an apparently insurmountable obstacle of projecting rock, we were not likely to be deterred by their reports. Before quitting the Tonos I took a few photographs of the crowd that surrounded us. I have rarely seen a collection of types so hideous: the group might have stood for models in a picture of criminals in Hades.

Squint-eyed, goitred, toothless, here a wen and there a tumour, no single deformity was lacking for the caricature. The very children were horrible. One little object waddled alone; we gave him a handful of rice; he retreated gravely, turning from time to time towards us a bulbous head with bulging eyes—a perfect little monster. A hoary old man with shaven pate, deprived of his queue, leaned his fleshless claw upon a crutch, and watched us with a fixed regard, half hidden by his overhanging lids. His nose touched his chin, and he was microcephalous. We did not linger among such a repulsive company. For a new tribe it was a very disreputable one.

17th (July).—The march was without incident yesterday and to-day, always skirting the hill or the river, into which one mule fell, but a few blows with the pick given by the makotou in advance generally rendered the passage wide enough for the animals. On the next day we had to engage four or five villagers to help our men; our gang thus beginning, without remuneration from the Imperial Government, the hard labour of road-making which was to continue for a long distance. We met some Pé-Lissous speaking the same tongue as the Ain-Lissous, but seeming less of Chinese. Joseph said that the Pé-Lissous are pure bred and indigenous. Men and women alike were swarthy; the former clad in a long white overcoat embellished with sort of epaulettes, descending to the knees and often fitting close to the figure. Some among them had long swords with straight blades wide at the end—their only dangerous part; they carried them in a section of a wooden sheath. The women were often naked to the waist and of statuesque proportions; they had a little hempen skirt and a Chinese cap decked with cowries and round white discs, which were said to

be brought from Thibet, and looked to me as if cut out of large shells. The greater number of them wore collars of plaited straw, mother-of-pearl, agate, or red and blue beads, apparently of English manufacture. Both sexes always smoked pipes. The Lissous are very fond of tobacco and spirits. I noticed several of the men and even one woman with an earthen flask slung round their necks, from which they constantly took a pull; the result was to make them very loquacious. I thought of the probable effect on these ignorant people of the introduction of civilisation with its vices; and what a fine field for extermination with bad whisky the English would have among them, as with the Redskins of North America in the past.

We camped near the village of Tatsasu, having been hindered by an incident on the way. A pallid, evil-looking individual had persisted in dogging us, and made an attempt to turn one of our mules aside into another path, with the probable intention of stealing it, when the makotou and Joseph detected him and promptly haled him off to the headman of the village. But that functionary would have nothing to do with the matter, so they brought the culprit back to camp, and we ordered him to be bound. Fa surpassed himself in the job, and trussed him up like a bale, with his hands behind his back and a guy-rope to his pigtail. While this human bundle lay upon the ground, an old man appeared from the village and claimed him as his child. After some discussion we yielded up our captive to him, with the promise that if he crossed our path again we would heave him over the edge without fail. The aged parent placed his inert offspring on his shoulders, and thus loaded hobbled off to the village.

Tatsasu is a dependence of Li-kiang, and is governed by two chiefs—a Minchia and a Lissou toussou. They sent us

rice, eggs, and a packet of tobacco, which was a great gift for them, and a small flask of tchaotiou. The last was protected by a cover of finely-plaited hide, very secure.

After Tatsasu the road became worse again. We thought regretfully of the comparative ease with which unencumbered horse or foot men with porters would accomplish three times the length of our stage in a day. A single rock would sometimes cause an hour's delay or a mile of détour to our pack animals, with an unload and carry in between. On the other hand, the natives of this region, who had been depicted to us in such threatening colours, proved willing to help for slender recompense. At this toil a big Lissou mafou, engaged at Loukou, and whom, from his profile, we called "Eagle Beak," worked harder than any. Strong as a Turk, he always marched barefoot, and with tobacco and an occasional nip of brandy

"Eagle Beak."

declared himself perfectly content to see new country. As for the last-joined Minchias from Piao-tsen, they were green hands, afraid if they went far that they would not find their way back, —"Sunt rustici," quoth Joseph.

After every portage a rest was imperative; if we did six or eight miles in the day we thought ourselves fortunate. Nor was this valley of the Mekong anything but monotonous, with its arid slopes, grey rocks, pine-clad ridges, and everlasting murmur of the great red river in its bed. I found my distraction in observing the habits of our own men and of the villagers. In these parts we saw some variety in the female costume; a pleated skirt down to the knee, like the Lolos of Setchuen, a small blue and white apron, short dark blue broidered jacket open in front, and often a heavy turban in place of the little white disc'd cap. Not far from the village of Lakouti we were pursued by a ragged old man wearing a large necklace of brown wooden beads, to which were fastened a bell and a bronze medallion. This strange being stopped us with much gesticulation, and, falling on his knees, addressed me in a long speech with many queer interjections. He said the inhabitants were indigent Lolos (*sic*) from whom he could not ask anything, but that we ought to give him an alms. It appeared that the poor old mendicant was the priest of Lakouti. Religion seemed ill paid in this locality. It certainly was reduced to simple elements; for we learned that the Lissous worship Heaven and Earth, and have few rites.

In the evening we arrived near a little hamlet hidden in a hollow, from which the inhabitants, each uglier than the other, came out and prostrated themselves before us repeatedly. Our advent seemed to have greatly alarmed them. One of these Lissous bore upon his breast a cuirass made of bark bound round

him by a sash. He was announced as a "brave,"—euphemistic for brigand, I imagine. As we set out, we noticed by the side of the path two posts with cross arms, joined by a chain of bamboo links, on the off arm a rough wooden bow, on the near one a sword; supposed to represent armed men guarding the village from sickness.

During the day we passed through the extensive village of Feoumoto. The inhabitants were Lamasjen, also called Petsen, with a dialect similar to the Minchia. Opposite, on the left bank, we perceived the little town of Yüm-pan-kaï, whose white houses and grey-gabled roofs bespoke it Chinese. Although connected with Feoumoto by a cord bridge, we preferred to keep the river between us.

At daybreak we discovered that two of Roux's valises, left uncorded near his tent, were gone. The thieves had also relieved Chantzeu's successor of a packet of opium, and—a far more serious loss—had abstracted from close by his head the theodolite. We found its case at a little distance. The "Doctor" was in despair. It was not the value of the instrument we regretted, but the impossibility of continuing his astronomical and magnetic observations. Our suspicions pointed to the villagers, who were prowling round the camp during the night. We summoned the headman, and promised him a reward if the things were restored, and threatened him with a complaint to Li-kiang in the contrary event. The inhabitants, meanwhile, remained placidly seated on a hillock watching us. In the afternoon we resolved to go in person to the village of Tchen-ki-oué. We went armed, and took with us Joseph and Fa. The chief replied, with some justice, that our arrival on the previous evening had not been formally notified to him, and that, in consequence, he had been unable to take precautions to guard us against robbers, with which the

district was infested. Our sole chance seemed to rest in a sufficiently big reward; but against this was to be set their ignorance of European promises as opposed to Chinese.

After a whole day's delay, without any success, we had to go on our way. The theodolite was irrevocably lost before it could become historic. Poor theodolite! After having travelled to Yola on the Benoué and the Adamaoua; after having assisted in the French conquest of the Soudan; after being carried into Asia to complete investigations northward of Garnier's, it deserved a better fate than to become the pipe-stem or door-bolt of some miserable Lamasjen, or it might be the tutelary deity of a pagan village. Some future traveller may thus unearth it, and read in it the evidence of bygone French pioneers.

Before our departure, the chief came to assure us of his good-will, and to console us by relating how a few years before Tchen-ki-oué had been pillaged by three hundred Loutses from the Salwen. Two of our mafous, whom we had sent over to Yüm-pan-kaï for stores, also brought word on returning that they had seen there the brother of the well-known Yangynko of Tali, who strongly advised us not to persevere on the right bank because of the *jejeu*. We had had these savages held over us ever since Lao, and intended to believe in them when we saw them, not before.

After an uneventful march we halted near a wretched little wooden village, where at night the villagers asked our permission to dance and sing, which we willingly granted. The men sat in a circle and chanted a not unpleasing cadence in slow measure, of a semi-religious sound, each strophe of which was marked by a prolonged note, preluding an abrupt drop in the tone. As they sang, they threw their heads back and half closed their eyes in a state of apparent abstraction. We were the theme, it seemed,

of their improvisation, in which they rejoiced over the advent of three distinguished strangers who could not fail to give them presents. With the entrance of several women, the scene became more lively, and our men, especially the big Lissou mafou, who showed a splendid set of teeth in his childlike glee, forgot their toils awhile. Meanwhile, the song gave place to a dance; the performers rose, the women ranging themselves arm in arm at the lower end, the men opposite them, each leaning on his neighbour's shoulder. They looked like groups in some grand spectacle, with a blazing pine log to do duty for footlights. Then the band began to wheel in circles, the male chorus keeping pace, and from time to time poising their step, while the women swayed their bodies in response. The whole scene reminded me of a dance of Thibetan women I had witnessed in the house of the chief Mussulman at Batang.

24th (July).—We made little progress—the path was so steep in places that it required all the art of our men, aided by natives, to overcome it. Eventually we stopped for the night close to a village said to be tenanted by *jejeu*. The inspection of a Chinese visiting card which they did not understand, and of our arms which they did, secured us a friendly reception. In the evening, while the inhabitants danced as on the preceding day, I questioned some of them. They were still of the Lamasjen tribe, ancient Minchia crossed with Chinese. All carried at their belt a long-stemmed pipe, a round tobacco-box, and a knife, and over their shoulders was slung a hide or string game-bag. When asked what was their religious creed, they generally replied with a laugh: "After death, all is finished." Nevertheless, two or three days subsequent to a burial they place a stone on the tomb to ward off the Spirit of the Mountains. Priests and altars there were none; they seemed

happy to lead an animal life without beliefs, or punishment for crime other than the vengeance of the victim's kindred. Desirous of learning more about these natives, I invaded several of their dwellings. They were for the most part built of wood round a centre court, in which were the pigs. Within was a daïs for sleeping, as in Arab houses. There were few implements visible; but one snare I noticed for taking pheasants, of wide meshes on a light wooden frame,—the men envelop themselves in straw and crouch in the stubble, and the birds taking them for rice-shocks are skilfully netted. Another weapon of the chase was the cross-bow, the arrows for which are carried in a quiver covered with the skin of the wild ass.

In the interior I detected no sign of any worship, but on emerging I observed under the roof a row of miniature bows and some joss-sticks. The occupants told me they reverenced Mazi, the Spirit of the Waters; Wousinkoui and Masimpo, two brothers who formerly fell into the water and became superior beings; and Tsomané, the Spirit of Evil. So that it would appear they are not such infidels as they professed, although they persisted in their disbelief in a future state, or any after punishment for assassins. This village presented a remarkable example of a community associated for the defence of mutual interests without any fear of final retribution.

Sickness was very prevalent in the district, chiefly fevers following excessive heat. Suicide was of ordinary occurrence. When a member of the tribe fell under the ban of his parents or his neighbours, he put an end to himself with a dose of opium. Monogamy is the habitual custom with them. At our departure they bade us beware of the eggs that might be offered us farther on; they are often rendered deadly by being steeped in poison. In connection with this danger I recalled a story told by the missionaries in

Chinese Setchuen, of leprosy being often conveyed by the promiscuous feeding of the fowls in the infected localities.

Joseph furnished me with interesting details concerning the Lissou tribes. Among the Ain-Lissous both births and deaths are celebrated as with the Chinese. The Koua-Lissous on the occasion of a birth offer presents and felicitations to the mother. In China the days of each moon are designated thus :—

1st day by rat.
2nd ,, ,, ox.
3rd ,, ,, tiger.
4th ,, ,, rabbit.
5th ,, ,, dragon.
6th ,, ,, serpent.
7th ,, ,, horse.
8th ,, ,, sheep.
9th ,, ,, monkey.
10th ,, ,, fowl.
11th ,, ,, dog.
12th ,, ,, pig.

The Koua-Lissous regard the day of the horse as most favourable for burial; the Pé-Lissous always the day succeeding death. They plant a post before the grave, and hang on it the bow and arrows and wood of the plough of the former owner, and near them leave a bowl and a few sapecks, that the deceased may not be destitute of what was his in life.

Our halting-place on the 26th (July) was the Lamasjen village of Feou-tsen. While the unloading proceeded, I watched a stalwart girl who with open flowing white garments leaned her bare arms with copper bracelets on a stone, while she gazed intently on the work, impervious to the importunities of a goat that butted at her

elbow. If she resembled Esmeralda, she too had her Quasimodo: a few steps off glowered a little wizen, bandy-legged old hunchback. Here was the foreground for a picture, the quaintness of which was enhanced by the grim surroundings whence we viewed it; a lower apartment filled with biers transformed into tables, benches, and settees, in the midst of which our hosts obligingly described a few of their strange usages.

When the Lamasjens marry, the wedded couple live at first apart with their respective parents, and do not set up together for several years, or until the birth of a son. This custom also prevails among the Lolos of Eastern Yünnan. Again, if female twins are born, or two women in the same village each have a daughter on the same day, the man who in process of time courts one must also espouse the other,—their fate is regarded as inseparable. As amongst the Pé-Lissous, before mentioned, the implements of the defunct are placed upon his tomb, with the addition of a sapeck inserted between the dead man's lips—none other than the ancient provision of Charon's obol for the ferry. Here again the Lamasjens told us that they did not look to a future existence; their burial rites would therefore seem only adapted from the Chinese without knowledge of their significance.

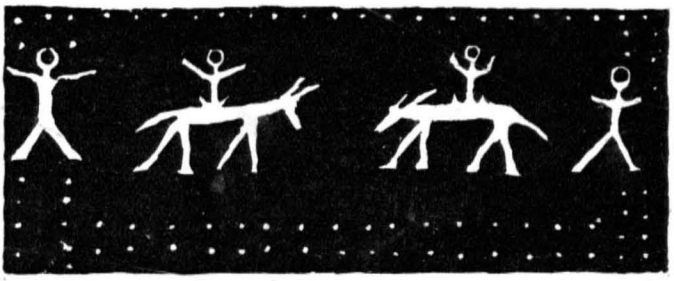
From an administrative point of view this region depends indirectly upon China through the medium of local toussous. The Imperial Government organises the jurisdiction of the latter in such a manner that it shall never form a compact circle but always be a segment. Whilst in China itself the mandarins are constantly changing at the will of the Court at Pekin, here the office of toussou, as well as that of headman of the village, is hereditary. On her borders China applies the system of central supremacy with a light hand, and, provided that the small tribute is regularly paid, does

not look too closely into the doings on her frontier. And, on their side, the toussous are flattered to feel that they derive their authority from, and are recognised by, the Imperial Government. The natives generally regard the Chinese as riparian owners of the Mekong by right of superior race. Every year the toussou, or a delegate kinsman, makes a tour of office through the villages subservient to him, on which occasion each family has to pay him two taëls five tsiens of silver and five taëls of opium. In the villages directly subject to China, the chief has to remit annually an average of from fifteen to twenty taëls of silver to the authorities. He will probably put aside at least an equal sum for himself. With regard to the ground, the inhabitants have the right to till waste lands without rent or other formality, and conveyance of such is a matter for private arrangement.

On the 27th (July) and the two following days our journey was prosecuted with little incident but much toil. Rain had rendered the path slippery, and in places we had to shore it with trunks and re-lay it with branches. In the open we noticed vertical slabs of slate placed to keep off the monkeys, which are numerous and destructive. To add to the discouragement of the troop, several false alarms caused dismay among the mafous. A band of thirty men issued suddenly from the forest with pressing offers of assistance with the loads. At another spot Joseph had an apparition of a man armed with a long sword, who confronted him without speaking, and then vanished. These frequent scares made every countryman a brigand in their eyes: in ours, the natives, robbers though they may have been, were only very dirty and very repulsive; especially the men, for the women were often white-skinned, merry, and even graceful, though tattered.

The dwellings were always filthy; we slept better in a passage than in the chief's apartment, which besides was littered with an assortment of articles such as grain bins, ears of corn, bows, bird snares, a broken matchlock, wooden spoons, a flail, bamboo-hooped buckets, and a kind of iron grid on which were kindled bits of resinous wood for light. Over the door there might be a white drawing of men on horses, though it required an effort of imagination to guess what the artist had intended.

In the woods which we traversed at this time the wild olive flourished, in appearance just like that of our own country; and here again after a long lapse we found specimens of the



Native Designs on Door Lintel.

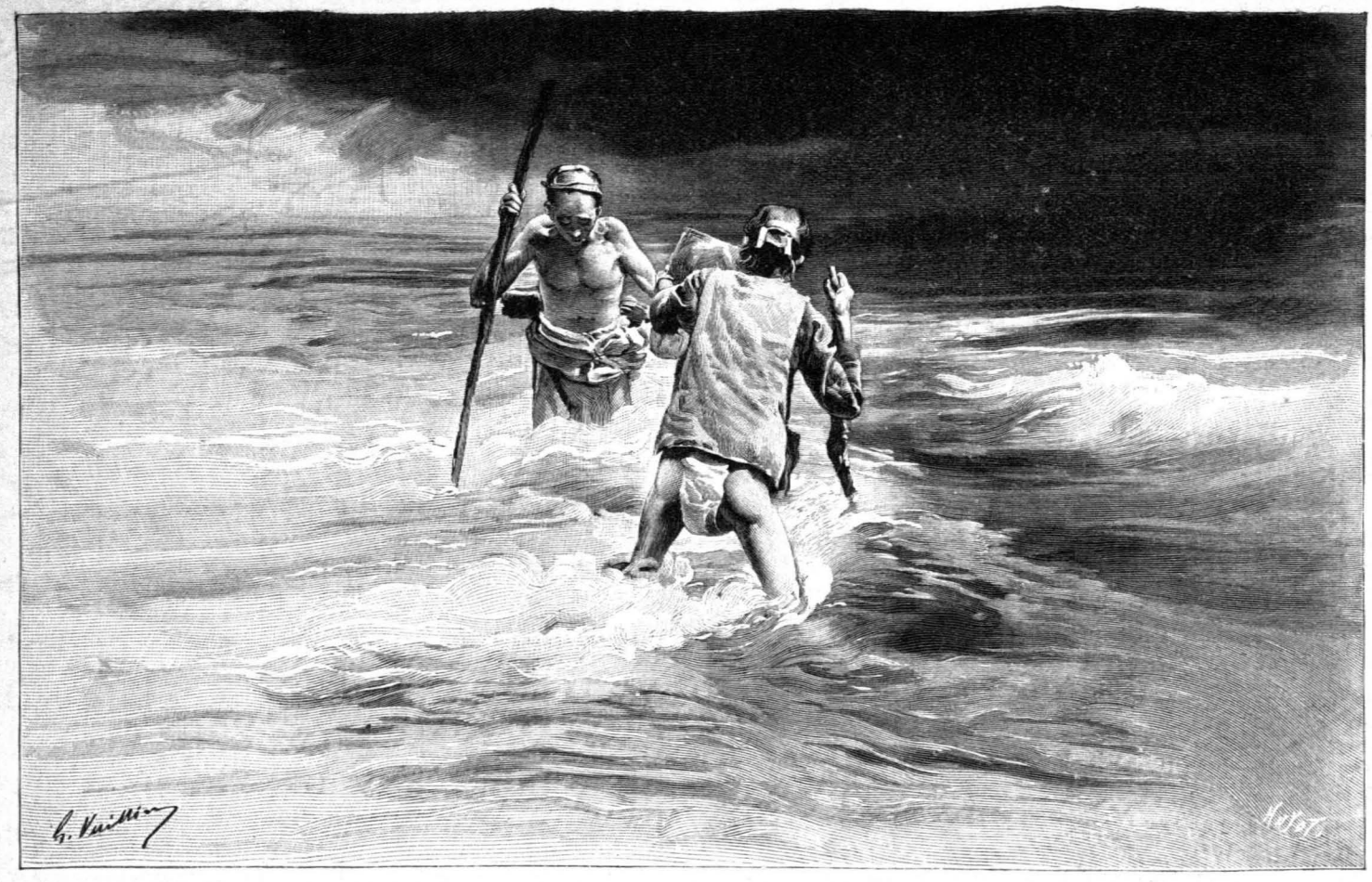
palm or macaw-tree. How did its seeds find their way hither? The wild vine, plum, and hazel were abundant, also some excellent little wild apples in which we instructed Nam in the art of making compotes. The country itself varied little: on one side ran the Mekong at our feet, always yellow and muddy in a deep channel, and on our left towered above us the range that separated us from the Salwen, its savage peaks and skirmisher pines reminding one of the Dolomites of the Tyrol.

As the 30th (July) wore on the route became better, and by the evening of that day we reached a townlet which we had been told was of some importance. We found In-Chouan, as it

was named, divided into Chang In-Chouan (upper) and Chia In-Chouan (lower), composed of a few scattered houses and the ruins of others. Nine years before, the chief of the place had massacred a neighbouring family. The Li-kiang-fou sent a mandarin to chastise him, who was himself beaten and robbed. Thereupon China despatched a column of one thousand men under the Li-kiang-fou in person, which killed the offending chief and his nephew, occupied the place for three months, and executed summary vengeance upon the inhabitants. The result was what we beheld. The blackened walls of the slain chief's residence afforded us a good kitchen, and in the moonlight the aspect of the bivouac among the desolate remains was weird. One might have taken it for a bandits' lair or a coiners' den rather than the peaceable roasting of a pig at the camp fire of the caravan of three French travellers.

Before leaving we questioned the people as to the valley of the Salwen, known here as the Lou-kiang. They told us that it was a three days' march to that river by paths wholly impassable for mules, with numerous villages belonging to the Hé-Lissous or savage Loutses. "*Non cognoscunt urbanitatem*" was Joseph's comment, as he further imparted to us a curious fancy gleaned in course of conversation from the Lamasjens. The latter believe that the grains of rice were brought by dogs, and that if they had no dogs they would have no seed. They could offer no ground for the superstition other than that their grandfathers had told them so.

Having been refused supplies by a chief the day before, on the 1st (August) Briffaud, Joseph, Sao, myself, and a guide diverged from the caravan to try and find the village of Téki, where we were told we might obtain information as to the



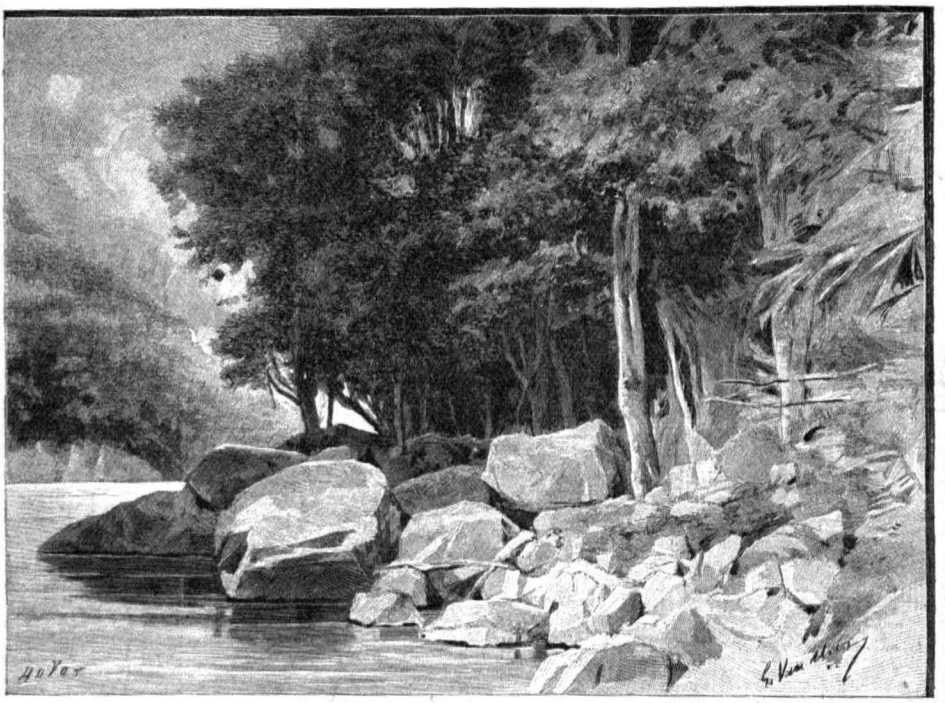
There was nothing for it but to wade.

Salwen valley. After following a path to the wooded brink of a torrent, the track ceased. We had to separate, and I struck a trail in the thicket that brought me to a secluded nook, where on two opposing boulders, half hidden under the leaves, a fallen tree trunk spanned the chasm. A fine place for robbers, but utterly out of the question for mules. There was nothing for it but to undress and wade with our clothes on our heads. The water was nipping cold, and the current so swift that only by joining hands and leaning on a pole could we make head against it. Having forded the stream, we had to scramble up a frightful steep on hands and knees. How our mules, unloaded though they were, ever followed us was a problem: after what I have seen, I would wager them to climb any staircase.

By this means we at length reached Téki, two freshly built villages as yet undarkened by time, and with the thatch still yellow on the roofs. Among the new buildings protruded many ruins; Téki had come in for devastation both by the chieftain of In-Chouan and by the subsequent Chinese avengers. At the doors stood scantily clothed women: a slight apron formed their sole covering; some even found this too complicated, and preferred the garb of nature. We checked our mules at the court of an opium-smoker, who seeing us offering to pay for grain waxed communicative. A bad path was said to lead from here in two days to the Salwen, there both wide and deep. The Loutses were clearly Koua-Lissous. Here the word Loutse meant simply natives of the Lou-kiang, and was not applied to a race. The independent Lissous were reported dangerous; a few bolder spirits from the Mekong valley occasionally penetrated their district at their peril to trade linen, salt, tobacco, and opium against drugs and skins. The Loutses made constant incursions

hereabouts; only three days before, they had paid a visit to Téki and carried off a resident as a slave.

From Téki we rejoined the caravan near a hamlet whence the inhabitants issued with lances and seized our mules by the bridle, but it was only with kindly intent. Farther on we came across an ill-looking company in a wood armed with bows and arrows. Our tent that night was pitched under a large walnut-tree



Torrent Bed near Téki.

in which were stuck small white flags, a religious custom common in Thibet. Hard by was the village of Toti, which the Loutses had raided only the day before, capturing two men and a horse.

"Eagle Beak" announced to us that the inhabitants of this Toti were Hé-Lissous, and consequently his kinsfolk. We thought this circumstance would procure us a dance in the evening, but found instead that they were far from being well dis-

posed towards us. They were heard in conference: "If the big men come among us without notice, it can only be to kill; we will be beforehand with them." We had only just finished dinner when the rallying horn was heard, and large fires were lit on the surrounding heights. As a precaution, I served out cartridges, and recommended the men to watch by turns; on which they hugged their guns and responded, "*cheulo! cheulo!*" (all right!), and promised to do sentry-go in spells of two hours. Finding us thus prepared, some of the people came in from the village offering us dried fungi, and bidding us not to have any fear. I took the opportunity to tell the chief that we were in no way alarmed: our treatment of the villagers would correspond with their treatment of us; if they attacked us we were ready for them. They then retired, and we lay down to rest. I woke in about an hour. It was as dark as pitch; the fire was half out, and every man was as sound as a babe. It was no good waking them; so back to bed again; one must run some risks in travel. But the Toti folk missed a good chance that night.

2nd (August).—We had three Lissous with us to-day, one of whom, having been plundered by Loutses, turned the tables on them by robbing the robbers of a sword and a red sash which he was wearing. By his account the Loutses subsist entirely by pillage. Asked why the Mekong Lissous did not retaliate upon those of the Salwen, he said the latter were better armed, and they were afraid of them. One of these Lissous produced a curious musical instrument formed of three small palettes of bamboo with stops. By applying the stops to his teeth and making them vibrate in turn with his finger, his open mouth acting as a sounding board, he drew from them a soft and plaintive tone, so low that one had to be quite close to hear it. The instrument

is of Loutse origin, and the Lissous will sit for hours amusing themselves with it.

On the 3rd (August) we stopped at Fong-Chouan. The Mekong here is forced into a complete S by rice terraces, having on the left bank another large village called Oueï-ten. The eye hailed with pleasure the reappearance of green cultivation after the dreary spell of gaunt mountains we had passed. At our midday halt Sao and Joseph exercised themselves with some cross-bow practice. The weapon is made of very tough wood, with a notch cut on the haft, and discharges featherless arrows with sufficient force to pierce a tree at forty paces. The point of the arrow is of wood, filled just above the actual tip with a virulent poison extracted from a geranium-leafed plant; the arrow head being easily detached to receive the unguent, breaks off in the wound. The natives are never without this arm, even at their work in the fields; many likewise carrying a sword about 3½ feet long, rectangular at the end, and as sharp as a razor.

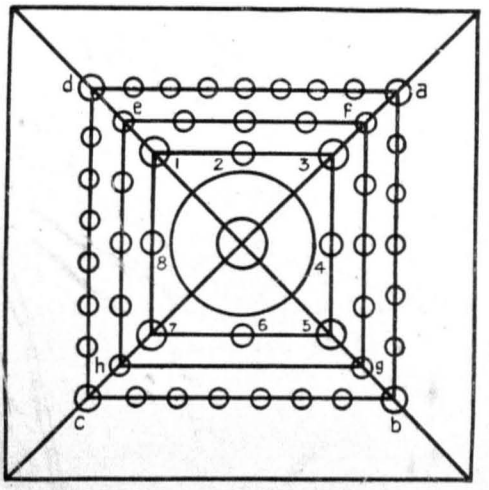
At Fong-Chouan I inquired of Joseph the meaning of the images and designs of Chinese pattern that filled the pagoda in which we slept. He expounded them thus:—"Against the wall you observe a table or altar on which are three panels. The left-hand one depicts the Water King: clothed in yellow, with a sword in one hand and a red sphere in the other, one of his feet rests upon the head of a marine monster; beside him crouch two devils. In the centre panel is the Mountain King, the greatest of the three: his head and his body are white; he has two faces, each with three eyes. The mouths are open, and disclose one tooth on either side longer than the rest; they are for defence. Upon his brow are red flames; around his neck are hung miniature human heads. He has six arms; the two upper

ones support twin discs, red and white, which are the sun and moon; the two middle hands are clasped in prayer; the two lowest hold, the one gold, the other a spear round which is twined a serpent. On either side of the god is one carrying books and a pen. The right-hand panel represents the Animal King: his countenance is adorned with long moustaches; he grasps in one hand a sword and in the other a cake or fruit, upon his head a red cap such as is worn by mandarins. The god is seated on a tiger, and at his side stand two priests in long robes, with shaven heads."

There was a vessel before the panel of the Mountain King containing small bamboo stalks inscribed with two characters, phrases from a religious book; the credulous who wish to know their destiny shake the vessel and draw forth a stalk, and interpret the sentence according to desire. This manner of reading the future reminded one of the usage of cutting the Bible at hazard.

In the centre of the pagoda was hung from the platform a square paper, marked thus—

The little circles arranged round the square *a*, *b*, *c*, *d*, are silver, and bear the names of the twenty-eight stars.



The little circles arranged round the square *e*, *f*, *g*, *h*, are red, and bear the Kiatsé or cycle (names of days).

The circles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 contain pictures, 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 red, and 2, 6, 8 silver.



These discs are called the Pakoua, and represent the system according to which are divided the elements, as water, earth, etc. Following the diagonals *af*, *hc*, *de*, *gb*, are hung small flags inscribed with characters to frighten the devils.

At the entry to the pagoda are four words in large characters, meaning :

TO INVOKE IT IS NECESSARY WITH FEAR CLEARLY

On either side of the door two long tablets bear inscriptions :

Left.	*Right.*
With three eyes (the Mountain King).	*With six shoulders.*
Can see all.	*Can govern the Louko (the Louko is an assemblage of six things,—sky, earth, mankind, eternity, money, great chief).*
Can see three thousand (hours).	

We were detained a day in Fong-Chouan by the search for a runaway mule. During our stay the Loutses attacked a village three miles distant, killing one man and wounding and kidnapping several others. We derived some more particulars of the Salwen or Lou-kiang, which hereabouts was called equally the Nong-kiang and the Nong-tse-kiang. Another river was said to flow near it in the same direction, named the Kiou-kiang, and this our after-experiences proved to be correct. Report also spoke of silver and copper mines on the left bank of the Mekong, at one or two days' march from Oueï-ten.

On the 5th (August), at starting, I noticed two Lissous who were wearing grey robes, Thibetan fashion, and plaited bamboo necklets : they proved to be traders from the Salwen valley, offering for exchange many Loutse objects, all made out of bamboo—long-stemmed pipes, woven baskets, pitchers with handles, etc. Judging from these articles, the transmontane tribes were more industrious than the poverty-stricken Lamasjens. Our stage was curtailed by a landslip, and we were promised an entire

cessation of the track two days ahead, where a hundred men would not be able to clear it. Both absence and destruction of means of communication were attributable to the terror inspired by the everlasting Loutses, the left bank and safety being usually preferred to this one.

While in camp the villagers constantly came begging for remedies, chiefly for eye troubles; and I made a large quantity of boric acid. Among our visitors were two with a kind of leather cuirass protecting the back only, which suggested to us that that was the part they most often presented to their foes; but they averred that were it in front they could not level their cross-bows on its slippery surface. One of them also possessed some balls which he would not part with at any price; they were a precious remedy against all ills, made from the gall of bears. Questioned as to the treatment the Loutses accorded to their prisoners, these warriors said they could be ransomed for from nine to fifteen oxen a man; if unredeemed, they were put to hard labour as slaves. The women were made bondwomen of, rarely married. The slaves might intermarry, and their children would be free; moreover, any captured children were brought up as their own in liberty. The accounts, therefore, of the ferocity of these Loutses would seem to be exaggerated.

To show the destitution of these villagers, I saw one going round among our mules with a sack, sweeping up the grains of paddy, mixed with twigs, that had dropped from their nose-bags.

Another short stage, and on the 7th (August) a dead stop with an abrupt end to the path. By dint of incessant and very severe toil, our mafous, aided by hired natives clearing brushwood, cutting down and filling up, pushed and pulled the animals through; so that at nightfall we were over the worst of it, and

reached a welcome hamlet. These emergency Lissous were a light-hearted set. After all their exertions they sat round the fire at the end of their long pipes, laughing and chatting, with no sign of exhaustion. They took what we gave them cheerfully, and made

Lissous at Lameti.

their way back to their villages at once, haunted only by the fear of having left their women and children at the mercy of marauders.

Our hosts at Lameti consented to perform a dance for our benefit, and a threshing-floor having been turned into the ball-room, the orchestra tuned up. It consisted of four musicians—a flageolet, a violin with two strings, a guitar with four, and an

instrument of slender bamboo strips made to vibrate upon the teeth. This last was played by an old woman, who was also mistress of the ceremonies. The air, though not very varied, was soft and rhythmic. The dancers formed a ring and began from their stations, alternately advancing and withdrawing their legs. Presently the villagers, male and female, gathered behind the circle and commenced to beat time loudly with their feet. Now the ancient Fury who led the orchestra stepped into the centre. With her commanding stature, parchment-wrinkled face, grisled locks crowned with a chaplet of seeds, and a collaret of bears' teeth and claws gleaming upon her breast, she was the personification of a witch. Faster and wilder grew the measure. The men who circled round her seemed under a spell, their heads thrown back, their eyes fixed, their hair flying, lost to all sense save that of motion. It needed our intervention to bring them back to earth; so we despatched them to practise reality in road-mending against the morrow.

The people told me they had no priests, and that when anyone died they put his arms and implements near his grave, that his spirit might miss nothing in its flight towards the mountain-tops, beyond which they knew no farther resting-place.

The dwellings in the next village were ranged alongside each other under a common roof, with a central rectangular court for combined defence against attack. As a consequence of so many families living together, the greatest laxity of morals seemed to prevail. As for the chief, he had only four wives; the fifth was lately deceased. Amongst this branch of the Lissous incompatibility of disposition is sufficient cause for separation, and either party is then free to marry again.

At night the dance was again readily organised, to the delight

of the villagers and the amusement of our men, who transformed themselves into link-boys with resinous pine branches. It was kept up with spirit, and great was the appreciation when we ourselves chose partners and "took the floor." The performance was in most respects similar to that of the preceding night, save that the surroundings, lit by a brilliant moon over the shoulder of an ebon mass of mountain, were even wilder in this out-of-the-world spot than before. Indeed, so secluded was the village, that only the merest chance had discovered it to us: no possible outlet from this angle could have been guessed for the river. By degrees, as they grew tired, the dancers withdrew from the circle, leaving three to foot it in a *kotchoau* (triple set). This they executed at fixed distances apart, gradually contracting till their shoulders touched, then radiating again, wheeling, pausing, leaping, without a moment's cessation of the instruments; the time was perfect, and the dance demoniac, though it did not lack grace. A *pas de deux* ended, like a cossack dance.

To this succeeded singing. A woman with a very fair voice began an air which the others took up in chorus. Then followed improvisation by one alone, or by one against another, the burden of the songs being all in honour of us, as shown in the literal translation thus roughly given me :—

Seupa	*ala*	*mamon*	*téléko*
The lords	almost	impossible to see	now once
Seupa		*dzeula*	*o*
the lords		have found	well
Téga		*seupa*	*láinia*
now		the lords	have come hither
cheu		*kai tai pi ;*	
no more		of ills ;	

or fuller, thus:—"Three such great lords had never before come to us. It is very hard to find us. Now they are here, it is well. Before, the Loutses were always plundering us. Now that they have come, the Loutses are greatly afraid. For many years we were in sadness; we had many ills. Now we are happy. The three great lords pass our dwelling: henceforth our fields will flourish, our harvests will be full." Poor, childish, ignorant folk, with no other joys than the pipe, the dance, the song, and love of species shared in common with all creation! Before leaving in the morning I saw a sufficiently wretched sight. In one of the houses a man was chained to a post neck and heels, though his evil plight admitted of his smoking still. He was a Loutse, one of the redoubtable brigands who, lagging behind in a recent foray, had been caught. I could not see much to choose between him and his captors.

The entertainment of the preceding night, or the better state of the road on the following day, put the men in good-humour. The makotou also, who had suffered from fever, was nearly well. He attributed his cure to the sacrifice of a little porker to the God of the Mountain as compensation for disturbance in path cutting. We passed the night in a clean house, belonging, strangely enough, to a Chinese. It was some time since we had seen any of his confraternity, and we had not missed them. But this one was a better specimen—a merchant of Yünnan, who had married a Lissou and had two daughters, the younger of whom we saw. The elder had gone to Ouïsi to find a husband. The father took me into his confidence, and poured out his paternal woes. Suitors hereabouts were so poor that his two girls, when they wedded, would only bring him ten taëls apiece; at Toti he might have safely reckoned on two hundred.

Here at Loza the Loutses were again in evidence, and night and day ten men watch on the brow of the hill to signal their approach. In the morning we were witnesses of a thank-offering to the Spirit of the Earth on behalf of an old woman recovering from illness. On the ground in front of the sufferer's door had been set up a small wooden framework model of a house with a bough stuck at each support. The structure covered some saucers of seeds and cakes, and behind it was arranged a measure of rice with two cups of tchaotiou upon it, and a distaff, the thread of which was twined round the frame. A coarse paste effigy of the Spirit presided over the whole. Before it was a basket containing a straw and three vertical bits of wood. An old *tongpa* (Lissou sorcerer) squatted beside it, muttering incantations. In one hand he grasped a fowl, which he first sprinkled with a twig dipped in the libation, while he recited the names of the spirits invited to the feast. Then, having opened the fowl's throat, he smeared the idol and the posts with the blood, and applied feathers to the parts thus anointed. The bird was then plucked and thrown into a pot, and the repast was ready for the invisible guests. For his own portion the wizard received the plates of rice.

During the next two days the valley opened out and cultivation increased, with splendid walnut, chestnut, and peach trees, the fruit of the latter unfortunately not yet ripe. Villages were numerous; and side by side with our old acquaintances the Lamasjens we met with yet another tribe, the Mossos, of whom more hereafter.

It was now that we suddenly descried, on the far side of the river, some black tents, whose peculiar form, as well as the thick smoke they emitted, did not leave us long in doubt as to their owners. They were Thibetan; and their presence at this spot assured us that we were within a few days of the land of the

Lamas, the northern limit of our wanderings. We hailed the sight with joy; for behind those few black rags and that smoke lay a meaning that sufficed to put heart into the whole caravan.

On the 11th (August), after passing several streams, where, by means of wooden planks with shutters, gold washings were being carried on, we arrived at the village of Into, connected by two cable bridges with the small town of Hsiao-Ouïsi opposite. At both these places there are Christians, and in the latter we found a French missionary, Father Tintet, whom I knew at Lioutin-kiao in 1890. The meeting with a fellow-countryman in so remote a spot was a great event for us, and for the moment as we chatted this farthest recess of China became France.

The news of the station was not good. Father Goutelle, the *doyen* of the Thibet Mission, had died ten days previously at Ouïsi, without having realised the dream for which he had laboured forty years—the recognition of the Roman Catholic religion at Lhaça and other cities of Thibet. The poor missionaries were in evil case. Notwithstanding the promise that M. Gérard had extorted from the Tsungli-Yamen of the reconstruction of their destroyed stations at Batang and Atentsé, nothing had been done. The viceroy of Setchuen, having been recalled to Pekin, gave orders before his departure to demolish the mission houses; and, just when his spite had been wreaked, was poisoned. The mandarin of Ouïsi followed suit by committing suicide. The latter had sent in a report avowing that the stations had received no injury either at Tsekou or Atentsé. It was forwarded through Yünnan-Sen; and simultaneously with its consideration at Pekin a second document, setting out the loss sustained by the missionaries, arrived from Ta-tsien-lou. The result of the conflicting evidence was a reprimand, addressed to the viceroy of Yünnan, who lost no time in passing it on to his