ADVENTURE SPORT AND TRAVEL ON THE TIBETAN STEPPES

John Weston Brooke.

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ADVENTURE
SPORT AND TRAVEL
ON THE
TIBETAN STEPPES

BY

W. N. FERGUSSON
F.R.G.S.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR AND THE LATE LIEUT. BROOKE, AND TWO MAPS

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TO THE

Memory

OF

J. WESTON BROOKE, F.R.G.S.

FENAY HALL, HUDDERSFIELD, ENG.,

THIS JOURNEY IS FIRST

RECORDED.

PREFATORY.

In offering this book to the public I must first explain its origin, and my own part in what is mainly an account of two journeys taken through China and Tibet by the late Lieutenant Brooke, F.R.G.S.

Mr. Brooke started on his first journey from Shanghai on August 1, 1906, and after crossing Tibet, returned to Shanghai in October, 1907.

He left Shanghai on his second journey in December, 1907, and travelled in Western Sechuan and Eastern Tibet until December 24, 1908, when he was cruelly murdered in the Independent Lolo Land.

On the second of these two expeditions Lieutenant Brooke was accompanied by Mr. C. H. Meares; and when that journey came to its untimely end, Mr. Meares returned to England and wrote certain articles in the Home Press on the country through which they had travelled. These created considerable interest, and Mr. Meares was urged to make of his own and his friend's experiences some more permanent record. But he had already been enlisted by Captain Scott for the Antarctic Expedition, and must leave England early in the present year for Siberia, there to purchase dogs and ponies for that enterprise; and the task which should have been his has perforce fallen to me. Mr. Brooke's parents have kindly placed at my disposal their son's diary and photographs taken on his journeys; and of these and my own and Mr. Meares's observations of a picturesque country and

a singular people, never visited by white men before, I hope to make something which shall commemorate the real begetter of this volume, and interest the general reader to whom adventure, sport, and travel in remote lands are of concern.

John Weston Brooke was born at Fenay Hall, near Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, in July, 1880, and went to school at Repton. In 1898 he joined his county Yeomanry, the Yorkshire Dragoons, and served with them in the Boer War. An act of gallantry in the field won him a commission in the Regular Army, and in November, 1900, he returned to England and joined the 7th Hussars at Aldershot. But the instinct of travel was in his blood, and in 1902 he resigned with the idea of exploration in that Dark Continent which has drawn, and yet draws, so heavily on the adventurous. An introduction to Major Burnham, the famous American Scout, then a Director of the East African Syndicate, turned his thoughts in that direction, and in April, 1903, Mr. Brooke left England for East Africa, and was sent off promptly after his arrival on an exploring expedition with Messrs. Blick, Brittlebank, and Brown. "The Four B.'s," as the party was called, travelled from Nairobi viâ Mount Elgon northwards to the western shores of Lake Rudolph, experiencing plenty of privations from want of water, and of danger from encounters with the natives.

On January 25, 1904, a report reached England that the expedition had been wiped out; but a week later this was contradicted, and proved to be the concoction of a runaway porter. Mr. Brooke returned to England the following April and applied himself to the study of scientific subjects, the more fully to fit himself for the life of an explorer. He received his diploma for survey work from the Royal Geographical Society, and was made a Fellow of the Society.

In March, 1906, Mr. Brooke sailed for India, with the

object of organising an expedition into Tibet to investigate the much debated question of the relation of the Sampo and Brahmaputra Rivers. This intention, so far as India was concerned, was frustrated by the Indian Government, in view of the Treaty just then signed with Russia, by which no stranger should be allowed to enter Tibet from India. Nothing daunted, he tried to slip across over the Assam border with only two servants; but the frontier officer, being warned of his intention, was on the look out and intercepted him.

Mr. Brooke now resolved to enter Tibet from the north, and left Calcutta for Shanghai in June, 1906, travelling thence viâ Hankow, Singan, Pingliang, Lanchow, to Siningfu. The journey was accomplished in three months, and in his journal Mr. Brooke speaks with gratitude of the missionaries, who "treated" him "with the greatest kindness and hospitality," and are "the true friends of travellers in that country." At Siningfu he stayed for about a month, gathering information and collecting ponies, yaks, and general supplies. In October, 1906, the Dalai Lama arrived from Urgu, whither he had fled when Sir Frank Younghusband's Mission entered Lhasa three years before. Mr. Ridley, of the China Inland Mission, and Mr. Brooke were lucky enough to obtain an audience of the Dalai Lama, and were the first Englishmen to see him.

Everything was now ready for the second attempt to reach the Brahmaputra, and Mr. Brooke entered Tibet by the Kokomer, travelling to the north of that lake to Baranr Tsaidan, and southward by the Tangla Pass. The journey was an adventurous one, especially so for a man ignorant of the language, and whose servants were—and proved—worse than useless. The party was several times in danger from the Goluk robbers, and on one occasion, when riding unarmed, Mr. Brooke had a hand-to-hand fight with one of these ruffians.

On arriving at Magehulla, a place about 200 miles north of his objective, he was surrounded by hordes of Tibetans, and although he held many interviews of a friendly character with Lamas, they were quite firm in assuring him that he might not travel south in that direction. As soon as he packed his camels the soldiers unpacked them, and, as he was one against hundreds, he had eventually, to his great disgust, to retrace his steps and turn again northwards. This was on April 30, 1907. The party was now reduced to two men and a few half starved camels, and with these he joined a Mongolian chief, with whom he struck up a friendship. They travelled together for some weeks, and the chief invited Mr. Brooke to go home with him, where he was given some good shooting, and secured some valuable sporting trophies.

At Tarmor he just missed meeting Dr. Stein, the famous explorer, who seems to have been in the village on the same day, but neither was aware of the other's presence.

Mr. Brooke had previously met Dr. Taffel, who had experienced many hairbreadth escapes among the Goloks, and was then himself attired as a robber, having been stripped of all his possessions.

On July 1 Mr. Brooke again arrived at the house of his good missionary friends, Mr. and Mrs. Ridley, at Siningfu, where he stayed for a few days. Then, leaving for Shanghai, he varied his route by going down the Yangtze River, and thence made a trip to Japan and Manchuria.

On his return to China, in November, 1907, he met, at Tientsin, Mr. C. H. Meares, and at once recognised in him a kindred spirit. He invited Mr. Meares to join him on his next journey, an expedition in Western China, the result of a conversation I had held with him when we met at Ichang some months before. I had spoken of the hitherto almost unknown tribes who dwell in the west of the province of

Zechwar, and among whom I had myself travelled for some years, distributing books for the British and Foreign Bible Society. An article of mine about these people, with a map of their country, had appeared in the Royal Geographical Society's *Journal* for December, 1908, being a summary of journeys taken between the years 1903 and 1907. But very much still remained to be learned, and Mr. Brooke suggested that if he should decide to go into that province, I should

CHIEF OF THE CARAVAN WITH WHOM MR. BROOKE MADE FRIENDS ON HIS RETURN.

introduce him to those chiefs with whom I had already become friends.

This expedition was subsequently carried out in Mr. Meares's company; and their route coinciding with a journey which I had previously planned, and not interfering with my own work, we travelled for a great part of the time together. In Chapters I–V the reader has what story I can make for him out of Mr. Brooke's diary, often in his own words, illustrating in detail the incidents and experiences of

the itinerary which I have faintly outlined above. It was later at Hankow that he and Mr. Meares made actual commencement of their main journey. After Chentu (in Chapter V), where I joined them, I have been able generally to write of experiences which I shared.

As I write, I recall the joy which Mr. Brooke evinced in natural beauty, whether seen in the lofty mountain, with its snow-capped peaks towering on high until lost in a cloud of mist; or in the rushing stream that swept madly on, in haste to mingle its clear blue waters with the muddy Yangtze and so be carried to the ocean; the grassy plateau and the virgin forest, with their strange, exotic, sometimes unknown animals and birds—all held for him a rare and profound charm. He would revel in the beds of wild flowers which grew so profusely and so luxuriously bloomed, carpeting the entire mountain-side well-nigh to the snow line. I have seen him almost in rapture as he chased over these beds, 12,000 to 16,000 feet above sea-level, seeking out the various coloured poppies that bloom at this altitude. There we found the red, the yellow, the blue, the purple and mauve poppies of magical beauty in that setting, though only two of them have proved new to the botanist. . . . Yet a little and it was my lot to go alone into the Lolo country and identify the bruised and mangled body of my friend, then recovered from the Lolos by the Chinese officials; and beside him the body of my adopted Chinese boy, who had gone with Mr. Brooke as his interpreter, and who had remained faithful to the end. . . . But it is time to begin Mr. Brooke's narrative from the diary which he penned while he was alive and well, the picture of courage, high heart and endeavour.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

On the Tibetan Steppes.

"After my plans for entering Tibet from India had been successfully frustrated by the Indian Government," writes Mr. Brooke, "I considered it best to try and get the support of the Chinese Government and, if possible, that of the Dalai Lama, and so enter Tibet from the north. After a most uninteresting tramp across China I reached Sining, a large town in the west of Kansu Province. Here I heard that the Dalai Lama was coming south from Urga and was to stay in a monastery close to Sining. Mr. and Mrs. Ridley, the missionaries connected with the China Inland Mission, insisted on my making their home my own, and I appreciated a rest with these very pleasant people after a lonely tramp of three months across China.

"The monastery of Tassu or Kumbum—the first name is Chinese, the second Tibetan—where the Dalai Lama was to stay for some time, had been well cleaned for the occasion, before the arrival of this great potentate. The dust of ages had been swept away, and the huge golden idols gleamed with their varied and fiendish expressions. Incense was kept continually burning in great vases in front of each. The massive doors of the building were open, and the worshippers kept coming and going, prostrating themselves on the polished boards outside, incessantly muttering their prayers.

"The palace to be occupied by the Dalai Lama was a long, low building, built on the side of a steep hill, which overlooks the whole monastery of Tassu. The golden roofs of the

temples stood out dazzling in the sun, and long-robed priests ran hither and thither from one temple to another, while the devout worshippers wandered about with bowed heads, counting their beads and muttering their prayers.

"As we were at the monastery three days before the Dalai Lama arrived, we were at liberty to go almost anywhere we liked. We visited the courtyard where the Dalai Lama was to be entertained. His bedroom, which was very small, was papered with a typically English rose wall-paper; a large bed took up most of the room, and was heavily draped with bright yellow silk curtains embroidered in gold, and a counterpane to match.

"Two priests were on guard, who would on no account allow us to go into the room, and were very angry with the guards outside for letting us come into the courtyard at all.

"On October 25, 1906, Mr. Ridley and I rode out of Sining to see the Dalai Lama arrive. The roads were lined with the grotesque Chinese soldiers, armed with their very ancient guns, wearing their straw hats and pink coats made of cotton cloth, which hung on them like sacks. The Chinese onlookers had gathered, partly because they had nothing else to do, and partly because a Chinaman must see everything that is going on; but no one was over-pleased with their guest, whom they had to supply with forced hospitality. In fact, for months past, the Mandarin of Sining had been collecting pots and pans, and even tables, from the cottages of the poor to furnish his lordship's apartments.

"As is the case with most functions of this kind, we waited for a long time for any sign of the Dalai Lama and his suite. At last, in the far distance, we heard the shrieking of the Chinese band, and then, as the diabolical noise came closer, amidst a great cloud of dust, some five or six Chinamen came up, shuffling along in a gait which was neither a walk nor a run. They were dressed as they liked, played as they liked,

and shuffled as they liked, for it could not be called marching. Next came the standard-bearers, in the same disorder, and these were in considerable danger of being run down by the horsemen behind them. They carried long poles with red flags, and all manner of curiously-designed spears and tridents, which one may see outside any Chinese Yamen, and which are emblems of authority and justice. Next came the mounted Tibetans, in wonderful long yellow coats and curious hats made of gilded wood, riding rough, high-spirited ponies, which did not lend dignity to the spectacle. Suddenly a distinguished-looking Tibetan galloped out of the crowd and shouted to the onlookers to 'koutou,' *i.e.*, fall prostrate on the ground in honour and reverence before his lordship. We dismounted from our ponies but refused to do more, so he left us to harangue the Chinese, who were quite indifferent and only laughed and said rude things, as our English crowd sometimes does to our respected Metropolitan Police, who have learned, however, to take it better than did our friend this distinguished-looking Tibetan. There was more to see now, for a crowd of horsemen drew near, surrounding a large yellow cloth-covered chair, which was carried by four horses led by four mounted Tibetans, two on each side, so that we only caught a glimpse of the occupant for one second. We followed with the crowd until we reached a large camp which was prepared for him outside of the monastery of Kumbum. Here we found hundreds of tents, all pitched in a square, with one, a Mongol tent of rich yellow cloth, surrounded by a wall of the same material, where the Dalai Lama was to spend the night.

"Outside the square were crowds of many nationalities from different parts of Asia, Mongol Princes with gaily-attired camels, bringing presents from the north; wild-looking Tibetans with matted hair hanging down their backs, riding equally wild-looking ponies, driving unwieldy yaks, thin from

long travelling, perhaps from Lhasa or unknown regions in Southern Tibet; Chinese in gorgeous coloured silks, and muleteers with their galled mules.

"Mr. Ridley and I donned our smartest clothes of Chinese silk for the occasion. Mine was as complicated to put on as a hussar's full-dress uniform is to a newly-joined subaltern, but no less smart. It consisted of four coats, with four different coloured silks and patterns, each being cut away a little more than the one beneath it, so that a portion of

BAZAAR AT KUMBUM.

each showed in front, dark red trousers and yellow leggings, which came half way up the leg, black boots which were most troublesome to walk in; a large black hat with turned-up brim and red tassels completed the costume. A pigtail is considered unnecessary by the Tibetan.

"We intended calling on the Dalai Lama at once, but were told that he could not see us at present, stating his willingness to receive us in a few days. We climbed up to a little tower overlooking the camp, and had taken a few photographs,

when a fanatical Tibetan knocked my camera out of my hand and assaulted Mr. Ridley in the act of focussing!

"Two days after this we went up to the monastery and were granted an audience. After waiting a few minutes, sitting on little silk cushions in the courtyard, we were brought up a narrow staircase to a small room, where all sorts of instructions were given us in a whisper. Our present, which consisted of a fur coat, was taken in, and we followed; we bowed as we entered the door and again when we approached the Dalai Lama. We then placed the light blue scarf or kata (always presented on such occasions in Tibet) into his lordship's hands, and he presented us with another. He gave me a small image of Bhudda. Mr. Ridley received a bundle of joss-sticks and a roll of Lhasa cloth. The Dalai Lama asked if we had come far, and while Mr. Ridley explained who we were, I had an opportunity to look round. The room was about thirty feet long by fifteen feet wide, and the walls were draped with beautifully worked embroideries, representing Bhudda and various deities. The room was well warmed, and a mysterious scent of incense pervaded the atmosphere. The Dalai Lama sat in front of us, cross-legged, on silk cushions which were placed on a table about four feet high, so that his feet were on a level with our faces as we talked with him. His face did not show the slightest trace of expression; he greeted us with a slight forward movement of his body, but nothing like a smile ever approached his face as we conversed.

"Dr. Sven Hedin says that he had never seen such a gentle, pleasant face as that of the Tashi Lama, and I can say I have never seen such a hard, expressionless face as that of the Dalai Lama. One could not help thinking that he must have trained his features to resemble the unsympathetic emptiness of the brazen images of the country. He asked if I had come from the other side of the world, and if the

English king had sent me to see him. Mr. Ridley told him that the English were a kind people, and that he was sure that if he would come to India to meet them and learn to know them, he would not mind their coming to his country. After about half-an-hour's talk, which was mostly on our side, I asked if I might photograph him, but he refused. With a low bow we backed out of his presence; as we backed his features relaxed into a faint smile, a great relief after our grave interview.

"So ended our audience with the Dalai Lama, his first, I believe, with an Englishman." Mr. Brooke's notes and diary carry on the narrative of his experiences after leaving the Lama's presence. But, for clearness' sake, it may be well briefly to indicate what these were, leaving a detailed story to other chapters.

From Kumbum Mr. Brooke went to Tankar, a small city some thirty miles to the north, where he purchased yaks for the transportation of his party and their supplies—nearly fifty of these slow and stupid animals. Leaving this border town he plunged into Tibet, crossed the Kokonor plain, passed to the north of the lake, and after much difficulty reached Baramtsaidam. Here they found a Mongolian, who traded camels for Lieutenant Brooke's yaks, but the Mongol got the best of the bargain. Mr. Brooke refitted his caravan at much additional expense and continued his journey, crossing with considerable hardship the high passes, then covered deep with snow.

There was much difficulty in finding grass for his camels and fuel to cook the necessary food for his party.

Finally he reached a point within a few days' journey of Lhasa, and had a long interview with the intractable guards stationed at the border of the Lhasa territory. There was much delay, and Mr. Brooke made several detours in the hope of evading the guards, but was always unsuccessful.

In the end he was forced to turn his back on his goal, the source of the Brahmaputra, which, after months of weary travel, he had almost reached; with a sad heart and weary tread he turned north. On his retreat he made friends with the Chief of a Mongolian caravan returning from Lhasa and joined this party, and proceeding almost due north came out in Turkestan, and then crossed into Mongolia. He shot much game on this journey, and sent home one of the finest heads of an *ovis ammum* ever seen in England. After some months in Mongolia he returned to Sining and Lanchow and thence travelled almost due south across Kansuh and Sechuan provinces as far as Chungking.

From Chungking, in October, 1907, he took boat down the Yantze River and spent the winter in Japan and Corea.

It was on his way down and at Ichang that I first met Mr. Brooke. We had a long talk on our experiences in China and Tibet. I happened to tell him of that part of the country in which I was particularly interested, that inhabited by the eighteen tribes of Western Sechuan. "Don't be surprised," he said, "if I come up your way next spring." At Shanghai he met Mr. Edgar of the China Inland Mission, who is also interested in Western China and Tibet, and their meeting decided him to come west. Two and a-half months were spent in Japan and Corea. On his way back to China he met, at Tientain, Mr. C. H. Meares, who agreed to join him in further travel. Hankow was to be their starting point. Mr. Meares went then straightway overland, while Mr. Brooke himself went by Shanghai, to make necessary arrangements for the forwarding of money and supplies for the caravan. They met again at Hankow, and from this port they travelled together, until separated by the untimely death of Mr. Brooke.

CHAPTER II.

Procuring the Caravan.

After the interview with the Dalai Lama, Mr. Brooke said good-bye to his friend Mr. Ridley, and started for Tankar to purchase the necessary yaks and ponies needed for his expedition. Tankar is a Chinese frontier town, where a considerable trade is carried on with Tibetans; it is situated on the Siho or West River, about twenty-four miles north-west of Kumbum and twenty miles east of Toba, the Mohammedan stronghold. The town is of some commercial importance, as a kind of depôt for Chinese merchants trading with Tibetans. Hither, from Lhasa, come the caravans of the Dalai Lama. That dignitary drives no small trade with the Chinese, and this town being on a direct route between Mongolia and Lhasa, large caravans pass through annually in the fourth moon on their way to the "Sacred City." To this town the Tibetans of the Kokonor (Blue Lake) district bring in their produce, which consists of salt, hides, wool, sheep, cattle, horses; and trade them with the Chinese merchants for cotton goods, red felt, wine, snuff, tea, grain, coarse hemp bags and sundry other articles which Tibet imports from China. The majority of the inhabitants of the town are Chinese, but some Tibetans and Mongolians also live on the street, and every day large caravans may be seen camping outside the gate on the grassy commons that surround the town; the writer camped there on his first attempt to reach the Kokonor district in July, 1895. Tankar, moreover, is of some political and strategical importance and was originally a military outpost.

Here the Sining Amban receives the Mongolian Princes once a year and distributes presents in the name of the Emperor. Ten miles to the east may be seen part of the Great Wall, in which the gate called Kwanmen is now in ruins, but at which a guard of soldiers was formerly stationed.

The town was once within Tibetan territory, but the Chinese have gradually swallowed up the district for its agriculture.

Along the West River are narrow gorges which make the entrance to Tankar Valley very difficult; the Chinese took advantage of these natural defences during the Eastern rebellion to keep the Mohammedans in check.

The approach from the east is charming; a beautiful grove surrounding a water mill near the city gate first greets one, while some beautiful temples stand out on the hills in the background.

There is one principal street lined on either side by shops, in which are to be found Chinese wares and goods for bartering; grain and food-stuffs, beads, earrings, hair ornaments, pots, saddles, ropes, boots and so forth are all displayed. The Yamen opens out into the street, and so do a small lamasery and several wool depôts; the houses of the citizens and representative Tibetans and the City Temple fill up most of the space within the walls of this border town. Outside the gates are small suburbs, mostly occupied by Mohammedans. Strewn along the streets and suburbs will be found the Chinese pedlar or travelling merchants with their small wares spread out on mats, waiting for their opportunity to fleece the Tibetan or Mongolian traveller as he passes through. Yaks are driven in and sold for beef, their average price being from 5 to 7 taels each, while young ones in very good condition may bring from 7 to 12 taels. A good pony costs from 25 to 30 taels. The tael up here equals about three shillings.

While Mr. Brooke was delayed here trying to secure his yaks, Dr. Taffel, a German traveller, arrived from Tibet,

having been robbed for the third time by the Golok, a famous brigand tribe inhabiting the region south of the Kokonor. When Dr. Taffel arrived at Tankar he had little left but what was on his back, and was dressed like one of the famous Golok, in a sheep-skin coat, Tibetan boots and fur cap, with a girdle round his waist and his gown tucked to the knee. He narrated the story of his narrow escapes from the hands of these notorious nomads, who gain their livelihood by driving away their neighbours' cattle, attacking caravans, waylaying travellers, whether foreigners, Chinese or Tibetans. Dr. Taffel's adventures, however, did not cause Mr. Brooke to hesitate to continue his journey, and he proceeded with his negotiations for securing his caravan. Dr. Taffel gave him a good deal of information from his lengthy experience in the country regarding the price and quality of the animals required, and the day after this meeting Mr. Brooke left Tankar and proceeded to a village some twenty miles away, where the yaks were to be procured.

That night he put up in a little house occupied by a half-caste Chinaman, where he had his first meal of tsamba and buttered tea, the staple food in this part of the country as well as in Mongolia and Tibet. In these regions the frontiers are distinguished by deviations of diet. In spite of the political boundary established by the Chinese, they are constantly encroaching on Tibetan and Mongolian territory. On the other hand, while the Chinese trader soon learns to eat and even relish Tibetan food in Tibet, he would not think of living on it in China, where it is always referred to as the food of the barbarian. Tsamba is parched barley, ground into rather fine meal and mixed into dough with tea and butter; when kneaded to the proper consistency, just hard enough not to stick to one's hands, it is taken out of the wooden bowl which serves for plate, cup and saucer combined, and is held in the hand, while the cup is filled with tea, and one makes one's

meal by biting a piece out of the dough and sipping the buttered tea. Buttered tea is made in this part of the country by breaking a piece of Hankow brick tea into rather small pieces and placing them in a copper pot, in which milk and water are kept boiling. This pot is kept constantly on the stove, and tea may be served at almost any hour of the day or night. When the tea is poured into the wooden basin, a lump of butter, half the size of an egg, is put in; this floats on the top and when dissolved leaves conspicuous the yak hairs the Tibetan thinks necessary to hold together and give flavour to the butter, which can now easily be skimmed off or blown to one side of the basin while one drinks from the other side. When the diner has satisfied his appetite, supposing him to have, like most Tibetans, a long tongue, he proceeds to wash his bowl by licking it clean. If, however, he is unfortunate enough to be tongue-tied, he must then use his finger to wipe the bowl out and finish by licking his finger clean; nothing must be allowed to go to waste in a country where food is so scarce and precious. Brooke's half-caste's wife did all the work and appeared very cheerful. She wore her hair in two plaits down her back. Two broad blue-cloth stoles, one attached to each braid of hair, hung down her back and were covered with stones, large cash and other trinkets, which must have weighed several pounds. This is the border Tibetan fashion, but Brooke was told the lady was of Turkish descent. Next morning, on going into the kitchen, Mr. Brooke found an old Lama, his host and four strong children all munching away at tsamba, while the old lady was making scones in an iron pot. These she heated over an argol fire. There being no wood in the locality, the excretum of the yak is dried by plastering it on the sides of the house, and when dry this makes very good fuel; that is, when one knows how to use it, but it is slow, tedious work to any one not accustomed to the use of this fuel to attempt

to cook a meal on it. After the meal was over the husband spent the day in nursing the baby, while his wife attended to the work. Mr. Brooke spent the day in bargaining for yak, and succeeded in selecting twenty-five animals out of the herd at 14 taels each. The price went up as usual as soon as it was known a foreigner wanted to purchase, and unless his middleman was exceptional we may rest assured that that

WIFE OF THE MAN FROM WHOM MR. BROOKE BOUGHT THE YAK.

indispensable person did not close this bargain with an empty pocket, since every middleman expects to make at least 20 per cent. out of every bargain he drives. Mr. Brooke also engaged a yak driver, who was supposed to understand the loading and management of the clumsy and stupid brutes. After securing the animals and seeing them started on their way to Tankar, Brooke returned to Sining to pick up his belongings and say good-bye to the Ridleys. While he was

there their little boy died, and he left them in sorrow. Mr. Brooke never forgot the kindness shown to him by these good people, and I often heard him speak of them while in Sechuan. Here he again met Dr. Taffel, and they travelled together half way to Tankar, where their road separated, and Brooke, not having a servant or escort, travelled the remainder of the road alone. When about five miles

CHILDREN OF THE MAN FROM WHOM MR. BROOKE BOUGHT THE YAK.

from Tankar a Tibetan overtook him, and for some time appeared most friendly, riding alongside and trying to converse. Suddenly he snatched at Mr. Brooke's reins and, pulling his pony up and at the same moment drawing his sword, an instrument which every Tibetan is provided with in these parts, he succeeded in striking Brooke over the head with it. The blow was weak and did little damage, and Brooke, slipping off his pony, kept it between himself and his sudden

antagonist. Finding this defence uncertain he rushed in at close quarters and pulled the Tibetan off his pony, dragging him about on the ground, which exhausted himself unnecessarily. Finally he succeeded in securing his enemy's sword, but though he struck at him with the weapon the Tibetan's sheep-skin coat was so hard and thick that the blow did little more than cut the garment slightly. The Tibetan now rushed Brooke in turn and recovered the sword, but Brooke so kept hold of him that he had no opportunity of using it, and my friend managed to secure the weapon a second time and hurled it into the mountain stream which roared beside them. The Tibetan bolted off to try and recover it, and Brooke spent this breathing space in trying to kick up a stone out of the hard road; but the Tibetan, noticing what he was at, left the sword and rushed against Brooke, knocking him over and trying himself to secure the stone, still fast in the ground. Brooke secured another stone, but was by this time so exhausted that he had little strength left to use it and only just managed to give the Tibetan a bump on the head. They closed again, and Brooke managing to get on top, banged his opponent's face with his fist, but it seemed to have little effect. The Tibetan then got on top and pounded his enemy on the forehead with small stones. Brooke now managed to get in a stroke under the Tibetan's chin which stunned him a little, and he succeeded in getting away. His own horse was grazing close by and he managed to catch and mount him. As he rode off he looked back and saw the Tibetan do likewise, only riding in the opposite direction. Fortunately he did not appear to have any accomplices. Brooke finally arrived at Tankar bleeding and exhausted. He found his boy just lighting a lamp to come and look for him. The servant professed to be very much distressed that he was not with his master to help him against the Tibetan, but after

Brooke got better acquainted with this worthy, he perceived that he was, in fact, delighted not to have been with him. In truth, the boy proved to be a coward in every respect.

Two Mandarins called on Brooke next day and appeared most sympathetic. They stated that soldiers had been sent off, soon after he arrived, in pursuit of the Tibetan, and had captured him early that morning; and they wanted to know what punishment he thought should be inflicted. Brooke said that for such a crime in his country a man would be given several years' imprisonment, with nothing but bread and water to sustain life. The Mandarins replied they had a similar law in their country; and nine months later Brooke saw the Tibetan still retained in the prison at Sining. Brooke's wounds, which consisted of a cut on his head and some bruises on his forehead, soon healed. On the 18th of November he packed the forty-five unwieldy yaks that composed his caravan, together with eight Chinamen in all, including an interpreter from the Amban at Sining, who had some influence on the robbers of the Kokonor district. It took about five hours to pack the caravan, and, as usually happens on the first day of an expedition, the loads tumbled about, frightening the yaks into a mad stampede, so that only a few miles were accomplished before encamping. The second day was most disastrous; the tent poles were broken during the night by some of the yaks smashing into it, his theodolite and plane table were also smashed during the march by the clumsy creatures. These disasters greatly affected the scientific results hoped for from the expedition. Late in the evening the yaks were tied up to the line rope, which is fastened by pegs or tied to great tufts of grass, and to this rope all the animals are attached. Senerh, his boy, foolishly went too close to one of the semi-savage yaks, whose horn came in contact with one of the boy's ribs with such force that he was

compelled to ride every day for a month, and was able to do no work. The country was now covered with grass and undulating hills, on which large herds of cattle were seen grazing. The people were friendly but quite on the alert, as a dreaded band of Golok was reported to be roving about, and there was no telling when or where they might pounce upon some herd and drive them off into some secluded valley, and thus get them away into their own country, which really lies south of the Yellow River. At last they came in sight of the Kokonor and camped by the lake. During the night there was a heavy fall of snow, which had the effect of making his boys move even more slowly than the notoriously slack Kansuite is in the habit of doing. Packing the animals next morning proved a difficult job, as the men were not used to the intense cold. Their caravan moved slowly, as yaks cannot travel more than eight or ten miles per day, especially if they are on a long journey. During the march Mr. Brooke shot a wild pony called a kyang, the meat of which proved to be very good eating. It is impossible to say whether these animals are ponies or mules; they seem to be quite a distinct species and do not interbreed with the Tibetan and Mongolian ponies that roam about the plains in a semi-wild state. He only heard of one instance of a hybrid Mongolian pony and wild kyang. They are quite distinct from any species of the horse, mule or donkey, having a mule's tail, and mane, nose and ears like a horse; they can be easily caught when they join a large herd of Mongolian ponies feeding on the plains. They are very fleet, however, and when feeding by themselves would be almost impossible of capture.

Lieutenant-Colonel Waddell, in his most valuable book, "Lhasa and its Mysteries,"* thus describes the kyang:—

"Passing along under the flank of Chumolhari, we found that the apparently bare desert plain, as we traversed it,

* Murray.

was freely studded over with clumps of grass and weeds between the pebbles, for the plain was thickly strewn with loose pebbles and sandy gravel like the dried-up bed of a sea or lake; and this loose gravel was very trying to walk on, and for the transport animals, as it wore out their shoes and lamed them.

"Browsing on this scanty herbage, which curiously included many thistles, were hundreds of large wild asses, the kyang of the Tibetans, in troops of tens and twenties or more. At first we took them for detachments of Tibetan Cavalry, the wild horsemen of the Changtang, as they came galloping along in a whirlwind of dust, then executed a perfect wheel-round, then extended out in a line at regular intervals, and advanced again; and as if at the word of command reformed into close order and came to an instant halt. Several of them galloped towards us and stood looking at us, out of curiosity, as near as 300 yards away, and a few trotted through the lines of our baggage mules, doubtless recognising their family relationship. They are pretty animals, more like ponies than asses, and move with great grace. They are about the size and shape of zebras, but with better heads. Their general colour is a rich golden brown with jet black points and stripes. When I was in North-Western Tibet, evading the frontier guards, I have seen these colours form startling kaleidoscopic varieties of tints in the bright sunshine, at one time bright sandy yellow, almost white, changing to golden chestnut and deep black, giving the appearance of a caravan of black-coated men moving amongst light-coloured laden animals. The Tibetans say that these animals are untameable, but they do not look so very wild. I cannot help thinking that here, in the home of these wild asses, we have a great field for breeding mules for the Indian Army, the supply for which never can meet the demand; and to obtain these insufficient numbers we have yearly to ransack the whole world, sending agents to

Persia, Spain, Italy, China, Yunnan and America, at enormous cost.

" As we march on and on across this great plain, with nothing to relieve the dulness but these herds of roving kyang and the encircling hills beyond, the eye wearies of the stretches of loose gravel with its stunted tufts of withered grass, and the monotony of it all oppresses the spirits."

Several of these animals were found at Lhalu; they had been given as a present to the Dalai Lama, who had them fed and stalled there. Colonel Waddell got close enough to photograph them, and, later, two of them were caught by members of the Mission, to be as a present to the King. Colonel Waddell classifies the wild ass as *Equus hemionus*.*

Quite early in the afternoon Brooke and his party came to an old Tibetan fort or stock yard, into which they drove their yaks and ponies for the night, as the place was infested with robbers. Four Tibetans came about, whose appearance did not inspire confidence. They were particularly anxious to see Brooke's fire-arms. He had determined not to show them unless it was really necessary, knowing that a savage's awe of a gun is always greater before he knows anything about its mechanism. However, wishing to be civil, he let his visitors each handle one of the four guns he had with him. A fourth man tried to get hold of his Mauser pistol which, after his experience with the Tibetan near Tankar, Brooke always carried in his belt. Discovering the game in time and unfastening his Mauser from his belt, he commanded the men to hand back his rifles, which they evidently intended to make their own. As it happened there were no cartridges in the magazines, even if they had known how to use the rifles; anyhow, they quietly handed them back to the boy.

Next day on the march four horsemen tried to surprise

* "Lhasa and its Mysteries," page 484.

the caravan, but seeing there was quite a large party they did not press an attack. At evening the party again encamped early and Mr. Brooke went out shooting. He had not gone far before he discovered the four gentlemen they had met during the march, sneaking over a hill not far away, their four horses tied to tufts of grass close by. The worst of this country is that every one suspects every one else of being a thief. The traveller may be out shooting when suddenly he discovers that crawling along behind him, only a few hundred yards away, are several men, evidently on his track to see what he is about. This puts an end to the hunting expedition for that day, for he has not the slightest idea who his stalkers are, but infers from their behaviour that they would as soon take a shot at the strange hunter as they would at the natural game of the country. There is a distinct difference between the professional and amateur robber—the professional is deliberate and goes in for big hauls, attacking large herds and driving off a good number of cattle at each attack; the amateur picks off small caravans, appropriating whatever goods he may obtain for the benefit of his party, but seldom taking life, unless actually driven to it. Brooke returned to camp, and during the night was aroused by a terrible barking of dogs. Turning out of his warm sleeping bag, he found the men hard at work piling the grain bags in position to fortify the camp. They all worked hard getting the bags in place, but the howls of a pack of wolves came closer and closer, and presently the camp was surrounded. Fortunately the yaks and horses were securely tethered to the line ropes, and though they made strenuous efforts to escape they did not succeed in getting loose. A few volleys from the four rifles fired from behind the grain bags so surprised the wolves that they turned and fled, leaving some of their companions dead on the ground.

The next day the party had a good deal of difficulty in

crossing a river which was partly frozen, and got most of the baggage wet, which necessitated the delay of one day to dry the grain. They next crossed over a high pass about 11,000 feet above sea-level that divides the Kokonor from the Tsaidam. There was a good deal of snow on the pass, but they succeeded in getting over without incident. They finally arrived at a Mongolian encampment and were directed to the chief, Chinghiwang, who was camped a few days' march farther on; and there Brooke hoped to spend several days reorganising the caravan, changing his slow and tedious yak for camels before proceeding on his journey.

CHAPTER III.

Across the Tsaidam and on to Lhasa.

They reached the lake of Dulan and camped on its grassy shore in a rich pasture land, where the only difficulty was in finding firewood, which had to be carried for a long distance. Mr. Brooke called on Chinghiwang, who was camped not far away. He found him living in a tent very similar to the other Mongolians on the plain, with very little to show that he was a Prince; indeed, a Scottish crofter's cottage would have been a palace to his bare little tent. A Mongolian's tent in this part of the country consists of a framework of wood, which comes down like the ribs of a boat; only turned upside down. These ribs are joined by a sort of trellis work, and the whole frame collapses, dividing into four sections when it is desired to move on to other grazing grounds. The roof was formed of a number of sticks resting on the wall, and all were tied to a ring of iron in the centre of the roof, which formed the chimney. The whole framework was then covered with felt or a coarse cloth made of yak's hair. In the centre was a raised stone fireplace bearing an iron frame, on which an argol fire was brightly burning, and with a pot of tea always on the boil. Through the chimney hole in the roof the smoke satisfactorily escaped, and these tents are really comfortable. From the walls of the chief's tent hung several old fuse guns and skins of butter, while on the floor, around the sides of the tent, were a number of Chinese skin boxes, on one of which was placed some Tibetan Scriptures, carefully wrapped in a cloth and bound between two

boards, which formed the cover. These are never opened till a priest comes, when they are read for three days continuously with great ceremony and feasting.

The Prince had recently returned from Lhasa, and as the party sat around the fire, cross-legged, eating mien which had been boiled in milk (mien is vermicelli imported from China and is counted quite a delicacy by both the Mongolians and Tibetans), he told most vivid tales of the difficulties that had to be encountered on the way, especially at this time of the year. Mr. Brooke was assured that it would be impossible to make the journey with yak, as the passes would be deep in snow and they would not be able to procure fodder on the heights, and the yak were so slow it would be necessary to camp on the passes. He felt that the Prince was paving his way to secure a good price for the camels, which he was anxious to supply, and also to depreciate the value of the yaks, which he hoped to obtain in part payment for his camels. Brooke insisted that his yak could easily make the journey, as they were young and in good condition, and added that he had paid 14 taels apiece for them in order to secure first-class animals. After an hour's interview Brooke returned to his tent, still undecided as to what was really the best thing to do. The next day the Prince invited him again to his tent. He had prepared quite a banquet and invited a number of friends. They all sat round the fire cross-legged as before, and began the feast by drinking tea and eating tsamba. The second course was boiled mutton, of which every man seized a piece in his hand, gnawing it and smacking his lips in a most appreciative way. After the mutton, Chinese wine was offered, a beverage distilled from grain, and (if no water has been added during its long journey to the Mongolian tent) usually found to contain about 65 per cent. of alcohol, though the stronger it is the more these dwellers on the highlands appreciate it. The Prince again

introduced the subject of camels and promised to sell Brooke some at a reasonable price, if he would not continue his journey to Lhasa. This suggestion Brooke would not entertain, and again asserted his intention of proceeding with his yaks. The Prince insisted that Brooke should wait a few days until his caravan of camels—which had been sent to Sining laden with hides, wool and butter, and were to bring back grain—should return; assuring him that it would not be more than a few days before they arrived. He stayed.

Meanwhile he made friends with some of the people, and especially with one old man, who was troubled with rheumatism, and whom, by the use of his galvanic battery, Brooke was able to relieve. In return the old man undertook to initiate his physician in the mystery of understanding the points of a good camel. His instructions came to this :—"Old camels are not valuable, as they will not stand the fatigue of a long journey; their teeth are short and they cannot masticate the coarse grass of the highlands of Tibet. Their hump sags or droops, and they lack spring in their gait. A young camel is alert; he is always on the look-out for food, and is more readily startled by a stranger or by such moving objects as he may see even at some distance from the road. His teeth are long, his hump is erect and he has a spring in his movement which is easily detected."

When the caravan returned the Prince brought over four of his poorest camels, which he offered to trade for Brooke's forty-two yak: three of his original caravan having died since crossing the partly frozen river on the other side of the pass. Brooke expressed indignation at this offer, and said he had come to the Prince believing him to be an honest man, who would not take advantage of a stranger, and he demonstrated the camels offered to be old and useless. The Prince replied that as sure as God was in Heaven he

could not tell a lie, and repeated that the four animals he had brought were the pick of his flock.

He departed, taking the animals with him, but returned next day, bringing four better camels. Mr. Brooke told him that if he took camels at all he would need at least ten, and that he would accept the four now brought in exchange for his yaks on condition that the Prince sold him six others at a fair price, and that he should keep possession of his yak until the bargain was completed. The Prince readily agreed, and nine other camels were chosen from the pack, averaging about 35 taels apiece, while the four young ones were about 55 taels. When the animals were packed Brooke found that he had just sufficient to carry his outfit comfortably and allow his men to ride. The last camel to be brought was one with a tuft of hair out of its side. Brooke somehow fancied the camel, but the Prince tried in every way to prove that it was not a desirable animal for such a journey, stating that it ate its own wool when it was hungry, which accounted for the bare spot on its side. He shook his head, indicating that the animal was no good, but his features betrayed him, and Brooke did not believe a word he said; and later, sure enough, another Mongolian told him that the boys at Sining had pulled the hair off. The Prince finally raised the price to 65 taels, which Brooke paid, and found the animal to be the best of the bunch.

The day before they started on their long and tedious journey towards Lhasa the Prince dined with Brooke. As a delicacy a dish made from Bird's custard powder and sugar was provided. The Prince did not seem to relish this and ate but little; his son, however, seemed very fond of sugar, and helped himself liberally.

Late in the evening of the last day he expected to spend at Dulan, Senerh, his cook, in company with his Shanghai boy, came into his tent and demanded that each of the men

be given 50 taels in advance; if not they would go back. Brooke ordered them out of the tent and said he would see them in the morning.

The Shanghai boy, who up to this time had proved faithful, now broke the news that during the days spent in camp the servants, having nothing better to do, had been talking over the difficulties and hardships which lay before them, and had all decided to turn back. This conspiracy made it impossible to start next day, so Brooke sent the useless ones out to gather firewood, and kept three of the best men in camp. These he made sign a paper promising they would go on, and himself agreed to send back 25 taels to each of their families. To this plan they all agreed, much to the disappointment of the useless ones, who were the originators of the disturbance and who had hoped to gain something for their trouble. On December 28th the party set forth, leaving the rebellious and worthless men with food sufficient at least to take them back to Chinese territory. Senerh, the Sining boy, repented and begged to be taken along. The interpreter who joined the party at Tankar, and had only been engaged as far as this place, was sent back with a horse and his full wages; while the other two only got half their wages, as they had been discontented, disobedient, and lazy throughout the whole of the journey.

They found the camels a great comfort after the clumsy, slow, brainless yaks, who were always dumping their loads off by running against each other, and moved so slowly that it made the march very tedious. The camels moved along at about four miles an hour, keeping up the pace day after day during the march; they were much less trouble to tie up at night and to find when out grazing on the plain.

During the first two days' march the road led through sandstone hills, which rose from 1,500 to 2,500 feet above the valleys; the southern slopes were covered with stunted

pine trees; they saw evidence of bear, but no wild yak or *ovis ammum*. On the 30th of December they crossed quite a large river, flowing through rather a deep gorge which sheltered it from the sun. The ice was sufficiently thick to allow the camels to cross it. This river is reported to be fed from Dulan Nor, but this Dulan Nor is a different lake from the one on which the Prince was camped, and its waters were more saltish, and the earth by its shores contained much alkali, which hindered the grass from growing. They were now nearing the swamps of the Tsaidam proper. Wherever the banks of the river had cut to any depth through the hills and rising ground there was evidence of conglomerate rock beneath the red sandstone which appeared on the surface. Passing through the rolling lands they entered a large sandy plain, through which they travelled as far as Baram Tsaidam, where another important Mongolian Prince had his headquarters. They were guided thither by an escort and interpreter in one, sent with them by Chinghiwang as far as Baram Tsaidam, with orders there to hand the party over to the next chief. On reaching the place they had some little difficulty in finding the Mongolian tents, and when they did find them it was to discover that the plain on which they were encamped was almost destitute of grass, and this when Mr. Brooke's camels were much in need of resting a few days on good grazing ground. The ponies suffered even more than the camels, for there was a good deal of shrubbery about on which the latter seemed to feed freely. Occasionally one of the young camels, who thought he could find better fodder further away, would start off on a journey by himself, looking back every few minutes to see if others were following him; when he found that by this means he was unable to coax them far from camp he would return, and after remaining some little time would start out on a similar search.

The day after Mr. Brooke's arrival at Baram Tsaidam he was told that the Mongolian Chief did not live there, and that it was impossible to procure a local guide. Taking the interpreter he set out to search for someone in authority, and did manage to find the house of the Mongolian Prince; but only his brother and an old Lama were at home. The village was surrounded by a low mud wall enclosing a few mud huts, which were dark and dirty. The Lama was sitting on a large shelf in semi-darkness, a butter lamp burning close by. The visitors were shown in by the Prince's brother, who motioned them to a mat, where he immediately joined them. Brooke, through his interpreter, informed the Mongolian of his recent visit to the Dalai Lama and the Amban at Sining, who had given him a passport to cross Tibet into India; and explained that Chinghiwang had received him and given him a guide to this place, where he was assured that he would receive an escort to guide him on his way.

The Lama and the Mongolian talked together for some time, and then they excused themselves on the ground that their lord was not at home, and that they could do nothing in the matter. Brooke asked them to think the matter over, for though it was not his wish to make any trouble, yet if he journeyed alone and anything should happen by the way, the Chinese Government might hold them responsible, as it was important, he told them, for him to get right through to India.

After further discussion they said they would let him have an answer in the morning, and the next day the Mongolian came to his tent with a guide who was to escort him ten days west to a place called by the Chinese, Dachinpa, *i.e.*, great clear plain. They afterwards learned that the story of the Prince being away from home was quite a true one. The day before they arrived the Golok had swept down upon his herds, and had driven away 100 of his ponies, and the

whole countryside had been called out to give chase. The Golok come into the country in large bands and break up into small parties, visiting the Mongolian encampments ostensibly as traders. When they have found out where the Mongolian herds are feeding and the strength of the camp, they collect together again, and drive off the herds into some valley, and by ways and means known to them, and in forced marches, usually succeed in getting the animals clean away. A band of these Golok in disguise visited Baram Tsaidam the day after the ponies above-mentioned had been driven off, no doubt with the idea of putting the Mongolians on the wrong track of their lost possessions. Brooke tried to photograph the bunch, but the moment they saw the camera they ran off, while one member of the party sprang toward the camera and covered the lens with his hand.

When the party was just ready to leave Baram Tsaidam, Senerh, the cook, declared that he must go back as he had run out of opium. After considerable discussion the man was allowed to go. To take an opium-smoker, who had no means of securing a daily supply of that drug, could only have led to a great deal of trouble, and the man would be worse than useless; so, from this place, Brooke went forward with only five Chinese. From Baram Tsaidam to Dachinpa they travelled westward over a desert covered with brushwood about six feet high, where the camels and ponies belonging to the Mongolians roamed in a semi-wild state. Their new Mongolian guide was a most religious man, repeating his prayers continually. When they pitched camp and the tea began to boil, he would seize the ladle used for serving out the tea, and, muttering his prayers, would throw a little of the tea out of the door three times, with considerable ceremony between each swing of the ladle; then proceeding to serve Brooke and afterwards the other members of the party.

On arriving at Dachinpa the party chose a good camping ground, where there was plenty of grass for the animals, and started off to find the old Mongolian Chief who was to provide the new escort. All day they rode and at last reached a hut where they found an old Mongolian at prayers. He motioned them to sit down, but otherwise continued to chant his prayers without looking up. He was dressed in a long dirty robe and squatted in front of a little stool, his Buddhist Bible in hand; he wore large round spectacles and his head was shaven but dirty. The guide, on entering the tent, solemnly bent his head until it touched the book, waited until the old Lama placed his hand upon his head, then rose and took his place by the fire. After a considerable time the priest dropped his voice into a low murmur, and they commenced to talk. The Mongolian Chief was not at all inclined to help Brooke, but after some little conversation he accepted a present from him in the form of a tin of Bryant and May's matches. With these the old man seemed greatly delighted, as he had never seen "self-giving fire," as he called the matches, before, and he played about with them like a child. He was a fierce, fat-looking old man, much like the imagined ogre of nursery days. A large pot containing two sheep's heads was boiling on the fire, and around the tents hung quarters of frozen mutton and rolls of suet, also an old gun carefully wrapped up in cloth; just behind him were a number of young goats, tethered by strings. Most of these had light blue hair, dainty little beards, and were really pretty creatures.

Eventually the old Mongolian consented to send as guide his own son, a fine-looking boy, who was to escort the party as far as Naichi, where they were to get another guide to take them on to Nagchuka. Naichi was reported to be ten days south of Dachinpa.

After bidding farewell to the old Lama, who held the rank

of local chief, they started out to retrace their steps to their own camp. In some way the guide seemed to have lost his bearings, and after travelling some time did not come out on the path which they had been told they should find. The new guide, of course, was not to join them until next morning. Brooke, feeling the guide was going in the wrong direction, told his boy to follow him and they struck off across the plains in what he believed to be the direction of the camp. They travelled in this manner due east until they reached the river upon which they were camped; here they rested and let the horses drink, when the boy suddenly cried out, "Look over there, Master, you say you don't believe in the devil, look at that." Brooke looked round and saw a very curious phenomenon, similar to the scene which Mr. H. Savage Landor describes having seen in the Himalayas only in a more remarkable form than that seen by Brooke on this occasion. It was the planet Mars having a kind of game of hide-and-seek with the other stars, a very extraordinary sight, for the planet leaped up to an angle of 30 degrees, then down to the right, and disappeared; then up again at a tangent, now glowing bright like an electric arc lamp, now like a little star. Brooke and his boy stood and gazed in sheer amazement. Asked if he was frightened, all the boy said was, "I hope it doesn't come closer, Master." Brooke told him that he would explain about it to him later, but never got the boy to believe any natural explanation. The planet at that hour was just rising, and, when they first saw it, was behind a mountain; but the different densities in the atmosphere reflected it in various directions, according to the atmospheric power of refraction constantly changing between them and the planet.

After this experience Brooke and his boy travelled up the river, which was at this place quite a foaming torrent. The boy grumbled very much, and persisted that they were

going in the wrong direction. At daybreak they found themselves within two miles from the camp, which they could see from the summit of a little hill on which they then stood, and reached it at 7 a.m.

The guide and camel driver did not arrive till 2 o'clock that afternoon, having gone many miles out of their way.

Their new guide turned up in the evening, and on January 27th they started for Naichi.

The first day they had a long march across an arid plain, intermittent with sand, quartz, volcanic rock and shingle, which was quite destitute of any kind of vegetation. They crossed over a small pass called Kokstom, which was quite difficult for camels to travel over because of the narrowness of the road. This pass could easily be avoided by blasting away a little of the rock in the gorge through which the river flows. They succeeded in making the pass without any accident, though it quite frequently happens that a camel making a false step is thrown over the cliff and dashed to pieces on the rocks in the gorge below.

They at last reached a Mongol encampment at Naichi in a terrific dust storm, and camped there.

It was a barren place, where there was little grass or fuel with which to build a fire.

The storm calmed down, their strange-looking tent attracted the Mongols, and about a dozen of them came over to call.

They chatted about the journey to Nagchuka, and asked a large sum to guide the party thither. Brooke offered 50 taels, saying that he would not give a farthing more; so they went away saying as usual that they would consult their Buddha about it, and let him know in the morning.

The natives told Brooke about some wild yak that were in the mountains near by, and next day, guided by an old Mongol, he started out to hunt them. Climbing a

precipitous mountain, the granite walls of which towered above the camp, he approached the top with great care, as the creatures are often to be seen grazing under the summit on the opposite side. On this occasion, however, they were not there, and the wind blew a gale, so that it was difficult work to make way round some of the cliffs without being blown off, and only those who have stood on some of these high peaks on the roof of the world really know what a gale in Tibet means. By resting his telescope on a rock and searching the valley and further mountain side Brooke was able to pick out fifteen yaks grazing on the slopes at the other end of the valley. He and his party at once set out, and for four hours scrambled over rocks and boulders, keeping under cover that they might not be sighted by their game. On reaching a grassy knoll, which Brooke decided was near where he had seen the brutes feeding, they stopped to rest and look carefully about. The old Mongol hunter took out his rosary, muttered something, counted his beads by fives, and twisting the beads put them to his lips. This was repeated five times, while Brooke sat almost frozen in the piercing wind. At last the old prophet predicted a successful ending to their arduous stalks, but the prophecy had yet to be fulfilled, so they crept on carefully, and as they reached the top of the knoll they heard stones rattling and a great yak came tearing up the other side to meet them. When he was within 200 yards Brooke let him have it just behind the shoulder. The yak turned down the valley a short distance, then stumbled and fell over a granite rock, where they found him dead.

The poor old yaks have none of the quick instinct of wild animals generally; they like to have a good look at the hunter before they make any attempt to get away, which may be due to the fact that they are seldom hunted by the Tibetan or Mongol. When once they do show the white flag they

can make pretty good time, for a short distance at least.

On returning to camp Brooke was informed that a Mongol would escort him to Nagchuka, if two camels were added to the 50 taels offered by the foreigner.

There seemed no way out of it, and as it was winter time and the passes would be difficult, Brooke agreed to the demand on condition that the guide led them safely through the desolate track of country that lay before them, and to the famous monastery many days to the south.

So on March 6th they left Naichi, and, after travelling only thirty li (ten miles) the first day, had to pitch their tent in a terrific storm, which almost tore it to pieces, and would have done so had they not taken it down, and waited till the storm abated a little.

The following day they crossed over a small pass 15,000 feet above sea-level and came down into the valley of the Dichu, or Drichu. The Dri River flows past Batang, and is known below that point as the Chinshachiang (river of golden sand); but, after it has been joined by a number of tributaries between Batang and Hsuchowfu, is known after Hsuchowfu as the Yangtzechiang, or Yantze River. But there is no doubt that the Dichu, or Dri River, is the main tributary of the Yangtze, which is fed from the famous chain of lakes surrounding the west Kokochili range. These lakes are over 16,000 feet above sea-level, as stated by Captain Wellby and Dr. Sven Hedin.

Where Brooke crossed the Dichu the valley was about four miles wide, but only inhabited by wild beasts. His men were stricken with mountain sickness, and thought they were going to die; the Shanghai boy gave up entirely, and, letting his horse go, lay down on a sand hill in utter despair. Brooke had to set him on his horse, but he fell helplessly off. Placed on the pony anew with the

promise of a good thrashing if he fell off, the boy succeeded in sticking to his pony, but Brooke knew from experience that when a Chinaman makes up his mind that he is going to die he is the most helpless object imaginable.

The following day they marched up the valley in a heavy snowstorm and camped in two feet of snow, with not a blade of grass for the poor animals, who had found it heavy work tramping through the deep snow all day.

In the morning it was still snowing and they were in absolute misery; the Chinese refused to turn out of their fur sleeping bags; there was not a stick of fuel anywhere to cook a bite of food or heat a drop of water.

Brooke pulled them out of bed, however, to make them pack the camels. The old guide picked out his two camels, or the two he would like to have had, and started toward home; but Brooke noticed him in time and made him bring them back.

Six of the animals wandered off and Brooke had to go after them himself, as the men all refused to do anything.

On bringing the animals back Brooke again pulled his boys out of their beds, and finally they got started. That night they found a camping place where the snow was not so deep, and the animals were able to scratch up a little grass.

They marched all the next day over a plain; the wind kept gaining in force all the morning until 11 a.m. The gale was running at fifty or sixty miles per hour, sweeping the sand and snow before it in a great cloud, even lifting small pebbles and lashing them against their faces. Great care was needed in holding the caravan together and in keeping their bearings, for if they got separated for fifty yards they would be doomed, as the trail was completely obliterated in places, and it was impossible to see or even hear a call for fifty yards. The temperature was 5 degrees below zero

YAK CARAVAN ON MARCH.

at 9 a.m., and with such a gale blowing it felt more like 20 degrees below zero.

To keep the party together the animals were all attached by a line ; it was impossible to do more than a rough tracing of the route followed that day.

They camped that night in the shelter of a sand hill. Brooke went out in search of a grass plot, on which the animals might find something to eat, for where their camp was there was nothing but drifting sand. While out on this quest his fur cap was blown away and carried off like a balloon ; it fell on a frozen pond, he pursued it, and on stepping on the ice he was swept to the other side as if he were on an ice sled. His cap turned on its edge and went racing along like a miniature bicycle, and if it had not caught in a bush about a mile further on, it is not likely he would ever have seen it again.

In this country it was with the greatest difficulty the tent was erected, for the pegs were useless in the loose sand, and the grain bags were used to hold the sides of the tent down ; they were also made use of as snubbing posts for the tent ropes. If the party was roughing it, so were the animals. The search for fodder was fruitless, and the party had to share with them some of the grain they were carrying, but as there was yet a long journey before them it had to be doled out very carefully.

In the morning it was much calmer, and they got under way early. By 9 o'clock it commenced to blow again, as it did almost every day of the journey across this barren expanse. The camels seemed to know that it was worse on before, and again and again tried to turn back. They were getting thinner day by day, and it was really wonderful how they kept up in such weather with so little to eat. Indeed, they proved themselves to be much more hardy than is generally supposed, and not only able to stand the heat on sandy plains, but also to endure the intense cold, without any pro-

tection from the fierce blasts that prevail in such elevated regions.

One of the men became so ill that the caravan had to be stopped for three days. On March 17th they packed him up in his bedding and tied him on a camel. He was then still very ill, but was soon all right again.

The wonderful thing about this bleak, barren country is that although the wind is driving at from fifteen to forty miles an hour there is a clear blue sky, if the dust will allow it to be seen.

They met a Mongol caravan with 800 camels on their way to China; Li, who was still ill, was sent back with them. Brooke paid him his wages and gave him 25 taels for the expense of the return journey, which caused a murmur in his camp, for they said, "Why give a sick man 25 taels to return?" The Tibetan and Chinese custom is to leave any person who shall fall by the wayside to die or recover, as the gods may design, and in such a cruel country as this to die is the only fate of any one dropping out of a caravan.

They crossed the Dungbure, which is 16,700 feet above the sea, with little delay, commencing their march at 8 a.m. and pitching camp at 4 p.m. They experienced little difficulty, although this is the highest pass on the journey between Sining and Lhasa. On the top was the usual obo or pile of stones, in which were erected poles, and to these were attached prayer flags. Many of them hung in rags from their constant flapping in the breeze.

The top of the pass was quite flat. On the south side, some distance from the top, Brooke found hot springs gushing out of the frozen earth. They also caught several small fish, which were identically the same as some secured at Baram Tsaidam. The formation of the Dungbure range was found to be similar to that surrounding the Tsaidam, *i.e.*, red sandstone over a very hard limestone conglomerate,

only in addition there were several volcanic spurs in sight, their jagged outline giving even a more barren aspect than the sloping sandstone.

At about 16,000 feet above sea-level they sighted the first Tibetan tent, pitched in a sheltered nook, and some miles further on there was a number of tents, and hundreds of sheep and yak grazing on the slopes.

The people were ragged and unkempt, with long, shaggy hair hanging down their backs; the women were very small, and the men not over 5 feet 6 inches in height. They belonged to Egla tribe, and live the whole year round at an altitude of from 14,000 to 16,000 feet above the sea-level, which may account for their low stature. They are said to be brigands, but Brooke found those whom he met quietly attending to their own herds. In the country directly south he found a great deal of granite containing large crystals of felspar several inches in length, and the large jagged boulders reminded him of some parts of Scotland.

Brooke's old horse at last gave in, and had to be left on the road; he was given to a Tibetan, who promised to care for him if he survived.

They reached the valley of Nagchuka on April 10th and found the people friendly. There were robbers roaming about who were supposed to come from a district six marches to the east; one Mongolian caravan had lost forty horses.

While they were camped in a pleasant place in good pastures, an old Lama called and warned Brooke that if he proceeded two days further south he would be stopped at the monastery there, but that if he liked he could give him a guide who would take him to Gyantse by a road which led all the way through the country of the Tashi Lamas, who were friendly to the English. Brooke feared the old man was trying to deceive him, and insisted on going on to Nagchuka Comba.

They moved on next day and arrived at the borders of the territory directly governed from Lhasa, where they camped. In the evening a number of horsemen rode up with two well-dressed Tibetans in the party. They all dismounted close to his tent. Two Turkish rugs were spread on the ground for them to sit on. Brooke walked over to them but was not invited to join the party, so he invited them over to his tent. They refused his invitation but beckoned him to be seated, and he sat. They asked him where he was bound for, and after he told them he was bound for India he learned that the two guests referred to were representatives of the Lhasa Government; one was a Lama and the other a District Magistrate, both from the monastery at Nagchuka.

The Magistrate was a pleasant looking man, wearing a beautiful turquoise ear-ring set in gold; the ring was about four inches long. His hair was parted in the middle, and a neat plait bordered the hair on the forehead. His pigtail was neatly wound on the top of his head. He wore a Mandarin's fur cap, a blue silk hood and velvet boots, and generally his dress was very similar to that of a Chinese Mandarin.

The Lama who sat opposite was anything but pleasant; his little eyes showed a keen, cruel look, and his head was clean shaved. He wore a Lama's garb that was quite smart looking, and he was really of higher rank than the Magistrate.

A gigantic Tibetan stood beside them who wore a look as if he might be the chief executioner; he was dressed in a roomy blue cloak, bordered and lined with leopard skin.

The Magistrate and Lama stated that, as this road on which Brooke was travelling led to Lhasa, the party must proceed no further until they had received permission from the "Holy City."

On leaving they promised a definite direction next morning, which meant that they were going to discuss the matter in the monastery; and after a friendly farewell they left the camp.

CHAPTER IV.

How He was Turned Back.

After the formal fashion associated with the state visits of potentates on alien soil, Mr. Brooke that evening returned his visitors' call, taking each of them a present. One received a cheap watch and the other a Ningsha rug. The watch caused some jealousy, as they both wanted it.

At 10 o'clock next day no reply had come as to their decision, and the interpreter was sent up to the monastery to find out what had caused the delay. He returned without an answer, so the order was given to pack the camels. This was no sooner done than a party of Tibetans came along and unpacked them again. Mr. Brooke then went up to the monastery himself to find out why the Lama and the Magistrate had not sent word as promised. He was told that they were waiting for another Mongol Prince to come and deliberate with them. His hosts were quite civil and asked the foreign visitor to be seated. While they talked, a tall man with black whiskers, sharp eyes, and rather a hooked nose, came in. They all bowed low as he entered. His bearing and looks bore evidence that he was not only a man of authority, but also a man of firmness of character and quiet decision.

The conversation of the previous day was all repeated, and the answer again was "Wait a little," with which Brooke had to depart content. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Lama and Magistrate appeared at the tent, bringing presents consisting of butter, flour and rice. These Brooke refused to accept until he had got an answer, and was told that he

"must not go south to Lhasa but west and then to Gyantse." To this Brooke agreed, seeing that they were most emphatic on the point.

From this place the old guide from Naichi now went back, getting 65 taels and one camel as his wages. One of the boys went back with him, so that, of the original party, only the Shanghai boy, the cook from Sining, and Brooke himself were left.

They were just preparing to start when a caravan arrived from Sining, conveying two Chinese Mandarins to Lhasa. Their caravan consisted of 100 camels and 50 horsemen. They pitched their tent near by, so Brooke's party did not start that day, as the guide was afraid to join them until the Mandarins passed on.

The Chinese party cleared out the next morning, and Brooke struck camp a little later. The guide took them round by a very rough road on which they lost one camel, and now they entered a thickly populated district, where they were soon followed by small bodies of horsemen.

The country consisted of wide valleys, covered with good grass, on which large flocks of sheep and cattle were grazing. After travelling about 300 li (between forty and fifty miles), Brooke and his party found themselves surrounded by about 100 Tibetan horsemen, riding long-haired, tough little ponies. They pitched their tents all round Brooke's camp, but were quite civil.

Next morning, when Mr. Brooke began packing his camels, two of the Tibetans came forward and said they had been sent from Nagchuka Comba to stop them until they had heard from Lhasa. Brooke paid no attention to them and continued to pack, when some of the horsemen seized Senerh, the cook, by the arm, and so frightened him that he sat down and refused to help. Brooke judged it prudent to halt.

After waiting here for six days, when I suppose the gods must have sent the Tibetans a wireless message, Brooke was definitely informed that he must go back.

It seemed to be a deadlock. Mr. Brooke and his party were completely outnumbered and to resist would have been fatal; and now he wished that he had taken the old Lama's advice, or had got away before the Chinese caravan came along.

There was nothing else for it now but gracefully to give in and try in some other way to surmount the difficulty later; but the thought of having to traverse the barren track of country with thin and worn-out camels was not a very encouraging prospect, and the greatest disappointment of all was that the cherished hope of reaching the headwaters of the Brahmaputra seemed doomed, and that after overcoming so many obstacles. Brooke's one crumb of comfort was that his Tibetan guide from Nagchuka said that he would stick to him as he had received 25 taels in advance.

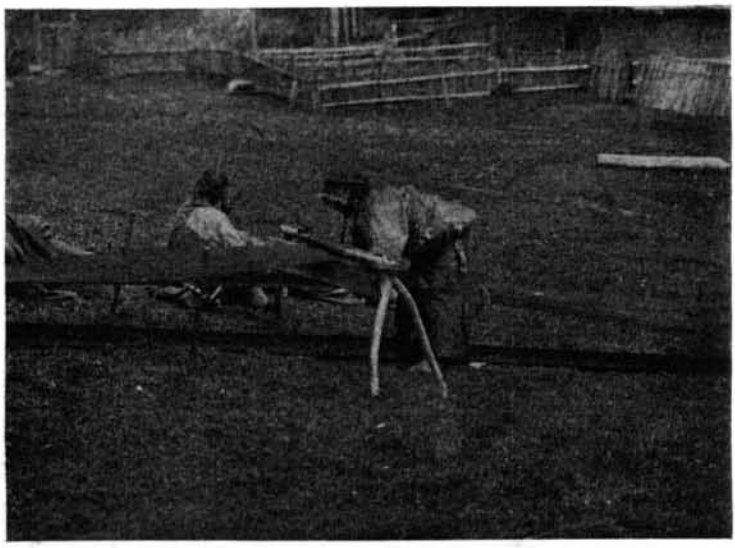
A body of sixteen horsemen escorted Mr. Brooke over the Tangla Pass, where they left him, and returned to Nagchuka. After continuing another day's journey north, he turned west, hoping to be able to evade the guarded district, and once more made his way south; but after travelling 200 li he was stopped again. He now went up the bank of the Dichu, and crossed the Dungbure range by a small road on the other side of the range; there was difficulty in finding the main road, but finally this was hit on. Overtaking a return caravan from Lhasa, he made friends with the Mongolians in charge, who agreed to carry part of his baggage, as his camels were almost worn out.

Brooke was able to shoot some game each day, quite sufficient, to their great delight, to keep his party in meat. He had many lonely tramps after bear, wild yak and other game that made its appearance along their line of march.

One by one his camels died off, for the long journey and

poor grazing, together with the intense cold on the passes, had made them very weak.

Mr. Brooke writes as follows about these losses :—" I have not said much about losing the animals, to me it is all too sad to think of again. I regret having lost even the rudest spitting camel, and it was a great grief to me to see the brave old beasts that had stuck to me, till so near the end of my journey, fall out of the ranks. Our three young camels are



WOMEN WEAVING TIBETAN CLOTH.

still strong, but only one of them is in really good condition ; he now has to carry a heavy load to help the others. We have still four of the original horses taken from Tankar, but I was always doubtful whether Senerh would ever get his back to China again. He had been ailing very much of late, but was a splendid dear little beast whose pluck might have saved him ; but five days before reaching the Mongol pasture lands he began to give in, and could scarcely keep up to the caravan.

At last he stopped, shut his eyes, his whole body began to quiver, and only with a great effort would he keep firm on his four wiry, weary little legs. Taking the saddle off and wrapping a rug around him, we got him a mile farther, where there was good grass. I kissed his soft little nose and there we left him. I hope he died not too cruelly. I had shot all the other animals before leaving them, but this one I thought might live. I feel as though I would rather have lost both my Chinamen, considering how inconsistent, unfeeling and cowardly they both were, compared with this fine little beast, which had carried a man for six months without either baulking, biting or kicking, his ears always talking and telling us how he hoped for grass and rest, a hope that only left him when his body refused to obey his brave little heart. My boy's black pony was another of the same stamp, but he, thank God, reached a nice camp, where a Mongolian agreed to look after him and bring him to Sining in the autumn."

One day they saw some antelope, and Brooke went after them, but the snow blindness from which he had been suffering since crossing the high passes still troubled him, and he did not succeed in getting any of them. He dropped out of the caravan to follow them up, leaving his boy to hold his horse. When he returned, they had both disappeared, and he walked 35 li and still could not find the camp. Finally he found an old Mongol, who took him on his camel to the place where the caravan had pitched for the night.

It was weary work tramping back over the same road by which they had travelled south so full of anticipation but two months before. On May 22nd, they found Li, who had been sent back sick, and also his companion. They had put up for two months in a little hut kept by an old Chinaman, who had a Mongolian wife. The coolie now joined the caravan. He would have left the old man without giving him anything for keeping him all this time, but Brooke, finding this

out, gave the host one of the camels which was badly in need of a rest and could not have gone much further, together with 10 taels of silver. After all, the boy said the old man had saved his life.

The caravan kept together as far as the Kokonor, where part of it went to Tankar. The other part went north, and Brooke continued with them through a salty desert, where the salt was in thick cakes on the ground. The path was marked by slabs of this salt which was raised on end. It is

MR. BROOKE WITH THE CHINESE CARAVAN.

from this locality that a great deal of the salt that supplies Kamsu is exported, being carried out by large caravans of yak and camels.

This salt plain was about twenty miles broad; of course, neither water nor grass was to be found on the march. Another forty miles north brought them to a large lake with thousands of geese and ducks floating about on it, and here they camped. The weather was quite warm now, and the lake would soon be swarming with young ducks and goslings and many other

kinds of water fowl. Mr. Brooke wanted to shoot some of them, but the old Mongolian said no; it was a pity to shoot them now, when they were nesting.

These Mongolians are a strange people; they are kind to animals, are rather averse to stealing, are extremely religious, believe it is wrong to tell a lie, and yet are always indulging in that habit.

After another four days' march the party reached the home of the old Mongolian with whom they had been travelling. His daughter was the first to meet him, and ran the last 100 yards, throwing her arms around his neck. The mother did not trouble to dismount from her camel to greet her step daughter. When they got to the tent the Mongol's old sister came out and kissed her brother's hand again and again while tears of joy rolled down her cheeks. "A funny custom to cry at meeting one's brother," grunted the Chinaman from Sining. The old woman had heard that her brother had been killed, and the joy at seeing him again brought the tears to her eyes.

On the hills and mountains in the neighbourhood was to be found plenty of *ovis ammum* and wild ponies. Mr. Brooke shot one very fine specimen. His eyes were still troubling him, or he might have bagged more.

After a great deal of discussion and bargaining with the people of the district, he secured four good horses in exchange for his few surviving and worn-out camels. The catching of the ponies was the occasion of much merriment. The people from the surrounding tents were all invited and men and women turned out. After the ceremony of tea-drinking was over, the herd was surrounded and driven up near the camp; then by means of a long rope which was encircled around the bunch, the ponies were crowded together and one by one caught and tethered to a line pegged out for the purpose.

They succeeded in catching all but one little red brute,

which Brooke had set his heart on, and which jumped the line and broke through the circle and got away. They kept the rest tied up, but this one galloped about until he got tired, then came in and stood with the others. Later they succeeded in getting the rope round him, and a clever little horseman threw a noose over his nose and got hold of him.

After patting and quieting him for an hour, they announced that he was ready to be ridden. He had never before had

THE NAICHI GUIDE WAITING FOR HIS KETTLE TO BOIL.

any one on his back and they would not put on a saddle, so Mr. Brooke mounted bare-backed. As soon as the pony felt the weight of his rider he shot into the air, his neck down and his back arched; at the third buck he succeeded in dislodging his rider. A bridle and saddle were now brought, and when all was ready Brooke again mounted, while an interested crowd looked on. The pony made six successive bucks, then galloped off. After about a three-mile gallop the pony was brought to a walk, and again tried to buck, bounding into the

air, then bucking to the ground, and this he repeated twelve times. At the twelfth plunge Brooke went off, but as the long tethering rope was dragged rapidly through his hand he gripped it tight at the knot, and brought the animal down.

Remounting immediately, he put off at another gallop, and this time brought the pony home quite tame.

Finally they got all the ponies fitted out with bridles and pack saddles and made a start, but the ponies, used to freedom and new to the business of carrying a load, were, to say the least, frisky.

The boy Senerh was to ride one animal and lead the pack animals, which were all attached by a leading rope. He tied his little bundle, which a Chinaman always carries when on the road, to the back of the saddle, and mounted, but when the pony felt this bundle dangling at his side he began to kick and buck, and sent the boy sprawling on the ground; the animals all stampeded, and the baggage was scattered all over the plain.

They succeeded in surrounding the ponies again, and with much difficulty got reloaded and made a fresh start, taking this time a Mongolian guide and horseman. After two days' march over the mountain range they arrived at Uchumi, a broad valley where Mongol flocks were grazing on the plains. Large packs of wolves were prowling about and the natives kept ferocious dogs to guard the flocks. Wild camels were seen, but they could only be distinguished by being longer in the legs and slimmer in the body than the tame ones.

The first town they reached was Chichen, 130 li north-east by east from Tamar; here they found trees, plenty of grass and fresh vegetables. The latter were most welcome to men who for several months had been compelled to abstain from a vegetable diet.

They passed on to Suchow, which is a well-sized walled city, noted for its giant donkeys and mules; some of the donkeys

reach twelve hands and the mules fifteen hands high. Mr. Brooke took his two Chinese servants with him to a restaurant, and they all enjoyed a good Chinese meal—meat, fish, buttered eggs, chicken with plenty of good rice, all cooked in Chinese fashion. A red wine made from dates served to wash them down, and the two servants, at least, considered that they had reached civilisation at last, although this is one of the places to which criminals are banished, and it is looked upon by the inhabitants of most of the other provinces as being the end of the earth. Kouwai, that is, "outside of the mouth of China," they call it.

The restaurant was the smartest one in Suchow, and the road to it led down a little filthy narrow street. The entrance led through the kitchen, where two cooks were busily at work over four hot charcoal fires, which burnt in a large mud range built in a semi-circle and all in one piece.

A little farther on they passed through a courtyard, filled with ducks and chickens, which wandered about amidst heaps of carrots and cabbages, all awaiting their turn to be prepared for the pot. After treading their way across this dirty courtyard, with some care, lest they should step on a cabbage leaf and find themselves sitting on the dirty cobble stones, they entered a large room, at the farther end of which they found a party of well-dressed Chinese. Some sat around a table drinking wine, while others reclined on benches sucking their opium pipes, all awaiting their dinner which was being prepared in the kitchen at the entrance of the inn.

This is the Ritz or Carlton of Suchow, and the best Chinese dinner put up in the place would consist of eight or ten courses, and for a table of eight persons, wine included, would cost about ten shillings for the whole party.

On returning to his inn Brooke found that Father Assance had just called, so he went over and spent a very pleasant

evening with this priest, who was the only foreigner in the place, his sole companion a Chinese priest; yet priests like Father Assance are so wrapped up in their work that they never feel lonely and never look forward to seeing the land of their birth again, but live and die with their converts.

Brooke engaged carts to carry the baggage to Lanchow, twenty-one stages to the south-east. He travelled with them as far as Kanchow, seven stages, then went south, across grass country, where he found large herds of cattle grazing, but the people were not friendly. Gold was being washed in the river beds by Mohammedans. On the passes and slopes he found plenty of wild flowers, and finally reached Sining on July 1st, where he found Mr. and Mrs. Ridley, who again gave him a hearty welcome to their home. After a week's rest he continued his journey to Lanchow, where he found his carts and baggage waiting for him. He spent a few days at the China Inland Mission with Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, whom he found exceedingly kind and hospitable, even though he could not see eye to eye with them on religious subjects.

Mr. Brooke's impression of missions was that both the Protestants and Roman Catholics were doing good work in China, and he wrote :—

"To criticise the missionary work in China as a whole would be unfair and ungrateful of any traveller, for he receives endless help everywhere from these good people. The traveller from his short stay in the country may be unable always to see eye to eye with them, but what they do they believe to be for the best interests of the cause they represent.

"More organisation would appear to be needed in some directions. What great things might be accomplished if England would carry on mission work with as much enthusiasm as she carries on a war or builds battleships."

From Lanchow he took mules viâ Tsinchow, and passing

through a rough rocky country joined the Kialing River at Peishuikiang, the most northerly point to which boats come, which is 250 miles north of Chungking. The upper reaches of this river are only navigable in the flood season, and to Peishui boats come for wool, hides and herbs, which are brought from Kansu by mule. After the long journey on foot and horseback, Brooke found it very pleasant to be once more in a Chinese junk, and to be hurled over the rapids and through great gorges where the river had cut its bed in the limestone rocks, and rank foliage overhung the banks.

KANSU GIRLS NEAR SINING.

He was rapidly carried on down through the cultivated lands of Sechuan, where everything was teeming with life and excitement. When passing through Kwangyuen he called at the Mission Station and found two English lady missionaries at work, attending to a crowd of patients who had gathered to be treated for various ailments so common to the Chinese, and was greatly interested with the work being carried on by these women in their lonely station.

He next reached Paoning, where he called on Bishop Cassels and spent some pleasant hours with the Bishop, of whose work

he speaks in the highest terms, as he does also of the medical work which is carried on at Paoning by Dr. Elliott.

Passing rapidly down the river, for it was in high flood, in six days he reached Chungking, which he describes as a dirty city, into which he had to climb up a long stone staircase by the river side before entering the gates. The roads are cut out of the solid rock and the city is perched on the side of the same.

At Chungking Dr. Wolfendale, of the London Mission, kindly entertained Brooke, who found him and his colleagues most pleasant people. While in Chungking he met most of the missionaries stationed there, and gave a lecture on his experiences in Tibet.

From here he hired another boat to Ichang. I met him first at Wanhsien on his way down and again at Ichang a little later.

He was then on his way to Japan and Corea as set forth in the introductory chapter. With that journey we are not concerned, and we will continue our story from Hankow, where he and Mr. Meares started together on that long, last journey which cost him his life.

I have written this outline of Mr. Brooke's Tibetan journey from a report he sent home, and hope that these notes will at least show the bravery, determination and character of the man, who, for the sake of science, left home and comforts, and endured hardship and danger without a murmur or complaint.

How much more should we, who believing that God has called us to go to the uttermost parts of the world, carrying with us the everlasting Gospel of Peace on earth and Goodwill toward men, be ready to suffer all things for His Name's sake.

CHAPTER V.

HANKOW TO CHENTU.

IT was from Hankow that Brooke and Meares actually started on their journey. After spending some days collecting a few remaining necessaries and securing another servant, the latter started off at daybreak, January 1, 1908, by one of the little river steamers that runs up to Ichang, in order to hire a house-boat to take them up the river as far as Chungching. Brooke stayed behind at Hankow to draw some money from the bank, and also to purchase a few more things when the shops opened after the New Year holiday.

On arriving at Ichang, Meares soon secured a comfortable little house-boat, the captain of which agreed to take them to Chungching in twenty-one days for 100 taels, or about £15. It was a more difficult matter to satisfy the Englishmen in charge of the customs. At first the officials insisted upon their producing receipted bills for all their instruments, cameras, etc.; but, as our travellers had not these bills with them, it was finally agreed to accept their statement that they had purchased them in Shanghai for their own use. The officials insisted, however, on their having a permit, for their arms and ammunition, from the Viceroy of the Province. They went round to see if the British Consul could help them in obtaining this, but he had gone off on a shooting trip and had left no one to act in his absence. This left them in rather a hole; but, on their calling on the officer in command of the gunboat, he kindly telegraphed to the Viceroy, and after some days' delay they finally got started.

Having a small boat they only had a crew of twenty men; some of the larger junks have crews of over 100 men. The junks are propelled, when crossing the river, by oars and sweeps, and if the wind is favourable they spread large sails

C. H. MEARES AS HE LEFT HANKOW, JAN. 1, 1908.

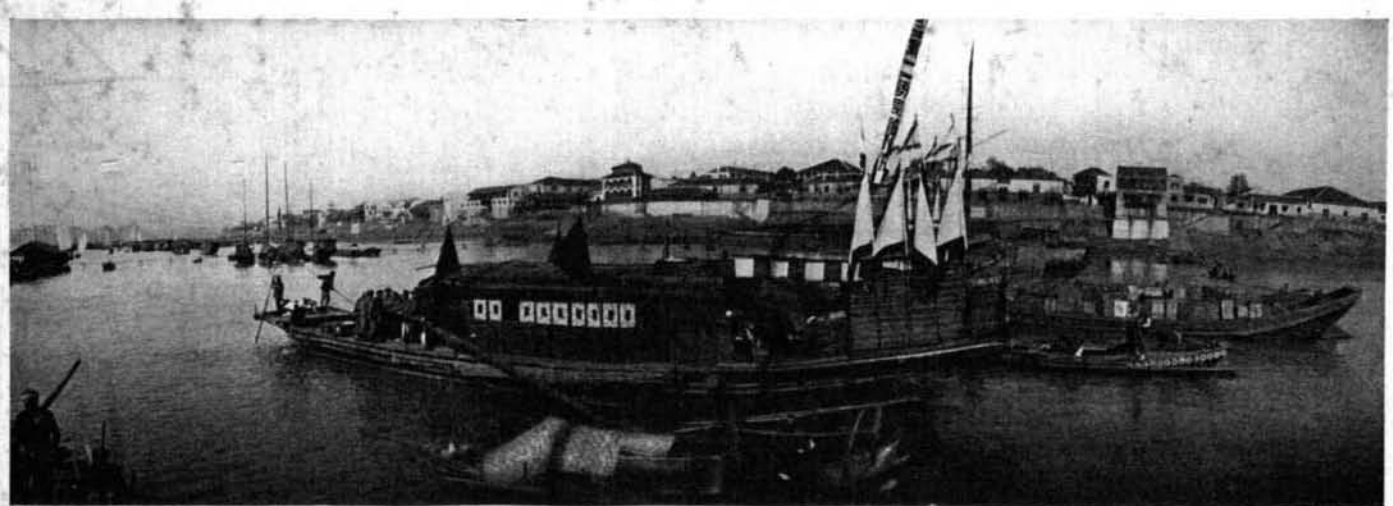
which carry them along at a rapid rate. Wherever the banks allow, they are towed up by gangs of trackers, harnessed to the end of a long rope made of plaited strips of bamboo. These ropes are wonderfully strong, and they need to be, for the weight of a heavily-laden junk at the end of a rope half a

mile long in a rushing current is tremendous, and often one may see a large gang of trackers on all fours, hanging on with their hands as well as their feet, just holding their own or advancing an inch at a time.

After leaving Ichang the river in many places is hemmed in by huge cliffs more than 2,000 feet high on both sides, and high up on the face of these cliffs a tiny path has been cut out, along which the trackers crawl. This is very dangerous work, for, if the junks swerve off into the current, the men are jerked from their precarious foothold into the river, hundreds of feet below. There are several bad rapids where the river comes down in a swirling flood full of whirlpools. In these places there are hundreds of extra trackers, who make a bargain to haul the junks through. If the ropes do not break all is well, but if there is a flaw in the rope, and it breaks at a critical moment, the junk is swept away and dashed to pieces on the sharp rocks. Our travellers were unusually fortunate, and came through all the rapids without losing a rope, and tied up at Wanhsien to give the trackers a holiday for the Chinese New Year.

Wanhsien is a busy town. A British cruiser was stationed there. Not far from the city there are some interesting deposits of the bones of antidiluvian animals. These were being dug up by the Chinese and sold for medicine on the streets of Wanhsien.

On his way down Brooke spent two days trying to get some of these bones as specimens, but could not succeed in getting any complete parts, such as a leg or a skull or a large section of the vertebrae. The teeth, parts of the jaw and sections of the legs which he saw went to prove that the animal must have been very large, but he could not make out what it could have been. The Chinese were digging all about the place, and had already carried away most of the



ICHANG, WHERE MR. MEARES HIRED THE BOAT FOR THE RIVER JOURNEY.

section to various parts of China, for these mysterious bones commanded a high price as medicine.

Such things as bears' feet and heads for rheumatism and stiff joints, deers' horns and sinews for the weakness in men, are among the chief remedies of the Chinese quack, and you will hear him crying out on the streets, as he offers these medicines for sale, that there is nothing like them for a weak or sore back, and all the other ailments that the Chinese so frequently suffer from.

Chungking is situated at the junction of two rivers—the Kialing, which flows from the north, and here joins its water with that of the Yangtze, that great river which finds its source on the roof of the world, nearly 2,000 miles north-west of here.

This city, therefore, is wedge-shaped, and built on the side of a hill which at its highest point is quite 500 feet; and the widest part between the two rivers is not more than two miles, so that the houses are built on stone abutments, one above the other, like great steps in a staircase. There is no difficulty about the foundation, as that is of solid red sand-stone. The streets are narrow, and are really one continuous staircase. They are kept in a continual condition of slush by the water carriers, for all the water consumed by half a million people has to be carried from the riverside in buckets suspended from a carrying pole. As the carriers wend their way up the long line of stone steps there is naturally a constant splash from the buckets. To make it worse, Chungking is like London, nearly always enveloped in fog, so that there is little chance of the streets ever getting dried up!

Although Brooke describes it as the most dismal city he has ever seen, yet it is a very important commercial centre. It is the most westerly open port in China and has a foreign community of several hundred people, including the Maritime Customs and Post Office staff, the Bluejackets and the

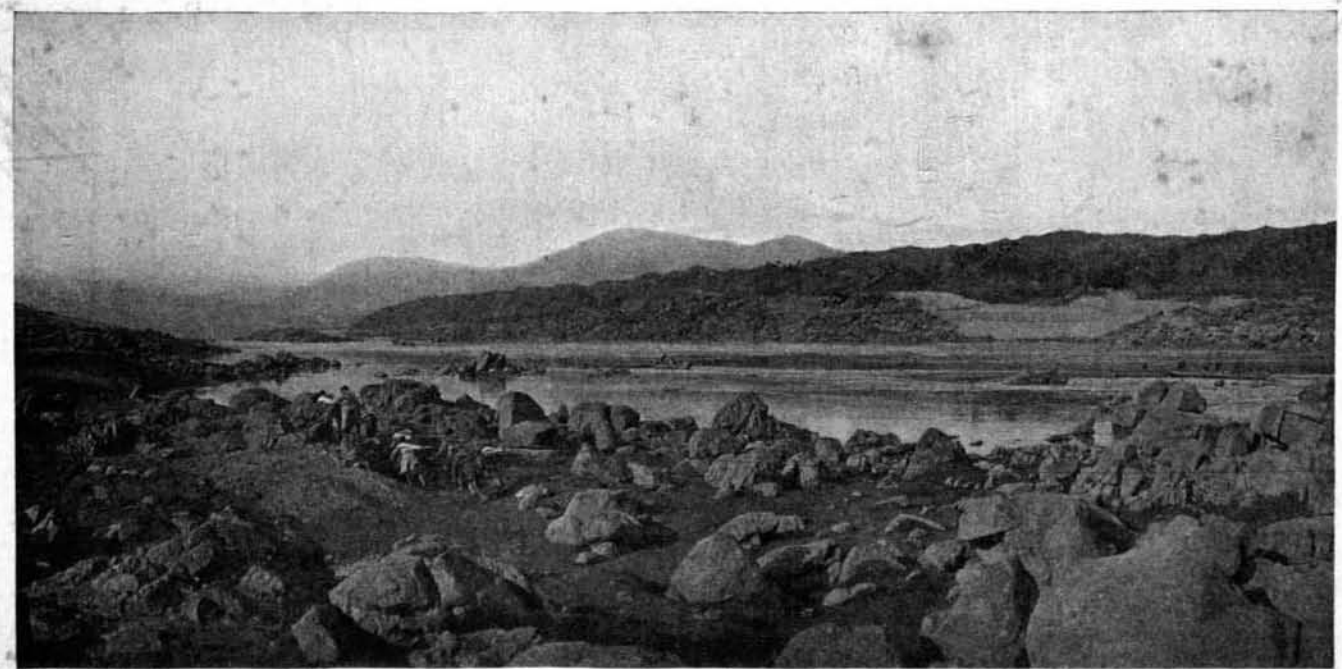
Missionaries. The British have three gunboats, the French two, and the Germans have one, and are expecting another soon; while the Japanese are to send up two. Chungking has many waterways as well as overland routes, by which the various imports and exports are conveyed to and fro.

Our travellers spent two days making preparations for their 256-mile march to Chentu, and all their things had to be repacked into packets of 50 lbs. each, two bundles of which were carried by a coolie, one on each end of the springing pole which the Chinese use for the purpose.

It was a bright, crisp, sunny February morning when the caravan wound round out of the north gate of Chungking. The narrow stone-paved road wound among fields of brilliant golden mustard and grey-green beans in flower; their scent was indescribable.

It was one of the mornings on which a man feels it is good to be alive, and both Brooke and Meares scorned their sedan chairs and delighted their coolies, who were glad to see them walk mile after mile, day after day, while they had only to carry the empty chairs. Yet the masters felt that they had the best of the bargain. The joy of the start at daybreak and the long march through these scenes and scents more than repaid the energy expended.

The oranges and orange-groves! Every half-mile along the road they passed a heap of the lovely golden balls, still dewy from the trees. Large, luscious, loose-skinned mandarin oranges—twelve a penny or sixteen a penny if you give the skins back—and other delicacies, huge stalks of juicy purple sugar cane, dripping with sweetness and only costing the fraction of a penny for a stick four feet long. In the cold mornings, when we started off from the inns, there was always one man waiting outside the door with hot sweet wine and an egg beaten up in it, and another with hot scones, light as snow, and with a lump of raw sugar in the middle. These refresh-



HAULING THE BOAT OVER A ROCKY REACH.

ments may not sound very tempting, but taste them after a good walk among the fields on a frosty morning, and you will think you have never eaten anything so good.

The towns of this district are all famed for their crystallized fruits, such as whole oranges, ginger, Buddha fingers, apples, plums, dates, cherries and many other varieties. If the traveller is not above eating the food of the country he can live well and cheaply here. And so Brooke and Meares marched along day after day, enjoying every hour, and rather proud of themselves when they swung into an inn fresh and hungry, after a tramp of twenty-five to thirty miles. Yet they owned that it rather took away their conceit when their miserable coolies, carrying over 100 lbs. on their shoulders, swung in behind them, also smiling and hungry.

They passed on through lovely fertile valleys, then up over rolling hills covered with fir trees and bamboo grooves. All along the road they met numbers of coolies carrying baskets of coal. Brooke, dropping behind, thought he would like to find out where these men came from, and followed up one of the coolies who was returning empty-handed. After going about a mile from the road he came to a shaft sunk in the ground where a Chinaman was turning a ventilating fan. A ladder descended into the bowels of the earth, by which he reached the main shaft, where miners were dragging little sledges full of coal along a gallery five feet broad by three feet high. One of the sledgemen was induced, for a small tip, to pull Brooke along the gallery on his sledge, and did so for some distance, till the seam suddenly dipped down into the earth. Here he bolted, leaving Brooke in the dark on the edge of an incline, until another miner, with a lamp in his hat came along, and, "tipped" in his turn, allowed Mr. Brooke to hold on to the back of the full sledge which he was dragging out, and so brought him safely from the shaft, where Brooke was greeted by a friendly crowd,

who brought him hot water to wash his hands. The coal was of a splendid quality, the mine was neat and clean with timbered and whitewashed walls, and the Chinese miners were well-dressed and healthy-looking.

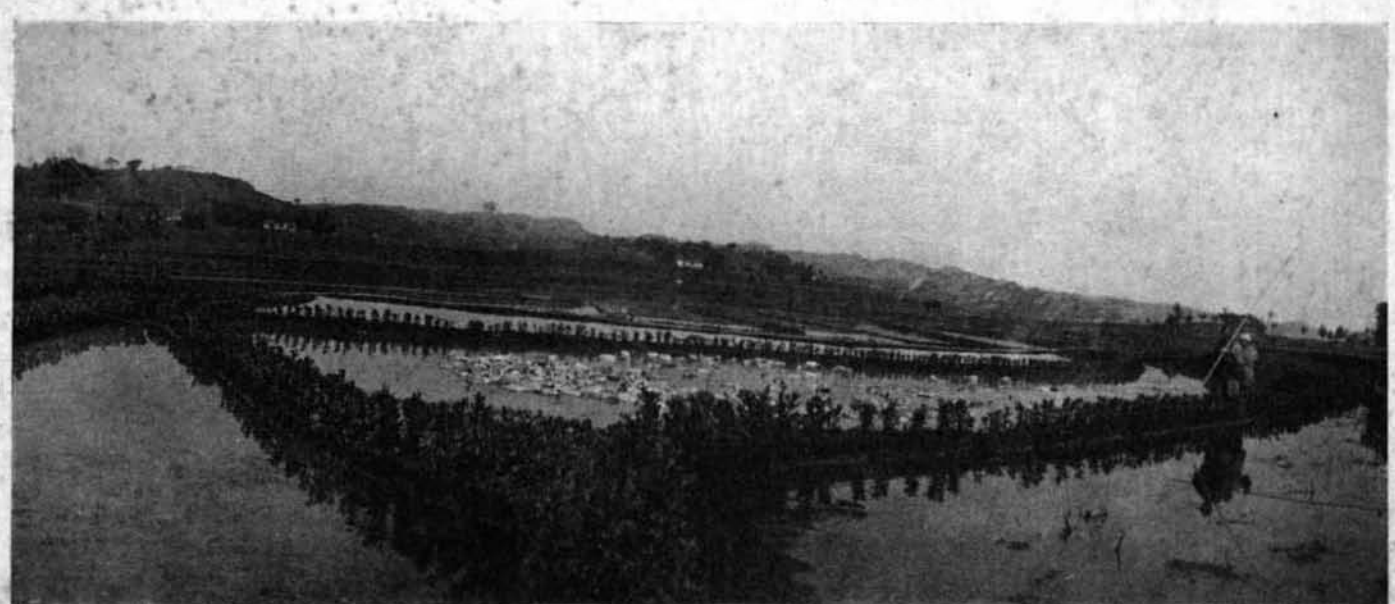
Brooke caught up with Meares and they had breakfast. In the afternoon it began to rain and the stone road which had been in such good condition for walking in the dry weather became like a sheet of ice.

They passed several duck farms on the road, and a wonderful sight they were. The duck farmer, by some means, gets thousands of ducks' eggs and hatches them by artificial heat. As soon as the ducklings are a few days old he drives them out in the fields to forage, and it is most interesting to watch him shepherding a flock of several thousand little ducks with the help of a long bamboo rod.

Some of the farmers were beginning to prepare the fields for planting rice, and the fields which a few days ago were covered with sun-burnt bricks, had now been changed into muddy sloughs. Scarcely has the water been turned on the fields than the fisherman is at work, wading about in mud up to his knees and with very little on but his hat. He carries in his hand a large round bamboo basket without a bottom. This basket he suddenly plunges into the mud, and then feeling round inside with his hand he draws out a little fish three or four inches long.

Next day was wet. They passed a string of coolies carrying the mails from Chentu to Chungking. These men make wonderful time, averaging sixty to eighty miles a day, while they carry bags of mail averaging from 50 to 60 lbs. in weight.

Some of the towns they passed through were very picturesque, and were all decorated for the Chinese New Year. One in particular impressed Brooke. The scheme for the decoration of the whole town was dark red, the streets were roofed in with the same colour and were lined with rows of



DUCK FARMER HERDING HIS DUCKLINGS.

red silk lanterns. The inns, too, were above the average, that is to say, they were as good as a poor European stable, instead of being worse than a bad pigsty, as usually they are.

Near here they met strings of coolies carrying what they thought to be very dirty sandstone. On asking them where they were taking the stones they replied "that it was salt, and that the blacker it was the better." This salt is obtained from the brine wells in this district, and these wells Brooke thought were one of the most wonderful things in China. The wells are about six inches in diameter, and some of them are 3,000 feet deep. They are drilled out by a steel bar slung on the end of a long bamboo rope, and jerked up and down by a cow, and you may imagine they take many years to sink. The brine is drawn out of these wells in a large bamboo tube with a valve in the bottom; this is lowered into the bottom of the well, and when full is raised by being wound round and round a horizontal drum turned by water buffaloes.

Some of these wells give off natural gas, which is used for illumination and for evaporating the brine into salt. A sight of these wells arouses admiration for the first man who sunk one of them. How did he know that the brine was there? Even if he was so far certain, he must have known that it would not be reached during his own lifetime, nor perhaps, in that of his son. Yet there the wells are, for all to see, and the blacker and dirtier the brine the more valuable the well, for the Chinaman thinks that white salt is unhealthy, and that the dark colour has superior medicinal qualities.

And so they passed along through the fruit district, the sugar-cane district, over mountain passes and beautiful plains, sometimes following the river-bed, sometimes climbing hillsides, and over stone steps cut out of the solid rock. Everywhere the busy farmer was to be seen working on his farm from before sunrise till dark, with a short interval to

eat his boiled rice and pickled turnip, and drink a cup of tea. Not only are the fields in the valley irrigated, but even the hillsides are terraced in many places and cisterns are made on the tops of the hills, which are filled with water during the rainy season, and hold it most of the year. From these cisterns water is let down into the terraced fields on the hillsides, and it is wonderful how they keep many of these small fields submerged for the greater part of the year. At last they ascended a mountain about 2,000 feet high from its base, and quite 5,000 feet above the sea. From the top of the pass they got a grand view of the Chentu plain. It looked like an immense forest, for the whole plain was covered with trees, and large feathery bamboo groves enclosed most of the farmhouses. When they reached the plain they found that it was simply a Garden of Eden. Every farmer took as much pains, in working up and fertilising his wheat field, as most of our gardeners in Europe or America do their vegetable plots, when catering for some large city trade.

The Chinese system of fertilising may not be a very pleasant one, but there is no doubt that the secret of their success as cultivators of the soil is the fact that they let no particle of fertiliser go to waste, and use it in a liquid condition. Our farmers in England have here a great deal to learn from the Chinese. We prefer to send millions of dollars worth of the richest fertiliser through our sewers into the ocean every year, and to buy our wheat from abroad, rather than find a plan of utilising it on the land from which it originally came.

Brooke and his party finally reached Chentu, after passing through about ten miles of beautiful flat farming country, which looked like a forest from the pass above the mountain.

Along this road are several very busy market towns, but the road itself showed by far the worst condition of any part

THE OLD FORT FOUR MILES WEST OF CHUNGKING.

of the 256 miles they had tramped from Chungking, a condition due to the large quantity of stone brought in on wheelbarrows from the quarries at Lungcheni at the foot of the pass.

Chentu is a very large city, and they walked for miles looking for a decent inn. So many officials come to this city that all the best inns are kept occupied, though even the best are nothing to boast of, for a large city like this. Finally they found a half-respectable one, and there, though the rooms were small and dirty, they decided to remain for a few days while they completed their plans.

CHAPTER VI.

CHENTU TO WENCHUAN.

ON the following day they called on Mr. Fox, His Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul-General, and had a talk with him about the country they hoped to travel in. He did not give them much information.

In the afternoon they called on the writer and we talked Mantze Land over a cup of tea, which our two visitors seemed to appreciate very much after their long journey across China, where they had not the latest convenience for making cake, and had very few opportunities of enjoying home-made bread and butter. They seemed to have enjoyed the Chinese food by the way, but it had by no means destroyed their appreciation of 5 o'clock tea, even when served in the humble cottage of a missionary nearly 2,000 miles west of Shanghai.

We talked about the people and the country, and as they seemed anxious to do some big game hunting I promised to introduce them to So Tussu, the Prince of the State of Wassu, where large game is to be found. These tribesmen are great hunters and spend most of the year in the chase; except for a month at seed time and another when the grain is being harvested, which is their close season. At that time the Prince issues a proclamation that every one must be in the fields.

As I had never taken a day off to enjoy a hunt since coming to China, I arranged to join the party for two weeks in the Wassu Forest.

They spent several days in Chentu, making the necessary

preparation for the hunting tour. Coolies had to be engaged, the loads repacked and made lighter; for the mountainous country into which they were now about to enter was much more difficult for the porter, and they were anxious to have no complaints after they started on their journey. I gave them all the help I could, securing for them a good head

A CHINESE PEASANT GIRL LEADING A BUFFALO TO GRAZE.

coolie, which is a most important item in starting on an expedition of this kind.

The head coolie is responsible for the conduct of all the porters; he keeps their time sheets, pays them their wages, engages new men by the way, should one by any chance fall out of the ranks or get "baulky" and refuse to do his work, as they often do. Much of the success or failure of

every expedition depends on the conduct of the porters, for if they are obstinate they not only hinder the progress of the expedition, but often make it very unpleasant and even dangerous for the whole party.

It is advisable when one is starting on a long journey in a rough or mountainous country to have the loads comparatively light, *i.e.*, 10 to 20 lbs. below the standard weight carried by coolies on the main roads. The coolies will then travel up to thirty miles a day if necessary and always be cheerful. Long stages are very seldom called for in the Tribes country, for much of the transport is achieved by "peitze," *i.e.*, a load carried on a man's back. The men's loads are made fast to a frame or human pack-saddle and fit down the back, and have straps coming over the shoulders; in this way they carry 250 to 500 lbs. per man, and travel about forty li (ten miles) per day. Usually every three miles, at most, along the routes there is an inn, or a stopping place called an inn, where passengers can put up. When the traveller gets off these main roads into the small paths that lead through the country, there are no inns; one has to make other arrangements, and get into a private house if possible.

It is a great relief to the traveller to know that his men are not too heavily laden and that he may have no fear of delay on their account. The average load for a coolie who has to pass over high altitudes should not exceed 60 to 80 lbs. per man; if this rule is adhered to, there will seldom be any grumbling or disputing in the ranks.

On February 27th Meares started off to Kwanhsien with the coolies and servants, while Brooke remained behind to secure an interpreter. Unfortunately the man he brought as interpreter from Shanghai developed heart disease, and on arriving at Chentu was in a very bad condition indeed, his legs and body being much swollen. The doctor strongly recommended that he should be sent back, saying that he

A MANTZE CASTLE AND TOWER; KIAKOS (ON RIGHT) FOR DRYING CORN.

would be certain to die were he taken to higher altitudes. They decided the best thing they could do was to send him home and run the risk of getting a local man at Chentu. Here, again, I was able to come to their aid, and, knowing a number of students who spoke English, helped them to secure the services of a very respectable man. Unfortunately he did not prove to be quite what was wanted, but rather elegant; and affected long finger-nails, beautiful silk gowns, and rode in a sedan chair wherever he went. He was useful, however, in translation work, and the travellers kept him for about a month in their employ.

Meares reached Kwanhsien in two marches, a distance of thirty-four miles, while Brooke, starting the next day at 12 o'clock, did it in nine hours; feeling his way for the last five miles; for it was pitch dark and he had no lantern, and did not know the road, which winds its way between swift-running streams for a great part of the distance. He finally reached the city at 9 a.m. and called at the Mission Station, which is just outside the city, in a nice little semi-native house on the banks of one of the irrigation streams. They directed him to the inn where Meares had put up and found the place not very large or clean. The inns in this city are for the most part occupied by merchants, who come here to buy up furs, hides, wool and herbs, which are brought from Songpan, Tsakulao, Mongum and other centres of trade on the Tibetan frontier.

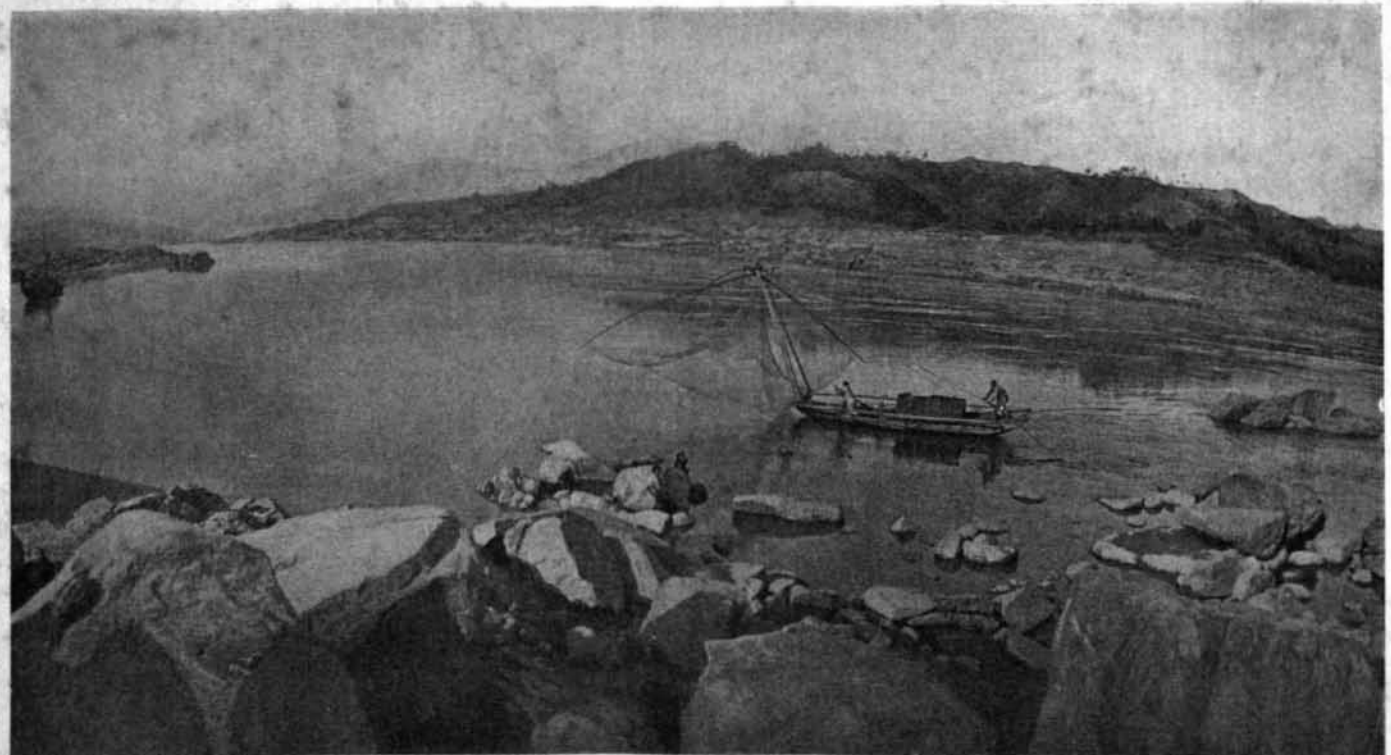
Kwanhsien is a busy little place on the Min River and is the frontier town between China and the Tribes country. It is the point at which most of the big Chinese firms trading with the Tibetan and border tribes have their head depôts, which are most interesting places, almost like museums; one finds all kinds of strange medicines, horns, birds, skins, furs, etc. Some of the skins are of animals almost unheard of in England.

They were very much struck, on the road from Chentu, by the constant stream of wheel-barrows conveying produce to the capital, grain of all kinds, huge bales of tobacco, black pigs which are trussed like helpless bundles, and packed on each side of the barrow; besides many other commodities. There are also passenger barrows which carry one along very

CONVEYING PIGS TO THE CAPITAL.

comfortably at five miles an hour, at a charge of about a penny for five miles.

They spent the next day exploring the town and examining the irrigation works. They naturally wondered where all this water comes from; along the road various dams and sluices are run, by means of which the water is turned into the various



ON THE YANGTZE ABOVE THE ICHANG GORGE.

courses, yet not until they reached Kwanhsien did they discern the wonderful piece of engineering work, which has been stated on good authority to be equal to anything accomplished by our modern engineers. A great volume of water comes rolling down from the snow-capped mountains of Tibet. Just as the river leaps from the slopes and gorges through which it has come, and is about to enter the plain, it is caught and parcelled into seven artificial beds, any of which would make a good-sized river. These divisions, again, are subdivided into thousands of small streams, so arranged that the water in them flows as high as ten feet above the surrounding fields.

Sluices are so arranged that, at will, the entire plain, consisting of over 100,000 acres, may be irrigated or left dry, as the owners choose. A large part of the water thus diverted from its original course is carried northward, and along the foot of the mountains, and through a cut in another range nearly 1,000 feet high; and so flows on for nearly 300 miles and joins the Yangtze at Lucheo, instead of returning to the Min River from which it was diverted.

To accomplish this feat the water of the Min is not only diverted from its natural course, but is brought over two water-sheds and joined to the Hanchow River, which finds its course on the opposite side of the mountain range. Thus the water taken northward from Kwanhsien, by being kept near to the foot of the range, is brought across the water-shed which separates the Kwanhsien and Hanchow waters, and is conveyed into the bed of the latter.

The plan for performing this piece of work was conceived by a Chinese Mandarin named Lee Ping, in 300 B.C., and the whole plan was put into operation by him.

For this famous piece of work Lee Ping was deified, and his memory is still kept fresh by a fine temple erected to him at Kwanhsien, where the officers and people worship him every year. A great fair is held annually in this temple to

which the people gather from far and near. Lee Ping left to be observed throughout future generations this motto: "Keep the banks low and the beds deep." The motto is still to be seen engraved on a stone in the temple at Kwanhsien, and, if it had not been scrupulously obeyed, the country would have been deluged long ago. About 60,000 taels (about £8,000) are expended annually in cleaning out the beds and repairing the dams; and the people willingly pay this tax, which is assessed on all the lands benefited by the irrigation system.

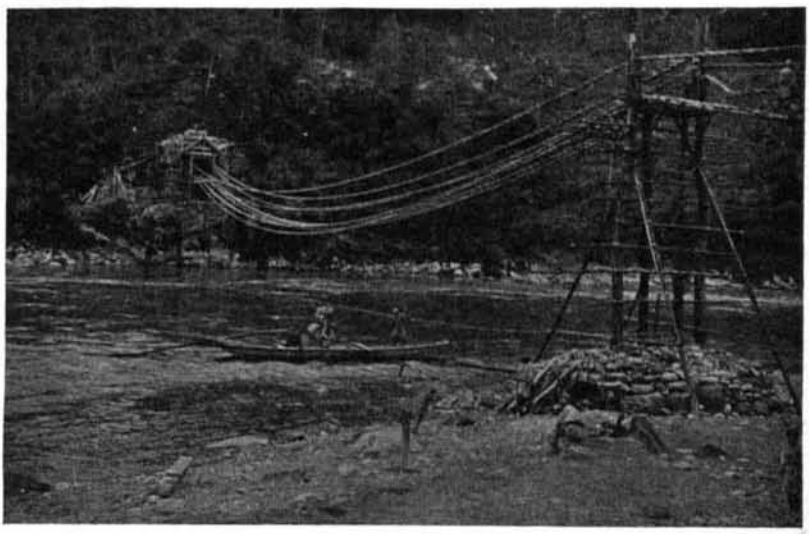
It would take too long adequately to explain the plan by which the immense volume of water is successfully carried out of its bed, and sent glistening and dancing over the large and fertile plains: watering thousands of acres so that they are entirely independent of rain, and enabling this track of country to bring forth sufficient food to support many millions of people annually.

The next morning they started early, and about a mile north of Kwanhsien, came to the temple dedicated to Lee Ping. This is one of the most beautifully situated temples in China, and is kept in better repair than any other temple in the country. All the gilding and lacquer work looks as fresh as if it had only been put on yesterday, and the whole place is kept in beautiful order—very unlike most of the temples in China.

At the entrance of the temple, carved in stone and gilded, is Lee Ping's motto for the keeping in repair of the irrigation works, and the Chinese show that they have not forgotten his instructions. Every winter they employ a huge army of tribesmen to divert the river from the irrigation canal and dig out the sand and stones, brought down by the summer floods, until two huge iron bars are exposed. These were first deposited by Lee Ping to show the proper depth of the channel.

Almost opposite the temple is an immense suspension

bridge, over which much of the traffic between Chentu and the Western Tribes passes. It is about one-third of a mile long, and is made of huge hawsers of plaited strips of bamboo, which stretch from bank to bank and are pulled tight on big wooden windlasses. Loose planks are laid on these hawsers, and it is ticklish work leading a horse across the gaps, especially when the whole bridge is swinging and oscillating in the strong winds which blow every afternoon in this part of the world.



REPAIRING THE WENCHUAN SUSPENSION BRIDGE.

The march was continued up the Min for some hours, past many coal mines and coke works, until a small stream was reached flowing from the east, which at this point ran through a narrow gorge, with huge cliffs on either sides ; after following this stream for some distance the road again turned northward and led over a pass at a height from its base of about 3,000 feet, or 5,000 feet above sea-level.

The view from the top of the pass is superb, but this was

not the time of year to loiter and admire. It was bitterly cold; every hair on every leaf of the bamboo and cryptomerias was encrusted with masses of crystal ice, and the whole place looked like fairy land. Swinging down the long sloping road, and returning to the Min at Yinhsiuwan, the party found a comfortable little inn perched amid the most beautiful scenery, and almost overhanging the river on a balcony of tree trunks.

Yinhsiuwan is a small town of about 100 families, and boasts several inns, but only two of them are really fit for habitation; the others are patronised by the tea and medicine coolies who tramp this road. The place itself is specially noted for its timber market, most of the square timbers and coffin boards, cut farther up the river in the Wassu country, are carried on men's shoulders to Yinhsiuwan, thence they are sent on rafts in the summer months to Kwanhsien, Chentu and other large centres.

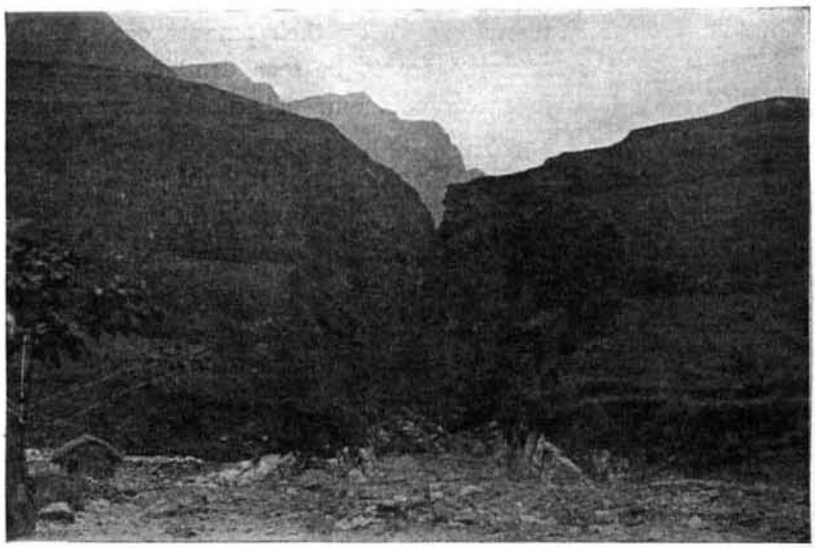
Yinhsiuwan is also a tea station, and much of the tea that goes to Songpan and Matang for trade with the Tibetans and Tribes passes up this way. It is the first stage; the coolies have to carry the tea to this place before they get any pay for their work; thence it is carried from stage to stage by different coolies.

At this point the party had now really entered the mountains, the scenery of which surpasses description, peak after peak towering to a height of 6,000 to 8,000 feet; there was evidence of profuse vegetation, though just then everything was in its winter coat.

The route lay along the banks of the Min, which was now a rushing, roaring torrent, and the road was rough and stony and walking was most difficult. On both sides the precipitous snow-covered mountains rose sheer from the river, and only a narrow strip of blue sky was visible overhead; yet even these steep mountains are cultivated, and one wonders how

the farmer can ever get the scanty soil to stay where it is wanted, and not be carried down into the river with the first shower of rain.

After travelling for two days in this most picturesque valley a new kind of dwelling, not of Chinese origin, came into view—great three-storied buildings, solidly built of stone and mud for mortar; and great water towers like factory chimneys rose in all directions. On inquiry it was found



CHENTU TO WENCHUAN—WHERE WE LEFT THE MIN AND ENTERED THE GORGE.

that the people living on the east bank of the river are called Chang Ming, and are supposed to be the remnant of the aborigines of the country; while the people on the west bank are the Wassu, descendants of the tribesmen brought by the Chinese from South-Western Tibet more than 800 years ago to help conquer the Chang Ming.

The whole stretch of the country is interesting, and it is well wooded for the most part, though every available spot

is cultivated. Along the road came thousands of coolies laden with furs, wool, medicines, deer sinews, brought from the Tibetan border towns, where these commodities had been taken in exchange for salt, sugar, wine, rice or bamboo and hemp sandles. The road runs parallel to the river all the way, and every two miles are found rest houses, very poor looking homes, in some cases covered only with split clap boards or undressed shingles; the frame structure, often as not, leaning at such an angle that one would expect the buildings to fall at any minute on their tenants, occupants, and on the travellers who are to be seen drinking tea and eating their food in many of them. There are, of course, exceptions; but most of the buildings certainly impress one with the fact that the inhabitants have a hard job to make a living. The average hut, called an inn, is filthy, and the pigsty and its inhabitants have the most prominent and honourable position—a room or pen at the upper end of the enclosure.

Reports of game were heard along the road, yet nothing was seen but one raccoon, which some of the natives had trapped and chained up. The country was very wild and rugged, and so steep were some of the cliffs that formed the river bank and so high did they tower, that the road builders, at points, had cut a passage out of the solid rock. In other parts mason work is built, or a wooden bridge is thrown across a chasm, sometimes several hundred feet above the foaming stream. Yet over these narrow and dangerous places the pack-mules plying between Kwanhsien and Songpan pass continually, and hardly ever with an accident. Often they have to walk within a few inches of the edge of these precipices with not more than two inches of space between the load and the solid rock on the inside, while a sheer drop of several hundred feet is between them and the water or the rock as the case may be, on the other side. Yet these wonderfully

sure-footed animals seldom make a mis-step or even bump their loads on the rocks, though you would not care to have your hand between the loads and the rock, so little space is there to spare.

SO TUSSU, HIS SON, AND SECRETARY.

On the evening of March 6, Wenchuan was reached, and a fairly comfortable inn was found in which they made their headquarters for some time. I started from Chentu several days after them, but making a quick journey on

my frisky little horse, overtook them the evening they arrived.

Next morning we called on So Tussu, who had just come down from his palace on the mountain of Tongling to meet a new Chinese official who had just been appointed to Wen-chuan. He was very friendly, and arranged a small hunt for us next day, to test our sporting capabilities.

CHAPTER VII.

Sport in Wassu.

Next morning we were up early, but by 8 a.m. no hunters had arrived, so we went over to the chief to ask if they were coming. A little later two ruffianly-looking hunters appeared, dressed in skin coats, and armed with long gaspipe guns, with coils of fuse made with bamboo fibre. They all wore bamboo or hemp sandals, and we did the same, as leather boots were quite useless, not to say dangerous, on the crags where we were to hunt. After leaving the village behind us we followed a small path which zigzagged up the precipitous side of the mountain, and, after some more climbing, found six other hunters with their dogs awaiting our arrival.

We still climbed higher, to take our positions for the hunt, while some of the hunters with their dogs remained below to drive the game. Before we reached our positions we heard the dogs barking, and the hunters shouted up to us that a musk deer had got away.

After a tremendous struggle up the precipitous cliffs, over which we scrambled, dragging ourselves up, by catching hold of the brushwood and shrub bamboo which covered the face of the mountain, we finally reached a position, far up the mountain side, where we had a most wonderful view of the surrounding country. Here we halted for a little, to gain our breath and enjoy the panoramic view unfolded before us. Away to the west a great snow range seemed to blend its glistening peaks with the clear light blue of the western

sky. The lower slopes were dotted with the dull grey stone dwellings of the Wassu and Changming peasantry, and the great towers, erected in these villages, looked like church spires in the distance. Above the cultivated fields rose green forests of bamboo, white fir, birch, shrub and prickly oak; and just below the snow line the rhododendron forest and higher yet the grassland topped by great craggy rocks, their peaks covered with eternal snow.

In the valley beneath us, 4,000 feet below where we stood, the Min, like a little stream of silver, glistened in the sunshine. To the south the view was not so extensive, but not less beautiful and interesting—the mountain wooded almost to its base, and, far up its sides, small openings in the forest where the perpetual smoke of the charcoal-burners showed and the potash-makers were at work: the trees bending under their load of snow.

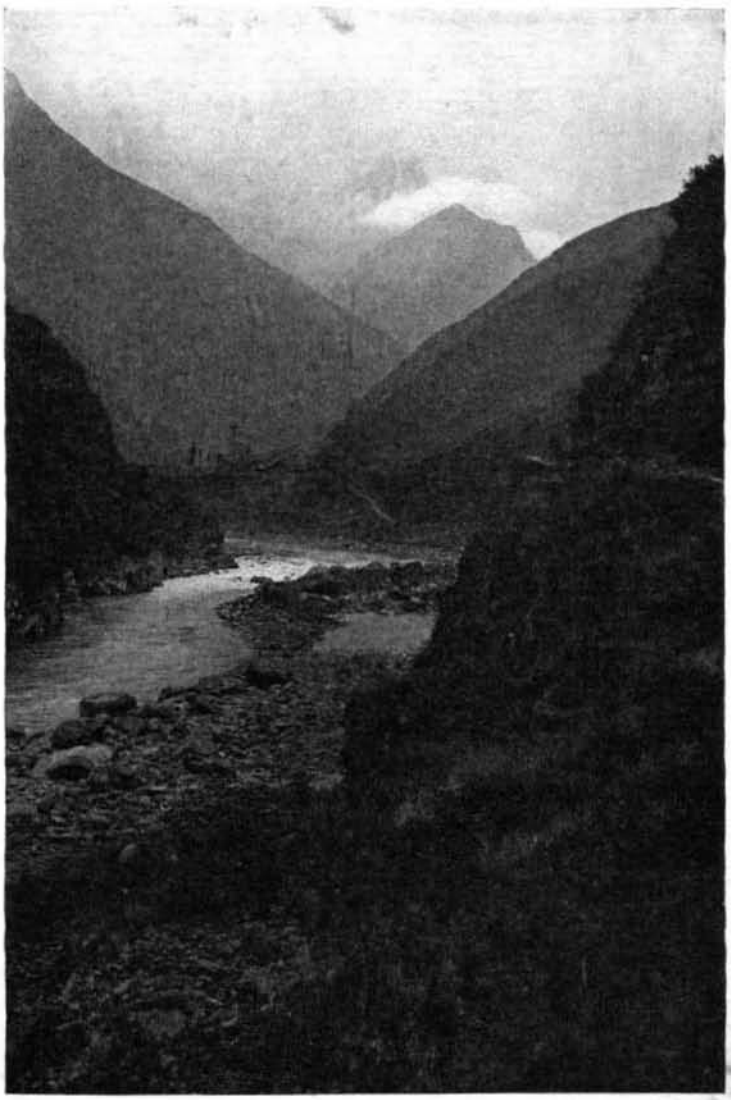
We looked northward to see if we were nearing the summit of the mountain, which we had been toiling up for the last two hours; but on looking to the valley beneath us, from which we had just come, and then toward the top of the slope that contained our hunting-ground for the day, we decided that we were not more than one-quarter way up. We had climbed 3,000 feet already, and the valley whence we started was 5,000 feet above sea-level, so that our position was quite 8,000 feet above the mighty ocean.

Our hunting-ground was covered with shrub bamboo, but there were many open spots and run-ways here and there, so, by choosing good positions, we had command of a considerable stretch of mountain side.

Prince So's head hunter allotted us our position, and we were all placed by 12 o'clock.

It was bitterly cold, for a strong wind had sprung up, and the heat of the sun did not seem to have much effect.

We knew from the barking of the dogs that game was



NEAR SO TUSSU'S CASTLE; MOUNTAIN AT END OF VALLEY SIXTY MILES DISTANT.

moving, but no shots had yet been fired; everyone was expectantly waiting, for there was no telling where the game might pop out.

The dogs kept zigzagging back and forth up the mountain side, at times coming near, again turning and apparently driving the game right away and round the farther side of the mountain. It was then the cold wind seemed to pierce us, chilling us even to the marrow in our bones, and my own hands got so cold that I don't think I could have held my rifle steady if the dogs had brought something to my feet.

For a long time they had not come near my side of the mountain, and their bark became almost indistinguishable from the murmur of the wind. One second I imagined I could hear them coming nearer and nearer, then the sound would die away. Knowing that the game in this part of the country are not afraid of smoke, so used are they to the charcoal-burners, with their camps everywhere in these mountains, I gathered at last some dry wild grass and bamboos, and made a fire in a little nook under a rock close by my station.

Finally, just as we were giving up hope of seeing anything coming our way, we heard a shot round the corner of a hill, and Mr. Meares rushed round just in time to meet a large wild boar and give him a charge of buck shot at ten yards. This bowled him over, but he recovered sufficiently to scramble down the steep hillside for a distance. Mr. Brooke glided down the hillside after him and gave him the *coup-de-grace*—rather dangerous work, as a steep hillside covered with thicket, in which a wounded boar is taking shelter, is not the safest place in the world.

The hunters soon collected round, and were much pleased to see a mass of pork, which they cut up and packed on their backs. We then descended 3,000 feet back to the river bed by one of the steepest tracks we had ever traversed.

We found it quite as difficult work safely to descend the mountain side as it was to ascend it. The path was narrow and covered with small round pebbles that rolled under our feet, and we all took turns in unwillingly and somewhat suddenly sitting down.

We had not yet got used to our new footwear, and the coarse hemp ropes of our sandals seemed to find tender spots in our feet, and especially as we found our way down the steep mountain side. Our toes would insist on finding their way through the strands of rope, which felt as though they were cutting ruts into the bones. We were glad when at last we arrived at the inn and found a good supper of boiled rice and curried chicken awaiting us, and I am sure the cook was pleased with himself, for we licked the platter clean that night.

We all felt quite proud of our first day's hunt, for although we had not got anything remarkable for our arduous climb, yet we had found there was something in the neighbourhood worth hunting, and our first day was not a blank. The carcase of the wild boar, which we had divided among the men, had put them all in the best of spirits, and they all joined in earnest expectation for good success on the morrow.

When the hunters collected next morning they brought the report that a ngaelu (cliff donkey), which we afterwards discovered was a serow, had been seen near where we hunted yesterday, so we set out early; it had snowed some in the night and the paths were quite slippery, but it was wonderful how our hemp sandals gripped the rock. By 10 o'clock we were all in our places, for we did not go quite so high as on the previous day.

Meares and I were posted in the river bed, and Brooke went higher up on the mountain side with the hunters. Old Wang, the head hunter, kept with Brooke, and they took up their position on a little ledge of rock with cliffs on

PRINCE SO (IN CENTRE), MR. MEARES AND MR. BROOKE.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two sides of them, on which the serow might at any moment appear, should it be pressed hard by the dogs.

Hardly had they got to their places when some of the dogs began to give tongue, and in a short time the beaters sent down the cry that a serow had gone to bay on one of the crags on the opposite side of the cliff from where Brooke and old Wang were located. But before any of the beaters could get near enough to get a shot, the serow broke through the dogs, and started up the mountain in quite the opposite direction from what those experts had expected, and, getting in the deep snow, was clean away. Another pack of dogs that had been started simultaneously raised another serow, and brought him round the lower end of the cliff. He was too far away from Meares and myself to get a shot, though we could see him like a little speck on the mountain side.

Old Wang rushed down the mountain side by leaps and bounds, and called to Brooke to follow on. Endeavouring to keep up with Wang, an expert mountaineer, he soon found himself in a sitting position, and came sliding down, rather to the damage of his trousers, but got off without a scratch. The serow turned just as he was about to enter the open ground, crossed his track, and went off in pursuit of the first one. It was now getting late, and we thought the sport was over for the day, but old Wang said there was still a chance, for when they were coming up in the morning they heard a goral blowing on the mountain side. He declared these creatures did not travel far at this season of the year, unless they were hunted, and that they would be out feeding at this hour of the evening.

They called the dogs in by a shrill, long cry, followed by several shorter ones, which echoed and re-echoed through the mountain side, and the weary disappointed little creatures were soon seen coming slowly back from three different direc-

tions, just as the men had all collected in the valley where Meares and I were posted.

One little stray dog, which the beaters had begun to grow anxious about, lest it had pursued the serow too far up the mountain into the deep snow, and had got eaten by a panther, appeared; and just before him, far up the mountain side in the clearing, a little coloured creature was seen hopping along, almost like a rabbit. This the hunters declared was a chitze, *i.e.*, a chamois. He was over 1,000 yards from us, and though we sent a few shots after him he escaped without injury, and the dog left him in answer to the call of his master.

The dogs were sent home by one of the hunters, who took us along on the other bank of the small stream. We followed a narrow path, which led up to a potash-burner's hut, then on, round the face of the cliff, and crossed over a precipice bridged by rotten logs. These were pinned to the side of the cliff by wooden pins as rotten as themselves; for it was many years since they were placed there by some venturesome charcoal-burner, to enable him to collect suitable sticks for burning in his kiln farther up the mountain side. The timber, suitable for this purpose, having all been cut, the road was long since discarded, and only these risky, fearless hunters now pass over it. It would only bear one person at a time. Old Wang said "siaosin, siaosin" (carefully, carefully), but there was no need for his advice. In places there was a sheer drop of 500 feet, and the only footing was a single rotten log, not more than six inches in diameter when first placed there, but now wasted to half that size, and we never knew just how sound the remaining portion might be. Then there was some snow lying on them in places, which added to the treacherousness of the situation, and there was nothing to hold to but the side of the rock, with here and there a small brushwood that had grown out of some crevice on the cliff's side, and on which one could not put much reliance.

The only thing was to look aloft, keep steady, and try not to think of the danger, for if one's nerves go for a second one's head would begin to swim and the danger be increased many fold.

After about 500 yards of this we came out on a more sloping hillside, but still not a place to slip on, for it was a long way to the bottom, and soon came to a flat place, where there had been an old hut. Here we stood still to scan the rocky cliff on the opposite side of a small ravine just in front of us; it was here the hunters had heard the goral in the morning.

The keen eye of Wang soon picked out something which he declared was a living creature; but though he tried to point it out to us, even with the aid of a good pair of binoculars, we could see nothing but rocks and trees. Some of the men were sent away round, to beat the side of the cliff, and drive the goral our way; but how they were to make their way was a mystery; in fact, it seemed impossible, but these men are like flies, they stick anywhere they set their feet.

We were a long time waiting. At length some of the beaters got beyond, and came down near where Wang kept telling us the animal stood; we saw an object move. It started to come toward us, suddenly it disappeared into a hole in the rock; the hunter followed, but could not find where it was hid; threw a stone into the hole, and out it came within a few yards of him, and went sliding along the face of the cliff across the gulley from us more like a panther than a goral.

When the goral came opposite to us he stopped; the light was failing when Brooke fired at about 200 yards, and wounded him badly. He fell straight off the cliffs and turned several somersaults before reaching the rocky bed of the stream, and we expected to find the beast a mangled mass at the bottom. With great difficulty we got down the face of the cliff, but when we came to where we expected to find