

DISPATCHES
FROM
NORTH-WEST KANSU

BY
A. MILDRED CABLE
AND
FRANCESCA L. FRENCH

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

THE CHINA INLAND MISSION, LONDON
PHILADELPHIA, TORONTO, MELBOURNE, AND
SHANGHAI
AGENTS: THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
4 BOUVERIE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4 . . . 1925

THESE DISPATCHES ARE ADDRESSED
TO THE SENIOR MEMBERS
OF THE
COMRADESHIP FOR CHINA

Boston University
School of Theology Library

C.S.
BV
3420
.K3
C3

TH 11869

OCT 0 6 1981



Lanchow, the capital of Kansu, is not far from the letter K of Kansu. Liangchow is near the narrow neck of land to the north-west, and Tihwafu is far beyond the border of this Map.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

*“ ‘There’s no sense in going further—it’s the edge of cultivation.’
So they said, and I believed it—broke my land and sowed my
crops—*

*Built my barns and strung my fences in the little border station
Tucked away below the foothills where the trails run out and
stop.*

*Till a voice, as bad as Conscience, rang interminable changes
On one everlasting Whisper day and night repeated—so :
Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the
Ranges—*

*Something lost behind the Ranges. Lost and waiting for you.
GO ! ”*

R. KIPLING.

DISPATCH ONE

BEHIND THE RANGES

COMRADES.

It is of no use for you to read dispatches from the front unless you have some idea of the line of battle to which they refer.

Look at your map and locate LANCHOW, capital of the province of Kansu in North-West China. From there follow a direct north-westerly line and you reach the last outpost of the China Inland Mission at Liangchow.

If you travel on in a north-westerly direction you will not again meet with foreign Protestant missionaries until you come to Tihwafu, which is beyond the frontier

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

of China Proper, and there, fifty-two days' journey from Liangchow, you will meet Mr. Hunter and Mr. Mather of the C.I.M.

Six days' journey beyond Liangchow is the city of Kanchow, from whence these dispatches are written.

It has taken you less than three minutes to locate these places, but it took us many long, weary weeks to travel here from Peking.

It was early spring before we left Liangchow, travelling in heavy carts, and the rivers, which had been a solid mass of ice, were beginning to break, also the mud-pits, for which Chinese roads are renowned, were in their full glory. Our cart spent many hours each day in these sloughs of despond, and we spent many hours shivering by the roadside and watching the frantic efforts of the mules to extricate themselves.

Our worst experience occurred when we listened to a traveller's tale, and, acting upon his directions, abandoned the main road, which, he said, was completely under water, and took to By-path Meadow, that is to say, to the grassy slopes at the foot of the Mongolian hills. Before we had gone two miles we were in a most hopeless condition. In spite of the frantic lashes of the carter, the mules were unable to save the cart from sinking deeper and deeper into the slime. We sat disconsolately leaning against the outer side of the Great Wall of China, and watched the sun rise higher and higher in the heavens.

The day's stage is so long in Kansu that it can only be accomplished under favourable circumstances, by travelling from dawn to dark, and we knew that we could scarcely reach the city that night. It was well after mid-day when a little donkey trotted through an



Photographs by

J. B. Martin.

"Our cart spent many hours each day in these sloughs of despond."

To face page 2.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

opening in the wall, and at the sight of our plight, sank gracefully to the ground, landing her rider in the mud. A providential occurrence, as it enabled us to secure the help of man and beast. A moment later a bullock cart slowly emerged, and its driver, seeing by the badge on our cart that we were Christian missionaries, immediately came to our assistance. "Where are you going?" he asked; "to Kanchow? I know your people there. Dr. Kao saved my life last year. I will help you."

In a few minutes the bullock and donkey were hitched to our slowly sinking cart, and with lashes, screams, and wild gesticulations the great effort was made, and the cart emerged from its watery grave.

For the next few hours our way lay over a grassy plain, to the north of which lay the range of hills which divides Kansu from Mongolia.

Here and there a wide stretch of sand and curiously shifting sand-hills, the location of which changes with every high wind, served to remind us of the proximity of the Gobi desert.

The passes by which the hilly region is entered are few, but they give immediate access to the pasture-lands where the Mongolians pitch their felt tents and feed their flocks and herds.

We made good progress for several hours, and in a tiny hamlet found a family willing to give us shelter for the night. Alas, the next day there still lay before us a flooded area, and this time fresh horrors had to be faced. In some mysterious way water was oozing up from every crevice of the ground, and the soil gave under us as we walked. It seemed as though we were on a thin crust over a bog, and our escort confirmed

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

this by saying : " We have now come to the place where we are walking over underground lakes which have just thawed ; we may have trouble with the mules, as they often take fright at the unaccustomed sensation of the quaking soil."

Many of the rivers in these parts rush down from the snow-capped hills, pass into underground lakes, emerge once more, and finally bury themselves in the Mongolian sands.

We knew it was all we could do to reach Kanchow that night, and it was with dismay that we saw the mules plunge into a lake of mud worse than anything we had experienced before. We had just settled ourselves for another long delay when two horsemen came galloping towards us. It was Dr. Kao, Chinese missionary-in-charge of the work at Kanchow, of whom you will hear more later, come out to meet us with a friend.

With characteristic promptitude he grasped the situation. " Old Sheep," he said to the carter, " you out of prison again ! Whoever trusted you to bring my guests over these roads ? It will take you hours to get out of that mud-pit, so you had better spend the night here, and we will go ahead."

Turning to us he said : " That carter has been in jail three times for destruction of passengers' property. He has an affinity for mud-pits." " Old Sheep " was looking as sheepish as might be expected, and submitted to the decision without a word.

" The horses we are riding belong to the Mongolian Prince who is now staying with me," continued Dr. Kao. " We will send back a messenger to tell him of our trouble, and he will soon dispatch some more to

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

our assistance." So some rode and others walked until, in an incredibly short space of time, we saw relays of horses and riders coming to our rescue.

One contingent went to keep guard over " Old Sheep " in the mud-pit and the remainder got us safely to Kanchow, but not until we had been travelling for fifteen hours, and over roads where it sometimes looked as if our carts must be broken to pieces.

Next time you go to a missionary meeting and find yourself singing so enthusiastically :

" Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole,"

try and realise for a moment how the thing is really done. Our life through those days was a battle with blizzards, snowstorms, hunger and thirst, weariness and perils, and every comrade who enlists in this campaign will find that the winds and waves will do more to impede his journey than to assist him in carrying the story.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"Kansu is a land of far distances. It is a journey of over forty days from East to West and of nearly a month from North to South. The mountain ranges vary from 5000 feet in the East to 20,000 feet in the West. There are no railroads, no navigable rivers, and only a few important trade routes. Besides the Chinese there are Salar Moslems, Tung-siang Moslems, Arabic-speaking Moslems, immigrants from Tibet, Turkestan and all the provinces of China, together with some aborigines, all speaking differing languages and dialects." From *"The Christian Occupation of China."*

DISPATCH TWO

COMRADES.

"The horses belong to the Mongolian Prince who is now staying with me." It sounded decidedly thrilling to hear that we were to be fellow-guests in Dr. Kao's house with a Mongolian Prince, but it turned out to be far more so than we had anticipated.

Before supper was over on the evening of our arrival we became aware of strange beings who peeped from every possible place of vantage, and who were evidently quite as eager to see us as we were to see them.

A climb on to the roof presented no difficulty to them when they might get a better view of us. "These men belong to the Prince's retinue," said Dr. Kao; "they are all Da-dz [Mongols], and their ways are quite different to ours."

They presented strange and fantastic figures in the half-darkness, but daylight revealed them as tall, strongly-built men and women, wearing long woollen

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

garments hanging in heavy folds to below the knee, where they met clumsy high-boots which would impede the movements of any but the strongest people, but which did not seem in the least to hamper their agility. They wore home-made felt hats, cloaks of dyed skins, originally of bright colour, but tempered by the weather to a sombre tone.

They walked with a great swinging stride, and every man had a hunter's knife hanging at his girdle.

We found that the reason of the Prince's visit was the sudden and serious illness of his little boy, ten years of age. The child had gone down with pneumonia, and his mother had ridden a five days' stage in three days, carrying her child in her arms. The Prince's command had been: "He must be taken to Dr. Kao at once, and I will follow as soon as I can."

The illness was a critical one, and the doctor, as soon as the Prince arrived, warned him that it had not yet reached its crisis, and the child's life was hanging in the balance.

"That's your business, not mine," said the Prince. "I have handed him over to you, and you must make him well. Aren't you a doctor?"

It is an abomination to a Mongol to feel a roof over his head, so in a spacious courtyard three tents had been erected, and in these lived the Prince, his wife and the child, their personal retinue, and the family Lama.

Outside the city was the large encampment where the herdsmen fed the camels, horses, sheep, etc.

When we went to pay our respects to the Princess the curtain of her tent was raised, and as we entered we seemed to be transported back to one of the scenes of the *Arabian Nights*. A small opening in the roof

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

admitted a ray of sunlight which fell on a low couch where lay the little sick boy.

At our entrance his beautiful mother, whose grace and natural dignity surpassed anything we could have expected, arose from his side.

Her oval face was framed by two long black plaits, her ear ornaments were so numerous and heavy that they were caught up in her hair to support their weight; jade and coral necklaces hung down to her waist.

The tent itself was made of thick white felt, and the floor was covered with handsome rugs, whilst inlaid boxes stood around. The whole presented an aspect of comfort and luxury. The thick felt affords protection from the burning rays of the summer sun, as from the bitter winds of the Mongolian winter.

In the kitchen tent we found a group of attendants squatting around the fire. They were preparing the family food—thin slices of meat uncooked but dried in the sun, basins of buttermilk, parched corn ground to flour, mixed with butter and worked with the fingers into a paste, over which boiling tea is poured.

Both Mongolian and Tibetan food would be more attractive if the milk were not so sour, the butter not so matted with Yak hairs, and the bowls not so highly polished by the use of the human tongue.

The third tent was exceedingly small, and only one man lived in it; this was the family Lama. He was, according to the Prince's estimation, "A regular rascal, like all the rest of them." He was busy cooking his own dinner, and none of us had the slightest desire to share it with him.

In the afternoon the Prince came with Dr. and Mrs. Kao to call on us. He was a man of magnificent physique,



Top—A Mongolian Princess.
Bottom—The Mongolian Prince outside his tent.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

with light grey eyes set far apart in a tanned face. He had the fearless look of a warrior and the insatiable curiosity of a child.

His knowledge of Chinese was very fair, but his interpreter, a charming youth with sly, almond-shaped eyes, accompanied him. A great many cakes were consumed, and the Prince smoked a great many cigarettes.

He is sworn friend to Dr. Kao, and this, according to Mongolian etiquette, gives each the right to ask freely for the personal possessions of the other.

When he first arrived and found his child lying on a camp-bed he sat down upon the edge of it. The doctor warned him to be careful lest he should break it down. "Broken or not broken, that bed is mine," he answered, "and I shall take it away with me." When the doctor bent over the sick child the Prince noticed that he was wearing a foreign leather belt, so in a moment he removed it and replaced it with a band of beautiful Mongolian workmanship, keeping the other for himself.

He found it impossible to leave without asking for a fountain-pen, and some of our Scripture pictures gave unbounded pleasure.

The Prince is quite prepared to give in return, horses and camels, besides first-class firearms, and his generosity is as princely as his demands are childish.

Once the crisis was over the little child quickly gained strength, and the whole family became restive, comparing the narrow courts of the city with the boundless plains of Mongolia. The Prince is Chief of an important tribe of the Altai Mountains, more than two months' journey from here.

After a few days the call of the wild became too insistent. The pack-camels were brought in and laden

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

with the tents and household goods. The Princess mounted her beautiful horse, and the whole retinue left the city and pitched the camp about ten miles away.

The doctor visited his little patient daily, and the dispensary was still haunted by Da-dz, but not many days later they started on their long journey.

Since we began writing these dispatches news has reached us of the expulsion of missionaries from Mongolia. Meanwhile copies of the Scriptures have been carried back to the Altai mountains by this chieftain, and twice already he has been brought into intimate and personal contact with the ambassadors of Christ.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"The East is undergoing a concentrated process of adaptation which, with us, was spread over centuries, and the result is not so much evolution as revolution. . . . The upshot is confusion, uncertainty, grotesque anachronism, and glaring contradiction. Single generations are sundered by unbridgeable mental and spiritual gulfs. Fathers do not understand sons ; sons despise their fathers. Everywhere the old and the new struggle fiercely, often within the brain or spirit of the same individual."

LOTHROP STODDARD.

DISPATCH THREE

COMRADES.

Of course you want to know how the Mongolian Prince and Dr. Kao came to be sworn friends. So did we, so we inquired, and were told the following story.

One day last year the doctor was walking into the country at sunset to see a patient, when he espied a large cavalcade of camels, horses and carts coming towards him. One of these was covered with green cloth, and this, he knew, indicated the presence of an official. Seeing them so far from the main road the doctor concluded that they were strangers and had lost their way. As he approached he saw that they were Mongolians, and by the number of the servants judged them to be the retinue of a chieftain.

Dr. Kao spoke to some of the outriders and found they were seeking a place in which to pitch their encampment. As they met, the Prince himself alighted from the green cart and told Dr. Kao that he had come

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

from the Altai range fifty-four days' journey distant, and was on his way to Kumbum.

Seeing the symptoms of a serious illness upon him the doctor said: "Is it because you are ill and are making a pilgrimage that you have come so far from home?"

"I am not ill; there is nothing at all the matter with me," the Prince answered abruptly.

"I am a doctor and you cannot deceive me, but if you need any help come to the city and see me."

The next day the Prince arrived at the Mission Hospital, and flinging down his passport, said: "Read that! You seem to know things without being told."

The passport, issued by the Military Governor of Sinkiang, stated that this journey was being taken in order to enable the Prince to present offerings at the Lamasery of Kumbum, where dwells a famous Living Buddha whose blessing might bring him healing.

Much prayer had been offered for this man by the small Christian community in Kanchow during the few hours since the first meeting, so that when the Prince asked in his abrupt way: "Now then, can you cure me? How many days will it take?" the doctor unhesitatingly answered: "Your disease can be cured."

"All right; you shall try."

So it came to pass that for many days the Prince was a resident on the Christian compound, and when he left it was with his sickness cured and in his heart a warm friendship for his benefactor.

Some months passed and one day Dr. Kao found himself the fellow-guest at the Tartar General's house with a Mongolian Lama of high rank, who was also a Living Buddha.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

As soon as the Lama heard his name he came forward most cordially, and inquired if this were Dr. Kao who had shown so much kindness to his cousin the Prince from Altai.

"I have heard so much about you," he said, "and about the religion you hold, that I want to come and see you and have a talk."

The result of this rencontre was that during the time which the Lama spent in Kanchow he and the doctor met daily and talked for many hours of the things of Christ. His parting words were: "I desire in this life to be your friend, and for the next that we should enter heaven as brethren." He took away with him copies of the Scriptures in Mongolian, and some of his immediate entourage were greatly interested.

In the month of May, six weeks after our arrival here, the whole city of Kanchow was in a turmoil. The main street was decorated with flags, and squads of Mohammedan soldiers were galloping to and fro, carrying messages and making the final arrangements for the reception of the great Panchan Lama from Tibet.

You have all heard of the Dalai Lama who is the political head of Tibet, but you may not have heard of the Panchan Lama who is its spiritual head.

As might be expected, a bitter and deadly feud is kept up between these two men, each one striving for the greater power. The flight of the Panchan Lama from Tibet to Peking has set every one talking.

It is rumoured that Britain has had designs upon Tibet ever since the Younghusband Expedition of 1904, and that secret treaties then made have now been ratified, assuring to England the suzerainty of Tibet.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

This has greatly pleased the Dalai Lama, who is preparing an army wearing British uniforms and equipped with modern weapons.

The Panchan Lama, on the contrary, is so loyal to the Chinese Government that, rather than face such disgrace, he fled from his home, to spend the remainder of his life in a monastery near Peking, or, others say, to return as General of a magnificent Chinese army and drive the usurper from the land.

We saw him in his yellow silk brocade cart, wearing robes of the same material and fingering his rosary. He stared hard at us as we stood amongst the crowd of Chinese by the roadside, but fortunately there was no one to whisper the word "British" in his ear as he passed.

He only delayed one day to receive the offerings of the local officials and Lamas, then proceeded on his journey.

Immediately after his departure an epidemic of what we should call chicken-pox swept over the city. "Chicken-pox, indeed! no such thing," declared the indignant mothers. "Blossoms of happiness, a lucky sign which always follows a visit from the Panchan Lama."

The very day he left, a messenger arrived at the mission compound with a note from the Living Buddha of Altai, begging the loan of a cart and horses to enable him to overtake his spiritual chief the Panchan Lama, to whom he must make obeisance. His request was granted; and his mission accomplished, the next afternoon he returned and came here to call.

Lamas, like other people, vary in moral worth, and this man is acknowledged by his fellows to be sincere

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

and upright. He is of an ascetic type, and spends long hours in fasting and meditation.

He listened with great interest to stories of the Life of Christ, and bowed reverentially at each mention of His name. He reads the Scriptures, and has given to Dr. Kao a passport, written with his own hand, safeguarding him through the whole territory of which he is spiritual chief. This in view of a missionary journey to those parts.

Thus the first skirmish. Now the steady pressure of a besieging force. Later *l'appel* and the call to arms, when the hour comes to capture this fortress.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"A very slight observation of the inhabitants of Kansu will satisfy one that they are not of purely Chinese origin.

"The Tartaro-Thibetan element is manifestly predominant amongst them; and it displays itself with especial emphasis in the character, manners and language of the country people. The construction of their phrases exhibits the inversions in use amongst the Mongols.

"But it is, above all, their religious turn of mind which distinguishes them from the Chinese, a people almost universally sceptical and indifferent as to religious matters. With the Chinese religion is limited to external representation, whereas in Kansu every one prays often, and long and fervently. Now prayer, as every one knows, is that which distinguishes the religious from the irreligious man."

Abbé HUC.

DISPATCH FOUR

COMRADES.

A member of the American Geographical Society recently described Kansu as "a long-deserted racial cross-road." A racial cross-road it certainly is. From east and west Tibetans and Mongolians constantly pour into and cross the country. From the north the Moslem Turk introduces an element of aggressive domination. For the past decade a steady stream of Russian immigration has flowed through. By the southern route men from every other province of China come in pursuit of adventure or fortune.

There are also to be found the remains of the ancient aboriginal inhabitants of the country, quite different in type from the Chinese proper, with brown eyes, high colour, and hair which varies in tone from dark brown

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

to blond. All these live side by side with the people of the country. These latter are the agriculturists. They cover all the fertile plains with their isolated farmsteads. These farmsteads are strongly built with a high outer wall, and are guarded by fierce dogs. They contain several spacious courtyards, and in the vicinity of the mountains are built almost entirely of wood.

On payment of two pounds a year the farmer may cut as much timber in the hills as he pleases.

The rooms are each built with a "kang" bed which is covered with movable wooden boards. In the hollow space beneath these, stable manure is burned to warm the "kang." The fumes of this manure smoke the rafters to a beautiful dark colour with a highly brilliant surface. A few nights spent upon such a "kang" leave one with the impression that one's lungs are in a similar condition to the wood.

The rooms are built around the various courtyards, and an inner door of one of the living rooms communicates with a kitchen which is spacious, and often contains a mill where a donkey grinds wheat for the family consumption.

The clothing is very poor, and the smaller children go quite naked all through the summer and half-naked all through the winter. Winter clothes are padded with sheep's wool from the flocks, and men spend their spare time in spinning wool and, in many parts, in knitting socks. These are knitted flat with two needles, and a diagonal line down the instep, the back of the heel and leg being stitched together and the sole made separately.

Unlike the people of the other northern provinces of China, those of Kansu do not collect into villages, but

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

form districts of farmsteads numbered off by irrigation canals, each bearing a distinctive number.

The land around Kanchow is exceedingly well watered and fertile, and bears crops of wheat, barley, flax, peas, beans, hemp, tobacco, and opium, in addition to splendid vegetable gardens and fruit orchards.

Potatoes, aubergines, turnips, carrots, radishes, onions, leeks, and garlic abound, as well as cucumbers and an extraordinary variety of fine melons.

There is a profusion of grapes, apples, pears and apricots. Many of the apricots have a kernel which is nearly as sweet as an almond, and which is freely exported to other parts of the province.

The Kanchow district is suitable to the cultivation of rice, which it exports in large quantities.

Judging by the look of the fields you would expect the farmer to be a prosperous man, but this is not the case. For years past the growing and eating of opium has reduced the population to great poverty; and even were the cultivation of the poppy now to cease, many years would have to elapse before the people could free themselves from the burden of accumulated debt.

There is, however, little likelihood of a righteous legislation forbidding poppy cultivation, for its growth is made the excuse for exorbitant taxation.

For some years past all high official positions in this tongue of territory have passed into Moslem hands. The official is guarded by his own Moslem troops, who take a high-handed attitude with the peasant.

When the farmer brings his produce to the city gate he is liable to have his mules and goods seized by the Moslem soldiers, and is severely beaten if he offers any resistance. Stories of such oppression reach us every

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

day, and sometimes goods that we have paid for are carried off before they reach us. We have seen men brought in from such a fray to the dispensary, covered with weals from the horsewhip. The Chinese are a patient and long-suffering people, but this province is likely to flow with blood in the day when they rise in rebellion. The brutality of the Moslem to women and children is a thing which cannot be recorded here.

Commerce is largely carried on by people from other parts of China. The skin trade is in the hands of Russian and Shansi and Tientsin traders.

Banks are managed by Shansi men. Carpenters and tinkers mostly come from Szechwan. The copper-, iron- and silver-smiths are Honanese.

A stroll down the main street of Kanchow towards the middle of the day is always fascinating. If it be winter you will see the great carts from "Ko wai" (beyond the north-west frontier) heavily curtained and lined with thick felts. In these carts the family of some official or some business man may have travelled from Kashgar or Tihwafu, sleeping in them by night and living in them by day.

We have on one or two occasions seen the curtains part and a charming, fair-haired Russian child smile at us.

Strings of camels led by Mongolian drivers, Tibetans riding fine horses, and Moslems with aquiline noses, black beards and wearing distinctive caps, all add to the interest of the scene.

It is not unusual to see a group of little Lamas down from the Tibetan hills enjoying the fun of the town.

All sorts and conditions of men find their way to the mission-house, where a comfortable guest-room is

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

always open to them. Here any visitor may find copies of the Scriptures in Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Tibetan, Mongolian, Phonetic Script or English.

At every gate of the city there are to be seen large gospel posters which proclaim Jesus Christ as Saviour of all men.

“O Lord Jesus Christ, who at Thy first coming didst send Thy messenger to prepare Thy way before Thee ; Grant that missionaries may likewise so prepare and make ready Thy way by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at Thy second coming to judge the world there may be found from all nations an acceptable people in Thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.”

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

“ We can never have courage lying idle and ready to be used upon occasion. The fact is, that in the matter of personal qualities and endowments we have only what we are using. We have no courage until we act courageously. We have no power of endurance until we are actually enduring something. We have no reserves until they are called out.”

Dr. JOHN HUTTON.

DISPATCH FIVE

COMRADES.

We have been trying to ascertain how many temples there really are in Kanchow, but the only answer we can get is, “ There are too many to be counted.” If the temples are too many to be counted, there must be more idols than inhabitants in the city.

One of the principal temples is built over a bubbling spring, above which is the inscription : “ First spring to the west of the River.” The river referred to is the great Yellow River, twelve days’ journey distant, and this is, strange to relate, the first known spring west of its banks in this direction. A stream of water is diverted to a pond where sacred goldfish live a privileged life, and the buildings are surrounded with majestic trees, for which Kanchow is justly renowned.

Many of the city temples are largely used as pleasure gardens. They are beautifully planted out with flowers and shrubs, and decorated with miniature representations of the sacred mountains, built out of stone, and covered with tiny decorated shrines. In shady recesses rustic tables are placed, and here, during the hot season, the rich families of the town invite their friends to

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

picnic-parties. In a back courtyard is a kitchen, from which an elaborate meal is served.

Some temple gardens are full of the fragrant tree-peony, and during the season when this is in flower one of the favourite sweet dishes is the peony-petal fritter, sometimes varied by the mint-leaf fritter. (Either of these dainties is certain to be a great success if served at a missionary exhibition.)

We often wish that some energetic official would undertake to put in order the beautiful lakes of Kanchow. There are four large expanses of water and dozens of smaller ponds. In fact, by digging a few feet under the surface you can reach water at any point. This water is supplied from the Tibetan hills, but loses itself underground before it reaches the city, bursting up in numerous springs within its walls. In the late spring many of the ponds dry up completely, so that the carts pass over them, but in July the water oozes out again and fills them to overflowing.

A passing traveller seeing the bubbling springs might be foolish enough to indulge in draughts of cold, unboiled water during the hot weather, but as the seasons change the carcasses of dead dogs and the skeletons of defunct camels make their appearance. There is one carefully guarded spring, and when we saw these things we understood why such strict injunctions had been given to our servants that they were never on any account to draw water from any other source.

This underground water-supply has a curious effect on the buildings of the city. On account of the alternate freezing and thawing and the consequent giving of the soil, the woodwork is thrown completely out of the per-

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

pendicular. The wooden pillars and door-posts are like the visions of a drunken man, and the houses, which are made entirely of a wooden framework with mud walls, frequently collapse. We were roused one morning by a loud thud, which was to us very alarming, but no one seemed to think it out of the way that the stables should have fallen in without notice.

In one of the larger temples stands a gigantic brazen horse and rider, twelve feet in height.

About the time that Queen Elizabeth was on the throne of England the Kanchow people were startled to hear that the river, then in flood, had washed down this great statue.

No one can tell whence it came, but such a bringer of luck to the city was viewed as a direct gift of the gods and accorded a great reception.

One hundred strong men fastened ropes around it and drew it up to the temple, where it now stands. Attempts have sometimes been made to move it, but it evidently regards itself as having reached its appointed destination, for though one hundred men dragged it up from the river, one thousand are said to be unable to move it from where it now stands.

The old priest who guards it sleeps peacefully at night, knowing that any attempt to rob Kanchow of its treasure would be futile.

The most renowned of all the Kanchow idols is reported to be the largest in China. It represents the figure of a Sleeping Buddha, which has a temple specially built for its accommodation.

It lies at full length with its head touching one wall and its feet resting against the other, a distance of one hundred and twenty feet.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

So huge is it that the pigeons build their nests in its nostrils. It lies on a raised platform, and is forty feet high.

This is one of the three gigantic Buddhas of this part of Asia. On our journey to Kansu we visited, near Pinchow on the Shensi border, the shrine where one of the three figures sits, ninety feet high, carved out of the face of the rock. The colossal figure stands out in bold relief, every detail chiselled with an accuracy of proportion which gives to the whole an uncanny realism.

The gesture of the outstretched hand with clearly-marked lines of head, heart and face, emphasises the expression of complete self-satisfaction and self-sufficiency of the head.

In Tibet is to be found the Striding Buddha, with his foot outstretched in a walking position. His purpose is to walk to Kanchow, rouse his sleeping brother and proceed with him to Pinchow, where the third member of the brotherhood sits awaiting their arrival.

The centuries pass, and the three colossæ remain, each in his symbolic posture, and each one waiting to rise to his work until the Tibetan Buddha shall take the initial step.

"But next day passed, and next day yet,
With still fresh cause to wait one day more
Ere each leaped over the parapet."

Thus many live. Always waiting for another to act, always afraid to risk a loss, always looking for a propitious hour of which they never see the dawn.

"And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Is the unlit lamp and the unglint loin."

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"Neither vision nor ecstasy, neither voice from heaven nor bodeful dream, has pointed the way of salvation to me. I owe my enlightenment quite simply to the reading of a book. Of a book, you say? Yes, and it is an old and homely book, plain and natural as nature herself, a work-a-day and unpretentious-looking book, and this book is sometimes called quite simply THE BOOK, the Bible."

"Rightly it is also called Holy Writ. He who has lost his God may find Him again in this volume, and he who has never known Him will there be met by the breath of the Divine Word."

AUTHOR UNKNOWN.

DISPATCH SIX

COMRADES.

There is a local saying regarding Kanchow which speaks of three things for which it is conspicuous:

"Oxen are short, but cart wheels are tall."

"Girls' shoes are small, but their feet are quite big."

"House doors are low, but the windows immense."

The reason for this saying is that the deep rivers necessitate cart wheels seven feet in height, which make the oxen between the shafts look ridiculously small. The girls' feet are clumsily bound and the back of the foot is supported on an invisible prop, which enables them to cram their toes into a tiny shoe. Every house has enormous windows and minute doors.

The thing, however, for which Kanchow is most famous is the multitude of its henpecked husbands. The wife is traditionally masterful, and the man quails before her. It is one of the delights of the Kanchow people to attend the open-air theatres and watch the acting of farcical plays on the subject.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

When a company was performing on the stage erected outside our front door, we could hear the roars of laughter with which the performance was greeted.

The husband was in disgrace, and was ordered by his wife to kneel in penance before her. He dared to refuse, so she took him by the lobe of the ear, dragged him to the front of the stage, and made him kneel down there with a brick-bat on his head.

"If you dare to move, I will flog you," she said.

Time passed, he fell asleep, and the brick-bat fell off his head, whereupon she took a horse-whip, gave him a few lashes, and told him to behave himself in future.

At this moment a friend of his appeared on the scene.

"What's up, old man? Wife been beating you?"

"No, no; there's nothing wrong," said the husband.

"But there are tears in your eyes. What have you been crying about?"

"Tears? Not at all. Just a fly in my eye."

"Your clothes are covered with dust. I can see that you have had to do penance again. Look here, old man, you will never get the upper hand of her unless you give her a good beating."

"I believe you are right," said the husband. "I will."

At this moment the wife came round the corner. "My shoulder is paining me. Come over here, you lazy fellow, and rub it for me."

The husband obediently did as he was told, and the friend whispered, "Now is your chance."

Placing himself where the wife could not see him, he began, by a series of antics, to suggest that the gentle rubbing should give way to a good pummelling. Several times the husband nearly obeyed and raised his hand as

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

though to strike, but let it fall again, lacking the determination to carry it through.

At last the friend could stand such feebleness no longer, and shouted, "Give her a hiding, man!"

The woman sprang up, and the friend, taking the law into his own hand, gave her one or two blows that she was not likely to forget. Encouraged by such bravery the husband joined in the fray; the wife uttered a piercing shriek, and dropped at their feet as if dead. In a moment the terrified husband was crouching at her side, weeping like a baby, and reproaching his friend: "What have you done? You have led me on to kill the best wife that ever man had."

Chasing him from the house, he returned to find his wife revived and finally established as sole master of the situation.

It is very difficult for you to imagine what connection theatrical performances can have with a milkman's guild, but the fact is that at their annual religious festival the milkmen of this town give a dramatic performance, at the close of which they all kneel before the idols and take a solemn vow to water the milk.

The rite is a terrifying one, for it involves a declaration that unless they adhere to the compact "may the gods strike their cows dead."

Sometimes our milkman fulfils his vow with such devotion that we are obliged to threaten him with instant dismissal unless he keeps his zeal within more reasonable bounds.

The Chinese theatrical tradition is highly conventional. Many of the plays represent historical episodes, and the tradition which allows no woman to appear on the stage remains unbroken in these distant provinces.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

One of the favourite *mises-en scène* is that of a battle, often involving several countries. Men dressed in decorative clothes, their faces disguised with flowing beards made from the hair of the yak's tail and brandishing swords and battle-axes, march around the stage making symbolic movements.

At a given moment they strike an attitude with war-like gestures, and simultaneously the leading actor howls the meaning of the scene in a shrill falsetto whilst the orchestra strikes in with a crashing din, in order to emphasise the rush of the warriors.

With a gesture of defeat some of the actors withdraw from the stage, and the remaining conqueror executes a graceful war-dance.

There is no applause, but the crowd gives expression to a murmur of appreciation.

There is no admittance fee to the theatre, and the play is often financed by a few rich people.

Every temple has its theatre stage, and this because every dramatic performance is connected with a religious celebration, such as the birthday of a god.

Whenever we hear of a theatrical performance in a large temple where we know there will be thousands of spectators, we go and pitch our large tent, if possible, out of earshot of the clanging cymbals.

We generally find that the Christian preaching, singing and music form an appreciable counter-attraction to the play, and a crowd of several hundred people will fill the tent. When the festival lasts for some days we find that there are some men and women who return with unfailing regularity to hear what we have to say.

This is our opportunity for broadcast sowing. Thousands of tracts and gospels are carried into every

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

village and hamlet of the neighbourhood, and the reading of one of these is often the first link forged in the chain which finally brings a family into the Church.

There is one picture connected with such work which will ever remain with us. In the main hall of the great temple the idol in whose honour the fair was held was dressed in gorgeous robes. Worshippers were burning incense and priests were reciting liturgies in rather fine plain-song, beating out the rhythm on a hollow wooden drum which proclaims the emptiness of all existence. Every hideous human passion was depicted on the faces of the group of attendant idols, and they that worshipped them were like unto them. At the feet of these monstrous representations sat a ring of men so absorbed that they never saw us, listening to one of their number reading aloud a chapter of the gospel according to St. Luke.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"The most civilised empires are as close to barbarism as the most polished steel is to rust ; nations, like metals, shine only on the surface."

RIVAROL.

DISPATCH SEVEN

COMRADES.

Never a day passes without something happening which compels us to realise in what a world of tragedy we are living. We cannot escape from it. Only once since our arrival have we joined a pleasure-party, and that was when some friendly ladies invited us to a picnic in a flower-garden.

We had enjoyed our tea and cakes together, and a ramble through the fields was proposed.

We were preparing to cross a stream by a log bridge in order to pick some wild flowers, when we saw a man lying by the roadside. He was a beggar in the last stage of emaciation, and was quite dead. No one knew or cared who he was, or whence he came, and that he had died of starvation called for no comment beyond the fact that it was a nuisance for the priests, in front of whose temple he had died, to have to dig a hole in which to put his body.

Our hostesses were ready to apologise for such an unpleasant sight being thrust on our notice, and they were half amused at our expression of distress when we spoke of the condition of the city beggars.

It is a common occurrence for beggars to be frozen to death in the cold winter nights, when they have nothing to cover them and the only shelter is that

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

afforded by some wall which protects them from the fierce wind.

In an interlude of one of our long journeys we were sitting on our warm "kang," one bitterly cold afternoon, when suddenly there appeared in our midst a little girl of about thirteen years of age with hardly a rag to cover her. In one hand she carried a broken bowl in which to receive scraps of food and in the other she held a tiny stick, with which to fight off the fierce dogs which are trained to attack beggars. She was too small and too weak to keep these savage creatures at bay, and her bare legs were covered with the marks of the dogs' teeth.

Her whole aspect was so intensely pathetic that we took the little shivering creature and made her sit on the warmest part of the "kang." As soon as she ceased shaking with cold we set a good hot meal before her.

She told us that she had neither father nor mother, brother nor sister, and that she spent her nights crouching under a shop frontage.

We were greatly distressed and appealed to some Chinese women, who were sitting at the time in our room, to do something to rescue the child from such a terrible future as hers must be. Their only answer was : "Nothing can be done. She belongs to some gang of beggars, and if any one were to attempt to help her, there would soon be trouble."

We were only spending a day or two in the place and, being foreigners, could do nothing ourselves, except that we determined to feed her during our brief stay, so when she had eaten we gave her some bread to take with her, and told her to return the next day for another meal.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

She took up her bowl and stick and walked out into the bitter night, and we never saw her again.

She may have been frozen to death that night, or her master may have taken her on to another city.

It was one of those occasions when the missionary burns with indignation at the unrighteous legislation of a country which admits of no appeal for the redress of the wrongs of the helpless.

There is no provision for the afflicted, and blindness or any other physical disability may force its victim into the ranks of beggary.

As for the beggars' children, there is nothing before them but an existence of misery and uselessness.

Another day our servant came to us with the report that there was a foreigner begging at the door. We went out to find a Russian man in rags, begging his food from the Chinese. He had certainly not been a beggar in his own country, and it was a shocking sight. The Chinese looked at him in amazement, unaccustomed as they are to think of the Westerner in connection with such poverty.

There is a great deal in the newspapers to-day about race antagonism. We have heard the subject discussed by educated Chinese, who are unanimous in declaring that the sense of nationality, strong though it be, will finally bow before the instinct of race solidarity.

No missionary ought to begin work in China to-day without having given some thought to the subject. It will supply the key to many intricate problems which will arise in his intercourse with the Chinese and which are side-issues of this question.

Before the Russo-Japanese War the prestige of the West was unquestioned, but the defeat of Russia by an

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

Eastern power, followed up by the Great European War of 1914, has placed the Western nations in a new light.

"Suffice it to say here that the Great War has shattered European prestige in the East and has opened the eyes of Orientals to the weaknesses of the West."

This point of view has been helped by the sight of so many destitute Russians begging their way through China.

The Chinese begging community does not lack organisation. By right of old-established custom, on certain days the beggars may walk down the main business streets and collect alms from every shop. The master of the establishment appoints one of his boys to stand at the door with a basket of cash, from which he gives a couple to each of the long string of mendicants.

We once saw the annual rally of the Beggars' Guild in a large business centre of Kansu.

Several hundred members of the profession, wearing the full regalia required by their calling, swarmed like locusts round the sunny side of a temple by the roadside.

The occasion was the election of the yearly officials whose business it is to assist their "king" in defending their rights. Should any shopkeeper refuse to conform to the custom of giving a monthly contribution, or should he take a stick and thrash one of them, an official, supported by a powerful bodyguard, will gather in such force that he finds it best quickly to meet their demands.

The conditions of his life have completely demoralised the adult beggar, but the misery of the beggar-child calls aloud for succour.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

Would that the day might come when a man like unto Dr. Barnardo would arise in Kansu. Perhaps there is a Comrade being prepared at this hour to do for the children of North-West China what he did for those of England.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"From a geographical point of view Tibet is a 'Closed Land'. On every side we see it bounded by long ranges of snowy mountains. The space thus enclosed is the largest mass of rock in the world; three times the size of France, having an area of nearly 700,000 square miles. Almost as cold as Siberia, though Lhasa is in the same latitude as Cairo and the greater part of it higher than Mont Blanc, the altitude of its tablelands ranging from 10,000 to 17,600 feet and that of its mountains from 20,000 to 28,000 feet above the level of the sea. The length, from east to west, is over 1600 miles; the breadth, from north to south, varying from a maximum of 700 miles in the east to a minimum of 150 miles in the west. On this plateau . . . the Ganges, the Indus, and the Brahmaputra . . . as well as the Yellow River and the Yang-tse-kiang of China, take their rise."

T. SÖRENSEN.

DISPATCH EIGHT

KANG LUNG LAMASERY

COMRADES.

Ever since our arrival in Kanchow we have been urged to make all preparations for an evangelistic trip into Tibetan territory on the occasion of a great religious festival held at Kang Lung Lamasery in July.

For weeks ahead the post-office pack-mules had brought us loads of gospels, posters, and tracts in the Tibetan language, and at every church prayer-meeting the subject of this expedition was remembered.

When the time came all was ready for a daybreak start; in fact, one member of the party had packed her bed overnight and slept on straw.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

A thunderstorm broke over us before dawn, and when the family gathered for prayers information was given that a scout had been dispatched to ascertain if the river could be forded.

He was soon back with the news that the waters were rushing down from the mountains and no crossing could be made before mid-day at the earliest.

By 2 P.M. our heavily-laden carts were standing at the water's edge. A couple of bullock carts were ahead, and we prudently held back to see how they fared.

The safest way to cross a swollen river is by bullock cart, for should a sudden rush of water overtake it, the ox, unlike the mule, keeps its head, and quietly takes to swimming where it has lost its footing.

The river was so wide that it finally took us an hour to cross it, but the stream was divided into ten channels, some with a deep, narrow, rushing torrent, others with a wide, shallow flow. At one point our shaft mule went down, and in another moment the cart might have been overturned in the water, but the mule in the traces made a great effort, and dragged us all into shallower water.

We had barely reached the opposite bank when we heard the cry : " Save life !! Save life !! "

It was a man in difficulties in mid-stream. In a moment one of our long tent-poles was dragged from the cart, and two or three of our party rushed down to give help. As soon as he was able to grasp the pole they drew him to the bank in safety.

The most frequent cause of drowning in these rivers is from the dizziness caused by the rapid rush of the water. The Chinese say of such a man : " He does not know how to look at water," which means that he



Photograph by

Miss Brock.

"A charming little girl, dressed in her best, came to the entrance and gave each member of the party a low bow."

To face page 37.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

allows his eyes to be drawn off by the rushing, swirling current instead of keeping them fixed on the bank. In a moment he loses his bearings, and is swept off and drowned.

A few minutes later a heavy thunderstorm broke over us, and we had to stop and turn our cart with its back to the driving rain.

It was nearly dark when we reached the farmstead where we were to spend the night.

The fierce dogs had been chained lest they should fly at us when we attempted to enter the yard.

It was the home of a Christian, as was quite evident when a charming little girl, dressed in her best, came to the entrance, and gave each member of the party a low bow. She was a school-girl and understood good manners.

We were fed on cakes fried in linseed oil (not recommended for missionary exhibition refreshment stalls, being an acquired taste), and urged to eat well, as we should be on short commons next day.

Early next morning a herd of mules and donkeys was driven in that we might select the best of them to carry us and our belongings over the mountain-paths. No other means could be found of carrying the harmonium than by swinging it from a pole between two men, and as we knew it would prove to be a great attraction to a Tibetan audience, this was done.

One donkey was laden with packets of Christian books in the Tibetan language, another carried flour and rice enough to feed the party for a fortnight, and yet another tiny donkey was laden with the long tent-poles dragging on the ground behind it and bumping over the stones. The canvas and ropes of our large tent

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

made yet another load, and two more animals carried the remainder of the commissariat department.

Four mules served for riding purposes. Before long we left the hot plain and entered a deep ravine, through which rushed a stream which we crossed about fifty times in the course of the day. At mid-day a halt was called and rations served. These consisted of dry bread, raw turnips and water from the stream.

By 6 P.M. all were glad to halt for the night. The tent was erected, and we were spreading our coverlets when a gust of wind caught the canvas and laid it flat on the ground, so the work had to be done all over again.

Heavy clouds then gathered and rain began to fall, so the women of the party decided to sleep in a building resembling the prehistoric beehive dwellings of the ancient Irish. It was full of fresh-cut hay and had a little window in the centre of the roof. The only entrance possible was by creeping through a doorway about two feet high. Elaborate precautions were needed lest small objects, such as glasses and fountain pens, should be, like the proverbial needle, lost in the hay.

All next day we rode on through the narrow ravine until the late afternoon, when we suddenly emerged into a green valley carpeted with small blue iris, the alpine gentian, and patches of edelweiss.

On the hillside suddenly appeared the buildings of Kang Lung Lamasery, the golden dome shining in the last rays of the setting sun.

As we passed by the Chortan, the mere passing of which is said to bring good luck, the prayer-flags were fluttering in the wind, the prayer-bones hung on the branches of trees were rattling, and the water prayer-wheel creaked gently as it performed its revolutions.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"The greater part of Tibet is taken up by stretches of table-land, bare and stony, destitute of verdure, but in some districts covered in summer with grass or barley. In the Northern and central parts there is hardly a tree or even a shrub to be seen, but in the South there are extensive forests.

"With the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty Tibet declared its independence of China. Tibetan is an alphabetical language based on Sanscrit, and all Tibetan literature is of a religious nature. The Dalai Lama is the spiritual head of the Buddhist Church, and the doctrine of Incarnation, so far as Buddhism is concerned, is purely a Tibetan invention for political reasons."

T. SÖRENSEN.

DISPATCH NINE

COMRADES.

Directly the priests from the Lamasery caught sight of our caravan they scented a diversion from the tedium of their monotonous lives, and in a few minutes we were surrounded by a crowd of red-robed Tibetans. All had bare feet and legs and wore a full, kilted skirt reaching to the calf, a short-sleeved upper garment with a full busk, and over the shoulder a skilfully draped "erxzan." This is a red scarf about five yards long, which is folded round the body so as to leave the right arm bare. The scarf is brilliant in colour, and harmonises with the sombre, weather-worn purple of the skirt. All had closely-shaven heads.

They came running at full speed over the rough roads and over the tree-trunk which was thrown across the stream as a bridge, laughing and chatting like a lot of schoolboys.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

All our goods were a delight to them, and were minutely inspected. The radiolite watch was prime favourite. A group had erected an impromptu dark room under their spread scarves, so that they might see the watch shining in the dark.

In a short time the Head Lama, who is a Living Buddha, arrived on the scene. The only distinguishing feature in his dress was a strip of gold embroidery on his sleeveless coat. He promptly borrowed the watch for a night, so as to enjoy its wonders to the full.

Before long a number of young women joined the group. Their favourite game was to take it in turns to sit on a camp-stool, and the courage of the first heroine who dared to do this was loudly applauded.

Pushing, laughing, dragging one another by the hand, trying to trip each other into the river, they trooped back, leaving us to erect our tent and make preparations for a supper we were wanting so badly.

Three big stones were skilfully placed in position, whilst two men with an axe ran up to the pine woods in search of fuel. The pot was soon boiling, and a hot meal of boiled rice, with a cup of tea, was served round.

The feeding of our party proved to be a far from easy business. The Tibetans eat raw meat in large quantities, ground parched corn, butter, and drink yak's milk and brick tea. They neither keep fowls nor will they eat eggs. Vegetables and fruit are unknown, as these cannot well be grown by a nomad population. The Lamas live entirely upon the bounty of the worshippers.

We received many presents, including two live sheep,

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

several pounds of butter of varying degrees of antiquity, some basins of buttermilk, and a few measures of parched corn. Apart from flour and rice, like the Lamas, we took to living on public charity, accommodating our appetites to the menu provided.

There is a most pervasive flavour about all Tibetan food. The milk and butter have it strongly, and the latter is always caked with yak's hair. As might be expected, the milk turns very rapidly sour.

The odour which corresponds to that flavour hangs heavily over a Tibetan crowd. The people, however, are not without their own charm, free and simple like strong, athletic children.

The interest of the Tibetan is centred upon his flocks and herds. His yaks graze on the mountain-side, his horses range at large, and when required for use are rounded in by swift riders. Again and again the horses will evade and break through; in the final issue they use the lasso with a noose that is skilfully thrown over the head, and which, tightening on the beast's neck, soon brings it to a standstill. As soon as the animal can be approached, the daring rider will slip a bridle over its head and in a moment leap on to its bare back, galloping wildly up a precipitous mountain-side, and over paths so narrow as to be merely sheep-tracks.

The yak is a splendid beast of burden and carries heavy loads. When well fed he moves slowly, so when required for a journey the herd is saddled three days ahead and tethered by a short rope. When the start is made they have had almost nothing to eat for two days, and in this condition will walk at a rapid pace.

Their uses are many. They supply the household with milk, butter and cheese. Their flesh makes

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

excellent meat and the skin a handsome rug. The tail mounted on a wooden handle serves to keep flies and mosquitoes at bay. Its hair is also used to make the beards of fictitious aged men on the theatrical stage.

In places where snow has made the road impassable a herd of yaks is driven ahead to clear the path.

He grunts like a domestic pig and seems of a mild and peaceable disposition. Although our previous acquaintance had always been from behind a fence in the Zoo, where he looks a rather fierce beast, when we came to know him better we slept quite peaceably at night, even though the herds were roaming around our camp.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"The Buddhas having entered Nirvana, never again can reappear on this earth, and as they have no incarnations and are thus unable to help mankind, the Mahayana invented the five celestial Buddhas, who, though not subject to transmigration, are still outside of Nirvana. In their great compassion for all living beings they brought forth spiritual sons, who, through incarnations, have undertaken to save all living beings from the pain of subjection to transmigration."

T. SÖRENSEN.

"HE ABIDES ALIVE FOR EVER . . . AND FOR THIS REASON HE HAS POWER TO CONTINUE SAVING, WHOLLY AND PERFECTLY, THOSE WHO, BY HIS MEDIATION, ARE THROUGH ALL TIME DRAWING NEAR TO GOD, BECAUSE HE IS FOR EVER LIVING—LIVING TO INTERCEDE FOR THEM." *The Letter to the Hebrews.*

DISPATCH TEN

COMRADES.

There are two kinds of worship : that which you know and that which we saw to-day when the Tibetans from all the neighbouring encampments rode in to appease the demons.

From early dawn they came, men and women, galloping over the mountains. As soon as they arrived they went straight to the temple with their offerings of butter, sheep, cheese, flour and tea.

At 3 A.M. two Lamas appeared on the upper story verandah of the temple, each wearing a hat representing a cockscomb and blew blasts on trumpets fifteen feet long, which gave forth the most hellish din that it has ever been our lot to hear.

Their summons was followed by the banging of

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

gongs, clanging of cymbals, and such a pandemonium of devilish noises that hell itself might have been let loose.

All sorts of rituals took place during the day. At one of these eight priests, wearing gilt crowns, sat before a fire of logs, each one holding a bell in one hand and a rattle in the other. Into the fire they tossed handfuls of every kind of grain, of butter, of twigs, and even beautiful Iceland poppies; in fact, a handful symbolic of everything useful to man.

As each specimen was thrown into the fire the head priest poured over it a large spoonful of butter, and as the flames arose, the bells rang, the rattles jingled, the trumpets blew, the cymbals clanged and the Lamas chanted in a minor key: "O thou precious jewel of the lotus flower."

Meanwhile the crowds of men and women in the grassy courtyard prostrated themselves, knocking their foreheads on the ground.

Ceaselessly some grey-haired old people bowed themselves, hoping thereby to gain some merit.

The great event of the day was the dancing and masquerading by the priests. Again the trumpets blew and the cymbals clanged, whilst the god and goddess of thunder came forth with mincing and rhythmic steps through the great temple doors.

Slowly they advanced and performed a dance. They were dressed in gorgeous blue embroidered silks, but over their heads were fastened large black masks, with great wide-open mouths, turned-up noses and goggle eyes, the head crowned with five human skulls.

With delicate movements they pirouetted, curtsied, and bowed towards the heavens, and as the trumpets blared forth once more their hateful sound and the

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

cymbals clanged, the worshippers were startled by a loud peal of real thunder which crashed from range to range of the surrounding mountains.

Bright flashes of lightning and then a tremendous downpour of hail. It was all over in a few moments, and then appeared two sprightly clowns, dressed in white, red and green, wearing death's-head masks, who performed a fantastic dance. On they came, one after another, old men, animals, beasts and birds.

None was more gruesome than a huge black-headed crow, representing the bird which is valued for its use as a picker of dead men's bones.

Presiding over all this orgy sat a Living Buddha on his gilt throne, wearing a yellow silk mitre and a satin cloak draped around his shoulders. Surrounded by red-robed Lamas, his face was expressionless and enigmatic, but we could conjecture some of the thoughts which might be passing through his mind.

Six months ago a Tibetan gospel was first placed in his hands when he received a party of benighted Christian preachers into his home and sat late into the night listening intently to the story of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world.

He was deeply impressed, and begged the preacher to go with him to his father's house, for, he said, "They have never been able to hear of Christ."

Although he is believed to be an incarnation of Buddha and is head of the Lamasery, such an action has brought him under severe censure and reproof.

"Do you not know," asked some of the Lamas, "that this gospel is our enemy?"

During our stay in Kang-lung-shi he came nearly every day to see us, received us as honoured guests in

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

his home, and listened with grave attention to all that was said.

The daily singing of hymns never failed to draw a group of Lamas and their young disciples, in spite of the fact that some of the elder priests did all in their power to hinder them from coming to us.

When these latter saw the worshippers at the temple eagerly carrying off the Christian literature, they undertook, by performing rites of divination, to discover whether the gods would be offended if they were read.

The answer from the nether regions was as follows : " He who receives a Christian book is displeasing to the gods and will be punished by the suffering of severe headache."

The Living Buddha is a refined, quiet young man, of a retiring disposition, unable to control the conduct of the unruly old Lamas under his jurisdiction, but he has his own quiet tenacity, and the New Testament, Christian tracts, as well as a picture of the prodigal son, find a place in his own room.

It would probably cost this man his life were he to make an open profession of Christianity, but he seems to be coming to the hour when a decisive choice has to be made. It will involve a battle, in the winning of which every Comrade can have a share.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

" Travelling to the S. or advancing to the E. or S.E., juniper-trees, tamarisks, willows, pines, firs, cedars, and elms appear gradually. Then the forests grow denser, and the varieties become more numerous. The beds of the valleys and their lower slopes yield wheat, barley, rice, rhubarb, peas, grapes, apricots, jujubes, and pomegranates. The animals increase also in number and are more diversified. Perhaps in no other country of the world are wild animals so numerous. The principal are the yak, onager (locally called Ghur or Khur), antelope, gazelle, musk-deer, bear, monkey, tiger, leopard, lynx, wolf, fox, eagle."

RICHARD'S " *Geography of the Chinese Empire.*"

DISPATCH ELEVEN

COMRADES.

These hills are one big Zoo. Do you know the marmot ? It has a fat round body and a shrill voice. The hillside is riddled with its holes, and one of the recreations of our party is to attempt the impossible task of catching one.

The marmot sits quietly at its back door watching the frantic efforts of the trapper at the front entrance, and as soon as it is sighted, with one bound it vanishes.

The wild peacock also spreads its tail in the grassy glades between the hills. During the summer we are not afraid of the wolves, but in winter they form into packs, and if we tethered our sheep at the tent door as we now do, they would be gone in the morning.

Herds of beautiful antelope leap from rock to rock. We caught one which was only a few days old, a lovely little creature with pathetic eyes.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

There are also wild goats which baffle the hunter by their speed. Next time you go to the Zoo look out for the white-headed eagle from Tibet. He perched close at hand a few days ago, and one of his quills, over two feet long, is decorating our tent.

The buzzard is a great nuisance to our cook, who dare not leave a plate of meat ungarded for one moment.

These birds of prey are fed by the Lamas, who periodically prepare dainties for them, so that they will be accustomed to follow them whenever a corpse has to be disposed of.

The Tibetans do not bury their dead, but leave the body on the mountain-side, and the more rapidly the bones are picked by the birds of prey, the more certain is the dead man of a good reincarnation.

The horse he rode, the saddle he used, and much of his personal property goes to the Lama in payment for the prayers which help his soul on its journey.

The Tibetans themselves say that with his mouth the Lama recites prayers for the dead, but in his heart he is counting up the horses and the sheep.

We were invited to supper in one home in a village at the foot of the hills, and feasted on wild sheep. Before dawn our host had unhooked his old blunderbuss from the wall—a home-made weapon, finished off with two wooden prongs with which to pin the wounded beast to the ground. He was an experienced hunter, so he left his home by cart, for the wild sheep is hard to bring down, but becomes so much interested in the wheels of a cart that you can approach near enough to shoot it.

Of all the wild beasts which surround us, the one of which we are most afraid is the domestic dog.

Among the Tibetan tents he roves at large, a huge,

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

shaggy, dark-brown creature, showing his fearsome teeth. In order to deal with him you need to make a deep study of dog nature. As we expect some of you to come here we will supply you with the following hints for scouts :

1. Approach a village riding.
2. Carry a stout stick.
3. Take care that your pockets are filled with stones.
4. Learn to yell "Dang Go" (stop the dog).

When it becomes necessary to alight from your horse, keep the dog busy running after the stones. A dog cannot resist the temptation to pursue. When the stones are exhausted give the dog the end of your stick to tear. This will keep him busy for a long time, and as long as he has the stick he will not touch you.

If you are one of a party and value your skin, see to it that you are neither first nor last of those who enter the court, for the dog's nature is either to fly at the first man or catch the last one by the leg.

Meanwhile, never stop shouting with all the vigour of your college yell, "DANG GO ! DANG GO !"

Probably by the time your stock of stones is exhausted and your stick is eaten up, some one will have arrived on the scene. It may be a small naked child about five years old, who will throw her tiny arms round the dog's neck, and he will become quiet in a moment.

It is rather humiliating, when you think of that row of silver cups which you won for athletic prowess, to realise that you experienced a sense of relief when your small protectress patronisingly said, "Don't be afraid, I've got him."

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"O God, to whom the Moslem world bows in homage five times daily; look in mercy upon its peoples and reveal to them Thy Christ."

DISPATCH TWELVE

COMRADES.

Do you know the meaning of the word Ahong? One of our party was addressed by that title. This man is a Moslem teacher and preacher. He knows some Arabic, which he has learnt in the boys' school connected with the mosque.

He understands all rules for ceremonial purifications and for the slaughter of animals in such a way that no good Moslem need fear to eat the meat. Before he kills he recites the following words: "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. Blessed be the Name of the Lord," and he bleeds the animal with its face turned towards Mecca.

He is fearfully particular that all saucepans, kettles, pots and pans, and kitchen utensils should be really clean, and no one else's washing seems to satisfy him. The thing he fears most is that lard or pork in any form should touch, and thus contaminate, anything which he uses in the preparation of food.

You may offer him the most tempting cakes, but nothing will induce him to touch them for fear they should be unclean, and it must have been a renegade Moslem who said to us: "A foreign lady offered me some cakes. I was afraid to eat the paste, but I put

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

out my tongue and licked out the jam, which was very good."

Five times a day the Ahong washes in running water. If there is not a stream at hand he makes the water run from the spout of a kettle.

Every Friday when he attends service at the mosque his clothes have all been washed, and he has fulfilled all the ceremonial requirements for purification.

Five times a day he prays with his face towards Mecca, and repeats with all Moslems in every land the declaration: "There is but one God, and Mohammed is his prophet."

He calls God "Huda" and the Lord Jesus "Er Sa Sheng Ren" (the Holy Man Jesus).

If you ask him who is his forefather he proudly answers, "Ishmael, Abraham's first-born, not Isaac, the second son."

He is arrogant, haughty and feared by the people, and his one virtue is external cleanliness. We appreciate this virtue so much that when this friendly Ahong was willing to accompany us on the Tibetan trip we accepted his offer on condition that he would take charge of the cooking arrangements.

We made a compact that if we conformed to his rules for eating he must conform to ours for attendance at daily service, and this he never failed to do.

From early morning till late at night the conversation round the camp-fire was always about food and cleanliness.

"This saucepan is clean," said the assistant-cook.

"It's clean enough for you, but not for me," answered the Ahong.

"Shall I wash it again?" asked the assistant.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"No washing of yours will make it clean ! I will wash it myself."

On another occasion :

"Have a drink of cream, Ahong ?"

"It's not clean."

"Have a little dzang ba ?" (parched corn mixed with butter).

"The butter is unclean."

Or it might be :

"We have had a present of a sheep, Ahong ; will you eat some of it ?"

"Not unless I kill it myself."

"That point is easily settled ; you kill it and we will eat it."

In the end all our wits were occupied in trying to find some flaw in his ceremonial cleanliness.

"Ahong, are you sure that the apricot which you are eating is clean ?"

"I have washed it myself," was his ready answer.

"Ahong, these chopsticks have just been cut down from a tree ; are they clean enough for you ?"

"That which grows on a tree is clean, but you have handled them, so I will wash them." Thus he got the better of us every time.

"Ahong," said Evangelist, "when you have lived long enough amongst Christians you will learn to drop your perpetual nagging about food."

"Never," was the answer ; "not if I live with you for ten years."

Nevertheless he sat, an interested listener at the Bible-study classes each day, when the subject of the Lord's return was under consideration.

Ahong has trouble in his own home. His only sur-

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

viving child, from a family of eight, is slowly dying from tubercular disease of the spine.

Before the end of the campaign he felt that he must return home to see the child, and it was with genuine regret that we said good-bye to him.

A few weeks later he asked us to go and see his wife. The sick child lay on his little wooden bed, a pitiful sight. It was easy to see how the Ahong, in his poverty, was denying himself that the little sufferer might lack nothing.

We found an appetising meal spread for us, which must have strained the family resources. We were received with the utmost cordiality and we found Mrs. Ahong to be a capable, kindly woman. Both their hearts were very tender when the little boy was mentioned. We asked the Ahong if his trade of making leather shoes prospered, and his answer was : "I can make a living out of it, but the little chap's illness uses up all my spare money. Whatever he fancies I like to get for him ; it's little enough that he can eat, and I never refuse him anything."

To the mother we said : "Where do you find comfort in your trouble ?"

"Huda," she answered. "It is He who gives and He who takes away."

A present sent to the sick child included a pot of home-made jam, and our Ahong has come to believe in us sufficiently to accept it as "clean."

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"And the squares of the city shall be full of children, laughing in its squares."
THE PROPHET ZECHARIAH.

DISPATCH THIRTEEN

COMRADES.

Would that it were possible at the next annual rally to march a group of Kanchow children on to the platform of Central Hall, Westminster, and for once let you see the real thing.

You would have to acknowledge that it would not be easy to find a jollier set of little hooligans.

In the front row, on the girls' side, you would see Dong-ling, the heroine and martyr of the band. She *will* attend the children's service, even though her mother beats her every day for doing so. Her father has deserted his family and spends his time in smoking opium.

Dong-ling's great desire is to be a scholar in the Christian school, but seeing that this is impossible, she slips in by the back door and learns all that she can with a zeal which is fed by persecution.

In order to put a stop to this, her mother sent her to stay with a relative some distance away, and for many days we did not see her. Then one evening a timid voice whispered under our window: "Teacher, Dong-ling is here," and in she walked, escorted by half-a-dozen admiring companions.

"Her mother has been beating her," said one.

"Her feet have been bound up," said another. Then we were shown the cuts and bruises on her arms and

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

her little feet, which were bound around with tight bandages and tied up with string. So cruel is the method of foot-binding in this district that young girls come to the doctor's dispensary with the sinews of their feet cut through by the fine rope with which the foot is compressed.

Dong-ling receives great moral support from a band of companions, who do all in their power to help her to evade her mother's vigilance, and who bestow unstinting admiration on her heroic qualities.

Foremost amongst these is Wen-bao, a little rascal of the deepest dye, but a splendid scout. If Dong-ling's mother imprisons her in a back room, it is Wen-bao who climbs over the roof and locates her whereabouts, acting as informant to the other members of the gang.

He rushed round here the other evening, as usual munching a slice of bread, and demanded an interview with Dr. Kao.

"Dong-ling's mother has locked her in," he announced. "She is all alone in the back room and she is practising her writing."

"Do you mean to say you cannot think of a way to get her out?" asked the doctor mischievously. "You watch till her mother is out of the way, then make a sign to her to come out. Bring her straight here. I have something I want to say to her."

There is not a crack or crevice of the neighbour's houses with which Wen-bao is unfamiliar, and in a few minutes, accompanied by her bodyguard of small girls, Dong-ling arrived, heralded by the triumphant Wen-bao.

More truly pathetic is the motherless Djao-djao, who

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

is being brought up by her aunt. She knows that she will be most likely sold as wife to an opium-smoker or bought by a Mahommedan, and she has none of the mischief of the others.

She is a sad little girl of twelve years. She dare not come to the children's service, but when she can escape observation she will slip in to learn a hymn, and talk with us.

Every afternoon a gong is sounded all around the neighbouring streets, and the children come running to the mission-house.

Our average attendance is seventy, and the chatter and talk is heard all over the compound, but when the leader asks, "Have you finished talking?" with one voice they answer, "Finished," and at the sound of her bell silence reigns.

At a word every one stands to attention and the meeting opens with an exchange of profound bows. The children have learnt how to sing many of the action-songs familiar to an English kindergarten, and the vigour of their actions is sometimes quite alarming. It is rather a problem for the younger members of the congregation, who do not boast a stitch of clothing, to keep their hands free for actions. Money can be secreted inside the cheek, but if you are eating your supper in the shape of a hunch of bread and an apple, and you know that if you put it down some one may take it, you are in a predicament indeed.

With skill it is solved by holding the apple in one armpit and balancing the crust of bread on the top of your head. In this way you can stand at attention, clap your hands, or perform the suitable actions to "Sound the trumpet, beat the drum."

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

Every child has a warm friend in the Chinese missionary doctor who lives here. He cares for their souls and their bodies, and his fertile brain is always at work thinking out some plan to make their lives happier and more useful.

"It is because no one cares for the children that we have so many brigands in China," he often says.

The large open space in front of the mission-house has been levelled and sanded and a row of trees planted, so that the children may use it as a recreation-ground.

He is widely known as the children's friend. A few weeks ago a little chap of twelve tramped two days' journey to ask the Doctor to find him a job. His mother had married again and deserted him.

"How can I take you without some one standing surety for you? Supposing you deceived me or ran away?"

"I'll go out and find some one who will speak for me," said the naked little urchin.

He marched off, and in half an hour had persuaded some business man to promise the Doctor that he would be responsible for any complication that might arise. In an hour's time he emerged bathed, his hair clipped and dressed in a suit of cast-off clothes. He is the Doctor's devoted slave, and waits on him in the dispensary. He is never allowed to be idle.

Only a few days ago a little boy, who had been given to a neighbouring temple to be trained as a priest, ran here and begged the Doctor to befriend him. He had no parents, and had escaped on two previous occasions, but each time was recaptured and so severely punished that the Doctor had seen him in iron chains to which

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

was attached a heavy stone, which he dragged everywhere with him and which he had to rest on his shoulder in order to enable him to get his food to his mouth.

"Stay here till to-morrow," said the Doctor, "and then I will see your master."

A brief interview and a little straight talk on the Doctor's side resulted in the child being handed over to him. Such boys find themselves under stern discipline, and no laziness or disobedience is overlooked. After a period they will probably be drafted on to the boys' school.

A few months of regular discipline and teaching amongst the children of our neighbourhood has resulted in a complete change of tone in the large group of children which has rallied around us.

Cursing and fighting are less frequent, and on every side one hears children's voices singing hymns. An *esprit-de-corps* has arisen, and to be an attendant at the Children's Service ensures one being treated in the spirit of camaraderie.

Quite late in the evening, a short time ago, a dispute arose between some street boys and a group of our girls. Immediately the Children's Service Band rallied and the offenders found themselves hopelessly in the minority.

They thought to make good their escape, but were informed that unless they brought eighty children to service the next day the matter would not be allowed to lapse.

Of course all Comrades know that a glorious day is coming when Jesus Christ will reign as King and rule this earth in righteousness.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

What a good time the children will have then !

" I long for the joy of that glorious time,
The sweetest and brightest and best,
When the dear little children of every clime
Shall crowd to His arms and be blest."

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"The block of granite which was an obstacle in the pathway of the weak becomes a stepping-stone in the pathway of the strong."

THOMAS CARLYLE.

DISPATCH FOURTEEN

COMRADES.

The man sometimes referred to as "Evangelist" in these letters is Dr. Kao. Thirty-eight years ago he was born in a village of the province of Honan.

He was a lively youngster, and always in trouble. When he was seven years old he saw a crowd of people listening to a preacher, so he wriggled his way into the front row, and for the first time heard the name of Jesus Christ.

At the close of the address the preacher said, "Let all close their eyes while we pray."

"That's a good trick," thought the boy. "What will they be up to when we have all closed our eyes?" So, instead of doing as he was told, he put his hands like spy-glasses before his eyes, the better to detect any suspicious move on the part of the stranger.

When he was fifteen years of age he left home, and, making his way to the nearest town, he went straight to the missionary's house and asked for a job. As a result he found himself installed as a little table-boy with a wage of one shilling per month.

He now felt that he had his foot on the lowest rung of a ladder which, like that of Jack and the beanstalk, might lead anywhere.

In the providence of God he had been led into the

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

house of people who were both wise and kind. At the end of a few months, seeing his passion for learning, the missionary was saying to his wife: "That boy must go to school and have a chance of education."

Accordingly to school he went, and for one year gratified his own burning desire to get on in the world.

All this time his father, bound by conventionality, tradition and ignorance, only saw in his bright boy a possible means of increasing the family income by making him a hawker of pea-nuts.

At the end of twelve months he succeeded in temporarily frustrating the missionary's plan of giving his son an education, and having got him home, refused to allow him to return to school.

Tears, passions, entreaties were all unavailing, and he had to return to the ordinary life of the ignorant peasant boy. During the time he had spent in the mission compound, however, he had learnt that he had a Father in heaven, whose sole care was for his uttermost good, and before that Father he laid his case in earnest prayer. Alone, in the fields, by the roadside, or under the stars, he cast himself upon God.

Two months later a letter was put into his hand from Dr. Sydney Carr, one of the medical superintendents of the China Inland Mission Hospital in Kaifeng, in which he offered the lad work in the hospital. Kao saw in this the answer to his prayers, and declared his intention of accepting the offer.

Strong resistance met him at every point, but this time his mind was made up. He had enough ready cash to buy a few yards of cotton material, but as no one in his home would help him to the extent of making it up into a suit of clothes, he induced a neighbour to come

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

to his assistance, and a few days later he set out on foot for the long tramp of twenty miles to the city.

He carried all his worldly possessions in two bundles fastened to a pole and balanced across his shoulder. Unused to carrying burdens, he had not realised how the pole would cut into his flesh. He shifted it from side to side, but at the end of a few miles both shoulders were sore and inflamed, and he sank to the ground exhausted.

Utter despair seized his childish mind. To return home was quite impossible, and to reach the end of his journey seemed to be equally so. He cried to God to make a way of escape for him, even though it be by death. He lay down under a tree, and must have slept, for when he opened his eyes a tall man was standing over him. "He seemed to me to be the tallest man I had ever seen."

"What are you doing here, boy?" asked the stranger.

"I am trying to carry my bundle to the city, but my shoulders are so sore I can get no further," was the answer.

"Jump up," he said; "you call *that* a load! Here, you take my coat; I'll see to this for you."

So saying, he put the pole across his own shoulder, and together they trudged the remaining miles.

"I have never forgotten the kindness of that stranger, and that incident is in my mind every time I preach from the picture of the man weighed down by the burden of sin," Dr. Kao has often said.

The doctors very wisely placed him under severe discipline and made him an offer that, in return for his training, which would last seven years, he was to give

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

a further term of five years' service to the Hospital, a total period of twelve years. It seemed to him a lifetime, but at the end of one week's consideration he realised that he was being offered the opportunity for which he had longed. He affixed his signature to the agreement, and his career was decided.

It needed all his ingenuity to supply the absolutely necessary food and clothing from his monthly wage, and in order to get all possible warmth out of his poor little bedding, he used to tie the wadded quilt around his feet with a piece of string, thus making it into a kind of sleeping-bag.

When summer came he was still wearing his winter coat, and saw no prospect of being able to provide even that which was necessary for the intense heat. A friend, seeing his dilemma, offered to lend him money, but this he refused, knowing that he had no prospect of being able to repay it. He had proved, however, that his Father in heaven was careful of his needs, and he went out to a lonely place and prayed. When he returned he heard one of the missionaries calling for him. "Where have you been?" he said; "I sent for you an hour ago." Thereupon the missionary opened a box and took out a complete set of summer clothes, which he gave to him.

"This incident," said Dr. Kao many years later, "completely settled for me the question of need and supply."

By such lessons was Dr. Kao trained, as every missionary needs to be trained, in preparation for pioneer work.

In days of lawlessness, isolated workers may be unable for long periods to receive their supplies. Mail-bags are rifled, and stores or clothing upon which they

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

have counted may fail them. In times of illness, medical aid may be unobtainable, and every Comrade who volunteers for active service in THE Great War does well to consider whether he be such an one as will enable the Commander with ten thousand such men to encounter the one who is advancing against him with twenty thousand.

“Just so, no one of you who does not detach himself from all that belongs to him can be a disciple.”

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

“Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat there to write, saying, Set down my name, sir; the which when he had done, he saw the man draw his sword and put a helmet upon his head, and rush toward the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force; but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely. So, after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the palace; at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, even of those that walked upon the top of the palace, saying,

*Come in, come in :
Eternal glory thou shalt win.”*

BUNYAN.

DISPATCH FIFTEEN

COMRADES.

Some of you know exactly how this young man felt when, examinations behind him, the future had to be faced. A Chinese who has been trained in a Western hospital lacks no opportunity of making money, and many influential people sought his company. So far so good, but in his case, as in yours, the matter was not quite so simple as might appear.

For some years past the doctors had been bringing before their students the needs of the unevangelised province of Kansu, and something had told Kao that he would have to be amongst the number who should volunteer to go.

One of the missionary doctors had already left Kai-feng for Lanchow, and on a return visit sent for the young man and again laid the claim before him.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

Kao felt, however, as you may have felt, that there were too many difficulties in the way, so when the interview was over, having brushed aside the suggestion, he spent the remainder of the day in social intercourse with some wealthy friends.

He had of course no intention of lowering his standard of Christian profession, and as usual knelt to say his prayers when the day was over.

But he seemed to have forgotten that it is no credit to a soldier to wear his regimental badge unless he obeys his Captain's orders.

That night his Commander spoke.

Kao realised the ingratitude which could turn the gifts showered upon him to his own use and to his own aggrandisement. Had it not been for the call of God and for the provision of all his needs, what would his position have been at that hour? Had the missionaries not cared for him, body and soul, into which of these rich homes would he have had an entrance? More than all, he saw once more the vision of that Cross

"Where the young Prince of Glory died."

Before dawn he had renewed his allegiance to the Captain of his salvation. That same day he returned home, settled up his affairs, and within a few months left for Kansu with his wife and children.

After a period of work with Dr. King in the Borden Hospital at Lanchow, where his evangelistic zeal was considerably quickened, he started on a journey to the far north-west.

After many days of travel he reached the city of Kanchow, which had hitherto only been visited by one or two itinerant missionaries. As he entered the city he

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

heard the words spoken to his inner consciousness: "This is the place of My appointment for you."

Several years have passed and many battles have been fought over this territory. Sometimes, when it has seemed to be impossible to overcome the forces of evil, these words have been the inspiration which have sustained the weary soldier and urged him on to victory.

The inn where he put up soon saw that it would not be helpful to business to have a resident preacher on its premises. He was therefore requested to leave, and for a time was the guest of a patient.

He could secure no permanent dwelling, but was soon offered a room in a temple by a friendly priest. Here he started medical work, and soon had a number of patients.

His reputation was established through his treatment of a Liangchow woman whose jaw had been dislocated for three months. To the amazement of the crowd, one click and the trick was done!

Daily evangelistic services were held in the temple courtyard and rows of Christian posters soon appeared on its verandahs, some of which remain to this day.

Half Kanchow said: "This man's propaganda is a nuisance and may become a menace." The other half said: "Never mind his propaganda, you need not listen to that; but what an advantage it is to the city to have a doctor with such a fine load of medicines."

The aggressive propaganda which was carried on could not fail to raise antagonism, and this reached a climax when one day a number of people gathered in the temple court and said that Dr. Kao must leave.

"This fellow Kao," they said, "has drawn off a considerable number of people by his persuasions. He declares that hand-made gods are not gods at all."

SPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

They would have turned him out there and then had an influential citizen, who had been a patient of his, at this moment appeared on the scene. The crowd called upon this gentleman to decide the

What harm has he done? "asked Mr. Mao.

He has done no harm at all," said the priests, who the past few weeks had been enjoying his genial companionship.

He says hand-made gods are no gods at all," again roused the crowd.

You may turn me out of this temple to-day," cried Dr. Kao, "but I declare unto you, in the name of the True God, that before many years have passed there will be a Christian Church in Kanchow."

Mr. Mao then quieted the mob: "This matter," he said, "cannot rest with you. I had a large share in rebuilding this temple. Either you return me that money or allow Dr. Kao to remain here."

With these words he dismissed the assembly.

Before many days were over Dr. Kao was able to mortgage a suitable piece of land. By a series of noteworthy events during the last five years this land has been bought and premises suitable to the carrying on of medical, evangelistic and Bible training school work have been erected.

There have been many difficult days, and often the dollar has been spent. Money has been earned by hard and unremitting toil. Every offer of help has been gratefully accepted, and the wall which surrounds the compound stands as a reminder of those early days. The foundation stones were carried up from the river-



Dr. Kao and the Mission House at Kanchow.

To face page 68.

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

bed by the doctor himself, who for many weeks fetched a cartload daily.

The broken bricks of which it is built were a present from a neighbour. The Christian Church in Kanchow to-day numbers seventy-seven baptized members and over one hundred inquirers. That which cannot fail to impress the visitor is the sense of responsibility which evidently rests upon them for the untouched cities beyond.

There is no Protestant missionary between Kanchow and Tihwafu, a distance of forty-seven travelling days, but the cities which lie between are a burden upon the hearts of the Christians, as is evidenced by their prayers, and by the fact that some of the Church members have been to the frontiers of China on itinerant evangelistic journeys.

The next few months will see an organised campaign undertaken on the north-west front. The great business centre of Suchow is the objective.

The cases of "ammunition," in the shape of Christian literature of every description, are already piled up waiting the transport.

A band of men and women have volunteered to accompany the foreign missionaries. On the way halts will be called at the cities of Shaho, Kaotai, and Fuyi.

A further series of dispatches will later on reach you from Suchow if the Great Leader will.

"O Lord of hosts, Who hast given us our station and our weapons in Thine army for the warfare of this life, setting comrades beside us and sending Jesus Christ before us, make us to feel the glory and strength of Thy victorious march and to hear the triumph song where Christ marches at the head of His saints, conquering and to conquer."

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

"I can well imagine that if the Church of Christ—the whole Church of Christ—were united in life and purpose, if she were really what we sometimes sing she is—a mighty army, not shuffling along any and every road in loose and bedraggled array, but marching under one plan of campaign and moving in invincible strength, I can imagine she would have her own Intelligence Department, her own secret service, her own exploring eyes and ears, peering everywhere, listening everywhere, knowing the most hidden facts of the nation's life, and proclaiming them from ten thousand pulpits in every part of the land. But while we wait for the united Church of Christ we must not go to sleep. Young people, you must strenuously and untiringly seek to get at the facts."

Dr. J. JOWETT.

DISPATCH SIXTEEN

COMRADES.

The reading of dispatches from a quarter where active warfare is in progress, especially if reinforcements are urgently called for, is sure to make readers who are in a position to enlist inquire as to the kind of recruit needed, the training necessary, the prospects on the field, and the equipment required.

These dispatches refer to only one province of China, and the provinces vary as much as do the countries of Europe in climate, customs, physical features, as well as in the particular problems calling for solution.

There are a few strategical facts which apply to the conditions met by any foreign missionary in any part of the country at the present hour.

The first was recently expressed by a modern writer

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

on Eastern subjects when he said: "The East is sick of patronage. It is sick of Super-government. . . . It has dreamed new thoughts while we supposed it dying."

The second may be expressed in the words of a master in psychology: "In the general stress of impatience and revolt which we all breathe . . . all feelings are becoming more sensitised and unstable. . . . Now, as never before, . . . to live beautifully together demands a tact and self-control which, unless there comes a wave of Holy Love from God's infinite resources, we cannot maintain."

The third is that race-consciousness is developing so rapidly that the only safe basis for mutual confidence, love and respect is the super-racial consciousness resulting from a knowledge of the Fatherhood of God, and of fellow-citizenship in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Kansu is not a province for stationary missionaries. In order to reach the people you must be prepared to conform your life to the local proverb which says: "Your home is an inn and the inn is your home."

The need is for those who present the characteristics of versatility and adaptability.

Were you proficient in the Chinese, German, French, Russian, Tibetan, Mongolian and Arabic languages, you would find use for each one.

Intercourse with the men and women of these various races and nationalities will call for the exercise of the utmost power of adaptability.

The polished manners which are your highest

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

recommendation in dealing with the Chinese official must be deliberately put on one side if you are to win the confidence of the Tibetan and Mongol, with whom they constitute a barrier to intercourse.

The Buddhist will eagerly engage in a metaphysical discussion on the illusion of matter and the material universe or the subtleties of re-incarnation.

The Moslem will obstinately confront you on scriptural grounds, and will show a knowledge of the Old Testament which will surprise you.

Even an illiterate woman may meet you with the inquiry as to what solution you can present to the problem of release from that wheel of re-incarnations to which she is bound.

No trite and ready-made answer is going to satisfy the inquiry of earnest men and women who have made room in their lives for more hours of meditation than have most Christians, and who have fasted and denied themselves the pleasures of this life that they might gain a better place in the future.

You must devote time to thinking upon these questions if you are going to be a worthy messenger to some of these finer souls who are feeling after God if haply they might find Him. "There is no gleam of light in the world's religions but that Christ fulfils it, and no discontent of the human heart but that He meets it. Happy indeed is that missionary who can . . . begin just where the inquirer is and preach Jesus."

You have as your Teacher One who holds the key to every problem of the human mind, and He is prepared to supply you with that part of your equipment which you can in no other way acquire. If you study His methods you will observe that in every case He dealt

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

with men by meeting them at the point to which they had attained, throwing a ray of light on the true nature of their difficulties, and becoming by His inherent holiness the touchstone for testing the purity of their motives.

One of the hardships in Kansu may be a sense of isolation. It may be quite impossible to obtain medical aid in case of sickness or accident.

Long distances, swollen rivers, heavy rains or impassable roads may at any time isolate you from fellow-workers. In fact, the demand made of you is to join the ranks of those who bear suffering like loyal soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Do not for one moment imagine that this warfare is going to demand less of you than an earthly campaign. Wounds you will certainly receive and scars you will surely bear, for "this world is no parading-ground, but a battlefield."

Well may the serious Comrade ask: "And who is qualified for this career?" The answer to that question is wrapped up in that inexpressible and indefinable consciousness which is spoken of as "a call."

It comes to the unworthy, but it neither comes to the insincere nor to the trivial. It will in one moment shatter your self-made plans and ambitions. You alone will hear it. Men will call you extravagant, visionary and deluded, but if you respond you have taken the first step in a career which is Christo-centric, and one in which you will come to understand in a peculiar and personal way the meaning of such intimate words of Christ as:

"Peace I leave with you; My own peace I give to you. . . . Do not allow your heart to be troubled, nor yet to be discouraged."

DISPATCHES FROM NORTH-WEST KANSU

“ I have given you authority . . . over all the power of the enemy : and nothing shall in any wise hurt you.

“ GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS . . . AND REMEMBER, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS DAY BY DAY, UNTIL THE CLOSE OF THE AGE.”