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Throughout all this region the independence of main water-partings, or divides, and main flexures, or mountain chains, is strongly marked. Indeed, it not infrequently happens that the longest and most continuous water-divides are to be traced along lines transverse to the main ridges. Examples of "antecedent" drainage are abundant, as are also instances of that process of "cutting back" by which the head of a river gradually works upward, appropriating fresh areas and enlarging its catchment basin. A notable feature in the map is the vast area of hydrography which has no ocean outlet, the drainage losing itself in the vast lagoons and "hamúns" of the Helmand, Mashkel, Lora, Jar Morian, and other minor lakes and swamps.

A JOURNEY THROUGH SOUTH-WEST SECHUEN.

By EDWARD AMUNDSEN.*

It was snowing lightly as we left Mili Gen-chen on January 10, 1899, the first snow since leaving Chetog. A few farmhouses were seen on the steep hill slopes. Next day we crossed the high pass of Si-li-shan. We halted for tea on the high snow-covered plateau, and met a good number of muleteers *en route* for Ta-chien-lu, as we ascended the gentle slope to the summit, which was reached at noon. From this point we expected to get a view of low-lying level country, but to our dismay nothing but mountain after mountain could be seen in any direction, and to the south a blue haze, which I understood was caused by the heat. A steep descent brought us down to fine grassy pasture ground, sometimes made use of by Lolos, who keep the people hereabout in great dread. At the bottom we crossed a stream by means of a wooden bridge, where I was shown the mouth of a remarkable cave, which is held as sacred by pilgrims, who come from far to make a journey in it. It is said that a journey of twenty days may be made in this capacious cave. During these later years, however, the people are forbidden to enter it, as many who went in never came out again.

We stayed this night in a village of five houses, and the next day halted for breakfast at a village of ten or twelve houses—the last in Mili. An hour's ride further brought us to the border-line between Mili and Yung-lin, which is also the boundary between Se-chuen and Yun-nan. After crossing the border we entered on a long populous plain, which becomes wider as one gets nearer the head village, where there is a Chinese yamen, or rather a poor shed called by that name, with two stone lions in front, to lend some appearance to the place.

* Continued from vol. xv., p. 625. Received after the publication of the first instalment. Map, p. 596.

Near by is also the palace of the King of Jang, who is not a lama like the Mili potentate, but a "layman." The runner from Mili handed his charge over to this king, who treated us very courteously.

Yung-lin is not a town, but rather a big plain full of small villages. A fine river divides the plain into two parts, and is joined by a small river from the north-east. The united stream flows in a southerly direction, and empties itself into the Kiu-chiang (local name for Yang-tse-chiang) south of the great bend. The climate here is bracing, though the sun is hot. The people dress mostly in clothes made from hemp grown on the plain, and are like Chinese in features and habits, but really are not. The religion is Tibetan, and a large proportion of the population is purely Tibetan, and speaks that language, though the language of Jang proper is different from either Chinese or Tibetan. They came in numbers to visit me, and were most polite and kind.

I here got an escort of two men, and set out again for Tsong-tien (or Che-tang) on the 15th, and crossed the difficult pass of Gu-lo-dia; stayed over-night in the village of To-hua, and reached the "river of golden sand," or, as it is here called, Peh-shui-chiang—clear-water river—the next day at noon. I was greatly astonished to find the bend so far north, but so it is, the older maps to the contrary notwithstanding.* The tract to the south within the loop is subject to Li-kiang, and is called by that name. The main stream receives from the north a tributary called Tsong-tien (or Shu-ji), which serves as the boundary here between Mili and Jang; also between Se-chuen and Yun-nan.

We crossed the tributary stream on a kind of raft made of inflated skins, about thirteen in number, tied under a bamboo frame about 5 feet square. A few of our belongings were placed on it, and one passenger, who had to sit perfectly still for fear of capsizing the whole affair. When all was in order, the man, with an inflated sheepskin tied on to his stomach, swam over the swift river with the raft in tow, repeating the process till all were ferried across. It is as exciting as curious, but is the only way of getting over, and the skins and sticks have to be collected in a distant village out of the traveller's sight. We waited till nearly dark before the men came, each with his skin and sticks, to help us over. On the 18th, after leaving the almost precipitous pass of La-mo-tso, I was shown a tree on the southern ridge of the summit, which they said marked the boundary between Mili and Tsong-tien. The bend of the Yang-tse touches the southern corner of Se-chuen. We passed the villages of Mo-shi-do, Drong-tse, and Ko-tse, and proceeding up a fine valley rich in gold, iron, and coal, ascended the pass beyond to the Che-tang plain. This pass is very much dreaded because of robbers, but we did not fall into their hands. The Che-tang plain is high and cold, but prosperous for miles around the town of Tsong-tien.

* This confirms M. Bonin's statement. Cf. *Journal*, vol. xiii. p. 532.

The people here are distinctly Tibetan in features, habits, and character, and are ruled by lamas, who have their great centre about 5 miles north of the town. The resident monks number about three thousand, and are strong enough to make the entire population obey their selfish demands. The Chinese official at Tsong-tien confessed "we stand powerless before them," although there are three Chinese yamens and twenty-three small Tibetan officials in the town. The country all around is notorious for robbers. The town itself is built on the gentle slope of a small hill facing the east, and has a population of 2500. It is attractive by reason of its situation, temples, and fine buildings. It was interesting, after the deadness of Mili, to find some activity in the way of trade. There are constant strings of mules passing, carrying sugar and cloth. Tsong-tien is famous for its ponies, a number of which are sent to Burma. The climate is quite severe in winter, but fuel is plentiful.

Having reached this, to us, interesting centre, we thought ourselves out of the reach of cruel men, but found ourselves mistaken, for, after leaving Tsong-tien, my Tibetan was nearly attacked by lamas for bringing, as they alleged, a foreigner into the country, and not till we had crossed the high Shang-hal pass and reached Ge-lu-wan, on the left bank of the Kin-sha-chiang, were we out of the reach of these anti-foreign lamas. I imagine that European settlers in Tsong-tien will be sorely tried by these monastic champions, who, strange to say, are even endowed by the Chinese Government. The descent from the Shang-hal pass to the banks of the Kin-sha-chiang must have been 9000 feet. We were now obviously nearing Chinese civilization: the well-built houses and tilled ground all spoke of this. The fine palm trees by the roadside were a charming sight. Rice, vegetables, and oranges could again be indulged in—a pleasant change indeed after barley flour and buck-wheat.

We crossed the mighty Yang-tse on January 30 by means of a raft of logs, and entered the big village of Jui-tien with great pomp, having four or five soldiers to escort us, besides a good turn-out of inquisitive sightseers, who declared they had not seen a foreigner before. Another two days' march brought us to the "Fu" city of Wei-shi. This city, with about three thousand people, lies in a ravine open to north and south; food and fuel are very plentiful and cheap. Trade is fairly lively, carried on with Tibetans and Li-sos. We stayed here over the Chinese New Year, enjoying the rest very much.

Getting fresh horses, we set out on February 13 for Li-kiang, as west of Wei-shi there is nothing but Niutses and Chiutses—"wild people"—and we were not equipped for such a journey. We returned to Jui-tien and followed down the right bank of the Kin-sha river, and left it again almost opposite the village of "A-sha;" ascended the gentle pass of La-si-mu, from which a gradual descent brought us to the plain of

La-si-ba, with its beautiful lake and villages. Only a small hill now intervened between us and Li-kiang, which we crossed, and came in view of the city, Saturday the 18th. This city, which is too well known for me to say anything about it, may well boast of its fine climate and charming scenery, having as a background a sublime snowy range which may be seen far and wide. The city is a Li-so city, and the Li-sos are anything but friendly towards foreigners. As we left on the Monday following, the cry "Kill the foreign devil" was heard from every quarter.

From Li-kiang I went to Tali *viâ* La-si-ba, through Kiu-ho and Jen-chun, arriving on Saturday the 25th. The country from Li-kiang to Tali is an exhibition of nature's most lovely features. From Tali it was my intention to take the shortest route back to Ta-chien-lu. For the sake of convenience it may be divided into four parts.

1. TALI TO YUNG-PEH.—We left the former place on March 4, 1899, skirting the northern end of the lake, passed Kiang-wei (near which is a coal-pit), Huang-jia-piu (here are a number of Roman Catholic converts), and reached Chin-kiang on the 8th. We crossed the river at this place by a good ferry, the river itself being shallow and rapid. The country from here to Yung-peh is fairly well populated and very fertile.

We arrived at the city on the 11th, having crossed a tiresome pass before entering. Yung-peh is situated in a fine plain a little lower than Li-kiang, has a good wall, but is not a busy place.

2. YUNG-PEH TO JIU-YA-PIN.—Here are two roads, the "small" and the "great;" I chose the latter, though a couple of days longer; but it was miserable going over rock and cliff, through watercourses and ravines, with no inns to speak of, few people, coarse fare—altogether a dismal road. Jiu-ya-pin was reached after six days' travel. The town is in a hot plain surrounded by high hills, and has a population of 3800, a good many of whom have accepted the Roman Catholic religion. These spoke as if they looked for the partition of China with joy.

3. JIU-YA-PIN TO MIEN LIN.—From Jiu-ya-pin I set out with an escort of two men, intending to go up by Yen-yuen-hsien and through Southern Chalag to my destination; but after crossing the border-line of Se-chuen my escort left me, going off to the nearest official to hand over their charge, and I never saw them again, so when I reached La-sa-tien, I could get no escort through the Lolo country to Yen-yuen, and it is far too wild to go without. The Lolos, in their lawless condition, plunder all they think themselves a match for.

My men pleaded with me, saying it would be a pity if, after having come through so many dangerous places safely, we should fall into the hands of these Lolos; so we returned to the big river, and followed it to the junction with the Kin-ho (or Nak-chu), which appears even larger than the so-called big river. Here I left the main road and went north

by the right bank of the Kin-ho—an awful road—crossing that river at Ta-pin-ti, a big village, beyond which we managed to drag our horses along perilous cliffs to the town of Sa-lien, a big busy centre. We then entered what may be called the Jien-chang valley. We passed numerous towns from here to Mien-lin, on the banks of the An-ning river, the most important being Pan-lien-keo, Ning-yuan-fu, Li-chau, and Lo-ku. The road is fairly level and good, traffic considerable, food good and cheap, climate better than Central Se-chuen, and people polite.

4. MIEN-LIN TO TA-CHIEN-LU.—We reached Mien-lin on April 8, and set out again on the 10th through the Lolo country.

Almost as soon as one gets outside the city, Chinese are scarcely to be seen. They have a great dread of the Lolos, and do not mix with them; while the Lolo feels like a fish out of water among the Chinese, who generally treat him with great contempt. The route I intended to take had been opened by soldiers the previous year, and the Lolo chief captured and shut up in the Mien-lin yamen as hostage for future travellers. Because of this, the official could not well refuse to let me go, so he sent an escort, while at Ta-chiao a couple of Sifan were added. Thus, with four runners, we set out from Ta-chiao into the wild mountainous country, over a snowy pass, and just before dark got to the Lolo village of Yeli. It was cold, and raining hard, and at first the headman of the village utterly refused to take us in; but we forced ourselves upon him, and when my men explained what a great (!) man I was, he became very polite, and, pleading ignorance, apologized for his former conduct. The houses were poorly built of wood, roofed with boards, open to rain and snow.

Writing of these Lolos, the Rev. W. M. Upcraft says, “the men wear a loose blouse and wide, short trousers made of blue cotton cloth, over which a stout plaited felt cloak is thrown, which reaches from the neck to the knees, and is useful by day in cold or wet weather, and at night forms an ample covering.” As far as I remember, they wear long trousers too. To quote again from the same writer: “One peculiar feature is their manner of dressing the hair. Instead of wearing a queue in the way adopted by the Chinese, the Lolos allow the hair to grow long in the *front*, then braid it into a kind of horn above the forehead, so that it becomes the most conspicuous object about them. Their women-folk wear a short jacket, often finely embroidered, over a plaited skirt, not unlike a Scotch kilt. Their feet and ankles are bare—a fine contrast to the cramped, deformed feet of the Chinese women.” They have well-formed figures and even features. The ease with which they go about their work attracts the attention and wins the admiration of the traveller.

On this special occasion I found the whole family sitting round a big log fire, watching the cooking of a cow, which had died from the cold, in an enormous iron pot. When they considered the carcass

cooked, the housewife took a big wooden spoon, several feet long, and shovelled the contents of the iron pot into small tubs, which were placed before each man, likewise a good supply of rice. Wooden spoons were used in eating; chopsticks I did not see. The tubs were carefully watched, and replenished as soon as a diminution became noticeable. When the principal performers could no longer indulge, the tubs were passed to the younger and inferior members of the household, and between them all they managed to put out of sight both cow and rice. Beds were not in use, so I was offered the use of the grain chest—quite a dignified place compared with the rest.

The next stage was the worst and most dreaded, so two Lolos were to escort us instead of the Sifans. They were each armed with a long knife, and were quite "rigged up" for the occasion; but before we had gone very far, both disappeared, leaving us to make our way without guides through the dense forests, except for the services of a Lolo, who was carrying a load. Just when we got to the wildest part, however, he put down his load and went into the wood to call some other man to carry, as his turn was up, and he appeared no more. My man took up the load, and the Chinese runner, who had some years before been over the road, undertook to guide us.

By roaring torrent and mountain cliff the road led us, muddy and slippery, while the mist enveloped us on all sides, and we had to hurry along in order to make a house before the darkness came on. To our astonishment, two men came after us from the last stopping-place, and went with us to the next village, where they gave their charge over to others. I thought we were getting along nicely, and so rode ahead, but was called to halt, the escort having run away, and the carrier left his load, so I had no resource but to strap the load on to the horse and walk beside it. At midday we halted for food and rest outside a suspicious-looking settlement of Lolos, who eyed us curiously as we went over the last high pass through slushy snow nearly up to our knees, at times falling full length in the watery mass. We passed two guard-houses, held by Lolos, under official supervision. Just before dark we came to the village of Tung-tsang, where there was a rough Chinese inn, but it was a shelter from the downpour of rain through the night.

Next morning some cold rice was heated up, and an attempt was made at breakfast, but even the Chinese runner did not feel like eating, so the rice was made into a ball, and taken along to be eaten on the road, when we were sufficiently hungry. We passed many Lolo huts by the way, and soon reached Tzu-ta-ti, a big busy village in a small plain on the right bank of the Tung river. From this point the country is Chinese again. We continued over high and difficult passes—a mass of them—so bad that we had to pull the horses up after us, sometimes carrying the loads ourselves, because the road was so narrow; again over rushing torrents, which nearly carried the beasts away.

Over some of the larger streams there were suspension bridges. The country is sparsely populated. From most of the passes one could see the magnificent snow-clad ranges around Ta-chien-lu. My Tibetan was much elated, shouting "Glory!" to which I answered "Amen," as we saw but one snowy ridge intervening between us and our destination.

Mo-shi-mien is a fair-sized village, comfortably warm, though we did not stay here, but hastened up the mountain-side till, late at night, we found shelter in a poor shanty, ate some Indian meal porridge, and slept on a bed capable of holding eight coolies. We were up in the early morning and away through the dense forest that supplies Ta-chien-lu with building materials, and tramped through the heavy snow on the pass; then down again several thousand feet to Ta-chien-lu, where we were heartily welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Polhill, and others, at the mission house there.

The journey occupied from December 12, 1898, till April 18, 1899, and, though not undertaken for scientific purposes, is not, I hope, without interest.

THE EMERALD MINES OF NORTHERN ETBAI.*

By DONALD A. MAC ALISTER.

TOWARDS the end of last year, Messrs. Streeter & Co. equipped and dispatched an expedition with instructions to proceed to the so-called "Cleopatra's Emerald Mines," in the Jebel Sikait district (Northern Etbai). The expedition, which consisted of Mr. A. A. Forster, Dr. Grote, myself, and three Cornishmen, set out from Daraw on December 14, 1899. In our baggage train were 130 camels, each camel carrying from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 cwt. of tents, equipment, and tools, with all necessary supplies for four months.

Leaving Daraw, we plunged at once into the desert, travelling north-east to Wadi Shaid. On the fourth day after leaving Daraw we reached our first watering-place at the Galt (or reservoir) called Um Selim. The reservoir is situated in a small tributary off Wadi Shaid, and is accessible to camels to within 100 yards. The reservoir is in sandstone, and is 45 feet across, and probably 6 feet deep. The water is slightly milky in colour, and contains green weed; but is good, and is fed for a short time after there has been rain by a small flow issuing from a crack in the rock.

After leaving Um Selim and riding for about two hours up the well-defined wadi with its sandstone bluffs, we reached Wadi Mueila, which branches off Wadi Shaid at this point, and forms with Wadi Sibrit an alternative route to Sikait, converging again at the Abu Had

* Map, p. 596.

SKETCH MAP OF PART OF SOUTH WESTERN CHINA

illustrating the journey of
EDWARD AMUNDSEN

1898-1899.

Scale of Miles
0 20 40 60
Nat. scale 1:1,500,000 or 23.67 miles = 1 inch
Route

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