

HUMMEL AT WORK

On April 2nd HUMMEL was summoned to YANG's brother-in-law LIU, who had recently been appointed governor of Aqsu and was now seriously ill. The doctor rode off immediately, and found the patient more dead than alive. His legs were enormously swollen, the pleura was almost full of water, the heart extremely weak, and he had the greatest difficulty in breathing, being, in fact, on the point of suffocating. As HUMMEL realized that the sick man might die any minute and would probably not survive the night, he went to YANG and expressed his hesitation at taking over a seemingly hopeless case. Only if YANG definitely desired it would he do what lay in his power. YANG replied: »Do everything you can. If he dies it is the will of the gods.»

After this HUMMEL spent most of his time with the sick man. A first puncture was performed and a quantity of water drained off. YANG was himself present and sat for five hours, in HUMMEL's company, with the patient. He expressed his admiration and surprise over the tapping and often reverted to the subject afterwards. The patient recovered before his own eyes, the water disappeared, the breathing became quiet and the heart-beat returned to normal.

The mandarins especially were very impressed by this successful cure, and the doctor's reputation spread and redounded favourably upon the whole expedition.

HUMMEL had better opportunities than we others of becoming familiar with the lives and deaths of the Chinese. On one occasion an urgent message came from a mandarin. In the latter's house the doctor found a servant stretched out on the earthen floor, to all appearances dead. He had taken such a stiff dose of some narcotic drug that his life hung in the balance. The man had been discharged that same day, and found his dismissal so unjust that he had decided to take his life in his master's own house. Such a vengeance is not uncommon in China. A servant will commit suicide, not from grief, but because his master, if the death takes place in his home, will lose face. HUMMEL prescribed a drenching of the servant's naked body with cold water. This helped; the man came to, got to his feet, and was even able to make off. But when quiet had been restored he returned and took a dose that was perhaps twice as strong. And this time he succeeded in his design and it was not possible to bring him back to life.

DINNER FOR YANG

On the 5th of April we gave a big dinner for Governor-General YANG, FAN, LIU, the Qara-shahr Mongol prince, McLORN, HILBRENNER, PAN-TSILU (an English-speaking Chinese who was of great help to us in a variety of ways), and several others. BURKHAN interpreted all the speeches and conversations. The dinner was a success; YANG seemed to be enjoying himself and was in the best of spirits.