

breathed for several years past. At Dr HAUDE's request and my own he had assisted us with important meteorological information about Kansu. I sat with him for a long time. He had spent thirteen years at Lanchow, before which he had worked in Shantung for seventeen years. The mission had four fathers, four lay helpers and fourteen sisters.

To our great pleasure KUNG and GEORG had already arrived from their detour via Chung-wei. They had had various adventures on their journey.

A week or two earlier it had been possible to drive across the river on the ice; now only narrow belts of ice and drifting floes remained. The river is crossed by an iron bridge with five spans — a construction that accorded ill with the surroundings. It was 220 m long and 8 m wide.

On February 2nd we said good-bye to our new friends in Lanchow, and rolled through the crowded streets of the big, handsome city, where the red posters and the swarms of people showed that the Chinese New Year was only two days off.

Outside the town we passed innumerable graves, where generations of Lanchow Chinese were sleeping their last sleep. We followed the wide valley of the Yellow River, bordered by fair-sized mountains. But after half an hour we drove up into a little side-valley to the right, between rounded hills. The road was wide and in good condition. Up and down we went, over ridges and little gullies. The slopes were fairly steep. The country became more open; but in some places the road was sunk again. There was more snow in the ravines and in places sheltered from the sun. We pitched camp after a two hours' journey, having covered 40 km. But we were doing no map-making now, as the country was well-known. Our camp bore the number 169 and the district the name Ma-chia-chai.

### THE REAL LOESS COUNTRY

With dales on either side we drove up a ridge to a pass. Here we were surrounded in every direction by wide spaces, yellow, rounded loess hills with no solid rock. On both sides lay ploughed fields, striped white with the snow lying in the furrows.

We saw no settlers, and seldom met travellers. A golden eagle hovered over the desolate countryside. For some way the road kept to the hill-tops. Up here the ground was pretty flat, but on either side we had what looked like a sea of great yellow waves.

Now we drove down a long, steep, fearfully winding slope to a goodly sized valley, a descent of about 300 m. We proceeded in the gorge for some time, then uphill again along another. Here we met a Dodge lorry. The passengers told us that they had been a fortnight coming from Sian, and had had fights with robbers all along the road.