

writers and considered that the spectacles gave them the air of students.

There was a gradual rise terminating in a very steep ascent up a defile over a bad stony road to Shang-fei-yüeh Ling (11,000 feet). On the top of this pass there was a little snow and the air was frosty. From it he got a fine view over narrow valleys below. The descent was very steep, and the wonder was that the mules got down without a fall. The total rise was 4740 feet and the descent 2260 feet. The next day—December 24—he reached the T'ung Ho valley after a further steep descent and followed it up to Luting-kiao, 5900 feet. The hills cut up by deep narrow valleys rose to a height of 4000 or 5000 feet, but were almost bare of trees as the Chinese had cut them down. The path wound pleasantly along the hill-sides 300 or 400 feet above the river, which was of a deep blue-green colour flecked by patches of foam in the rapids. By the side of the river was a narrow belt of flat land taken up by farms and small paddy fields green with the spring crop.

Christmas Day he spent in solitary state at Waszekow in the Lu Ho valley, and the next day ascending a narrow, rocky winding valley with the Lu Ho, a dashing mountain torrent, on the right, he reached Ta-chien-lu.

Ta-chien-lu is the capital of the special area of western Szechwan. This area used to extend to Chamdo on the west, to Ya-chow-fu on the east, and nominally to Somo and Damba on the north, Taowu and Kantze on north-west. It lies in a hollow between high bleak hills. And from it