

CHAPTER X

TO LAN-CHOW

PEREIRA had now to make a big detour before he could enter Tibet. The direct route would have been through Batang to Chamdo. But this for some reason, of which there is no record, was not available. Perhaps the passes on the way were not practicable in the depth of winter. Perhaps robber bands prevented his passage. Whatever the cause, the result was that Pereira had to make a detour of hundreds of miles, and he did not actually reach Chamdo till July 28.

The General and Magistrate came nearly three miles out of the city to say good-bye as he left Ta-chien-lu on January 7, making first north and then east to Kwan-hsien, a town lying only a short distance north-west of Chengtu which he had first reached so many months ago. Pereira now had his first experience of travelling by ula, the Tibetan corvée system. The inhabitants are bound to supply animals for transport when duly requisitioned by the official. Pereira employed twelve oxen yak, two ponies for himself and servant and two for his escort. These animals only cost half a rupee a day, and he gave the men the same amount as "wine money". The animals