

A DESERT JOURNAL  
LETTERS FROM CENTRAL ASIA

by

*Evangeline French*

*Mildred Cable*

*Francesca French*

LONDON  
CONSTABLE & CO LTD

1934

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO  
ALICE HIELD  
IN APPRECIATION OF THE UNSTINTED  
LABOUR SHE GAVE TO THE HANDLING  
OF THESE LETTERS .

*by the same authors*

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THROUGH JADE GATE  
AND CENTRAL ASIA

An Account of Journeys in Kansu,  
Turkestan and the Gobi Desert

With an Introduction by the late

REV. J. STUART HOLDEN

A Frontispiece and a Map

*Sphere*: "Comparable only to that epic of travel, the journeys of Odysseus of Homer, this might almost be said to rank as a female Odyssey; for if steadfastness of faith amid trials terrible in their exactions make a great book then this is assuredly one of those fit to be dignified with that sorely over-used adjective."

*Baptist Times*: "One of the great missionary books of recent years."

*British Weekly*: "A modest and most vivid account of one of the most remarkable journeys made by adventurous women of to-day. While this book makes a special appeal to all those interested in zealous missionary work done under most difficult conditions, it ranks high among records of strange travel and adventure."

SOMETHING HAPPENED

*(Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.)*

## FOREWORD

THESE Desert Journals are personal letters sent home during a period of years spent on missionary journeys in Central Asia.

They were written in unusual places and in diverse circumstances. Sometimes in the shade of a Tibetan lamasery, sometimes in the Palace of a Mongol Khan, occasionally from the sand hills of the Edzin Gol and often in a mud shelter of the great Desert of Gobi.

The strange hieroglyphics traced by the pencil were always an object of interest to curious on-lookers : " What ability ! " " What speed ! " " They write in the scholar's flowing style ! " " Much learning has destroyed their eyesight ; look, they all wear glasses ! " were the murmured comments to which they were penned.

The dispatch of almost each letter was a problem, for only occasionally was normal postal service available, and sometimes a travelling merchant has carried a packet to post in some distant town. When brigands controlled the area and censored all letters, the journals were cut into strange patterns to be brought together again by the friend who received and circulated them.

The writers are three members of the China Inland Mission who, between them, have given ninety-eight years to missionary work in the Far East. E

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	FACING PAGE
HIRING CAMELS . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
SINGING IS LED BY THE CHILDREN'S ORCHESTRA .	42
THE GREAT GATE OF KIA-YÜ-KWAN . . . . .	45
TIBETAN WOMEN . . . . .	46
GIRLS IN GAY CLOTHES FILLED THEIR GOURDS AT THE STREAM . . . . .	117
IN THE GARDEN OF THE KHAN . . . . .	134
ONE OF GOD'S DESERT HOSTELS . . . . .	147
'SIR THOMAS COOK' AND SON . . . . .	167
A LADY OF WANG YE'S COURT . . . . .	184
ON THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE HILL IS AN OBO .	200
A FORTIFIED FARM IN NORTH-WEST KANSU . . .	204
CAVES OF THE THOUSAND BUDDHAS FAÇADE <i>pp.</i>	208
CAVES OF THE THOUSAND BUDDHAS, TUNHWANG. 'AT THE TURN OF THE HILLS THE GREAT CLIFF CAME IN SIGHT' . . . . . <i>pp.</i>	209
GROUP OF TURKI WOMEN VISITORS . <i>facing p.</i>	234
A MOSQUE NEAR TURFAN . . . . . „	243
A QAZAQ WOMAN AT HER TENT DOOR „	251