One of the world's great figures, China's "Christian General" Feng has an Old Testament religion, a medieval problem, and a modern army. He is the sole military defense of China's tottering Government. Now his enemies seem to be closing in on him. This article shows what kind of stern leader they will have to reckon with.

China's Cromwell

A Visit and an Interview

By A N N A L O U I S E S T R O N G

W HEN I become Emperor of China, there is one man I have arranged to shoot. I shall not give his name, for I could not spell it, but he is the most affable Chinese gentleman who at two o'clock in the morning, in the shivering station of Kalgan, induced me by sheer insistent politeness to travel twenty-four hours farther into the desert, in unheated cars through a blinding Mongolian snowstorm. And yet, perhaps I shall change my mind and reward him; it seems always difficult in China to decide whom to reward and whom to execute. For at least his kindly persistence brought me something more than the heavy cold with which it afflicted me.

It brought me a chance no other foreign journalist had endured—a visit to Feng Yu-hsiang in his camp in the desert, where his soldiers are digging roads and irrigation ditches, in the very week when he was step by step rising to become known as China's chief military general. The coming man—both hailed and hated!

A LREADY Feng was known as one of four leading generals, each of whom had a chance to go down in history as China's savior or conqueror. To the northeast ruled Chang Tso-lin, and the foreigners were betting on him. At his rear Japan supplied support of morale and munitions, and British munitions works, disappointed in General Wu, had advanced him 40,000 pounds of credits. None of these loved Chang, but they thought they could use him. A conqueror he, coming down from Manchuria, whence conquerors of China have come in the past. An Oriental potentate of the finest water, seated in a throne-room between two stuffed tigers, surrounded by his $300,000 collection of jade ornaments and his dozen concubines and wives. But Chang made the great mistake of asking for foreign funds to "unify" China; and in that moment the Chinese began to turn from him.

In Central China, with his base on the Yangtze, at the ancient trading city of Hankow, General Wu Pei-fu tried to preserve the remains of his former glory. He held the respect of the Chinese, but not their enthusiasm. A loyal Confucianist, he kept to the ancient ethics. Not much more than a year ago, when he took Peking, which had been in the hands of his former teacher, Wu remained outside the gate while his teacher withdrew from the city, for his code forbade him to humiliate a man who had once taught him. When he himself escaped from Peking later, in the vicissitudes of fortune, he was found in a gunboat reading the maxims of Confucius.

In his retirement he wrote poems and painted pictures. And when important Chinese politicians visited his retirement to urge some action which might overthrow a government it was deceitfully announced in the papers that they had visited General Wu "in order to spend a pleasant week discussing ancient Chinese literature." Then every one smiled blandly at the cheerful classic flavor which Wu introduces into politics. Charming old Wu, exploited by a bunch of well-born grifters as the only man they can all trust to "reward his friends." He has more political "friends" than any one else, but they have little coherence. Almost every time they leave Wu in the lurch.

Far to the south, in the province of Kwangtung, as large and populous a state as France, the "Red troops" of Canton were extending their sway. They are "Red" chiefly in the eyes of foreigners, who dislike the virile nationalism of which Canton is leader and the anti-foreign strikes and boycotts which she so efficiently maintains on occasion. Otherwise their slogans are "Honest government" and "Make Canton safe for business," which incidentally involves a struggle with the rival British port of Hongkong. They continue the traditions of Sun Yat-sen, and all over China the younger radicals and national patriots look to them for light. Steadily all summer they had been beating back a four-fold "Anti-Red Army" launched against them with Hongkong as base. They had regained their whole large province; but they were too far on the edge of China to influence, except by example, the main current of Chinese politics.

R EMAINED Feng, the "Christian general," far in the northwest, with his back to the deserts of Mongolia, with one arm reaching west to the mighty heights of Tibet and the other stretching southeast to touch and control the police troops of the capital. Steadily his prestige had risen as a builder of roads and restorer of order and cleaner-out of opium rings.

Until a year ago he had been persistently isolated by Wu, moved to backwoods provinces where he could import no ammunition or given police jobs by which he "lost face." Finally, a year back, he performed his historic "betrayal," and, sent by Wu to the front against Chang while the pay for his troops was stolen by Wu's Peking satellites, he executed a counter-march and seized Peking, declaring the war ended and himself in control of the capital.

"They came into Peking," said an amused Y. M. C. A. worker, "singing words to the tune of 'Hark! the Herald Angels Sing!' You couldn't be much afraid of cheerful troops like that. And actually the Mayor Feng appointed has been the best Peking has ever known."

The marching songs of the Chinese are an interesting composite of tunes learned from mission schools (for Chinese music lacks swing and melody) and words which no mission school would acknowledge. One favorite march, to the air of "Jesus Loves Me," runs something like this:

Jesus loves me, this I know;
We will overcome the English,
For the Bible tells me so.
We will overcome the French.

And the chorus relates how "We will drive out all the foreigners!"

But Feng's Christianity goes deeper than this medley. His wife is a former Y. W. C. A. worker; he has introduced Y. M. C. A. clubs to improve the morale of his army; he has won the eternal enmity of the British-American Tobacco Company by prohibiting cigarettes to his soldiers, thus interfering with the com-
pany's advertised intention of "putting a cigarette into the mouth of every man, woman, and child in China." He supervises his men's morals and punishes looting with the iron hand of a Cromwell.

It is told of him that when he was sent to the northwest to take command of the province of Chahar he subdued and rounded up the previous troops, who had been looting the people, and promised to send them all home to their distant provinces. Then, when he had them surrounded at the station, he had each man searched for loot. And the looters were put on a special train and taken out on a bridge, where they were mowed down by machine guns. No Chinese thinks less of Feng for this; for life is cheap in China and order is difficult and dear.

A weaker-hearted missionary acquaintance of Feng took him to task for this drastic clean-up, and Feng replied, frankly, that he "had taken it to the Lord in prayer for a whole night." Then he turned to his Bible and read of the terrible dooms meted out to the disturbers of the peace in ancient Israel, and he knew, he said, that he must destroy evil "root and branch." Such is the "Christianity" of Feng Yu-hsiang! Reminiscent of the steel of the Middle Ages rather than of the soft easiness of today.

W hat the Chinese of the old school criticize in Feng is not his harsh discipline, but his "treachery" to Wu. For ancient Chinese ethics recognizes obligations to friends, but none to country. Feng's claim, that he returned to Peking to stop the war between Wu and Chang and give the people peace, gained little adherence. It was not then known, what became clear a year later, that Feng's betrayal of Wu was part of a preconceived program whereby another subordinate general serving under Chang should also betray his master and seize Mukden when Feng seized Peking, and that the two of them should then join hands, declaring a stable peace. The other general, Kuo, acted with Oriental procrastination a whole year later. These are the recent events which have made Feng chief military leader in China.

But already the great wave of nationalism which swept through China last summer as the result of the Shanghai shooting, and the many shootings of Chinese by foreigners which followed this first one, had pushed Feng upwards into favor with the nationalists. For Chang, under obligations to foreign Powers, closed labor unions and students' headquarters; and Wu, the conservative, did likewise. But Feng had nothing to lose by a strong nationalism. At his back beyond Mongolia lay the Soviet Union and the Trans-Siberian, by which he was bringing his military freight, since Chang controlled the seas. He had received no loans tying him to Japan or England. Nothing prevented him from coming out strongly for the nationalists. Whether he was sincere or not, is of importance only to Feng's own conscience. He will become sincere, at any rate, as time goes on, for he has learned already that his own interests lie with the Chinese students and common people.

So already when I visited him he was recognized by the Nationalist Party of China and all young radicals and students as the northern hope of that movement which in the south ruled Canton. Mrs. Sun Yat-Sen had said to me: "In two or three years, if Canton expands northward and Feng expands southward till we meet at the Yangtze, we shall be able to unite and form a really representative government of China." And yet the attitude of the nationalists is one of growing but still incompleteness. "Feng speaks well now," they say, "but we have been deceived so often. How will he speak when he really comes to power?"

It was to gain light on this question that I took train from the outskirts of Peking to Kalgan, beyond the Chinese Wall. As the train pulled out of the station a man with a pleasant smile entered my compartment, selling an anti-opium journal, and reminding me that I was already in Feng's sphere of influence. Two missionaries on the train were going up to ask Feng's aid in their anti-opium propaganda.

The mountains begin barely an hour beyond Peking—great jagged walls of rock topped by the Chinese Wall, which runs 1,500 miles along the northwest frontier. Beyond them came Kalgan, Feng's original headquarters, a windy, dusty city set in the midst of gorgeous hills. We held handkerchiefs over our faces to keep out the dust blowing from a thousand miles of Mongolian plains, while our rickshas ran between high mud walls that bound the usual Chinese street. Posters painted on these crumbling walls denounced opium or advocated the advantages of learning to read and write. But competing with these were advertisements of "Rex Cigarettes, Bristol and London."

Down through the shopping streets next! Gay floating banners of colored paper meet overhead in the narrow streets, gaudy tissue-paper tassels, and hanging lanterns. Stuffed bears and leopards stand at attention, announcing a trading post of Mongolian furs. And here a "Shop of a Thousand Pipes" makes it plain that Feng has not quite cleaned out opium smoking; in spite of the assurance of my guide that these pipes are sold only as souvenirs of former days, there seemed too many new ones in good condition. Along the street the raucous tones of a phonograph grinding Broadway jazz makes it plain that even far-away Kalgan is getting civilized.

Yesterday, an American tells me, two bandits were executed in the dry river-bed of Kalgan, before a curious crowd of ten thousand spectators who lined both banks and crowded the bridge. The prisoners arrived in a wagon, preceded and followed by soldiers, handcuffed, with their crimes painted on a large placard. They drove under the bridge to a dry spot in the river-bed and knelt stolidly by two holes already dug in the sand while a near-by soldier pulled the trigger that crashed a bullet in their brains. Then dirt was piled into the hole and the crowd dispersed. And Kalgan people say, approvingly, that "life and property are safe, since Feng brought discipline."

Feng himself, I learn, is a day's journey beyond Kalgan in the desert. So I talk first with General Chang—not Chang Tso-lin, but another of the numerous Chang clan, one of Feng's subordinates, and Governor of the province of Chahar. The walls of his reception-room were decorated with framed pictures of Christ in Gethsemane and the repentant Peter, intermingled with old bamboo designs and military photographs.
He served us tea, as usual, but confined himself to hot water; wise man, considering the constant stream of guests with whom he must have tea!

"We are building a new type of army," he said, "and a new type of officer and soldier. When we enlist men, we go to the country districts. We ask each man, 'Have you been a soldier before?' If he has, we refuse him. All soldiers that ever were before were bandits. We want White paper, without any color on it. Then we train him to work and to fight and to read and write. We are teaching many trades to our soldiers: weaving, carpentry, soap-making. Just now we are reclaiming a million acres of land in southern Mongolia. We shall give our soldiers first right to settle on this land. So we shall have farmers who can read and defend themselves. They will be citizens—the first citizens of China. Always before have been farmers who could not defend themselves and bandits who did not work but preyed on the farmers.

"Since the Shanghai shooting one thousand students have asked to serve in our army, in order to build up a People's Army in place of the many armed bands of mercenaries under different generals. We give these students very rough discipline; we put them in the ranks under stern, uncultured officers. We must learn if the students are truly patient and enduring, or only sentimental. If they are patient, we shall see that they rise steadily, keeping always their touch with the common soldier. We shall get a new type of officer, who can leaven and train the whole army."

I was after my talk with Chang that I met the courteous Chinese gentleman whom I don't know whether to reward or execute. Stupid with sleep and cold, I was waiting in the Kalgan station for the after-midnight express to return me to Peking when this most affable creature appeared. He waved impressively a telegram that seemed to come from Feng himself; he urged me to come into the desert to see the great commander. Only twenty-four hours farther; he assured me that the trains were comfortable and heated, that Feng would entertain me in his private hotel. It was my first experience of that Chinese courtesy which assures you of everything pleasant without regard to veracity. I felt for it. I felt this insistent official would hardly dare approach Feng's presence if he did not bring me, so polite had he been.

Flendid cold! Even the coolies wore sheepskins. I was the only person, it seemed, in all Mongolia who had neither furs nor wadded clothing. A snow-storm broke from picturesque but much-unappreciated mountains on our unheated train. Late the following night we reached a desolate frontier station and found ourselves quite unexpected. However, Feng's forces were game. They took us to the new hotel which Feng had built for his many guests. We were the first to sleep there. The plaster was damp on the walls, the stoves not yet attached. Four husky soldiers brought up from the station some armfuls of tables and chairs and bedding.

Thus we encamped for the night. Sharing my room was the Swiss governess who taught Feng's children; she also had just come from Kalgan, summoned by Mrs. Feng. His children, she told me, studied all summer in a little shack with mud floor and no windows; they swept the floor themselves every morning. Feng believed in discipline and the simple life for his family. She hoped, she said, that now that the cold was come they would have a warmed room.

Out to Feng's own headquarters I went next morning. Everywhere were gangs of soldiers building roads, digging...
irrigation ditches. I passed two hundred of them marching up from the station to Feng's hotel, each carrying a chair or a table or a bench or part of a bed. Thus simply is the transport problem solved by plenty of man-power. By evening the entire hotel was furnished.

In a plain little room, with grass matting over the mud floor, Feng received me. Thank Heaven, here at last there was a stove! Outside hundreds of soldiers were busily constructing the new barracks. For Feng boasts that when he is assigned to govern a new province he does not throw the people out of their homes to make room for his soldiers. He builds always new barracks outside the city walls—barracks of firm desert-mud bricks which will last a generation if no floods come and which cost little but labor, of which he has plenty.

"The first need of China," said Feng to me, "is to push popular education till every man can read." This is called Bolshevism by many old-fashioned Chinese; even university presidents have urged that only the scholar-official class need read, and the people should obey, uncontaminated by the restlessness which follows education. "The second thing," said Feng, "is to build good roads and railroads; we have built this summer four hundred miles of road from here to Kansu, fifty feet wide, with four rows of trees, and with eighty bridges. Now the peasants of Kansu at last will have a market. Next we must reclaim the waste lands by irrigation and settle on them the surplus population of Central China. We must give loans to these new colonists; already I have started three Credit Loan Bureaus, one in each province that I am assigned to control."

A stolid man, tall and strong, he had recited his program with a bored but courteous air. His secretary had told me that he works like a horse from four in the morning, and keeps his soldiers always working to keep them out of mischief. Somewhere beyond the reception-room in which we sat there waited him, I knew, the morning's pile of telegrams—wires from Chang Tso-lin, from Wu Pei-fu, from advisers in Peking and semi-subordinate allied generals in many provinces. For all China behind me was seething with civil war; and the burning question everywhere was, "What will Feng do?" And Feng had retired twenty-four hours' journey into the desert to survey the province of Kansu, which had been assigned him. He expected men of virtue to keep peace in China. Especially Peking had grinned over his telegram to Chang Tso-lin, in which he said, with the humble courtesy of the Chinese, that if Chang "needs any of my troops to run errands let me know, that I may so instruct them." While Chang made restless and insecure plans at Mukden and wondered what Feng was really going to do!

It was my inexperience that led me to ask Feng a useless question, "How many provinces do you think you could handle with your present organization?" I might have known that he would reply in the Chinese manner: "Even to manage one province properly is too much for my inexperience."

Feng blamed the foreigners greatly for China's civil wars. "Every grafting politician," he said, "runs away to a foreign settlement, where he lives under foreign protection in the very heart of China, plotting for future power. The Chinese people whom he deceives cannot
catch or punish him. The foreigners give him arms in return for special privileges; and the Chinese cannot prevent this, for the foreigners themselves decide what 'debts' shall be recognized and charged against the Chinese customs income. Our tariff is controlled by foreigners, so our money goes out of the country. This keeps the people poor, and the hungry peasants turn bandits.

This starts war. England and Japan conquered Korea; they wish to try the same methods in China. But they will not succeed, for our nationalist movement is growing."

As I went out Feng gave me a copy of a patriotic song which he had himself written for his soldiers:

We are a great race and have long existed;
In ability and strength equal to any Power;
In morals and population unexcelled;
But by long oppression reduced to weakness,
Civil strife and foreign thefts know no limits;
In name a Republic, in fact only beasts of burden!
Unclothed against cold, eating grass roots for hunger!...
A "Republic" means "people's rule," but revolting is the extravagance of our rulers,
Wearing silks and satins, eating sharks' fins and bird's-nests,
Indulging in opium and sparrow-playing, squandering thousands for a concubine,
Skullking behind the lines where their soldiers gain loot for them!...
In a democracy Officials are servants and soldiers are protectors,
Securing for the people the right to work happily unmolested,
So that unworried by food and clothing they shall become masters of their lives and real citizens.
If we are unspoiled by money and treated with equality

Then the day of world peace is not far off;
All oppressed peoples of the world are our brothers;
All who oppose equality we shall not tolerate;
For this we shed our blood, and this shall be our glory!

One Thing at a Time

By DON C. SEITZ

DISSATISFACTION with educational conditions in the United States is reflected in the considerable support received by the effort to add Federal supervision to the already overloaded systems of State instruction throughout the country. The people, who in some mysterious way ascribe the power of miracle working to the General Government, seem unable to grasp the readily apparent fact that what really ails education is that there is too much of it. Little Willie is being fed more than he can hold.

Mr. George B. Morton, of the pleasant and intelligent town of Paré, Maine, has recently been delving into the costs of education in his community, compared with the 'fifties, when the neighborhood rejoiced in reputations made by such native sons as Hannibal Hamlin and Horatio King. Education then cost $7.50 per juvenile yearly, against a present-day rate of $73, or nearly ten times as much. The school census shows that there are fifteen more pupils now attending its schools than there were at the earlier date.

Of course, many items enter into the increase. Teachers' salaries were small in the olden time—$2.50 to $5 per week. School-books had to be provided by parents. Now the town buys them. This implies less care in their use and preservation. Besides, school-book companies do a deal of revising. Their editors are always making new volumes to keep education up to date or to fit more advanced theories, while incidentally increasing output. Formerly there was no supervision by State or county.

So, while economists like Mr. Morton, whose corporation is the largest taxpayer in his town, are seeking reasons for the constant increase in their load outside forces are always rallying against them in too great numbers to be set aside. Per capita costs grow steadily, therefore, and the prospects of Federal supervision only add to their certainty for the future.

What is true in Paris, Maine, is true in every other town in the United States. The cost, however, is not the chief question. That lies in whether or not the pupils are given value received in the hodge-podge fed to them daily by their instructors. The complaint behind the desire for Federal control is that they are not. While no one explains the reason, it is not a bad guess to ascribe the ills to intellectual indigestion.

Physicians can usually prescribe cures for the physical source of this distemper. What, then, can be done in the way of educational relief? The obvious answer is to curtail confusion and increase efficiency by teaching one thing at a time. The basis of all knowledge is the ability to read. In far too many instances reading is negligently taught. Crowded classes, that must move from room to room at the tap of the bell, are hurried through their lessons with scant attention to recitations, which are usually left to a gifted few while the others are left to stumble.

By taking the child at six and teaching nothing but reading in the class, two things would be insured; capacity to acquire knowledge and interest in the acquisition, both now lamentably absent. Having learned to read well and intelligently, spelling and writing should follow, flavored with a little grammar. Thus the art of disseminating knowledge would be added to that of acquiring it. Mathematics should come next, up to square root, eliminating algebra. Then a course in history and geography could conclude what should be the average education. High schools and colleges for...