

hitherto appeared but faintly silhouetted on the horizon, began to stand out in clearer and clearer detail, until at last one saw in their recesses the rocky gap that is the opening of the Nan-k'ou Valley. Just as the train entered this valley a Spring storm, dark with flying dust, came sweeping over the landscape, and the interesting scenery was obscured. The Great Wall with its picturesque creepers on either side of the valley disappeared, and the interior of our carriage took on a grey tone of dust and powder.

This carriage had been placed at our disposal by the Government, but we had to pay a pretty penny for the hire of it.

It is dark as we pass Kalgan. During the night and the following day we continue on our journey westwards between fields and villages. In the north rises the Yin-shan, otherwise known as the Ta-ch'ing-shan.

At Kuei-hua, the capital of the province Sui-yüan, Dr ERİK NORIN came down to the train to greet us on our way through. He was in Kuei-hua purchasing provisions.

The railroad stretches further to the west, following the southern foot of the Yin-shan, whose ridges stretch as far as the eye can see. To the south the plain carries the gaze imperceptibly downwards to the Huang-ho, of whose mighty stream we can only glimpse a couple of bends. Towards evening we arrive in Pao-t'ou, the little town where thirty years previously I had spent a couple of days with Swedish missionaries.

## IN PAO-T'OU

The European members of the staff were on the platform to meet us. The heavy silver chests and the rest of the baggage were loaded on to ox-carts, while we ourselves drove or rode to the south gate of the town and so to our new headquarters. The house we had hired for the purpose contained fourteen rooms, a dining room and kitchen department with three cooks. In the courtyard was a whole mountain of boxes containing the tinned provisions we had bought in Tientsin. In a sheltered corner Dr HAUDE had his meteorological observatory. In a little enclosure we found the eleven magnificent camels that LARSON had acquired. As the fate of the expedition had hung in the balance for two months he had not been able to begin a systematic purchase of camels. This would, moreover, only be possible in Inner Mongolia, whither we planned to remove with the help of hired camels as soon as all the preparations in Pao-t'ou were concluded. To have acquired the three hundred camels we needed, with Pao-t'ou as our base of operations, would have been too risky. YEN HSI-SHAN, the well-known governor of Shansi, had quartered a considerable garrison in the town, and the streets were swarming with soldiers. We knew that the military confiscated camels without