

packed into wooden boxes. The next morning our Mongols set off under the escort of MASSENBACH and MÜHLENWEG to the camel-owners.

On June 16th the first lot of camels were led into the camp. They were large, plump and handsome beasts, and it was a particular pleasure for me to inspect them under LARSON's guidance. Their humps were fat yet firm, conical and erect. They had already moulted most of their winter wool, and therefore looked naked.

If we had been satisfied with mediocre camels our caravan would have been ready to start long since; but I was determined to have only first-class animals, that would not only be able to stand up to the 2,100 kilometers to Urumchi but that we could also use later on for new marches. LARSON had made it a point of pride that our caravan should be the finest to set out for the interior within living memory.

STORM

On the 19th June I was awakened by a strong and rising wind, and after lunch the leaden clouds that had come driving from the west began to unburden themselves. The first downfall was whipped over the camp by a raging storm. We called up every Mongol we had to hammer in the tent-pegs harder, to resist the terrific pressure of the wind. We expected the taut-drawn canvas to give way any moment; but these Mongolian tents are ingeniously constructed, with a functionalistic stream-line form. The rain lashed against the canvas with such violence that a fine mist came seeping through. Everything that was not under cover became wet, so I draped rugs over my books, maps and piles of newly washed underclothes. After a while this heavy rainfall turned into a fusillade of hail-stones, and this, together with the thunder that pealed and rumbled overhead, gave one a vivid impression of being exposed to a violent bombardment.

The velocity of the wind rose to seventeen second-meters, and the temperature sank rapidly from 25° to 15.7° Centigrade.

On the 21st June NORIN and BERGMAN returned from their three weeks' tour to Beli-miao. They had worked around the temple and in the tract lying between the latter and our camp. NORIN had made a plane-table map of the ground they had covered to a scale of 1:50,000, and had studied the geology of this region. BERGMAN had come across three prehistoric sites from which he brought flint objects that had been worked upon by man.

RAIN

Early in the afternoon of June 21st it began to rain, and continued without interruption the whole night. When we awoke next day a storm was raging and it was piercingly cold. The sky was overcast and dark, but it had stopped raining.