

There was a roaring wind, however — as usual, from the west. At the camp the velocity of the wind rose to seventeen second-meters, but on a nearby hillock it was as much as twenty-eight meters per second. The maximum temperature was a little over 13° Centigrade, and strange as it may seem, we certainly felt the cold now more keenly than ever we did in the winter. Shortly before the sun went down in a sea of flaming gold the wind suddenly fell; it became dead calm, and the stars began to appear. Chilled and shivering, we crept out of our lairs, where we had sat writing till the storm should show signs of abating.

The rainy period does not generally begin before July 10th, as LARSON had assured us. According to HAUDE, however, the storm we had experienced was nevertheless to be regarded as the first clear visitation of the monsoon.

Many of our newly purchased camels had moulted all their wool. They had to spend the night together and covered with felts and canvas sheets. Such an arrangement is, however, rather risky in a strong wind unless the camels are accustomed to it. If the wind gets under a camel-felt and starts fluttering it and slapping the animals may take fright and bolt. Two of our Mongols had therefore to keep watch over the camels all night in a cold drizzle.

#### ANXIETY FOR THE CAMEL BUYERS

Meantime, the days slipped by with astonishing rapidity. There was no tedium in the camp — all had work to do, and something new happened every day. We made plans for the future and were kept in a continual state of tension and suspense, waiting for camels from the north-east. It is no light matter to send a party of Mongols out into the unknown with ten thousand dollars in silver, and we could not help feeling certain misgivings when day followed day without our hearing anything of them.

We were all well enough aware of the restlessness of the times. At midsummer I had a letter from Father DIELTIENS in Ho-chiao, saying that in the district to the east of the Belgian mission-station there had been a regular battle between two thousand »Red Spears» and a thousand bandits. The latter had been victorious, and had slain twenty-two of their opponents. The Red Spears were rallying to take revenge, and the scene of hostilities moved eastwards.

#### SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENT

On June 26th we had a regular fête Sunday in the 'town of the four nations'. A curious Chinese company had arrived in the camp: four or five fellows with three women and half-a-dozen dirty youngsters. They declared that they were a travelling theatrical company, and that they had come to show us a sample