

are out of sight. Mingghan-jasak extends south as far as Wu-yüan. In this tract grain was at that time double the price it had been two months previously.

To the S. S. E. there were several Chinese settlers, who cultivated rye, wheat, peas etc. The settlers leave their families at home in China and stay in these places for a period, after which they return home with hides, wool and such like products. Their farming is absolutely dependent on the rain, for irrigation is impossible — the water-courses are too small.

In this place we engaged two more coolies.

Two of our camels ran away. We took a film of a Mongol who told fortunes in the shoulder-blade of a sheep. He put the shoulder-blade on the glowing embers in a Mongolian brazier, after a while taking it out to examine the cracks that had been caused. LARSON asked him if our two runaway camels would return that day. Yes, they would. The fellow even showed, by pointing at the sky, at what time they would come back.

The camels were restive on August 3rd. MENTU and I had not gone far before we saw a section of the caravan a little way ahead that had thrown their loads. But the trouble-makers were captured and had already been re-loaded as we rode past.

### THROUGH LIU-TAO-KU

Half an hour later we had arrived at the little Chinese village of Hötel-khuduk (The Well at the Pass). Here LARSON had halted with all his sections except the first. One of the files had thrown their loads again — they were still strewn about on the ground. LARSON got his Mongols to unload all the camels, in order to forestall trouble on a large scale. The wildest of the beasts, that had been loaded with 250 kilograms of rice or flour (instead of the normal 180) had unburdened themselves without any help. Three camels had run away and were being pursued by riders. They were caught up and captured after a two hours' chase.

I went on ahead, however, and after a little while we were riding up a low ridge with a large and a little obo. From the crown of this hill one had an almost limitless view to the west and south-west. Our heads swam at the sight of this vast expanse of country, rolling away to the horizon in the direction of our route, and that we still had to traverse. Here was space and to spare; as far as the eye could reach stretched nothing but low hills.

The caravan route in these parts was so dead and desolate that a meeting with a Mongol on camel-back or a couple of armed Chinese soldiers on horses was an event. One exchanged greetings and put the usual questions: where from —? where to —? and whether the other party had had a good journey.