

of the bed the country opened out to show vast plains. We were about to leave behind us the small hills that we had been travelling among ever since we left camp X at Chendamen. The Lang-shan in the south almost disappeared in the distance.

### ACROSS WIDE PLAINS

At a quarter to five it commenced to rain, and a violent N. W. storm broke loose. We halted and waited. After a while the Mongol MATE LAMA, who had gone ahead to reconnoitre, came back. He had spoken with a herdsman, and found that we were near a source. We went on for another hour westwards and S. W., and MATE showed us the watering place. He and MENTU pitched my tent in pouring rain, crashing thunder and vivid stabs of lightning. We had 40.6 kilometers behind us.

Our camp was situated near the Abdarantei-gol on a wide plain with black hills of lava. We had now left the last Chinese settlements behind. One saw but few Mongol *yurts*, for one always finds these a little off the main roads.

LARSON, with the main body of wild camels and the provisions, had spent the night thirty li to the east.

From our camp, looking north-east, one could see the little monastery of Burkhantei-sume at the foot of a conical hill three or four kilometers distant. This monastery was vacant.

At ten o'clock on August 4th we were under way. HUMMEL hopped down from his camel for every flower he saw, and added it to his herbarium. The steppe is covered with quite thick clumps of the hard, high grass *tsaghan-deresun*. Here and there one sees nettles. Our botanizing doctor found further that artemisia, aster, convolvulus, iris, chive and different varieties of grass prevailed.

We traversed a dry stream-bed from the mountains in the north. It was thirty meters in width and very shallow. Forty-seven cows and two horses were browsing on the bank. A little farther on quite a large herd of horses were pasturing. The herd, clad in straw hat and on horse-back, came up to exchange greetings. He told us that the tract was called Khadain-ger. The mountains to the north were called Khadain-ul (meaning simply »Rock Mountains«).

The route was formed of seventeen parallel paths with low green bands between. Throughout the day it was much better than it had been the day before, and could easily have been trafficked by motor-car.

The blaze of the sun was filtered by light clouds; there was no wind. I rode with nothing more than a shirt, as lightly clad as possible.

Looking ahead, to W. N. W., the eye followed the rolling plain to the horizon. There seemed to be no end to it; it was like being at sea. Only to the S. W. and W. S. W. were there mountains in the blue distance. Despite the monotony, one