

drifted with the current. One felt nothing of the hard wind in this peaceful passage where the wood and the high bank on our left gave us impenetrable protection.

By lunch-time, at one o'clock, the enchanted wood had come to an end; the river widened and became as tortuous and winding as before.

We were probably the first to navigate the river, unless the generals of the old Han emperors transported war materials and supplies on the Edsen-gol during their wars against the Huns. But of this we know nothing, and the annals are silent on the point.

At last the sun went down, and night began to fall over a new camping-place. We sat round the fire and talked. Over our heads flew two flocks of wild geese. We did not see them, but we heard them honking. They seem generally to fly at night — just like the Chinese merchant caravans to Guchen, and possibly for the same reason — in order to be able to pasture during the day.

On the following day we found that the river had sunk a few centimeters. Here and there we passed browsing cattle on the grassy patches on the banks. The cows stood and stared at us stupidly, but a herd of horses swung round sharply and dashed off between the bushes in a cloud of dust. The same astonishment was shown by three camels drinking at the water's edge.

The breadth of the river changed frequently. Sometimes it was all of seventy meters, at sharp bends often scarcely ten.

Suddenly there was a change of scene. The wood came to an end. A few odd poplars formed its outposts lakewards. The tamarisks, too, became sparser. On either side stretched a grass and reed-covered plain. Between the two rivers Dunda-gol and Oboin-gol there rises here an isolated, gravel-covered plateau, and on this the prince of the Torguts has his yurts and his *yamen*. Not far from the prince's settlement rises the little temple Dagelin-gompa. We pitched camp on the bank below the plateau.

Three novices in the temple, brisk and lively fellows, showed surprising gaiety. They were really as little shy as could be desired, and darted about between our tents like tame squirrels. When HUMMEL and HASLUND had been here on their botanical tour they had made acquaintance with the novices, and it was comical to see the pleasure with which the latter now renewed acquaintance with HASLUND, taking him familiarly by the arm and calling him »Hassloun».

THE TORGUT PRINCE

On the morning of the 20th we sent MATE LAMA to the yamen of the Torgut prince to enquire when he would receive us. By twelve o'clock our messenger had still not come back with the answer. We knew that the prince was old, blind and deaf, that he spent his days on his back and never received guests. But his son, a