

Especially was I glad to meet NORIN, BERGMAN, HEYDER, MASSENBACH, SÖDERBOM and TING, whom I had not seen for months, and who had happily arrived in camp on October 23rd.

All these members of the northern column were, and with justice, pleased with their results. They had lost only one camel and bought three more. Twelve of their camels were in such good condition that they could begin the long journey to Hami at a moment's notice.

They had also heard wonderful rumours about the main caravan. Some were to the effect that we were a whole army on the march to the Edsen-gol to undertake the conquest of the Torgut country. Others related that we had entrenched ourselves in Khara-khoto, where we had found huge quantities of gold, and that large bands of robbers had assembled outside the walls to plunder us when we should depart.

Winter was now noticeably on the way. The whole staff now appeared in big felt boots, sewn from Mongol felt, in fur caps and warm clothes. And every evening each member took a basin of glowing embers to his tent when he retired for the night.

We began to wonder where YUAN had got to. He and the whole of the south column with him had disappeared completely. Evidently he had chosen a considerably more southerly route than had been originally intended.

From caravan leaders and Mongols who knew the country we heard that six routes reached the Edsen-gol region from the east: 1) the northernmost, cutting off a strip of Outer Mongolia to the north of Ghashun-nor; 2) a route which passed the Edsen-gol delta near the house of the prince; 3) the road we had taken with the main caravan; 4) a route which reached the river fifteen li to the south of our camp; 5) the road from Chen-fan to Mao-mu; and 6) the great postal route between Kansu and Sinkiang. Besides these there were several local roads in Alakshan, and it was impossible for us to know which of these YUAN might have chosen.

### A FIRST PARTY LEAVES FOR HAMI

Dr HAUDE suggested setting out for Hami with a part of the caravan on October 31st, in order to reach this town by the shortest possible desert route so that he might organize there our meteorological station number 2. He ought thus to arrive about three weeks before the main body. His caravan would be the middle column, for I intended to take a more southerly route and NORIN-BERGMAN a more northerly one. HASLUND was to be HAUDE's caravan leader and HEMPEL was to map the route.