

Accordingly, on October 31st they set out with a lightly equipped caravan of twenty-four camels. Besides those mentioned above, DETTMANN, KAULL and LI also took part. Only one Mongol and one Chinese were taken with the party as camel-men.

SINKING OF THE EDSÉN-GOL

During the last days in October and the first part of November the river dwindled appreciably. True, a part of its water was bound in the form of ice; but the ice-formation was not sufficient to explain a fall of 33.5 cm. from our maximum. The Torguts said that the farmers round about Mao-mu and higher up put their fields under water every year, to get a covering of ice as a protection during the winter. When this operation was over, they said, we could expect a fresh high-water level in the river in the middle of November. The bed looked strange and unfamiliar. The main arm that had washed our bank had now changed into a long bay full of stagnant water. The stream that was left flowed in the middle of the bed and appeared only as a thin streak, winding its way over innumerable mud-banks.

MY WINTER DWELLING

One day LARSON surprised me with a yurt, that he had ordered from a Torgut. It was small, but quite new, and beautifully clean. The yurt felts were white on the outside and grey on the inside. The door was painted red. In the centre stood a stove that one of our Mongols had manufactured from an empty paraffin-oil tin. It was provided with a home-made stove-pipe that went out through the smoke-hole in the top of the yurt. This latter also gave me daylight.

It was with a feeling of deep satisfaction that I moved into this warm dwelling just as winter was beginning to show its teeth.

SÖDERBOM'S WINTER DWELLING

Another dwelling that was finished at the same time as my yurt, and that immediately became very popular, was the combination of tent and cave in which SÖDERBOM was to spend the winter. In a poplar grove that was to take the sting out of the north-westerly storms he had dug a square hole, one meter in depth; and over this he had set up his big white tent. In order to enter his salon it was therefore necessary to go down some steps. Farthest from the entrance to his tent-hut he had left a platform of earth to serve as a sleeping-place, like a Chinese k'ang. In the centre blazed an open fire.