

## VIII. FROM THE EDSEN-GOL TO HAMI

### DEPARTURE FROM TSONDOL

On November 8th we were to begin the second great stage of our journey, the hard winter-march through the terrible part of the Gobi Desert that separates the Edsen-gol from Sinkiang. The first day's march was to be quite short, being really regarded in the light of a trial-march to give the Mongols an opportunity of seeing that the loads were evenly distributed on the camels' backs. We therefore intended to set off after lunch, and in this way we had a last opportunity of gathering at the long table under the poplars. Then the work of loading began.

In the midst of all this bustle a messenger arrived to say that the Torgut prince would be coming within a few minutes to bid us farewell. We arranged a tea-table with chairs on ZIMMERMANN'S tent-veranda. Professor SIU and I went to meet our visitor and LARSON served as interpreter. The chief handed to the professor and myself a *khadak* each of unusually large dimensions and a bag of rice, explaining that the former were a symbol of his father's and his own good wishes for a happy journey to Hami, and the latter an expression of his hope that we should lack for nothing on the journey. We spoke once more of compensation for the damage to his pastures that would be done by the camels we should be leaving behind; but he bade me be easy on that score and expressed his hope that I should return to the Edsen-gol before the station was withdrawn.

### THE HAMI CARAVAN

My Hami caravan reckoned 127 camels. Sixty-four were left behind at the station and eighty-one were out in the field with the various sub-expeditions. On the way from the Khujirtu-gol we had lost twenty-eight animals.

NORIN, BERGMAN and MARSCHALL remained in camp for another day, and the following day they were to set out on a more northerly route than we. The journey to Hami was to be made, like the first stage, by three columns.

The following members of the expedition's staff were to comprise the first co-