



Fig. 19. The southernmost tent in the camp at Tsondol

lumn: LARSON, HUMMEL, HEYDER, MASSENBACH, LIEBERENZ, MÜHLENWEG, SIU PING-CH'ANG, HUANG, TING, LIU and myself. The camels in my column were to be managed by nineteen Mongols and Chinese. We also had with us a cook, five boys and the digger CHUANG. The caravan thus comprised in all thirty-seven men. The provisions were calculated to last for forty days.

LARSON was convinced that all the camels would reach Hami. None of us then had any idea how hard and trying this desert journey would be.

### THE FIRST STAGE

Leaving the Tsondol camp and its happy memories behind, we first set our course up the river, afterwards turning south-west. After a short march we pitched camp on a sterile gravel-patch near the skirt of the poplar wood. This was camp no. 50.

On the same day a Chinese merchant-caravan left the Edsen-gol with eight hundred camels. This caravan came from Kuei-hua and was on its way to Guchen with cloths, tea, groceries, cigarettes etc. During the first part of the journey we had them a short distance ahead of us and met them several times. Their leader had asked permission to travel in our company, as our rifles would have served to protect them as well as ourselves from robbers. We did not, however, accept this proposal, as we knew that several wells had not enough water for so many camels.

On November 9th the Edsen-gol woods disappeared behind us; we crossed a