

row of low ruins of watch-towers which BERGMAN subsequently found to be of the Han dynasty and proceeded over hard, even ground covered with black gravel. Only a few odd clumps grew here. A dry little river-bed with languishing poplars was evidently Narin-köl. The route took us past a belt of bound dunes and some tortured poplars. Soon afterwards, arriving at a row of dunes, we pitched camp and our hunters went out after game. My yurt was set up in seventeen minutes and my plan of work, which afterwards recurred daily, included the making of a couple of sketches, calculation of the length and direction of the day's march, an entry in my journal, the writing of articles for the press and a short period devoted to the study of the Mongolian language.

Our big iron stove was left behind at Tsondol, so all our cooking was done on an open fire. Instead of bread we ate Swedish rusks, of which one of our cooks had baked a huge supply. Everyone got seven such rusks a day. Chocolate was also rationed; but we had no other food restrictions.

### THE MÖREN-GOL

On November 10th we crossed the bed of the Mören-gol, 180 meters in breadth. It was moist in a couple of places, but otherwise quite dry. On the left bank was a well near which was a pool with fresh, ice-covered water. The wood flanking the river-bed was sparser than at Tsondol, and white beam-trees were here the most representative growth.

Just near our camp was a Torgut yurt, and we heard that twenty families lived on the bank of this river. A Torgut by the name of JANTSANG was enlisted as a guide to the next well. This tract was called Toroi-börek.<sup>1</sup> Our Torgut informed us that wolves, foxes, wild-cats and antelope are to be found in the tiny woods of the Mören-gol, but no lynxes. He hunted these animals and sold the skins to Chinese merchants. For a wolf-skin he got as much as ten to twelve dollars. In the spring and early summer the river-bed is full of water; when the ice is melting it is impossible to cross. After continual summer rains there is generally high-water again. Finally, he told us that the HAUDE-HASLUND caravan from this place had taken the usual (southern) route to Hami, that we had intended to follow, and he advised us to take the northern road. We followed his advice — a step that from the geographical point of view proved to be a happy one, but that was disastrous for the caravan.

The route on November 11th led us straight to the north, crossing several other paths. It took us over steppes of small bushes and clumps, growing on little clay cones that were held together by their roots. Sand grouse were common, and antelope tracks led in every direction.

<sup>1</sup> Roughly: The poplar-covered Dune. F. B.