

wages from their employer YOLBARS KHAN, in addition to which they were given two chin of flour and ten chin of fuel a day.

In Liao-tun we stopped over for a day (February 8th) to rest the horses. A courier caught us up with mail: illustrated papers and books but no letters.

INTO THE T'IENT-SHAN

Through the tract called Toquz-davan or »The Nine Passes» our route led into the T'ien-shan — now meandering and crooked, now straight over small ridges with steep slopes, through red defiles and past stone cairns.

Our night accomodation in I-wan-ch'üan was provided by a caravanserai of the simplest kind. But the murky little rooms had holes in the roof for the passage of smoke, a peep-hole in the clay walls and a door-opening without door. For the rest, the village consisted of only two homesteads.

The following morning there was a north-west wind, and the sky was covered with clouds. The wind whined round the carts and the dust whirled up behind horses and wheels. A fair distance ahead of our party rode the Mongolian escort. Crossing a couple of rather steep passes we presently found ourselves surrounded by sterile hills. We called a halt in a narrow valley at Ch'e-k'o-lu-ch'üan or »Cart-wheel Spring» with its ruined huts. In the evenings one of us read aloud from v. LE COQ's masterly work »Auf Hellas Spuren in Ost-Turkistan».

February 11th. In dazzling morning light and with beautiful *chiaroscuro* effects in the valley we continued our downward journey in the winding, sometimes scarce twenty meter broad valley-bottom. The slopes on either side formed hills of from forty to fifty meters in height. The valley widened out into a kettle-shaped plain in the T'ien-shan. Approximately in the middle of the plain lies the village Ch'i-chio-ching-tze, where we called a halt. Here was a telegraph station and here, too, a branching of the route: the right arm continuing over Ku-ch'eng-tze to Urumchi and the left arm going over Turfan.

The next day we had a distance of forty-nine kilometers to cover, and the following day fifty-three. We were therefore roused at half-past two in the morning, but we went on sleeping in the carts.

At nine o'clock we woke up as the party came to a halt at Tung-yen-chih, »East Salt Marsh». There was the grave of a Tungan saint, a little building with a conical cupola and a temple in Chinese style with sacrificed horns of argali and ibex. On the walls inside hung red cloths with Chinese inscriptions, and the grave, shaped like a sarcophagus, was covered with white cloth. Our drivers performed devotions at this Mohammedan holy tomb. They poured oil on the altar-lamps and ignited it.

For a long time we had heavy going over gently rising gravel country up to a