

shimmered the reddish violet slopes of the Bogdo-ula chain with their beautifully glittering snow-fields. On our right we had swamp and sheets of ice, that made rather troublesome going. We spent the night at the village Davan-ch'eng.

On February 25th we continued our journey to the west, over flat ground with high T'ien-shan ranges both to the south and the north. In the course of the day we passed a little lake on our left. Late that evening our driver IBRAHIM lost the road in the dark and was within an ace of tipping us into a treacherous pit. The name of our camping-place for the night was Ch'ai-o-p'u.

The last day but one of our journey took us through a driving south-east storm to the village Chi-chi-ts'ao-tze, and when on the following day, February 27th, we rose to cover the last miles to Urumchi we were met by whirling snow, the ground was white and the weather raw and cold. In the half-dark stood our carts and horses, bearing a wintry mantle of snow. But later in the forenoon the snow turned to slush. The country was undulating and we passed several small ridges among the foot-hills of the Bogdo-ula.

#### ARRIVAL AT URUMCHI

Early in the afternoon we were driving along a street on the outskirts of Urumchi of seemingly bottomless mud, and here we drew up before a one-storey house in Russian-Asiatic style. This house, that had been placed at our disposal by Governor-General YANG, had belonged to the Russian-Asiatic Bank, which had gone bankrupt the previous autumn. Those of our companions who had arrived in Urumchi before us now came out and took us straight in to dinner. Also present at the meal was the Tartar BURKHAN, the Governor-General's interpreter and the head of his motor-garages and their staffs. BURKHAN and GMIRKIN, a Russian, had been commissioned to attend us and be at our service during our stay in the capital of Sinkiang, while two Chinese officials, WU and LI, were to attend upon our Chinese members.