

of a case weighing 800 kilograms. The jetty was reinforced with new planks, and finally the Renault was got onto the ferry.

It took no more than a few minutes to drive across the island to the next landing-stage. The crossing from here took twelve minutes. By this time night had already fallen. A rough road took us up to Janga Semi, the part of Semipalatinsk that lies on the left bank of the river. Here we found accommodation with a decent farmer, who had spent four years in France and recollected some words of the language.

On the morning of August 29th our column of five cars was able to set off in real earnest. The road took us southwards, and we were presently driving over hard, even steppe. We crossed the new railway-line to Tashkent. The telegraph-line to Bakhty followed our route. If the whole journey to Urumchi had been over such roads as this it would have been possible to cover the distance of 1250 kilometers in three or four days. The weather was glorious, and we sped swiftly over the steppe, feeling that we were boring our way deeper and deeper into the heart of the great continent. Unfortunately, however, our unhappy Renault was delayed by now one flaw and then another; and we were obliged to wait long hours for it to catch us up.

In the burning afternoon sun a long line of fifty-two ox-carts went creaking past. We passed other files, bearing wool and cotton from Sinkiang. From some forest region beyond the treeless steppe came loads of planks and boards.

We drove over a salt swamp, now dried up, but almost impassable in spring and autumn. Among the hills to the S. S. W. the Qazaqs pastured their herds of sheep, camels, horses and cattle. Some of the Qazaqs are so rich that they may own as many as tens of thousands of sheep.

Beyond the *aul* Arqaliq we crossed a little pass. The road then fell gently southwards. At Achiq-köl or Picket No. 3 we stopped for the night, putting up at the station.

The following morning the Renault started off in advance at four o'clock, and we followed three hours later. We left The Bitter Lakes, Achiq-köl, on our left. These lakes are long, and on their shores browse all kinds of cattle, horses and sheep. Here we saw fourteen felt-tents clustered together.

The road formed a winding, light yellow-grey band in a greenish grey field. We passed endless files of ox-carts loaded with wares. Sometimes, too, one saw horse-drawn traffic. To the right rose the little group of mountains known as Arkat. The picket bearing the same name has a post and telegraph office. A long, narrow valley took us to a little pass and the station Aldjan-adinsky. The clouds of dust that were whirled up by carts and beasts of burden lay like a grey veil over the ground, and often obscured the view.

Beyond Uzun-bulaq we traversed a belt of dried up salt-swamp; and at Inrekeisky Picket a bridge led over a stagnant watercourse. At Altin-qulaq we