

## HUMMEL's ARRIVAL

Just after midnight on September 23rd our car returned. HUMMEL sprang out and rushed towards me: »Is he still holding on?» — »Sure he is, and probably over the worst of it.» — »Well, thank God for that!» He went straight in to AMBOLT, made a preliminary examination and gave the nurse instructions for the night.

The travellers had found the roads heavy going, and had, moreover, been held up in Urumchi by a lot of formalities in connection with customs and passports. When they did arrive they had been on the way for thirty-nine hours, and in spite of the rain they had nearly broken a record. They had taken turn and turn about at the wheel and slept and eaten as best they could. HUMMEL had not slept for forty-eight hours, and he did not get any rest now either. When the others had lain down and the patient had been tended for the last time for the night we two sat up and chatted until six o'clock in the morning.

The following day those who so desired were vaccinated against dysentery. The doctor found our hygienic arrangements barbarous, to say the least of it. I had my bed on the floor of the sick-room, that was probably alive with bacilli. The patient's bed was primitive and we had no sheets for him — not to speak of much else that one cannot even mention. But now that HUMMEL took over he introduced a very different régime. All superfluous rubbish was flung out, the sick-room was scrubbed, and three hand-basins of sublimate were brought in. Fly-papers were hung in the windows, and the very first day over a thousand of these infection-carrying vermin were caught. Sheets and pillow-case were frequently changed, and the greatest care was exercised at meal-times.

The doctor was of opinion that AMBOLT would not be in a fit condition for continuing the journey for a month, but I myself now intended to go to Urumchi as soon as possible.

On the 26th I paid a farewell visit to LI, for we were to start the next day. Here I was received with the edifying news that he had got a new telegraphic order from the authorities in Urumchi, demanding exact details as to who were in my party, how many cars we had, and what our boxes contained. Weapons and ammunition of course! — they had already been examined. This suspiciousness was despicable and ridiculous. What was the meaning of this, I asked LI. »Well», he said smiling, »it says expressly in the telegram that you are not to start until full particulars have been sent and permission telegraphed back.» I made no reply. It was pouring with rain and we could in any case not have set out with the heavy lorries. LI sat and dictated a new telegram. Suddenly he leaned towards me and whispered: »You can start when you like, I'll take the responsibility.»

The whole night it rained in torrents, and the streets were transformed into mud-baths that defied description. But on the 28th the weather was