

Lanchow, accounts of our huge caravan had already arrived, and the people were convinced that we were only the advance-guard of an army and that the hydrogen cylinders were cannon. After a cross-examination lasting for several hours, the worthy official declared that he had been commissioned to take the staff to Suchow, and that if the three gentlemen did not consent to this the whole station with all its equipment and its camels must proceed westward to Hami. To this ZIMMERMANN replied that he would sooner forfeit his life than leave the station that I had appointed him to manage. Followed fresh negotiations, and it was at last agreed that MA should go to Suchow to try and gain a hearing with his countrymen and explain the aims of the station.

The winter proved a hard one, and the temperature sank to  $-28^{\circ}$  C. But the station was well protected against the storms from the north-west and the north, thanks to the natural barricades provided by the trees, and thanks especially to the high tamarisk-covered dunes, that broke the force of the wind.<sup>1</sup> And there was never any lack of fuel.

On the hard-frozen arms of the river ZIMMERMANN and SÖDERBOM went skating, with skates that they had bought in Peking — to the vast surprise of the Torguts.

## WILD CAMELS

SÖDERBOM went on a trip to the Mören-gol to shoot birds for the collections of the State Museum of Natural History. This was just in the camels' rutting season, when the males are particularly fierce, and now a wild male from the desert had joined a herd of tame relations and followed them every evening to the tethering place. He attacked everybody at sight, so that no-one dared to approach him, and finally he was shot.

On one occasion a young wild camel came to Tsondol and struck up acquaintance with our tame beasts, drinking with them out of a hole in the river-ice. But he rushed away into the desert when SÖDERBOM tried to catch him.

TUBUT DSANGGAI once caught two wild camels, one of which died, while the other flourished and was tamed, being finally sold to a rich Mongol in Alakshan. At the Noyan-bogdo there was a wild camel that had been broken in and was put up for sale for one hundred taels. The Torgut prince also had a two-humped captive from the desert, but this animal still retained some of his own habits. In winter he would wander back to his relatives in the Gobi, while in summer he rejoined the tame camels near the river. But one day he went back into the desert and never returned.

<sup>1</sup> The name of this place, Tsondol, signifies precisely 'great tamarisk-cones' or 'bound dunes'. F. B.