

UNREST AND SUSPENSE

January 1928 was drawing to a close, and still no word had been heard from MA. The two Europeans began to feel uneasy on his account. Their money had practically come to an end, and they expected that HASLUND would arrive any day, according to arrangement, with money, post and news from us.

One day, towards the end of January, the camels and puller that MA had had on his journey to Suchow returned — but without MA. There was, however, a letter from MA, informing them that he had tried in vain to convince the authorities in Suchow that the Edsen-gol staff had only peaceful intentions. He warned the two Europeans of fresh *tracasseries* to come. The authorities had decided to send MA under escort to Lanchow, the capital of Kansu, to subject him to a thorough cross-examination.

Towards the end of February the supply of flour was exhausted. There was lots of tinned food, but ZIMMERMANN saved this carefully as a reserve.

As winter advanced, the camels began to lose weight; and several of them died, despite all that MERIN and SÖDERBOM could do to keep them alive over this difficult period.

FRESH TROUBLES

On February 25th a new commission of investigation arrived. This time it consisted of CHAO FU-LU, the chief of police in Mao-mu, a clerk, and four soldiers. The Torgut prince was now also summoned, as well as his two nearest men, one *dsakheriche* and YUNDUNG *merin*. The commission absolutely insisted that also ZIMMERMANN and SÖDERBOM should go to Suchow. When, however, the commissary realized that ZIMMERMANN was not to be budged, he finally declared that he would be satisfied if SÖDERBOM went back with him. The latter answered that he would comply if the commissary procured them 150 dollars to buy flour for the station. This sum was then advanced by the Torgut prince.

The Torguts who had hitherto been so friendly, now began to grow cool and suspicious. They evidently found it difficult to believe that the staff of the station were not spies or other disreputable characters, since they were exposed to such treatment at the hands of the Chinese authorities.

Flour was bought and divided between the station and SÖDERBOM, who on February 27th left for Suchow together with the commission. SÖDERBOM's »caravan» consisted of a single riding-horse, and he took with him scarcely anything besides the clothes he was wearing. I have seldom met a man who could manage with so little baggage as SÖDERBOM. A valuable accomplishment for travellers in Asia! ZIMMERMANN was now left alone at the station, wondering when it would