

TRAVELLING PLANS

For my own part I was only waiting for a suitable opportunity in order to realize plans that I had long cherished of a return journey to Eastern Turkistan, where I intended to embark on two different explorations. The first of these would take me across Takla-makan from north to south by a route that no-one had yet ventured to take through the sea of sand. This expedition must be started in the beginning of the winter, as the water-supply during this desert crossing must take the form of ice-blocks that I would take with me. The other trip that I planned was a boat-journey down the new course of the River Tarim.

GEORG SÖDERBOM was to accompany me as my factotum on both these trips, a prospect over which he was hugely delighted. During these years in the service of the expedition he had, despite his youth, been magnificent. His linguistic abilities and his complete knowledge of the customs and mentality of Chinese and Mongols alike had made him more and more indispensable. He was at home in all practical fields: caravan-work, car-repairs and everything mechanical. He was, moreover, genuinely interested in scientific work. Recently in Jehol he had made a map of the temple-grounds. On the Edsen-gol he had collected birds, treated them like an expert taxidermist and finished with no fewer than seventy species in his collection. Among these one was new to science; Professor LÖNNBERG has named it *Larus melanocephalus relictus*.¹ He also collected insects, reptiles and plants for HUMMEL and stone-age tools for BERGMAN.

ECONOMIC POSITION OF THE EXPEDITION

It was chiefly two circumstances that prevented me from setting off on my journey to Eastern Turkistan: Governor-General CHIN's failure to grant me a passport, and the uncertain economy of the expedition. There was, it is true, one bright spot in the general economic situation in the news that the Swedish East Asiatic Company had generously agreed to grant us free freight on their boats for our ethnographic collections between Shanghai and Gothenburg up to an amount of 30,000 Swedish crowns; and this was of course a very welcome present. But to maintain the activities of such a big expedition larger cash contributions were required.

If we did not receive any money before the end of September I could scarcely set off on my journey to Eastern Turkistan for six months, for all the various part-expeditions would then be stranded for funds. Either I must return home in October to procure money or else go to the United States to try and get

¹ A remarkable Gull from the Gobi Desert, *Arkiv för Zoologi*, 23 B No 2 (Stockholm 1931), A Contribution to the Bird Fauna of Southern Gobi, *ib.* 23 A No 12. F. B.