

donkeys or oxen, harnessed in pairs, shied, reared and threatened to leap to destruction down the slopes.

From the top of the pass, which is called Wu-kung-pa by the Chinese and Ongon-davan by the Mongols, we had a wonderful view over the Kuei-hua plain to the south and over the variegated crowd, amid which the Chinese, with whips and sticks and piercing cries of exhortation, were urging their stubborn beasts onward. A party of mounted soldiers burst through the mob, and along the open road they had made we ran sharply down the pass to the village P'ai-lou-kuan, where the road started to run uphill again.

By the time we reached the crest of the second pass the gravel had come to an end; and so did the mountains. The road wound between gently sloping red hills.

A TIRESOME NIGHT

It was nearly five when we reached the Kuku-irgen brook, where EFFE's lorry stuck in the ice. After much vain struggling we had to unload the lorry to get it out of the water. And so we lost another two hours.

The sun set. Twilight fell, and then darkness. What a pleasant first night on the Mongolian plateau! At midnight we reached another frozen stream. And now it was TSERAT's turn. His lorry went through the ice-crust; and after vain efforts to free himself he stuck as fast as in a vice. The rays of the headlights swept dazzlingly over the ice. The men cut, hacked and dug; the ice-floes were heaved aside, and the silence of the night was disturbed by the orders of our two Swedish mechanics, given in Chinese and Mongolian. But the lorry was inexorable. After a trying wait the stillness of the night conquered. Our men had been up long before sunrise (the chauffeurs had not been to bed at all), and the first day in the field had been terribly hard on them. They were dead tired and hungry, and one after another they disappeared into a driver's cabin or onto the top of a load.

Suddenly I awoke. The headlights had been extinguished, and the blackness of night surrounded me on all sides; there was dead silence. But the reveille was sounded, and the men set to work again. Finally, the last car was got over the ice sheet. We went on through the night till 2 a. m., when TSERAT stuck fast in the little river Chao-ho, and here we pitched our first camp. »Dinner« was served between four and five in a temperature of -11°C . There was a glimmer of dawn in the east before we began our first 'night' in the chilly tents and sleeping-bags — with a silent prayer that the winter nights to come might not be like this first one.

On November 11th we did not rise early! In an indolent mood we looked at