

At Yingen we had been in a wide depression only 650 m above sea-level. We were now climbing slowly again. After the well Horun-bosuk followed a labyrinth of small hills, with quite a good road through them. We rested for a time at Bandedtologoi, where there were fourteen yurts and a very modest house belonging to a Chinese firm. Their goods — tea, hides, wool, etc. — lay piled upon wooden scaffoldings a little above the ground, out of the way of the drifting sand. The merchants treated us to some first-rate *pilmén*, mince-meat in a covering of dough.

We bent off sharply southward round a belt of sand with an abundance of dry wood and trunks of dead trees. Our camping-place for the night was involuntarily determined by TSERAT, who got stuck in a patch of sand where quantities of sax-aules grew. We had water with us as usual.

SÖDERBOM CATCHES US UP

On the morning of December 22nd, an episode of more than ordinary importance occurred. BERGMAN and I stood chatting by the pleasant morning fire. Suddenly BERGMAN turned his head and seemed to be listening attentively to some sound to the eastward in the noiseless desert.

»I thought I heard a car. . . wait, I can hear it plainly now!«

A few seconds later the top of the driver's cabin of a motor-lorry appeared over the nearest terrace to the east.

»It's GEORG!« BERGMAN cried.

»Has he got only *one* car?«

»No, there comes another!«

They swung round in our tracks and stopped quite close to our camp-fire. All our fellows had hurried out to greet with shouts of welcome the comrades they had missed for so long.

We sat down by the fire and GEORG began to tell his story. He had hastened from Kuei-hua to Tientsin, where he had obtained all he needed to repair the broken-down lorry at Yang-chang-tze-ku. In Tientsin he learned from FORD's agents that after we had started from Kuei-hua a telegram had arrived from EDSEL FORD, addressed to me, in which he offered to present me with an 8-cylinder truck, 1933 model, as a contribution to the road-making expedition. I need not say how full of gratitude we all were for this great kindness. But the lorry was not ready; the driver's cabin and the platform at the back still had to be built, and meanwhile GEORG had to wait.

Our delight was indescribable, and we were all in high spirits. Our convoy had been strengthened; we had now four lorries, one car and fifteen men. We were