

black ridges between which wound the road. Little shallow gullies; dark gravel; no vegetation. Porphyry with white veins of quartz; small ledges and passes. We were in a labyrinth of little hills where it was not difficult to drive in broad daylight; but now the sun was sinking and throwing its blinding rays right into our eyes. When the sun had sunk below the horizon and the short twilight had given place to darkness, it was a hard enough job to see the little red flags set in the ground by the map-makers. This work is made more difficult in such ground as I am describing by the continual winding of the road, which makes the bearings very short. On more open ground we took bearings on the head-lights after sunset.

But at last we saw a fire far away under the little crescent moon; and presently we had reached camp, which was all ready to receive us.

On January 19th we passed old camping-grounds, which betrayed themselves by the heaps of camel's dung or the holes for fires and cooking-pots.

The soil was for the most part absolutely barren. It was excellent for motor traffic, hard and level; road-makers could not have improved it. Sometimes we passed surfaces of hardened dry mud which had been carried down by rain-water into shallow depressions and had formed a surface as smooth as a floor. Low, distant hills rose to the right and left of our route.

AN ACCIDENT WITH TRUCK »EDSEL»

Everything went well till we had put behind us the first ten kilometers of the day. Then the last lorry signalled to us to turn back. When the cars had assembled, TSERAT told us that »Edsel», the only one which was missing, had had a misadventure right in the camp (no. 23). Soon after we had left the place, and the motor-lorries were almost ready to leave, GEORG, unable to get »Edsel's» frozen engine to start, had asked for a tow from JOMCHA's car. »Edsel» stuck fast on a quite low but sharp ledge in a watercourse while JOMCHA was going at a fair pace. They used a steel wire for the towing, and the jerk that followed bent »Edsel's» front axle somewhat, putting the lorry out of action. GEORG sent word that he required at least two days to repair the damage.

We held a council of war. We should have to halt for a few days at the next well in any case to give CHEN an opportunity of making an astronomical determination of longitude and latitude. It was therefore decided that JOMCHA and EFFE should return to camp no. 23 with their cars and help GEORG, while TSERAT with his lorry was to accompany us to the next well.

So we proceeded westward. The ground now became rather worse, crossed as it was by a multitude of shallow little watercourses at only a few meters' distance from one another. This caused a rocking movement of the cars and materially checked our speed. The ground rose very slowly, with fairly gentle undulations.