

HUMMEL inspected the Turfan hospital, a caravanserai, in whose rooms the patients lay on *k'angs*. The medical orderlies were boys of fourteen. The place was bare, dirty and evil-smelling. There had been talk of some typhus cases, but the doctor could not discover any.

LEAVING TURFAN

On February 22nd — blessed day! — we succeeded in leaving Turfan — this now hellish hole that six years before we had seen peaceful, pleasant and prosperous.

Just before we left, YOLBARS entertained me with an account of his worries as head of the commissariat. He had to get between two and three *tomans* or *chin* (about a ton and a half) of wheat a day for MA's army, and the same quantity of maize for his horses. Besides this, he had to keep a thousand civilians and several hundred soldiers in Turfan. But he exaggerated. Of MA's army only fragments remained. At the close, YOLBARS uttered a confession: »If MA doesn't take Urumchi I shall leave the country and go to Sweden or Germany.»

Our satisfaction at leaving Turfan behind reconciled us to some extent to the wretched bridges, marshy watercourses and treacherous canals we had to cross.

We had not been on our way for more than a couple of hours before an aeroplane was droning like an organ over our heads. It can hardly have been 1,000 m up. We expected to get a bomb through the roof of the car at any moment, and stopped. But the organ music died away in the distance.

The road we were following soon led us into a labyrinth of furrows, deep-cut by wind and water between more or less sharp-edged ridges of clay as much as three feet in height, so-called *yardangs*.

It was half-past six. TSERAT was ahead. The sun had set in a fiery glow and it was already nearly dark. TSERAT stopped and reported that the ruts and ridges were becoming more numerous, and the road we were on was quite impassable for cars.

About turn, and back to the bridge at Yamchi-karez that we had crossed earlier in the day! We had wasted several hours on the most hopeless surface: and now we pitched camp No. 40 by this bridge that it had cost us much trouble to build. We would look for another road in the morning. The only thing needed to complete our misery was the thought that we might have to go over that wretched bridge again.

A brilliantly clear morning! The mountains in the north were magnificent, with their shimmering sunlit slopes and shadowy blue valleys in the quiet, subdued tones lent by distance. Bogdo-ula, The Holy Mountain, towered over the rest of the earth and the snow-clad giants of the T'ien-shan.