

admirable in his icy self-control. He showed not a trace of fear. At the height of the tumult, when he stood stripped to the waist with his hands tied behind his back, he had shouted:

»You're a lot of cowardly swine! How dare you lay your hands on the representatives of Nanking and MA CHUNG-YING's guests? You'll pay for this!«

»You've been arrogant and overbearing here and on the way here. Now it's our turn!« the soldiers standing round had answered.

We were sitting on the *k'angs* in our room. The night wore on. It was one o'clock. At two GEORG was to be back at CHANG's quarters. From time to time soldiers came in with fresh orders. Just before two o'clock one came and said that GEORG might sleep till four.

No-one went to bed as long as GEORG was still with us. We were all convinced that we were seeing him for the last time. Among the 'Tungans he could not avoid witnessing things that must not be made known on the fugitives' line of retreat. He would thus be put out of the way as soon as he had conveyed his barbarous passengers to their destination. GEORG himself did not think he would ever see us again. As the moment for parting approached he asked me to read a few Swedish hymns, which I did.

One natural consequence of the night's events was that our plans of dividing the expedition between Lop-nor and Kashgar were abandoned. It was clear that we must keep together, and not weaken ourselves by splitting into parties.

The new plan was this: the whole expedition was to follow the tracks of GEORG's lorry till we found him, alive or dead.

GEORG insisted with almost monomaniac obstinacy that for its own safety's sake the expedition should flee as quickly as possible to the Lop Desert, and thence endeavour to reach Tun-huang and the Imperial Highway to Lanchow. »It is better,« he reasoned, »that *one* man should be sacrificed to save the rest, than that the whole mission should be wiped out.«

Not one of us, Swedish, Chinese or Mongol, would hear of anything but reunion with GEORG. But it was impossible to convince him, even when I said that the course he was suggesting to us was the kind of thing that was not done by gentlemen. One does not let a man fall overboard without trying to save him.

At seven a soldier appeared to summon GEORG to CHANG's quarters. I was still awake, and heard him come into HUMMEL's room, where he had a cup of coffee. He had not slept a wink. I called out to him. A last vigorous shake of the hand, and: »God keep you! You'll wait for us at Aqsu; we start to-morrow.«

On the morning of March 6th YEW and I went to call on the mayor, who had already heard of the night's adventures and asked if anyone had been injured.

On the walls of his yamen, papered with white, he had painted the following words in Chinese: