

something like a spark of gratitude appeared in their eyes. The lessons in savagery, cruelty, sadism and blood-thirstiness that they had learned in the gallant MA CHUNG-YING'S school had made their features hard and animal. Now, however, they began to thaw, and human nature asserted itself.

When all the patients had been attended to, and had been shown how to look after their wounds, they bowed to the doctor and withdrew politely and in silence. The whole garrison would soon know that the convoy they had fired upon from ambush the day before contained a wonder-working doctor.

The wind wailed and howled, and the air was chill, grey and misty. Everything seemed gloomy and futile as the hours crawled past. The doctor's soldier patients afforded us a welcome distraction. A new syphilis patient certainly betrayed a military secret when he cried to the doctor:

»I've been ordered to go to Kucha to-morrow with General MA CHUNG-YING. So you must cure me at once.»

At five o'clock we had a none too welcome visitor — the courteous General HUANG WEN-CHING, commandant of Qara-shahr. He had just arrived.

HUANG seemed tired, but fairly calm. He made a firm request for the loan of three lorries, that were to be sent to Qara-shahr that same evening to fetch wounded. It was just for the journey there and back, and the lorries would be back in our yard in the course of the night. I replied that I had no objection to lending the cars provided that he gave me a written guarantee that they would be returned. This he promised.

A good hour later HUANG came back to tell me that the trip to Qara-shahr could not be undertaken until early next morning. At eight o'clock HUANG sent a young officer with a request for the loan of all four motor-lorries the following morning. They were to fetch General MA CHUNG-YING himself and his staff of twenty-five from Qara-shahr to Korla. Again I said yes, against a guarantee that I should get them back. The messenger replied that I could be perfectly easy in my mind, as General HUANG himself was going with twelve men. They would probably be back in the course of the afternoon or evening; and immediately after their arrival General MA CHUNG-YING, according to what he had said on the telephone, would come and call on us in person.

It was not easy to find out what had really happened at Qara-shahr. Some said that a thousand Torguts had assaulted the town in alliance with Russians, Turkis and Kirghiz, but had been driven back by MA'S garrison, which was only three hundred strong. Hami, Turfan and Toqsun had been taken by the northern army. HUMMEL'S patient, the cavalry general MA, had been carried on mule-back from Turfan to Korla, where he had just arrived in the company of the chief-of-staff, General LI.

During the siege of Urumchi, which had been raised a month previously, MA had taken an armoured car from the northern army. This clumsy vehicle, which