

Another fascinating problem, that I also touched upon in my memorandum to the Government, was the revival of the 2,000-year-old Silk Road, which went past Lou-lan and which, reconstructed for motor traffic, would be a direct and convenient channel of communication between China proper and Kashgar.

And lastly, there was the definite solution of the Lop-nor problem, a scientific question of geographical, hydrographical and historical significance, having its origins in PRJEVALSKY'S momentous discoveries in 1877 and RICHTHOFEN'S criticism in 1878. ERIK NORIN, NILS HÖRNER and PARKER C. CHEN in particular had made the most valuable contributions to the solution of this great problem. All that now remained was the survey of the new river, the Qum-darya.

We knew now that our lads were on their way back, and that we might hear their horns sound outside our gate at any moment.

The doctor was therefore busy decorating the mess with table-cloth and curtains, while CHEN pasted to the walls round the portraits of GEORG and EFFE whole swarms of bats (representing happiness) and symbols of long life, ingeniously cut out in red paper.

### RETURN OF THE LORRIES

At half-past nine on the morning of March 29th I was awakened by sounds of running about and shouting in the yard. I heard motor-horns from the street and the cry: »The lorries are coming! the lorries are coming!«

Just as I got outside, GEORG was driving slowly and surely through the gate. TSERAT, JOMCHA and EFFE followed. There stood the whole car-park, as if nothing had happened!

The drivers jumped out. Embraces and vigorous hand-shaking.

»Thank God you've got back alive! You can't imagine how worried we've been about you!«

»We've been all right, but it's been a narrow shave time and again.«

We devoured the weather-beaten fellows with our eyes; we wanted to take hold of them with our hands, to convince ourselves that we were not seeing visions. Never had our courtyard seen such excitement. It was the day before Good Friday. None of us had experienced such an Easter as this. They had come like men risen from the dead.

When they had removed the thickest layers of grease and dust with brushes and soap they were taken into the mess. They were astonished at the splendour that met their eyes. The coffee-table was laden with all the house could muster in the cake line.

At about twelve Colonel SALOMAKHIN, commanding the 3rd regiment, came in. He was a pleasant, frank man. He had received orders from SHENG TUPAN that