

troops to stand their ground against aeroplanes that rained bombs, and armoured cars, and stronger artillery. But my army will rally at Kucha, and if the other side is too strong there too, I shall go off to Aqsu and Kashgar and win over supporters all through Nan-lu, at Yarkend and Khotan and as far as Charkhliq. It'll take time, but I shall conquer the whole of Sinkiang.»

At 2 a. m. on March 14th MA sprang up and sounded the alarm. The drivers were not asleep, but were sitting smoking by their lorries while they waited. The tanks had been filled, and the lorries were ready to start at once.

It was in the neighbourhood of Yangi-hissar that TSERAT crashed into EFFE's lorry from behind, smashing his own radiator and one splashboard and was left behind.

At four o'clock in the afternoon the diminished convoy drove into Kucha. The commandant there, WANG, received instructions from MA to see that the drivers were made as comfortable as possible. They were given excellent food and tea, and allotted sleeping places on the roof. In the same billet, but indoors, were quartered Big Horse, an elderly general, and the agreeable CHANG SIN-MING, commander of the training corps, who had been so kind to us at Turfan. Strict orders were given that no-one was to go near the lorries, and sentries were posted round them.

GEORG, EFFE and JOMCHA enjoyed complete freedom in Kucha. Of course they could have escaped on horseback if they had been willing to give up the cars. MA CHUNG-YING seemed to have confidence in them.

The very first evening they walked to that part of the oasis which is called Dushambe-bazar, where the Swedish Missionary Association has one of its stations. Miss ENGWALL, seventy years old, had been living there quite alone for the past seventeen years. She spoke kindly of the members of our former expedition, who »had been so nice.» When the CITROËN expedition passed through Kucha in 1931 she had seen motor-cars for the first time in her life. She had not had a single letter for two years. It gave her indescribable pleasure to meet two young Swedes, and they missionaries' sons into the bargain.

To live alone for seventeen years in a small town in Central Asia may be tolerable if one is sustained by the lofty ideals for which one is fighting. But to live there with war raging, ceaselessly menaced with looting and violence, was no small thing, especially for a woman. Yet no-one dared touch her. The savagest Tungan rabble passed by her house as if she had an invisible guard. One of the drivers had heard that the leader of a robber band had come to her house to steal her horse. She had given him so sound a box on the ears that he forgot the horse he had meant to take for sheer astonishment.

On March 15th the drivers did not know what was going to happen to them. GEORG attempted in vain to speak fair words to the general about permission to return to Korla. Instead, he was ordered to drive Big Horse to the mayor's yamen. The whole courtyard there was packed with fugitives from Ili, soldiers