

leaping and twisting his body and whining with delight. He rushed up and down over the ridges and far out into the reeds, unable to restrain his joy. And there, too, were the cock and hens, that did not pay the slightest attention to us. But there was no sign of a human being. The camp was deserted.

We landed. The first thing that struck us was an artificial cave constructed between two perpendicular *yardangs*, with two canoes for a roof and a pile of flour-sacks for the back wall. Our four boatmen's baggage was inside, but the equipment of the party was missing. We could see that a sheep had recently been slaughtered. A letter from BERGMAN lay on an empty box. GAGARIN's rifle, sword and heavy coat were gone, like himself.

Four canoes were missing. I asked my boatmen if they thought that their three comrades had bolted. They considered this to be out of the question.

»They've no work at Konche. With you they've got pay, bread, meat, tea — everything they need. So why should they bolt? Probably GAGARIN has shot an antelope and they've gone to fetch it.»

Our boatmen ascended different *mesas* and shouted at the top of their voices — no reply.

»But wait a moment!» someone cried. »There are three donkeys grazing in the reeds — and there are three sheep!«

»Look here!» CHEN called. »KUNG has been here!» His footsteps were easily recognizable, for he was the only member of the expedition who was still wearing hobnailed boots.

We were very puzzled by this, but left the solution of the riddle till next day and went to bed.

## ARRIVAL OF THE RESCUE PARTY

At 7 a. m. we were awakened by the cry, »Here comes MUSA in a canoe!» We hastened out. It was blowing hard from the north-east, and the waves were splashing on the shore. In a few minutes he came to land and hurried up to us.

He told us that KUNG and TSERAT had arrived in the small car, and that while the weather was calm, they had had themselves paddled to an island farther east; and then the water had become so rough that they had not dared to come back.

The car had been left about 5 km from the bank, one man watching it.

CHEN and I immediately embarked in one of our double canoes, and MUSA and SADIQ paddled us to the island where KUNG and TSERAT were.

We found them standing on a *yardang*, on the look-out. They could not believe their eyes when they saw us coming from that direction. Our joy at meeting again was mutual. And now KUNG gave us an account of their trip.

The letter I had sent to BERGMAN had been duly delivered by APAQ. The small