

wait with the cars, it was still worse. The summer ran its course in the desert with its terrible, sweltering heat and pitiless, burning sun. The only consolation was the river, in whose cooling waters they spent hours, morning, afternoon and evening. The rest of the time they spent drowsing in their tents, the only shady places available in the Lop Desert. The tents were pitched in such a way that the tent cloth was everywhere free of the ground, to allow each little breeze to pass through and afford some slight relief from the heat. Not until after sundown, when the evening had grown cooler, did they revive.

After HUMMEL, KUNG and BERGMAN had each severally started for Urumchi via the Quruq-tagh, in June, the loneliness and inactivity became even more oppressive than before for GEORG, EFFE, our Chinese servants and the soldiers. No-one who has not himself been in such a situation in so desolate a country can have any idea of the monotony.

Of the members of the expedition engaged in scientific work CHEN was the only one who held out all through that oppressive summer.

In the few days of June he measured the volume of water and the evaporation at the base-camp, and received the little caravan we had sent from camp No. 80 in the delta of the Qum-darya, which included GAGARIN and the dog Tagil. He tried vainly to cope with our wireless apparatus, that the Russians had spoilt.

After messengers had gone off to BERGMAN in the south, and HUMMEL and KUNG had started on their journey to the north, CHEN set off upstream on the left bank on June 13th. Sometimes on foot and sometimes, though more rarely, using a canoe, CHEN mapped several lakes and then went on to Qum-köl, in whose southern marshes the arm of the river already mapped by BERGMAN begins. Qum-köl was 8 km long and from 2 to 3 km wide. It is impossible, without CHEN's own map before one, to follow his lonely wanderings through those most irregularly and unaccountably shaped lakelets and the channels that join them to one another or to the Qum-darya. Often, when mapping a lake, he was suddenly held up by an arm of water, that he either had to wade across or, if possible, get round.

But nothing in this fantastic maze of lakes, waterways, reed-beds and drift-sand could deter the energetic young Chinese. He mapped the riverside lakes on the southern bank of the river, reached Ying-p'an on July 7th, and two days later was at Temenpu. The ground was difficult for the last five kilometers owing to live tamarisks and dense reeds.

At Temenpu he drew a map of the interesting point where the Qum-darya breaks off from the old course of the Konche-darya. When we encamped at Temenpu for the first time, on April 19th, the Konche-darya was carrying 80.18 cub. m of water a second. Now, on July 12th, CHEN found 81.80 cub.m. The difference is not great. According to the inhabitants, too, the river had already begun to rise.