

given me such a letter, stamped with his own seal. Unfortunately, I had neglected to bring it with me, but as it happened, this was of no practical consequence. The young prince could in any case not do anything to help our expedition; he was powerless under the new régime.

We saw him again later in Urumchi, in conditions that showed how lightly he weighed in the scales of Sinkiang's internal politics.

FROM QARA-SHAHR TO URUMCHI

Meantime, we drove off on the road with which we were already familiar. It was even more thickly strewn with carcasses of fallen animals than before. At half-past five we were at Qumush, and in another hour we were crossing the watershed from which the ground falls all the way to Toqsun. We reached the wonderful spring Arghai-bulaq in the twilight, encamping just below the gush of cold, crystal-clear water that spurts from the sheer wall of rock.

The downpour of May 14th had badly damaged the fantastic road over the high stone blocks in the narrow defile, but TSERAT got the car down safely, without more than a slight scraping against projecting boulders. There was a fearful stench of rotting corpses and dead horses in the valley, and I declared emphatically that we must camp at a respectful distance from the corpses.

On the morning of June 5th we found that we had the dead body of a Tungan not eight meters from our camp.

When TSERAT was filling the tank later that morning he had poured in half the contents of a tin we thought contained paraffin before it was discovered to be water. The tank had of course to be emptied; and now our fuel would hardly take us over the distance of 225 km that separated us from Urumchi.

In the neighbourhood of Su-bashi we passed the armoured car that had been made at Urumchi, taken by MA CHUNG-YING, and abandoned by him for lack of petrol.

We were soon clear of the mountains and at Toqsun, where we stopped only a short time. On the plain outside the town the temperature was 41.3° C (106.3° F.) in the shade, a record for the whole expedition.

The ground rose gently over barren *gobi* and approached the first hills, where the track was under water for some distance. Crossing a ridge among the red and black hills, we joined the Turfan road, and I found myself once more in a region that I had passed in 1928. Our route was picturesque, winding among savage mountains and rising uphill along a brook skirted by bushes and trees. We turned off to the right from a lovely little copse and climbed steeply to the Davan-ch'eng passes.

On the morning of June 6th there was a fresh breeze from the north-west, but the sky was clear. The temperature had fallen to 15.4° C.; we had reached a cooler