

We drove to Toqsun in the afternoon and encamped in the desert at 9 p. m. On the following day, July 7th, we made a hazardous journey over the passes at Davan-ch'eng, getting stuck in the river on the farther side of it. A little caravan that happened to be passing hauled us up onto dry land for payment. It was already past five when we started on the long stretch with the Bogdo-ula on our right and the salt lake in the west. We switched on our head-lights, for it was getting dark.

We drove in among the hills, and were only 4 km from the south gate of Urumchi when we stuck fast in the thick mud of a shallow gully. It began to rain. TSERAT made desperate efforts — no good. We hoped that a horse caravan would pass sooner or later, and help us out of the swamp. But it was too late; the two gates were shut at dark. TSERAT scratched about with the spade, digging away the mud in front of the wheels. But the car would not budge; it had sunk too deep.

We shut the windows on account of the rain, and lit the last candle-stumps. Then we unpacked the remains of our provisions — biscuits, cheese, chocolate, a melon.

A horrible night! It is all very well to spend *one* night sitting in a car; but three nights running is too much. Towards morning a party of fifteen Chinese passed. After some discussion they agreed to tackle the job for 350 taels. And at last we managed to get loose.

BACK IN URUMCHI

It was characteristic of conditions in Urumchi that we had hardly set out on our relief-expedition to HUMMEL, before Mr WANG of the foreign department went to YEW in a great rage and heaped reproaches on his head at the command of the highest authority. YEW explained what had happened, but was of course not believed. WANG then apparently hastened to Mr APRESOV, and blurted out:

»SHENG TUPAN is most surprised and annoyed at Dr HEDIN's leaving the town without special permission and without a pass! It is as clear as day that HUMMEL's illness is an invention. It is a pretext to enable Dr HEDIN to leave Urumchi, go to his expedition, and make a bolt over the frontier to Kansu.»

Some days after our return to Urumchi KUNG appeared, and at about the same time BERGMAN. KUNG, in company with GAGARIN, had travelled along the Singer-Turfan route, and his trip had been perilous. All his animals had died of thirst in the Chöl-tagh south of Turfan; and he and his servants had been within an ace of losing their lives.

HUMMEL's condition grew worse. He was running a temperature the whole time, and for the first week in Urumchi he had to keep to his bed. Dr SAPOJNI-