

its southern foot, at an altitude of 5280 feet above the sea. The crest, which was terribly cut to pieces, rose some 400 to 500 feet higher, not more, and presented no difficulties whatever in the way of a crossing.»

Next morning the traveller climbed to the top of the range. »Ahead of us to the north-west we found our path barred by yet another ridge. Selecting the very first depression in the crest, I made for it, crossing on the way a gravel-strewn steppe, followed by gently sloping foot-hills with rounded forms, and finally by an easy ascent reached a comfortable pass. This little range is built up of some variety of dark crystalline rock, whereas its southern slopes and the hills below consist of disintegrated grey granite. On the left of the pass the cliffs are piled up into solid masses, but on the opposite side the crest is lower and the outlines softer. Upon reaching the bottom of the pass, we followed a valley that inclines towards the south-east, until we came to another craggy mountain-group, with sharp peaks, stretching towards the north-east. Having passed round its eastern end, we found ourselves in a valley with a flat granite threshold, and shallow rounded troughs in the rock or small basins filled with water from the melting snow. The spaces between the troughs were occupied by greyish red gravel, a product of the disintegration of the adjacent rock, a rose-coloured, chloritic, porphyry-like granite. We crossed the next following crest, which was not very high and consisted of the same red granite and felsite, by an easy pass. The ravines and transverse glens were here choked with red sand formed *in situ*. On the other side of the range, in a tiny valley, we came upon an immense number of wild-camel tracks, showing that the place must be visited by them in troops.»

»On 10th February we had a mountainous road to travel. For five long hours we vainly sought to find our way across the range, which is rather craggy, and consequently difficult of access, especially as it does not run in any definite direction, but winds backwards and forwards like a snake, often bending round so as to be parallel with itself. In fact the range, which consists of varieties of crystalline rock, is precipitous and wild, and possesses an extraordinarily jagged crest.»

»After a difficult climb of 17 versts we reached the summit of the pass, and had before us an extensive plain, which showed here red, there yellow, and in other places almost black according to the coloration of the different varieties of rock that, in the form of sand and gravel, fill the hollows of the ground.»

»A long way to the north, at 60 or 70 versts' distance, there appeared yet another range, not very high, stretching north-east and of diminishing altitude towards the west. In that direction there extends a boundless level expanse, the surface of which slopes apparently towards the same point. Towards the east the elevation grows perceptibly higher.»

»The mountains from the top of which we obtained this extensive view consist of diorite and gneiss. Their transverse glens are filled with coarse granite sand. The pass had an altitude of 6637 feet above the level of the sea. Once, at some very remote period, it was crowned by an obo, and there ran a road over it to the south-west and north-east; traces of this can still be seen going in the latter direction. At first the descent from the pass was rather stony, but soon grew easier; it is about 3 versts down to the bottom.»