

In the middle of the night I was woken up by three revolver shots and a frightful shrieking among the tethered camels. »Aha, an attack by robbers!» was my first thought; but as nothing further happened I went to sleep again. In the morning I was told that a dog from the village had slunk into MARSCHALL's tent and drunk out of the antelope Dicky's milk-bowl. Dicky had fled, pursued by the seven dogs of the village, in their turn chased by Hami and Yoldash. MARSCHALL had also rushed out to save Dicky, his favourite. The antelope dashed in among the camels, who took fright. MARSCHALL himself said that according to the regulations he had called out »Wer da?» three times before firing into the crowd of dogs. No one was hurt, however, and everything became quiet after the shots.

On the morning of the 14th, balloon no. 100 was sent up, though it did not mark the occasion by establishing any height record.

The route led between irregular hills and over open spaces till we came to a winding valley between steep or vertical mountain walls. Here purred a dwindling little brook called Tsaghan-gol. We passed a grave on one of the banks. Time and again we crossed the bed, before finally leaving it to turn up a tributary valley that led us out on to open ground again. Six hours later we had reached our camping place for the night.

We took supper on bast mats near the kitchen. Just as we had settled down with crossed legs to begin, Dicky came bounding in among plates and dishes and stepped right in the middle of the beans. I could not help sighing with relief that the camels were not equally familiar.

I cannot imagine anything more splendid than to build my airy habitation in a different spot every day, and to study the earth's surface, not in a text-book but in reality. And then, however instructive the day has been, evening always comes as a solace and a relief.

We resumed our westward journey over the bare steppe, traversed by dry ravines and bordered by desolate hills. In the hilly ridge to the right of the route was a gap, a pass, giving a wide view to the north. I was involuntarily reminded of The Golden Gate, through which one gazes out over the endless waters of the Pacific. Here it was Sha-mo, the Sea of Sand, Gobi, the great desert, whose vast and desolate spaces in the north faded into blue infinity like a sea.

REACHING SHANDE-MIAO

At a great distance, W. S. W., one saw, on August 16, a gigantic white *suburga* or *stupa* at the famous lama monastery Shande-miao, the Bayan-shandai-sume of the Mongols, which is considered to be half-way between Kuei-hua and Ghashun-nor.

Some merchants lived by themselves in nine yurts beside a dry river-bed to the east of the monastery. We rode past this »mai-mai», and went on till we reached