



Fig. 6. Camels among saxaules

not make them out at all. Everything in the tent was soon covered with fine sand, and one got sand in one's eyes and ears, under one's clothes, in one's pockets and in the food. By evening I had all my pockets full of sand. Even the dogs and the antelope Dicky sought shelter in the tent.

Towards evening, however, the storm had abated. Despite the weather, the temperature during the day had been as high as 27.8°C .

A SERVANT ASTRAY

The pasture in the vicinity was tolerable. On taking tally of the camels in the evening one of the beasts was found to be missing. A couple of Mongols and a young Chinese went out to search for him. He was soon found by the Mongols, but the Chinese did not return. No-one took much notice of the fact; he would probably come back during the night and silently disappear in his usual corner.

On the morning of the 9th he was still missing. We thought he must have been overtaken by darkness and had slept under the sky, and that he would turn up any minute. Later in the morning his continued non-appearance began to look suspicious. A man who loses track of his surroundings and the few land-marks in this desert is lost if no one comes to his aid. And death by thirst is inevitable. Our Chinese was as much a stranger in Alakshan as we ourselves.

HASLUND and BATU rode out with water. The hours passed. We were preparing to spend another night here when at 4.20 p. m. the two searchers returned, bringing the missing Chinese with them. He had wandered about all night and all day, going round the camp without having the least idea of his whereabouts. It was evident from the traces he had left that he had at times thrown himself down and beaten the sand with his staff, in despair. When they had finally found him he was lying on a dune, weeping.

Despite the late hour I resolved to set out with MENTU for the well Ukh-tokhoi, only twenty li distant. The caravan was to come on afterwards, being guided by our camp-fire.