

faint bulge. Everything else that had been exposed was quite submerged, and had to be carefully dug out. The layer of sand on the mat was 3.5 cm in thickness.

The night after the storm the temperature sank to 7° C., and one felt decidedly chilly. According to the barometric readings we were 1057 meters above sea-level.

The stolen camels and their pursuers were tired after their wild chase of altogether two hundred li to the south-east, and the two Mongols therefore petitioned for another rest-day at camp XXXV. All the seventy-nine camels revelled in the green, luxuriant pasture of reeds in the trough between the dunes where the sub-soil water was near the surface.

The marching route for September 14th was at first to the north-west and at an acute angle with the saw-like and sand-covered ridge that rose in that quarter. We tacked in all directions over and between dunes and sparse tamarisks before we finally reached the crown of a little ridge with an obo. From this point of vantage one had an endless view to the north, where the distant blue horizon formed very flat ground-waves. To the south the sea of sand extended as far as the eye could reach with enormous yellow waves.

Up on the plateau the ground changes frequently. At times we were riding among tamarisk-clad dunes, at other times between low hills, and again over almost even ground strewn with fine gravel. Sometimes the soil was absolutely sterile. A low row of hills was broken by a valley, in the mouth of which the view to the north over the sea of sand was magnificent.

For a while we kept a northerly course, coming through a gently sloping valley out on to an endless plain.

At the well Ukhurin-usu, or Cattle Water, we were surrounded on all sides by desert. The camel pasture was scant, but the water uncommonly good.

We left MATE LAMA and a Chinese in charge of LARSON's fifteen tired camels, plus one of our own. MATE was instructed to follow on slowly with these beasts, making a halt wherever the pasture was good. He was expected to reach the Edsen-gol between ten days and a fortnight after us.

THE WELL OF THE LAMP

Just after midday on September 15th we reached another sand-belt with high, rather troublesome dunes where one had to travel in a zig-zag in all possible directions to avoid the most difficult passes. Tamarisks and saxaules grew in profusion and sometimes to a height of five meters. Their fresh, dark green foliage was a relief in the eternal yellow sand. Many of the saxaules were dead, and their crooked and twisted limbs lay about everywhere. Even the 'road markers' were made of them, piled up like beacons.

We pitched camp at Dengin-khuduk, the first well in the sand. Measured from