

tassels. Endless as a sea of long, undulating, solidified waves I see the desert stretching in all directions to the distant horizon — a landscape that in its magnificent poverty is always as fascinating as the sea itself. In the waning light I see the sun as its fiery red ball sinks in the west, and the after-glow spreads its reflection over the wilderness. The marvellous colours fade, and twilight falls. In the east, the shadow of the earth, the herald of the Night, rises slowly higher and higher. Everything is sunk in peace. But from the distance comes the scarcely audible sound of bells. I listen, and as the minutes pass it grows more distinct. Now it is quite close at hand. Innumerable times before I have heard this sound in the eternal melody of the desert; but I cannot resist the desire to contemplate the regal gait of the camels. With slow, regular strides the caravan passes by, and the last camel in each string bears around its neck a bronze bell, whose heavy clapper gives tongue with every swinging stride. Silent as shadows, the Chinese camel-men walk at the head of each string. The last camel, with an alert rider between his humps, strides past. Gradually the clang of the bells dies away, and silence spreads its wings over the earth again. Like glimmering diamonds, the stars twinkle down on us, ephemeral guests on this planet, itself an untiring wanderer towards unknown destinations — a grain of dust in the mysterious infinity of eternal space.