

but in no great quantity ; and in four places also you find brackish water.<sup>1</sup>

Beasts there are none ; for there is nought for them to eat. But there is a marvellous thing related of this Desert, which is that when travellers are on the move by night, and one of them chances to lag behind or to fall asleep or the like, when he tries to gain his company again he will hear spirits talking, and will suppose them to be his comrades. Sometimes the spirits will call him by name ; and thus shall a traveller oftentimes be led astray so that he never finds his party. And in this way many have perished. [Sometimes the stray travellers will hear as it were the tramp and hum of a great cavalcade of people away from the real line of road, and taking this to be their own company they will follow the sound ; and when day breaks they find that a cheat has been put on them and that they are in an ill plight.<sup>2</sup>] Even in the day-time one hears those spirits talking. And sometimes you shall hear the sound of a variety of musical instruments, and still more commonly the sound of drums. [Hence in making this journey 'tis customary for travellers to keep close together. All the animals too have bells at their necks, so that they cannot easily get astray. And at sleeping-time a signal is put up to show the direction of the next march.]

So thus it is that the Desert is crossed.<sup>3</sup>

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NOTE I.—LOP appears to be the *Напопо*, i.e. *Navapa*, of Hiuen Tsang, called also the country of *Leulan*, in the Desert. (*Mém.* II. p. 247.) *Navapa* looks like Sanskrit. If so, this carries ancient Indian influence to the verge of the great Gobi. [See *supra*, p. 190.] It is difficult to reconcile with our maps the statement of a thirty days' journey across the Desert from Lop to Shachau. Ritter's extracts, indeed, regarding this Desert, show that the constant occurrence of sandhills and deep drifts (our traveller's "hills and valleys of sand") makes the passage extremely difficult for carts and cattle. (III. 375.) But I suspect that there is some material error in the longitude of Lake Lop as represented in our maps, and that it should be placed *something like three degrees* more to the westward than we find it (e.g.) in Kiepert's Map of Asia. By that map Khotan is not far short of 600 miles from the western extremity of Lake Lop. By