

of duck and geese. Indeed, these lakes must have been the breeding-ground of the water-fowl, which, in the cold weather, find their way down to the warmer parts of the continent. Large numbers of bustard, too, we saw, and many herds of antelope.

The chief attraction for us, however, at this period of our journey, was the milk and cream we could obtain. What a treat it was, after nearly four months without milk or any of its products, to drink some of the rich delicious stuff which these Mongols brought us! At one time in the forest, when I had been out of sorts, I had been allowed a glass of condensed milk from our stores as a medical comfort; it was such a luxury to get even this, that I was sorely tempted to feign sickness for another day to obtain more. But here was the pure article in any quantity, and as rich and thick with cream as any from Devonshire. These Mongols made, too, a sort of cream cheese which was most delicious. It was a kind of solidified Devonshire cream, which they made by simmering milk for about twenty-four hours, and then removing the cake of cream formed at the top, drying it, and rolling it up like a pancake. It was rather less thick than a cream cheese, but thicker than Devonshire cream, and it tasted exactly like the latter. The advantage of it was that we could roll it up in a piece of paper, and eat it in alternative bites with a piece of bread on the line of march. And plenty of it we did eat in this way.

Of the Mongols we saw very little. They were probably removed from the main line of traffic, and kept well clear of it and of the shady characters who might frequent it. We only came across two of the felt yurts which are their characteristic abodes, and those Mongols whom we did meet lived in houses, and were more or less tamed and settled.

At length, on September 20, we reached Tsi-tsi-har, a large town of about forty or fifty thousand inhabitants, and