

district; but a circumstance that struck me very much in North China was, that the mules produced by a cross between the donkeys and ponies of the country are very much larger than either. In Peking one used to see magnificent mules in the carts belonging to the high officials. I was told that from fifty to a hundred pounds were sometimes given for the highest class of mules; and these animals were frequently 14'2 to 15 hands in height, and fully a hand or a hand and a half higher than the ponies they were bred from.

On April 12 we passed through the Great Wall, and entered what Marco Polo calls the land of Gog and Magog. The gate of the Great Wall was not imposing, consisting as it did merely of a rough framework of wood, near which was a low hut, in which dwelt a mandarin with a small guard, and in front of which were two small cannons fastened on to a piece of timber. On either side of the gateway were large gaps in the wall—here only of mud—which carts or anything else might pass through.

On the 14th, after starting at three in the morning, we emerged on to the broad, open plain of Mongolia proper. It was a lovely morning, with a faint blue haze over the low hills, which edged the plain on each side and in the far distance; and an extraordinary bounding sense of freedom came over me as I looked on that vast grassy plain, stretching away in apparently illimitable distance all round. There was no let or hindrance—one could go anywhere, it seemed, and all nature looked bright, as if enticing us to go on. We were on a rolling plain of grass. Here and there in the distance could be seen collections of small dots, which, as we came nearer, proved to be herds of camels and cattle. Numbers of larks rose on every side and brightened the morning with their singing. Small herds of deer were frequently met with; bustard too were seen, while numbers of geese and duck were passing overhead in their flight northward.