

things, and was as pleased as a child with a new toy when I gave him an empty corned-beef tin when he left me. That treasure of an old tin is probably as much prized by his family now as some jade-bowls which I brought back from Yarkand are by mine.

Poor Ma-te-la had to do a most prodigious amount of work. He had to walk the whole—or very nearly the whole—of each march, leading the first camel; then, after unloading the camels, and helping to pitch the tents, he would have to scour the country round for the argals or droppings of camels, which were generally the only thing we could get for fuel. By about two in the morning he could probably get some sleep; but he had to lie down amongst the camels in order to watch them, and directly day dawned he would get up and take them off to graze. This meant wandering for miles and miles over the plain, as the camels are obliged to pick up a mouthful of scrub, here and there, where they can, and consequently range over a considerable extent of ground. He would come into camp again for a short time for his dinner, and then go off again, and gradually drive the camels up to be ready for the start; then he would have to help to load them, and start off on the march again. It used to seem to me fearfully hard work for him, but he never appeared any the worse for it, and was always bright and cheery. I gave him a mount one day on one of my camels, but he would never get up again, as he said the guide would give him no wages if he did.

There were eight camels. I rode one myself, four others carried my baggage and stores, and my servant rode on the top of one of these baggage camels; of the remaining three, one carried the water, one was laden with brick tea, which is used in place of money for buying things from the Mongols, and the third was loaded with the men's things. The total weight of my baggage, with the two months' stores, servant's cooking things, camp equipage, etc., was 1416 lbs.

We left Kwei-hwa-cheng by the north gate of the town, and,