

The Mongolian camel* has very long hair in winter, which it sheds in summer. A few years ago a European merchant travelled through Southern Mongolia and established a trade in this wool, so that now the Mongols and Chinese caravan-men save it up instead of wasting it, as formerly, and bring it in for sale at Kwei-hwa-cheng.

I was warned to look out for robbers about here. Some uncanny-looking gentlemen came prowling about my camp one day, and the guide told me to keep my eye well on them and have my revolver ready. I was in some anxiety about my Chinese boy, Liu-san. He knew I must have a lot of money with me, though he did not know exactly where, for I hid it away in all sorts of places; one lump of silver in a sack of flour, another in an empty beef-tin, and so on. So I was at first afraid that if a loaded revolver were given him, he might make it very unpleasant for me one day in the wilds. So, to inspire awe of our party in outsiders, I gave him an unloaded revolver; but afterwards, thinking that doing things by halves was little good, I loaded it for him, and told him that I had the most complete trust in him. He and I must be true to each other; I would look after him, and he must look after me. The plan answered admirably; he used to swagger about with the revolver, showed it to everybody he met, and told the most abominable lies about the frightful execution he could do with it. Nobody can lie with such good effect as a Chinaman, and as he told the gaping Mongols and Turkis, that though he could only bowl over about twenty men at a time with his weapon, I was bristling all over with much more deadly instruments, they used to look upon me with the greatest awe, and I never had the semblance of a disturbance on the whole of my journey.

* I refer my readers to a most excellent description of this camel, its habits and peculiarities, given by Prjevalsky in his book "Mongolia," translated by Mr. Delmar Morgan.