

of stones, and contained a tablet inside a niche. I was looking at this, when I was driven off with ignominy by some ravens which had their nest in it. They screeched and hovered about within a few inches of my eyes in such an unpleasant way that I, having no stick, beat a hasty retreat to camp.

On May 7 we emerged from the undulating hilly country, and, after crossing a small stream called the Moli-ho, came on to an extensive plain bounded on the north, at a distance of five or six miles, by a barren, rugged range of hills, at the foot of which could be seen some Mongol yurts, and a conspicuous white temple; while to the south, at a distance of about twenty miles, were the Sheitung-ula Mountains (called by the Chinese, the Liang-lang-shan, or Eurh-lang-shan), which lie along the north bank of the Yellow river, and were explored in 1873 by Prjevalsky. My guide had a tradition about these mountains that, five or six hundred years ago, a Chinese force of five thousand men was besieged on a hill by a Mongol force. They had been enticed into these deserts by the Mongols, who knew where all the water was to be found, while the Chinese, being unable to procure any, suffered terribly, and only a thousand survived; ever since the Chinese emperor has paid money to the Mongol prince to keep quiet.

A caravan from Guchen passed us on the 8th. There were about a hundred and fifty camels, mostly unladen, but several carried boxes of silver. This was the only caravan we met coming from the west; it had left Guchen sixty days previously.

The following day we passed close by a spur from the northern range of hills, which appeared to be of volcanic origin. The range presented a most fantastic appearance, rising in sharp rugged peaks. It consists of a series of sharp parallel ridges with intervening strips of plain, perhaps a quarter of a mile wide. In Manchuria we had also found