

my diary will best illustrate the description of country we now passed through.

*May 13.*—A very disagreeable windy day. The sand penetrates everywhere; you do not see the sand in the air, but everything in the tent gradually gets covered with a coating of it. The country is extremely dreary looking—nothing but sandhills everywhere, and the air hazy with the particles of sand. Every evening about five we see herds and flocks slowly wending their way over the plain and converging on the water near the camp, but only the sheep seem to be attended by any one, and there is scarcely ever a yurt in sight.

The ponies go about in a semi-wild state, in troops of about twenty mares, under the guardianship of one or more stallions, who drive them about from place to place seeking something to graze on. They are entirely free, and every evening at sunset they march slowly back to the Mongol yurt. The Mongols have great difficulty in getting hold of one when they want it. They chevy the selected pony, riding after him with a long pole having a noose at the end, which they at last succeed in throwing over his head.

On the 13th we passed through some low hills, and then descended a valley in which were some gnarled and stunted elm trees—the first trees I have seen in Mongolia. They were about thirty feet high, and evidently very old. We then passed over a sandy, barren waste, the beginning of the Galpin Gobi, the very worst part of the whole desert. We met a small caravan of Mongols, and passed the encampment of a large caravan going from Bautu to Guchen.

*May 14.*—A very strong wind sprang up E. by N. in the morning and blew all day, and in the evening it was too strong to march, so we halted to-day. There is no mistake about the desert now—a sandy waste in every direction, with scrub in patches; irises are very common in small clumps.

*May 15.*—A very strong wind again to-day. I waited