

eyes as you kneel to drive in the pegs ; and to add to it all, it was pitch dark, and heavy spurts of rain would come driving down at intervals. Tents with walls are not fit for this hard work, as the walls offer too much resistance to the wind.

*May 18.*—A fearful wind blew the whole day, with sand and occasional bursts of rain. Two Mongols encamped with us. They slept in a makeshift tent of felts supported by sticks, leaving just room enough for the men to lie down with a fire between them.

The guide wanted to halt on account of the wind, but I objected, and we started at 6.30 p.m., travelling on towards the range of hills in a westerly direction. The wind subsided at sunset, and it was a fine night ; but the sand had been blown over the track, so that we lost our way and were compelled to halt at 11.30 p.m. in the middle of the plain, without sign of water.

*May 19.*—Luckily we had brought a little water in our water-casks, and so had enough for breakfast ; but we had to start afterwards, as we could not remain without water.

We started at 11 a.m., and soon found the track, as we had the range to guide us, and at five miles reached a well ; but after watering the camels we pushed on for the next well, gradually ascending the range, which I now found to be the eastern extremity of the Hurku Hills, the highest part of which was 700 feet above the plain, the track crossing it at 630 feet. We can realize how deceptive the distances are here. Some days ago we first saw this range, and I thought that we should reach it at the end of that march, but we have taken four days to do so. We passed over a plateau at the top of the range for three and a half miles, and then descended very gradually to the plain again, camping at 7.10 p.m. near a well.

The hills are very barren, but have a few low bushes scattered over their surface, which serve as food for the camels which roam among them. They present a jagged outline, the