

ranges of hills on either hand, about fifteen miles distant on the north and ten miles on the south, and the plain occupies the space between them, which is not quite flat, however, but slopes gradually up to the hills on either hand. The distances, as usual, are most deceptive; the ranges look quite close, as if you could get up to them easily in an hour, and the mountains ahead appear comparatively close, but you travel on and on and don't seem to get any nearer to the distant hills, while the peaks on your right and left are only very slowly left behind.

On the 4th we reached a Mongol encampment, called Tu-pu-chi. This is the most thickly populated part I have seen in the Gobi, as there were several other yurts scattered over the plain. The guide had left a large supply of flour and rice here on a previous trip, and now replenished the stock he had with him. The Mongols looked very poor, thin, and badly fed, and were miserably dressed. Their flocks of sheep, though, were in first-class condition, and were collected round the different yurts. We continued on about another six miles, and then halted by some more yurts, where a new Mongol joined our party to look after the camels.

On the following day we crossed a ridge connecting the Hurku Hills with the southern range, and descended a wide valley or plain between those two ranges on the western side of the connecting ridge. Between us and the southern range was a most remarkable range of sandhills, called by my guide Hun-kua-ling. It is about forty miles in length, and is composed of bare sand, without a vestige of vegetation of any sort on it, and I computed it in places to be as much as nine hundred feet in height, rising abruptly out of a gravel plain. With the dark outline of the southern hills as a background, this white fantastically shaped sand-range presents a very striking appearance. It must have been formed by the action of the wind, for to the westward is an immense sandy tract,