

both kept their countenances, because the arrangement had been between the two; but the guide's face did not move a muscle, except to express supreme astonishment at my audacity in even supposing such an honest boy as mine was capable of squeezing me. I said no more to my boy. His manner, however, has very much changed for the better, and he is evidently trying to get into my good books again. In the afternoon he told me a long yarn about how good and honest his father was, and how honest he knew himself to be—all of which I was very glad to hear, but did not offer any remarks on the subject. These rows will happen in the best-regulated families, but they are a nuisance. I limit them to once a fortnight, when possible, as one cannot be always "nagging" at the unfortunate guide. We started at 4.15, and continued over the plain, passing several yurts and many flocks of sheep and goats and some ponies.

June 13.—A north wind, slight rain in the morning, and very cloudy. It cleared at eleven, and away on the northern range was *snow*—quite low down, too—most delightful to look at. By two it had all cleared away, except on the highest ridge.

I suggested to the guide that we should halt for a day when we came to a good grazing-ground, to let the camels pick up, and then make a renewed effort; but he says that if they were to halt for one day, they would not go on at all the next—the only thing is to keep them at it. Rather like the cab-horse in "Pickwick," which had to be kept in harness for fear of it falling down!

To the north, at a distance of twenty-five miles, are the Altai Mountains, rising to about nine thousand feet above the sea. There was slight snow on the summit before to-day's fall. They are entirely bare, and the southern slopes are steep, but not precipitous. In the centre of the range is said to be a plateau of grass land to which the wild camels resort.