

dollars a head, or three ponies with a man for thirty-six dollars. He has been a riding-boy himself at Shanghai, and is a pretty smart fellow at times, when he likes, and on the whole is a satisfactory boy for the trip. His English has improved a good deal, and, with my small knowledge of Chinese, we manage to understand each other all right. Now and then I am astonished to hear him come out with a choice selection of English swearing, to supplement his stock of Chinese oaths, when he is having a row with the guide.

We camped at 11.35 at Liang-ko-ba, a collection of four Mongol yurts on the plain, round a patch of green.

*June 15.*—Cloudy, with a few drops of rain. I could see the rain falling all round, but it passed off in steam without reaching the ground.

We changed two camels here; one had gone lame, and the other could scarcely move. I bought a sheep for three bricks of tea for which I had paid a tael in Kwei-hwa-cheng. There were some ponies feeding about. They were strong, well-shaped animals, but in bad condition. I rode one which a Mongol had ridden to our tent. It was very different from the clumsy ponies of Peking. We started at 4.40, and still passed over gravelly plain, keeping along the edge of a low range of hills parallel to the road on the right.

*June 16.*—Wind westerly, in violent gusts; fine, but cloudy; snow falling on Altai Mountains. In the morning I climbed a hill and had a fine view of the country round for about eighty miles in every direction. The main range of the Altai Mountains is not at all of a uniform height, but, on the contrary, consists of distinct high ridges connected by lower hills. To the eastward I could see the snow-capped ridge which forms the butt end of the Altai Mountains. It is about twenty-five miles in length, and north-west of it is a second ridge, which also had some