

was that I was trudging along beside a string of heavy, silent, slow-going camels, and on I had to go, for hour after hour through the night with monotonous regularity.

Suddenly, after travelling for nine hours, the gravel plain ended, and we passed over a stretch of grass and halted by a small stream. Close by were pitched four tents (yurts), and this was Ma-te-la's home.

He came to me the next day, saying the guide could not pay him all his wages, and asked me to lend the guide four taels, which I did. He has served the guide for two years, and the guide has now given him only fifteen taels (£3 15s.). That guide is a regular scoundrel. Poor Ma-te-la had to work night and day, collect fuel, fetch water, look after the camels grazing, and then have to walk the whole march. In spite of this he was always perfectly happy, and used to sing and whistle the whole march, and would laugh at everything—if you even looked at him you saw a grin overspread his whole countenance. And now, for all his two years of hard work in this frightful desert, in the arctic cold of winter and the tropical heat of summer, he got fifteen taels—about a penny a day.

Started at 3.10 p.m., and passed over the gravelly plain again. The sunset was most wonderful. Even in the Indian hills during the rains I have never seen such a peculiar red tinge as the clouds had to-night. It was not red, it was not purple, but a mixture between the two—very deep, and at the same time shining very brightly. I have seen at Simla and in Switzerland more glorious sunsets, with richer diffusion of colours, but never one of such a strange colouring as this. An hour and a half later, when it was nearly dark, a very light, phosphorescent-looking cloud hung over the place of sunset.

Camped at 1.30 a.m. in a hollow among some low hills, in which was a small stream of water.