

Mongols say there are plenty in the Tian-shan—they called it *arhgǎli*—and say it has a white breast (see Prjevalsky). The kuku-yamen, they say, is also found about here.

We camped at 6.30 by a spring and some good grass, which the camels have not had for some time. I climbed one of the highest hills to have a look round. There were plenty of white soft clouds about, but suddenly my eye rested on what I felt sure was a great snowy range. I had out my telescope, and there, far away in the distance, were the real Tian-shan, only just distinguishable from the clouds. My delight was unbounded, and for long I feasted my eyes on those "Heavenly Mountains," as the Chinese call them, for they marked the end of my long desert journey.

Our next march, however, was the most trying of all, for we had to cross the branch of the Gobi which is called the desert of Zungaria, one of the most absolutely sterile parts of the whole Gobi. We started at eleven in the morning, passing at first through the low hills, which were perfectly barren, but the hollows had a few tufts of bushes, and one hollow was filled with white roses. After seven and a half miles we left the hills, and entered a gravel plain covered with coarse bushes, but no grass. There was no path, and we headed straight for the end of the Tian-shan range. After passing over the plain for fifteen miles, we struck a path and followed it along till 11.30 p.m., when we halted to cook some food and rest the camels. It was of no use pitching camp, for there was neither water, fuel, nor grass; not a bush, nor a plant, nor a blade of grass—absolutely nothing but gravel. I lay down on the ground and slept till Liu-san brought me some soup and tinned beef. We started again at 4 a.m., and marched till 3.15 p.m. through the most desolate country I have ever seen. Nothing we have passed hitherto can compare with it—a succession of gravel ranges without any sign of life, animal or vegetable, and not a drop of water. We were gradually