

Zungaria we passed a track which he said was that of a wild camel. It was smaller than the tame camel's footprint, and, as it was a single track and leading straight across our line of march right up the desert of Zungaria—from nowhere to nowhere—and miles from any camping-spot, it was not likely to have been anything else but that of a wild camel.

During this march my Chinese rather came to grief. I had been walking, and wanted to ride, so I said to the guide, "Yau chi" ("Want to ride"). The guide was eating some bread, and laughed at me, shaking his head. I got rather angry at this, and repeated, "Yau chi," at which he shook his head again and pointed to my camel. My boy now shouted out to him, and he then at once dismounted and seated my camel for me. It then struck me that "chi" also means "to eat," and he had thought I meant I wanted some of his bread, and had pointed to my saddle-bags, where I had my own. I ought to have said "Yau chi" in a surprised tone, whereas (not being in my usual amiable state of mind) I had said it in an angry tone, and the meaning was immediately altered from "I want to ride" to "I want to eat." Such are some of the intricacies of the Chinese language.

After this long and trying march we (or I, at any rate) scarcely got a wink of sleep, for the heat was stifling, without a breath of air, and I was lying on the ground in a Kabul tent, pestered by a plague of sandflies, which got into my eyes, nose, and everywhere. That was the most despairing time of my whole journey, and many times that night I accused myself of being the greatest fool yet created, and swore by all the gods I would never go wandering about the wild places of the earth again. These periods of depression must occur to every traveller. He cannot help asking himself now and then, "What's the good of it all?" But 'tis always darkest before the dawn, and I could just see the first glimmering of awakening day—the snowy summits of the "Heavenly Mountains"