

one house and an inn in the midst of bare hills. There was no cultivation or pasturage. The inn was occupied by a military mandarin from Urumchi, who had with him a number of soldiers, so there was no room for our party. We drew up the cart a little beyond, and the boy cooked a meal, which I ate in the cart. These big carts are very comfortable. I have a mattress spread out on the top of all the baggage, so that I or the boy can lie down at any time. I sleep in the cart at night, and the boy occupies it during the marches.

*July 11.*—We started again at 2.55 p.m., passing through a hilly country, very bare, and covered, as usual, with gravel. I saw two *Ovis argali* horns, but they were of small size. Halted at 7.15 at Chê-ku-lu-chuen (fifty li)—a house and an inn in a gorge, which we had been descending for rather over a mile. Still no cultivation, and everything very brown and sterile. Had tea, and slept, as usual, in the cart. The boy would not sleep in the rooms of the inn, because the soldiers were to return here from the last stage, and he says they would turn him out and steal his things. They are a bad lot, apparently. They were civil enough to me, though. They mistook me for a Russian, but when I said I was English, they said, "Oh! you belong to the great English nation." Every one here speaks of the *great* English nation. Russian, French, and English, are the only European nations they seem to know. Dull day, but no rain; cool.

*July 12.*—Started at 4.40 a.m., passing down the gorge for four miles. The gorge was from fifty to one hundred yards broad, the hills being from one hundred to one hundred and fifty feet above it. The bottom was fine gravel, and the hills rocky and stony. After emerging from this, we still continued down the slope of gravel from the range, and nine miles further on crossed a plain covered with a light clay soil, bearing plenty of shrubs and trees, but no grass. The plain is surrounded on all sides by hills, and, if there were a more plentiful rainfall