

sional hut inhabited by Mongols, and entered on a quite new phase of our journey. Scarcely a tree was to be seen, and for mile after mile we passed over rolling downs covered with rich grass and exquisite flowers.* In the hollows were often lakes of considerable size, some of them several miles in length. And these were covered with swarms of water-fowl—thousands and thousands of duck and geese. Indeed, these lakes must have been the breeding-ground of the water-fowl, which, in the cold weather, find their way down to the warmer parts of the continent. Large numbers of bustard, too, we saw, and many herds of antelope.

The chief attraction for us, however, at this period of our journey, was the milk and cream we could obtain. What a treat, indeed, it was, after nearly four months without milk or any of its products, to drink some of the rich delicious stuff which these Mongols brought us! At one time in the forest, when I had been out of sorts, I had been allowed a glass of condensed milk from our stores as a medical

* The whole of this tract from Petuna to Tsi-tsi-har is now under cultivation, so rapid has been the advance of Chinese colonisation.