

spect must be shown to me. Then he would pretend to be very obsequious, and bow and kow-tow in the most servile manner. It was hard to know whether to be angry with him or to laugh; he was always so very comical. There would be a twinkle in his eye the whole time, and now and then, while all this pantomime was going on, he used to say to me in English (*his* English), "I think master belong big gentleman; no belong small man." He thought I was a big gentleman quite off his head, though, to go wandering about in such out-of-the-way places, instead of staying comfortably at home; and he used to say, "I think master got big heart; Chinese mandarin no do this."

We were now gradually approaching the heart of the Gobi, and the aspect of the country became more and more barren; the streams disappeared, and water could only be obtained from the rough wells or water-holes dug by former caravans. No grass could be seen, and in its place the country was covered with dry and stunted plants, burnt brown by the sun by day and nipped by the frost by night. Not a sound would be heard, and