

its dull monotonous aspect, fading away in various shades of blue, each getting deeper and deeper, till the hills were reached; and these again, in their rugged outline, presented many a pleasing variety of colour, all softened down with a hazy bluish tinge; while the deceitful mirage made up for the absence of water in the scene, and the hills were reflected again in what appeared to be lovely lakes of clear, still water.

The Bortson well was reached on May 22. Here were a few Mongol yurts on the banks of some small trickles of water, running down from the Hurku Hills to the north; and it was at this point that I crossed the track of the Russian traveller, Prjevalsky. In his first, and also in his third journey, he had crossed the Galpin Gobi from the south, and passed through this place on his way northward to Urga. Describing the Galpin Gobi at this point, the great Russian traveller says: "This desert is so terrible that, in comparison with it, the deserts of Northern Tibet may be called fruitful. There, at all events, you may find water and good pasturage in the valleys: here there is neither, not even a single oasis—every-