

strange lurid colouring as this. An hour and a half later, when it was nearly dark, a very light, phosphorescent-looking cloud hung over the place where the sun had gone down.

So we plodded on night after night over the desert, and halting for the day sometimes by the side of a minute little streamlet, where we would find a few Mongols encamped, more often by a roughly-dug waterhole, in the midst of a desert with not a sign of human habitation in sight. At last, one evening, towards the end of June, when, after two months of desert travel my patience was well-nigh exhausted, a ray of light appeared. I had climbed one of the highest hills to have a look round. There were plenty of white soft clouds about, but suddenly my eye rested on what I felt sure must be something more than a mere cloud and must be a great snowy range. I had out my telescope in a moment, and there, in truth, far away in the distance, only just distinguishable from the clouds, were real snow mountains. These could be none other than the Tianshan; my delight was unbounded, and long did I feast my eyes on those "Heavenly Mountains," as the Chinese name them, for