

as bare as a well-kept garden drive. I lay down on the ground and slept till Liu-san brought me some soup and tinned beef. We started again at four, watched the sun rise again, marched through the whole morning right up to three in the afternoon, passing over the most desolate country I have ever seen. Nothing we had passed hitherto could compare with it—a succession of gravel ranges without a sign of life, animal or vegetable, and not a drop of water. We were gradually descending to a very low level, the sun was getting higher and higher, and the wind hotter and hotter, until I shrank from it as from the blast of a furnace, and would often put my hand up to shield my face. Only the hot winds of the Punjab could be likened to it.

Fortunately we still had some water in the casks, brought from our last camping-ground, and we had some bread, so we were not on our last legs ; but the march was trying enough for the men, and much more so for the camels, for they had nothing to eat or drink, and the heat both days was extreme. The guide called the distance two hundred and thirty li, and I reckon it at about seventy miles. We were