

leave all the comforts of civilised life and deliberately place myself amid depressing surroundings, and of my own free will go through such hardships?" But 'tis always darkest before the dawn, and I could just see the first glimmering of awakening day—the snowy summits of the "Heavenly Mountains" were rising above me. The desert journey was nearly at an end, and before long we should be among a new people and passing through towns and villages again.

Impatient to reach the promised land as soon as our well-nigh worn-out camels would carry us thither, we made an early start the next day. For nearly two miles we passed through a country well covered with trees, and patches of coarse grass and bushes, growing on a soil partly clay and partly sand. This unusual vegetation ended as suddenly as it had begun, and we passed over the gravel desert again, where there was no vestige of either grass or scrub. The hot wind blowing off this seemed absolutely to scorch one up; but yesterday's order of things was now reversed—we were ascending while the sun was descending, and it gradually became cooler,