

as afternoon passed into evening, and as we slowly climbed the long even slopes of the Tian-shan.

About ten at night we suddenly found ourselves passing over turf, with bushes and trees on either side; a shrill clear voice hailed us from out of the darkness. The guide answered, and a Turki woman then appeared, who led us through the bushes over some cultivated ground to a house—the first I had seen for nearly a thousand miles, and the first sign that I had entered Turkestan—the mysterious land which I had longed for many a day to see.

Flowing by the house was a little stream of clear, fresh water. It was scarcely a yard broad, but it was not a mere trickle like the others we had passed in the Gobi, it was flowing rapidly, with a delightful gurgling noise, and was deep enough for me to scoop up water between my two hands. I gulped down mouthful after mouthful of the delicious liquid, and enjoyed such a drink as I had not had for many a long day, and as I lay down on the grass on its bank while the water-casks were being filled, I thought the trials of the desert journey were nearly over and that some few