

a narrow valley. The last mile or two was over soft green turf, and near the summit there was a perfect mass of flowers, chiefly forget-me-nots ; and the sight of all this rich profusion of flowers and grass, in place of the dreary gravel slopes of the Gobi Desert, was a treat to be remembered.

Yet there were still no trees to be seen, and a curious characteristic of these hills was their entire want of water. For twelve miles from Morgai to the summit of the pass we had not seen a drop. From this absence of water the valleys were not deep—not more than five or six hundred feet below the summit of the hills on either side—nor were the hillsides remarkably steep, as in the Himalayas. They were grassy slopes with rocks cropping out at their summits, and here and there on their sides. But five miles on the southern side a small stream appeared, and the valley bottom was partitioned off into fields, round which irrigation ducts had been led. Trees now at last began to appear, and we pitched camp on a little grassy plot near a stream of cold clear water, and under a small grove. Such a treat I had not enjoyed for many a long day. I