

pass and travel several miles beyond it to the next camping ground, but this arrangement was discovered in time, and we turned aside to the spring which Pike had seen the day before. The spring-water proved unfit for the use of man, and, as there was too little of it to be of service for the animals, we had to ply the pick and spade to procure a sufficient drinkable supply. Another day's march, during which our guide stuck to us, brought us almost within sight of the native encampment at Gerge, and then the Tibetan speedily disappeared. Here were numerous flocks of sheep and goats, and, far apart from these, at the east end of a long, narrow, salt lake, and close to a small marsh, we found a few tents with inhabitants. We pitched our camp on some dry ground, slightly above the level of the marsh and close to a small hole, from which all the drinking-water of the encampment had to be lifted with ladles. After we had erected our tents and had begun to enjoy the shelter they afforded against the rays of the sun, a petty official came to Ramzan to inquire who we were and where we meant to go. Ramzan, who, like other Argûns, was quite accustomed to lying, gave, without hesitation, a circumstantial account of our proceedings. Pike was a merchant returning from Turkestan to Batang, and I was a skilful medicine man willing to be of service if there were any sick in the Tibetan encampment. How the statement regarding Pike's status was received we were not informed, but the offer of my assistance was promptly declined. They had a medicine man of their own and would have nothing to do with a stranger. This was unfortunate, as medical practice among them might have served many useful purposes. During the afternoon some Tibetans became unpleasantly inquisitive, manifesting a strong desire to inspect and handle everything they saw, and for some hours they hung about the tents. I was disinclined