

large wooden bowl provided for their use, though the third, being untrained in this manner of potation, could not be induced to do so. These two tanks we left for a fresh supply, which was to be brought from Kara Targaz.

Next day I rose early, and, after awakening my sleepy company, found it necessary to remonstrate strongly with Dalbir Rai, whom I found coolly enjoying his morning ablutions as if water had been superabundant. We continued our march through a country which presented little variation from that which we had traversed the day before. The presence of a tiny green plant with long roots led me to hope that water might be found beneath the surface, but though we dug deep in the bed of a small ravine, we found none. It seemed marvellous that the diminutive plant could live and thrive in this parched land, where the sand by day was so hot that even the natives, with their thick-skinned bare feet, could not stand on it for any length of time.

At the end of our second day's march in this desert, I found that we were almost exactly on the parallel of 38° N. latitude. Next morning, when we had gone a short distance from the spot where we had bivouacked, it became clear that our guides were quite unfit for the work they had undertaken. When questioned, one of them admitted that he had forgotten the direction we ought to take, and I at once gave the order to return. It had been no part of my purpose to attempt a long desert journey at this season, but the incompetence of guides, who were at fault after only two short marches, was irritating. I tried to lead the party back to Kara Targaz by the straightest course, but this effort had to be abandoned. In all directions the landscape presented one unvarying appearance; the trees seemed all of one height and the sand-hills all of one shape. Again and again I sought to keep a distant object in view to direct my