

Rock pigeons played and cooed on the bare precipice beneath which I sat looking over the desert country as far as the still obstinate fog permitted. Through the two openings of the gully there is a free view over the small scattered knolls, really relics of denudation, reminding one of holms in a fringing belt of rocks, without water and wood, in shades of red and yellow, dead and bare like the face of the moon. The valley which descends to the south-south-west and is the main drainage channel of the district, is seen to emerge soon on to level ground, and beyond its mouth an extensive plain apparently lies.

While I sat musing beside the spring, I heard the everlasting camel bells sounding shriller than ever, for the clang was loudly echoed from these naked moist cliffs. The whole hill seemed to be set in vibration, and unseen caravans seemed to be approaching from all sides. But soon my own fine camels came round a turn on the path. They strode slowly and silently on their soft pads and with a royally majestic gait up to the spring. They did not dash greedily and wildly at the blue mirror of the water, but bent with great dignity, gently, and with restraint, as though they were at first astonished at their shaggy reflexions in the water. They bent lower, and their lips came in contact with the life-giving fluid, which they sucked up in long, slow draughts. They raised their heads, looked round for a minute, and then drank once more, and then the herd strode down again at the same quiet and regular pace to their open-air stall and their straw scattered over the ground.

The water in the large basin of the spring had a temperature of  $63.5^{\circ}$ , when the temperature of the air was about freezing-point.

Late in the evening the mist thinned and the cloud covering of the sky showed more relief; it was possible to distinguish individual clouds and layers, and there was not as hitherto a universal grey mistiness. Stars of the first magnitude shone out in the zenith, and we hoped for better weather and longed for a glimpse of the sun, which we had not seen for so long.

At half-past six on January 13 the fog was denser and