

height of 3858 feet. From the other the view is extensive towards the east, and shows the lie of the land; but we do not care to enjoy it for long, for just about the summit a whole cloud of small irritating midges buzz in our ears and torment us with their sharp bites. In the afternoon the air becomes strangely thick, and the hills show only in hazy shades of varying density. The mist seems as if it came in from a sea and lay over fringing reefs.

We encamped at the well Cha-i-kurgez (3186 feet), where a caravan of horses and donkeys were already. The men had made a ring fence on the windward side with their bales, which contained tea and tobacco. The bark of dogs in the distance showed that there were other human beings in the neighbourhood. When the wind died down at night we were badly teased with midges, beetles, moths, and other winged insects. It was too warm to keep the tent closed, with  $65.8^{\circ}$  at nine o'clock; but we had descended during the day, and come nearer to the sultry, unhealthy country.

$67.3^{\circ}$  at seven o'clock on April 2 foreboded a warm day, and at one o'clock the temperature rose to  $83.5^{\circ}$  in the shade. The air was heavier and thicker than ever, and we could only get a very indistinct notion of the surrounding country. But there was not much to see. Dreary and monotonous, the steppes, desert zones, ruins of hills, and drainage channels alternated as heretofore. The rocks were conglomerate and sandstone, composed of weathered porphyry, and here and there penetrated by veins of calcareous spar. In a hollow begrown with luxuriant tamarisks the clayey soil was much sodden, and we waded and splashed through the yellow slime all on foot. The tamarisks grew on small cones, and only near them, that is, where their roots made the ground somewhat stable, could we get along, the difficulty being to pass from one tamarisk to another, while the camels were nearly drowned in the quagmire. At the mouth of a small valley a small brook had formed large pools, where I sat and splashed my boots about to clean off the clay.

A little farther two men sat dreaming at a hill while their horses grazed. They were armed to the teeth, and