

effective. Two of the reported invalids were coaxed into eating some oats, and, having been got to move close to the spring where reeds and scrub were abundant, could be safely left behind with a hope of subsisting at ease until the men returned from Tun-huang to take them home again. The third poor beast, however, was doomed, and died before I could come round to shoot it. Thus the total roll of victims rose to six, and to that figure, I may state at once, I had the satisfaction of keeping it down in spite of all the fatigues which still confronted us before Tun-huang.

It was certain that all our beasts, the brave camels included, were in need of a rest. But from the information previously gathered I knew that Koshe-langza, the next stage, would be the best place for this. So I decided to push on. The march brought little change in the physical aspects of the ancient lake bed which the route continued to skirt. For the first seven miles or so we crossed another bay, less wide than the former, and with a soil which, though covered with 'Shor,' still showed remains of old reed-beds. Then we struck again the line of more or less continuous littoral terraces and moved along their edge, forty to fifty feet above the level of the flat salt-encrusted lake bed which stretched away northward as far as the eye could reach.

The deathlike torpor impressed on this landscape was broken only by the distant view of a high mountain range to the south, and by a shallow Nullah with plentiful tamarisk growth which was crossed after about seventeen miles. A stretch of salt marsh fed by springs and covered with reeds extended here at the foot of the clay terraces, and numerous footprints showed that animals, including wild camels, were in the habit of descending to the Nullah for water. They probably came from the sandy desert, vaguely talked of by the Abdal hunters as Kum-tagh, which extends over the higher glacis of the mountains south.

Finally the route dropped down to the foot of the old lake banks, which here rose very steeply to a height of 100 to 120 feet, and after a total march of some