

Our march that day led mainly westwards above the wide depression in which the bed of the stream, now practically dry, seemed to descend. We skirted the foot of some low barren spurs trending from the north; but since the snowy main range now took a decided turn to the north-west we soon lost sight of its peaks. The increased distance from its life-giving snow and ice expressed itself in the absolute barrenness of the ground, even near flood-channels, in the diminishing moisture there, and the absence of all animal life. The view to the west was still encouragingly open; but I looked out in vain for any distinct sign of the great salt lake which early in the 'sixties pioneers of the Indian Trigonometrical Survey had roughly located in this region, and which by our bearings I thought we ought now to be nearing.

Under a burning afternoon sun we crossed a wide alluvial fan and found the flood-channels over its expanse absolutely dry. This was a new difficulty. There was no chance of getting water here, though dead Burtze roots showed that running water must have been near once. So I turned off to the north-west towards the foot of a low spur. The shallow Nullah we there met held no stream. But there were some grass-covered patches in the dry bed. Just as if we were in the Taklamakan, we took to digging a well at a spot which felt moist, and at a depth of three feet came upon fresh water. So men and beasts got a drink at least after the twenty miles' tiring march over ground still about 15,500 feet above the sea. But the violent east wind made the bitterly cold night very trying for the men who had difficulty in collecting enough fuel, and for our poor animals which vainly searched for shelter. Next morning another pony succumbed after having stood motionless behind my little tent all night.

Some relief came on the morning of September 15th, when in crossing a low saddle some four miles from camp, I sighted a glittering sheet of salt efflorescence stretching far away in the distance. It marked the bed of the large salt lake which was now for the most part dry. Its total length proved upwards of sixteen miles, and only