

the battens to form an impromptu floor. Upon this platform was laid a non-conductor of simply doubled hair-felt, sewed into a thin mattress of light canvas. There was very little trouble in this arrangement; the men were kept well off the ground, and the hair-felt not only preserved their bodily heat from escaping, but it prevented the damp of the earth from ascending. This mattress was ten feet long, therefore it could be rolled up to form a bolster at one end; and, during a hot sun, it was intended for a cover to the roof of the gipsy van.

The first day's start is always in the afternoon, and the march is short. We had only made three miles, and it was nearly dark when we halted. The absence of fuel necessitates the great trouble of carrying a supply of charcoal, and it destroys the pleasure of the cheerful night-fires that usually enliven the bivouac in wild countries. The plants and herbs that grow in Cyprus are all prickly; thus groping in the dark for the first inflammable material to produce the fire-foundation is unpleasant. There is a highly aromatic but very prickly species of wild thyme: this is always sought for, and at all times responds to the match.

The first night is always novel, in spite of old experiences. We pricked our hands in raking up thorny plants, but a useful implement, which combined the broad hoe on one side with a light pick on the other, lessened our labour, and we produced a blaze; this was bright but transient, as the fuel was unsubstantial. The dinner was quickly warmed, as it consisted of tins of preserved meats; and, climbing up the ladder, the gipsy van presented such a picture of luxury that if the world were girded by a good