

the result of one or two days of sunshine. As soon as the snow has disappeared, the moisture quickly disappears also, though its cementing and solidifying effect remains, imparting to the lamina in question a firmer consistency than that possessed by the lamina of sand which is swept over it by the first storm of spring; so that we can now understand, how it comes to permeate the entire dune, and how in especial it shows itself on the surface in ridges and ribbings. I question very much whether a winter storm would have any effect upon the relief of the dunes, for the snowy covering acts like oil upon the waves.



Fig. 288. DEAD TOGHRAK-TRUNK IN THE DESERT.

As the sand ahead of us appeared to be impassable, we turned to the west, and finally struck a hollow containing two or three dead tamarisks. We were now 18 km. beyond the point where, according to Roborovskij's map, we ought to have crossed the old bed of the Tschertschen-darja, of which he had been informed; but so far there had not been the smallest hollow to indicate the presence of any such ancient watercourse.

Of vegetation on the 6th January, except for two dead tamarisks, we did not see so much as a drifting leaf; nor anything indicative of a bajir all day, while the dunes were steep and difficult. In general the underground contour seemed to be rising as we approached the mountains. True, there was no great indication of this on my hypsometrical instruments, but it was noticeable that the view looking north was

*Hedin, Journey in Central Asia.*