

## CHAPTER IV.

### ACROSS THE JARDANG DESERT TO ALTMISCH-BULAK.

We now turned our backs upon the Kuruk-darja, and continued towards the south-east, the going being exceedingly difficult in consequence of the numerous gullies, and *jardangs*, or ridges, 2 m. high. At intervals came gigantic mounds, standing either singly or in groups, and crowned by veritable plumes of *kötäk* or tamarisk. In suitable places the sand was heaped up, but without forming actual dunes, though dunes were visible one or two kilometers farther south. Two or three times we observed fresh tracks of hares and foxes; both these animals frequent the adjacent mountains. In proportion as we advanced away from the Kuruk-tagh, the *jardang* ridges grew lower and lower, until at last they were only about one foot high. All the same they made travelling very difficult and tiring, for we had to cross them all at right angles, and there were vast numbers of them and they were hard. We now picked up our first find, a fragment of a baked clay jar, as well as a piece of slate, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  dm. long and 1 dm. broad, which had evidently been used as an axe. These were the first ancient traces of human beings we discovered beside the Kuruk-darja.



Fig. 52. OLD TAMARISKS ON THE BANK OF THE KURUK-DARJA.