



Fig. 7. Tamarisks at the Edsen-gol

as if through corridors and ravines. There were large numbers of tamarisks, both living and dead. The ground consisted partly of light clay with wind-furrows and partly of hard gravel. Between a couple of bound dunes flourished a grove of fresh poplars. The cones had exactly the same shape as the cupola over the »mosque» at Khara-khoto, and they were as much as eight to ten meters in height. Some of the tamarisks were six and seven meters in height, as tall as trees.

The countryside afterwards becomes more open and the distances between the vegetation-cupolas greater. The clay soil is furrowed by the constant grooving effect of the wind just as in the Lop desert, but the furrows here are quite shallow. A ruin that we passed may possibly have been a detached fort belonging to Khara-khoto.

After rather a short march from the ruined town we pitched camp XLVIII in the middle of the plain, where the ground was even and hard and innumerable trunks of dead trees lay strewn about. This, too, reminded one of old Lop-nor and the desert around Lou-lan. But there is one great difference: there, one sees numbers of dead trees still standing on their roots, while the dead wood to the northwest of Khara-khoto consists only of prostrate and rootless trees.

A yellow scorpion crawled forth from between the folds of the doctor's and HASLUND's tent. It was the first of its kind we had seen, and was immediately added to the collections.