

attempt which might prove futile, for the camels had already spent three rather warm days without water, and a two days' journey lay between us and the river. I went on that night some six miles to the south, in the direction whence the ancient water supply must have come. Before sunrise the next day we were under way, making straight for the river. The camels' throats were so dry that they began to rattle distressingly. The creatures knew that they were headed for water, and traveled more than half as fast again as on the outward journey. We reached the Keriya River that night, doing two days' journey in one, in spite of the soft sand and the countless zigzags. We men did not suffer as the camels did, but another day would have exhausted our melons and water, and then we too, like the camels, should have felt the pinch of thirst. It was fortunate that we had not depended on Ibrahim Beg's estimate of how much water we should need. If we had, we might have joined the company of improvident Chanto treasure-seekers, who, as one hears in every village, have perished of thirst while hunting for the gold supposed to lie buried among the ruins beneath the sands of Takla-Makan.

In spite of difficulties, the trip to Dandan-Uilik was a success. The canals and pottery between the main ruins and Rawak were seen to indicate that an area seven or more miles wide from east to west must have been under cultivation. The length of the cultivated area, including Rawak on the north and a group of houses which I discovered two miles to the south of Dandan-Uilik, must have been at least nine miles. In other words, the oasis of Litsa, in its prime, had an area of nearly fifty square miles. Be-