

before approached Dandan-oilik from this side. On the march he had more than once before told me that he thought the route taken by Kasim was leading too far north; but apparently, from a feeling of professional etiquette or pride, he had refrained from pressing his advice. Now, on the hunters' plain avowal of their inability to trace our goal, a gleam of satisfaction passed over his wrinkled face. A short conversation with the returned men sufficed for him to locate the point which Kasim's party had reached. So next morning the men were sent back with full instructions to guide Kasim back into the right direction.

Old Turdi, with the instinct bred by the roamings of some thirty years and perhaps also inherited—his father had been a 'treasure-seeker' before him—would find his bearings even where the dead uniformity of the sand dunes seemed to offer no possible guidance. So, skirting the foot of several higher ridges of sand, he brought us next evening to ground where dead trees were seen emerging from heavy sand. Shrivelled and bleached as they were, Turdi and the men could recognize among them trunks of the white poplar, the willow and other planted trees, unmistakable proofs that we had reached the area of ancient cultivation.

In a steep-banked hollow, about a mile and a half farther to the south-east, we succeeded in digging a well to camp by. Next morning, guided by old Turdi, a couple of miles farther south I found myself amidst the ruined structures which mark the site of Dandan-oilik. Scattered in small isolated groups over an area which my subsequent survey showed to extend for about a mile and a half from north to south with a width of three-quarters of a mile, there rose from among the low dunes the remains of buildings, modest