



CAMP IN THE DESERT, DANDAN-ULIQ.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### EXCAVATION OF BUDDHIST SHRINES

ON the morning of the 19th of December I commenced my excavations by clearing the remains of a small square building immediately to the south of my camp. Turdi knew it as a 'But-khana' or "temple of idols," and well remembered once having searched it in his own fashion. But the sand, though lying only two to three feet high, had not been removed, and by laying bare the foundations and floor I could expect to gain useful preliminary knowledge as to the general construction and arrangement of such shrines. In this I was not disappointed. A careful examination of the remains of walls which were brought to light on the north and west sides showed that there had been an inner square cella enclosed by equidistant outer walls twenty feet long, forming a kind of corridor or passage on each side. Both inner and outer walls consisted of hard plaster laid on a framework of wood and reed matting, which itself was held in position by massive square posts fixed at regular intervals.

Of the manner in which the upper portions of the inner cella walls, long ago decayed, had once been decorated, I could not remain in doubt when fragments of flat stucco relievos, which must