

sand the dark line of trees fringing the Keriya Darya came into view.

Four miles more we tramped on over dunes that showed broad backs and gradually diminished in height, until a belt was reached where tamarisks and 'Kumush' grass was growing freely. When passing a last low bank of sand, I suddenly saw the glittering ice of the river before me. While I was glad to sit down on its bank after the tiring walk of some fourteen miles, Kasim went to search for the ponies which had brought the Sub-Surveyor's party from Keriya and were to await us here. Half an hour later they turned up under the escort of Ibrahim, the 'Darogha' whom the Amban of Keriya had sent to look after my camp. A cheerful fire was then lit under the poplars that line the river-bank, and by its side I sat contentedly until the camels turned up in the darkness. It was pleasant to view in the dusk the high trees still bearing partly their red autumn foliage, the thick shrubs and the wide ice-belt of the river, after those weeks when one's eyes had rested only on yellow sand and the wavy lines of its expanse.

On the following morning Kasim with a single companion left us to start on the march back to the Khotan Darya, while I was grateful to get into my saddle once more for the rest of our march to Keriya. The river along which the route led was now almost everywhere completely frozen over. It flows in a deep and extremely tortuous bed about 50-60 yards across at the narrowest points, but widens at occasional great bends to fully three times as much. The ground on the left bank, along which the day's march took us, is covered for a breadth of about a mile with patches of forest and a belt of reed-jungle. Beyond stretch the sand-dunes westwards. On the right bank a high and well-defined ridge of sand, known as Kizil-kum ("the Red Sands"), which seemed to rise 300 feet or so, could be seen following the river-course. The growth of willows and poplars seemed equally luxuriant on either side.

I passed a number of shepherds' huts ('Satmas') built of a rude framework of wood with walls of rushes closely packed, but met no