

main channel loses itself in the sand some four miles to the west of the little colony. The water needed for irrigation is diverted into the old bed by a 'band' which I had passed some seven miles higher up. But even thus the supply is getting precarious, and as the labour available is quite insufficient to cope with the vagaries of the stream, the people of Yartungaz Tarim have started fresh cultivation at the new debouchure as an alternative in years when their old irrigation channel is likely to fail. Given an adequate supply of labour for the maintenance of dykes and canals, it is certain that the area of cultivation could be greatly extended. If fields were to replace the expanse of jungle, covering at present an area of at least twenty-five square miles, the terminal oasis of the Yartungaz River might well present the conditions we must assume to have once existed round the ancient site below Imam Jafar Sadik.

Here too it was impossible to obtain any clear information as to the ancient remains for which I was bound. But our energetic Darogha succeeded at last in hunting up reliable guides to the grazing-grounds of the Endere shepherds, and our supplies of foodstuffs and fodder could be replenished from the surplus stock of the little colony. Two long marches brought my caravan across the region of sand-dunes to the forest belt of the Endere stream. Immediately after leaving Yartungaz Tarim a formidable 'Dawan' of sand, apparently about 180 feet high, gave trouble to the camels and ponies. But as usual the ridges further away from the river grew lower, and broad depressions between them covered with soda efflorescence offered easier ground. Ice brought from the Yartungaz and the contents of my water-tanks enabled us to camp half-way without the necessity of digging a well, and the quantity of dead tamarisk stems close at hand though scanty sufficed for the camp fires. After we left Yartungaz a fairly strong wind began blowing from the north or north-east, and the dust-haze it raised displayed an ominous persistence.

Late on the 19th of February we crossed the chain of high dunes which skirt the left bank of the Endere stream, and then continued to the south-east along what our guides called the 'old Darya' of