

water only every third year. Boundary 'Pao-t'ais' marked now the extreme limit up to which Bagh-jigda could reclaim desert land. But with the reduced allotment of water, cultivation of the many acres newly levelled had not proved sufficiently attractive, and so the luxuriant vegetation of the riverine jungle was allowed to step in and annex them. Of course, it protects them almost equally well against the drift sand of the desert, for the benefit of future generations whom prospective pressure of population may force to turn their labour to such land.

While the observations here and in a few miles of young Toghrak jungle, carefully preserved by Nasir Beg for the sake of its fuel, were interesting, the antiquarian results of my visit proved scanty. The first owner of the Uigur manuscript, a Bagh-jigda tenant, pointed out as its find-spot one of those curious tamarisk-covered sand-cones which form so typical a feature on the edge of the Taklamakan. It turned out that more than ten years had passed between the discovery and the presentation of the manuscript fragments to Mr. Macartney. How the several portions were found at greatly varying depths, as the original owner asserted, seems difficult to explain, seeing that these sand-cones are of relatively slow growth, and not likely to cover up parts of the same manuscript at periods separated by centuries. But here, as in the case of almost all chance discoveries of this kind in Turkestan which have not been followed up at the very time, the critical verdict can only be: *non liquet*.

Two miles to the north of this place, and beyond a belt of fine Toghraks known as Kiziljai Mazar, I found numerous ruins of mud-built houses scattered over an area which, by its clearly traceable irrigation channels, its terraced fields and similar indications, was marked as having been occupied down to a not very distant period. Mr. Macartney had visited this locality, called Koilogh-ata, earlier in the year and, stimulated by the find of the Uigur manuscripts, had the rubbish in one or two of these humble dwellings cleared. But the only discovery rewarding his excavation was part of a leather slipper, and the chronological fixing