

showed that he had fared well, and he had nothing but praise for the way in which as a Saiyid he had been helped by the villagers. Nevertheless he seemed home-sick for his barren Salt Range hills, and talked of soon setting out for them. It was a queer Punjabi he talked, and I wondered what welcome he would find in his old home. He declared that during all these years he had never thought of getting news about his parents or relatives!

From Achma and the adjoining small oasis of Laisu I struck south-east through a belt of luxuriant Toghrak jungle to the edge of the marsh of Shivul. After a night's camp there near a desolate little Langar I visited a small Tati with old pottery débris, known as Jigda-kuduk, some five miles away to the south-east, where the dune-fringed marsh approaches the bare gravel glacis descending from the foot of the Polur hills. The edge of the Keriya oasis proved only a little over two miles away from this dreary waste, which once, no doubt, had formed part of the cultivated area—how long ago I could not determine. From its glare and heat I was glad to gain the broad, well-shaded road which passes through the oasis to the town and district headquarters of Keriya.

There a halt was indispensable in order that I might make the acquaintance of the Amban, and secure his assistance for whatever explorations I might have to carry on within his district, mainly desert, which stretches for nearly five degrees of longitude eastwards to beyond Charchan. But my stay would certainly not have extended to five days, had the necessity of obtaining fresh transport not detained me. Keriya was the last place where I could make sure of replacing the camels which, by a succession of deaths due to some unexplained illness, I had lost since August. We had taken all possible care of the fine-looking animals acquired at Kashgar, and used every chance for giving them rest and plentiful grazing. Yet, as already related, I had the mortification of seeing them return to Khotan from the Kara-tash Valley, where they had been grazing at ease during my absence in the Karanghu-tagh mountains, reduced by two in number. During my work about Domoko two more succumbed in