

interfered with it. But since then the tide of renewed development has continued; and though many of the colonists brought from the western oases under official auspices, *recte* pressure, have escaped back to their old homes, the population is steadily growing. When I crossed the river, still flowing, in spite of the late season, in four or five well-filled channels with a volume far in excess of that of the Khotan Darya as I had seen it in the autumn, I recognized the possibilities which nature affords for the Charchan oasis. But who can foresee whether they will ever be fully realized, or how near or distant the time may be when desolation will again reign here supreme?

These glimpses of the present Charchan had their best counterfoil in the silent 'Tatis' which I visited on the second day to the south-west of the extant oasis. These *débris* areas of bare eroded soil, where nothing but small potsherds, broken pieces of glass, and metal and other fragments of hard material indicate former occupation, extend in patches from the present edge of cultivation for nearly five miles to the south-west. The ground presents itself as an almost level Sai of fine gravel, with here and there some island-like 'witness' of loess indicating the height of the overlying soil which has been eroded and carried away by the winds since cultivation had ceased. Near the Mazar of Yalghuz-tug ('the lonely Yak-standard') new fields are again invading the area of what the people of Charchan know as the 'Kone-shahr.' Any remains besides pottery *débris* which the ground may have once retained, have, of course, long ago been searched for treasure and destroyed.

The line of an old canal running towards this nearest of the 'Tatis' was followed by me for nearly two miles to its point of junction with the irrigation channel which Musa Beg some twenty years before had endeavoured to put to fresh use and which I had crossed on my approach to Charchan. Old pottery *débris* cropped up also in extensive patches west of this ancient canal, as far as the banks of a shallow depression which receives water from the Ayak-tar stream during the summer floods. Judging from the configuration of the gently sloping alluvial fan,