

days, a matchlock of imposing size and weight, not to reckon felts and other kit which would allow Ismail to camp out in the jungle during the severest season. Yet the pony never lagged for a moment and was ever ready to take the lead in awkward places. Of such there were many indeed, before we approached the ridge of tamarisk-covered sand-cones which Ismail pointed out from a distance as marking the site of the ruins. In the intervening depressions which probably are reached by occasional summer floods, the tamarisk and other scrub grew in such tangled luxuriance as to be often quite impassable on horseback. Toghraks of great size and frequently of curiously twisted appearance studded patches of ground between these depressions so closely as to force us to make détours. Everywhere there abounded tracks of deer, boars, and smaller game, and I could well realize what execution Ismail's antique weapon might do here.

The ruins of Yalghuz-dong, 'The Lonely Hillock,' consisted of three isolated small structures, showing oblong walls of very soft brickwork and built on the top of tamarisk cones which lower sand ridges connected. The walls stood only a few feet above the ground, and though partially protected by the sand which the tamarisk scrub had detained, they nowhere showed remains of any superstructures. On the slopes of the hillocks rising about thirty feet above the plain, there lay some large beams or planks of splintered Toghrak wood which Ismail thought might have belonged to coffins. But there was nothing to show their original position or use. Altogether these poorly preserved walls and their strange situation looked puzzling. But the small size of the bricks and their softness suggested no great age. The puzzle was not solved when about one and a half miles to the north-east Ismail showed me a second group of small rectangular structures closely resembling the first, but built on low ground by the side of what was manifestly an old irrigation canal. Here, too, the walls stood only two to four feet above ground and retained no trace of superstructures.

But when, following the traces of this canal for a little over half a mile eastwards, Ismail took me to the principal