

barren glacis. On our left a distant fringe of low tamarisk cones lined the horizon, with glimpses of Toghraks, living or dead, where the channels of rare rain floods from the mountains expand and at times bring some moisture. To the south the absolutely sterile outer range remained in full view all day, its scarp furrowed by 'Chaps,' which the wild camels were said to haunt.

We halted for the night at Yandash-kak, where amidst high cones of sand covered with dead tamarisk we found two wells about six feet deep yielding plentiful and tolerably good water. Next day a long march, which from the total absence of any distinguishing features seemed never-ending, took us north-eastwards across some twenty-seven miles of uniformly bare Piedmont gravel to the banks of the Jahan Sai. We crossed its broad flood bed, almost dry, as the light was failing, and hurried to kindle a big bonfire on one of the highest tamarisk cones in the belt of sandy jungle which stretches along the east side; for the column of baggage and labourers was far behind and in need of guidance. Then we who were mounted groped our way ahead in the darkness until we struck first a small canal with some fields, and then a luxuriant growth of Toghraks by the side of a shallow stream.

It was the stream of Miran, a branch of the Jahan Sai, which the people of Abdal have utilized for a generation or two to create a small colony known as the Miran Tarim. Here in a somewhat spasmodic fashion they cultivate fields of wheat without having abandoned their fisherman's life by the river. It was close upon midnight before all our heavy goods-train of camels had arrived. But what did a much-delayed dinner matter? We had fuel and water in plenty, and as I sat warming myself by a well-nourished camp fire, the rosy glow which lit up the young forest around us seemed to harmonize with my hopes of archaeological work before me.

Next morning, December 8th, I left our camp by the stream and, crossing the thin ice sheet which covered it, hurried under Tokhta Akhun's guidance with my full posse of labourers to the ruins he reported as being close by to the east. For about half a mile we passed through