

lee side trunks of dead mulberry and Jigda trees could still be traced. About a hundred yards to the west I came upon eight big trunks of the cultivated poplar lying in a row, the only specimens I saw at the site. Their size—one measured forty-seven feet in length and six feet in circumference—suggested that at this point, at least, cultivation had proceeded for a long time before the site was abandoned.

Repeated reconnaissances made with the help of Rai Ram Singh and my Loplik hunters failed to reveal within striking radius any other structural remains beyond some already seen by Hedin. These were so badly eroded that their exploration, though revealing some features of interest, *e.g.* the use of burnt bricks, did not occupy us for more than a day. I had made my arrangements accordingly, and felt heartily glad when, by the evening of December 28th, all the camels from the salt springs northward arrived. It was just as well that eleven days of constant toil, carried on under exceptionally trying conditions, sufficed for the completion of our tasks. With the hoped-for supply from the springs failing, our ice store was running very low. It would have been even lower but for the blizzard on our arrival, the snow of which lay long enough at the foot of the hills near the springs for a small quantity to be melted down to refresh the animals. Recurring cases of illness among the men showed how exposure to the continuous icy blasts, with hard work by day and inadequate shelter at night, was telling on them. The Surveyor's rheumatic pains had placed him *hors de combat* for most of the time. I myself, amid constant exertions and strain, had renewed attacks of malarial fever to contend with.

It was time for us all to regain ground where there was water and with it life. I decided to effect this move in two separate columns. The main camp was to march back to Abdal with the 'archaeological proceeds,' nearly four camel loads, by the track we had come. The Surveyor could take charge of this column, since his ailing condition made him unfit for topographical work on any new route I should otherwise have liked him to take through the desert.