

riverine jungle. But though the succession of Dawans seemed now again closer together, and the going was accordingly heavy, there was no want of encouraging signs. About three miles beyond camp there appeared on dune-girdled cones a few tamarisks still alive. We had come before upon patches of flat ground covered with the stubble of dead Kumush stalks, still eight to ten inches in height.

Frequently we passed cones with dead tamarisks rising amidst the dunes; and when after about twelve miles I fixed my plane-table on the top of a high sand ridge, I could make out through my glasses far away to the west a dark line running north to south, clearly made up of tamarisk cones bearing living bushes. Such bushes were met with, in fact, very soon after, though in isolation, and by the time we were nearing the end of our tiring fourteen miles' tramp, the spirits of the men had been raised by the sight of a patch of living reeds. The camels had kept up with us all day remarkably well. Had they scented the approach to water and grazing? Close to the small Yardang where we pitched camp, two fine old Toghraks raised their gnarled trunks still alive, and the top branches we cut off were eagerly chewed by the camels for their sap. All day snail-shells had littered flat sand and bare clay alike; but pottery débris had become very scarce, and of bronze only a small fragment was picked up.

Next morning, in spite of the bitter cold, the men got ready for an early start with unusual alertness. At first progress was slow; for the dunes before us were high, up to thirty or forty feet, and showed no grouping into successive ridges and depressions. A huge Dawan of sand, probably over one hundred feet in height, which loomed in front stretching from north to south, was avoided by keeping a more southerly course as we had done repeatedly during the last few marches. Then we skirted the northern edge of a similar big ridge which showed on our left, and met more and more tamarisk cones and groups of Toghraks still living. At last the dunes got lower and lower, and after nearly seven miles gave way to an inlet-like depression covered with dead Kumush stubble and fringed by big