

under comfortable shelter might restore the physical endurance of my caravan, and only Charklik could afford that.

So on the morning of January 16th, to the great relief of my myrmidons, I changed our course at right angles and headed for Charklik due south. It was a long and dreary day's march. The portion of the Charchan river delta through which we first passed had received no water for six to seven years; I noted how scrub and low jungle was dying away to the south. Then came miles and miles of bare waste, with the surface clay or loess showing slight wind erosion. The dry river beds which we crossed in this belt seemed to come from the direction of Vash-shahri. After eleven miles we struck the broad bed of the Charklik Darya, here some fifty yards broad, but holding only scanty water, and passed into a loess steppe with gradually increasing vegetation. Finally, we reached in the dark the edge of Charklik cultivation, and after a total march of some twenty-six miles found a hearty welcome and shelter in our old host's house.