

ues onward to the north, and directed our course westward toward Dandan-Uilik across ridge after ridge of sand, fifty to one hundred feet high. All the ridges, in response to the prevailing northeast winds, faced in general southwest. Their gently sloping backs to windward were gray with a cover of rather coarse sand, while their steep fronts to leeward were pale brick-red with the fine sand of the main desert. The backs of the larger dunes were diversified with smaller dunes, like shoals of mounting fish, and the small ones in turn were covered with ripples. All the forms, whether of dunes or ripples, were on one pattern, endlessly varied. The variety and grace of the curves in the sand, like those of drifted snow, give the sandy desert an unceasing interest and beauty. It is utterly unlike the monotonous flat deserts of gravel, clay, and salt, though even those have beauty of a certain sort. The charm increases as the dunes increase in size. The sand is truly awful in times of heat and wind, but when, as during those days at the end of September, the hours of sunshine are pleasantly warm, the nights are fresh, the air is still, the way is known, and a water supply is assured, its unique beauty is indescribable. The sandy desert is at its best in the morning, when, as often happens, the haze falls to the earth during the quiet night, and the shadows of a clear sunrise bring out all the details of form.

My plan had been to go direct from the Keriya River to Rawak, the northern part of the ancient oasis of Litsa, and then south to Dandan-Uilik. In order to follow as straight a course as possible, I directed our way with the compass, heading for a point between Dandan-Uilik and Rawak.