

was searching for ruins buried in the sand, they sent post-haste to Keriya for old Adulla, a professional treasure-seeker. After a rapid ride of a hundred and ten miles, he overtook me a few miles north of the shrine of Imam Jafir Sadik, at the point where the Niya River finally disappears. During the next few days, he led me through five or six miles of ruins which no European had ever seen before.

"How is this?" I said. "You say you were the guide of the Sahib who came to this region five years ago. Why did n't you show him all these ruins?"

"Oh," was the nonchalant answer, "the Sahib's camel-man, cook, and hostler frightened me. They were afraid to go out into the sand, and they wanted to go home. They said, 'Don't tell the Sahib anything. He knows of the "stupa" [shrine], and we can't help his finding that, but he does not know of the other places. Lead him around them.' So when the Sahib said, 'Adulla, do you know of any other ruins?' I said, 'No, Sahib, even if you cut my throat for it, I should still say there were no more ruins. I swear by Allah that I never saw or heard of any.' And then when the Sahib went himself to hunt, I and the others led him away from the ruins."

The sanctimonious old man did not seem in the least ashamed of his lies. Indeed, he was proud of them. Perhaps he cheated me too. Still, I think he showed me all he knew, for Ibrahim, who was almost as keen in the search as I, pumped him night and day.

The shrine of Imam Jafir Sadik is located, as I have said, where the Niya River "reappears for the last time." The phrase expresses an important fact. The river disappears