

to run away and seek its mates, we should be in a sorry plight. If we should have to go on foot to Tikkenlik, carrying even the minimum of food, furs, and ice, and following a circuitous route in order to hunt for springs at the foot of the mountains of Kuruk Tagh, it would probably take us twelve, or perhaps fifteen days to get there. Failure to find water, sickness, or untoward accident, such as injury to the compass, might mean that we should never get there.

I decided to spend two days in hunting for the camels, and then, if we were unsuccessful, to try for Tikkenlik. The track of the runaways must be visible somewhere in the soft sand or gravel. I told the men that when we found the track, the discoverer was by no means to go off alone in that vast pathless desert, but to come back to camp for a companion, and for food and ice. During that anxious night, it was hard to refrain from repeatedly getting up to make sure that the little camel had not escaped. In the morning, we found that Handum Bai had gone off alone, nobody knew when or where. We finally found his track, and that of the camels, leading off to the southwest down the slope of piedmont gravel. It did not deviate to right or left like the track of animals in search of food, but ran straight away as though the creatures had been led. Handum's track showed that he had been running, an amazing thing for an Oriental to do. Ibrahim and our Loplik guide followed the track some miles, but came back at three o'clock with no news. As Handum had opened none of the food-bags, and had left his coat in camp, I began to feel more anxious about him than about the camels. If he lost his way, or went too far, a night without food, water, fire, or furs, and with a temperature of ten