

many labourers as I could possibly keep supplied with water. Thus, what with the example set by my 'old guard' and the helpful local influence still possessed by my energetic old factotum, Ibrahim Beg of Keriya, a column of fifty diggers, with supplies for four weeks and additional camels for transport, could be raised within a single day's halt.

Once again three rapid marches lay through the luxuriant jungle belt which lines the dying course of the Niya river. At this season the glowing autumn tints of wild poplars and reed-beds made a delightful treat for the eye. Picturesque parties of pilgrims returning from the lonely shrine of Imam Ja'far Sadik added a touch of human interest to this silent sylvan scenery. A few miles beyond the supposed resting-place of that holy warrior and martyr, we filled all available water-tanks and goat-skins with water. There we left behind the last abode of the living and also the present limit of life-giving water. Two days later I had the satisfaction of camping once more amidst bare dunes not far from the centre of that long stretch of sand-buried settlement. Subsequent surveys have proved its scattered remains to extend over an area of over fourteen miles from south to north with a maximum width of some four miles.

Already that day's route, slightly diverging from that followed on my first discovery of the site, had taken me past spots of ancient occupation, marked by the debris of completely decayed dwellings and remains of fences enclosing ancient orchards. It was a joyful sensation to find myself once more among the shrivelled trunks of dead fruit-trees and poplars that had flourished when there were still emperors ruling Rome. A little experimental scraping in the corner of a modest much-eroded dwelling had revealed