

## CHAPTER XXI

### THROUGH THE DESERT TO KERIYA

ON the 3rd of January, 1901, the explorations at Dandan-Uiliq were completed. The previous evening my long-expected mail had arrived from Kashgar, a heavy bag this time with the postal accumulations of some six weeks. The latest of the letters and papers sent from Europe viâ India dated from the beginning of October. One of the most welcome letters was a communication from the Indian Foreign Office, which informed me that the request I had made some nine months before from Calcutta, to be allowed eventually to return through Russian Turkestan, had received the sanction of the Russian authorities. The safe packing of my fragile antiquarian finds, and the making up of my own mail, kept me busy all day and as long as work was possible in the tent. The camels had, in accordance with previous instructions, duly arrived from the river, where they had managed to gather fresh strength even on the scanty fare offered by the wintry jungle. From the unusual animation with which the preparations for the start were proceeding, it was easy to see how much all my men, from Ram Singh downwards, enjoyed the prospect of saying goodbye to this trying camping-ground. So there was some disappointment when they learned that before altogether leaving the desolate neighbourhood I intended to visit some ruins of which Turdi had spoken as situated to the north and known to treasure-seekers by the name of Rawak ("High Mansion").