

mere ribs of its timber. There was the fresh breeze, too, and the great silence of the ocean.

For the first few days I found it difficult to confine my thoughts to the multifarious tasks which claimed me, and not to listen inwardly to the Sirens' call from the desert northward. How joyful it seemed to be free for pushing farther and farther into that unknown waste beyond the last dunes on the horizon! Though a number of matter-of-fact observations did not allow my archaeological conscience to indulge in dreams of 'buried cities' far away to the north, nevertheless I was longing to leave behind all *impedimenta* and cares for a long plunge into the sand ocean.

I felt this temptation more than ever when, on the second evening after my arrival, I marched under Ibrahim's guidance across the dunes south-eastwards in order to visit the northernmost ruins explored in 1901, and to test the position of my new camp by their distance and bearing. It was a gloriously clear evening, and the colour effects of the red light diffused over the semi-lunes of yellow sand were quite bewitching. I had just reached my goal when my guide's keen eyes discovered the Surveyor's camels steering towards us. On this great expanse of uniformly high dunes even the figure of a man standing on the crest makes a landmark. When Ram Singh had joined me I learned with some dismay that the guidance of Islam Akhun, the Niya villager who had offered to show ruins newly discovered away to the east, had failed completely.

He persisted in marching northward in manifest contradiction to his own previous indications, and when no ruins of any sort were met with after a long day's march, confessed to having lost his bearings. He then on the next day endeavoured to pick up some guiding points by steering south-eastwards. But his confusion became so manifest in the end that the Surveyor thought it prudent to head again for my camp before the camels, which showed signs of exhaustion, broke down. Ram Singh on this Odyssey had reached a point fully thirteen miles farther north than my last camp of 1901, and his testimony as to the complete absence of ancient structural remains in that direction