

younger camel-men shouted that he could see a 'Pao-t'ai'! All eyes were directed eastwards where he pointed, and soon I verified with my glasses that the tiny knob rising far away above the horizon was really a ruined mound, manifestly of a Stupa. What a relief it was to us all! The men from Charklik were all buoyed up with sudden animation, and beamed as if they were already arrived at the beginning of the end of their troubles, while my own men affected a look of self-complacent assurance as if things could not possibly have happened otherwise.

But the most curious thing to me was to watch the triumphant figure and pose which Hassan Akhun, my quick-silvery camel factotum, presented. There he stood on the top of the Yardang, with his right arm stretched out and supported on a staff like that of a triumphator, while his left rested akimbo. He was addressing his audience of labourers, whom on the march he loved alternately to cheer and to bully, with a mien half that of the prophet proved true and half of the exultant demagogue. Had he not always tried to drum it into their thick heads that under the guidance of *his* Sahib, who could fathom all hidden places of the dreaded Taklamakan with his 'paper and Mecca-pointer,' *i.e.* map and compass, all things were bound to come right? Now by the appointed day he had brought them to the promised 'Kone-shahr,' just as he had hunted up plenty before. What more could they wish now than to earn their ample wages and the rewards offered for old 'Khats'?

I always knew that my troublesome and mercurial myrmidon had his uses, especially for any tough bit of desert work. But never had it struck me so clearly that in him lived the spirit and manners of an old Greek adventurer. As he stood there, full of jubilant conceit and heroics, in his bright red cloak and high-peaked purple cap, his moods of dejection and petulance clean forgotten, he called up to my mind a vision of one of Xenophon's Greek mercenaries who shouted: *Thalatta! Thalatta!* More than once after this day in the Lop desert I felt haunted by the thought whether it were not from a drop of Levantine blood, bequeathed by some remote ancestor who had found