

he had come across what seemed almost better—the footprints of two men.

I hastened, of course, back with the Naik, and soon verified his discovery. There could be no doubt that we had before us the track of two men, faint or effaced in some places, but clear enough where scrub or low dunes had afforded shelter. The footprints led to a high cone commanding a wide view of the jungle. The hunters—for clearly such the men must have been—had ascended it for a look-out, since their footsteps turned thence sharply to the south-east. They now followed closely the track of some camels, no doubt the game they had been looking out for.

It was getting dark before we could trace their tracks much farther. But I had seen enough to convince me that we could not do better on the morrow than try and follow the footprints back to where the hunters must have camped. The only question was: had they come from a well or the river, or had they brought ice to their last camping-place. There were no questions of this sort to damp the joy of our people in camp. Ibrahim Beg had just brought in the men who had vainly laboured at a well down to a depth of sixteen feet. The great news we could give was the best antidote for the resulting dejection. Some had, evidently, made up their mind that they would never reach the abode of men—or water—again in life! Only the poor ponies, for which we could spare no drink from the half-filled Mussucks of our last well, remained without cheer that evening.

Unusual alacrity prevailed on the morning of February 11th throughout the camp, and by rousing Ibrahim Beg at 4 A.M. I managed to get the camels to move off before sunrise. The hillock which the two hunters had ascended was soon reached, and taking the cleverest of the party ahead we set out to track the footprints along the route they had come. It proved an exciting and by no means easy task. Wherever they led along the crest of dunes or on the lee slope, the traces had become faint and often completely effaced. Some two miles to the south they disappeared in a tangle of dead brushwood. The tracks of wild camels were here exceedingly numerous, and as