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A PILGRIM'S SCRIP



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Pl. 1. The Great Trilingual Inscription at Behistun.
 DARIUS AND TWO SATRAPS ON THE GREAT TRILINGUAL
 INSCRIPTION AT BEHISTUN

A PILGRIM'S SCRIP

BY R. CAMPBELL THOMPSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

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TO
L. W. K.
H. R. H.
AND
IN MEMORY OF
P. D. S.-M.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I HAVE of set purpose avoided giving an account of the discoveries in the excavations conducted by the British Museum under Mr. L. W. King and myself at Nineveh in 1904-5, and under Mr. D. G. Hogarth, Mr. T. E. Lawrence and myself at Carchemish in 1911; these chapters together with those on Behistun (of which the official account has been published by the Museum) and the roads between Mosul and Damascus contain the matter of notes which I made while in those parts in the service of the Trustees of the British Museum, to whom I am indebted for leave to publish them, and for this courtesy I wish to offer my thanks. For the few opinions expressed the responsibility is naturally mine.

The chapter on my journey in Asia Minor is in part based on my article published by the Society of Biblical Archæology in their *Proceedings* (Vol. XXXII, p. 181), on which I have drawn in many places; to the same Society are also due my thanks for some quotations from my notes on the folklore of Mosul, which they published *ibidem*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 76. If any be interested in the map of the route in Asia Minor, it

will be found in the *Geographical Journal*, Vol. XXXVII, p. 629. Similarly I am indebted for some material from my notes published in *Man*, on the Eastern Sudan (1908, No. 36), on the Hadendowa language (1910, Nos. 55, 95, and 100), and on Sinai (1905, No. 54), from an article in the *Spectator* on the city of Mosul (15 Feb., 1908) and another, with photographs, in the *Scottish Geographical Magazine* (March, 1910). My thanks are also due to the Byzantine Research Fund for leave to use the block (which has been kindly lent by the Egypt Exploration Fund) showing their excavations at Wadi Sarga, which I was conducting for them in 1913.

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A PILGRIM'S SCRIP

A PILGRIM'S SCRIP

THE HANDMAID OF CLIO

But you have been to Palestine—alas !
Some minds improve by travel, others, rather
 Resemble copper wire, or brass,
Which gets the narrower by the going farther.—HOOD.

Don't you be an old Fuss-pot.—SMALL PERSON OF TENDER YEARS.

A VERSE of Omar Khayyám pictures a soul in the likeness of a caravan starting in the early twilight for the Dawn of Nothing; when the wain stands slantwise with two stars yet hidden under the earth, a film of grey light engrailing the lace of the dog-tooth hills, and the cold air of the dead night shivers the aglets of the tamarisks. The crescent is wan with a herald sun-ray which presently kisses the top of the old minaret : a door opens and a priest, coming to the parapet, recites his call to prayer, *There is no God but God*, and one by one the wakening worshippers spread their carpets to offer their morning orison.

So, in parable, are those two spent nations Assyria and Egypt, caravans which set forth bravely on a long journey to end in nothingness

and vanity, while now the lands of the Caliphs and Sultans are, in large compass, an urn to hold their ashes. Through yesterday's seven thousand years the peoples of these empires rose and fell, surging to and fro over each other's lands as their tides ebbed and flowed ; Sumerians coming from the unknown, perhaps from the East by Persia, and settling by the mouth of the Two Rivers on the Indian Sea, making the beginning of their kingdom Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh in the land of Shinar, and bringing their picture-writing now turned to angular wedges from the needs of plastic clay : Semites thrusting themselves forward from Arabia, and ousting those prime settlers ; but, in their ignorance of writing, adopting the Sumerian alphabet to express their daintier speech, however clumsily. These, pushing forward, ever hugging the rivers, went forth out of the land of Babylonia and builded Ashur and Calah and Nineveh : and thus lay Assyria along the Tigris, flanked on the east by the line of the Persian hills, and on the south-west by the Syrian desert, which shut the dwellers in Mesopotamia in with a funnel-opening to the north and north-west, until the mountains blocked their permanent occupation. North-west by the Euphrates and beyond lay the Hittite country, Carchemish, Kadesh, and up to Pteria, known now as Boghaz Keui, as far as Smyrna ; westwards the Phœnician traders, and Hebrews, settling there from some migration of the Semitic stock ; and

then, up the Nile valley, another great power, Egypt. But now Nineveh and Memphis are fallen, and the mounds of their decay are but sandpies for such as choose to grope therein for treasure. Truly, as Aurelius saith, "The Chaldaei foretold the deaths of many, and then fate caught them too."

He who would follow this trade, digging for the pot of gold beneath the rainbow, seeking the peculiar treasure of kings who like chimney-sweepers have come to dust, plants a root with many future ramifications, now plying as a comfortable stay-indoors, mending pots, now voyaging to the uttermost ends of earth to fossick in antique mixens. In this bifurcation of employ he will spend long days under a blazing sun or in bitter cold, a little king in Babylon ruling his feofs, ever measuring, scribing, drawing: the smallest pieces have for him their significance, and a written stone raises his expectations to a zenith. Then will he return to the dullness of steam, electricity, and policemen, tracing the *vestigia* which his spades have discovered for him, reading the enigmas of his hieroglyphics, or comparing this and that bursten crock to publish the affinity of lost tribes. Was ever a hunt for pirates' treasure more fascinating—could Long John Silver or Basil Ringrose offer a greater bait? It may be that in to-morrow's expectancy of years men of science shall consider the results of Archæology and its sister Anthropology of to-day

as more important than any other contemporary research, for their evidence is transient and not like that of Natural Science, abiding.

Such a pursuit has grown into a healthy philosophy, and the contumely of the Middle Ages of the nineteenth century towards all oppositions of science falsely so called is almost as forgotten as its Great Exhibitive utilitarians, who were shrewd enough to appropriate their wives' property and rule their household with a minatory Bible, being thus near akin to the devil by reason of their apt Scripture citations ; who found the discoveries of the growing science out of accord with the source of their authority. True, even now there are some who wrest each archæological truth into agreement with Hebrew writ, being seekers after preferment ; but the trade of antiquary incurred its greatest damnation in our fathers' eyes, in that it was like that of Cosmas and Damian unfee'd. Did not Ecclesiasticus say rightly, He that teacheth a fool is as one that glueth a potsherd together ?

Yet many there are even to-day who have run after a substantial and life-long monotony, miscalling this a beneficent regularity, who cannot see virtue in labour of little hire ; following the dull eye-glazing round of counting-house ledger-men, they are a gigmanity hedged about in all matters with perversity of ignorance. Truly the poet Arnold hath said, " Most men in a brazen prison live " ; they hold questions and genealogies

as foolish, and look with chryso-aristocratic disgust on the emptiness of those who spend their lives trying to piece the obscurity between the Now and the Then, as Britomart her sulphurous curtain. True, if hire were the only reward of her service, then Clio is a niggard mistress, hesitating not to show her bondsman that little of his labour is for his mouth; nay, one had almost said that if at the end she grant him Charon's obol, he would be at bequeathing it to a glass case. But the Digger shall know good days when the basket-men carry out the dust of forgotten palaces, disclosing their glories, and that compelling eagerness, leashed to restraint lest haste should be a spoiler, spying the sampled corner of a chiselled monument all delicately carven, bared by an Arab pickaxe, and the sweet delights of prying out its secret runes. His vision shall lengthen itself in the leagues of splendid distance of champaign, without blind butts to check his sight or trammel his freedom, a hundred men shall do his bidding, a horse shall carry him. For all this he shall pay sceat in hunger, thirst or sickness, and in the end shall account it worth his pains a hundred times, this musty, dryasdust trade of archæology. And to consider a collection of beautiful handiworks is like hearing a cathedral's anthem.

But besides the scornful magi of agiotage, the apprentice shall meet many witless folk who voyage lightly in Asia and Africa, and wilfully or

through ignorance transgress the landmarks which divide the white from the brown : for each of the English who sojourn in the East is heir to the traditions of the British *Râj*, the honour of an ancestral inheritance which must not be tarnished by untoward heedlessness, and it is well to take care lest peradventure one inconsiderate act bring discredit. Some (but these are of low caste) vilify what they think to be their own kind to low-caste native men, affecting to believe in a universal equality of brotherhood ; these are few, but their words are published abroad in the bazaars as though bearing the impress of authority. There are others like them, who, being men, yet have lived so long beneath the protection of guards and physicians, knowing neither hunger nor thirst, that their likeness of manhood is changed ; these stir up popular commotion in sympathy for any Oriental assassins. For, not living amid volcanic peoples, they jeopardize not their own lives by their sentiment, or, being barren, they need no thought for the sons who rule these lands ; and thus, by hating their friends, think also that they thus love their enemies in obedience to the precept. Others (and these are females) in sport wear that pertaining to an Eastern man in the sight of the markets, or don an Arab boy's garb as a dress to dance in, or bear themselves lightly towards donkey-boys and handsome, black-avised truckmans, thus earning an evil name for English ladies in the privy converse of lewd fellows.



By courtesy of the Byzantine Research Fund

EXCAVATING A COPTIC SITE: WADI SARGA

The block is at the F. F. F.

More amusing will he find those Lions of our Streets returned from the Grand Tour, after peregrinating the Holy Land in a ten days' crusade. Once a clever man sang a song of a soldier who had spent his life in Burmah amid the glorious sun and light and air, and the grey, grim city whither he had returned home was no longer the wonder-house he had thought it, but a sordid waste of bricks and people, and he felt the East drawing him with its call. Thus ran the song, telling of dawns without twilight, daintiness of Burmese maidens, a pæan of thanksgiving for god-sent freedom. Straightway the song found favour, and not the least among its admirers were such as had been shepherded to Aeaëa or Gadara, or nose-led by an offscouring truckman had greeted the bordillers of Cairene bazaars. These returned explorers were hailed as heroes who had heard the East calling them as an Acrasia her thralls; little maids of London suburbs, quick to impressions as a mirror to a breath, opened wide ox-eyes at the perils of the Jaffa landing, with its riff-raff pirates, the long gallops over the plains, the deadly malarie, the fierce Arabs skilfully concealing their knives, and all the farrago of those who had sloughed their sober dignity to give play to their boyish imaginations. More vivacious are those retired gentlemen of a gallant profession, Major-Generals, who can write a washing bill in Babylonian cuneiform, who, relinquishing their life-work, devote themselves to breeding

theories, riding a new hobby-horse Antiquity out of Hebrew Translated, and then you shall see wondrous decipherments, miraculous Biblical discoveries.

There is less need to-day for a traveller to lay to heart James Howell's advice: "One thing," says he, "I would dissuade him from, which is the excessive commendation and magnifying of his owne Countrey; for it is too much observed, that the English suffer themselves to be over much transported with this subject, using to undervalue and vilifie other Countreys, for which I have heard them often censured." The Bobadils of his day have given place to those liberal-minded folk who preach that the foreigner can do no wrong, decrying everything English in a mock-modest manner, so as to give countenance to colonial fallacies about the parent stock.

Now a fit man who travels solitary in the Near East with design of long sojourn for great discoveries in digging old cities will apply himself beforehand to learn the manifold needs of his expedition. First, he must surely acquaint himself with the rudiments of the languages used in the districts of his intention, either to speak, or better, to write them. The ability to write even his own name in Arabic characters serves at once to show his education in the eyes of the common folk who have no book-learning: to note down his workmen's names in pay-lists rouses their admiration; and to read a short letter or write a

receipt allows him to dispense with Greek, Syrian, or Egyptian clerk or paymaster, and he is then under no embezzling thumb. This last is freedom, for it not seldom happens that the headman of the neighbourhood, who knows enough to jot down debts, holds mortgage from the unhappy underlings about, and if by chance he worm himself to favour with the unsuspecting Inglizi he will further grind the faces of the poor. Beware of this local *Agha*, for he will seek employment under the stranger, offering to collect the gangs of workmen ; from whose scanty earnings he will take privy toll as footing to pay for their privilege to remain in his service on the excavations.

In a broad way it may be said that the line of 37° latitude running from the Mediterranean to the Persian frontier is the march between Arabic to the south and Turkish to the north, just as of old the Semite marched with the Hittite, as my former colleague H. R. Hall says in his *History* ; the peasants of Asia Minor will not understand Arabic. So for the common people ; as for the Turkish official he will hide all knowledge of Arabic which he may have as a shameful thing, and hence the traveller must know either Turkish or French, of which latter even the Jacks-in-office have often a smattering. English or the language of the United States is known by a few only, such as have been trained in the missionary colleges, but these are rare, and frequently are pestilent fellows to be avoided.

It is not unwise to pay early visit to the seal-cutters in the bazaar, who cut names cheaply in their script, for a seal is convenient in these lands to send as proxy to the post office. Yet it is worth remembrance that an ordinary envelope in the Turkish post will pass with less ostentation than a sealed package, which cries aloud to the attention of officialdom, and any wax can be removed and replaced with a hot blade.

In all emprises of this sort the Frangi is the chiefest cause of expense, for he has far to go, and his habit must be in worthy style, so that the more trades he knows the fewer will be the staff, and the less will be the burthen of the cost. Thus, he should be able to map out a square mile of ground, no difficult task if he but accustom himself to the management of easy instruments. There can rarely be use for a theodolite, for the map needed is but of small area, and he needs no star-gazing unless he be exploring virgin country. All his business is to set on paper only his work and its neighbourhood, which he must practise beforehand, if he be raw in this ; he must first measure a level base, in length less than half a mile, with a good tape two or three times to secure a mean of accuracy ; then for a week he must tramp his site up and down, working with plane-table, compass, and clinometer or Abney level, or if great accuracy of levels be needed he must have a level and gradated staff. The depth of strata in ancient cities varies locally for many reasons,

the succession of later inhabitants, their shelter or exposure ; and the most attractive knoll is rarely the secret chamber of mysteries. This map is a prime duty coincident in time with the earliest trial trenches, so that in succession from the first the progress of the diggings may be noted, and each test-pit identified by a number which is written on a worthless peg driven into the earth at a corner. Nightly thieves prowl for goods of little value ; let them see then that these billets of wood are too small for firing or tent-pegs.

Now it most frequently happens that the site for his exploration is far distant from large towns or cities, and there will be nothing but mud villages of a few score inhabitants round about, whose goods are barely enough for their daily use. For this reason, before the antiquary leave the last town, he must enquire of the manner of labour in the district to which he is going ; it is well to learn beforehand the sort of tool these men can use, for slip-shod starvelings cannot wield the spades of English navvies, nor will the Eastern peasants take readily to new tools, although they will prove themselves handy in their use after a time. In fossicking a mound in Mesopotamia the labour is parcelled among a score of gangs of four or five men and boys ; the first wields a pick, standing aside to rest when his stint is done, and the second with spade or hoe shovels and scrapes the loose earth into the baskets of the carriers ; of these last there are two, unless the refuse heaps

are far, when more will be necessary. In Egypt the soil is sand, and here no pick is needed, but the hoeman shovels straight into the baskets, and the work goes on continuously. In countries where such digging is uncommon all these tools and baskets must be prepared and brought from a distance (though in Egypt the men bring their own), and it is well to remember that pickaxes need resharpener by a blacksmith after each few weeks of battery; hoes and spades break and wear out, but not so frequently, and string will not for ever mend a porous basket. All these cost a little money for carriage and repair. Also, there are the crowbars and large marlinspikes for levering great stones, sculptured inscriptions, or tumbled blocks, and thick ropes to raise heavy slabs on edge.

The antiquary who pays a hundred workmen each week will find need of small moneys which must be bought from the usurers, and brought by the hand of an honest man or guard; but when the word of an Englishman becomes known in the district (if it be not already), the Arabs will allow their pay to accumulate for two or three weeks, and thus gold can frequently be employed to pay them their increased sum. Although the arrival of the messenger indicates a boundless wealth in the explorer's house, I have not found evil resulting from this; perhaps a secrecy might be as well, if such were possible.

To each his desire, and in him who would lay bare the whole periphery of a broad tract within

the labour of many years to come there burns a necessitous singleness of acquiescence, a tip-truck railway. Indeed, in the earlier labour no ingenuity can foretell the best disposal of displaced earth, which rises from the molehill of a basketful to the foot-beaten mountain of a fortnight, beneath which may lie the continuance of a palace wall. Then, after the first probings have borne fruit, the lucky areas widen, and all their refuse must be vomited afar off, lest the tailings add their hindrance. Thus is a railway expedient, and its cost adds greatly to the burden of the enterprise : yet, perhaps, a first season in a virgin place demands it not.

Then when a stone reveals its inscription beneath the brush, the archæologist should know how to discern at least the approximate meaning, or, if not, to read the Egyptian king's cartouche, or the Assyrian monarch's name marked by an upright wedge, even if he do but take the well-known lists of kings in hieroglyphs or cuneiform for reference.

A most necessary art is photography, which must be done with good and brass-bound instruments, and a changing bag. Besides the expensive camera, the digger should have a cheap roll-film pocket kodak always with him, to photograph small antiquities as they are found, such things as demand not the expense in plates of the laborious tripod : in any case a scale measure should be added to the group. For sometimes he

may meet with a dozen pot-burials of which one or two samples from his greater pictures are enough : yet all should be recorded, and the hand camera is here the proper instrument. In this work, to make identification easy, if the development of the film is delayed, he should keep different objects in his pockets to place singly near each group photographed, a watch, a notebook, a knife or whatnot, so that there may be some distinct point to check the numbers in the notebook, which are often troublesome in a film of a dozen exposures ; still further may he add a thumbnail sketch of the probable picture. His tripod camera is more for pictorial scenes, large monuments, or anything demanding careful attention to detail, grouped pottery, stone knives, inscriptions, and such : and in this he should not forget to take a large sheet of glass, perhaps two, for laying the smaller objects on to be photographed from above.

The necessities are many, the luxuries endless ; he must have squeeze-paper¹ to take an impress of inscriptions or sculptures ; wax and plaster for smaller intaglios and reliefs ; acids to clean moss-grown stones of lichen ; labels to tie on each object when found (gummed labels are not of much use), and little cardboard trays, such as hold fruit, to keep beads and such-like in.²

¹ Squeeze-paper can be bought at the O.W. Paper and Arts Co., 105 Great Russell Street.

² Most of the hints necessary for diggers are excellently put forward in Petrie's *Methods and Aims in Archæology* and Hogarth's article in *Hints to Travellers*.

When the laborious sunlight has departed, and it is time to take to writing, it is an encouragement to think that other and fitter men have made mistakes, but better still to remember that all critics are hostile. Each master in this calling can shiver in terror of some familiar—nay, two, three, or a dozen—like the haunted man of whom Sir Wm. Gilbert wrote, ghastly mistakes, not of apprenticeship only, perpetrated in moments of fatuity. A charming belief used to exist, so the Rabbis tell, that many little devils owe their parentage to the marriage of men with restless succubæ, and from their unseen home they are ever on the watch to claim their due and ultimate heritage, to hail their earthly fathers by that affectionate title. So also are the devilspawn of printed error, which once published can never be recalled, and of these I am conscious that scores claim to be sib to me, thrusting their mowing heads from behind some forgotten hiding-place, like ghoulish red-armed rhubarb, a buried vampire returning from its trance and struggling to the light. Truly the most comfortable are those secretive hidalgos of learning who, all unwedded to their art, risk no progeny of criticized mistakes ; and many that hold their peace are counted wise. Indeed, it had been perhaps better to call a spade a spade, and not the handmaid of Clio.

MOSUL, 1904

There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers ; they hold up Adam's profession.—SHAKESPEARE.

HECATE herself might well have established her haunt at Dêr-ez-zôr on the Euphrates, for it lies at the parting of the main Four Ways which cross Aram, a very Carfax of Western Asia. For these roads, starting at Aleppo or Damascus, and stretching out to Mosul or Baghdad, meet in the middle at Dêr, and thus the map is as a five-pipped playing-card, marked with these cities. As children play at Puss-in-the-Corner, and run the gauntlet from coign to coign, so will the Arab muleteer, leaving these towns, hesitatingly venture his merchandise to escape by bare hazard the wild bandits of these roads. For these lands are held in fee by roving freebooters : Arab *shêkhs* of the Ancyze or Shammar tribes, or the devil-worshipping Yezîdis of the Sinjar Hills, armed with Martinis or Remingtons and ready to *Stand and deliver* any less warlike assemblage or train of merchants. Then a man may see the straggling sumpters close up and hurry on, and the merchantmen draw knife or pistol or whatnot on the dangerous flank ;

but in the end they will yield tithe to the marauders, lest a worse fate befall them. Yet the Inglizi who goes with escort has nought to fear from these raids, for the prestige of the British *Râj* holds good in Moslem lands.

My colleague Leonard W. King had had one such encounter with the Shammar on his way to Mosul, but he spoke the Arabs fair, and offered a cup of coffee, and thus they went each on his way in friendliness. My servant Mejîd, who returned from service with me from Damascus, was robbed by the Hamidieh on the northern route. For he had hidden three Turkish pounds in his sock for its surer conveyance, and when his caravan drew nigh to the lair of Ibrahîm and his Hamidieh buccaneers, he congratulated himself on its security, for the horsemen galloped down through his pack-train and took toll of their goods. Then, although they searched his pocket and traveller's scrip, he was within a little of getting off scot-free; but a churlish fellow, who had no love for him, betrayed him to the robbers, and revealed his hiding-place.

South of these northern routes lies the camel-post road from Palestine to Baghdad, but the wells are scarce and the waterpools are consumed out of their place in the summer heats, and there is nowhere to turn aside. The messenger sits on his swift camel for twenty hours each day and perhaps never reaches his goal; then those companies who go out to seek him find

only a riderless beast wandering aimlessly over the naked land.

So when good fortune decreed that I should relieve my friend L. W. King, who had already lived a year in Irak to rake the middens of that ancient city Nineveh, and take over the control of the excavations when he should come home, it was decided that the better route across these plains was from Aleppo by Dêr to Mosul. The northern road from Trebizonde was closed by reason of the winter, for it was yet February; the Hamidieh were at that time out on the Nisibin road, which runs through Urfah and Mardin. Even at Iskanderûn the towering walls of the Amanus mountains were clad in snow, and the wind was shrieking in an icy blast through the Beilan Pass, just as it did when Tavernier passed through in the seventeenth century. I betook myself to those two good gentlemen well known to all who visit Iskanderûn, Mr. Catoni and his son, and, after the wont of British Consuls in the Near East, they offered me great largesse of hospitality. Nay, more, in this Oriental land where business is tardy in doing, a four-horse carriage was prepared for my journey to Aleppo within three hours of my coming, and I left after midday. I had hoped to enlist a caravan here, but better advice prevailed: to drive to Aleppo more quickly thus, and then seek out a fitting muleteer inland.

It is about a hundred and fifty kilometres to

Aleppo by this metalled road, and the carriage must needs climb slowly for three or four hours to the little village of Beilan, which lies on the sides of the pass. You may see the way of travel there three hundred years back in Purchas : William Biddulph went hereby to Aleppo, taking a *Janizarie* (called *Paravan Bashaw*), with two *Jimmoglans* to guard them, with the necessary victuals, and passed " a towne called Bylan, where there lieth buried an English gentleman, named Henrie Morison." The mountains were capped with white, as I drove beneath them, and it was bitterly cold ; in the village a man was sadly bringing down the dead body of a little lad on an ass, frozen to death in the drifts. Above lay the pass, and on the far side the descent of the zigzag road towards the great lake and marsh, grey with the shadow of the evening clouds. It was on this eastern side that Ibrahîm Pasha's Egyptian troops were barred by Turks from entering Asia Minor ; and as they lay halted beneath, he determined to force the pass, albeit there were two Turkish batteries in position. The Egyptians, flushed with two successes and trusting their commander in everything, nevertheless asked among themselves how men could mount such crags, and yet, so great was their faith in Ibrahîm, they stormed the heights, drove out the Turkish defence, and wrought great havoc in their pursuit.

At the foot of the mountains camels were

hobbled for the night, and one of them, but lately dead, was a mangled carcase for the dogs to tear. At six o'clock the driver stayed his beasts at a khan, stabling them within; these khans mark the resting-places on Eastern highways. These are squared buildings, with but one door for better protection, a great gate through which a carriage may drive into the open court, round which are shelters where the beasts are bedded at night, and a man may hear his stallion paw and neigh as he lies in his chamber overhead. Good fellows, too, the rugged keepers of these hostels, who for a trifle will prepare such homely victual as they may for their guest, and one may sit in comfort in their bare, limewashed rooms, scabbled and scratched with strange tags of writing on the walls. Yet not all these scribblings bear witness to their author's content, for a homesick wayfarer had here written his opinion of Aleppo, cursing it *malgré les attentions d'une de ses habitants du beau sexe*. Long before dawn the bells on the horse-collars tinkled out a carillon, as the horses were harnessed in the chilly dark. Everything was black, and there was nought to see or do save to curl up on the seats and sleep again: even when the sun rose, the undulating lands bore little interest. Once a carriage full of giglot dancing-women from Aleppo passed, jesting as they went by. "Who was it," said they, "whom he was driving? An Englishman? And was he travelling alone?"

doubtless pitiful, and remembering the second chapter of Genesis.

Two or three centuries ago this district was as safe as now to travel in ; sailors were wont to leave their carvels for a holiday on shore, walking up to Aleppo to buy a fairing for their sweethearts. The Baron Tavernier avers that in his time, in the seventeenth century, no Europeans were allowed to traverse the journey between Alexandretta and Aleppo on foot, a decree obtained at the instance of the merchants of the latter place. For some of these Frangi tarry-breeks, taking a hundred crowns with them, walked to Aleppo from the coast in three days, and here they laid in a store of the country wares. With this they returned to Alexandretta to sell it where they might, and inasmuch as they had spent but little in the first place, they were content with small gain on their outlay. This so upset the cartel of the Aleppo merchants that they laid the matter before those that sat in the gate, and it was covenanted that no stranger should pass by that route save only at a charge of six piastres for every horse. Perchance these seafardingers, like truant schoolboys seeking adventure, were no whit less pleased to set such a quarrel abroad and disturb the serenity of the cytogastrous Aleppo land-sharks. In the Antioch marshes eels are caught, and in the plain Tavernier shot a kind of barbel, which he found eatable. Many of the fish of Mesopotamia have beards,

for they root in muddy bottoms, and their big-scaled flanks are copied in the April gifts for French younglings.

One night more on the road, and then Aleppo at two in the afternoon, a journey in all of fifty hours from the sea-coast. Some years later I rode the return journey with three horses and a servant in thirty-nine hours, stopping at one khan only, and travelling on the second day for twenty hours, with two hours of this as a rest. Aleppo had changed in those six years, for the new iron road from Beyrut had joined it to the sea, and it had become a town of new things, well built and of great importance. But when I saw it first, in the rose lights of a winter sunset reflected from the pools of rain, it seemed a daintier city with its creamy stone and criss-cross lattices. Here George Smith, a gentleman most learned in Assyrian studies, had died of the toil and privations of his journeys to Nineveh. His grave is in the little God's-acre, marked with a granite stone, and hither I made a humble pilgrimage.

Mr. William Biddulph remarked on the customs of this city in the seventeenth century: "they also account fooles, dumbe men and mad men Santones, that is, Saints. And whatsoever such mad men say or doe, though they take anything out of their house, or strike them, and wound them, yet they take it in good part, and say, thus they shall have good lucke after it." I myself have seen, one afternoon while digging an ancient city on the Euphrates, a mad-

man beating a drum preceded by a little squint-eyed gossoon bearing a green flag in pride, and these twain came down to the workmen; the poor demented fellow had gone out of his wits, they said, through overmuch study of writings. He seized a shovel from an Arab and, beating those who stood in the way lightly with the flat of it, set to work digging in frenzy; then, his fitfulness over, he withdrew, and, as he went, the workmen, like sleepers on an iron track, lay down in front for him to tread their bodies and bring strength to them. Many such naturals go naked, as Biddulph describes.

Now that good confection of sesame seed, *helawî*, something of the appearance of a linseed poultice, was as beloved of the Aleppine in his time as it is now: "They have also varietie of Helloway, that is, sweet meates compounded in such sort, as are not to be seen elsewhere." He adds also, "Their most common drinke is Coffa, which is a blacke kinde of drinke, made of a kind of Pulse like Pease, called Coava, which, being ground in the Mill, and boiled in water, they drinke it as hot as they can suffer it."

From Aleppo to Dêr-ez-zôr the traveller may ride secure with two soldiers on mules and never a thought for the peril of the road. The British Consul, Mr. H. D. Barnham, had arranged three horses for my baggage, one for myself, and another for Haj Wahîd, my servant; moreover, there were ten other horses bearing tobacco to Mosul,

all belonging to the muleteer, the short and pursy Nakhli. His henchboys travelled on foot, pricking up the lagging beasts with packing-needles as occasion served. Haj Wahîd, who was to take me to Mosul, was a handsome, black-moustached man, speaking Arabic, but perhaps with Kurdish blood in his veins; down his shaven skull was the ancient suture of a wound received in some brawl. When we arrived in Mosul he bought a horse for £5 with his road-hire, on which to travel back, for horses are cheap in Mosul. I met him several years later in Aleppo, installed as owner of a *gahwa* or coffee-house near one of the posterns; he was for the moment absent, but one ran to fetch him from his house, and he recognized me straightway. From his little shop he brought forth low rush stools for me, himself, and his patrons; then spake we of many past matters, how such an one was dead, how was Mr. King? and also of Haj Wahîd's marriage. Immediately he brought out a little Arab dandi-prat and sat him on my knee, and I was an uncle henceforth; and then this good fellow related such little adventure as had befell us twain in the past to his gaping cronies. "Sir," quoth he, "I have been married two years: an you will, we will go together afield again." So later it fell out, and he came with us to Carchemish. Once he led me up the main street past the prison, and as we walked, he told me of his life. "Five years was I a sergeant in the army, and five years was I in there,"

jerking his thumb towards the gaol, "without the money to get myself out." Now Heaven send me henchmen as good as he !

Thus started we from Aleppo, the two soldiers riding on mules. These Turkish guards are a strange medley of hero and swashbuckler, and may be divided into three classes. First, the regular soldier, used more than the *zaptieh* between Aleppo and Mosul, and as brave as a lion. Be-striding a Government mule, he has nought but himself to risk ; he cares for nothing, and will fight honourably on behalf of his trust. Next, the *zaptieh*, a mounted Pistol of any age up to incapacity, armed at this time in Mesopotamia with the Snider, in Anatolia with a Martini ; he rides his own mare and this makes him timorous of robbers. He is the ordinary escort in Turkish Asia, and one who may sometimes be of use in camp, for he is frequently a good fellow ; perhaps he may help pitch the tents, or even wreak bloody murder on the dinner-fowl. Third comes the *gendarme*, a janissary, unmounted, and usually a young fellow armed with a magazine rifle, but he is only found in certain districts.

There be some Frangis, mock-heroes, who travel unescorted in Turkey, despising such a guard as the city-marshal provide, being affected by dæmons ; openly commending their way to others and admonishing the stupidity of those who follow less valorous advice. But these are simple, thoughtless fellows who reckon little of what

may betide: all heedless of native contempt that they are common folk and not English gentry, they ride their way in folly.

Between Aleppo and the river are many neat little villages of houses shaped in cones like beehives. Now the road touches the river at Meskeneh, two and a half days' journey from Aleppo, and here high-banked Father Euphrates, slow, muddy, and broad, waters the thickets in his path with his tawny flood. John Cartwright, in 1603, when he reached the Euphrates, travelling from Aleppo, found it "as broad as the Thames at Lambith." The eddies curl in little whirlpools, as Chaldean sculptors graved them for the noble Asnapper; the brown copses on the banks are like English hazel-spinneys, and a man might well be ranging the winter woods at home for all the difference, as he threads his path through these. For sport I cast a fly, a *Jock Scott*, on the waters, but this availed nothing, nor was a bright, flashing spoon more profitable.

Once, those mounted in this train spied a wolf, and straightway rode madly in pursuit, like urchins chasing butterflies, a joyful gallop on a fresh morning. This land was a vast feeding-ground for ruddy sheldrakes (if I am right in my description), which live here in thousands at this season, and are as cunning as the curlew. Each Arab with his pipe-gun frightens them, so that they fly at the first sign of an enemy crawling over this open ground. Peewits sometimes flut-

tered slowly up, with their weird, plaintive cry (O the homesickness to hear !) ; perhaps a stray gull, blown inland from the sea, or dainty in his meat, floated overhead. In the little cliffs near Dêr lived the pigeons, and now and again came didappers, maggoty-pies, stares, hawks, and laverocks. The plateau at Meskeneh is strewn with the flint chips of primeval man, and such as I picked areshown now in the museum at Bloomsbury. Once Nakhli made his evening *zarîba* at Ragga. The great bales of tobacco were set to windward, and the other burdens completed a circle, wherein his starveling crew slept, thus shielded from the wind, forgetting the pains of the road. As we sat there in the dying afternoon, three little imps sported and tumbled round the boxes, viewing us as Jack-puddings or whatnot ; and shrieked with delight at a gift of farthings " *Ya metaleek*," hurry-scurrying to be the first to receive. The *metallique* is a small copper coin, of which four go to the State piastre. These little people buy either the *halawwa* or *helawi*, that viscid mass of sweetmeat, or *dibs*, a treacly fluid made of grape syrup.

On the road the sergeant complained of a swollen wrist ; a woman had overlooked him while he was removing some sacks, casting thus an evil eye on him. Little boys and favourite mares wear blue beads to repel such glances.

A week after leaving Aleppo we spied the minarets of Dêr-ez-zôr, and eased the horses of

their loads in the dirtiest khan. There were two of these inns in Dêr, but there was bad blood between my servant and the host of the newer one, and the caravan willy-nilly must sleep in the other. Here was an old Yahûdi, his wife and children, making the journey from Aleppo to Mosul in a carriage driven by an Armenian, who was a nidget fellow if ever there was one. Dignified and gentle, the old Hebrew gave me the greeting of the road, and offered me a meal of some queer mess ; nor was he less kind at finding I knew some little matter of his ancient language.

Came the police of the town for my *biruldi*, the road-passport which franks the stranger through these parts ; and also the brother-in-law of Haj Wahîd, who was a *yuzbashi*, a captain of infantry with a moustache after the manner of the *Allemânîs*, an officer of pleasing character, albeit he thought that we had hired mercenaries throughout Europe to fight against the Boers. Alas ! some years after he went mad and died in an asylum. We sat together in the cell allotted to me in this caravanserai, and it was told that there were many soldiers in the town, but mules were lacking ; and zaptiehs—tilley-valley ! they will flee at the first danger. Haj Wahîd held to the two soldiers from Aleppo, as a baker the leaven to leaven the whole lump, but two were not enough to hearten a handful of zaptiehs. The Mosul road from Dêr was a little in danger of marauders, and it was fitting that the escort should be larger.

But the expectant days went on, and yet there came no sign of fresh soldiers, though Rumour, painted full of tongues, had gone forth through the long market saying that a convoy was on the road. The bruit of Arab gossips is slow to come to pass ; yet it rarely fails, although succeeding tongues swell the first tidings to bursting. Once, when living amid the Bisharîn of the Red Sea coast of the Sudan, I heard horrid reports of an English force slain on the west of Khartoum ; this my servant Mejîd told me, learning it from the Hadendowas. Later this was verified when certain news was brought of some tale of a little slaughter, but infinitely less than rumoured at first.

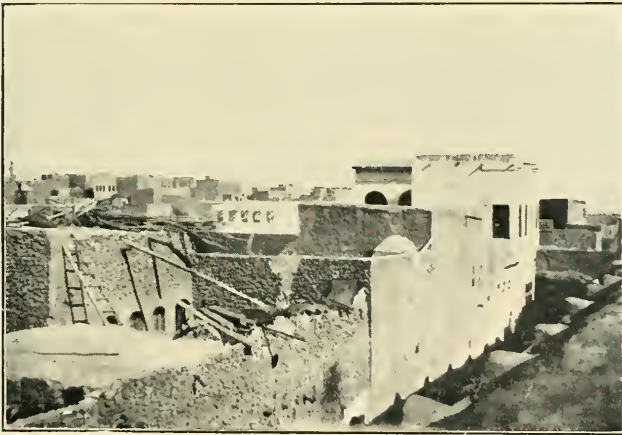
Nakhli, cautelous fellow that he was, seeing his beasts thus eating up his profits day after day, sought to squeeze further hire for them from me, but the agreement had long been settled that I should pay no money on the journey. This is the cunning of the muleteer, who, partly in fear of highwaymen and partly in greed to lend at interest, brings but little in his purse, that he may cajole the more from any richard who travels at his mercy. Then one of his footboys came to Haj Wahîd privily, with a word in his ear that Nakhli, failing in his extortion, would steal out silently that night and return to Aleppo, trusting his merchandise to the charge of the khan men ; so that I in my turn went to the governor, asking that restraint be laid upon

this deserter, lest he leave me horseless in a poor town. So his constable was sent to issue warrant to the keeper of the hostel that he should prevent my muleteer's mistimed evasion ; " on my head and eyes," said he as he received it ; and in the end, having maintained authority, I agreed to pay a daily sum to Nakhli exceeding our first conditions, while we remained in Dêr, and he was appeased.

Of the country round Dêr there is little to say. As you look northwards across the river, there is nought but flat, dead lands ; southwards lies a low range of hills, all barren and yellow in winter-time. Near the river are the gardens, watered by little channels fed from the machines by the river-bank. Through the lower reaches of the Euphrates the ground is fed by water-wheels of great span, fifteen or twenty feet across, turning like a mill-wheel through the force of the current beneath, and each having a succession of water-pots fastened to its outer ring, so that the lowest fills in the stream below, and the highest dribbles its water into the garden-trough above. If there be no flow in the river to turn such monsters, then a bullock or other beast turns a windlass by the river-side in a perpetual giddy-go-round. Others, again, have the simpler way of driving a beast down a short ramp, thus hauling up a skinful of water which spurts forth from an ingenious nozzle. Lastly, the compensating pole of the swipe see-saws on its prop that



SHOEING RESTIVE HORSE IN THE KHAN IN DÊR



DÊR-EZ-ZÔR

the thirsty may lower its bucket to the water, and toil not to haul back again, by reason of its balance. So were they portrayed on Sennacherib's sculptures at Nineveh. The monstrous wheels which go slowly and ponderously round sing like parrots in their piping choir, such that none forget the plashy little waves lapping against the sodden wood in concert with the rasping voice of the axle.

We had been in this little town a week, and it stank in my nostrils. Two or three times I had been to the governor to ask "How long until the soldiers should come?" until he wearied of me, shrugged his shoulders, and declared that no one would hinder my starting without them. There was nothing to be done save sit in that foul khan writing translations of Museum inscriptions, or ride out for exercise with Haj Wahîd.

At last on a sudden there ran into the place one of the old spicers that sat without, bearing tidings of the arrival of a captain of fifty and his men. Then hastened the tag and rag of the stables to gird the bundles on the rested beasts, now healing of their girth-galls and breeching-sores, with hooves fresh-shod at need with the flat, solid plates of this stony land: the venerable Jew gathered up his family and prepared to wrangle again with his Armeli driver: and eight soldiers with two zaptiehs attached themselves to the long train as it wound out of the gate in the sunset. The ferry of great pontoons bore the horses

and drivers over the broad breast of the river, and the caravan lay that night on the far bank. The sergeant of the guard, seeing my interest in his warfare, showed me the Turkish attack by rushes, as is our wont at home ; casting himself on the ground behind cover and snapping his Martli. Sometimes in the days following he would throw out a flanking point, but as a rule we moved close together, as befits such a convoy. From the Euphrates onwards to Mosul by this road there are few hills of importance, and much of the country is rolling down-land. Once in the gloom before dawn an unseen shepherd in front of us drew trigger of his fire-piece, discharging it in air, and some galloped forward to discover its import, exciting sport in the cold night air. Haj Wahîd made merry at my valiance, jesting with me on my bravery ; "Did you kill him ? " quoth he. A little way from Dêr lies Es-Sawar on the River Khabur, where the stranger, if he have ever been a galley-slave at the oar on placid Cam, will cross the rope-ferry with memories of that muddy stream bearing octaves of heroes in light shallops. In February this river flows a mile and a half in an hour as near as may be.

One early morning, after the sun had risen, the caravan straggled along the footways south of the long line of the Sinjar hills where dwell the Yezîdis who, as some men say, are Devil-worshippers. A little salt brook trickled across the path, and here arose the uneasy cries of women

and children, hidden behind some misshapen knoll. For these, seeing us from afar, had conceived that we were a truculent *razzia* of the Shammar Arabs, and our company laughed, mocking their folly, and halted a breathing space until the Jew's lumbering coach and the pack-train should overtake us. The soldiers bandied light words with two pretty Yezîdi wenches at the roadside, who, nothing loth, gave riposte to their passado in kind: "This is the right fencing grace, my lord; tap for tap, and so part fair." Presently came, from where the affrighted cries had first issued, a gang of women bowed beneath the weight of waterskins filled at the brackish rivulet, passing us to go to their village in the hills. These leer-headed wives turned in their path to chatter shrilly with the strangers.

At the sound of their voices away in the distance on the hill-brow something was happening. Distrustful sentries had given report from their aery of our approach, and first one white-clad mountaineer, then others, took their posts on the crest; and then a thousand yards up the slope a wisp of blue powder-smoke shot out, and the silly bullet sang high over our heads. This whistling sentry-warning straightway roused the unseen village about our ears like a nest of hornets, and now there passed out from a little fold in the green limestone, a stream of Yezîdis rushing down in knots of twos and threes. A vixen among the expectant hussies standing near

at once gave tongue to the *u-lu-lu* of the women's cry, the *tahlil* which they use for ceremonies or to urge on their men to battle ; and, attuned to this sound, rose the louder whoops of the Yezîdi onset. Yet one girl laughed and cried to us, " There is no danger."

The escort took post on the outward side of the pack-beasts which had come up with the Hebrew patriarch's carriage at a quickened pace. The men were hastily thumbing the levers of their Martlis down and slipping in the brazen cartridges, while Haj Wahîd leapt from his horse, a brute notoriously shy of guns, and loaded a fowling-piece as for gazelle. These Yezîdis were on foot, and ran towards us, flourishing their curved swords, while galloping down through their midst were four chiefs on horseback, carrying lances or rifles. " Fifty-two of them," said the old Hebrew. Then began the soldiers to shout to them, "*Irja', irja'*, Go back, go back," like guinea-fowl, explaining to the foremost (who now were checking their speed a stone's throw from us) that they had wronged none, nor was there harm done ; also came their chiefs, who hearing this, leashed their followers, who put up their swords. Nothing more happened out of this foolishness. The women grinned, pleased as ever to set so many men by the ears ; the men, not a little shamefacedly, walked back delicately to break their morning's fast in the hills. These native soldiers knew their trade well, and none

loosed a nervous bullet in his haste, for nought of evil betides in these small encounters, if no one shoots.

Later, when these things became known in Mosul, the *Hukûma* despatched a message to these Yezîdi chiefs saying, " Why have ye made a foray against this Gunsul ? " to which also the messenger added of his own accord, " a Gunsul who has a rifle which can kill a hundred in a minute." Then they made answer, " An't please you, we knew not that it was a Gunsul ; and furthermore, we thought it was a merchant's caravan."

So they returned like a play-acting chorus, as it seemed, disappointed like fowls which a mischievous babe has cluck-clucked to feed, casting only sand or gravel in lieu of corn. On the way as we went one of the soldiers, a pleasant fellow enough, sought to borrow a needle, and bade the Armenian driver rein in his horses a moment, but the churl, a fat lubberly knave, refused. Thereat the soldier firked him lightly over the shoulders with a whip, and down crawled the hilding from his seat, laying his length in the desert and beslubbering his face with tears piteously like some spoiled child, like many of these Easterns who weep readily ; but the sergeant with all speed ran to kick him up again. For none liked this fellow ; he had twice upset his carriage full of the Jew's family, and the old man declared to me this ruffian wished his death, that his pretty young wife might be a prey. This last I disbelieved.

That afternoon from afar we marked the dust of a great trampling in the sky coming towards us ; the soldiers asked amongst themselves, " Is this the *Bedu*, or a company of merchants ? "

With a glass the heavy-laden horses became apparent, but these wayfarers, too, shrank at our approach, nor knew what we were, fearing in their turn that we were a hostile band. The men grinned at this report, and, or ever a man could think twice, pricked their mounts to a wild gallop, brandishing their rifles as they charged down in sport on the caravan. We checked the pace a hundred yards from these people, and a boy-soldier of our troop laughed to see them sheathing knives or putting back cartridges in their bandoliers. " They are afraid," quoth he. But a wiser head, a *zaptieh*, decried this wantonness, saying, " One only should advance." This new company was the advanced guard of a governor changing his district.

Tel Afar was the last stage before Mosul, an ancient mound of some dead city. Then came the Desire of Last Day, the longing of these poor rogues to end their travail, when none should cry in the bitter dark before dawn, " Rise, for the night is sped," or impatient, full-fed horseman at hungry noonday gainsay them resting-time when the sun is high and warm. A few hours more, and they would revel in their *Kéf*, their pleasant ease, within four walls with food to fill their bellies, and friends to listen open-mouthed



Black lent by

the R.S.G.S.

A STREET IN MOSUL

between the sips of coffee to all the boastful fancies of their tales. So pressing forward, the caravan circled a shoulder whence sprang to view the towers and minarets of Mosul. Beyond the city lay the two ancient mounds of Nineveh, Kouyunjik and Nebi Yunus.

Then on a sudden from the roadside rose in obeisance a stalwart fellow, a watchman set to observe our arrival, to take the news to the diggings ; for we had tarried by the way, and no report of our coming had prevented us. Nay, the *Hukûma*, too, had sent soldiers to seek us, and these had found us thus belated some few days since. This fellow, Yakûb, an overseer of gangs on the excavations, was the first to give me *Ahlân w'sahlân*, welcome to the city, and led us in through one of the western ports, past the old walls, to the great house my friend had hired. Here was a massive portico, a dark, frowning entrance beneath a pylon, which led to stables and a garth of beaten earth, and by an arcade to a fair court, paved with flags and centred with an oasis of slender lemon trees.

Mosul is the meeting-place of Arabs, Jews, and Christians, and the queer devotees of a score of sects. In its khans a man may learn all the gossip of a hundred roads from here even as far as Jebel Kâf, which no one knows save that it is the dwelling of the Jinn at the fag-end of the world. One may hear a myriad Babel-tongues of strange road-fellows from diverse tribes : Kurds that have

come down from the Persian marches, wild and uncouth ; armourers from Sulimanieh, where they make the Martli rifles of smuggled Swedish steel ; Baghdadis from the City of Harun er-Rashîd, whose shibboleths of *ch* and *k* bewray them ; and offscouring Levantines who best know what signifies the thumb rubbed against the second joint of the forefinger, the token for money throughout the Near East. Sindbads are they, each man of them, who have foregathered in this city of sweet waters and pleasant gardens, a fair haven after the toils of voyage, and to each the stones of the streets ring homely welcome beneath his horse's shoes. For the love of gipsy-wandering is in the Arab blood, and the pilgrimage to Mekky is but a delight to these rovers. I had once an Arab moufflon-hunter who stalked game with me in Algeria and had many tales of his palmer days to the holy city ; he had gone by sea to Jedda, as many do, each day asking the captain of the ship for the compass points to direct his prayers. Once in the Walideh Khan in Constantinople, where the Persians congregate, I turned to speak to an old Arab wearing the heavy double-twist about his coif ; he was leaning listlessly against a tree, idly waiting for days to go by until a caravan should take him back to Baghdad, whence he had come three months since, for he liked not Stambul.

Of all these Arabs, how may a man know the hundred and one tokens which mark one dialect

from the other, or note the *wasm*-marks on their faces? Will an Algerian use the word *bakshîsh* rather than *surdi* (which must needs be Italian)? although eastwards of his country they would not understand him; while here in Mosul many by metathesis will say *bakbîsh*. Ask for bread in Egypt and say *êsh*, but in Tripoli *khobza*, which in Syria is *khubz*. The Bedu of the desert pronounce a *qâ* as *g*, like the ancient Babylonians, but the Egyptian and Syrian make but a rough breathing in the throat for it; the *j* of Irak and most of Barbary is a hard *g* in Egypt, and a soft French-pronounced *j* in Syria; Syrians say *ta'abên*, *ju'ên*, for the *ta'abân*, *ju'ân*, "tired," "hungry" of elsewhere. But the distinctions are endless; it is as says Meleager: "If thou art a Syrian, say Salam, and if a Phœnician, Naidios, and if a Greek, Hail; they are the same."

Mosul is a city of goodly houses, built with ashlarèd marble in overhanging eaves; of narrow cobbled streets, adown which in winter the rains rush violently, cleansing the Augean filth. Pendent oil lamps barely illumine the darkness, and no goodman of estate will walk at night without his linkboy, lantern in hand, to light him on his way. Ragged festoons of sacking hung across the streets screen the noonday sun from the merchants who sit in their little booths flapping the flies from the loaves, flesh, or fruit with whisks. The streets are rich with the heavy scent of spices, with the goodly sight of dyed garments, hosen,

mantles, and red shoes. Here are little panniers of astringent pomegranate rinds; sometimes a boy passes bearing on his head a prickle of flowers of chamomiles; but proper chemists are few, with aught but native medicines. Each guild of artificers has its own quarter: the fleshers are near the tanners towards the river-staith, and the stink of their trade rises to heaven: Kurdish peasants bring down the gall-nuts from the dwarf-oaks of their hills. Near the slaughter-places are gathered all the puppies of the gaunt dogs of this neighbourhood, and in winter a score of these will huddle in a shallow pit for very warmth, each ousting his fellow, that one more wretched should play Odd-Man-Out and crawl across their backs. For these town dogs, as elsewhere in the East, divide in clans, each holding a ward of the town, and woe on one straying from his phratry into a strange parish! for a puppy of a few weeks will rouse the elders with his treble warning, in no wise fearful of the enemy, strong in his righteous trust in support. It is ill for the hunting greyhound, following at his master's heels to reach the open fields for hares, for he is a trespasser in every street.

From the tanners to the workers in copper is but a short way of twisting alleys, a noisy quarter where the hammers beat the soft red metal with perpetual clangour. Here the smiths still fashion such bowls as the winged gryphons of the Assyrian sculptures show, pannikins with looped, swinging

handles. The tailors work in their alcoves with their machines humming like bees in gorse, and they will copy a Frangi suit in linen for a Turkish pound. Harlequin socks, knitted so that only one side can be worn outwards, flap in the air, dangling from the soffits ; you shall see the same, a trifle yellower perhaps, made in the Shetland Isles, taught, so the islanders say, by a shipwrecked Spaniard, who (I venture) learnt the trick from the Moors. Haberdashers sell a medley of miserable trumpery ; bakers ply at their ovens in sight of the street ; the fruit is at all times a glory of colour, be it red gherkins, rose-coloured melon pulp, Cinderella pumpkins, yellow apricocks, black grapes, or purple radishes, each in its season. The sellers of *leben*, bonny-clabber, sit on the cobbles with glazed bowls of lustrous green full of delicious messes.

Life is easy at Mosul, and a man may buy his needs cheaply. One of the best houses in the town cost thirty-six English pounds a year ; a good, serviceable riding-horse can be bought for eight or nine. A serving-man, ready to take the hardships of the road and cook roughly, asks as his hire but twenty shillings a month ; food is cheap enough, for there is a good market ; eggs are sold at three or four a penny, skinny fowls for fivepence, and a turkey for about three shillings. Indeed, Mosul brags of a time when eggs were sold at forty for a few farthings, publishing it abroad in the inscriptions on one of the great postern-

gates. Onions, potatoes, oca, tomatoes, egg-plant, rice, tapioca, oranges, and lemons are to be bought for a small price ; dried figs come from the hills, as well as dried apricocks ; dried dates come up from the south, for the date-palm does not flourish above Tûz Khurmati. One may find some little flotsam from Europe : arrowroot, chocolate, tinned sardines, and perhaps twelve-bore cartridge-cases.

The men of Mosul, if they be the ordinary folk, wear linen trousers, a long *zebûn*, a kind of cassock reaching in a skirt to the ankles, and girt at the waist, and a zouave jacket or wadded woolward coat. About their heads is a coif formed by a red kerchief kept in place by a heavy doubled ring of hair. The diggers of the lowest class were poorly garbed in this sort, or more often wore wide breeches of linen and a jacket ; sometimes the Arab workman wore a kind of smock, gathered at the waist. The soldiers and police wore a poor uniform with wretched shoes and a fez. One peculiarity of the Moslem and Christian women is their vizard ; in the town it is a black, stiff, square-cut curtain descending from the forehead, which they hold with one hand, tilting it for their eyliads at passengers, for the Christians follow Moslem habits in this town, and keep their women secluded ; nay, once my servant Mejîd gave Christian example of this, when he saw a sketch drawn by P. D. S.-M. of a dinner party of two young lovers seated with all the

delicacies before them, soft glow of candles and dainty napery. Quoth he, reading the picture in two dimensions as hardly as civilized men read unwonted printed characters, "Who are these? A man and woman sitting at meat together; then that is his sister?" But the answer to his question astonished him, and he continued, "Nay, *Sidi*? Then, *Sidi*, would you sit at meat with a woman who was not your sister? *Wallâhi*, if so, and it were my sister, I would kill her." When he visited Baghdad some months later, where the people are not so strict in their methods, this matter of the women eating with men offended him; and he spoke of them contemptuously as though they had been light queans. At Beyrut he found the hotel full of unveiled tourist-women, chattering to their menfolk across a common table; a last blow to his belief in the chastity of Frangi ladies. Once in Mosul two little native ladies from the English missionary school visited me to sell their needlework, d'oyleys, orfrays, or whatnot, and Mejîd, playing the part of a Tartufish aunt, remained in the room of his own accord; either in curiosity at the sight of strange women, or to be a protection against gossip. A good fellow, Mejîd, and, if it be God's will, we shall meet again; the world is a small place, and it is well to write here of him as I remember him.

Six-foot-three and fourteen stone; twenty-three years of age; descendant of ancient Ninevite forbears; Christian by birth and not (heaven be

praised !) a convert ; with a laugh ready to break out from the smooth eye-corners, which the desert sun has not been able to wrinkle with crow's-feet ; this, and much more, is Mejîd. From the ridiculous little white calotte worn atop of his shaven crown, and the blue zouave jacket broidered with white tendrils, to the flowing red and white skirt and scarlet shoes, he is a fine figure of a man, brave, trusty and gentle as a woman. A faithful henchman, following his Beg in Mesopotamia and Persia, even to the Eastern Sudan.

Time was when he swung his mattock in the bowels of the mound of Nineveh, digging for the pay of the English *Antikhâna*, with five score others. But service offered in the Inglizi's household, to groom the horses in the little farm on the eastern Tigris bank, and one day his luck came. Roused from his noonday rest, with the sleep still in his eyes, by the fumbling clatter of a horse forced unwilling from its stable by hasty hands, he hurried down the ladder to find the stable door shut and the steed galloping off round the corner, with its hoofs drumming a dactylic measure over the hard ground. A faithless *sats*, biding his sullen time, had seized the moment when the world was in all the solemn stillness of siesta, to mount and ride away on the mare. But there was still a second nag, a Rosinante nodding with shut eyelids and drooping knees over the manger, and the saddle hung ready on its pin. Mejîd, now awake, buckled the girth, and changed the rope halter

for a bridle, and swung featly round the corner in chase, unarmed, raising his *hallali* at sight of the fugitive. The miscreant turned in the saddle and with pistol levelled ventured a flying shot which sped past but a hair's-breadth from his pursuer, and yet again another. But no whit daunted, the blood of Assyrian kings forbade Mejîd to slacken ; yet naked pursuit was fruitless, and he turned aside for armed help from a little village. Here he found comrades at hand to sally forth with such ancient firelocks as their fathers had bequeathed to them, and thus they prevailed against the runagate, who was incontinently delivered to the watch and placed in ward.

A year or two later the changes of fortune led him to the Sudan, to take service again with me, leaving his home on the Tigris to travel to the land of the Pharaohs. A bitter winter took heavy toll of his caravan in the Mygdonian steppes, and men and beasts perished of cold and hunger by the wayside. Yet he came through in safety to Esh-Sham, whence, had all gone well, his voyaging could have been completed comfortably. But matters went awry, and my credits for his reckonings failed in their delivery, and it had gone hardly with him, but for the friendly offices of good travelling agents, who furthered his journey on trust to Cairo. There, being known by previous report, he was joined to the retinue of a kindly soldier Beg (whose welfare may God increase !) who accompanied the Lord of Egypt in a Red Sea

pageant at a new harbour. At Sawâkin the scent grew dry, and a new check awaited him, for the curmudgeon postmaster denied him knowledge of his Beg's route in the grim Eastern hills, albeit the Survey camels were passing and re-passing between the camp and the town. Half starved and disheartened at so far a journey, seeking (so it seemed to him) a careless Inglizi who had made sport of him, the black despair of a far country fell on him, and he had wellnigh determined to return to Mosul to brave the mockery of his home-companions, when two white men passed down the dust-laden street, and they told him where his goal should be. A week later he was riding up the thorn-scattered gorges of the Bisharîn hills, with all care thrown to the winds ; and as he traversed the valley between the peaks of Odeâno and Herâno, the white canvas of two tents roused his doubts again—was this the end at last ?—and as he lighted down from off his camel amid the kitchen cooking-pots, a welcome hail came from the shadow, and his journey was over.

My second boy was Habîb, the son of D'aim, the watcher on the mound, an Arab and a Moslem. He it was who during the fast of Ramadan learnt the hunger of growing youth, and, being away from his father, called himself a Christian that he might stay his pangs. Now Mejîd, on the other hand, though a Christian, carried himself in Moslem habit, for, said he, "it is easier in the *sûk*, or market, thus."

The little ladies of the mission school had left in my care certain small kittens yet unspeaned from their mother, promising to take them from me when they were grown. This agreement they basely broke, leaving me to rear or feed seven kitlings in all, amusing but mud-thirsty and rapacious little imps who left nought unnibbled outside the *Kafas*-safe. One died ; and it was Habîb who buried this first untimely dead in the forecourt, raising a small mound over it, and keening a dirge in his little, low, crooning voice. It was strange to see his modesty in describing a brief sickness which fell on him ; he said he was shamefast.

Now were the spring freshets breaking loose from the snowy hills, and the great tawny waters roared down in spate, swelling above the river-banks. On the Mosul side the houses abut the water's edge, save where the foul roadways debouch into the stream, and here, overlooking the Toll-booth where every laden beast pays load-penny, is the Blue Posts Tavern, painted a fairweather-sky colour, as if expectant of some Peter Simple. Within this coffee-house we sat, watching the flood, for the pontoon-bridge was loosed, and now sagged and strained at its hawsers as it lay along the bank, with the river now an open door for the waves to pass unhindered. Across the eddies, three-quarters of a mile away, lay the two great mounds of Nineveh ; the waters had not yet touched their brown flanks.

The longer mound, a hundred feet high lying to the north, hight Kouyunjik, and is bare, save for a little tomb ; the smaller is covered with the village of Nebi Yunus, with its minaret brave in green and gold. These mounds form part of the great walls of that great city Nineveh, which the prophet Jonah described as three days' journey ; the smallest circuit can be compassed by a good horse in fifty-two minutes. The ancient Diodorus affirms that they were a hundred feet high, and so broad that three chariots might be driven on them abreast, a nice description which is accurate in its expression, for their remains show how near to this they must have been at one time. Built in their lower courses with great hewn limestone blocks (alas ! now quarried profitably by ignorant clowns) and then with massy pressed brick, dried in the sun and never baked, they stand as a monument to the greatness of a great people for such time as their trustees, the Turks, give respite. The green minaret of Nebi Yunus marks, as men say, the mosque of the burial-place of the prophet Jonah ; foolish fellows among the Arabs said also that the larger mound Kouyunjik held the great whale, and that the English *Antikhâna* was seeking it. Strange, then, that Nineveh means Fishtown, portrayed in cuneiform with a building with a fish therein ; thus wise men say Nineveh was the fish that swallowed Jonah. Here in Nebi Yunus, above the palace of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria in the seventh century, is the tomb of this prophet

in the mosque. Certain travellers, spending a few days in Mosul while I was there, sought eagerly to enter, and by the grace of the Wali, their wish was granted : these courteously invited me with them. Here was need to wash with ceremony after the custom of the Moslems, and we entered the mosque amid a clustering populace, the mad old Said leading us. In the gloom ecclesiastic, shot with dappled light, behind a grating lay Jonah's bier covered with a green mantle. The prophet's virtue has descended on a large cauldron which steams and bubbles in an antechamber, refilled for ever by some magic with food for the poor, like the widow's cruse of Scripture, such that it cannot be exhausted. This the old Said showed me ingenuously.

At a time later word was brought me that this Said would show me some curious carvings, so that late one night Mejîd and I started to cross the flats between Kouyunjik and Nebi Yunus. Against the mosque the old Said had gathered some small party of his friends, seated about a flickering fire, sipping their coffee ; and these made place and offered a welcome, and discussed the war of Japan with Russia, and of Russia with the Turks long syne. Then the Said, ever mysterious and half-mad, beckoned me aside and led me to a stable, and, thrusting some straw aside, displayed a miserable and disappointing piece of marble. We left him, being wearied of this stretch-mouthed fellow ; quoth Mejîd, " I had as lief shot him in the stomach."

On the west side of the walls of Nineveh between them and the bank of the Tigris are the brown plough lands and willow coppices, cleft by the silver channel of the Khosr River which flows across the ancient Nineveh through the eastern and western posterns. Round about the old water-mill of Armushiyeh, which turns beneath the head-long fall of a runnel in baby cataract, the plover whistle in the dun furrows, rising in little fitful flights for wariness, and in the sallows are francolin and perhaps a boar. Marshes fringe the Khosr mouth in the rains, and here lie snipe, mallard, pochard, tufted duck, and moorhen; for many water-birds find winter sanctuary on this stream for half a day's journey upwards. Once or twice in the spring a curlew circled round in answer to my whistle, and in December a rare gull or cor-morant came in from the sea. The oyster-catcher lives on the Khosr banks the year through, and the belted or pied kingfisher flutters hovering above its waters ready to pounce on small fry. The message-wire is the resting-place of the blue and green bee-eaters who reiterate their plaintive bar of five notes in melancholy chorus; King Solomon's hoopoe runs solitary in summer amid the ancient courts with none to ask or offer counsel.¹

¹ The native names for a few of these birds as the common folk of Mosul gave them to me are: mallard, *warduk*; belted kingfisher, *kelekus*; pied wagtail, *fashûsi musul*; grey wagtail, *fashûsi jebel*; ringed plover, *tatwêsi*; bee-eater, *hudhuhudhêa*; white stork, *laktak*.

I believe I saw a rufous warbler at Asi in July flirting up its black-barred tail.



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THE EASTERN WALL OF NINEVEH AND THE RIVER KHOSR

The Arabs will not eat the ringed plover which is found in the fields ; the lapwing comes more rarely. Magpies, blackbirds, starlings, wagtails, and larks are common ; at Christmas come the chaffinch and ruddock, with other small birds, such as redstarts. The buzzard screeches his a-e-i-o-u from the Mosul roofs : the white storks live by the mound in the spring, and I found many congregated at Faideh, a few days to the north, in summer. Thousands of whistling Pallas sandgrouse fly over the mound in great flocks in summer and early autumn, and the town pigeons spend the warm days abroad, returning at sunset to roost amid the houses ; thus I tried to flight them, like ducks in England, lying hid behind the little tomb of the *shêkh* on Kouyunjik. As we returned from Bisitun in June I thought I saw a black-winged stilt, or it may have been an avocet, two or three days to the south ; as we came from Aleppo, a ptarmigan rose close to us in the hills ; in the Kurdish hills I marked a jay flitting in the trees in summer. Once, when we were crossing the Persian frontier in spring, a torrent of rain burst upon us with thunder ; the track ran down in the waters and the clouds lay low in the pass. Yet it lifted and cleared, and as the light broke forth again, a cuckoo startled the echoes with his sudden piping.

There are two kinds of wild pig in these lands, the smaller, the *khanzîr* which the Assyrians called *khumtsiru*, and the larger, the *dibbi*, of which

the ancient cuneiform is *dabu*. The *khanzir* was said to live in the willow copses by the river ; I fired a tinker's shot at a *dibbi* in the Kurdish hills, and could not loose a second for the magazine failed me. In the winter when the snow lay on the ground, a little herd of gazelle was driven in by the cold on to the mound of Kouyunjik : I had an exciting stalk across the bare snow plough lands, crawling low, but shot nothing.

Round about Nineveh lie the ancient cities Dur-Sargon, Calah, and Tarbitsu, now heaps of mounds. A British Consul, travelling through, foregathered with me, and I was glad to examine the ruins of Calah with him. Calah is the modern Nimrûd on the east bank of the Tigris, a mound excavated by Layard in the early days of Assyriology ; it stands solitary in the plain with ruins and sculptures in part visible, happily protected by the earth which the excavators replaced. Here was the palace of Ashurnatsirpal, King of Assyria B.C. 884-860. A day's journey below Nimrûd on the other bank is Kalah Sherghat, the ancient Ashur, wherein were found the cylinders of Tiglath-Pileser I, about 1100 B.C. Dur-Sargon, "the citadel of Sargon," King of Assyria 722-705 B.C., lies a few hours' ride distant from Mosul, a small mound excavated by M. Botta. Tarbitsu, "the court," is not far from Nineveh, the modern Sherîf Khan, containing the ruins of a palace of Sennacherib.

Over the undulations of the Tigris Valley great

dust-storms rise at times in windy haze, with whirling, dancing pillars circling up in suddenness from the unexpectant desolation. On a day when the mound had been made festive for a visit from the Governor, and a feast prepared for him, a great black devil swept down over Nineveh and spread his mantle on the wastes to shut out the sun. All had been ready at the Palace, with guards brave in their livery, and horses gay in rich caparison, fit for a caliph's progress ; with all the little jackals following the great man in a fringe of courtier sycophance. But the dark efreet prevented this display, nor would they leave the Serai, fearful to breathe the unwonted dust, and yet the *Hubshi* could tell them of *habûbs* far worse in the Sudan.

Came also to the excavations a traveller, a Hungarian with a great ban-dog walking round the world ; he would go to Baghdad, and thence to Teheran, Thibet, China, Japan, to be the first traveller in the world. He carried no arms, and spoke but little French ; and told that his reason for his long journey was first, *la bravoure*, secondly, a book. This was as he sat at meat in the little pavilion on the mound, and as he said it, a pistol spoke four times at no great distance. A stray bullet churned the dust as it fell some fifty yards away, and his little soldier guard ran out to see the coil : for there were many Arabs digging near, and this was an unpleasing jest of some drevill aiming in sport at the mound's flanks. This little

soldier ran from one to the other to seek the culprit, but nought transpired, yet he who was walking round the world stayed like Achilles silent in the tent, nor offered to help. These Arab roadsters are wont to discharge their weapons for joy to hear the report, and reckon little of the chances ; such an one did it on the road a few days later, and his splitten bullet sang its song in ricochet above the trenches.

There had been some little trouble in one of the villages about this time, and the *Hukûma* sent a constable to arrest the guilty. A fellow came to the Inglizi house on a day with bazaar rumour ; this Turkish *Tharborough* had found three men lounging by the bridge side, not, as it fell out, inhabitants of the recalcitrant village, and to these he strode. "Come," said he to one, "I must lay thee by the heels in ward" ; but the other gainsaid him and refused. In wrath the constable drew on him and shot him dead, so that he in his turn was in danger of the judge, who lodged him in the gaol. The little Abdullah told me this last, that it might be for a term of three days. This Abdullah was a homuncule of strange habit, a miserable lickspittle Christian, a pickthank of the Government, a spy, and to the public eye a policeman, who loved strong drink ("to ride on a camel," as the vulgar Arabs say), fit to play saltimbanque or punchinello in Italian play. His priggish eye sought a certain perspicil-glass belonging to the Inglizi, a double prismatic, which

he had borrowed to spy out the iniquities of distant rabble ; *microscope*, he called it in his bastard French. " When you go," quoth he, " you will leave me this as a memorandum."

Once on a time the *Mâmûr* Kâmil Effendi, and his brother the *Tabarâsî* were invited to a dinner on the mound. Below the mound lived a certain one-eyed officer, whose name is unnecessary ; a borrel, scurvy fellow who played the harmonium with both hands, and came too often to eat the Inglizi biscuits. Quoth Abdullah, " This man is your neighbour, and you must ask him also with the *Mâmûr* " ; but this I would not, and chode Abdullah lest he invite him without me. Nor did this admonishment prevail, for the little wastrel regarded the order not a whit. For when the serving-man had set the table in the long evening shadow of the tents, whence all the close of ancient Nineveh lay unrolled as a picture beneath ; the full moon rising in the grey over the far, ruined postern, as when Sennacherib's astrologers watched it lie in even balance with the sun to halve the month ; the distant Topsy-Turvy hills turning to amethyst in the earth-shadow ; so did four guests walk delicately in uncertainty of welcome across the summit of the mound—Kâmil, the *Tabarâsî*, Abdullah, and this one-eyed Calendar of a man. This one, forsooth, lest there be lack of table garniture, bore with him his own trencher-tools : and we sat down five to meat.

Presently the little pithecoïd Abdullah turned

red, ferret eyes upon the arrack which none else had touched ; he gulped it waterless in gobletfuls at a time, and swallowed four before the tempting flagonet vanished in the voider's hands. His little pig-eyelets watered and grew redder ; he choked and yexed at the flaming spirit which turned him drunken. "*Ah, la belle bouteille,*" giggled he ; "*c'est partie ; M. Tonson, chaque cheveu de votre tête vaut tout le monde, je ne peux expliquer—je veux dire, expliquer—mais vous me riez au nez, M. Tonson, parce que je fais des grisames—je veux dire, grimaces. M. Tonson, lui, il est l'unique de son temps—de son temps—Tonson—son temps—son temps—Tonson.*" The little maltworm shrieked with eldritch laughter like some uncanny changeling, and nearly walked into the river as he was piloted home that night over the bridge of boats.

As yet Abdullah was in favour in the graces of the Wali, and thus he learnt of many things which came not to the ken of the common folk ; but presently, like the mote in the sunbeam, he fell from his estate, and, sinking low, he wandered up and down the streets unofficed, no longer a petty vizier ; none now feared the shrewd turns with which he had aforetime requited them. As the unburied ghost prowls round the noisome leystal to seek its forgotten victual, so did Abdullah woe-fully haunt the barren office gates, praying for the royal favour ; he, whose merits in times past showed not except for bribe of gold, now aped

humility at the silver dole of charity. Yet there is ever in the East a place for snakes of his kind ; in the end the little man was restored to place, and it had been pity if such a figure had starved. From him one learnt that inquisition methods still obtained to extort evidence, as once were used in mediæval Spain, and even to-day in an American republic where they disdain not torture. That year a child was murdered, and her poor little body, flung into the Tigris, was washed hither and thither by the whimsy of the current, until it came to land a few miles below Mosul. So suspicion fell on two men, and these were haled before the Cadi, but neither confessed ; so, said Abdullah, one was beaten with rods, but he was steadfast in his silence.

In the autumn came two good fellows, English missionaries, from Baghdad, on furlough from the city, where now the cholera had abated. The great mound was a camp of many tents, and the Wali of his courtesy sent a superfluity of guards. I passed the little Abdullah on the bridge, with a cloak over his arm gaily going towards the mound the same evening : “ *Je viens,*” said he, “ *pour vous garder,*” fleering at me in the hope of much largesse later.

In the spring five score Arabs were digging in the ancient palaces in three or four companies, each in reliefs. First comes the pickman with his *kosma*, digging the soft earth, *turâb*, or hard stubborn *libn*, the sun-dried brick ; then, when his

stint is ended, he will sit down to rest, while the basket-filler with a hoe scrapes the rubble into the little baskets of the boys who run up ramps out of the pits to cast their loads down the mound side or on a spoilbank. Times and again a mad fit will seize on a gang, and a wild orgy of work ensue, diggers, fillers and boys all a-frenzied with the sport ; then take they up the burden of a chanty, a gasping chanty roared in recital : “ *Hat, cha, dir, hau, hai, im, bi, ha, Hat, cha, dir, hau, hai, im, bi, ha* ” ; or simpler, “ *Sulli en-Nebi, Sulli en-Nebi.* ” Their snarled matted locks fly loose across their foaming mouths, and in their rage they neither hear nor see aught except their enemy the earth, which they hack and shovel and toss, flail, winnow and sieve with piston-beat of war-song energy. Each panting breath marks the uncaesured and staccato syllables, and the drone of it reaches the other gangs, who grin to hear their fellows thus at war.

Once in the winter the rains swept down on the diggings, the cobble-paved streets of Mosul ran down in cataracts of inky water, and Kouyunjik was a slough of muddy pools. The Arabs shivered in the lee of earthen corners, and happy was he who could bring warmth to his sodden body with his labour ; so at last in pity they were given leave to depart at the half-day. Then came one of them with ingenious mind ; the sun had passed the meridian by a full quarter of an hour, and thus they had worked more than half a day,

“ Would I pay them a full day’s hire ? ” Great was the clamour of joy at assent ; they sang their little pæans of praise, and the best fogleman amongst them gave out his line :—

He hath paid us a full day,

He hath paid us a full day,

and his burthen was taken up by a score of raucous fellows.

Later there came a learned official, as chock full of science as Sol Gills, to see what we had found ; and as he walked over the courts of Ashurbanipal’s palace, he learnt that such-and-such a threshold would yield little tutelary deities. At this information his eyes glowed, and, said he, “ Monsieur Thompson, give me workmen, I pray, to dig these out to-morrow.” So it was arranged, and thirty diggers were set to clear the rubbish from above this gateway, ready for the great man ; and when the little cist which always contains such figures was revealed, he motioned all aside, and sat down to scrape delicately at the soil with his penknife. With joy he raised aloft a little clay figure. “ *Voici mon héros,*” said he ; and immediately the boys, time-serving rascals, sang a little improvised song :—

The Effendi who came from afar

Knew all about it—knew all about it !

Whereat he, thinking he had shamed me before my own workmen, took me kindly by the arm and comforted me. “ *Il faut un peu de science,* M.

Thompson," said he. I believe it is an old playwright who provided for schoolboys that verb of the first conjugation Iamano.

The words that the workmen use for bricks and baskets belonged to the old builders of the mound : *libn* is but the Assyrian *libnâti*, unburnt brick ; *zambil*, a basket, comes in Babylonian as *zabbillu* ; and *ajorr*, burnt brick, is the old *agurru*. These diggers live either in the town of Mosul, crossing the pontoon bridge daily at sunrise, or come from villages round about. For a miserable wage they fossick in the dust from an hour after sunrise to an hour before sunset ; in the summer was granted a breathing space at noon. As the sun lies slanting over westward Mosul, the head ganger eyes his watch-dial narrowly, and then on a sudden shouts *Paidos*, as Sussex hop-pickers shout to pick no more to-day, "calling off" in their dialect. Shrieking, tumbling boys echo the word ; from the depths of pits climb the lower gangs, hand on hand up the ratchety steps by ropes ; little parties bear back blocks, shears, and guys to the sheds.

In the spring the little River Khosr rises in flood, and then no horse can ford it either at the stepping-stones, or higher by the ancient quay. Then one needs to swim, giving one's clothes to a tall fellow who will walk it neck-deep, naked, keeping them dry on his head ; while the diggers watch from the mound on the far side, shouting encouragement, *Aferun*, to the swimmer. In the summer it dries away, leaving its bed seamed and

cracked, with barely a pool in its hollows for the dry snakes to drink at ; without spoil for those that spread nets, its banks sandy and crumbling, and the little that was sown by the brooks withered and driven away. Then in the autumn it fills again with the rains, and half freezes in the winter, for once in rare times snow falls and covers the mound, so that the Arabs fear to work. Thus did it fall that year, and for a week the mound lay white and idle ; one of the diggers crossing the stones in the little procession had fallen into the ice-cold stream, nor had he recovered until thawed in a warm bath. His mates swore that they would take no further risk while the ground was white. The little Arab boys played with this unaccustomed heaven-sent gift, and, moulding the snow in their hands, employed their labours lewdly in *schneemanntechnik*. Once when the little backwaters were frozen with a breastplate of ice, I ranged the banks with a gun in hope of starting a snipe ; and just where the upper ford is, where the eastern wall is interrupted by the river, the back of a dead donkey threw a sombre shadow in the pool. He had gone down in the dark to drink or cross, and becoming numbed with the cold had fallen asleep with his head drooping in the water, and now he lay a menace to those who drank of the water below. A few Arabs passed over the ford, sitting lazily on their beasts, and these I should have stayed to help drag out the rotting carcase, but these cockered,

delicate fellows liked not the cold of the stream and cared so little for the welfare of their brethren that they played the Levite and passed on, despite all argument. So in the end I was left to haul him from his oozy resting-place to the bank. So selfish are these Moslems in their blind faith in God, that they pollute the running streams or wash their dead above a village ; at Alexandretta they cleanse their dirty linen at the springhead, leaving the scum to defile the fair watercourse wherefrom some thousands drink. What matter then this single donkey ? Truly, as Ecclesiasticus saith, " He that discourseth to a fool is as one discoursing to a man that slumbereth : and at the end he will say, What is it ? "

And so, when the fell Demon of the Yellow Air, the cholera, came in the summer, stalking grim, silent, and unswerving from Persia, it behoved one to be wary of these curmudgeon ways. For we had returned to Mosul in June from Behistun, and the pestilence was yet on the Persian border ; slowly it crept over, perhaps with some train of palmers going to Kerbela, perhaps with some careless caravan, and all the summer long the people in Mosul marked its dread progress up the river. By this time my comrade had gone home, and I was in charge of the diggings ; the lady missionary, Miss Martin, too, had gone, but even as she went she took it in her escort, so that two died. Then the devil of sickness set himself quietly about his work.

“ He is come to Kerbela, he is passed to Baghdad ; he is gone over the passage to Dêr-er-zôr ; Mosul is afraid, for the Persian cities are fled ; the inhabitants of Tel Kêf gather themselves to flee ; as yet shall he remain this breathing-space at Sulimanieh.” So murmured the bazaar-tongues, in terror of his approach, fearing the day of visitation, for it goes hardly with a city whereof the dwellers are as locusts for number, and in this disease neither herb nor mollifying plaister can heal them.

Then came an order from the *Hukûma* to eat no green food, neither the *bâmia*, the ocrea that sprouts from the pale yellow of its flowers, the *bedinjân* or eggplant, cucumbers, or such and such. Soldiers visited the houses of the fruitsellers, taking the ovoid melons, emerald and sage-green, of pink studded with black seeds, to cast in woeful noyade in the Tigris from the bridge, lest any eat this deadly pulp ; and for these the little wanton boys who swim below the staithe scrambled and fought in splashing rivalry, a Fortune’s gift that came thus rarely. Many a burgher burnt soggy straw in his courtyard, thinking thus to fumigate himself and purge his house of the contagion if it come.

Then at last it came. Quack-salvers prepared their potions for the unpacified and terror-stricken, apothecaries and herbalists amassed wealth by their trade in electuaries ; wizards wrote amulets and periapts with abracadabra for

the superstitious. In different quarters of the city great bursts of wailing broke the silence of the heavens ; here one had died, and the mourners wept, casting themselves down to kiss the dead face, holding the lifeless form in embrace. Chirurgeons signed lying certificates so that all wonted rites and customs might prevail, and none knew the tale of dead. At Baghdad there had been a hundred daily deaths, so that the good missionary doctor, Brigstocke, had each day tired five horses in his ministrations. In Mosul every third day was worst, with perhaps thirty or forty, while the intervals tallied no more than a dozen or so. Strong men were stricken and became unconscious five hours after the attack, staying thus comatose for a fortnight and then sometimes recovering ; so the *zaptieh* Said-denûn. Perhaps there survived twenty in each hundred, and the deaths were chiefly among old people and young children.

Then came my big servant one evening in the twilight of that solitary house, saying, " Master, it is not good to stay in this city of endless mourning for the dead, *wiyu-wiyu-wiyu* ; let us back to the tents on the mound," and, nothing loth, I set the house in order, and the diggers took up our carriages again to the little hut, guns, stove, chairs, bed, kittens and all. Throughout this scourge of pestilence Mejîd had filtered and boiled all the water, even for washing for our household, but to find pure water for eighty diggers was a matter for thought. It was the custom to employ a pur-

blind old man to provide the water for the gangs, whose thirst in summer demanded the continuous traffic of two donkeys bearing amphoræ, for the Khosr River near at hand was now dry, and the Tigris was the present source. A crowd of washerwomen was always gathered on the shelving bank above the bridge, slapping the soiled clothes incessantly with their wooden batlets, beating from early dawn ; here was also the dipping place for our waterpots, amid the foulness of these steeping clouts. If the black death of cholera strike a family, the mourners burn nought of the dead man's chattels, but wash all that is not wanted for cere-cloths in the river, spreading thus the infection.

When therefore the plague came, and the rags of the poor dead were like to be cleansed by these whitsters at this washing-place, who would deny that the water-boys must fill their vessels higher up the stream ? On this eastern bank there was nought save marsh, scrub and copses, with little gardens of cucumbers and melons fringing the bank ; no houses except a gardener's lodge to watch the fruit by night. There was a narrow track between the vines less than a mile above the bridge, such that the boys might have traversed with care and found the water sweet and clean ; but the lord of this trumpery demesne, seeing that it might be turned to account, denied free passage to them, and demanded five Turkish pounds as wayleave. So another way through

the thickets was found, above this privy land, and the carriers thus drew from untainted water, glad with the promise of added pay. But the blind old rascal who hired out the asses, thinking further on the matter, next day of his own motion sent the boys back to the former place near the washerwomen, and news of this was brought to my hut. The first remedy for this was to ride to meet the boys and dismiss them out of hand ; this was at midday, and the men on the mound were expecting the great jars to be refilled, so that runners were at once sent to the villages round about to engage a fresh waterman. None was found, and it was impossible to keep the diggers without water, so they were dismissed with half the day free. In the meantime the old waterman came with pathetic *baisemains*, beseeching to be reinstated ; but he had acted ill, and to have been compassionate on a trickster would have been but feebleness. Tearful appeals came from his family, and even from the very men who drank the water ; the wife of D'aim, the watcher of the mound, whose quiver was full of younglings, added a vain intercession, yet she held her peace at answer that this was to safeguard such as they. New water-carriers came next day, and for a few brief hours all seemed well ; but these poor cowards said they feared thieves in the tamarisks, and so a third man must needs escort them to the water's edge. Failing thus in their intent to be lazily employed, they cast about for a new excuse, and asked that

authority be obtained to pass the scrub from its owner. These wearisome laggards were sent about their business, and a man was despatched to the market to buy a horse for four pounds, and two large waterskins, for this was clearly the proper course. No further trouble arose, there were no thieves, nor did any grudge passage through the copses ; one man alone was enough to lead the horse and fill the skins, a cold and bitter travail for horse and man, which chapped the legs of both. The water was lifted to the clucking skin by a wooden scoop, much like a Cambridge mock-honour to the lowest bungler in figures in the tripos-list. Withal some small rumour spread in the bazaar of the Inglizi care for the workmen, while Arab diggers, flattering, raised pious hands and eyes to Allah as a bell-accoyle in greeting. Some said, "O Beg, our life and death are in the hands of Allah ; if we die from drinking this water, it is His will" ; but ceased at the parable, "Do you dance along the edge of a precipice, or go slowly ?" Yet this pestilence was never a great terror in Mosul ; little Abdullah maintained that the monasteries of the many saints ringed the town about with a carcanet of safeguard. Yet the workmen knew that firewood was free to them to boil the water on the mound, if they brought their cooking-pots ; the great jars from which they dipped a common ladling-cup were put aside, and little separate goglets substituted by each man. A ten days'

quarantine from work was proclaimed against any whose near relations died ; this was no difficult matter to discover, for a mourner asked a day's furlough at least. The chief *Wekil* and paymaster of the men scoffed loudly at these whimsies. " Let the workmen die," said he, but then he was only a Christian. Once a poor, seam-rent fellow was found lying on his face, grunting in pain, but the *fa'âl*, workmen, said, " It is nought, he hath often this colic " ; and he drank some *afyun*, and returned to work, for happily no case of cholera came amongst them.

The end of the pest came shortly. As the sun rose one day, great crowds surged out of Mosul with one common end, Jews, Moslems and Christians, into the great plain engirt by the ancient walls, beneath Kouyunjik. Here in their thousands they abased themselves, praying each to Adonai, Allah or Isa, to avert this evil. Then it passed, and Mosul was no longer a plague city. So ended the cholera here.

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Spring on the mound of Kouyunjik is a delight of Dryads and Fauns. The antique soil is a marquetry of emerald wheat and yellow mustard, scarlet poppies and flowers-o'-Naaman, with little turkis-blooms, and the saffron of the scented clover. A great green sea of quivering barley-halms rolls at its foot, and in the islands of open patches spring the dainty purple irises. Little

orange marybuds and pink stocks bedeck the gardens and dog-roses blossom in tangling sprays. The road from the bridge is like an English lane with blackberry hedgerows on either hand, smiling fields, and a nesh track for a morning gallop ; the Khosr River is abated from its flood, the winter is over and past, and the stepping-stones by the ford are now awash. Great flights of locusts, red and yellow, have swarmed in over the young crops, and husbandmen in little skirmishing lines wave white bannerals over their tilth to fray them off. Already the bullock drives the windlass on the river-bank in endless, creaking circle for the swelling, thirsty melons ; the glorious burgeoned clouds no longer spread their white against the blue, and the summer sky is left a dome of colour. As the spring passes, the sun blazes down, scorching the land to yellow, amber, and orange, and the grass withers and the flowers fade ; the barley has long since been reaped, and the harvesters are now shredding the swathes of straw beneath their sledges. The green ripples of corn have given place to golden dunes of tedded forage ; the ogra has grown breast-high, and puts forth its sulphur-hued petals like the evening primrose. The distant hills change to a soft amethyst as the sun sets, no longer flaunting a brazen, harsh outline of barren dust against the noontide blue, but mingling now in the gloaming with the tender opal of the sky. Some little goatherd calls in an unseen nook of earth, and,

piping on his twin-reed, plays a lullaby to Pan. The great moon rises silvern on the horizon ; the diggers have gone homeward, and there is nought to people the old courts of Nineveh save the owl and the rearmouse ; the little jackals whimper in the scrub below.

When the heat of the day was over, and the work laid aside, it was good to saddle Darius, the little grey horse from Persia, and ride down past the rustling, dry reed-bed to the sandy spit in the angle of the stream below the babbling mill for pistol-practice, tent-pegging, or melon-cutting. The Shammar Arabs use a lance or sarissa nine feet long, of male bamboo, and tipped with a solid iron spike hung about with little jingling chains. One of these Mejîd bought for me, and once, displaying its use, mounted a horse and poised it overhead, as though making a foin, a scene for very likeness of an Assyrian warrior from the sculptures. An Indian sword, graven with monogram of the Great White Queen, with leaves of oak in damasked tracery on the blade, had found its way to Mosul, a strange piece of flotsam in the bazaar ; this, too, Mejîd bought. Excellent in most matters, Mejîd was like most Arabs, an unhandy markman with the pistol or rifle. Mahmud, the brother of the watchman, was the only man who could handle a gun featly ; owning an ancient arquebus with a long barrel and swivel-rest near the muzzle, he could hit small clouts at fifty paces lying down.

From time to time some strolling singer came to the mound, tinkling an antique cittern ; so also came a lutemaker from Mosul with sample of his handicraft, a great-bellied mandolin of pumpkin size straked with alternate strips of walnut wood or lemon, with five double catlings. His signature was fretted in the sound-hole, " Hanna Jeji of Mosul made me." He brought also a long-necked wire-strung rebeck of barbarous shape ; and when the neatherds learnt that here was a market for the work of an idle hour, they in their turn fashioned double pipes of shawm or bone pierced with sextettes of twin-holes, with mouthpieces of vibrant reed in pitch sockets. At the *Gahwa*-houses there were oft-times gathered singing men of raucous voice in unison with dulcimers ; but worse than these were the bursts of cacophony blown down-wind from the Meidan, where Turkish soldiers played on Frangi brass. The digger-boys would sing at times some snatch of song, but more often these franion fellows sat listlessly beating one stone against another like a savage drum, or playing silently with tossing pebbles over hollowed sunken cups in the ground.

One day, on a hot summer afternoon, there arose a great tumult among the workmen like fifty thousand pannier-loads of devils with their tails chopped off, as Tristram Shandy says ; they streamed down the mound-side, going at large like horses. The little Abdullah ran this way and that, breathlessly shrieking, " A Kurd, a Kurd, he has

stolen two guns ” ; and meanwhile all the diggers were spread abroad running to catch a lone figure who had outdistanced them. The grey horse Darius was ready for a romp, and he was soon galloping with me across the parched Khosr-bed, leaving the laggards of the pursuit behind. Under the mound of Nebi Yunus the fugitive was caught, the excited Arabs questing like a pack of demon-hounds, wild and slavered and sweating. Twice a Martini roared in jubilation, sending its bullet skywards at the hands of an excited hunter, cheerful in the success of the finest run that ever was seen. They haled the panting Kurd, wild-eyed and ragged, as in a triumph, none knowing his guilt, until some wiser than the rest found that the rifles were his own: that he had brought them to Mosul to sell, and that he had but visited the mound from curiosity.

Here was a to-do, for we had now reached the mound. Said-denûn, the zaptieh, had already arrived on the scene, and the joy of chase having died away they said, “ O Beg, he is a poor man, let him go,” as though they could not have freed him themselves when afar, and now, having delivered him to the police, made belated amends. But the *Mâmûr*, thinking this might be noised abroad, was unwilling, and interrogated the misadventured wretch who had then two rifles without licence. This was a proper charge, that a wild Kurd had brought down Martlis to the town unlicensed ; and he was rightly prisoned for two

days. A Kurd is not worth pity, nor does he need it ; we met them later.

For it fell out that my road lay northwards to the ibex country in the summer ; it was too hot to work, and the *Antikhâna* had proclaimed a six weeks' truce. So a caravan mustered with Mejîd, his two brothers, Abd-el-ahad and Sâfô, and old Hanna, the cook, who was so blind that his pistol was sequestered and a sword given him instead. Then by the east of the river, passing the little flat-roofed villages where the dogs challenged from the wall-tops, Tel Kêf, Kanishirin, Tel Addas, to Faideh, with its storks that congregate round the pools ; Dehôm, a little hamlet nestling in a limestone valley, graceful with its fruit trees ; Zakho, with its high bluff cliff on the Khabur ; Nahrwân on the plains, with its little church ; Jezirah on the Tigris, ever in fear of trouble. High grass, dry grass, and dwarf oak, picked out with blue thistles (O, the glory of their fringed tassels!) ; hills with clear streams running adown the ravines past the mountain villages set in orchards. To such an one the caravan was piloted, Hosêna, under Jebel Jûdi, where the Ark of Noe, as the tale runs, stranded. Bubbling springs and rivulets, foliage of kindly walnut trees, gardens of figs and pomegranates and apples ; blackberries in the woven bramble copses, and spinneys of *bellut* oaks and little plane trees up the grey and red limestone. Pigeons and doves nest in these hills, and a rare jay chatters in the woods ; blackbirds

and throistles challenge an English summer with their pipings round the blossom of the rose-laurels.

Yet the Christian native, with face smiling-sweet, lives here in terror of the Kurd, and well he may, for in the autumn later the Kurdish Agha, who lives in these rugged fastnesses, swooped down on the village and destroyed it. This was the Agha of Shernok, who owes allegiance to none, and under him, if rumour speak sooth, are four hundred sturdy vassals to do his hests. Belted about with a double baldrick of cartridges and armed with rifles, they are ready to roam the crags at their lord's bidding in little bands, to see what bordraging may profit them. Nay, in the seventeenth century, Pietro Della Valle says that Jezirah was "under the government of a Curd."

Now as the caravan lay for a day or two in Jezirah, a certain malignant Christian dog, rancorous against us for lack of his vails, and conceiving a plan to be revenged, sent privy word to the hills to this margrave that an Inglizi hunter was purposing to come to his domain, and bringing with him a rifle of dainty and cunning artifice. Hence, as the camp lay idle a se'nnight later beneath the canopy of walnut trees, the horses drowsily champing in their nosebags and twitching at the flies, the men dreaming in the shade, ten unkempt, armed caterans filed into the group and sat them down under the tree. Here they received a welcome, and comforted their hearts with coffee which

the serving-men made ready. Then they put forward the reason of their coming, "Had the Beg a rifle?" and received answer that it was locked away and could not be shown. So with hesitating farewells they rose up uncertain from thence and departed, but only to return next day with the same inquisition. The same excuse served, and then they demanded cartridges; these were forthcoming, but were worthless because too small. Elsewhere one fellow, making enquiry of the servants, "Had the Beg field-glasses?" learnt from the faithful varlet (who lied like a Cretan) that there were none. Meantime there was a nervous spirit through the camp, the two soldiers of the escort communing with each other that they would not hazard themselves in a fight for a stranger; but the three muleteers, stout-hearted and no cravens, bandied words with the ruffians that they feared them not, and so presently these lewd fellows went back to their hills, fearing to force the safeguard of the British *Râj*. As Herrick hath said, "We trust not to the multitude in warre, but to the stout: and those that skilful are."

Now there had happened to be a rock sculpture of Sennacherib up this hill, chiselled in a great boulder, and engraved with the Assyrian writing that none before had copied, and a native priest of Nahrwân had told me that a friend of his had gone up to see it and declared that it was scribed in Latin. This I had copied on that and previous days, and inasmuch as my colleague, L. W.

King, had done the neighbour inscriptions at Shakh, far more important than this solitary record, clearly it was better for him to publish them all together, which he has lately done.¹ Time had done almost its worst with it, poor mutilation that it was.

In the cuneiform cylinder of Sennacherib the Assyrian king thus describes this difficult country in which he once fought : the mountain hamlets

“ Perch’d like an eagle’s aery, that king of birds,
High on the ruggedness of Nipur’s peaks,
Bent not in vassalage beneath my sway.
There below Nipur I array’d my host
And panoply of valiant men-at-arms,
Embattail’d, ruthless ; like some headstrong bull
I, the forerunner, led them ; in a palanquin
They bore me over rocky rifts and spurs,
Ravines, deep gullies, till the slippery steeps
Denied my litter, so that I, the king,
Clamber’d on foot, learnt of the mountain-goat,
And reach’d the top : the sheer rock was my rest,
And for my thirst the waterskin. In flight
The foemen of these ravish’d burning hamlets
Thridding the boskage of these woody heights
Fled all disorder’d, beaten, plunder’d, spent.”

I had by that morning, luckily, finished copying the remnants of the characters, so that when the last of these Kurdish brigands had passed out of sight the camp hastily did up the tents and coverlets and whipped them on the beasts’ backs, sparing no time to flee lest these villeins should

¹ *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, Feb., 1913, p. 66.

think twice of their light departure. Zakho's bluff cliff again gave hospitality for the night, yet here, as the Turks say, he that fled from the rain met the hail; for as the camp slept, our watch challenged six wastrels of the night who had come stealthily to spy out the caravan's strength, and, finding it too great for them, turned back for other plunder. Down at the foot of the slope, a musket-shot distance, unseen in the dark passed a merchant train with hooves a-clatter on the stones and tinkling kitchen-goods slung atop of bales, their long day done and their march finished. On a sudden one cried out of the black night *Ho!*, and there was a brabble of loud words and garboil of beasts and men, and then sharply followed the flash of pistols across the mirk. The zaptiehs of the Inglizi caravan fired a loose bullet in the high air, shouting of refuge; the thieves fled with a man grievously hurt, but they had left a bullet in one poor wretch of the merchantmen who went out over the border that night.

So came we back to Mosul in the heart of summer: a land of extremes wherein the quicksilver in July rises to 115 degrees, and in January the blackened waterpools congeal. In my sleeping chamber in the third week in January it was 41 degrees Fahrenheit, and the road to the mound was frozen. The rains begin about the third week in October, and then the tracks turn from the thirsty hardness of their sweated soil to lanes of slippery mud, delaying the posts seven days on

their journey from the north. In the summer heat in Mosul the people rest in *serdabs*, cool grotto-chambers faced with marble and sunk below the ground level ; the flies torment man and beast, but they die in their myriads in November.

Mosul still is a cave of magic, and wizards and sorcerers ply their trade there as in other cities of the East, be they Hebrews or Arabs. The venerable Yahûdi of the Dêr-ez-zôr caravan came to the Inglizi house with report of a magus in the town, a Jew who was his friend, and presently at his instance this magician came, bringing a *grimoire* written in cursive Hebrew script which he took upon himself to copy. More than this, he found others, and the owners sold them as worth a great price, thinking their fifty-year-old pages to be of vast antiquity, and soon a great store of almagests of charms, divinations and divers witchcraft, worthy of Jannes and Jambres, was garnered. Some were in Arabic, some in Gershuni (which is Arabic written in the Syrian character), others in Hebrew and Syriac ; the talismans prescribed are so much mumping gibberish, whether for love or malison or success in business, except they be the potions of the surgeons and leeches. Wouldst thou be cured of a snake-bite, dog-bite or scorpion-sting ? Then write such a talisman as the scribe hath penned engrailed with curly lines in senseless antics, and wash it off in water and drink health therefrom. If bravoës meet thee in a narrow alley, make invocation of a string of magic words six

times, adjuring those powers "who smote the men of Sodom and Gomorrah with blindness," that they smite the murderers with blindness too; and thou shalt see them, but they shall not see thee. Nay more, if thou wouldst be invisible and yet see others, write *Yeishteb ia agareun* on gazelle-skin, put it in a dish or glass lamp full of oil which thou shalt burn without spilling a drop; and at the end of three days thou shalt find a ring therein, and by wearing it on thy finger shall see without being seen. Most of these amulets end with the words "Proven and certain," just as Herrick writes of his charm against a witch:

" . . . then forthwith make
A little wafer or a cake;
And this rawly bak't will bring
The old hag in. No surer thing."

Love-lorn youths might cease their sighing for a haughty damsel if they but followed these old receipts: "Let him write the following in saffron and hang it up to the wind in the window of the house by a hair of her head: *Dlushin, Dlushin, Alushin, Alushin, Sru'in, Sru'in*, descend, ye children of the Efreets and Jân, and turn the heart of Fatma, daughter of Ahmed the dyer, and confuse her brain and trouble her thoughts, that there be no thought in her head but of me."

Following on the heels of these chapmen came such as practised curious arts and cast people into trances; one such came to the mound on a September morning to show the ink-pool trickery.

A hollow-cheeked, lacklustre-eyed fellow of middle age was this *shêkh*, and one of ascetic appearance ; and he began to sweep out a corner of the hut and to spread a blanket thereon. Mejîd bore a fire-pan with glowing coals into the room for cassolette, and inveigled Dîo, the little son of the watchman D'aim, to test this magic, to play Aladdin ; the wizard began to draw cabalistic pictures on the little boy's right hand and thus closed it. On the thumb-nail he spread a large patch of ink, moistening it at times to keep it bright, and on this the little boy fixed his eye, as a bemused hen her beak. This magician then grasped Dîo's wrist and quickly gabbled out a hocus-pocus, marking the pauses in his mutterings with some sharp-uttered word, and casting from time to time some aromatic gum on the coals.

Then commanded the wizard, " Say, come, Shemha'îl, come, Berkân," calling on the names of two demons, and the boy piped thus after him, and presently said, " He is come." Following the conjuror, he ordered the demon, " Set a chair for the King," and then he was plied with questions. One would know who had stolen certain dollars from him ; so said the magician to Dîo, " Tell him to bring the thief." The demon brought the likeness of the culprit. " What like is he ? Old and with a white beard from among the workmen." A second time was the boy put to the test, and this time it was for the health of a distant Inglizi doctor in London, and the devil of the

phantasm bore a picture of this foreigner. "He is well and laughing ; and he is good and kind to look at," said Dîo. "He is an oldish man, his face is red like yours, O Beg, and he has a red moustache and beard, also like you, *Sîdi* ; his clothes are black." Then one asked, "Is it clear that his moustache is red, and not white, that he has a beard ?" At this the baby seer, reverting from his former description, gainsaid his words, "Nay, Beg, his moustache is white, and he has no beard," making all this mummary a laughing-stock, laveering to any weathercock suggestion, albeit unwittingly, and depicting a proper portrait of this *hakîm* or doctor only at the impulse of his questioner.

The magician laid his hand gently on the boy's forehead, gave to the vision the licence to depart, blew in the boy's face, and he awoke as though from sleep. He stretched his limbs, and then followed the servant Mejîd to seek out the old, whitebearded workman : thus provoking my servant to hasty wrath, for the gaffer they found was too old to run ten yards, still less to steal.

Now, in order that the wise men of Mosul might know that their magic would be received with favour, and that the report of this might be published, a fresh trance was brought about, and the question was asked, "Where are *antîkas*, written stones, and such-like to be found in this mound ?" The little boy declared he saw the demon dig : that he knew the place : and presently

a little knot of seekers after truth followed the squinting urchin on his return to this world. "Here," quoth he, indicating a place above the ancient quay, "here the demon dug": and, lest the interest thus aroused fall, a gang of five was set in this yet untouched corner.

That night, as the watcher's little fire glowed red on the summit, Dîo strutted a hero, his pocket full of metalliques; no more would the little girl Burbarra, hitherto so coy, look with disfavour on his suit. "Dîo," said one, "how didst know 'twas a demon that thou sawest?" and he shrilled in answer, "'A had a red head and black body." Now how should a child know these things?

That same summit of the mound was the scene of a wedding, and also of one of the first Mohammedan rites. One day the brother of D'aim the watcher, by name Mahmud, was to be married; he was an unkempt, wild man who handled a pick in the diggings, and the bride was a shy wench of seventeen, brown-eyed and passing pretty, though she ever veiled at first. There came to the mound no small concourse of his cronies firing pistols in the air and otherwise expressing their congratulations, and these formed in a circle and danced to the mad music of a strolling player who was girt about with cartridges. D'aim's wife and her gossips hastily baked bread on smooth, convex iron grids for this party; the dancers clapped their hands in unison and raised their legs, dancing primitively thus. Presently came a leech

to circumcise her smallest son, and a small crowd gathered round the operation, and at its close they gave the little boy a dagger to put in his girdle, to please him, as they thought : but really it was the old mark of being risen to man's estate. And, seeing me, he shrieked proudly, "*Ma b'chît, Sidi*, I wept not, sir."

Two or three months afterwards I met the bride bearing the daily water-pitchers up the mound, with a figure like the letter *elif*, as the Thousand-and-One Nights say ; she had long since cast away her habit of veiling for such a usual wayfarer as myself. Quoth she, "O Beg, my husband Mahmud is a moonling ; take me and Dîo, my little brother, to Lundra with you." These poor women age quickly, and wither like an old apple-john, and their husbands regard them not in their later ugliness. D'aim, the watcher, had thought to let his wife die, that, said the gossips, he might marry a second, for though Mohammed allowed four wives to each man, yet rarely more than one is taken by these poorer folk. For one winter's day, as the snow lay on the ground, I rode to the mound and found that D'aim's wife was lying sick in the little hut of ancient bricks, eating nought, and thus had she continued uncomplaining for three days, while the Arab husband, thinking complacently on the will of Allah, sat in unperturbed content where the men were digging. Rasping words brought him to bestir himself, and, at threats of dismissal

if his wife died, his face went yellow, and he hasted to mount my horse to fetch meat for soup from the market ; another went to bring milk from a home-stead near ; another to roll a billowy tent to be a bed for the poor woman, for she was lying on the ground. A fire sprang up, water boiled, and presently a broth was made, and next day (such is the vigour of these *mesquins*) she sat up nursing her latest babe.

In the November of this year the *redîf*, or army reserve, were called out, for there had been a revolt among the Arabs near Basra, and the army had suffered heavy losses from want and disease. Two *tabars*, four hundred men each, went from Mosul, and in the streets one now saw gallant old greybearded officers in uniform. Those who had eleven pounds to give for a substitute paid escuage, for bazaar rumour spoke much of disaster, and idle fellows repeated that Ibn Sba had been instigated by the English ; yet none molested an Inglizi in Mosul, so it appeared to be but untrusted babble. These troops left Mosul by raft amid a wailing populace, and fifty deserted before they had gone as many miles. Arabia is a hard land for warfare, and trouble is constantly brewing, be it with the *Sherîf* of Mekky, the tribes of the Yemen, Ibn Saûd, Ibn Sba, or Ibn Reshîd. Few Turkish troops return from these grim fastnesses of sand and black rock and dry paths ; some of these in the end straggled home by Basra, ragged, footsore and wild-eyed, but most left their bones to whiten

in the scorching sun. Once, later, when I sought a body-servant, a soldier from the Yemen war presented himself; meagre and weazened, his face bore wrinkles of five years' desert and his eyes stared madly.

About this time two missionaries visited Mosul from Baghdad, one the doctor who had spent his energy among those stricken with cholera. There are many Christian missions in Turkey, both English and American, and so long as they make no attempt to turn the Moslems to Christianity, and restrict themselves to doing good to the ignorant, all is well. But, to speak sooth, converts from Islam are few, and it is tacitly recognized that a good Moslem will rarely change his religion, particularly when such a course may mean his death or flight. Indeed, it is a matter of congratulation that a faith whereof the tenets are so accurately observed as Islam permits no drunkenness, and those interior districts as yet unspoilt by contamination with civilization maintain a wonderful sobriety. While I was at Mosul I saw no drunken man, to my recollection, save one, a Christian. Happily, too, this religion is spreading among many of the native tribes in Africa. These good missionaries in Turkey, however, apply themselves far more to teaching the native Christians and maintaining hospitals than to making futile attempts to proselytize. All honour to them for a brave people! Women who travel where they must wear veils and endure the skirring stones of a

coward populace, and men who ride far to succour a sick man with risk of murder-accusation if he die. And such good men and women are found in every large town.

Many were the evenings of gloomy winter that I spent talking to my good Arabs, who would tell me of their folklore. Once my boy Mejîd, returning from the market with a great gobbet of mutton, was met by an irreverent youngster of the better class whose family I knew, and straightway this latter turned on the serving-man with impudent tongue. "You eat ox in this house," a most deadly insult. Then answered Mejîd, "Ox, do we? *Wallâhi*, in your father's house you eat both ox and camel," a still greater. These two beasts are unclean, that is, anciently holy, like swine in Jewish and Moslem law; and the little boy bore the tale of Mejîd's insult home to his mother, who in her turn referred it to the master of the house, and he then came heavy-browed to me. It was curious to see him beat about the bush; first, he visited my stable and decried the horses, then, grumping, reeled off his long tirade against Mejîd. I could but assure him it was *badinage* (he knew some French). "*Badinage*," cried he, "*qu'est-ce que c'est ça? Espèce de badinage—pah! Espèce d'insulte.*" Ultimately I appeased him.

Stories of ghosts and demons pleased the men, who, like children, love to be kippled up with boggart tales over the firelight, and no less do they enjoy leading the listener solemnly on to the end of

an elaborate deception. "There is a haunted house in Mosul," quoth one of them to me, "and a knot of bawcock fellows, wiling away the time, dared one of their number to go thither and knock at its door after dark. Not daunted, he set off, while they waited, waited, waited ; then with a ludicrous fearfulness they went to seek him at the house, and behold ! there he was at the door, dead of fright, with his cloak caught from behind on a nail."

One of the Christians in Mosul who spoke French was M. Abdullah Michael, known shortly as Abbo the Poticary, and one might hear all the gossip of the bazaars among his limbecks and mortars. He was like the Moslems in respect of his wife, who never appeared before strange men, but she sent me farewell gifts of trays of pleached straw, and a wonderful doll camel caparisoned with beads. From him I learnt the treatment of epilepsy as the empirics of Mosul know it ; a *shékh* first lays a knife on the patient's head, and then brings dates which he fumigates ; then he utters a chant over them, spits on them, and gives them to the patient to eat.

Many were the strange receipts used by these charlatans. What shall a man do for toothache, when a worm hath gnawed through the ivory ? for these simpletons are like the gaping boobies at a fair, who see Master Septimus Cagliostro draw a small maggot from the mouth of some poor tormented wretch, thus cozened by the wonder-worker's chicanery. A Christian priest

of Mosul affirmed the good sooth of this marvel ;
 " Take the *ambûbi*," said he (this is the henbane,
 as Mr. Botting Hemsley informs me, from en-
 samples sent him), " burn it so that it fumigates
 the sufferer's open mouth, and you shall see the
 worm drop out." Here is an ancient legend,
 come down from Assyrian tablets, that the
 court-leech of Sardanapalus would have exulted
 to hear ; across a score of centuries his leasing
 parables still prevail. For once on a day as I
 searched the Museum cupboards for trove of an-
 tique sorcery there came to light a little Baby-
 lonish tablet, a *harde tile wel ybake*, bearing pre-
 scriptions for the teeth ; thus ran its doggerel,
 writ in arrowheaded runes :

" After Anu made the Heavens,
 And the Heavens made the Dry Land,
 And the Dry Land made the Rivers,
 And the Rivers made the Ditches,
 And the Ditches made the Marshes,
 Then the Marshes made the Maggot.
 Came the Maggot to the Sungod,
 Weeping came she to the Sungod,
 Before Ea came her wailing :
 What wilt give me for my victual,
 What wilt give me to devour ?
 (To the Maggot thus he answered),
 Sun-dried figs, O worm, I give thee,
 And the toothsome garden coleworts,
 (But the Maggot thus in dudgeon),
 What avail are figs, bethink you ?
 Or your toothsome garden coleworts ?
 Set me near the teeth to batten,
 On the gums, I pray you, leave me,
 Thus their blood will be my victual,

Thus I may devour their vigour,
 Thus the postern-bolt controlling.
 Since thy rede is thus, O Maggot,
 Heavy-handed Ea smite thee!"¹

Follows in a rubric the liniment, some devil's elixir, to be rubbed on the tooth that the affection be assuaged.

Now if a Mosul man have a calenture, he will betake himself to a warlock of the Arabs for his healing, and this man will tie about the sick man's wrist a single thread of cotton, wherein he makes seven knots. A week shall pass, and, if the distemper be not then cured, the patient still retains his wristlet; if all go well, he may cast it away, and then must he make bread and throw it to the dogs. (This is not really for charity's sake, albeit they think so now, but that the devil of the sickness may be absorbed in the bread, like the atonement-offerings of savages.)

Again, hath an Assyrian fribbler in simples written on his clay-books the parent-charm of this for headache:

" Hair of virgin kid provide,
 Witch-spun on the dexter-side;
 And sinister, double-tied;
 Knots twice-seven thou shalt tie,
 Mutter Erid's gramarye,
 Snood the sick man's head thereby;
 Round his neck entwine the hair,
 Chain his throat² thus in its snare,
 Bind his members everywhere,

¹ I have ventured to quote this tablet from some small publication of mine; "coleworts" is a doubtful translation, but the rest is fairly accurate.

² The word means both "life" and "air passages."

Now the sick man circumvent,
 With the magic water sprent,
 That the ache malevolent
 Smoke-like with the air may blend,
 Like a spent libation's end
 Into the deepest earth descend."

This very name *Mosul* has given title to a weaver's stuff, for among strange word-pedigrees *muslin* holds high rank, that dominies may muse on its descent. For, as saith the learned Marco Polo, it was first manufactured here, inheriting the name *Mussolino* or *Mousseline*; and yet Mosul is but the Arabic *Mawsil*, which the Arabs in their simpleness think to mean "the place of arrival," little wotting that Xenophon had known the name Mespila long before Arabic had ousted its cousin languages. But this place Mespila, when Xenophon speaks of it, was already a waste; perhaps the inhabitants of its departed glories told him in their Assyrian tongue that *mushpalu* meant "a low-lying spot." But alack! the weaving of these cloths has ceased, driven out by the Joseph-coloured plagues of Manchester.

But my year in Mosul was drawing near its end, and it was time to consider the route home: and presently came orders from the *Antikhâna* suggesting a return by Baghdad, but leaving me free to come as I would, so that my caravan made ready to start to Baghdad and thence to cross to Damascus. But first in the next chapter is some small account of a journey my colleague and I made to Behistun.

FROM MOSUL TO BEHISTUN

“ If thou shalt behold this tablet or these sculptures, and shalt not destroy them, but shalt preserve them as long as thy line endureth, then may Auramazda be thy friend (and) may thy house be numerous.”—*Behistun Inscription*, PERSIAN COLUMN.

Persicos odi, puer, apparatus.—HORACE.

NOW I had come to Mosul to my colleague, Leonard W. King, now recovered of his dysentery, in part to relieve him at the diggings in the palaces of Nineveh, in part as harbinger of the good tidings of the Museum order to go to the Inscription of Darius at Behistun in Persia. For this had come about in this wise, and, albeit a somewhat tedious story, must be set down here.

Some matter of five hundred years before the birth of Christ, the Great King, the King of the Age, Darius, had chosen a sheer rock-face amid the pleasant mountains of his land of Persia to grave his deeds thereon that men might mark his prowess for all time, that his name might live for ever. Here, where the road half-girdles the buttress of a mountain chain which looks down over all the smiling valley of the Karkhah, he builded him great works along the scarp of the rock above the pool of welling waters from which

armies and travellers have drunk their fill since this road was used. Cunning artificers and masons smoothed a face whereon the sculptors might portray the King as he was in life, writing round it in three tongues all that the King had done, and a man may still find morticed boulders below, perhaps a relic of their scaffolding.

For when Darius was a young man in his father's house, Cambyses was warring in Egypt, turning it upside-down, as he had promised his mother ; and in his absence Gaumâta the Magian seized the occasion to revolt, proclaiming himself to the world as Smerdis, a son of Cyrus. Herodotus calls him Crop-ear ; his wife betrayed him at her father's instance, publishing his brand of infamy with which Cyrus had marked him. But the real Smerdis had aforetime been done to death by his brother Cambyses, who straightway on the bruit of this usurper, set out homewards to thrust him from the throne ; but died, as the Greeks say, from an accident in Syria, before any encounter. To this also the Behistun inscription adverts, affirming its truth in a measure, saying he " died by his own hand." Then Darius, one of the royal line of Achaemenidae, rose in his stead to destroy this upstart Magian (thus wrote he on his rock, " There was no man either Persian or Median or of our own race, who took the kingdom from Gaumâta the Magian ; the people feared him exceedingly"). And with a few followers he slew him at Sikayauvatish, in Media, and took the



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THE INSCRIPTION OF BEHISTUN

(The Persian Version is on the four columns visible on the right : the Susian is on the surface behind the Arab (Mejid) : the Babylonian is on the sloping surface, level with the Sculpture, about seven feet above his head : the lower left-hand corner of the Sculpture is apparent in the top of the photograph)

throne of Persia. For thirty-six years he held sway over these lands of Asia, fighting continually against pretenders or revolting vassals ; thus runs his history in the cuneiform engraving down to his expedition into Scythia in 507 B.C. Even before the Scythian campaign this noble monument of his deeds was completed according to his will ; but, wishing to add a final glory, he erased part of the writing to make room for the figure of the Scythian leader, Skunkha.

Here ends the great inscription, long before the Persian troops fought at Marathon, so that posterity must be satisfied with the one-sided account of the Greeks until some new record comes to light from Jamshyd's courts. Small wonder is it that all the sympathy should be given to the Greeks and none to the Persians, when every schoolboy hears but the story which the Greeks tell to their own credit. Give us English fairplay, my masters ! and a truce to school books which echo their sneers against the Persian foe—"faugh, these luxurious, effeminate Orientals, how despicable ! this oiled and curled Assyrian bull !" They cling to this word effeminacy, which is a jack to play the virginal of their imitative abuse : a Persian king was a tyrant, a tyrant is one whom all should abhor, and therefore all schoolmasters hate him, and bite their thumbs at him. Truly the insularity of Doctor Syntax *contra Medos* rouses me as a Medizing apostate to joust at the quintain of his outrecuidance. Some day this great nation

of Persia, where youth was taught to ride and shoot and speak the truth, will be accorded a fairer portion of praise among the comity of proud, ancient peoples ; this race, who but a few years after Marathon marched in a countless host against Greece, was a wonderful people, albeit in the end Gengulphian Aeschylus in his braggart play shows them tearing their hair " in handfuls, in handfuls, in bitter woe " at their defeat. Perhaps the snorting engines of the Baghdad railway, supplanting the fire-breathing, brazen-footed oxen which the first Jason had, will one day give the opportunity to Mr. Feeder, B.A., to tour amid the ruins of Susa, for a sally *Lundraden Ajama* at the instance of Turkish advertisers ; and he shall learn what, as the Logicians say, the barbarians of Darius conceal wherewith to smite the first-comers. " All's heathen but the Hebrew," says Ananias, the deacon of Amsterdam, in the *Alchemist*, all civilization is to be referred to the Greeks, said the classic scholar ; nor is it so long since that the dictum of this Ananias, in a city famed for its Hebraists, was held by the learned, that Hebrew was the base of everything, for it was the language spoken in the Garden of Eden ; and hence, for instance, Babel, the gate of God, was derived from a Jewish word meaning confusion. Once an American pastor, dabbling in this tongue, solemnly told me that the dispersion of the Semites took place at the Tower of Babel, and that Adam gave names to the beasts and the

birds : so did tribal and linguistic divisions begin. To disagree with such will at once outlaw the disputant as *framasûn* or infidel ; but Gypsy Borrow himself could not go further astray in hasty and inaccurate philology. 'Tis a small-minded but exceedingly pleasant game to play tit for tat with the pedagogues of our earliest recollections, as a counterblast to their Persian hatred ; did they not also lick their lips over the hapless blunders of our pupillage, like a spaniel over a furmety-pot, and chronicle them in the robing-room as jests meet for crackling laughter ? Just as a sensitive infancy is spied on by " that tyrannic pest, the prying maiden aunt," lusting for laughable stories to be brought out at adolescent meal-time like the Egyptian memento : so in the heyday of boyhood the floundering originalities of Bultitude and Jolland culminate as trailed clouds of glorious humour to these tutorial dullards of routine, these Orbilii, these proud princock scholars, as Coryat hath it. Miserable blunderers are they, too ! And thus in such small Persian apology as I can advance I may eke champion the perpetual cause of Youth, in its schooldays without appeal. O happiest time of life ! O everlasting parental bosh ! Alas, to think that Hood should have prostituted his muse to aid this monstrous trades' union of eld. " O little fool ! " says the traitor, " while thou canst be a horse at school, to wish to be a man ! " In the potpourri of remembrance I keep recollection of an aged and kindly master (peace be to

his ashes !) pathetically believing in Aram as the provenance of certain lilies ; and vouch for another, glorious as these same lilies in his garb and flowery in his speech, who told of Virgil's careened keel swimming. Another saw in the Egyptian word *baris*, the flat-bottomed boat, the root of the Greek *βαίρω*, because it went, *lucus a non lucendo* ; but their mistakes are too numerous to mention. Comfort ye, O little brothers ; for when you are holding the reins of Empire they will still be rattling the abacus before your successors. So, in years to come, when bivouacs in the open shall mean but a rheumy couch, when the limits of voyaging stop at the frontier of unleavened bread, then will it be time to join oneself to those modern Argonauts whose pleasantries are the reminiscence of the classroom ; and in revenge for their despotism, Persian-fashioned, to gather up the gems of their own gibbering in their travel, kin to the grin of savage in a new top-hat ; to watch them regularly trying Epirotes with ancient Greek in their Stratford-atte-Bowe pronunciation, or being photographed in Bethlehem garb, to see how near to nullifidians they are come at first cognisance of the value of Palestinian witness ; snuffing the fragrant spices of error which their own exuberant information has rubbed on the bows of their apprenticeship to travel.

The glory of the Persian kingdom passed, and went the way of Babylon, Nineveh, and Tyre, and men forgot to read the runes which the Magi of

the East had written above the little pool. Chance wayfarers brought stories of this wonder to their homes ; one said Semiramis had made it there, her craftsmen climbing the rock by a ladder of pack-saddles placed one above another : another that it was the twelve Apostles who were limned thus in stone : another that the figures represented the tribes of Israel in captivity. In the end came an Inglizi while the Great White Queen was yet young on the throne of Empire, a soldier who scaled the cliff and read the riddle which had baffled the doctors of the West. With sheets of spongy paper he lovingly impressed each panel, storing them in the cupboards of the Imperial House of Records, for the better observation of those who sought the past in the dainty ease of their chairs. The cuneatick characters gave up their secret to him, and once again the words of Darius were as an open book for everyone to read, to the glory and praise of famous men, not only of him who wrote it, but also of him who unravelled the clue.

For here was no Rosetta stone or Philæ obelisk with Greek transcript of names of Cleopatra and Ptolemy to give the divers signs their sounds ; nought but unknown languages, of which but few characters had been deciphered by the labours of scholars. Grotefend at the beginning of last century had, by his great ingenuity, deciphered the names of Hystaspes, Darius, and Xerxes from the inscriptions at Persepolis, and later Cyrus ; others,

following in his track, had added a few more sign values to his list, but none had read the excellent matter of the inscription. Then Henry Rawlinson, this Englishman, turned his mind to the two inscriptions in a gorge of Mount Elvend, and without knowledge of what his predecessors in this science had discovered, strove to unlock these deep matters. This was his rede, that the two inscriptions at Elvend differed in nought except in two words in each, and thus he determined in his mind that these were names of kings with their fathers—that the king who carved the first inscription was the father of him who carved the second. Hence it remained to fit the key of such Persian kings of antiquity to the lock of this mystery ; and by this comparison he, too, found the names of Hystaspes, Darius and Xerxes, and learnt the values of the signs. Armed with this clue, he sought the Behistun inscription, and all the world knows now how he read it, laying a sure foundation for all cuneiform knowledge.

But half a century passed, and the rains beat on the weathered rock and fashioned crude gargoyles in their boisterous course down the hillside, to spout the chemics from the soil over the king's writing. Like Punic vinegar which cleft the Alps, these winding treacheries gnawed what image-breaking churls had left perforce in safety. Moreover, laborious hands, were they never so gentle, had combed and carded and hackled the decaying impress-papers at home, fringing the



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THE SCULPTURE OF BEHISTUN

edges with a ragged nap, and yet there still remained unsolved the enigmas of a score of passages, for which none could find interpretation. So there came an order for a fresh scrutiny, and it was set in hand that my inkhorn mate and I should go to Behistun.

Then it was that our early days together in Mosul were a joy of lusty preparation, for all the city was ransacked for travelling furniture and victual. The tinsmiths smoothed their metalware with their hammers, and soldered boxes to hold the rolls of fibrous paper ; the lorimers wearied their eyes with day-long plying of cunning double needles ; and the cordwainer patched and cobbled many pairs of old friends. From sunrise to sunset the house of the Inglizi was as a temple of Janus in war time, by reason of the stream of handicraftsmen and merchants whose wares were fitter for a king's journey in cloth of gold than the tarnished travel of dead highways.

Behold the inner court, all fragrant with its lime trees casting slender shadows to the cloistered walk beneath the gallery, now strawed with every fantastic labour of Araby ; magic carpets whereon if one sleep, all the kingdoms of the world will be unrolled before his gluttoned eyes ; such lamps that, if Abanazar had owned them, he had cozened Aladdin's princess not once, but a thousand times ; brazen bottles meet to hold the two genies Harut and Marut themselves, if only Suleyman, the son of Daûd (on the twain be peace !) would deign

to press his signet on the foil. "Why, master, this saddle-cloth of blue diapered with orange is one fit for the stallion of the Wali Pasha himself, and let but thine excellency trick out thy mare with its bravery, not a damsel in the market but will turn her dove-like eyes behind her veil with a ravished heart as thou goest by. Yea, sir, this mule of mine, calkined only yesterday, is a very Rustem for strength (Allah's curse on thy father for a sulky brute !) ; *Sidi*, see this tent, lined with carpets of tapestry, which hath been held back for thee only, and not even the Sultan himself could secure it, didst thou bespeak it ; *wallâhi*, O Beg, hearken not to the dog when he calleth *that* a saddle-gall, for the horse is clean-backed—on my head and eyes I swear it, O my father ! " All these fair bargains Mejîd of the discriminating eye, with ear fast closed to honeyed words of Judas-money, smilingly disparages, and fittingly discounts each impassioned eulogy.

The forecourt of the house is filled with a perpetual dust from mangy rush-matting, unwashed tent-cloths, old wrinkled saddles, and all the gallimaufrey of past journeys, mingled with the cloudy tramlings of a succession of show horses on their mettle, whereof the several merits are weighed in a nice balance. Presently comes the ropemaker with his knotted bundles, testing the strength of his cords that a man may lower himself thereby securely down the clefts in a mountain, nor fear the breaking of their strands ; and

for the better approval essays a trial from the porticoes. A narrow seat, such as children use to swing in sport, is tied into the noose which dangles from the iron joist. A little widening here, a little support from a girth there, a doubling of straining weaknesses, a clamping with rivets, and this cradle becomes a pattern for a second, strong and firm to stand in good stead against the haps and hazards of the precipice.

Then in the end the caravan orders itself, and its pilot, an old grey horse, roadwise in a thousand tricks of travel, feels its way under the dark overhang of the gate. As it guides the youngsters out, the hoarse-voiced bell slung to its neck gives friendly tongue to mark the passage, and there is no need to utter a warning, "Have a care," at every blind corner like a Venetian gondolier crying in a masked canal. In the street the patriarch who sits in the shadow of the confectionary's booth, with the pyramid of hard, dry dates piled up before him on the strip of sacking, rises to give his gentle farewell to the strangers within the gates, and bid them God-speed. The muleteer makes a last forlorn attempt to wheedle a further foretaste of his unearned hire, to lend it to some hapless borrower at a usurer's one-quarter interest. The escort of two mounted fellows, vainglorious in their tattered panoply, ride their mares with an easy grace, with short-gear'd shovel-stirrups rowelling the hollow flanks in lieu of spurs ; their Snider rifles toss athwart their pommels, muzzled with a

twisted clout which serves as tampion against the searing dust, and at their belts the vicious sickle of a knife. Last comes Mejîd, his cob slung about with dangling kickshaws which he knows his masters will need anon, albeit now they are loudly scornful of such daintiness. The delight of First Day is in his eyes, and only his thought for to-morrow's fetlocks makes him frugal of the wild abandon of a gallop.

Watch him when the pack-train halts for the night and the straining bundles are unroped from the beasts. Before the tatterdemalion crew of drivers has begun to pheeze the sweating withers with their clattering tin currycombs, or salve the festering saddle-sores from their skinful of lard, Mejîd will have kindled a fire from the withered branch which he picked up an hour ago when he leapt down from his saddle to ease his tired mount. While the skillet boils, his hands are busy with the great twin saddlebags of drugget which burgeon out on either flank of his horse, and from these he draws shoes, coverlets, and other night-gear. The pallets are spread to windward of the wisp of smoke which comes from the crackling thorns where the pot is bubbling merrily, and now is uplifted the savour of *kababs*, little shreds of meat skewered on spits and carbonadoed, with onions a-frying, better at the day's end than all the spices of the merchant.

Lie easy in your cot with some old printed friend to read beneath the mulberry boughs, and little

is lacking to make this strange land Paradise. The day is waning to the whisper of the evening breeze, which is so light that the leaves hardly stir; not the blustering terror of the *khamsîn* which flies hot foot across the sweltering sands at noonday, parching and scorching all things in its path, but fragile, sonsy airs which barely ripple the awns of the pliant oats, now in all their green glory. The frogs are croaking behind the weeds of the little water-course, and now and again from the clump of sad willows comes the forlorn hoot of an owl, a dead mother-ghost seeking her babe. From the low, brown mud-houses of the village issue the women, brave in smocks of saffron and blue, bearing their pitchers on their shoulders, and as they chatter at the ford the wide mouths of their cruses spit and gurgle in the stream. A dog howls from the roof of some hamlet hidden in the folds of the earth, and his burden is taken up by others who sing their parts in the chorus with all the discords of an unschooled orchestra. Now is the time to stray into the magic circle of caravaneers, under pretence of some trifling need, and sit at their welcome, listening to the tales of the camp-fire *improvisatore*, or the grey-beard who has passed ten lustres in the toils of the road. Masters of few words yet fluent in gesture, they tell their stories with an inborn gift of tongues, of *jinn* and princesses, of histories of kings, or battle and sudden death in some stark venture. As the glow of the coals turns to ashes, and the little

singing coffee-pot stills its lullaby, one by one they wind their gaberdines about them and fall asleep on warm mother earth with knees drawn to chin. A serving-man looses the tinkling bell of the old horse from its collar, lest it grow restless in the night and rouse light sleepers with its fitful tongue. . . .

The caravan's route lay between the Tigris and the Persian frontier, by Arbela, Altun Keupri, Kerkuk, Taûk, Tûz Khurmati, Khanikîn and Kermanshah. The Tigris valley is a fair country in spring, green with the fields of corn, blue with the hills on the circle of the earth, broidered with silver filigree of rivulets, and yellow and scarlet with mustard and anemones. Once a land of great deeds and heroes : now of little renown save for the memories of ancestral dead. Two hours from Mosul we encamped near the small village Gogjêli, amid the district of the Bajwan tribe, and on the morrow, leaving a small village Huzna Tukhba on our left, reached Bartulla in a little less than three hours. An hour or so further lies the mound of Keremlis, two or three miles to the south of the track, rising like some island in the waveless plain.

Let him who rides this spell between Keremlis and Arbela cast a pebble to the manes of ninety thousand Persian soldiers, whose ghosts still haunt their place of death ; where Alexander, hasting from the ford Thapsacus to this side the Tigris, met the hordes of Darius Codomannus in the autumn of the year 331. Poor wretches ! They

broke and fled before the Macedonian weapons, pursued for two score miles to Arbela across two rivers, dried in some measure by the summer heats, before they reached sanctuary.

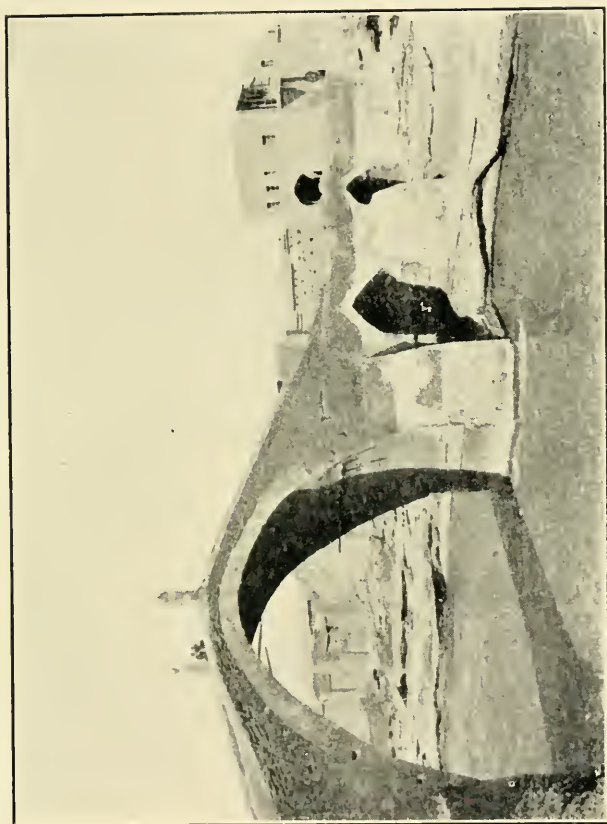
Late in the afternoon of the morrow we reached Arbela, long known from the arrowheaded characters as Irba-ili, the town of the Four Gods, built on a steep mound, a hundred feet above the plain, and surmounted by a populous village, whose outer walls mantlet the crest. Herein must lie the precious things, the silver, the gold, and all that was once found in the treasures of many kings ; but its serried houses will hamper the explorer's spade, and that great Temple of Ishtar, perhaps with its library of clay books, will long stay hid.

Now this Ishtar, goddess of love and battle, was worshipped by the Assyrians, who have bequeathed many legends concerning her written in their clay books ; and these fables the Greeks, contemptuous of those whom they called barbarians, in their accidie attached to Semiramis. Yet these Greek bunglers, careless to receive the truth, were better than the good Christian torturers who wrought such ruin in the South Americas, for though they were at so little pains to learn these stories well, yet they made no holocausts of written scrolls and parchments for the glory of their gods. In these Greek garblings learned men to-day show what a patchwork of queer mythology these travellers pieced together out of the jargon of galimatias which they heard.

Sooth to tell, Ishtar was but the patroness of fertility, bedight anew with the recurrent spring of each year. Thus also it is told in allegory by the Assyrian scribes, who recite how she descended to the Place of Spirits.

Leaving Arbela, you will see its road to southwards marked by three small, abrupt mounds, like ancient watchtowers from which a warning might be signalled to the city; the nearest was three hours, the second two hours further, and the third a bare three-quarters of an hour beyond the second. As one draws nearer the Persian frontier the zaptieh escorts on these posts grow truculent, and expect greater largesse than those of Mosul. Of the two or three with us at Arbela, one only worked manfully in helping us to pitch the camp, and he was fittingly rewarded. The others sullenly rejected the customary fee, with hope that their dudgeon would bring forth more, and waited to see how much these richards would offer them to appease their contumely. But the *Ingliziytn* returned the fee to their pockets, declining now to pay dole of any kind to these unmannerly fellows (this is a proper habit to use with Orientals of their kidney); nor was it unmeet that these scroyles should look glum at each other. So presently, in the end, after speech with the others, came one of them as their patrico in humbler fashion, saying, "Pray you, sirs, grant us your gratillities as you will."

Hence came we over the dusty plains, crossing



THE BRIDGE OF ALTUN KEUPRI

the little Inja, ten and a half hours from Arbela, a stream containing eels, but nothing rose to my fly. Beyond lay Altun Keupri, *Pont d'Or*, a little more than an hour, with its magnificent one-arched bridge over the Great Zab ; it was said that a little boy would dive from the top, no great feat if the water be deep enough. Then by Gog Tepe, a volcanic cone, to the pleasant willows of Dar Aman, seven hours in all from the Inja ; Khan Enjirâ, an hour and a quarter through the hills, and two hours and three-quarters further the great mount of Kerkuk, where they make the wine. The city is large and straggling, set amid gardens of palm trees, lemons, mulberries, and pomegranates ; the ancient mound, perhaps not artificial, is to the south of the town, crowned with houses, and there are large barracks. Five hours and a half more of riding brings the traveller to Khurmati, a long village, many-gardened, on a small stream ten yards wide and three feet deep. Taûk, with its tower, lies four hours and a half beyond, and dreads the robber Shêkh Muhammad Nûri, whose village quivers in the heat within eye-distance. A barren waste of seven hours' journey separates Taûk from Tûz Khurmati, the northern limit of the date-palm, a village under a low slope of hills ; and so by Salahîa, nine hours, and the burnt hamlet of Rahîm Warka, and by Karablau, eight hours, to the River Diala. Of this river Pietro della Valle, in the seventeenth century, says that, " owing to there being no more

than one boat to waft us over, we were employed till noon in crossing": and we were in like case. Here was a flood a hundred yards broad at this time of the year (though two months later on our return we forded it on our horses), with a *kelek*, a skin raft, to waft us over. Twenty skins formed the floats, and on these were laid four transoms, almost fan-wise, each four inches thick and nine feet long, and imposed on these were the cross-wise chesses, canes from five to eight feet long, lashed in their place with split bamboo. The paddle was made with a blade of six sections of split canes fastened one against another to a pole four or five feet long; the cane decking sank to a level with the water's edge when all the loads were on.

Then to Khanikîn, the frontier town where the sun-backed lion of Persia stares at the star and crescent of the Ottoman dominions, and thence across the barren no-man's-land which is neither Persian nor Turkish, a strip three-quarters of a mile broad of mountain-tops and high levels. Here may one meet a dozen runagates from either land along the road, for neither nation dare transgress this zone with a patrol, lest suspicion of gleaning in Tom Tiddler's Ground fall on the offender. Beyond this is the frontier guard-post, where a man of grand presence and gorgeous apparel received us and furthered our progress with a mounted guard. It was said that this great man was a skilled markman, apt at shooting eggs with a rifle.

So, as we rode to the quarantine station Kasr-i-Shirîn, on the Kirind, we took our first lesson in the language of the country, for none in the caravan except Tobiiyyah the cook knew aught of what they spoke; "*Yak, du, seh,*" counted the Persian horseman on his fingers, "*chahar, panj.*" Then we came to the quarantine enclosure, where a few wayfarers were held in durance, and chose a decent spot for our camp away from this herd, for it was not fitting that we should mingle with unkempt pilgrims or pitch on their fouled earth. As we sat by the waters of the Kirind, stray printed broadsheets came to our hands, telling of Russian victories over the Japanese, false news to carney the Persian folk, in this year of the war between Yabân and Moskôf. 'Twas but for one day that we were held, and pushing along the grassy banks of this foaming, brawling river, camped by it, at Sir-i-pul, trying fly or phantom minnow bootlessly. Here the headman of the village in the grey evening sat on a cliff shooting at the fish, where the river, now the Khulwan, flows amid many rock sculptures: the fish are as long as a man's arm, bearded, and very heavy. Persian sentries guarded us by night, waking the camp each little while with watchman's cry. Thence the road led us across great ranges of glorious, fertile mountains, green and moist, where fat-tailed sheep pastured: finding our way, like Theseus with Ariadne's clue, by the message-wire which marked

the path, for the land was then safe as in the seventeenth century ; and so steeper into the Zagros hills. A passing storm of hail and thunder greeted our advent at the gates, and as the sun again came forth with warmth to assuage our cold, a cuckoo called amid the peaks near Mian Tagh, a little village. From here Karind lay five hours' ride in front of us (O poplars ! O nightingales !), and then wretched Harunabad on its stream, where scaped a snipe as we passed. And thus ends this dull itinerary at Kermanshah.

Now, Kermanshah, like many another Persian town, is watered from channels running the city's length from above : the same conduit feeds each house in turn, flowing from one to another, that when the plague of cholera smites one burgher, his fellow shall presently lack nothing of his share. Then will the Angel stalk rampant through the streets (this time no bloodstained doorposts will avail), taking tithe of the dwellers, so that the mourners run about the streets, and sad processions follow the shouldered couch which bears the dead, vaguely outlined beneath his shroud, with perchance one limp, loose foot dangling. As one sits at the lattice, each stricken household sends up its wail to heaven, the cry of the women swelling and falling in cadence. The East holds three eerie sounds which, if they be heard at dusk, never leave the memory : the yelping of the little hungry jackals in the scrub ; the ululation of the women shrieking to drive their men to battle ; but worst

of all, the death-wail on the housetops. Presently the tale of dead will mount to four or five score each day, and then begins an exodus from the town, such that it becomes a city of the dead in very truth, dead and silent.

So was it at Kermanshah. The pestilence, even as we entered, was seizing on these careless drinkers, and a dozen had already died. Rumour was passed through the market that an English doctor had poisoned his patients, and the little Persians on the roofs tossed mud-balls at us riding through the narrow streets, as white men akin. Here we found a British Vice-Consul, a Persian prince who had been educated in England; he fed us at his table, and discoursed of many matters, notably the marriage customs of this land. "If a rich man," quoth he, "desire a new wife for a short time, he will set the middling-gossips to search until he find a pretty poor girl; then he will bargain with her father for her, who in his poverty will say, 'Give me a hundred, two hundred, *tomâns* for her and you can treat her as you will.' So will he marry her and be kind to her; and at the end of a year will say, 'Tis finished and over, take thou a hundred *tomâns* as a present and go.' And she will go, well-pleased, being thus much enhanced in value in the eyes of lesser rich men, for that she has been a year in a good household."

On the next day came the last journey. Strange how this land of Persia differs from the lower levels of Mesopotamia: cross but the

frontier to the highlands of Elam and you will find sloping roofs to the houses where before were flat tops, and no more coffee drunk, but tea. For these mountains are damp and misty, and rain falls more often than on the plains of the Tigris valley, and in the wayside khans are samovars perpetually bubbling to supply the little glasses with sugar-sweet infusion. Both roofs and stirrup-cup are due to the climate, for Persia cannot grow coffee like the plains of Araby, and the rains are frequent.

High on our left hand all this day ran a long chain of hills, and 'twas the end of this that we sought, for the great inscription lay at Bisitun, or Behistun. So after a few hours we arrived, and here beneath the rugged scarps of this great mountain lay the little village, mud huts and a khan, now a temporary quarantine. On the left, hollowed from out the flank of these steep rocks, was an antique cutting in the mountain-side, wrought as though for an inscription, but with nought to reveal its purpose. A little further beyond the road passes between the last steeps and a fountain welling out into a clear pool. The caravans of all the ages have trampled the dust of this, the Great King's highway, pent between the cliffs and the springhead which flows down through the village until it feeds the River Karkhah. In its waters are goodly fish, but the time served not to cast a bait for them.

Here at the spring the last buttress of the range

masks a deep fold in the mountain-side, and high up on the face of this are graven in the rock those histories and portraits of the king and his foes of which I spoke above. From the track by the spring a man shall pick his way up to the foot over a great hurly-burly of boulders up a steep slope to the base of an escarpment which towers high, crumpled in cloughs and crannies with ramps of bare footholds and galleries. Yet this escarpment, the spur which bears the royal blazonry, forms but a terrace to the beetling crags above, whereon a man may sit far above the inscription and almost cast a plummet to sound the depths.

Then with longing eyes cast on this Titan's balcony from beneath we strained our necks to find a stairway, but none was visible from the front ; so, ranging about the masking wings, the *coulisses* of this stage, we found a foretaste to our climb by first surmounting this buttress from behind to reconnoitre. Thus was it easy to the summit of the escarpment, whence from above we looked down on all the vale below : the little tents, the pilgrims miching from their quarantine, the Karkhah River winding in a meander across the green crofts and plains. An eagle swooped from his aery below us, poised in mid-air, that we might mark the pennæ of his wings. Far below us was the tablet of the king, itself unseen, but the ledge in front still visible. First from this bastion's crest we cast into the air two coils of two-inch ropes, each wellnigh three

hundred feet in length, shaking them snakewise past each Siren niche, which wheedled them to stop in their course, until they reached the wall of writing, and lay athwart the face of the rock, fretting the ribble rows of writing with a twin streak of hemp. The upper bight of these was made fast to great marlinspikes, driven deep into the grassy soil above as bollards, where Yakûb took his daily seat henceforth, to lower or raise at need : while on the right, on a projecting wing of rock, lay Mejîd in view of the inscription to catch our signals for the alteration of the cradles. Thus was the first day's work ended, leaving the rock to be scaled for the morrow.

Then next day, spying the rock-face with a glass, we marked the probabilities of passage. First, from above the massy boulders of the ground, a chimney, small, steep, but not too difficult, led upwards to a gallery, perhaps ten or a dozen feet above ; 'twas sheer from the ground, but runged with rocky crevices, and tasselled with herbs deep-bedded in the soil for handgrips. Beyond this was yet unknown, for all climbs look easy from afar. My colleague strapped about his boots the Kurdish espadrilles of string, which all their hunters use, as good as my gymnasium rubber shoes, and both served us well. So first up the little chimney with hands and feet, no very hard matter, to the smooth rock at the top, worn by the mountain rains, and then to weigh the probabilities at this breathing-space.

To the left was the glibbery and polished slide of the rounded shoulder, a glissade curving out of sight, nor could one hope to scramble up it save by the help of a rope from above. To the right lay an easier passage, a narrow shelf sloping gently up towards the right of the inscription, as a gallery unrailed, showing a fall sheer to the ground below. The deep sea of this precipice was better than the devil of the slippery rock-face, and we started along this balcony, my colleague leading, creeping cautiously for a few yards. Then came a break, an interruption in the path, for a nick in the overhang gave pause to see the fall beneath. Beyond this little chasm the rock projected, offering sanctuary to a bold climber ; so said my friend, " Be ready to stay me if I slip," but I could warrant him no purchase on this narrow *escalier*, nor could I be yare thus to save him. So quoth he, " Give place and stand clear," and stepped nimbly across the gulf, and then I followed him. Thenceforward the climb was easier, and presently we stood together on the ledge of the inscription. 'Twas a magnificent table of stone, five columns of Persian cuneiform each twelve feet high, gliddered with some lacquer, surmounted by the sculptured picture of Darius receiving his prisoners : here was the king, five feet eight inches, as my colleague measured later, standing with one foot on Gaumâta, the first pseudo-Smerdis, lying prostrate in supplication. Behind Darius were the two satraps : before him come nine captives

bound together by the neck : and over all was the winged disk of Auramazda, the sungod, with lightnings issuing from him. Each of the ten pretenders to the throne, Gaumâta, Atrina, Nidintu-Bêl, Phraortes, Martiya, Citrantakhma, Vah-yazdâta, Arakha, Frâda, and Skunkha with the pointed cap, was indicated by three tablets in the three languages (save Skunkha, who was marked by only two) : " This Gaumâta the Magian lied, saying, I am Smerdis, the son of Cyrus : I am king," and so forth. Over the king himself, in Persian and Susian, ran this proclamation :

" I am Darius, the Great King, the King of Kings, the King of Persia, the King of the provinces, the son of Hystaspes, the grandson of Arsames, the Achaemenian.

" Thus saith Darius, the King : My father is Hystaspes : the father of Hystaspes was Arsames : the father of Arsames was Ariyaramnes : the father of Ariyaramnes was Teispes : the father of Teispes was Achaemenes.

" Thus saith Darius, the King : on that account are we called Achaemenians : from antiquity are we descended : from antiquity hath our race been kings.

" Thus saith Darius, the King : Eight of my race were kings before me : I am the ninth. In two lines have we been kings."

Now copies of this inscription, so the Susian version relates, were published abroad, and a fragment was discovered in Babylon not long ago.

Our vantage-point at the northern end of this ledge was but five feet wide, and it narrowed gently towards the three Susian columns which are graven on an echelon of rock thrown an ell in front of the Persian, and for these there was little foot-space or none. High above this Susian writing was a sloping boulder, overhanging like a roof's eaves, on which the Babylonian version was inscribed, thus jutting out above the precipice. The ropes were dangling adown the inscription, and it was now a small matter to add to them the two cradles drawn up from the men below and attach them to these cords, and now to the cradles were fastened segments of heavy climbing rope for our daily scramble into the seats as they lay against the rock. Yakûb would adjust these hanging saddles to such height as Mejîd gave signal, hauling or lowering the ropes from his pinnacle and then belaying to the iron bollards, giving a margin of a four-feet sag to stretch beneath our weight as we climbed into them. Then, hand over hand, with a knee-grip we climbed up, and struggling into the seat as though it were a child's swing, tied each himself to the supports with a mule-girth.

The lower part of the Persian inscription was easily collated by standing on the ledge. Thus had that genial American professor, A. V. Williams Jackson, done the year before ; but much he left unexamined even in the Persian, for which he had no tackling. Later, when all the work on the Persian text was finished, we must needs

swing across the gulf on the ropes to the Susian, like *Miles-na-Coppaleen* in Mr. Boucicault's play, the *Colleen Bawn*, and there climb to the niche on the left of the Babylonian overhang, where we might sit our slings again and shuffle round by hands and knees each to his place, there working or photographing the pictures of Darius from one side. Once we essayed to take the impress of Darius' head in clay, korbasia and all, but it failed. But it was no hard thing to use one's legs to thrust the swinging seat outwards and away from the rock, and, leaning back with the camera held distant, to photograph the king's head at a five-foot range. Thus also was done to the captives and the others.

So ran our work for sixteen days, collating Rawlinson's copies (O, wonderfully accurate !), taking impresses with paper, or photographing. After our first climb some little balustrade of iron pegs and hand-ropes was fashioned for the gallery, making each day's ascent to the ledge an easier matter ; and anything needful we could hoist by a cord straight from beneath, even the eggs, which we ate hard-boiled, or sucked after the manner of vagabond schoolboys.

Now here at this village of Bisitun was stationed the Karantina against the cholera-demon, now rampant through the land, a lazar-house of eight hundred foul and long-haired pilgrims, clap-dish beggars, delayed there on the Kerbela road. Over them hovered the pest, smiting them as he would ;



By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum
THE HEAD OF DARIUS AT BEHISTUN



By courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum
THE HEADS OF THE TWO SATRAPS AT BEHISTUN

happier we in being camped beyond the little stream, secluded from this rabble. The better part of a squadron of Persian cossacks had ridden in to keep ward over the khan in which they lay, troopers dressed after the Muscovite pattern with long coats breasted with antique cartouche sheaths; they were proper men, ruddy and black-moustached, well-equipped save for their boots, useless for aught but riding. One man I remember in particular, a giant of six feet and a half, a courteous soldier who each day saluted, louting low with hand-obeisance also.

The little doctor of the *Commission Sanitaire* (peace be with him, for he died of this plague) gave us pratique to camp where we listed, and willingly came to supper, telling of many strange, grim sights of his mystery; of caravans bearing the sarcophagi of those martyrs who had died on the road to Kerbela, to take their bodies back to Persia: of coffins in these trains, of cholera-dead, festooned with onions roped about, meant for a profitable merchandise; and others such as this. Eight of these palmers in quarantine died during the sixteen days of our work, and these their fellows bore past our camp shoulder-high on a broad-runged ladder to wash and compose by the stream, which filtered back through the village, doubling in its windings like quicksilver on a pendulum: yet the draff from these rites seemed too diffuse in so much water to be harmful, for the village was not affected. But we by chance

had almost taken this same ladder for work on the inscription, before we had observed its previous charnel use.

Food in the village was costing dear by reason of the multitude, and a poor fellow, one of the better class, came into our tent and flung himself on his knees asking for help, for his money was exhausted through his detention. One night Mejîd had his red slippers stolen, and there was a great whoobub, he firing the double gun into the air at the alarm; these the headman of the village made good, as in duty bound. Tobiyyah, our cook, sought throughout the place for meat, finding now chickens, now eggs for flawns, and once some dried apricocks which he turned into a confection in his ingenious earth-oven, where he baked his cakes and pulpamenta. 'Twas by a fortunate chance some careless English bakery wench had labelled a tin of biscuits as a dull sort without savour, and yet they proved, when it was opened, to be macaroons; a blessing on such heedlessness! But Tobiyyah could never find livers in Persian fowls—the gourmet!

Thus came to an end the sixteen days of work at the Rock, and we prepared to take up our carriages to return by Tak-i-Bustan, a palace fit for Sindbad-el-bahri himself. For here a half-day's journey from Behistun is a green pleasaunce watered by a fountain of cool waters from the mountains, flowing down in great volume beneath a little lodge into a broad pool built by masons of

old for royal delights. 'Twas a paradise of lawns and whispering trees beneath the early summer sun of Persia, engirdled with gardens which we had seen the moonlit night before, the little groves of guelders with Philomel singing solitary, Ocy, Ocy ; a dream-palace for an old tent-maker to conjure fantasies of past spring days with memories of Rose-in-hand. Here was an alcove hewn from living rock, deep cut with one towering architrave, panelled with chiselled pictures of the royal lists of kings, the venery of wild boars in thickets, pavilions and the throng of audiences, knights on destriers gay-caparisoned, or the strange housings of elephants. So also by this arch werè three giant figures sculptured in the cliff, reflected in the pool, of Ardeshir, with his son Sapor, over the body of Artaban the Arsacid.

Thus was our halcyon day spent swimming and basking in the sun ; and on the morrow the long, dusty road to Nineveh. Yet there remained an ancient inscription to copy on the way at Sir-i-pul, one of a Babylonian king four thousand years old, and again the Behistun tackling served. This time the face of the cliff was sheer from earth to graving, a long rope climb and scramble. A little crowd of Persians gathered to see if we should fall, standing about our tents pitched on the sand, where a myriad sandflies bit at night. Here was Anubanini portrayed, with Ishtar, goddess of battle, leading a wretched captive ringed through the nose before him, and little prisoners to show their

worthlessness beneath. M. De Morgan gives a picture of the rock in his great book, with a native taking impress of the sculpture on a rope-ladder. Round about in this neighbourhood were two or three others of the same period, of Babylonian kings who had invaded these domains. It was a fit setting for such memorials, amid the cliffs of the wandering little River Khulwan, which bore moisture to the shrubs and bushes of its neighbourhood.

Then to the frontier again, with vain hopes of avoiding the quarantine, and had we skirted the little village all might have been well, but as we passed up the main street a runner followed, asking us Whither? and Whence? and haled us back to durance in a khan. Here was an empty hostel, granted to us for our prestige, thanks to the doctor in charge. In the usual khan were gathered many road-fellows of the Arabs and Persians, while at the wicket stood a guardian with a ladle, dipping the coins of their barter in acid.

Now was the season of apricocks in the plains, and as we came from our prison we found the orchards by the roadside strewed with golden fruit such as Atalanta might have picked up in her race. The summer heats were beginning, and it was well to lie at our ease in the middle of the day, starting at six and riding until ten, sleeping on coverlets on the ground wherever we dismounted; in the saddle again before dawn to travel for four hours. Once, riding ahead of the

caravan in the dark, we passed five shadowy figures lining a ditch. "Thieves," said the zaptieh, "with guns in their hands"; but to me it seemed they bore spades, for the zaptiehs are mumming heroes who see a danger lurking in every thicket. Yet that next day we reached Taûk in the early morning, and the baggage-beasts had not arrived, nor was there any report of them. "Thieves," again said the zaptieh, "'tis a bad district for them," and we thought of our manuscripts, squeezes and photographs, and went to the Turkish official for help. He was a solemn magnifico, weighed down with the cares of office, and the responsibility of a handful of zaptiehs. Gravely he heard our cause and promised that if the lost caravan did not appear by midday he would send out a search party, for, said he, "they will certainly arrive." With this poor comfort we had to be content; nor did climbing the old tower outside the village to look, like Anne in the folk-tale of *Barbe-bleu* for a cloud of dust, bear hope. So we sat by the runnels of a palm garden in the shade of fruit trees, wondering if Tobiiyyah would appear again, or whether he and all the horses had fallen a prey to some freebooter.

Then, after an infinity of uncertainty, came the click of hooves down the little stretch of road, the *huyt-ta-a* of a muleteer driving a straying tired beast again into the track, and then the s-s-s-s of men hissing to the horses to halt the caravan, with Tobiiyyah grinning in apology in the frame

of the garden gateway. "We lost the way by night, sir," said he.

The minarets of Mosul betokened rest after the toil of the road. Nebi Yunus was threshing its corn, the men tossing showers of golden foam into the air with the winnowing-fans, and the patient beasts drawing the sledges in perpetual circles round the floors. The mound of Kouyunjik, now yellow and bare, held out a welcome as an old friend.

FROM MOSUL TO DAMASCUS

When Wat to Bethlehem come was
He swat : he had gone faster than a pace.—RICHARD HILLES.

THE Assyrian Empire was cleft by the Tigris, like the Chaos-dragon which Rashi declares was split pilchard-wise by the Almighty and kept for the food of the righteous in Paradise, thus carrying on the tradition of Babylonian Bel and the Dragon Tiâmat. On the east lay the great cities of Nineveh and Calah, with Dur-Sargon and Arbela some little way distant ; on the west lay Ashur and the roads to the confines of the Syrian dependencies or vassals, by Carchemish on the Euphrates. Hence there were two routes southwards, one on either side, and these are still followed.

A road in these lands is not a road at all. It consists of a dozen pathways, worn into countless vagaries by camels or horses which have strayed to nibble, fallen with their loads, been pricked up on this side or on that unevenly with a packing-needle, taken sudden fright and run away, met another caravan, turned their heads at a sudden wind-gust, been turned aside by a stone

in the path, or passed a heavy-laden beast, so that these paths wriggle in a serpentine undulation whither they lead. Sometimes there is a well-made macadamized causeway, such as the one between Aleppo and the coast, or even small lengths amid the hills to the north of Assyria ; but commonly the road has few marks to distinguish it from the country round.

Now I had seen much of the eastern road, when going into Persia with my colleague, through Kerkuk, Taûk and Tûz Khurmati, and hence sought to take the other by Tekrît, past Samarra, a town which in sooth lies on the left bank : and now that the year's work was ended, looked to the speediest way to come home from Mosul hot-foot by Baghdad, obeying my route-instructions. Snail-caravans, slow moving with their baggage, no longer found favour, and nought but post-haste, or as near as might be, was pleasing. Thus I took counsel with Mejîd's family, who knew all that was needful of horse-lore, for their father trafficked largely in beasts of burden, and they gave each his worthy advice. My purse forbade me imitating the Persian *angarot*, doing as Rawlinson had done, riding the journey post in seventy-two hours ; but Mejîd and I might at least ride *ghâra ghâra*, with all speed, by taking a little thought. Darius, the little grey stallion bought in Persia for eight Turkish pounds, was in the pink of condition ; the *menâdi*, or rather *dellal*, as they call the town-crier in Mosul, had effected

a profitable sale of the little mouse-coloured horse used for carrying water to the diggers. Therefore three more beasts were wanted, one as a spare led horse to relieve the others in turn, and one to carry the little baggage that we had. It is a golden rule in the East always to buy rather than hire for any journey lasting more than three weeks ; besides, no *katerji* would allow me to ride his beasts in this way. Moreover, beasts sell well in Damascus, if they survive all the risks and hazards of the road, small horses going to Egypt as polo ponies, and mules for the Egyptian army. Nay, later, when Mejîd came to me in the Sudan, he recognized our mule in Cairo, which he had sold in Damascus at the end of this same journey. Many were the beasts offered me for sale, and I thought of buying a beautiful pedigree horse, 'asîl, as they call them, for twenty-five Turkish pounds, with a delightful action ; but, as Mejîd said, these go like the wind for two days and are then worn out, nor will their pride permit them to bear a pack-saddle. Besides, there are thieves always ready to decoy away a good horse (nor can there be any greater temptation in the world to an honest man). Lastly, the better the stallion, the more likelihood of wild scenes at night : for the zaptiehs all ride mares, and picketing pegs loose themselves in an unjustifiable manner in the darkness of the khans. Once on this journey we were roused at night by the fiery stampings and tramplings of Darius, whose heel ropes had

at strange instance become untied, and a quarter of an hour later the fresh fastenings were again rendered useless. Still, one may echo the farewell of Rebekah's family at this length of time in all good will.

So less ambitious counsels prevailed ; a big gelding and a *râwân*, a little ambling pad, were bought for nine and seven Turkish pounds, and a mule which Mejîd owned as a present from his father was taken to carry the baggage. Mules are expensive beasts, and I gave Mejîd fifteen pounds for this one, promising him the difference between that sum and anything up to eighteen pounds if the selling price rose so high in Damascus. Mejîd, with his six feet and more of stature, and a man of large composition withal, probably rode between fourteen and fifteen stone ; I certainly rode thirteen ; so that it was well to have a third horse to go unladen ready to take its turn again after a rest. That most useful pannier, the double saddle-bag of carpet (*khurij*, they call it), slung across a high pack-saddle, carried all that was needful : a change of clothes for both, a spirit lamp, a Bergfeldt filter, saucepans, nosebags, and a few odds and ends ; the powerful mule made light of this fifty pounds weight on his easy saddle. The light Burberry tent lay with the horse-blankets, which they call *shuff*, and our sleeping-rugs or quilts on the back of the spare led horse as a covering, for the weather is cold in February. On the cantle of my saddle was a light Mauser

carbine, strapped crosswise in a leather case, and Mejid wore my '380 revolver.

Now a trade caravan going from Mosul to Baghdad takes from eight to twelve days to traverse the distance, although on its return it takes less, inasmuch as the beasts carry nothing. I wagered to little Abbo, the pharmacopolist, that we should reach Baghdad in six days, a distance of perhaps two hundred and forty miles: he thought me jinn-mad to go by road in chill February. But then the Chaldean gentleman is not a muscular Christian, and the Turk made no bad bargain in the days of the old Government by allowing him to purchase, under compulsion, his exemption from military service at seven shillings yearly. For, said he, "The way is tiring, and you will be cold; so that it were better to go down to Baghdad by the river on a raft, where the raft-man lets you sleep late, you need not get up to work, and you can sit at your ease over a brazier and read your papers. But," continued he, "you are accustomed to sleep with your windows open and have a cold bath every morning, you will doubtless arrive." Had it been summer, there then had been wisdom in his advice: does not the poet say:

"And many a sheeny summer-morn
Adown the Tigris I was borne
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old?"

But this was winter.

We tested the worth of this caravan on a day,

riding out with baggage and all, and the mule, rejoicing in his light load, marked his delight by kicking up ecstatic heels and breaking away to gallop over the heavy ploughlands. Herein I learnt Mejîd's idea of training ; for, said he, "The beasts are better for our purpose if they stay in their stables, rest, and grow fat, rather than work them thus." Yet often did the men on the mound discuss personal bravery ; how such and such, although a fat man, feared no one, "Ah," said Yakûb, "'tis the mind that stamps the man, not the presence of him."

But four beasts to stable and feed each night was enough work for Mejîd's pair of hands, and my share was to boil the drinking water and cook the meals (whenever I could not pay some *khanji* to do it for us). After all, fowls, eggs, vegetables, and dates are all that one needs to cook. By 4.30 a.m., Turkish time, on February 12, 1905, the caravan was paraded to start ; the wali, by his courtesy, had given me an escort of six zaptiehs, hinting at some little trouble on the road ; and now such of my friends in Mosul as could find a beast to ride upon assembled at the door.

Mejîd was saying good-bye to the girl he was going to leave behind him, of whom I had heard nothing, but I passed him at the farewell speedily, lest I should play the part of a let-game. She was a tall, strapping wench, unveiled for the moment, and as I went by he kissed her with a right-and-left smacking buss on either cheek, as though a

twelve-bore gun had gone off. Two or three weeks later, as we were riding across the lonely Syrian desert, he broke the silence. "Did you see my mother at the door when we left, *Sidi*?" "Nay," said I, "she was full young to be your mother, O *Mejîd*"; thinking of the stage-play *Iolanthe*, "if she's but seventeen I don't believe it was his mother." Thereat he grinned and said, "*Sidi*, that was my cousin"; this excuse of a cousin is thus also current in Mesopotamia. *Mejîd* was as the apple of the eye to his family, a Benjamin, the youngest of the flock, and one to be guarded as six-feet-three of extreme value, so that Abd-el-ahad and his other brothers farewelled me almost with tears in their eyes. Indeed, a day or two before, his mother had baked large platters of larded cakes as a present to blind my eyes that I might be disposed to watch over him with care and spread the ægis of British prestige over him. How similar it all was to the manner of their ancient forbears! Read any ancient Babylonian traveller's letter home to his family and you will find the same sentiments as those which these good people felt for their kin on a journey, or as they write to him when absent—an inch or two of baked clay impressed with minute characters, enclosed in a clay envelope—scrawled with homesick pleading for news. "In the name of the gods," cries one, in a letter to his wife, written about the time of Darius, "why has news of thee to me been delayed?" And again "Why have I not seen a single letter from thee

for a whole month ? ”¹ Or another to his wife called Mouse : “ Be not remiss in the housework, be observant : pray the gods on my behalf and let me speedily have news of thee by some traveller.”²

Little Abbo rode solemnly on a white donkey a little way beyond the southern postern. “ Now,” says he, “ London is nearer to you than Mosul.” So with farewells to the kindly little man, and a last look at the old mound which had been a good friend, we started off into the drizzling rain which seemed to have set in, the horses splashing the puddles as they trotted on the short stretch of track which leads to the southern undulations.

The best caravan pace is a quick walk for a long journey ; I had thought of cantering in stretches (Eastern horses do not trot, unless taught) and then dismounting to walk by the side of the beast, but the first two or three days showed the futility of this, for zaptiehs will rarely get down to use their own legs, preferring to rest both man and horse at the same time. As it was, one of them was riding a young horse, and he over-rode it by the time we reached Tekrît, three days from Mosul, so that, as Mejîd told me a year later in the Sudan, it ultimately died.

Shurah, a little Turkish guard-house, lay at the first day's end, five hours and a half as we rode it ; the rain ceased towards evening, and the sun shone forth in a blanket of clouds at his setting. The commandant, an elderly Turk of dignified

¹ British Museum, No. 31,121. ² British Museum, No. 31,290.

port, retired to his *harim* in the little village, leaving us to take possession. Kalah Sherghat, the ancient Ashur, where the Germans were digging, lay before us on the morrow, and we started early, so that long before the sun set the high pile of this ruin showed itself distinct on the horizon line. All the landscape was painted in a dull sepia, sodden with the recent rains, and only a glimpse of grey water in the meandering reaches of the Tigris or in some small pond, or the sparse blue of the sky gave relief to its sombreness. After nine hours of riding we reached the foot of this great mound, and rode up the ramp which leads to its summit ; great serried gangs of men were digging in masses all about it, clearing the *ziggurat* or temple-tower, such as Cortes would have called a *teocalli*, removing the dead earth of years from the ancient stone-paved quay on the river's brink, or working with trucks and rails in strange ruins. As our horses passed over the crest, with the serrated mass of time-worn brickwork of the tower between us and the sun, the spongy track sloped gently to the guard-post and the German house, a beautiful building of two stories, with spare rails for the tip-trucks packed in stacks about it. All that was at first visible was a party of cheerful, remarkable cats, fit to remind one of the Dragon of Wantley—"What a monstrous tail our cat hath got!"—but immediately a kindly gentleman, Herzfeld by name, issued and bade us welcome with hospitable words.

Shortly afterwards Andrae, the chief, and Jordain, the third of their party, came across the mound as the day's work ended, and I was nothing loth to accept their invitation to see their diggings.¹ They were architects rather than archæologists, and all the buildings that they had discovered were either temples or palaces. I never want to meet three better or kinder men; they fed and entreated me royally. But they declined to believe that I could reach Baghdad in my wagered time, after taking two days to come from Mosul, and they spoke vaguely of the Shammar on the southern road making a foray on my caravan. These Shammar, so the stories run, take black slaves with them, wherever they go, from the old mangonizing trade in the Red Sea, a traffic which our occupation of the Sudan has stopped. However, on the morrow, after we had crossed the long spur which shuts off the Tigris from the western plains, we saw none of them. Our horses were going well, without a trace of weariness after their two days' journey. Away to the west the levels, as far as the eye could see, were shimmering in the heat-haze of the morning, after the rain of yesterday, brown with the past year's sun, with the rathe spring grass beginning. Hadhra, the old ruin, quivered in the mirage several miles to our right. The sun was nearly

¹ For a complete account of the results of their excavations I refer the reader to the *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*.

down as we came in sight of our goal, Kernina, a little encampment of black Arab tents, where the *shêkh*, somewhat crafty of mien, gave accolade and pressed me to sleep under his tent-roof, but 'tis always a wearisome night if one is inveigled into such ; chatter, jabber, and talk all the night long from the Arabs, who would come in to see the foreigner, with the flicker of a smoky wood fire making the eyes to smart. My own little tent thirty yards away from the camp was far better, and I left Mejîd to sleep near the horses lest our zaptiehs rifle their nosebags.

The custom of all the ages has been to pay in some way for Arab hospitality in the morning if the guest is a rich man, and Mejîd gave the proper payment to the right person. The *shêkh*'s son, however, persisted in riding out with us in the hope that he, too, would receive something, and his desire became so strong in him that at last he asked, " Is there no *bakshîsh* for me ? " And he retired in disgust when his effort failed.

The zaptiehs' horses were beginning to show signs of fatigue, as we had galloped much the day before, and the *shaûsh* (sergeant) himself would hold up his fist to me, with arm bent—the sign for gently, gently ; but we reached Tekrît before midday, about seventy-five hours after leaving Mosul. This is a long bourgade, straggling over the undulations of the hills on the Tigris bank, and we passed the scattered ruins of the old city to the north of it as we rode in, stabling in a

widow's house. Glad enough to get to the end of their stage, the escort sat down giving orders for a royal breakfast, and I found a secluded corner for a hot bath.

The *shaûsh* was ready to talk, and was quite open on a matter which had exercised Mosul some months before. For time had been when a certain *Kochuk* or chief of the Yezîdis had given much trouble to the Turks by raiding caravans and robbing travellers, and yet had hitherto escaped his dues, so that they were at their wits' end to know what to do. So the Government fell back on its old trick, inviting him to Mosul under promise of safe conduct, that they might discuss matters amicably. He trusted their word, and no sooner was he come to the market-place than he was stabbed by two soldiers. "Ah," said the *shaûsh*, "I know their names and they were each paid five pounds for the business." Then I asked him, "Who paid the money?" Then, repeated he, "Ah, who paid the money?" Whereat I laughed, and told him that he knew, I knew and everyone knew who had paid. And he winked. This was, of course, under the *Ancien Régime*.

But our beasts were tired, and we dared not press further than Samarra the next day for fear of breaking down. Before midday the great golden dome of the mosque appeared like a barley-corn on the brown levels, the far side of the river. The khan on this side is the last stage of the mule diligence which plies to Baghdad, and here a small



TEKRÎT : A PRIMITIVE MERRY-GO-ROUND

bambino, led by promise of a *metallique*, undertook the plucking of the evening fowl, but feared lest I break my pledged word, for, like Ecclesiasticus, he thought, "Who shall trust a man that hath no nest, and lodgeth wheresoever he findeth himself at nightfall?" Reassured by the coin placed in his sight beneath my foot, he sat on the coping of the upper story, and scattered feathers to the winds like Mother Hulda snowing. In these khans it is strange how soon a man can learn to sleep dressed in all his clothes, the less to do on next morning: and, though he must stretch himself on the hard floor, if he lie almost on his face, he will avoid the pressure on his hip-bone where otherwise he would hollow a niche for it.

On the morrow our road lay across the ancient city of Ferhaliya, which extends over an enormous tract, a distance of two or three hours, but unusually flat for an ancient city, and it would not be easy to choose salient points at which to begin excavations in its broad acres. It was the sixth day of our journey, and we had yet many miles to ride to Baghdad from our halt at Simwesi that evening, so that a little after midnight, at the full of the moon, the shivering caravan awoke to mount the chilly saddles again. Time creeps with slow foot in the cold, dark hours, when the beasts can but crawl on their way all unseeing trusting to the leader's lode-manage. Once the zaptieh spoke of thieves in a ruined tower by which we passed, but it was the parrot cry of his

guild. At last the first flicker of the dawn shot up over the low-lying plains, and the cocks began to crow their aubade, but the sun was well up before we reached the river-bank, where the great waterwheels were creaking in their daily task, endless as though the malison of Ixion were upon them, and their spurting cruses handled by the accursed Danaids. Afar lay the domes and minarets of the golden mosque of Abd-el-Kadr (not otherwise is the Yerkes' Observatory on the other side of the world with its three observing towers). About two o'clock *à la Turka* we left the river-gardens and turned inwards, cutting off a large bend, and here the pace began to quicken, for if we were to reach our goal in the appointed span, we had but two hours left. Yet the beasts were fit, and they would soon have two or three days to rest themselves for their weariness.

The zaptieh sought leave to quit us half-way up the sandy slope, and turned his mare homewards with his small dole, while we approached the towers in their palm-grove, through all the straggling evidences of a great Eastern town. This was a holiday, and the teeming people in the outskirts stared at us round-eyed. Mejîd was leading the mule, and the led horse followed, and by reason of our light equipment, and swaggering trot through the streets, one said to his fellow, "Behold, *El-Posta*," as though to arrest our progress—glorwious! With half an hour to spare on our allotted six days, we crossed the *Elkadem*

bridge, the northern suburb of Baghdad. And O, Baghdad ! the city of all romance, with twisting streets hung overhead with sacking-strips to shade the hucksters from the sun, and cool verandahs by the river's brink. Smell the smell of it, wanderer, for Baghdad is the Daughter of all the East, and once the traveller has snuffed the reek of Arab dust, the memory will never pass. Over the dancing waters spin the little coracles of pitch and palm, made as they were when Abraham left Ur, round the two-three steamers granted by the Osmanlis to ply to Basra. Great sailing ketches ride at the wharves, straining at their hawsers on the turbid spring flood, and behind these, on the river-front, fly the flags of many nations, for the Consulates of Foreign Powers and the British Residency mark each its presence with a brave ensign. Pass down the broad way, Inglizi, and answer the salute which the Pathan sentry gives you, for he is one of the Residency Guard of a score from El-Hind. Established there by adventurous Englishmen who traded in the merchandise of Baghdad and the tiffanies of Mosul when the Stuarts were on the throne, it is a privilege upheld by the British *Râj* to keep these redcoats of the Native Line as escort to the Residency. Ask then your way to Babylon, How many miles ? and the nursery-saga will nearly give the answer :—

“ Can I get there by candlelight ?
Why, yes, and back again.”

It is two or three days' distance by the mule-car to see that great Babylon which King Nebuchadnezzar built, where the Germans are still sifting tedious dust-heaps. Baghdad had but recently exorcised the cholera-demon, who had claimed two hundred victims daily, and the cemeteries were full. Gruesome were the tales of pilgrims lately dead, now snatched from their hasty graves by friends who sent the bodies home for burial, leaving the cere-cloth matting scattered unguarded on the ground.

I sought the house of Mr. T. D. Cree, a genial Scotsman well known to those who visit Baghdad for his hospitality, and paid my respects to the British Resident. A year before the Residency guard had consisted of twenty-five or thirty wild Indian troops, splendid men to look at, but bad to hold, and it fell out that one day their corporal, an unpopular fellow, was missing, and could not be found. A little while, and a private turned king's evidence, revealing that the corporal's body lay buried in a house some little distance off, stabbed with seventeen knife wounds; but he, the informer, whose days were now as of those who start up at the sound of a bird, went in fear of his life, although none knew who had betrayed the secret. Then the last act of the tragedy came. At five o'clock one morning the Resident was awakened by a rifle shot, swiftly followed by four more in succession, and he roused himself and went out with a double gun, each moment expecting to

be shot. He found the sentry. "Come along," said he, and they went up together to the men's quarters, where lay five men shot dead. The murderer, who was the man turned informer, had escaped to a house-top hard by, and as the Resident and sentry mounted the stairway they viewed him fifty yards away across the chasm of a street. "Fear not, Colonel Sahib," cried he, "I shall not shoot you." They arrested him, but from compliment to the Sultan, who disapproved of capital punishment, he was sentenced only to imprisonment for life in Ceylon.

There is a goff-course at Baghdad in the sandy wastes to the east of the town on the undulations which mark the ancient settlement. 'Tis fit to moralize on the difference of manners, when King Yunan, at the advice of his physician, Duban, rode at the ball and struck it with a goff-stick as he sat in the saddle. Moreover, the younger Turks were riding gently to and fro on bicycles, exhibiting explosive ring-straked socks.

An access of ague returned to me one of the three days I spent there, so that I had little time to learn the glories of Baghdad. My caravan was well rested from its toils, and early in the morning with two zaptiehs as escort we crossed the bridge of boats and left the palm-groves, touching the arid plains. Far to the north the aiguille of the ancient tower of Akar Kuf pierced the sky; Tavernier says that the vulgar believe it to be the remains of the Tower of Babel. A funeral,

crosswise to our path, startled Mejîd from his dormant pace, and he drummed the belly of his horse with the stirrup-corners (well did the Aramæans anciently name them *feet-houses*!) lest the sinister thing do us a mischief on our start. A stint of two hours brought a frightened caravan meeting us with timorous bleatings that the notorious Shammar were changing ground behind them, and now in our path; one poor wretch lagging after told of his reft mantle. So I made ready to fetch a compass round Akar Kuf, thus avoiding them, but the soldiers would have none of such shirking, and indeed it seemed a monstrous thing that the ægis of Baghdad, headquarters of an army corps, did not extend two hours' ride from the walls. Wherefore we rode on, and presently these Shammar trickled into sight, sparse and in clumps, all moving to the south across our path. Soon we espied their gipsy-belongings straggling wide among them, tents, poles, and all their teraphim. But a little, and we drew near a handful of Arabs lying or squatting in a cluster near a corner, grinning cock-a-hoop, kynopic at our greeting, denying that they meant harm that day, and we came peacefully to our midday halt, a small hangar, with a zaptieh or two, and thence for ever over the same brown undulations or flats to Felûja, where on the morrow the Euphrates was crossed. Two days' journey from Felûja lies Hit, the city of bitumen which Herodotus calls "Is.



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AN ISLAND IN THE EUHRATES

the R.S.G.S.

The city itself is built on an ancient mound, and all about bubble the geysers of bitumen, the air mirk with exhalations. Thus saith also John Newbery in 1581, "Heit where is a Castle to the West of the River : and a little from the Castle to the South-west, is a place where Pitch boyleth out of the Ground continuously." Between Hit and Hedîtha, as one rides by the Great River, he may see an occasional holm in mid-stream, clustered with houses built down to the water's edge, and where ground gives space grow palm trees. There is little of interest until the neighbourhood of Anah, where, some distance below the town, there frowns a fortress from a high cliff on the bank, built at an angle of the river to command two long reaches. Anah is a town built in one long unending street, ever washed by the Euphrates ; John Newbery, visiting it in 1581, says, "This Towne of Anna is very long," and Tavernier, describing it as of mediocre size, says that it belonged to an Arab emir, and resembled Paris, "for it is built on both sides of the Euphrates, and in the midst of the river there is an island on which is a fine mosque." Amid yellow mud houses, yellow dust, and palms, the khan of our rest lay at the northern end, where now were unharnessed the carriages of several Turkish travellers, with their Armenian drivers clattering their sheaved currycombs. Barely had my kettle begun to sing for tea when came an accursed publican gathering annual toll from horse-owners,

particularly Armenians ; the tax on each horse was a few shillings. I had heard that Europeans did not pay ; furthermore, Mejîd, eyeing the fellow's brigand port, and human in his readiness to endamage the revenue of kings, whispered " Pay not " to me, as he saw him working his way through meek citizens, at last reaching my stables. " Three *mejîdîs*," demanded he, and, failing in his extortion, was inclined to argue, so that in the end poor little tired Darius was saddled again and Mejîd rode off to the local magistrate. Then gathered round me these Armenians of the baser sort, all mulcted of their tribute and no wise sorry to see a Frangi under the harrow—who could escape the Turkish Dowleh ? " And, besides," said the innkeeper, " it is the will of God," being at one with Antonio in *Don Sebastian*, " I see the doctrine of non-resistance is never practis'd thoroughly but when a man can't help himself." Also the tax-gatherer, emboldened at his own temerity and rejoiced at the pothor he had caused, prinked his wattles and became as the bubbly-jock for pride.

Then Mejîd rode into the khan door at a gallant canter, his face as the full moon, and his mouth spread abroad in a grin, and in the presence of the rabble there assembled spake : " O Sir, hear the word of the governor (who gives you god-den) which I bring ; that we should in no wise render tribute for these our horses." Then did the heart of this nidering publican fail within him and his

manner was plucked from him like the feathers of a Christmas turkey. "A poor man, a poor man am I," he squeaked, "and only under orders from others": thus was prestige sated. A few days later at the board of our Consul at Damascus I was assured that I was wrong, for a new iradé had been issued concerning imposts on foreigners; a cause of an insolent and unholy joy.

As we passed through the gate on the morrow a cripple besought an alms, and at his miserable insistence Darius curveted in a sprightly capriole. Straightway the lame man, thinking to cozen our affrighted sympathy, fell like a play-actor amid the concealing dust, and lay his length silent in the roadway, like one at the agony of death. Poor starveling, his deceit was too pitifully plain to all; a word to Mejîd, whose back had been turned, the grins of the audience, and the beggar sat up and withdrew to another place.

The distance between Anah and Dêr we covered in four days, once pitching in an Arab encampment by the Euphrates, and once lying in a solitary and deserted guard-house. Dêr is a strange place which has never an escort, so it seemed to me; I had waited there a week the preceding year, for the same reason. The morning after our arrival I sought out the governor: my horses were ready to start, except for the zaptieh who came not. Mejîd might have attributed this ill-fortune to that untoward chance which led him to put a sock on inside out: but as he had noticed it in

time, he had declared that all was well so long as it was not set right. Perpetually was I assured that a soldier would be found, and searchers ran about the city, trying the coffee-houses, the likeliest dens for such a quarry : but still no police. Then in all magnificent panoply my four animals were led to the parade ground under the very eyes of the Government, and here they stood in protest ; and at this there clattered in through the port the mounted guard armed cap-à-pie, as I had expected. Tired of course he was, but a silver scudo is a cure for every ill, a key to every lock, which wound him up to go with us nine hours across a desolate undulating track. On our road sat one of those bullies, a local *shêkh*, wringing taxes out of camel caravans ; later we caught up with a horse-dealer taking his beasts to Damascus for sale, which pricked us up to prevent him, for Mejîd did not desire any market-beater to forestall him.

Thus did we reach Dêr-Kowakib, the last three hours darkling, and thence next morning to Bir-ej-jdîd, the New Well, by a monotony of roads marked once or twice by white stones ; and at this post an unwieldy train of camels had stayed at midday, now swelling themselves with water. The women stood at the troughs, and, making scoops of their hands, were splashing the muddy fluid into the untied gaping mouths of the glistening black skins, for thus did they anticipate the difficulties of the way. A hostile wind was even

now raising the dust in mares'-tails along the dry flats, and howling against us ; the air grew brown, and presently the landscape melted into blur, and disappeared behind the thickening curtain, and thus barely an hour's ride from the well we were forced to stop in these waterless plains. Unseen in the foggy distance the camel caravan was passing in difficulties : the cries of straying Arabs to be heard of their fellows reached us, and to these we turned our heads. Out of the gloom there loomed one shadowy form after another, camels halted, camels roaring as they knelt, camels come to earth where the rasp of cords running over saddle horns marked release from burdens : they dared not go on through this waste land in such a darkness, with head-winds cutting bare flesh, bowing each clout-wrapped head against the poison-dust which inflames the unguarded eyes. The poor beasts could no more press against this contrary wind, with hindrance of great bales spread wide, and thus we found our lodging with them, a little bare, wind-swept hollow. It is a law of these people that water shall be given to wayfayers, enough for each to drink, and Mejîd went with our pan to beg of the camel men ; they gave what they could, dark green and stagnant, topped with floating straws, such as fills our summer duck ponds in drought. Yet there was no hardship in this cold weather in refraining from it, and there was a little in my costrel for Mejîd and me ; though we had boiled and filtered this

wretched solution, the fear of disease was far greater than trivial desire to drink comfortably. A threaded string of dried figs gave supper ; our saddles to windward and what bags we had gave wind-shelter of a sort until three hours past midnight, when the restless nomads, hoping to profit now by the gentler winds which had replaced the blusterings of last night, again set forth in the cold dark. But peace lasted but a short while : hardly had we started, when ominous gusts again rose in our teeth and the very camels found difficulty in keeping the scarce-marked path. To these we trusted to pilot our horses through the blackness before the dawn, cleaving to their track, lest we be lost in the wastes. Thus did the wind continue in our faces until we reached Sukhne an hour or so before noon.

Between Sukhne and Ereḳ, which is the next resting-place, I picked up some palæolithic implements amid the surface gravels of the stony desert ; there should be many more, if I am right in identifying those which I found, but the sun was setting when I found them, and I could only make a hasty scrutiny as we rode over the ground. Here at the small village of Ereḳ was great fear of robbers, of whom five were believed to dwell at no great distance ; but we shut ourselves up in a house and slept anigh the beasts without any cause for alarm.

The road from Ereḳ to Palmyra issues from a small gap to a long level plain, the northern

boundary of the great Badiet esh-Sham, the desert between here and Sinai and Arabia. Under the shelter of low hills which bound this waveless plain lies Palmyra afar, with its deceptive grave-towers which appear like temple-columns nine miles off, and cheat the traveller into the belief that he is only an hour's ride distant. So will he laugh to scorn his muleteer's reckoning of three hours, until the weary miles seem to pass by eternally, and yet no nearer is the goal: and he shall find this one of the many unkind jests of Nature in these lands. In this antique town of Palmyra the road leads towards the splendid columns of temples rising from spawn of Arab houses, and behind these glorious relics the enormous burial towers of squared blocks of red stone flank the issuing route. The first cause for such a town was the limpid blue stream which bubbles forth from the hills.

We waited here but an hour or so. The flanks of the vague defile which forms the road to Jeryatên expand gradually into a flat desert between continuous distant hills, and night was upon us before we could reach Beida, the guard-house. A mysterious and suspicious fire flickered in front of us in the dark distance, and our escort grew uneasy at this and his difficulty in seeing the track. Pruffle-like, he thought Thieves: here everyone said "Hush!" a good many times, and the horses were ridden in a compass silently past the blaze half a mile to the right. Nothing hap-

pened. It was left behind without excitement, and on a sudden we discovered the guard-house, which stands by itself in the middle of the plain.

The morrow's Boot-and-saddle started the beasts on a double stage to Jeryatên; half-way across this dull desert land was a ruined house with a well, perhaps three hundred feet deep, in the very bowels of the earth. As the afternoon's tedious passage wore itself out, the limestone hills came closer, and at last the white roofs and bosky gardens of the village shone fair in the sun. From here to Jerud rumour reported the road insecure, but this we found not, for our way on the next day was ridden in the same simplicity. The track ran at the foot of limestone slopes which diverged fanwise after a few hours, and so came by the line of pits which had been dug for water near the outskirts of the group of villages of which Jerud was the halting-place. Here were the days of dullness ended: no more the jejune Syrian wastes, flat, miserable land of weariness. There was one day more in the saddle, and then Damascus; and every homesick dweller in Mesopotamia will confess to an early awakening for the last ride.

It was cold mounting in the dark, and hours passed before the sun rose: but at last the road to the Great Gorge met us, leading us to the pass which is the door to the plain of Damascus. Spread beneath was the great valley rimmed with mountainous walls, with snow-topped Hermon's huge head towering over all. White hamlets and

smiling gardens, the daughters of Damascus, surrounded the distant city like babes on apron-string; and from below our feet ran the ribbon of road home, zigging and zagging down the steeps. And so Damascus, after sixteen and a half days' riding from Baghdad.

What think you of the Great Bazaar of the city of the Damascenes, sombre in its winter gloom, yet lit by pencils of sunlight? For here is a long covered street, arched with a roof of wood some forty feet high, a cathedral in its proportions; mud or dust underfoot and a rabble of Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, tireless on their feet, a congregation from the four quarters of the earth. The fat and greasy-voiced Syrian in skirt and jacket, with fez enwrapped in a shawl to keep his daintiness from the cold, steps gently over the stones with mignardise worthy of the ancient ladies of Jerusalem; the lower class, like our own, set their fezzes on the backs of their heads so that the tassel hangs like a tail, while on their foreheads is a predominant, a foretop fringe. Bedu Arabs from the Syrian steppes, stately and silent with dun-striped mantle, sleeveless and coarse, upon their shoulders; Greek merchants, Jew tailors, Christian and Yahûdi, befezzed and yet aping civilized dress.

Nowadays a new strolling minstrel has arisen in these Syrian towns, a wandering troubadour bearing in his embrace, like a bagpipe, a cornemusing gramophone gasping out Turkish discords such as

savages delight in. He peregrinates the markets with this devil's voice ready to be unchained for a *metallique*; it is a toy fit for the Tartar intelligence. A dozen such strident instruments blare their cacophony down the main street of any town from the booths. Even in the cold of winter, with the snow on the ground, the lemonade-seller goes through the crowd, clinking his two cups together, and holding against his breast the great globe of glass which is half full of snow and citron. Small boys, dressed in rags, lead brown donkeys bearing double panniers piled high with glorious Jaffa oranges, as though they were newly come from Aladdin's cave, where jewels hang on the branches. Slow-paced strangers from Bokhara or the Caucasus, looking about with wondering eyes, shroud their hands from the cold in the long sleeves of their wadded blue or red cloaks, clasping them in front as though they were all monstrous door-knockers, mongrels of sleepy habit, with sparse beards hanging straight without a curl. 'Tis a town still Oriental, albeit the Iron Road has forced its way thither: that Road which is to cross the Euphrates—whir! whir! all by wheels!—whiz! whiz! all by steam!—by Aleppo and Mosul to Baghdad. The engineers are even now at Carchemish, where the bridge will be; so that the passage still is where Assyrian kings ferried their armies of old when they made a progress through the Hittite provinces. When the winter is severe the snows in the hills above

Damascus block the passes and cuttings with a mass five yards deep, so that the town is as though besieged by Nature ; and Aleppo is cut off altogether from the coast, and its inhabitants suffer from the bitter rigour.

Mejîd and I sought the railway to Beyrut across the Lebanon : it was his first sight of a locomotive, yet he comported himself as though he were the owner of magic rings and lamps in perfect control of these great jinn. A German family, kind and genial, entered the same carriage as myself, and during the journey a native *controleur* put his head in at the window, shaking a dirty muckinder full of coins at us, and cajoling (in Arabic) that he was collecting money for a poor man (named Hassan) in Beyrut. Straightway, when this was interpreted to these benevolent but misguided Germans, they were for pulling *metalliques* out of their pockets to fill his cornucopia : but stayed their hands at a few words spoken in Arabic to them, not that they should understand, but that the official might, that we would go to the Railway Company's headquarters in Beyrut and pursue investigations about this poor man (named Hassan). As was to be expected, the *controleur's* heart went out of him, his face waxed yellow, and he returned the coin with many protestations. It recalled the *Punch* picture, "and then after that you and me will go and look for that charitable institution." There are seventeen hundred and twenty-one poor men (named Hassan) in Beyrut.

Mejîd was not to be entrapped into an expression of wonder at my steamer unawares: he merely remarked, "How small." Electric light did not astonish him: but in the end he was vanquished by the sight of the length of the upper deck.

There was a charming German professor with whom I fraternized on board. "I haf been," said he, "to Palestine, to destroy my last lingering faith in the Christian religion."

KODAK SINAITICUS, 1902

Now had they pass'd the Arabian bay,
And march'd between the cleaving sea ;
The rising waves stood guardians of their wond'rous way,
But fell with most impetuous force
On the pursuing swarms,
And bury'd Egypt all in arms.
Blending in wat'ry death the rider and the horse :
O'er struggling Pharaoh roll'd the mighty tide,
And saved the labours of a pyramid.
Apis and Ore in vain he cries,
And all his horned Gods beside,
He swallows fate with swimming eyes,
And curs'd the Hebrews as he dy'd.

—DR. WATTS.

'**T**IS a wonderful monument, this great Canal of Suez, the gut, which is the half-way house between the White and the Brown, linking them together where aforetime Servants of John Company crossed the desert hastily to meet their second ship at Suez ; from the De Lesseps statue at Borta Said to the clanging, banging trucks of Suez Station, it is a silver marquetry in sand, an inlaid tombstone for a great man. Port Said to the north, with tawny sand-laden rollers breaking the even monotone of the sea which lies low in the bosom of the sky, for the shores are flat and dead and offer no eye-vantage. Fishermen from out of the Thousand-

and-One Nights patrol the shallows knee deep, casting their leaded nets in half a fathom of broken water ; gaunt dogs, with nose and tail to earth, prowl stealthily along the beach for offal ; thus passes the track to the cemetery along the shore, by wrack of half-built houses or deserted ruins. Here is a little God's-acre of ordered tombs, where many heroes lie buried, with the sun shining fair above, and the song of the clean wind and sea to keen over them. From Port Said to Chicago of the Four Winds is an earth's diameter, and yet the twain are cousins in their consonance of sea and land ; grey Lake Michigan and leaden shallows of Egypt, level sands of Illinois and Araby, searching mistral of the spring or scorching heats of summer ; with tenements in stories marking each its owner's trade with painted signs, semi-civilized, decadent, and barbarian with babel tongues from everywhere. Port Said is but a place of passage, a khan at one of the world's toll-gates, to pass the night and change the order of a journey, the end of home and Europe for the eastward-bound, the quickened joy of hard-won return for those who keep ward over the Empire. Black night and dank water at Borta Said when the liner coals : barges piled high with black fuel float out into the night from the low quays gently, the dusty swart collier-men singing their weird chanty *héli-hé*, a barcarolle of the East. There by the twisting glare of the cressets on the gunwales, reflected in trickling flames in the mirror of the dappled water,

the mongrels of the Levant fit their gangways to the great ship's lower deck and swarm in endless chain, ceaselessly returning with voided baskets.

Midway in the length of the Canal is Ismailia, once delivered over to the pestilence of ague, but now free from its incubus ; at the far end lies Suez, a little tree-planted town. Here is the patch between the desert and the sown, for eastwards stretches the Waste of the Wandering, when the Chosen Race of old, weary of making bricks without straw, stepped out into the domain of the Efreets and lost their way, seeking some volcano that even in those late days still smoked and fumed. As the crow flies towards the sunrise, so does the desert-track lead to Akaba, where the power of the British *Râj* ends, and the Osmanli looks across the marches. Those travellers who would make a progress to the Holy Mountain of Sinai from Suez either ride southwards on camels or, loving their ease, take ship to Tor and so risk not their tenderness save for two days' riding. But the first way is the better, to cross the ditch between Africa and Asia in a lugsail boat while the low sun throws its last pink lights on the little clouds, and the desert merges in the purple distance.

A stone's-throw from where my boat grounded a caravan of camels was being laden with the fardels for their masters' traffic ; a gurgling, bubbling pother of snarling monsters, roaring out sulkiness from their raucous throats. A three-day

crescent shone clear against the opal sheen which was spreading out of the copper blaze to meet the turkis of the dome. Here on the flat, near the bales and boxes, a flare of thorns had sprung up athwart the gloom, where an Arab had lighted a handful of dry thorn twigs the better to see the tying of his cunning knots, and its flicker made the shadows of the Bedu dance and courtesy on the sands ; a camel uttered its wrath against its driver shifting its load while others of its company stretched a long neck upon the sand in sleep, or chewed their meal of beans which lay before them, spread upon a sack. Out of the fugue of squeaks and growlings which rose to heaven from this medley my poor *kafila* separated itself, two beasts for baggage, food and the water-barrels, and the third to ride.

Burrowing a nest on the soft ground as it lies knee-haltered, the camel gobbles out a ban on the stranger who swings himself all unhandily into the saddle, and spares no time to rise when once its Bedawi has slackened the hobbles. With a forward heave and a backward plunge the great beast unfolds itself from its earthen bed—happy is he who has taken occasion to grip the saddle-horn well under his right hock ! And each little thorn-bush, each overhanging tamarisk-bough is henceforth the camel's friend to buffet or scar the wretched rider if he slackens in his watchfulness. As a wanton babe plays cup-and-ball, so will the jogging beast sport with him in the lurching saddle.

Then the great train set forth into the night, a ghostly, silent company, one calling to his fellow for very comradeship in the dark. The wan, pale moon picked out the dotted scrub and thorn which barely hold their life in this insecure and waterless land, and yet they thrive ; the gor-bellied camels, casting their long shadows, looked like giant fossils come to life out of the limestone hills which skirt the waste, as they padded silently over the ancient track. Away to the west in the distance across the gulf flashed and flickered the beacon which guides the homeward bound into the great Canal. Once an Arab, walking as noiselessly as his pack-beast, chinked flint and steel together that he might drink his pungent *timbak*, and the little glow of the tinder marked his place. Now and again a light breeze which the noonday heat had chased into some cranny, came out like a light-o'-love, wantoning among the shuffling crew, and rustled in the rare herbs. Even the subdued monotone in which these nomads murmur at night was stilled, nor did any break the holy peace with some rasping snatch of unphrased song. For by day the Arab of the desert, though his ancient dignity bids him heed, will utter vibrant dissonances, which it were idle to miscall melody, often with hand to mouth to splay the sound trumpet-wise ; but now in darkness loth to stir the eerie silence. On either hand, dimly purpled against the sky, lay the mysterious hills of two lands.

Yet a little, and the train of camels slackened

and halted and couched on their fore-knees to their masters' *ikh-ikh-ikh*, yet with bellowings of malice. "Where art thou, O father?" cries one to his unseen elder; "Lift, O Abdullah," a camel-man bawling to a baby Arab already straining to ease the double loads with his puny arms; the cords, unravelled of their knots, grated in the old scores on the saddle-crotchets as the heavy bundles fell away each side to the sand. Here were the Wells of Moses, a refuge in a thirsty plain, where the water lies in great open pools fringed with date-palms. Little fires began to spring up in the darkness, and the low babble of these roadsters came past me quavering: the lads probed the saddle-bags for the kneading-pans and coffee-mortars, for the flour and salt, and presently rose here and there the rattle of berries shaken over the coals or pounded beneath the pestle; grimy little skillets piped scannel songs in the embers. Yonder a boy was slapping the flat round bread on its platter before burying it beneath the red ash; so also did the ancient Assyrians use in their *akal tumri* or "bread of the ashes"; thus do the Arabs of the desert make their bread for each meal, of flour, water and salt in a large metal bowl, leaving it in the embers for a quarter of an hour. Now in Mosul, hard by Nineveh, the common people cook their bread like flat thin pancakes on a large convex girdle (would not James Pigg of famous memory have called them "singing hinnies," save for lack of butter?). In

the Sudan the black man wraps his dough round stones as big as a man's neif, and toasts this in the fire, a trial of queasy stomachs. But in most villages of the Near East, the bread is thin like paper, or at most, a pendulous, flabby plaster.

On the morrow there was much afoot near these wells, for the caravan was parting on its several ways, north, south, and east. Westwards lay the glorious blue of the gulf with its cliffs marking Egypt, southwards ran our tracks to Wadi el-Hatah; the October sun rose hot to the sand, casting long shadows from the scattered palms. Out of the hugger-mugger of camels and packs I sought my three beasts, and found a changeling in the stead of one of the past night, a lame, poor beast, yet the *contratto* had secured to me three camels in good and strong condition. (For in Suez the two *shêkhs* Brahîm Abu-'l-gedail and Medahhan ibn Suleiman had covenanted together not to hire out camels the one against the other, but to charge a dollar a day for each; the journey was for three weeks only, or I had bought my caravan whole; so that with these monstrous charges the Consul had drawn up a narrow contract whereby three camels in good point were to be my right.) My other Arab waxed indignant: "Can we go for three weeks with a halting camel?" in low tones lest the *shêkh*, who stood by, should hear. This man of double mind smoked on, in no wise abashed at his cozening attempt, *Wallâhi!* as though I were the sightseer of a day, ready to

meet half-way this desert chicanery. But those near at hand aided me, and presently a little boy led me to the sound beast, lying strong and healthy in the sand.

Here there was nought but stones and flat sands, crossed by a score of little intermingled tracks, curving in and out, parallels and arcs and tangents, running in a mazy network between the stunted bushes. By this labyrinth of ways my old Arab Sellemi, grey beyond middle age, led my caravan, and a little lad Ahmed, of seventeen years (though to sight nearer ten) followed. These Arabs of the desert, having but little to nourish them, are spare, lean, and ascetic, are often short of stature, and yet can travel far, barefoot or in hard leather sandals : their food is a flat cake of bread, a few dates in a mass, and coffee. A comfortless life, and yet one of great content and happiness : in their austere simplicity they count among the greatest boons the god-given sleep after labour, or *timbak* which they smoke each now and then, or (one had almost said) absence of pain. Their religion is simple as popish doctrines, where they need no abstruse thought, but only pray, avoid strong waters, and keep Ramadan. Once their race was adorned with learned men, builders of Alhambras, great mathematicians and doctors ; now, albeit affectionate, trusting and patient, they are ignorant and incapable of the old philosophy, either from a natural decay, or the curse of a religion which stifles originality, surpassing



AHMED AND CAMELS AT TAIBT EL-WADI

the efforts of Monkish Christianity ; and broken in some measure by the veneered barbarians who conquered Mesopotamia, who never made aught but war, and have now forgotten that.

The sky was cloudless, and hardly a breath stirred the air ; the sun beat down hard upon the camels, which sweated as their necks swagged up and down. A little more, and there sprang to our sight some rank, low vegetation, a *hyoscyamus* with coarse thick leaves, with long spikes like a foxglove, not a delicate rose-colour, but dwale-like of a warning purple, which the Arabs call *saikuran*, for it robs a man of his mind if he drink of it. In dim, past ages it would seem that men of Babylon knew of it, perhaps from the thirsty caravans of Teima which plied across Araby, for such of them as were cunning in simples have written of it on their clay books in wedges. "Heart-plant," they called it, for it bereft all meddlers of their understanding, and they traced its origin to Magan, which some think to be Sinai ; and babbled of some matter of the gods with it, and "its horns reach to heaven," said they : "it seizeth on the heart," said they. A friendly thorn in Wadi el-Hatah offered shelter from the noon-day heat, and the little Ahmed unloaded the grovelling camels, now twitching their exiguous tails. A wagtail skated over the sand with little runs, hunting the flies which had come with us on the covers of the boxes, while Sellemi, old wanderer of the desert, built his little fire of twigs,

which threw up a vibrant transparency of vapour and boiled the water, for the devil of yellow sickness had stalked abroad in Egypt that year, and it was not good to drink haphazard from stray waterpools. So would I rally these Arabs, jesting that I was mad: "Nay, sir, if we drink water and are not smitten with disease, good: and if we die, it is written and it is the will of God." The little clay goglet choked and gurgled, as the water hiccoughed in his narrow neck, and then sweated through his porous sides. O the good miles of clean desert land bounded by violet hills!

Thus we lay till the fierce noontide had abated, and the deep peace that comes with the cool of the western rays had fallen. The gentle wind sprang up again over the arid plains, and sported in little games of hide and seek behind the swelling folds of pebbly dunes: the blue of the Egyptian mountains was broidered with a fringe of gold. As the day waned, the little Ahmed, waked from the sleepiness of sultry travel, began to sing such gutter-canzonets as every malapert urchin knows, of the Beloved with gazelle's eyes, of the Camels and their loads, *Ya bînt, ya batta!* and Sellemi reproved but chuckled. This elder Arab carried across his shoulders an ancient firing-piece, once a double-barrel, but now so dented at the muzzle that its left barrel had fallen into disuse. Sometimes a covey of partridges would run from a stony nook, and then he would ram home a charge, put on a cap and stalk them till they stopped

running that he might shoot from near at hand. Then the capsoon hissed in the lock, the faulty loading failed, and the birds flew off, leaving Sellemi the gainer by a charge of powder. He it was who told me wonder-stories in his tongue at night, or spoke of politics. One phrase of his remains with me : “ *Sidi*, the English are good, the French are good, the Austrians are good, but the Jews—— ! ”

Now halt an hour before sunset, while there is yet light enough to see to spread the cloths for the camels' fodder, or tie their nose-bags of beans to their heads ; to break fuel from the desiccated thorn bushes, uprooted by some *sêl* or flood from their sandy bed, dead and sear ; to gather the baggage into a small compass lest something be lost in the night. The camels will chew with ceaselessly champing jaws, kneeling with legs folded under them ; the Arab lad will fan a flame with the skirt of his mantle, so that presently the evening meal will be ready. There is little in these solitudes for food, which must be borne on the camels, and the Arabs carry with them a sack of flour, some salt, sugar and coffee, and perhaps some dates ; little enough, but it is a sparse land, and the Bedawi is nought but gristle, without fat on his bones. With me were two boxes of preserved foods and other victual, which served for the three and twenty days of my journey, augmented from a little storehouse at the turquoise mines ; there was little else save some poor fruit

from Bedu habitations. A small tent, needless except once when a thunderstorm burst upon us with hailstones, served me for a luxurious couch at night, rolled up on the sand. Thus as one sits round the friendly fire, the coffee gurgling on the ashes, and a little jet of gas from a palm frond fitfully whimpers as it lights up the magic circle of its sanctuary from the cold ghosts who live in the outer darkness, a stray Arab will wander up to seek a welcome. For these nomads, shy of the gloom and its devils, hasten to link themselves to any little knot of wayfarers, to take comfort by their fire, as men have sat for all the ages round fires, stone hearths, ingles or chimney nooks; and the tales of good Harun er-Rashîd begin again, told by these well-mannered guests, soft-speaking to their hosts, nor are they niggards to amuse the company with stories, talking in unending barter of words. First is the needful parley of this acquaintance, "Who art thou, and whence, O brother, O father? Whither goest thou with this *hawâjâ*? Shooting ibex, is it?" for their ears itch for gossip. It is told in the ancient arrow-headed script that Gyges, King of Lydia, sent an embassy to the noble Asnapper, King of Assyria, and the people asked the envoy, "Who art thou, O stranger, into whose land no rider has ever made his way?" thus showing how little the curious Semite has changed in these ages.

Then will the new-comer play willingly at school-master to increase the Inglizi's Arabic with the

recital of simple folk-tales. "Once upon a time," begins one (O blessed jongleur-phrase of all the world!), "there was a Sultan who had two sons, and it fell out as the twain were riding together, after journeying two days and nights, that they lay down to sleep on the third night, and the elder saw a light in the distance. Thither he went, and saw from afar forty men less one sitting together sharing a meal, each man eating from his own plate. The elder brother unobserved obtained one of these plates by stealth, so that one of the thirty-nine went hungry. . . ."

But 'tis tedious to spend the end of a long day in listening to fairy tales in a strange tongue, glossed by many scholiasts with weary officiousness; leave the circle to drain their coffee, in long gurgling inhaunts like hungry eels at night, and curl up in your blankets, lulled to drowsiness by the gentle river of the Arab babble, while deliberate stars shoot across the sky.

A little tunnel in the ground betrays the brisk mouse, which steals in and out when all the camp is quiet, to nuzzle fallen crumbs. Hearing that I sought to take specimens of such, the small Ahmed and another of his sort captured one alive and built a stone palace for it against my return, and showed it me triumphant, a little fawn beast which I made speed to ransom, without the heart to kill it, paying them wondering in sweet preserve of fruit. Next night, and this not unnaturally, Ahmed had again trapped his game, yet haplessly

wounded it in the side in his chase, at which I bade him end its pains. And the lad, speedily killing the mouse, laid it on the ready coals to cook. I watched in amaze, for he began to gnaw its flesh, breaking the Mosaic law, while old Sellemi looked on disgusted, yet excusing him to me for that he was but a boy.

Two and a half days' distance from Ayûn Mûsa we filled our barrels at Wadi Ghurundel and turned inland towards the Debbet er-Ramleh, wandering hither and thither as the tortuous camel-tracks led by Wadi Guwêsah and Sarbut ej-Jemel. Then appeared a broad and rolling floor walled in the clear distance by great hills, and sown with thorn bushes; a woeful waste of sand, and never a habitation to see, where the clean air of the desert bore with it a cheerfulness no whit lessened by these solitudes, for they lacked that awful grimness of the black decaying rock in the Eastern Sudan. Sellemi had that day shot a partridge, so that there was fresh meat in camp, and the small Ahmed, now singing to himself of a double portion at supper in the hope of that favour to come, now pounding the evening bread, searched vaguely in his scanty shirt for an itching camel-tick. For these little insects, which the Arabs call *grâd*, are round, ugly, and voracious, and will smell the blood of an Englishman, fee-fi-fo-fum, at a dozen paces, if they stray out of the hairy hide of camel or ibex in which they live, and will scurry over the sand to bury their heads



WADI GHURUNDEL

ostrich-like in human flesh. So tenacious are they that an Arab will heat a needle red-hot and pierce their pendent bodies that they loose their hold ; else if they be torn from their delights, the head breaks at the neck and remains behind in a little bulb of skin, gorging its vampire fill even in death.

Then shrieked the little Ahmed, "*Hawâjâ*, sir, after two plates of meat I shall be strong enough to lift the water-*barmîls* by myself." (*Barmîl* with its broken plural *baramîl*, is like its fellows *takawît* for "tickets," and *baskawît* for "biscuits," foreign words mishandled by these unlettered debtors.) "When we return to Suez, shalt give me one of thy shaving-knives as a present." For all these Arabs shave their heads in distinctive guise ; he, too, a week later, vanished awhile from the nightly halt, to return shorn and bald, save for a three-sided fringe above his forehead, and a thick pig-tail on his poll ; and did greet me with a cheerful "Beautiful, sir !" having been to a neighbouring Arab who possessed a razor.

Next evening, after the day's journey was over, an Arab offered himself as guide to Serâbut el-Khadm, the ancient Egyptian temple and settlement, probably in connection with the old turquoise mines of Wadi Maghârâ, which have been worked for six thousand years. So did I pay homage to the long-deserted shrine of Hathor, climbing by a rocky path up to the ruins, for now we were come out of the flat lands to mountains, leaving the limestone and sandy hills behind, for

south of the sedimentary formations in this peninsula are the beautiful igneous rocks, with great boulders of many-coloured granites rolled into the wadies. Set here in this weary barrenness of parched mountains, the temple must have been a haven within easy march of the mines to those poor exiles from Pathros whom an evil hour had brought to this land to seek *mafket* for their lord ; a little ruin with monoliths of sandstone carven with hieroglyphics by the fingers of Pharaoh's craftsmen, some still in place. Mapmakers of our Indian army had come hither forty years back, and had described and pictured it in their big books on Sinai. Here was nought of grandeur in man's handiwork, save that it had been a permanent habitation in a waterless land, built high above the valleys as a fitting shrine to the Mistress of the Desert. A few blue beads and fragments of glazed pottery lay higgledy-piggledy on the ground amid the fallen lintels, miserable relics to show the poverty of the wretched exiles from civilization.

Onwards our road lay into the heart of the granites, through valleys walled in by these stark mountains, divers in their colourings from red to green, with great storm-tossed raffle of random boulders scattered on the sandy floors amid the thorn trees. Herbage or green is rare unless there be water, but with the pools comes abundance, with weeping tamarisks in thickets, or perhaps an untrimmed date-palm. Yet the thorn bushes flourish with a devilish interest on such small dole



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THE TEMPLE AT SERÂBUT EL-KHADM

Man

of kindness as the desert sand vouchsafes to them, and the camels nibble between their caltrop-spikes with chary, flexile lips, the more if the yellow or white bloom be burst forth on them. For in the spring in the Sudan valleys, the mass of thorn-clumps is a-bud with little blossoms, like a Kent apple orchard, bushes one behind another. The rugged steeps run down in bare rock to the sand-strewn levels, towering aloft in crenellated masses against the sky, whence, if a man climb thither, he may see spread beneath him a solid, turbulent sea of mountains, in great waves of granite spurs and troughs of hollow valleys running this and that way in monstrous vagaries. No Lombardy this, but a greater, wilder country, till at the last, for a bounding belt, comes the salt sand.

Then gathered the clouds big with thunder above the eastern summits, ready at sunset to burst with a shower of hail as though it were pigeons' eggs ; thus for a brief space lasted the storm, with lightnings playing about the tops and thunder rolling in the echoes of the gorges. From the thirsty soil sucking in this moisture came a pestilence of sickening, heavy smell which made the air thick to breathe, and a myriad chirpings rose up, making the silence between the roarings alive with an uncanny, unseen population. As the dark tumult of cloud drew off, unveiling the sky in the east, all delicate in its evening blue, a great torrent was pouring over some chasm in deep diapason, hidden in a giant's recess to rouse a wild music.

Darkness was settling down, and a grave peace had come upon the land after this cloud battle.

Well may the learned doctors say that Yahweh was a sky god from Sinai, and small wonder that an ancient tribe had faith in his presence, riding on a cherub above their Olympus in these deserts. "He made darkness his secret place ; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies : at the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail-stones and coals of fire." But I learnt nought of ancient habit in this storm from Sellemi, for he and the little boy came into the tent for shelter with thanks for the invitation, and later ran about outside to pick up the hailstones to eat.

There came to my caravan one evening an old *shêkh* of a neighbouring district and a younger chief, who ambled up on camels and sat with me. Sellemi kindled his flame and boiled tea in lieu of coffee, to give *Ahlân w'sahlân* to our guests, whose spirit of adventure goaded them to test my limejuice tablets and biscuits. Presently the old despot espied a pocket-knife in Ahmed's hands, a small gift from me, and he at once distrained upon it in his right as *shêkh*. Next he discovered that Sellemi owned a pair of my old stalking shoes, and my henchman submissively yielded them up without a murmur. It was a displeasing exhibition, and consequently it degenerated into a game of rounders : Sellemi gave the shoes to the old thief, who put them under his seat, from which I as



THE COUNTRY NEAR SERÂBUT EL-KHADM

speedily removed them to my own : and Sellemi received them back in due time.

In this district, scrawled on the walls of reddish rock which set the bounds to these highways and grip them in a narrow avenue, are the greetings of wayfarers who have passed by for these last two thousand years, giving *salâm* to those who follow in their footsteps.¹ Robert Clayton called attention to them when he edited the manuscript of the Prefetto of the Franciscans in Egypt, who journeyed in this land in the early part of the eighteenth century : " I think proper," says he, " to communicate to you a translation of it, in the hopes of exciting you, who are now erected into a Society of Antiquaries, to make some enquiry into those ancient characters, which, as we learn from it, are discovered in great numbers in the wilderness of Sinai, at a place well known by the name of Gebel el Mokateb, or the Written Mountains, which are so particularly described in this journal, that it is impossible for an inquisitive traveller to be at a loss in his searches after them. By carefully copying a good quantity of these letters, I should apprehend, that the ancient Hebrew character, which is now lost, may be recovered." His idea, I presume, was that Moses and his following had written these inscriptions. The Prefetto himself says, " Though we had in our company persons who were acquainted with

¹ The curious will find them published in Euting's *Sinaitische Inschriften*.

the Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Coptic, Latin, Armenian, Turkish, English, Illyrican, German, and Bohemian languages, yet none of them had any knowledge of these characters." These are but the rude scrabblings of adventurers perchance to the turquoise mines of Wadi Maghârâ, whither we were now bound, where, nearly six thousand years before, a Pharaoh of Egypt, a son of a god, had caused his name to be inscribed on the rock, perhaps with less reason than these poor wanderers, yet inoffensive now : for doubtless it is the respect of age and veneration for things old which remove the stigma from this brazen means of record of man or king. Therefore when Arrius is dead, and Kensal Green has become as the Potter's Field, honour will be paid to *graffiti* on an antique wooden bench from Epping or Bill Stumps' mark at Baalbek.

Leaving Ahmed with two camels at a well-marked spot, I rode to Wadi Maghârâ, with Sellemi running behind to admonish the beast with blows, and allay the monotony of the journey with his dry humour. Presently we came on some half-naked fellows hewing trees, who bid us "Peace be with you," being the outposts of the turquoise mines, and here were two or three sheds of iron with a few Arabs under an İnglizi fossicking in the caverns for the little blue stones. The İnglizi had adopted the long robes of the native, and his head was closely shaven, as is the wont of many who work in dusty caves among

strange insects in these countries. He welcomed me kindly, and told me that he liked the solitary life among these wild fellows ; his stores came from the coast three hours distant by trotting camel. He guided me round the mines, now a warren of tunnellings and burrows in the cliffs, where was some written trace of Pharaoh's luckless bond-slaves, runes of antique hieroglyphics, cartouches and sculptures of the kings, one of which had of late been broken by some iconoclast's pick, and lay as though the living rock had calved like an iceberg. The Arabs dislodge the little blue and green nodules of turquoise as they dig the ancient workings further into the hillside, each treasuring his poor find knotted in a scrip made from his Isabella-coloured mantle.

Then I farewelled my host, asking him if I could bear news of him to his friends in London, for, "I come from Poplar," said he : and thus departing, Sellemi and I sought Ahmed with the other camels. The morrow was the last stage of our journey to the ibex ground, and I was minded to press forward to the Wadi Fêrân that night. Here, as we rode to our nightly camp, were some old tombs by the wayside, three or four adjacent chambers built of stones, and I lighted off my camel to examine them. On a sudden the small Ahmed leapt high in the air, shouting, "*Aho, aho !* Mark, mark !" A small snake, guardian of these ruins, had issued from a hole beneath the doorways, and he was now showering stones upon

it, saying to me that he had almost trodden on it with bare feet and had now been with *Rabbêna*, our Lord, but for his agility. We hunted it, he with stones, I with a revolver, and the turmoil roused the few Arabs from their little *menzil* by the ruined monastery, and they came forth in amaze, for, said one of them, "We thought it was *harb*, a war." Sellemi was already bivouacking near their hamlet, and a dozen men came and sat round the fire. I essayed to understand their barbarous speech, but they spoke very fast and their words waxed fierce and vehement, and I turned away, having nought better to do, to reload my pistol. Straightway old Sellemi, seeing this, and thinking I know not what, came hastily from the seated hubbub saying, "Fear nought, sir, we are all in the hands of *Rabbêna*, our Lord." It turned out that these jabbering homuncules had said, "Here is an Inglizi alone, let us ask a dollar of him that his baggage be not stolen in the night." They grinned shamefacedly, nor did I pay their levy, and in a little while the greybeards of the *menzil* brought me a gift of pomegranates.

Sellemi pitched the tent, as the little insistent trumpet of a mosquito harbingered a plague of them; an occasional guest came to the fire and chattered. Ahmed, as was his wont, fell in love with a pretty little Arab girl in a blue smock who sat mumchance on the other side of the flames, albeit not too shy to accept largesse of biscuits. But he found her unresponsive and a little dull

withal, and so asked leave to join in a fantasia now audible among the trees some short distance away. Girt with a borrowed sword, he stalked away majestic, and took his place amongst the revellers ; this performance demands but that the company should sing two contiguous notes with their grating voices, and clap their hands in consonance, throughout the night.

A slightly built, wiry Arab offered himself next morning as a hunter ; he wore no colours or falderals about him and looked hard and thin, so that I took him on trial. Several others offered themselves as stalkers, but they were for the most part charlatans and rogues, and they sought in vain ; and my new man Sbeah and I started off for the first stalk up a stony wady showing patches of vegetation here and there. We pushed steadily up the dry water-course, Sbeah carrying a full goglet and I my magazine '303 ; the sun was well on in his day's journey and the granite hills had already begun to mirror the heat. Some little hunting of Barbary sheep the year before in Algeria had shown how impossible it is to approach a beast silently on limestone or granite rocks in clattering boots. There is an old saw in deer-stalking in Scotland or Norway, where most of the country is grassy and soft, " Take care of the scents and the sounds will take care of themselves " (I believe this was invented by the excellent writer of *Three in Norway*) ; but south of the Mediterranean the dry face of the cliffs, be it hard rock or

loose rubble, gives tongue at the hunter's approach under his boots, or even if he dislodge a pebble or let his rifle-butt ring on a stone, be it never so lightly. I had therefore packed in my wallets several canvas shoes with indiarubber soles, and wore a new pair each day as the granite frayed them out. They gave secure footing on the dry bergs, and I used the same kind some years later at the Rock of Behistun, but at the end of the day's stalk they cried loud in evidence against the old Roman's *est facilis descensus Averno*, for on a downward slope they gripped and pinched the feet in their forward thrust, and the toes were thus clamped Chinese-fashion. Perhaps jute soles had done as well.

These Arabs here disdain to use a telescope, and indeed they need not, for they have a piercing eyesight and the air is very clear. In Algeria my henchman Haj Ali would sometimes take the glasses to scan the shimmering plains of El-Utaia beyond El-Kantara for moufflon or gazelle, but amid these Sinai hills the distances which one need spy are frequently short. Now a stranger in a new land must needs trust his stalker to sight the quarry at first, for who shall say what is the wont of strange beasts? There are times when a deer in the forest lies half-hid in a peat-cutting, tail to wind and eyes awake staring down the braeside to leeward, or he may have found safety amid his meinie of hinds which picket the corrie like sentinels and bark their warning to him of a

danger ; a reindeer will lie at noon for his sleep ; a gazelle in untrodden ways will stand to watch the caravan pass a bowshot distant along the sand dunes ; ibex desire the hills and the hard rocks which give no yield to their spring. As is said in the Book of Iyyob, " Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth ? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve ? "

So, as Sbeah passed up the crumbling track, he continually cast his eye upward, scanning the summits, while I trod his footsteps and hoped for Beginner's Luck—who has not remembered the first sight of the game which he is out to kill ? Years back, when on my first deerstalk on the hill in Sutherlandshire, the ghillie had halted me mysteriously near the march, " A can show you a deer, but it's no' on our ground, and you mustna wish me to take you to shoot it,"—and the magic crystal of his glass showed a patch of red bracken across the burn where the curtain of the mist had lifted and a good stag lay feeding among his wives. It was irksome to think of this beast, perhaps the only one we might see that day, but it was vain to sit and wish him on our side, and we moved on up the sodden grass of the hillside over the spongy peat. Every stalker knows how tedious a pursuit this can be when there are no deer to be seen ; up one hill and down the next, the click of the shutting telescope striking the half-hours, and the ghillie's dirge, " Not a beast." It was not until the late afternoon that we spied three

stags on a hill-top, one of them a switch-horn ; as we took observation from near at hand the stalk seemed no easy one, for they were on bare flat ground, not unlike the high field of Norway. Wherefore the two of us crawled like snakes over gritty, grey fragments of glacier-marked limestone and through the black mud of soaking peat, till my stalker, lying prone in front of me, gave my rifle a rest across his body ; the switch-horn, turned half away, was the best beast, and though the shot struck a little too far back, Beginner's Luck held good in the end. It is the same whether one is hunting beasts, antiquities, or bull's-eyes ; I have known a schoolboy go to the open ranges for practice once or twice, and then make thirty-four out of the possible thirty-five in the days of the old two-foot bull at five hundred with the Martini, and yet not do the like again for years : once I, when curio-hunting as a boy, bought a perfectly-wrought stone spearhead for a few pence in a London shop, such as I have never found since.

So begins the stalk. Follow the Arab hunter and unsheath the rifle from its cover. Throw up a fistful of desert dust in the air to mark the wind's air ; see that the latchets of sandals or espadrilles are secure to the feet, for the rasping fissures chafe through the soft foot-raidment as a file. Dislodge but a pebble in the upward climb to fall into the deeps below, and it will start the echoes rolling for the repentant hunter, as a clamorous tocsin to affrighted burghers—Nay, who will give now

a penny for your chance ? Press up warily in the shade of the hill (for it shall be morning or evening that these beasts are spied best when not taking their midday sleep in some cave or hollow of the rock) and see that the treacherous wind blows fair from the front, for the twisting crannies and corries hold lurking fauns and satyrs ready to warn their half-brothers of the hills with back-blown zephyrs. Allow the Arab to peer cautiously over the skyline first, nor let your Frangi helmet, springing up as a prompt mushroom from no depth of earth, warn the herd of an enemy's approach ; and then, if your hunter turn and grin with a crooked finger between his teeth, know that there are more than prickets among the quarry, and snick the safety-catch from behind the bolt. Only young blood now hastens itself, and the older man knows the worth of a few seconds to recover lost wind, as he lies peeping through a battlement of two stones split apart by a tussock of dry grass at the bighorn guarded by his *harim* which form his outposts as he feeds. Wriggle the rifle into position slowly, just where the sights and barrel range clearly above the ground in front, touching nothing, but held square and lightly with no deceitful rest to play the sighting false. Hold breath and squeeze trigger on a hand's-breadth behind his shoulder, and though the magazine be full, let one bullet do its work cleanly ; and as the thick, treacly savour of the cordite goes up on the air, the startled herd turn this and that way

all undecided of your ambush. If the big buck be down, spare no time to secure him, for the rocks are full of holes and clefts which can hide a wounded beast. . . .

Alas, the dream of *storbock* that day was shattered ; for Sbeah led me easily within a hundred and fifty yards, but it seemed full a hundred more, and with the sight up to two hundred the bullet broke against a rock two feet above the back of the big ibex. So came the scamper of heels and the clatter of rolling stones as the frightened beasts leapt over the boulders :

πολλὰ μεταξὺ κύλικός τε καὶ χειλέων ἄκρων.

There would be no more stalking that day.

Thus we left the Wadi Fêrân, with its sepulchres and monkish dwellings, to traverse a long valley watered by a pleasant stream. The sands of this gorge, drinking at this rivulet, were no longer athirst and offered a gratitude of green delights for its gifts. Palms and tamarisks, bulrushes and green herbs, sprang forth in thickets close and heavy-scented ; the rushes, camel-high, withstood the stumbling beasts. For these poor monsters, with two-toed club-feet made to cross only the dry desert, slipped and staggered on the treacherous slime, and once my hapless camel fell asprawl, casting me, dull as Dun in the mire, into a pool of mud and water. 'Twas but the accident of a day, a cause of merriment to my followers ; and, praise be to God, the Merciful and Compas-

sionate ! soon we came out of these tortuous passages to dry land, where sat an Arab by the wayside. His head was circled with a turban of divers colours, and he drank his *timbak* in the long pipe of cherry wood which all these natives use. He rose with dignity and said, " Sir, I am he whom the *shékh* summoned as your hunter yesternight."

Now here was a coil, for the little Sbeah had now entered my service, and a second hunter was needless. This new fellow, Salem by name, gave some token in his countenance of his frampold nature, and I misliked him ; he clamoured to be employed in the place of Sbeah, thrusting himself forward and swaggering in his bulk which out-matched my hunter's spare frame. Yet my little man only grinned, his head the height of my shoulder, as I explained to Salem that the agreement was complete and there was no place for him in my train. This little matter ended with a small present of money and a pocket-knife to the fellow, who had spent his day finding me, and he departed. But on the morrow I was roused from sleep by this ruffian wrangling with my men ; his stature was wellnigh a span higher than any nomad gathered round my camp, and as he sat in their circle, " Liar," roared he at Sbeah, " Liar and thief, liar, liar !" until I wearied of hearing his voice and rose to rebuke his blusterings angrily and he held his peace for a time. Then interposed the men of the tribe, " Sir, be not wrathful, for the chief is here to do your needs." For the chiefs

of these tribes are as little fathers to their clan. So Sbeah and I left the camels to follow the ibex again, and hardly had we gone five minutes when Sellemi and Salem both pursued me with the news that they had spied the game on a hill-top near. Again began the wrangle, but I dismissed Salem with a small *bishara*, the present for good tidings, though sick of his importunities. The herd was feeding high up on the crest of a precipitous shoulder on the other side of the strath, and their curling horns were clear against the sky ; the upward climb was hot and steep, and the *gharīb*, the stranger to those parts, must sweat where a half-naked Arab stays unaffected by the sun. Again came that curious uncertainty of all stalks, when the hunter has followed the line of country that he mapped out for himself from afar, and, once started on his attack, he may not spy his quarry again until within range ; each little landmark, noted as he passes it, points to his goal and yet appears so different as to bring doubt how far he has progressed, so that at last he asks himself, " Is this the little rise with the grey-splashed boulder from which I hoped to get a shot ? If I raise my head, how large will the herd appear ? "

I discarded my grey helmet and peered slowly over a piece of granite—yes, there they were feeding gently a hundred and fifty yards away, very hard to see against the brown rock. The rifle came into line and the big buck was spitted on the foresight ; I squeezed the trigger, but the

bullet sped over his back, and at once the herd began to rush up the hill, the white of their bellies showing clear. A second shot on the run had the same effect, but a third, aimed lower, dropped a nice buck as he galloped up the steep.

Now the law of this land demands that a beast's throat shall be cut, which the fleet Arab will do or ever he can be withheld. 'Tis an ancient rite of sharing the life-blood with the gods, as the old Israelites were wont to do ; one that has put many a noble pair of horns to the antechamber, unworthy, by reason of this gaping rent, to hang under fretted ceilings. Yet let the Arab strike low in the neck, and he will none the less have obeyed Alcoran, and the pelt will be unsullied. Again, cross-counter the impulsive son of the desert at the kill, lest he fall to kissing his congratulations ; this both Semite and Tartar will do on occasion, if not stopped in time.

Sbeah was nearly stopped in time, and I set to work to gralloch the beast, which was not a bad one, and we returned to camp with Sbeah carrying it on his shoulders. Great jubilation arose in the camp, for fresh meat is always welcome, and pieces of it were distributed among the Arabs who gathered from far and near : for 'tis a small thing to give away tough ibex meat to these simple folk, who are hospitable with their little. Then, as I sat skinning the head, a noisy little wagtail fluttered and squeaked on the rocks close by the shade of my tamarisk ; behold, a yellow snake

four feet long was writhing along the stones. The camp, aroused, assailed him with stones, for Orientals have always loathed and feared snakes since the time of Father Adam, for 'twas a snake that made them work, but he took to earth, and then the men smoked him in his hole with a fire of thorn bushes.

About three o'clock we decided to move. Salem, that incubus of the last two days, was still there, but as he was only receiving the ordinary hospitality that any Arab looks for, I had to bide my time. Presently when he saw us loading the camels, he begged a gobbet of flesh for his *shékh*, and I was glad to rid myself of more in the hot weather. Then, "*Hawâjâ, bakshîsh* before you go!" said he. I turned on him and bellowed at him in plain words, for no Arabic was good enough; my curses on him, and every ill that I could think—did he think that I came there to give malcontents like him *bakshîsh*? His face fell suddenly, like Cain; he knew nought of my powers as a magician, but that he was banned in an unknown tongue, a terrifying collection of sounds which he could not pronounce. For one must needs assume a play-actor's part with these children of Ishmael, showing anger or amity with no sparing control, and scowl or smile openly; for if a man do but blare his lusty wrath at them, it will serve to stay them from putting further foists upon him. Show your metaphorical elephants the blood of grapes and mulberries:

shriek, howl, jabber, roar, bellow, bluster, if you would succeed in these countries ; bluff, gesticulate, shake your hand and let your eyes flash. Marcus Aurelius well describes this method of babydom : " Imagine every man who is grieved at anything or discontented to be like a pig which is sacrificed and kicks and screams " : thus must you weary your opponent, and if he but think you mad, you will attain all that you wish. The wretched Salem grovelled at once ; had I drawn cabalistic figures in the sand and stared fixedly at them with my chin on my hand, glancing at him from time to time, he had roared for mercy of my *sihr*-magic. He murmured some miserable word and went.

The caravan started again, and as we pushed down the long valley, the sun dropped behind the western wall of hills which shut us in : so against the sky, now no longer a brazen mirror of light, my Arabs spied two horned beasts staring down upon us. So needs must that we pursue them, getting down and taking cover behind the camels as they plodded on, turning them towards the shelter of the dead slopes of the mountain on which we had seen the ibex. Then when we reached the rocky foot, the camels turned away down the wady again, leaving Sbeah and me to begin the climb, heavy enough after the day's work was nearly done, but it was good to be on the trail again without the heat of the sun.

Suddenly, before we had gone ten minutes,

there was a click-clack to the right, and sixty yards away over the boulders cantered a little beast startled and escaping for his life. I drew a bead a length ahead and pressed the trigger, but a malison on 't ! I had forgotten to slip the safety-catch. Thus he fled, leaving us to clamber further : and presently, by cautious reconnoitring, we made out the first beast as he stood silhouetted against the sky, a black horned shape against the evening blue. It was an uphill shot at a hundred and fifty yards, and no easy one in the gloaming, and at the roar he leapt, turning to the right, seeming thus to crumple up. His horns stayed for a moment sharply defined on the light, and then fell, and we raced to the top.

“ *Ma fh sh'*,” said Sbeah, and surely enough, there was nothing. There was no sign of the quarry anywhere ; we had marked him down most carefully, and it had seemed that he had fallen, yet there was no blood, no fewmets, no spoor of any kind. He had vanished. So we searched in vain for many minutes, and then descended. On a sudden one of the hares which are found in these wilds jumped out from some hiding-place and gave me a running shot at him : I did not hit him, but the nickel went somewhere in his direction. Beneath us was the welcome little flare of Sellemi's sage-bush fire, with its aromatic reek, cooking the evening meal, and there are many worse places than a camp with a good servant and plenty to read. First, however, there

was some small veterinary matter to attend to : a camel had developed an inflamed sore as big as my fist on his hump beneath the saddle-pad. We doctored it as best we could, pouring a solution of carbolic into the wound, and decided to let the beasts rest on the morrow. This sore, however, dried up very shortly and there was little trace of anything amiss in a week's time.

One pleasant afternoon Sbeah and I rested in our descent in a cave such as Horace would have loved, with overhanging eaves of rock, and as I drew a camel-tick from my foot he spoke : " When you go," said he, " give me your rifle as a present." Then, accepting a laughed refusal, he furthermore, " then give me a pair of those *el-astik* shoes for my mother," which I could not withhold : and doubtless there were soon five Arabs wearing canvas shoes all too large for their small feet. The sun now sinking, we sought our camels, and from some ambush rose the music of two pipes fluting in a pastoral symphony ; Ahmed and another little imp, his counterpart and reflection, each facing each prone on the earth and shrilling windy melody from their twin reeds. Thus in a setting of shadows from the yellow dunes and thorny bushes lived again the votaries of Pan, with their sweet piping, like some dream-picture ending fairy tale. Thus little graceless Ahmed once when left as pompous watchdog of the camp amid these sands greeted my return with mischievous recital of his welcome to two babe-Arab

amorettes, Leila and Fatma belike, whose visit of shy discovery had cheated time for him, even to the forgetfulness of our expectant meal. "O *hawâjâ*," quoth he, "I showed them your revolver, I gave them your biscuits, and I played the pipe to them, *beeel, beeel, beeel*"; and capered against the sunset, and set himself to play again. But no sound vibrated to his breath, and he was put to it to seek the cause of this calamity; and plucked forth a long black hair from the reed, thus witness of his dalliance. The last rays of the dying sun caught the grey jagged pile of Sirbal's summit, looming noble above its skirts, which clothe the base with vast pleats, apt in its name of Hauberk, shining in sunlight after rain. Some hold that it was the true Sinai, where Moses delivered his law, but there are many pitfalls for those who probe this mystery, to find the historic fiery mountain, or the temenos of the burning bush. Once aged Sellemi, thinking to bring better luck, used an ancient custom on a day when he wished to join the hunt. Putting a match to a low dry thorn bush he let it blaze, and, drawing back a little way, he ran and leapt over it, nor were we slow to follow, for it is an old rite to jump the fire. This, he averred, was for good fortune, and if no quarry was espied to-day, it might haply be to-morrow. A long and empty day of clambering and descending, without a sight of game, although prints of a leopard's pads, old and dry, crossed our path. Sellemi, perhaps a

little tetchy at his rugged toiling amid these new mountains, marked his dudgeon, "Sir, these hills are not commodious like the flats of Suez ; here it is all *inzil itla'*, *inzil itla'*, up and down, up and down." The way of hunting at Suez is, he said, for two men to walk on either side of the wadies along the crest, thus driving the game before them and shooting from above.

Sellemi, that primitive savage, was prone to believe in tales of boggarts and bogles, and for him the deserts were haunted by a thousand wraiths and cobbolds. The small Ahmed once lost himself in these ambages, and his adventures with a ghost led Sellemi to burst forth in a flood of confidences, capping the boy's experiences. For it had fallen out on a day that a covey of game birds spying the caravan ran out of their stone coverts, and Sellemi lighted down from his camel to pursue them : in vain did he prowl towards them, louting low with his gun ready, for as he advanced so did they continue to keep their distance. In the end his firelock roared defiance at them, they chuckled, and he returned to the pack train, where he sat in his saddle meditative between the water-barrels like a cavalry drummer. Alas, an untoward loss ! for but a mile or twain distant he learnt that his sword had dropped unnoticed from his belt : "*Sidi*, that brand was worth a guinea in Suez"—wherefore was no remedy save to wait while he ran to seek it. But he was maladroit in his search and found it not,

and at his return, Ahmed, given his furlough, mounted my camel and rode back to try his fortune. To my shame a grave fault was committed, the first and most elementary law of the desert was broken, for he set off without food or water with him ; we, thinking he would not be long gone, gave close instructions for our night's halt. The gaunt brown camel stalked back over the path where it had come : our opposite way lay over a curious raised beach where were shells. Presently, in a broad, open level, hospitable to tamarisks, we ceased from our day's journey, and in the dusk Sellemi built a bale-fire to guide the boy. But he came not, and all that night he was absent, the patient old Arab watching for him lest he fail to see us in the dark. With the dawn rose our anxiety for him, and Sellemi reproached himself for sending him, adding, " I will break his head for his folly in losing us, when I find him " ; so with doubting hearts veering every whichway, we were thinking first to go forward and then back, when, *el-hamdu lilláhi !* a little voice hailed us from the dusty ridges, and Ahmed rode out of a fold amid the hillocks, rushing first to the water-flasks. Upbraided by the elder, when he had assuaged his thirst, he related how he had lost himself, and that in the darkness a ghoul, its wail rising and shrilling, had waited for him ; thus also have I heard a sea-bird in Scotch mists play banshee, belike a Great Northern Diver. Here Sellemi, with his mind at rest, added his corroborations.

tion ; quoth he, " If I pass a black man in the market I know whether he is an *efreet* or not by my hair which rises of its own motion at him, if he is not of the *b'nê Adam* : but now all such demons and goblins have been driven back to the Sudan whence they came, by reason of iron swords and guns and telegraphs."

Came the last days of my sojourn ; was it better worth to spend the three days on a pilgrimage to the monastery, or further explore these fastnesses for wild goat ? True, the otiose monks had let slip one fourth-century manuscript into the hands of the ingenuous Tischendorf, and Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson had discovered the old Syrian text of the Gospels ; but one of them, looking like a dwarf Assyrian king, with beard and hair in ringlets, long cloak and barret, had visited me in Suez, and was mightily displeasing with his offer to charge himself with the ordinance of my caravan at high cost. There is a frequent aura of nauseous repulsion attaching to ostentatious Oriental Christians ; their greasy smile, their voice soft like European hybrids, or the wolf who burnt his throat with hot irons, perhaps the added femininity of petticoats (which natheless the Moslems wear) are kneaded together into the flabby dough which calls down upon itself the visitations of the more virile races. Moreover, the monks demand a toll of a *lira* for entrance to their monastery, and I felt little inclined to offer myself to their spoiling after the officiousness of their

ambassador. So the ibex drew me that I should run after them, a better way than to sit in easy travel on a rocking beast.

One hot morning, therefore, Sbeah led me up an ancient river-course, now green and rampantly fertile with all the growth that springs where water is at but a little depth. The morning was hot, and no wind rose to cool the parched earth-flooring of the little shelves of this forgotten cascade. Here thrust the spikes of grasses, piercing the tesserae of pebbles locked in a ragged pavement above their earths, rarely thus decking the galleries of these rocks. A little flock of ibex, moving slowly in their innocence above us, passed behind the crest and were gone ; without need for caution the wady offered us fairway to their disappearance, and, this mark reached, the mountain showed to peering eyes a second long, deep valley, on the far side. Distant but half a mile the herd had couched amid the rocks for midday sleep, each beast in shadow, behind the boulders flashing light from storm-polished sides. The wind-god of this land made alliance with them, breathing a gentle susurrus preventing all secrecy of passage, nor was there safe conduct across his hostile domain ; no way but to make circuit of this mountain arm to try a hazard from the far side. Thus did we in silence, toiling hotly in a wide-flung cast behind the shelter of the ridge, and encircled the curling bay of this abyss, fashioned like forefinger and thumb in its walling. Set at last in an un-

conscious aery of this rock, and stealthily viewing the herd below, so did we see two of their outposts abask in all the pitiless accuracy of the sun, but these two only, for the rest were sleeping amid the cairns and boulders. Still, these two were a fair mark; a downhill traject, it is true, but the petted rulings of Scotland must only be accounted as the counsels of a training ground, which must broaden their liberties like ripples from a pebble-splash, weakening with their larger expansion.

The rifle bellowed in that alcove of the jinn, and the shot sped high over the quarry, a miss: and there leaped two or three score of startled ibex into the brilliant flood of sunlight, galloping everywhere. The lithe body of a rock goat nimbly footing it over uneven paths is a poor mark, and none dropped to my bullets: but alas, I take shame to myself for a wounded beast. When the last of the herd vanished Sbeah and I descended the slope, I felicitating myself that if nought had been hit, nought had at any rate been hurt: and then the little devils, who doubtless turned Orpheus' head at a happy moment, led me to look round. Against the glint of the sun in a niche of the hill a couching ibex sat, without a doubt wounded, so that we turned our steps in pursuit, but I was clumsy on the loose rock, and the poor beast rose to disappear round an edge of the hill. Try how we would, we never found it, nor did rewards of piastres offered among the Arabs that night meet with any good result.

Then ended my sojourn in the wilderness, and I sought the blue of the sea which had lain in sight, all splendid in the sun, from the crests of many mountains ; thus did Wadi Hebrân serve me for passage to bring my camels down to the Ga'ah, by the side of a cheerful little fly-breeding burn, reedy and palm-watering. The mountains abut the Ga'ah, which is the broad, pebbly sea plain, traversed by the remains of the great Abbas Pasha road, a poor track made by the great man for his better transport to his summer palace in the hills. Thence came we into Tor, the little village on the sea, where the commandant was a broad young Egyptian officer of good type, uniformed in khaki and a *tarbûsh*. Here in Tor was a native school of more than a dozen Arabs taught by a Frenchman ; embarrassingly he thumped his desk and they leapt to their feet in courtesy at our arrival. The interest lay in the contrast of the Egyptian and the Frenchman, the one cheery, jolly, broad and deep, the other undersized, slope-shouldered and myopic, longing in this strange land for boulevards and casinos. So also is it in Algeria—*Avez-vous vu Biskra, m'sieu?—c'est bien joli*—because it has a *café chantant* ; but otherwise there is little more interest for the ordinary Frenchman. Algiers itself is suburban France, where gather together the most mysterious, gossipy old ladies.

To Tor in the middle of the sixteenth century had come Furer, the Alexandrian Patriarch ; he calls it 'Thora, " which citie is on the shoare of the



WADI HEBRÂN

Red Sea of no lustre." "In this citie," says he, "we saw a Mermaid's skinne taken there many yeares before, which in the lowest part ends Fish-fashion : of the upper part only the Navill and Breasts remain." One simple remark of the Patriarch is very pleasant. "The Water of the Red Sea is of the colour that other Seas are of."

While in Tor I had been delicately schooled by Sellemi to tell impertinent Arab busybodies that we were staying in Tor for two or three days : this to prevent pestilent ruffians, however genial, from offering themselves early as servants. But towards midday the camels were loaded for the road and the last journey was begun. Only a hundred and fifty miles now separated us from Suez, but it took us five days. Each night two or three hours before dawn, Sellemi would have a roaring fire ready with an early meal ; and then shortly the start, each man shivering in the saddle until Ra, the Egyptian sun, sailed his boat into the sky again. In this wise we came to the sea again, to Hammâm Faraûn, the Bath of Pharaoh : here is a sulphurous river welling forth from crystalline limestone, warm as though from the fires of Hell, where Pharaoh and his drowned host still can be heard through the caverns groaning in torment. Sellemi, like all Arabs when they come upon hot springs, bathed in the boiling water ; I should have preferred the open sea, but there are apparently sharks, and so I followed him. The emerald caper plant, shrined like an antique

statue high up in a niche, trailed in bright waving fronds from a crevice in the aisles of rock, seeking an equal place with the hyssop in the herbal of King Solomon: it is my latest memory.

TARABLUS EL-GHARB, 1903

He that is backward to share in the pleasant Libyan acres
Sooner or later, I warn him, will feel regret at his folly.

—*Oracle of the Pythoness concerning Cyrene*, HERODOTUS
(ed. Rawlinson).

NOW Africa hath five daughters in the north, wild hoydens who have coquetted with many adventurers, yielding at times to the caresses of blunt seafarers, Phœnician and Roman, or at others to the rough capture of puritanic iconoclasts from Arabia or raiders from the south of Europe ; successive waves of Semite and Latin imposed on Hamite stock of brown or black. Memphis bowed to the Roman yoke, and later to a hardier nation from still further north ; El-jzêr and Tunis, too, dallied with the Latin race from Rome or Marseilles ; Tarablus el-Gharb spent the flower of her youth with Latin conquerors, and this same Italy finds to-day entry amid the Tartar occupiers. Moghreb el-Aksa apostatized with the rest to Islam, and, though once part under Ingliz occupation, is the most lawless of the five. 'Tis a strange strip of land this, of the Atlas Mountains to the Brook of Egypt ; of ancient romance and accredited sorcery (who hath not heard of the fame of Moghrebi wizards ?) ; of Hannibal and his heroes,

who so found favour in Baal's sight that he vouchsafed them much honour in their campaignings ; of the Caliphs of Islam, whose religion spread from east to west ; of the wild terrible deeds of the Riff pirates ; down to bloody battles of English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, against the Moslem races.

Amid the mongrel descendants of these conquerors, the inhabitants of Tripoli, holding to ancient customs, wear the *barrakan*, descended, so men say, from the Roman toga. Beyond the circle of safety marked by the compass of Ghariân, Tarhuna, and Lebda, lie the wild tribe of the Tawareg, who screen their faces from the flying sand with a mask of cloth ; here, too, are the towns of Murzuk and Ghadâmes, rarely visited by Europeans. In the districts of the olive, where grow hundreds of thousands of these trees—this is within a hundred miles of the sea—are ancient Roman oil-presses looking like dolmens from afar. These are made of three squared blocks of stone, two as pillars standing high, a Jachin and a Boaz, with the third set atop, and in the standing columns are the morticed holes for the oil-press ; the Arabs called these monuments *senâm*. Before Sir Arthur Evans and Prof. J. L. Myres had travelled through this land they had been accounted as prehistoric trilithons or cromlechs ; but the latter has shown clearly that this is an error.¹

¹ *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, vol. xvii. In the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (*art.* Tripoli) this fallacy is still maintained : " There is reason to believe that



A SENÂM

Hans Vischer, mentioning that the ancient inhabitants of this land sent their Emperor Septimus Severus a large quantity of olive oil, remarks, "Little enough now remains of the ancient olive groves,"¹ but his journey took him directly south of Tripoli, and not to the east where the olives are.

In the past those who had been to Tripoli had gone seeking a definite purpose, consuls taking up their duties, explorers making it their base wherefrom to start their caravans, antiquaries in search of ruins, or those skilled in languages studying Hausa or Arab dialects. Among these the gallant Barth had fetched a compass of a few hundred miles behind the town to practise his pack-train for his more serious journey into the interior. Von Bary did the same. H. S. Cowper and de Mathuisieulx had in later times occupied themselves with this region. These are but a few of the names connected with travel in Tripoli, and yet they are not numerous when all are told. It was partly the *asnâm* which drew me to Tripoli in an Italian ship which stayed in her passage at Malta.

the builders of these prehistoric monuments are represented by the Berber people, who still form the substratum, and in some places the bulk, of the inhabitants of Tripoli proper." H. S. Cowper, *The Hill of the Graces*, p. 131, has been at pains to examine many of them, and has well described them; as he says, the term *senâm* is a wide one in Tripoli, being used "first, for certain megalithic door-like structures of dressed stone, which are the most characteristic features of the ruined sites; and secondly, and more broadly, [the Arabs] apply it to any site where such a structure still stands." The distinctive point about the trilithons is the lateral holes which occur in all those which he observed, except four. ¹ *Across the Sahara*, p. 6.

A yellow land, Malta, of dry stone walls and prickly pears, and its Arabic the worst of all the low Arabic dialects. Six years back I, serving as lance-sergeant in my University Corps, learnt some little matter of the Maltese from our instructor, whose regiment had lain there, that they would cry at the sight of their own blood. This trait I know not for certain, but I found that it is their proudest boast that they are British subjects, and by such you may identify them. Just as an American is bewrayed by his shaven neck, his grating voice, and the sharp angle of his shoe-soles beneath the instep, so will a man who claims loudly to be a British subject, and speaks with a sharpened *t* as in "Don't mention itttt," reveal that he is a Maltese. These uttered warnings against Tripoli; "Beware," said these Catuli Melitæi, "for it is a terrible place without hotels," but they were of comfortable habit, deserving their Latin nickname.

Now on the ship was one Joseph Weissberger, whose aim was a holiday to hunt lizards, chameleons, tortoises, snakes, frogs and all the creeping things of the earth in Tunis, and it fell out that on a happy day we each took counsel with the other of our several expeditions. Then, quoth he, "Let us go together to Tripoli: it matters nought where I find my reptiles," and I fell in gladly with his mood. For he was a man to whom all languages came easily, and withal a musician at whose hands the cabin was filled with the plaintive melodies of

Norway, the symphonies of Grieg, or even the barbaric music of American atabals. Moreover, he had voyaged in Asia Minor with a German sage the year before. Clearly it seemed laid down in the tablets of destiny that we should travel together, and when the anchor dropped into the deep Mediterranean blue of Tripoli harbour, it was no solitary journey that lay in front of me.

Tripoli is the same long, low, white town that a man may see recur a thousand times in his journeyings eastward, from Babylon to Barbary ; but to this is joined the wonderful blue and green sea in a narrow streak joining the blue sky on the flanks, while east and west of the white houses are the palms, dense, luxuriant and heavy with fruit ; the whole cause for its existence is a small mass of reef which forms a breakwater. Hither come the trade caravans from Murzuk and Ghadâmes and Fezzân, bringing their wares like ancient Egyptian traders to Hatshepset the queen. Negroes, Hausas and Tawareg all congregate in its bazaars, and for these had come my old college-mate, W. H. Brooks, to write a dictionary of the Hausa language. 'Tis an unspoilt town of the East, a riot of colour, with narrow streets trellised overhead with vines in crosswise network, with grape clusters hanging from espaliers above the *gahwa*-houses where sit the Arabs eternally over the little cups. The patient Turkish soldier was in possession, a wonderful beast of burden, in those days rarely touching his pay and yet perpetually cheerful.

The only visible thing clean about him was his Martini rifle, curiously plugged with a greasy rag, no bad device in a country of wind-borne sand ; his uniform a patchwork stitched with sackcloth, and boots miraculously adhesive ; while his own port was a peculiar curve. This was changed in Syria after the Constitution, which spent more money on the army ; the troops wear a shoddy brown uniform of khaki which wears out easily at the knee, and patched breeches are frequent ; nay, Oriental always, although they copy Frangi uniform, they roll their putties underneath their slovenly boots. Watch them at drill, gendarmerie or regulars, armed with a magazine rifle ; the slow marching pace with bastard German high-stepping action does not give an impression of smartness, nor does the firing position in two ranks on the knee without resting the elbow suggest a proper aim. A squad which I once saw in Damascus had, when in line, a kind of "right wheel twice" like a ballet. As for the officers, they appear to be chiefly concerned with their upturned moustaches and light grey overcoats ; 'tis said they cannot concentrate their attention for more than ten minutes at a time.

So we went ashore at Tripoli in a cock-boat to the *gumruk*, the Customs. It was still the ancient régime of unblest days when Turkey was unregenerate, without its Constitution, which was going to do such great things, and there was a mock-rigid air of formality about this *douane*.

Nowadays they do not demand a passport of a foreigner, but aforetime none might pass the portals without it ; moreover, books and weapons were among the prohibited articles. It is an old story how the Sultan of this period had laid embargo on dynamos, so obviously connected with dynamite, but all this ignorance has been miraculously removed before that wand of faerie, the Constitution. The heaven-born of these lands to-day has thrown off the fatuity of his dignified fathers, foolishly grave, stupidly pious ; his motto *je suis civilisé* (add thereto for device a Lutetian moulin, gules) shows his rapid advance, and his pleasant, easy familiarity, born of that Liberty which you may take with other folk, wins over the English stranger at once : *Ah, mon cher, pa'ole d'honnère, Samsun* (or any town of his knowledge) *c'est pètti Pariz ; des cafés et choses ; mais ici* (the good open leas) *il n'y a rien, et les Arabes sont de très mauvais caractère* ; follows a simian irritation of the coat-lapel, indicative of disgust. An official may use the telegraph, I believe, without cost, and it is interesting to see him chattering at the wires. Another weapon which strikes terror into the heart of his foes is the pen, and a proud man is he who has an accusation to write, perched up on a stool with the paper held beneath the squeaking reed upon his open hand ; so will the evildoer tremble when he sees this mysterious power.

The Governor lived on the sea-shore in a fortress

of mediæval aspect of strange angles and curves, which looked as though it had been a disappointed man-of-war run aground in Tripoli. Here, high up in this building, after many steps, a lean and slippered sentry presented arms to the Consul, and we were ushered into the room of Naama Effendi, the interpreter, who said he was a relative of Nimroud Rassam, the British Consular Agent at Mosul. Behind this anteroom, after passing many doorways hung with arras, we found the great man, of friendly mien, with a fine head and delicately chiselled nose. The Consul hoped that His Excellency would courteously give me leave to travel, for I was a *mudîr* of the English *Antikhâna*, anxious to see the Roman remains in the interior for a fortnight ; and in the end I returned to Weissberger well pleased. But the Consul came later, and said that Weissberger had not been provided for ; but, said he, " he can surely travel with you as your servant." And Weissberger, hearing this, acquiesced readily, " Yes, massa." Two days later the permit to travel arrived at the Consulate, and the Consul spent this interval in arranging our caravan. Horses were hard to find because the Turks had laid hold on all goodly beasts for the war in Macedonia, and we were fortunate in obtaining two miserable jades of carriage horses, the property of a fat man bred in the town. This man, called like most Moslems Mohammed, hired these horses out to us for the fortnight at five francs a day each, with his

services, providing food for himself and them ; it was expensive, but the war gave us no option. Two donkeys under a boy, Ali, at half that rate, carried our baggage on double panniers of basket ; and our escort was two zaptiehs, to whom we paid three francs for the two each day for fodder and sizes.

This fat man was a villain, and his villainy became apparent soon after we had left Tripoli. When we sat ourselves down of an evening, who was the first to be seated ? Who was it argued perpetually when our fiat had gone forth for the times of starting and halting ? Who was discovered wearing our slippers on a morning, giving as only excuse that he was keeping his own for the hills ? Answer me these questions, O *Shishmân*, and then give place to a fitter man, Ali, who was always ready to help work in camp, to do the meanest chares, and to hunt for firewood on damp mornings. The two zaptiehs were well mounted, and were armed with Winchester carbines: the older man, a grizzled veteran, stuck out all round like a monkey puzzle with pistols, daggers, and swords. He had a wonderful knife with an *efreet* in intaglio on the blade.

Westwards as a man rides to Zanzur, a small oasis but a few hours' march from Tripoli, the track lies along the sea-coast by yellow sand dunes and flats ; the good warm sea called to her embrace with murmuring invitation, and by a ruined watch-tower we yielded. Each pack beast, freed

of its load, rolled on its back in sand to ease its galls ; if they be ridden into the sea they appear to bear with washing thus, albeit each will shy and refuse in its ignorance if even little wave-lets come tumbling on shore. As we rode into Zanzur each Arab urchin regarded us as a galanty-show rejoicing, just eternal human boy.

That evening we lay at Limaye. Mohammed, who loved his ease, still nursed his fond belief that our purpose to sleep in the open was fustian, and at dusk made as though the caravan should enter one of the *funduks*, those open courtyards or khans where travellers pass the night. His face fell at a reiteration of his orders, but as the rainy season does not come until later in the year (from December to February) there was no practical objection save the risk of the heavy dew ; and we bivouacked securely in a field. With the early dawn the little breeze wafted the fragrance of moist palms and scrub over the start, while the beasts walked delicately in their stiffness after the damp night, shaking the saddles in their jog free of the dewdrops. The younger zaptieh Mesawwud was eager to reach his native village Zawiya, a few hours further, whither our route lay (for we had a letter to deliver to the Turkish Governor there). At midday we drew nigh to a grove of palms, giving kindly shade on the silver sand, and out of a little booth of wattle there dashed a chubby little maid of six, Mesawwud's sister, hugging him amain. So sat we here a while, while



IRRIGATION-MACHINE AT ZANZUR

the men devoured a great *b'zin*, a hot pudding of meal covered with red sauce and pepper, with no small appearance of an English apple pudding, served on a wooden platter and covered with another.

Zawiya village lay near, and, as we went, the Arabs, being ignorant of Europeans, thronged us about ; the barracks lay behind the houses, and here lived the *Kaimmakâm*. One Turkish office is much like another, bare, whitewashed, with simplicity of furniture, like nightmare schoolrooms smelling of ancient ink. There will be a table with dusty inkpot, broad-pointed reed pens, and sand-caster in place of blotting paper ; the more advanced Turks add a table-bell to summon their servants, and perhaps a little scent to smell from time to time. The telegraph-office is the same, where the operator either in a perilous condition of half-tied points, or even frankly in his night-gear, performs all the ritual and incantation to set the lightnings in motion ; successful in his copy of civilization.

In no wise different from other local magistrates was this *Kaimmakâm*. We spoke of the war in Macedonia (it was 1903), which had so drained Tripoli of horses that we had barely secured our poor beasts ; and as we went out into the great courtyard I was presented to Mustapha Effendi, officer of horse, a great six-foot man, splendidly made, who looked in his blue tunic and white breeches for all the world like a certain Corporal

Major of the Blues, who once tried to teach me how to ride. To his house at Surman with him we went, a journey of fifteen miles ; he was magnificently mounted and dwarfed us both as he sat, a soldier-picture in his saddle—" *Fi sa'a, fi sa'a*, quickly, quickly," said he constantly, urging our wretched nags to a gallop. This house lay at the end of a long palm grove ; we sat outside by a large leaping bonfire with him and an old Arab *hakîm*, awaiting supper, while all round about at no great distance banged the guns of the young men courting. Only is this fusillade surpassed by a people who thus mark a date in July, where on its morrow you may see a dozen natives, Abram Abramovitch to Peter Islavinsky, lodged in jail for thus celebrating the victories of their ancestors. The Arabs fire off their guns at most ceremonies, weddings, circumcisions and such-like ; nay, at night, the solitary watcher in an Eastern orchard will thus fray away the phantom thieves of indistinct shadows.

From Surman we rode to Zawarra, and thence, turning to the south, to El-Ajelat, a small village with a *Kaïmmakâm*, a prison and a telegraph, amid palm trees in a waste of white sand. I sought the telegraph, which, like many in the Turkish Empire, can only use the Arabic character, and ventured on the word *selâmâ*, to the London code address of a friend which was spelt chiefly with z's and r's, and was within the compass of the instrument, and much surprised was I to find later

that it had arrived. The Governor, this time an Arab, bid us to his meal, and beneath a swinging oil lamp we met the postmaster, and the second in command, who looked a very Shylock in an Arab *barrakan*. Before the first course arrived the latter strove to be an agreeable rattle with three words of French, and one of Italian; his finest venture was an elaborate series of synonyms, "*Effendi, bil Italiâni Seyneeoure, bil Fransâwi Mossiou.*" Our good host gave us of the best, and we sat at a table covered with a white cloth, with towels in their usual place as napkins, and (even as the ancient stories of the Grand Turk tell) when the server brought in the blancmanger of fowl, we took our portions in our fingers. When the *Kammakâm* felt a peculiarly succulent morsel, he would tear it off and share it with us. Two courses of meat followed, and then a cheese pastry, and finally a kind of starch pudding with cinnamon and almonds. Then cried Shylock, "*Julie!*" and my companion and I stared at each other, for surely the tale of Oriental hospitality was now full; could this be one of the *harîm*, or was it a native name for some new form of tartlet? No, he spake in French, in gratitude to our host. After coffee we rose, and mounting our beasts again pushed on to a little village, Jo'damîa, where we lay that night.

The next town in our route was Kasr Ifrîn, two days' ride to the south, away from the coast, by the low rolling downlands covered with coarse

grass, which form a belt between the sea and the hills, where you will find nomad Arabs dwelling in hair tents : and, as you approach the higher ground, you will traverse a spacious growth of tamarisks, which give their name to the Wadi el-Ethel. From the far end of this grove the low hills rise, and your caravan will wind in theatrical gullies amid the channelled low steeps where gypsum outcrops in the slopes. As we took our way through these fastnesses our guide grew ill at ease, and ran up to the tops to spy the land beyond. The track was weary for the horses, and we had dismounted on reaching these difficulties ; now and again they, seeking their own way, came to impassable places and had to be helped back. The little patient donkeys, brushing their packs against the earthen banks as they went, came on steadily over the winding track which ever narrowed in its upward trend ; once the branches of a bush blocked the way until lopped off with spade and knife. At last the caravan, reaching the end of its fairway, stopped where the ravine forked trackless and forbidding ; and on a sudden from above, our guide, whom we had forgotten for a while, leapt up like some child's Jack-in-the-box, filling his mouth, a Billingsgate slang-whanging Tartar if ever there was one, with railing at the wretched Ali, calling him *khanzîr* in his volume of words. There was nought but to turn round and retrace our steps, doubling on our tracks to the proper path, belated in the fast-increasing dusk.



IFRÂN

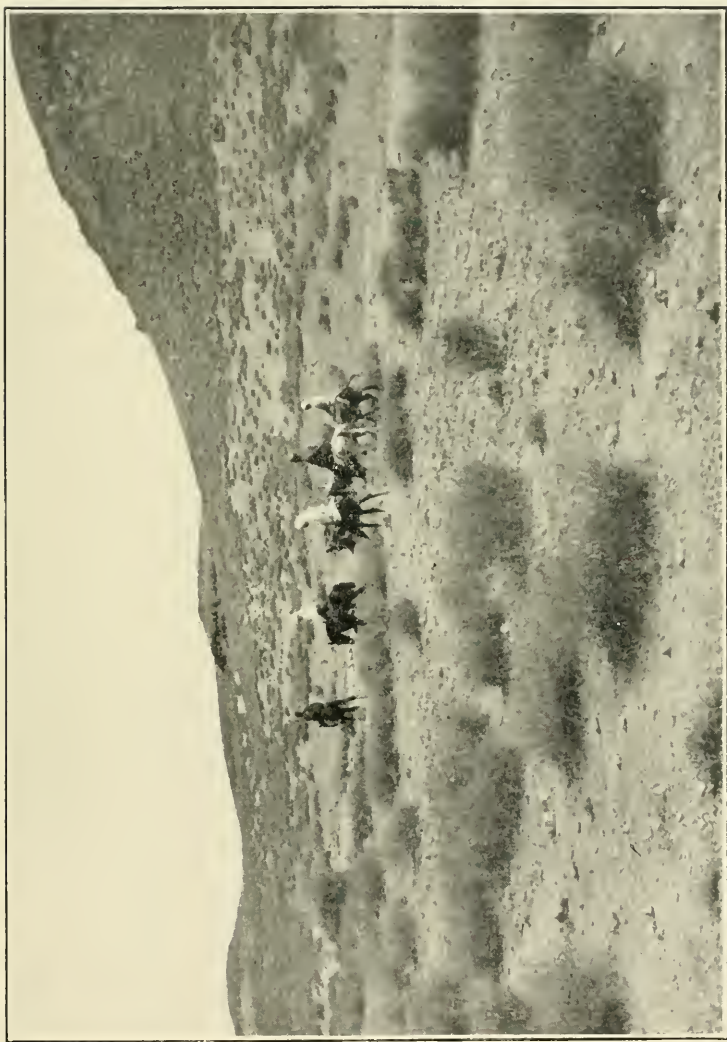
For many hours in the moonlight the caravan moved slowly up towards the town of Kasr Ifrîn, which lay on the slopes white and silent, save for the baying of some pariah hound watching on the roofs. At the end lay the fort, a massive structure with a postern and heavy wooden door, against which we beat ; the bolts clanged back, it fell open, and we filed in, to sleep after a journey of nearly fourteen hours.

This fort is a rectangular two-storied building of stone, with a courtyard in its midst. A solid parapet protects the passage-way round the top of the walls, and from this you may see over the flat roof of the village northwards to the sea across the plains, while facing the fort are the artillery barracks. By good fortune the people were agog with festivals, the chief being that sacrifice from children to the Moloch who has been worshipped by Semites since the institution of the rite begun nominally by Abraham. The small boys of any age from two to five were gorgeously dressed, and rode on horses which were led through the crowds by their relations amid explosions, tom-tomming, and barbaric dancing ; the ceremony was performed by a European doctor who had settled there.

Thence we rode towards Mudresân, and the next day reached the abode of troglodytes, called Ghariân. As we came through the westernmost hamlet in the dark of the evening the limestone rang loud under our horses' hooves in the cold air ;

we had come to a stone-wall country now, and hard by the road in a field a gathering of Arabs held holiday with guns and drums. As we peered over the coping of the wall, our helmets upspringing like two immodest fungi, the celebrants ceased their merrymaking and streamed towards us to solve the problem. Their feelings were friendly, and they gave us peaceful greetings. Our bed was on a flat roof, where had been spread the drying vine-leaves for the camel fodder, but despite our blankets the night was very cold.

The village assembled next morn to watch us donning our clothes. It was market day in Ghariân ; the large *agora* in front of the Governor's house was thronged with Arabs buying and selling under the open sky. The Governor, who spoke some dialect of Czech, with which my companion could cope, led us round the strange underground dwellings cut down into the earth. Imagine a block of earth the size of an ordinary house removed from the soil, leaving the earth unrevetted but standing perpendicular by its own consistency : into this a ramp descends one side, leading through a gateway, until the floor is reached, a sunken courtyard thus surrounded by four solid walls of earth. In these walls are hollowed many chambers, each debouching on the courtyard, which are still inhabited at a fabulously low rent : and M. de Mathuisieulx has well described them in his book *A Travers la Tripolitaine*. Herr Barth noted the similarity of the Arabic



BETWEEN IFRÍN AND GHARIÂN

word *maghârâ*, a cave, with this place-name Ghariân, but he mislikes the comparison, citing Ebn Khaldun's saying that Ghuriân was the name of a tribe : on the other hand, Mr. H. S. Cowper reasonably mentions that many other names are thus composed : Gheran, Ghirgaresh, Ghirrât ; and even instances the Libyan Garamantes with their city Garama.

We sat in an orchard and discussed the native folk-songs with the young Turkish officers of the garrison, who seemed much surprised at their publication, which had been made by Herr Stumme ; they recognized many in our quotations, notably that one which sings of the mangy tortoise. We left in the afternoon, passing the extinct volcano of Tekut, a low, lop-sided crater, at some distance ; our route lay eastwards through a forest of olive trees, and consequently by those ancient trilithons aforementioned, the *asnâm*. Two days later we came in sight of the little village of Tarhuna from the crest of a long and gently sloping stretch of undulating land. Here lived a *bimbashi* or *chiliarch* of the zaptiehs ; and on our arrival he prepared a gallant cavalcade to escort us to a waterfall, which was this demesne's chiefest delight. To me he assigned a glorious barb, but alas ! bitted and bridled in the cruel native fashion, with which manner I was all unschooled ; for in the mouth is a sharp iron which acts to the touch of the reins, and thus one may not draw them to curb his stallion. I, all unwitting,

found him difficult to manage, and in the end, was thrown as he curvetted in his prancings, a woeful downfall. Ignominiously I was given a milder steed, and thus we rode to the cascade, beautiful to see, indeed a pleasant fall of water. There are few streams of importance in the north of Tripoli, and consequently this is held in high honour among a people who depend so much on wells. Whether this lack of water accounts for the scarcity of game is doubtful, for African beasts go long distances without drinking : but certain it is that we saw no game during that ride of three hundred miles, save one covey of partridges and a tame gazelle. A few years before, gazelle used to come near the very town of Tripoli, so the Consul told me : the *Encyclopædia Britannica* to-day speaks of moufflon, gazelle, hares, rabbits and marmots being among the commoner animals, but this may refer to the hills further south.¹ Weissberger was, however, able to surround himself with wondrous lizards and chameleons, and there were also tortoises.

We were now set north-eastwards to the sea again, by Mesellata, a fairly large settlement, and thence to the ancient Roman port of Lebda, now

¹ Swainson Cowper (*loc. cit.*, p. 101) agrees with me, for he says, " During my rides in the hills the only quadrupeds seen were three hares, a few chameleons, and a mouse. Birds are commoner, the quail, partridge, and heron, and various hawks existing, but they are scarce. Gazelles, of course, are found on the plains near the foot of the range, and foxes I have seen near the coast at Tripoli. Wolves and jackals seem unknown in the hills."

Homs, buried in the sands of the sea, spreading wide, with tombs in its suburbs. The buildings, of which much is still standing, are of well-hewn stone : three immense columns of porphyry lie in the sand, as they were left by Admiral Smyth after his excavations in 1817 to carry spoil for King George upon his throne. As for the modern town, it is a poor little place ; but its telegraph office was bilingual enough for Weissberger to suggest to little Signor Toffolletti, two days distant in Tripoli, *Prepara colazione stupenda.*

THE SUDAN, 1906

The thirsting Tantalus doth catch at streams that from him flee ;
Why laughest thou ? The name but changed, the tale is told
of thee. RALEIGH, *translating* HORACE.

NOW the outrageous fortune which makes play with those thrice-swirled tea-leaves the lives of men sent me by its changes into the Surveys of the Sudan service, and hence I found myself just before Christmas, 1905, in Khartoum, waiting to move up to the Red Sea coast to join an engineer officer who was surveying the awful black mountains of the Hadendowa country. Why or wherefore I was there matters little : perhaps the pay drew me, perhaps overmuch bricks and mortar peised me down, perhaps routine unequally balanced the prospect of new journeys to the East. However that may be, I had for the moment cast the old profession behind me to try a new one—does not Burton say in his *Anatomy*, “Methinks it would well please any man to look upon a Geographical Map ? ”

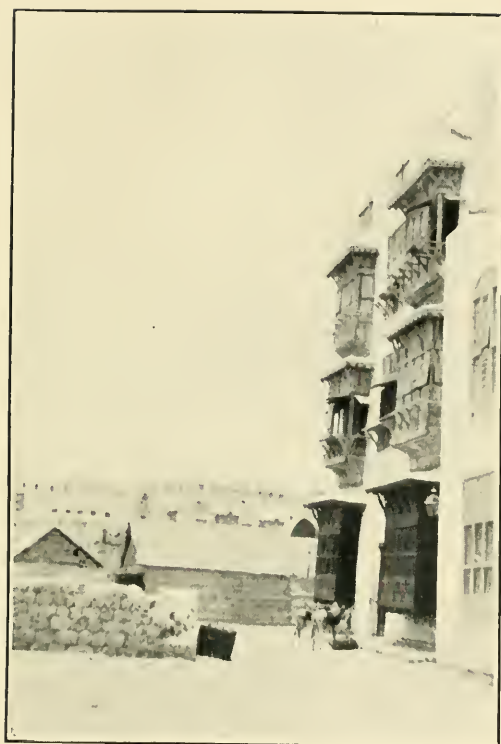
Khartoum is built by soldiers for soldiers ; it is as ugly almost as Aldershot, with its serried lines of umber buildings and little huts. The one relief was the Sirdar's palace of cream, built in a pleasant

garden, where an English and an Egyptian sentry stand on duty among the Maxims and Nordenfeldts at the door, looking out on the Nile which flows past in front a biscuit-throw off. Amid one of the large open squares of this town I found P. D. Scott-Moncrieff—peace to his memory!—erecting a large late wall of Candace's period, round which the Museum was to be built some day : one, who was not a soldier, came to me later with trembling joy in his voice, showing how, in future, Khartoum could not be all straight lines and squares, for the Museum must be built a little slantwise to take due proportion. When you have seen the umber brick of the Gordon College, walked on the undulating umber brick of the War Office floor, surfeited yourself with umber walls, umber houses, umber buildings in straight lines, meet to recall a certain strange story of streaks produced in a man's head by foam-barred tides, you may turn your eyes on the yellow sands of the horizon which go into nothingness for ever. There are a few sparse trees, rarer as you go farther from the river, but that is all ; it is a drear waste, without the art of the Oriental which makes a fair city rise from a desert. The sons of Ham are still looking at the nakedness of their father which begat them ; Africa of this latitude is naked of all that can show relief from Nature's heavy hand. Yet the old Easterners left their taste in one city of the Sudan, Sawâkin, which shows the grace of Syrian towns, where, instead of the squalid huts

made by prognathous black men, are fair houses with overhanging latticed windows, and mosques and minarets. Lapped by the Red Sea, although now moribund because of Port Sudan, Sawâkin is a landmark in the history of this country, for that it was the one Sudanese city which kept the Egyptian flag flying in the wars of the eighties.

To this city the new rail took me (in those days the Atbara rail had not long been built), and here I sought food and camels to take me farther on my journey. Camels the English *mudîr* obtained for me, with a strange Hadendowa servant called Kerao; Angelo Capato, at that time a Napoleon of finance in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, who kept an emporium of all merchandise, fitted me out with tinned foods, and so great was his name that one was inclined to think of Pope Gregory, *Non Anglo Sudan, Sed Angelo*.

I had telegraphed a month back, as soon as I knew that the Sudan was to be my certain goal, for my old servant Mejîd from Mosul, who was always desirous of seeing the world. No word had come from him of his start, and hence I could but leave word where I might. They knew of his existence and probable advent in the War Office in Cairo, and this ultimately proved very fortunate for him. So I left Sawâkin with a native servant and a few camels one evening, to seek for an engineer in the wilderness, making my way first to Port Sudan, then similar to the Eden in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, for hardly anything was built save one



SAWÂKIN

or two red brick houses : there was a small native village of huts with beehive roofs made of straw. As I reached the collection of tin shanties by the seashore, I lighted on an Englishman carrying a theodolite and staff, who greeted me casually by name. It fell out that some years before he had visited my old department to ask me for some small information, and had not forgotten my face ; methinks such a man with such a memory should go far. But then the Sudan has the choice of the army, for it can offer a subaltern officer brevet rank of captain, and he can be earning seven hundred a year at twenty-seven, and saving most of it if he is in a wild part with nothing to buy except a few pounds' worth of tinned food each month. In their wisdom the authorities no longer allow men to be alone, even of all those that dwell by the river sud, as is said in the Book of Baruch, but put three or four together : so that the Devils in these solitudes have no more power to ride them singly, as was their wont. The Sudanese officials are wonderful men, such as are hardly known at home, where they are swallowed up when on leave in crowds of Londoners.

I learnt more of the man whom I sought, how that he was making his way to Gabêt, the ancient gold mines, several days' journey to the north, whither I set out, leaving the sea behind my right shoulder, and striking inland for the hills. Here were the tribes of these strange long-haired chocolate-coloured men, called Hadendowas and Amarar.

The only wear of the men was a kilt or skirt, sometimes with an added mantle : a belt and a pouch slung by leather cords about them, and amulets on their arms ; their hair fell in a thick, matted mop upon their shoulders, frequently a mass of terrible grease, with a heavy sickening smell. The women wrapped themselves in a mantle of folds and windings. I had never fully understood how a stag can smell a human being so swiftly, until on a day a Hadendowa family passed me at fifty yards, with my back turned towards them, while I was writing outside my tent ; the wind bore down the presence of them to me, making the place foul with the coarse smell. These strange wild beings were quite friendly ; they went about armed with a kind of lancegay, long and thin-pointed, and their youths would shamfight with stones, holding the rough pebbles strangely sideways contrary to our habit, so that when thrown they made a low whistling or drumming noise as they hurtled through the air. But they had nought of the good Arab desert law ; they were frightened of us, we found later, " lest we take the land " (because of our survey ironmongery) and so they hid their dribbling wells, which are dug in the wadies everywhere near encampments, covering them with stones so that a man might not distinguish them on the surface. Once in my thirsty haste with my servant, I asked for water from an encampment without first giving greeting. " Is there no salâm ? " said

one in answer, and sought to sell water from his skin, a thing unspeakable ; and all thirsty we passed him by and left him. They understood nought of an agreement ; a promise made overnight to carry boxes up a hill next day was null and void, nor was the deceiver to hold or bind, nor swayed by money to perform his promise. In bargaining, their method is to continue saying *Iftah Allah* (" God open your purse-strings ! ") to any offer that may be made ; it is charmingly ingenuous.

Their language is a curious agglutinative Hamitic dialect, exceedingly difficult to master scientifically, and, alas ! dropping into the eternal sink of forgetfulness before the advance of Arabic ; so perhaps doth history repeat itself, for the ancient Hamite Egyptian adopted scores of Semitic words at one period of his world existence. I tried to learn it from them, and to augment the known dictionary and grammar of Reinisch and Almqvist : at night over the camp-fire stray camp-followers would give me new words at a piastre for twenty, counting each with a small pebble.

It was but a day or two after leaving Port Sudan that we espied distantly a train of five or six camels, and I rode hastily to them, thinking (and it proved right) that my future colleague was here. So we joined caravans and halted, discussing the future : he had made a compass map from Port Sudan to Gabêt, to note his triangulation points, and mark his spot for a base. This last he

had found in a broad valley between the two hills Odeâno and Hêrâno, near the Khor Arbat, where still flowed the stream which was to feed Port Sudan : a little complaining beck in this land of great thirst, black mountains, hunger, and sandy valleys. Thither we turned the long train of camels ; he had with him a lithe Sudanese sergeant and a thick, stolid private named Idrîs, of some black battalion, who played the flute. All that he could play were three notes in a descending scale continually repeating these ; it was like the long word in Aristophanes, although it ended in a purificatory rite long before Aristophanes had finished.

Thus in the afternoon we came back to the place he had chosen for a base ; a mile-long course in this wide valley, ringed about by rocky, stony mountains, Odeâno to the east, and Hêrâno, a spike to the west, washed at its base by Arbat, which disappeared into the earth almost or ever it reached our open valley, flowing through thick groves of tamarisks and vegetation.

As you go north of Sawâkin, between the hills and the sea, the country lies level and sandy, a plain which breeds rough grass and thorn here and there, where the birds in winter sing like those of an English common. If westwards, your camels will pass the bailey of these mountainous bastions, by *khors* where ancient torrents found their bed, walled on either hand with granite crags. By such paths were the camels guided to the place of

the first base, a sandy floor spread wide, growing thorn bush and thorn tree, where in easy sight was the amphitheatre of cliffs marking the lower terraces to the further mountains. The tricky beams at sunset rested on the eastern peaks, and the dying rays, denied by the western hills, sought out their purpling crannies with definite light ; the noonday was a perpetual glare, save when a mist hung grey and white, giving relief from the sun. The roaring, rushing desert blast swept helter-skelter down upon the tents, and made the scrivener's task outside impossible : while within the canvas the hot air felt like a hypocaust, driving the inmates to seek sparse shelter outside. Sweet after brackish sea-coast water, the welling pools of the Arbat mirrored the tamarisk spinneys, and here was water to drink or for bathing, where minnows nibbled at paddling toes ; rarely a green kingfisher flashed past in vivid streak, and once I heard a hidden bird sing an almost perfect scale of six descending notes. Mr. Doughty heard the song of one such which ascended on the gamut, near the Nefûd. Locusts swung like autumn leaves on the thorn branches, swarming thickly everywhere, masses on the ground, clusters on the trees, four inches long marked with grey and splendid red, not unlike in colouring to the Red Underwing moth ; they shuffled away with inanity, futilely. Flying in great clouds, they gathered in the domes of the tents or dropped upon the evening meal, or knocked over candle-lamps in

their flight (thus at least did the Hadendowa servant explain a breakage). When the mists were too thick for surveying, my colleague and I would seek the coveys of sand-grouse sometimes to be found near the Khor Arbat, or the rock pigeons which lived on the sheer face of Hêrâno to fill the larder ; as the season went on, there came great flocks of doves to feed on the camel fodder which these loose-lipped beasts scattered abroad from the sacking on which it was set before them, and these eked out the tinned food. Once I saw three hares in one day, and at another time a small covey of grey birds with long bills and legs. Rarely were we able to buy a kid, although the flocks were frequent, for the native cared not to sell, and there seemed to be a tabu against us, but sometimes we shot an Ariel gazelle or an ibex. Often the caravan as it jogged slowly by passed a few gazelle, which would stop and stupidly stare at it at seventy yards' distance : then would one light down off the camel, leaving the caravan to go on, and draw an easy bead on some beast. Sometimes in the hills during theodolite work, the natives would set up a *ho-ho-ho* ! and a big horned ibex would gallop past, always when there was no rifle. Once, just as the day's work was done on the top of Hêrâno, I looked into a precipice by chance, and beheld an ibex several hundred feet below ; I left the theodolite with the native boy and hastened down after it. It was a hurried descent, and the way to reach the beast was to

go down our usual track and then make a semi-circle across a lower shoulder, and, coming round the base over the massive plantless rock, I spied the ibex at eighty yards on my own level and took a quick shot with the Lee-Metford. It hid itself, and I lost sight of it amid the rocks, but found blood-spoor where I had fired, which I followed over the great boulders, and, as I scrambled, the beast leapt forth from a cranny, and it fell to another shot. Being without a knife, I galloped it with a rough piece of granite, and, slinging it round my neck, walked back a mile or more towards camp with it thus ; but wearying of it, I cached it, and spread a handkerchief in the wind to mark the place and in the hope of keeping off preying beasts, which unhappily it did not do ; for next day we found the corbies eating the mask and eyes.

When I was in Khartoum, the Director of the Zoological Gardens had implored me to lay hands on a small beast called a *bimsuika* which lived in these fastnesses, but the Hadendowa boys could tell me nought of it, and asked, " What like were the tracks ? " which I could not say. But one night as we slept I was aroused by a squealing (we were sleeping outside the tent) and two small black beasts, like little Pomeranians, fighting rolled past my bed into the tent ; but when we struck a light they had disappeared. The natives said their name was *gwilawr*, when they heard the description next day.

Of snakes there were few. Once a small one was found in the store tent, but whether poisonous or not, I know not. There was a strange horrid centipede four inches long on the hill-tops, a thick, worm-like beast called *te-bilhôlis*; once or twice we found scorpions. But living creatures were not common, and that Eastern pest, the flea, is unknown in the Sudan, nor were we troubled by mosquitoes. A swarm of bees like the sound in the Rephaim mulberries swept by one afternoon. Otherwise there were but the domestic camels and goats of the Hadendowas; one might get a drink of milk from the former in a bowl made of bark, but, as I have said, it was difficult to buy a kid for food. It may have been that they would not slaughter their beasts save as a sacrifice. Once I heard that a burial was taking place and, by hearsay, learnt that the Hadendowas would sacrifice beasts at the grave; this I did not see, for they are a tetchy people, and might not have borne willingly with a sightseer, although they were always gentle with us. Their graves were scattered over the face of the land, the perimeter marked with flat stones set upright in the earth, as children make play-houses, with an opening to the east.

Our camp lay in the broad valley for seven weeks, for there was much to do. The first duty was the measurement of a mile-long base over a flat surface, now cleared of irregularities and small bushes by the men; the exact ends were marked by pegs driven firmly in and with their centre



HADENDOWAS AT A WELL.



HADENDOWAS LOADING CAMELS

accurately dotted. The metal tape, which stretches as little as may be, is drawn taut and a board is pegged down beneath its furthest calculated mark and pencilled opposite it, and as it lies on the sweating sand the local temperature is taken for correction for expansion. This is repeated until the far peg is reached and the base measured thus for a first time : a second and a third time measurements are taken and then the mean of the corrected totals is accepted as the proper length ; thus is fair accuracy established.

Then remains to find the latitude of one of its ends and the angle of this base with the north, the azimuth ; so, as the sun is but a clumsy object in these clear heavens, you must go by night and, working with the Nautical Almanack, seek *Arc-turus*, *Orion* and *Pleiades*, and the chambers of the south for the fitting stars. With your theodolite over the peg at one end of the base, and a pin-point candle light on the other a mile away, you must swing your telescope from star to candle, and back again, with watch corrected by your heavenly guides, taking the double readings even down to seconds of arc. So you find a mean from your two stars, and settle your theodolite's latitude with little error.

Thus begins the survey ; and next day with a dozen painted poles you must climb to the clouds to the best vantage point of each and every crag of the rock in sight ; and, choosing firm ground whereon your tripod may stand, erect your bâtons,

each an accurate mark for future triangulation. So, marking the angles of each, both horizontal and vertical from both ends of the base, you may climb to each in succession and there repeat this mathematical mumbo-jumbo, going from one hill to another until you die of weariness and boredom. There are some who take pleasure in this map-making, even to finding a joy in plotting in the little hills and valleys. Such was our work for six months.

Now in these great clear distances the sun's rays can be reflected for forty miles ; so that, with intent to take long sights for angles, my colleague had brought several heliographs, rounded mirrors swinging on pivots, which threw a blinding flash ; are not such described in the Eastern tales, where the lover in the street espies the dancing ray on his mistress' ceiling, and argues, because it is a mirror, there is a woman : because the mirror flashes many times, it must be a pretty woman ?

So did we try to train our Ethiops, patiently showing them how to sight on a rod through the small peephole, and make the tomnoddy climb up and down like a wooden monkey on a stick. After many days we despatched five of them with meal and water and heliographs to the distant hills of our vision, and next day sat watching on the tops with theodolites ready for the flashes. Strange : these never appeared, and nothing flickered on the far summits to mark our native

men's success, and downwards to camp we crawled wearily with disappointment. As we arrived, there came one shamefaced blackamoor and then another, fear on their faces from their solitary night, with awesome stories of the gathered tribes, who wished to eat them, so that they dared not sleep. So was our attempt a failure, an essay too difficult for black brains. Nay, in the summer later I found the difficulty of it myself, for, trying to heliograph across a desert of forty miles, sighting on well-marked hills, I was successful in signalling to my colleague in one place only out of four ; he, withal, having a powerful glass wherewith to spy in the first instance, and I working for two or three hours in each place.

It was while we were encamped here that my faithful servant Mejîd from Mosul reached me. I had at last heard that he was coming down the Red Sea on one of the boats which were carrying the Great and Good to the opening of Port Sudan ; the Egyptian War Office, knowing that he was seeking me, had done this of their kindness. The callous native post-director in Sawâkin wantonly withheld from him my locality, and he mooned about solitary in the town till he learnt by chance what he desired, and so arrived. Despite privations his shadow had not decreased, and he would have been a match for any two Fuzzies.

Weeks passed : yet the arsmetrike of the map still demanded time and labour. We were now taking wider casts, like setters on highland hills,

to reach outlying peaks, returning after some days to our base. In the beginning camel-saddles were lacking, nor would the crafty Hadendowa sell to us, for he thought thereby that without camel saddles we could do nought. These saddles are made of twin Λ -pieces, bound firmly one in front of the other by parallel braces or ledgers, so that they bestraddle the hump fore and aft, well padded on the pressure with two long, stout cushions. The Λ -pieces are formed of two curved well-seasoned biliets, bound with thongs back to back; and our attempt to cut such hames from thorn bushes, lashing them to cross-pieces and making pillows of sacking, failed to do more than give sore backs. In the end new saddles came from Sawâkin and we could start away from our base camp.

Foolishly we did not trouble to fill up the fantasses with water, those heavy metal cisterns carried on either flank of a camel. It is within the memory of all who have travelled that each time when they have scoffed at the advice which bids them carry a day's food and a day's water, they have paid in drouth and fasting: thus did we, and under the deep shadow of Gumadribab halting for the night, learnt that there was no water near, and the Hadendowa wells were hidden. For in these great *khors* underfoot is sand washed from the mountains intermingled with rubble, great stones and boulders, so that a well may be concealed by a single water-worn slab laid atop,



HADENDOWAS NEAR GUMADRIBAB

and eye cannot discern it. Many a weary hour back the camels had crossed a fountain of clear water gurgling forth from the flat, pebbly beach, and in our folly we had left this uncontributing ; and now thirsty, the memory of its flow mocked us. There remained two courses open, either to send back for it, or to seek again a poor stagnant pool high up in a cranny of the great mountain, which my friend and I had found a month back when exploring the land which lay in front of us. The lateness of the evening forbade the first, so that I took a waterskin and set off up the rugged ravine, followed by a native boy bleating his protestations that we should find none. Wearisome are these titanic step-ladders, these water-courses now dry, and none but the ignorant would climb by them except there be no other way, for in the welter of a torrent the massy boulders tossed about form barriers without foothold, each a portcullis to the giant's castle. Yet to him who has no guide they are the safest road to lead to the summit, newels in the winding labyrinth of its irregularities. *Ototototoi !* we reached the basin sought, but the later heats had dried up all the moisture, and there was nought to do but to descend again, the thirstier for our clambering. Night was falling as we reached the waterless camp ; there are times when in the visions of one's head upon one's bed appear fantasies of the Bath Club, with long draughts of its pellucidly flowing spring. But in the morning Mejîd rode forth in search of native

camp, and came back with milk and a skin of water.

Gumadribab, which means the Long Hill; points like some rigid puritan to heaven, an uncompromising spire which may yet offer fair sport to a rock climber sated with northern difficulties. On the eastern side of the great *khôr* which sits at its feet is another mountain, Hadarabab, and thither we twain rode one morning; labour was scarce, and when we began our climb on foot, there was only a wretched native boy to help carry our boxes. To my English companion fell the lot of shouldering the plane-table kit and legs, and to me what felt like half a hundred-weight of theodolite and tripod stand: thus we began at seven o'clock, reaching the top two hours after noon. In sooth, there come the reminiscences of the Badminton book on stalking, its contempt of looking at the view too often, and yet here was full justification. Once in the climb came the excitement of some natives' view-holloa, as a heavy-horned ibex galloped down past us; there is little else in these hills. Scant was the meal for three, bread, a tin of beef, and a quart of water; and this ended, we set to work with the instruments until five. The boy, now unnecessary, had been sent home to camp.

My colleague counselled no descent that evening, with only an hour to sunset, but dry throats overcame wisdom, and, leaving the burdensome tools of our trade, we lost no time in descending

homeward. Dark was early upon us, and our path lay down a slippery stairway of white rocks, visible in the night, but claiming every care. Sometimes we lay resting, sometimes sleeping : always to me came Tantalus-visions of theatre-dinners —would these unhallowed tombstones never end ?

“ Will you still owe your virtues to your bellies ?
And only then think nobly when y’are full ? ”

Sit and slide, slide and sit in the slow darkness ; so did we progress amid this horrid torrent-bed, and not until two hours past midnight did we reach camp.

Is it small wonder that no shoe leather can withstand such hackling ? But a little of these Sudanese rocks, like flint-studded threshing-sledges, or Glumdalclitch’s nutmeg-graters, and the leather crumbled to nothing. To such a pass I came, filling the shell of my boots with tin from the biscuit canisters, or buying native sandals or espadrilles ; sending the while to Sawâkin, a ten days’ journey, only to receive the careless recompense of two left-foot boots in return. Does not the cant of the guttersnipe speak of hyperansteric poverty, an expectance of ensuing kibes ? So have I now a fellow feeling for the palmer who forswore the boiling of his peas, and think with gratitude of a good man on the mines at Gabêt who gave me a new pair of ironclad boots clouted like a diver’s with subsolar plates. Now have I sympathy with those who are on their metaphorical uppers.

I tramped back one evening after a day with the theodolite, guided by the roar of my rifle which Mejîd was firing to apprise me of his place. It had been hot that day, and as I descended I had found what William Biddulph calls a Jacob's pillow—a good hard stone—and, sleeping briefly thus, let slip the sun ; the carriers had all gone back ahead of me, and my path was difficult to seek amid the burnished brass of these slippery, shining rock-faces. In the dark Mejîd had come to meet me with water, and a woeful tale that the first carrier, a Hadendowa, had finished all other water before the other poor Othellos could arrive, and that the camp was almost dry. It was a thirsty night, and dry-throated dawn drove us to seek a well ; three hours of sulky camel riding brought us to a little *khôr*, mud-stained and oozy, where a spring of bistre fluid welled out amid the footprints of beasts, from which a woman was splashing her goat-skin full, scooping it with her palm. This brown water bubbled scum-topped at our boiling ; it was an awful, thirsty land.

During our camp at Jebel Gumadribab poor Mejîd, who slept on the ground, came to me with ear-ache, and in the end he went down to Sawâkin on a camel to the maison-dieu. After many days he came back, his pain assuaged, and stories of the ejection of a caterpillar or worm : more interesting was his relation of a *gahwa*-house discussion : “ Some breed-bate fellows in this *gahwa*-house complained when I was there of the English rule

over the country.—The poor fools! I said to them, ‘You inveigh against this Government where everything is at peace, the roads are safe and I can travel alone unharmed; without fearing encroachment of taxgatherer or the levy of my animals by the Sirdar. Come to my country, where the roads are unsafe and robbers take your goods and the Turks take tax and impost continually—pooh!’ ”

He was frequently in charge of the camp, which was a general meeting-place for Hadendowas who begged for odds and ends, and once his evening grin was larger than ever: “*Sidi*, an old *shêkh* with a beard like a goat came here with some of his followers to-day, and asked for flour; I gave it not, and then he asked for lentils; but these, too, I gave not: then said he, ‘You are not a good man like the other servant who was here before.’ Sir, I only waved a stick at them and they vanished, and as for the old *shêkh*, I took him by his goat-beard and waggled his head for him.”

As April came in, the thorns began to put forth little tassels of yellow and white blossoms; and under Jebel Oda’s chimneys the wadies were a pleasant maze of bloom, at which the camels nibbled with delicate lips. Partridges and doves would flutter down to pick up the camp crumbs. Our hill-climbing continued; there was one awful day when a theodolite in its box, balanced almost on a knife edge with a ravine on either side, launched itself in some occult manner into Tar-

peian depths, bounding from crag to crag in maniac glee at our five seconds' eternity of twanging heart-strings, and ganching itself at last on a needle of the rock. All that I could think of was, "It is well padded": true, when it was recovered, the green skin of its case was unbroken, but not a bone in its body was whole. The horrid gnarled mass of the ruined St. Lawrence Bridge did not look more grimly awful than this little broken machine: but by good fortune we had one in reserve at the Gabêt mines across the Dur Erba desert, and thither we went.

The Dur Erba waste is a broad undulating barren floor between two tracts of the mountains, forty miles apart; a two days' waterless march of low mounds of brown rock, stone, earth and rubble, indistinguishable and formless. The thirsty camels slacked their dry throats on the far side at giant cups, made by the Hadendowas from earth set near the wells wherefrom the water is drawn in a black glistening skin slung down by a cord. A little further were the gold mines worked by four Englishmen: a thousand ancient adits and tunnellings revealed their pristine value, the pick-marks on the walls and roofs showing where the slaves of old fossicked in sweating caverns that Cleopatra might be decently attired. Poor black humanity which swinked at toil in these dark holes, by flicker of flame from smoking clay lamps, which are the rare remnant of all that they left! Even the Ababdi boys saw the ghosts of ancient



HADENDOWA NURSERY NEAR HADARACHÂTI : THE MOTHER OF THESE
TWO BABES HAD TETHERED THEM TO THE THORN TREE

miners, old men running out to attack them with stones. A few pieces of potsherds, glass and iron, little more than this to show their poor possessions, while round about the openings to daylight were strewn the great querns of stone in scores. The upper stone had revolved in the lower, grinding the quartz of which the refuse was sluiced away, leaving the gold at the bottom.

By the middle of May we had reached Khor Yemum, a wide flat between granite mountains, and our tents were pitched beneath a huge tree, for they were only of single canvas and the sun was beating heavily down. The pods which fell from the boughs formed the staple food of the little black goats which strayed round the tent, uttering their queer little nasal explosion, seeking water from us. Work was only possible in early morn or late afternoon now on our second baseline: rarely a cloud came into the sky. The birds were fearless of man: two small impertinents came down to drink at the wash-basin, something of the humming-bird order. The male was black except for an iridescent gorget of emerald, barred with crimson on his breast, while the female was drab. A week or so before a flock of the smaller bee-eater went by, but these were now gone. By the end of May the partridges had brought out their young, generally a dozen good strong birds in the covey: a month before the parent birds only had been visible, foraging without the cheepers. A small bird of a thrush-like appearance

forced its way one day into my tent as I lay reading and attacked its counterpart in the little mirror boldly, every now and then looking round the back of the glass to see where his foe was. Lest his violence should do him harm, I took away the glass, and straightway the pugnacious little warmint found another to fight in the top of a shiny biscuit box. I watched a quaint fly, rather like a small dragon-fly, with a long, thin, cylindrical body, burrowing a hole in the sand. He went in head foremost, the hole being about half an inch across, just large enough for his bulk : in five seconds he returned, coming out backwards, flying thus rapidly stern on for two or three feet, when he let go a pinch of sand which he had bored out, thus throwing it by his impetus several feet from his hole. This went on for a long time.

There was one awful day when the Sapper was lost. He had gone back across the Dur Erba desert with a party to climb Jebel Oda and another peak, whence he should spy my heliostat flashing from the northern side ; I on my part flashed for two days in two places near Gabêt. One of these was successful, and he was able to obtain a long side to a triangle. On his homeward start a gazelle drew him from the rest of his caravan, and presently they missed him, and though they sought for a while, they presumed he had gone on by himself to the camp at Gabêt, whither they were heading. So they, too, continued their march

and reached the mines the same evening, asking me if he had yet arrived.

Here was a coil, for I knew nothing. Every available camel was at once mounted with a native rider and sent forth southwards to look for the lost Sapper, but by next morning there was no news of him. I had naturally wished to go myself, but as Mejîd said, these men knew the district and rode much faster than I could, so that a camel was better spent in their hands than mine. But on the morrow, he not having arrived, I found a camel, I forget now how, and went out with the *ombashi* who had come back, and spent the day in the desert. We had separated early, as I, like all over-wise, knew I could find my way easily back ; as I once heard a Boy Scout say, " I can show you the camp as easy as pie." (This latter I should have liked to commend to the author of the *Budget of Paradoxes*, wherein all fanciful theories of squaring the circle are collected, for I believe its origin is really π , by a metathesis common in argot where the most difficult thing becomes the easiest ; do not those who take a first in the Little-go so far forget themselves as to say paradoxically of a strange language, "'Tis all Greek to me ? '") At any rate, I lost my way and dropped my sleeping-bag folded as a pad on the saddle, nor did I pick up my route until the afternoon by mere good fortune. When I reached camp the Sapper had happily arrived, and I was M. Auguste of the French Circus.

It was in June that I set off homewards from Gabêt to the little port of Muhammad Gol on the Red Sea, many miles north of Port Sudan, a curious little native village. I found a small babe casting a net into the sea for fish and bargained with him for his catch, but he doubted my word, and I had difficulty in persuading him at first. A dhow with one large sail was going off that day with forty native men aboard to Port Sudan ; so I paid the fare thereof and went down into it to go with them. A following wind bore us speedily over the blue, and its waves, foiled in pooping us, so lifted and let fall the ship's stern, that poor Mejîd fell sick, and but for prestige I had followed his example amid such a stinking crowd which made the vessel smell like an obsolete ferret-hutch. One fellow dropped a whiffing line with feathered hook astern, and soon was hauling in a large mackerel half as big again as ours. From the dhow Mejîd spied landwards the mountains Oda, Odeâno, Milangwêb and all the other devil's peaks which had worn our feet and hearts sore : and vigorous was his welcome oath at recognition from afar, *inâl abûhûm*, " May God curse their fathers ! " There are legitimate occasions when a man may whistle the Funeral March of a Marionette without accusing himself of being a fantastico.

FEMINIE, 1909

How dulce to vive occult to mortal eyes,
Dorm on the herb with none to supervise,
Carp the suave berries from the créscent vine,
And bibe the flow from longicaudate kine !

—O. W. HOLMES.

IT was the freakish suggestion of my friend, P. D. S.-M., that this chapter should be called "Through Angora on a Goat," and he drew a charming picture of me, temporarily dismounted, spying out the land. Fitting it is that here I should turn aside to pour my libation to his *manes*, for he was the youngest of our Department and beloved of the gods.

Unhappily truth compels me to choose some other title, much as I should have preferred this picturesqueness of diction, nor can I mask its meaning with *tragacanth*, *tragedy*, or *tragopan* in cryptic guise.

It was in August, 1909, that my ship came alongside the quay at Constantinople, amid the kaleidoscope of ferryboats, caiques, and barges which ply across the harbour from the Galata bridge under the eyes of the Grand Signior. At the foot of the ship's ladder, now lowered to earth, swarmed a swinking scrum of Levantine blackguards, thrusting and seething for the vantage

to be first up when the barrier was removed. This bridge was yet defended from them by a fine old Turkish soldier of the old school, greybearded and ponderous, like some solitary Horatius : who, as a Samson gripping the Philistine pillars, took his purchase on the lowering chains of the stairway and turned his back upon the foe, using in crayfish style what Nature in bountiful mood had bestowed on him to butt back the crowd. Stambul had barely shaken herself free of the results of the revolution, for martial law still held sway in the city ; the Constitution had now been hailed as the dawning of a golden age for Turkey by every Westerner who knew instinctively the several boons each nation needs ; and *hurriyet* was the watchword of the uprising, liberty, freedom copied from the ideal outside New York. Sotiri, the steward of Kroecker's hotel, had many stories to tell me, hailing me by name as I drove up to the door, remembering my three weeks' visit in the preceding autumn before the insurrection : he bubbled over with a fluent epic of the fatal thirtieth of March, how there had been a little burst of firing in the evening, but each said to his fellow merely, " This is only a *seriat*, or religious ceremonial." But, as all the world now knows, this was the dayspring of emancipation, the revolution ending in cataclysm. Turkish prestige died with the Old Turk, and Tartarin's words from the minaret are no impertinent parable, for the place of the reverent *There is*

no God but God in their minds has been taken by the amphibologies of gramophones, except in the peasant shires. A little, and all Pera knew of the revolt : Sotiri told me how the serving-men and pantlers of the inn, with wives and children, sat behind staunch iron shutters and barred doors, for it was a time when folk could mark the shrapnel bursting above the streets.

Six years before my friend Joseph Weissberger had ridden for a fortnight with me in Tripoli, and Fortune again decreed that we should ride together. Does not Jesus, the son of Sirach, say, "Nothing doth countervail a faithful friend, and his excellency is unvaluable"? This new foray was to explore some of the blank spaces on Kiepert's map between Angora and Eregli, with sextant and prismatic compass, zealous to see the Hittite monuments and probe in Feminie for fresh evidences of that ancient people. Pteria was their metropolis, now called Boghaz Keui, and here the German excavations had discovered great numbers of cuneiform clay tablets, and this, too, was to lie in our progress. So at a quarter to five one morning we set forth to the ferry-steamer on foot, for there were few carriages at such an early hour, and four hundredweight of baggage went down with us on too few porters' backs. They struggled manfully, each with an Anchises of a burden, and presently the whole of Pera down its main street was studded with halting, greasy, nodd-pated fellows mopping their

temples, marking successive segments of our expedition. At last, when the clock-face gave perilous warning of little licence, we found a carriage which aided our exhausted followers, and so won through.

Would you see Scotland's hills and sea-lochs repeat in Orient guise? Then follow the railway line which patrols the Asiatic coast until it must needs leave the dear sea for the hills. Far across the bay the bastion of a mountain wall withholds the sea, the little gentle sea of land-locked waters, like Eriboll of Sutherlandshire, where storm-tossed sea-fowl find a sanctuary. Change, then, to the upward path amid narrow ravines and mountain torrents, now with the first rains of autumn blotting out the sun in their down-pourings, swelling the spate of silver burns to foaming brown waters, a muddied flood. Here is a wilder land than Mother Scotland, and yet a fertile: precipices and abrupt rocks are but a setting for the orchards planted by the way, apples, crab-apples, walnuts, figs now ripening, and mulberries. These last give pasturage to silkworms which thrive, and after five years of growth the mulberry tree, given as state-bounty, bears two pounds profit in Turkish money, the Government herein claiming a portion. Vegetable against mineral, the granite of the rocks as building-stone is less remunerative, for the cost of bringing it down from its quarries is more than its value.

Two thousand five hundred feet marks the zenith of this line between the sea and Eski Shehr, the junction. A little *locanda* here, kept by a Czech dame, was our lodging, and Weissberger, the linguist, was able to argiebargle with her in her own tongue. These taverns, set at the meeting-place of two roads, are always of an atrabilious tendency ; there is just such another at El-Gerra in Algeria, which two Swiss, mother and daughter, managed. The desire for home in people of this country so passionate, and their love of the hills so strong, it was sad to hear that they had already endured sixteen years of saffron dunes, and there was an infinity of pathos in Madame's *on peut s'habituer*.

A wearisome day followed, crossing an endless tableland three thousand feet up ; the rail has been carried along a level terrain between the dumpy hills which flank it at any distance up to a mile. Adjacent shallows marked a winding stream ; few villages appeared, and there was dearth of men and women, and the land might well be fertile, yet lack of water is to its disadvantage ; it was the pastoral age again, rather than the agricultural, through these bare uplands with their scattering of stunted shrubs. Angora town is a kilometre distant from the station, linked to it by a willow-veiled road ; perched on a hill and overflowing down the slopes, it relieves the green monotone of its great forecourt of flat lowland with a mergent brown and shadow-

colour. You may lodge at the small caravanserai at the station, but the beds are jungles, and the garden is sweeter ; moreover, on our arrival there was a poor fellow recovering from typhus within.

Came then the olden joys of horse-dealing, to buy the caravan. Herein does the wise philosophy of Ecclesiasticus offer sound counsel : that a merchant shall hardly keep himself from wrongdoing : that it is ill-advised to take counsel with a merchant about exchange, or with a buyer about selling. Who shall fathom the devisal of Eastern iniquities in a scourse, who can read the four-footed enigmas ridden for approval ? Doth not every hornbook of travel dissuade the guileless from offering more than a small part of the knavish price asked, and who but those grown old in stable doctrine would dare think of trafficking in horses ? Yet horses must be bought, if a journey is toward, and therefore do you, if unschooled in this crabbed lore, play an actor's part. " Better is a man," saith Ecclesiasticus, " that hideth his folly : be as one that knoweth and yet holdeth his tongue." Pry first into the beast's mouth and look at the teeth (to tell the age is complicated, but you need not do more than mutter unknown words) ; make display of feeling the cavities above the eyes, and try him also for blindness ; slap your palm on the withers and so pass your hand down the shoulder to the hock with two or three successive rubs, and thus without startling your prad, turn up his hooves

and see if they are sound, or if he wants re-shoeing (Eastern horses are shod with plates of metal); so also, without frightening him, draw your hands along the hind-quarters and lift up his tail and look at the dock; ungirth the saddle and shake your head over old galls; mark the knees for signs of stumbling; and finally, walk round him, viewing the straightness of his legs from front to back. All these things the Orientals do, and though you do not understand, your pantomime will be vastly impressive, lending colour to your deprecation which must now begin. Offer valorously one half of the suggested price, for your reputation is already earned, and you may be sure that the horse will not be entirely bad, and may very likely be good; try him at a canter (he will not trot), and if he find favour, say that you will look at him again to-morrow. For in any case you will certes pay more for him than the native, and hence your mount will not be sold to another without your refusal; buy a stallion rather than a mare, even though, as Ecclesiasticus saith, he neigheth under every one that sitteth upon him, for a mare has no such value for you as she has for an inhabitant. Above all, when dealing with a mule, remember your manners and be not familiar.

Thus we bought a riding-horse for £10 T and three baggage animals for £6 T, £6½ T, and £8 T, and a strong roan was displayed before me by a Shagpat who asked twenty pounds. It was a

poor place to try a gallop in this enclosed market, for the street cobbles are a dangerous race-course, but these hucksters do it, if there is a hope of money. Does not the poet Herrick sing the true Oriental thought ?

“ When all birds els do of their musick faile,
Money's the still-sweet-singing nightingale.”

A little crowd of loiterers stood at hand, a boy passed leading a miserable screw—no pampered jade of Asia, this !—there was a stay in the bargaining. Immediately this trailbaston patriarch burst into sudden choler with this inoffensive youth, thinking that too much competition was abroad in the air, and rushing upon him like a whirlwind in an unforeseen attack, smote him all unprepared in the face with a little pliant quirt.

Would that I had the pen of a Hazlitt, who could so vividly tell the story of Bill Neate and the Gasman ; or the power of a Dickens, who gave the Pott and Slurk encounter to the world ! or Thomas Day, the combat of Master Mash and Harry Sandford ! Achilles in his wrath, poluphlois-boisterous in his armour, is but an empty simile to which I turn in my poverty of comparisons : my old man, casting off his golden turban, like an apocalyptic saint, flashing lightning from his eyes and foaming out pompholygopaphlasmatic incoherences, broke like a ninth wave upon his foe with hands, feet, voice ; weapons worth

all the promises of Thetis from the stithy of Hephaestus ; a bestowal of Nature on passionate man wherewith to fight or rouse the batteries of noise. A wild storm of buffets, clawing, flat-handed, feminine, whirled in a flurry upon the younger sconce, while a-gasp, innocuous, the belaboured youth retaliated not : but, or ever harm could arise, those in the market-place ran to the old man, grasping, pulling, and thrusting his portly person from fighting distance from his adversary, where he might satisfy his vengeance more undestructively and Saul-like with his tongue ; others seized the youth and hurried him out of danger ; letting them void their anger in turgid clouds of round, volleying abuse. In this great whoobub we slipped away, and in the end bestowed our patronage elsewhere.

Pack-saddles, costing 60 piastres each, were brought to us, great bale-like structures padded out with straw, looking as though some columbine from Astley's could trip a twinkling measure thereon with her spangled feet, or skip through hoops, a-cantering round the ring. They are so stuffed that if a poor jade is wrung in the withers out of all cess, you may put a few flocks in the point, or better, cut away the offending pressure over scab or gall. There is no trouble in obtaining riding-saddles in a good Turkish town on a European model at 120 piastres each.

So presently, with our work done, a kindly German on the railway asked us to an evening

swim, in an oast-house-like rotunda scaled from without by an iron ladder, where snorting, backing engines drank their fill through mammoth elephantine trunks. Here was a great store of clear water in cool darkness in the cockloft, and here we plunged and swam. 'Twas only on the morrow that the chief engineer resented such a fouling of his drink, misliking new savours.

Five days did we spend in preparation, yet all our quest had secured only one servant, a silly little Bosniak boy; and when the hour to load up the caravan arrived, our puny, ignorant efforts were the feebleness of conies. The boy knew nothing, and had little strength in his bones, and the stout zaptieh Ali, who was to ride as our guard for a fortnight with us, was above such work. As our dilemma appeared patent, nay, almost without remedy, there stepped forth from the crowd of lazy fellows about the *locanda* a wizened greybeard who without a word lay a great magic on the ground, the device of the guild of muleteers, a serpent-wriggle twice with rope on which the bundle lies before its cording. Mark this, O novice to the road! for the old and well-versed baggage-man is known by the way he first sets his cord to earth. And happiness descended again upon us, for here was the Profession; who, nowise displeased to see how his art had found our favour and having given ensample of his trade, sought service with us. The clouds open and the heaven-born descends: thus was old Mustapha

engaged. Praying an hour's grace to farewell his family and bring his travelling-bag, at five o'clock in the afternoon he saw us start and instructed Ali in his later meeting-place.

The Elma Dagħ lay in front of us, but far beyond the daylight, and the night fell dark as we came across the ploughlands to Uzal, a little built fountain, such as are numerous in the north and centre of Asia Minor, but rare in the south-east. Foolishly the nose-bags had not been filled at the start, and as a consequence old Mustapha set off grunting into the darkness to forage among the fields for straw. For as was apparent in the morning, these were now stubble-lands, where the bullocks were drawing the flint-toothed sledges round and round, the poor swaths of the corn piled up in rows and weighted against the wind with stones, and here by a fortunate omen we found two palæolithic implements of andesite, and half of a stone ring or hammer.¹

The Elma Dagħ is a long ridge, well clad with grasses and flowers, pasturing many flocks of Angora goats; the caravan climbed laboriously up, and halted some little way down the far side, near a crystal fountain, on a terrace. Even after the summer the little burns run bountifully enough from high up the slopes. King-crested hoopoes, wagtails, and gaudy bee-eaters flit by the big mulleins and thistles, or a rare pigeon flies; and

¹ Identified geologically for me by Dr. Prior. They are figured in *Man*, 1910, No. 39, and are now in the British Museum.

to knock at one of the low, prickly bushes is enough to bring a thousand ladybirds to answer your call.

Below to the east lay a Devil's Punchbowl, a giant's crucible of a valley, green, luxuriant, girt with a circling rim of green-bedecked rock. Two villages, amid poplars, marked human dwellings, whose owners bore to us bread and fruit, sour milk and honey ; preprandial columns of blue smoke from cowdung fires rising in silent atmosphere are finger-points to show a score of hamlets in the morning. In these parts woman burns two kinds of fuel ; in the uplands, where the scented dwarf-oak spreads, the fire-kindlers use their ringing labrys, one edge axe, and one edge mattock, and keep their hands unsullied by these faggots ; the lowlanders, their soil not breeding logs for burning, mash cowdung into cakes and plaster walls therewith to dry their coproplastic bannocks in the sun. Amid the kind hills the woodcutters' tracks are wrinkled with the ruts of little disk-wheeled wagons, bullock-drawn and laden with the fragrant thick-leaved bavins, singing an axle-song two alternating breves six notes apart. But the oak country was not yet.

This was the end of August and the nights were cold, but after dawn the thermometer went up to 60° and 65° Fahrenheit, and the days were hot. The rains begin about the middle of September, but until then there is no need for tent or roof, either for man or beast. After then

sleeping in the open is a damp, sorry, and unhealthy practice, for the horses catch cold, and if fever has assailed any of the camp the exposure will assuredly bring it out. A room in a village can always be rented, and stalls for the beasts can easily be found, and as the traveller will pass a score of hamlets in the day, there will be no difficulty in reaching a lodging each night. Besides, the horses must be fed, and as the villages are so close, the simplest way is to finish one's day's ride near one of these and let the muleteer buy corn and straw from it. A horse in work in these parts eats daily fourteen double handfuls of barley, costing $2\frac{1}{2}$ piastres, and a quarter of a sack of chopped straw (about $\frac{1}{2}$ piastre), and at this time of the year, the autumn, there is no difficulty in obtaining fodder. Fuel of cowdung costs about a piastre for a sieveful. As for food, in the country districts a fowl costs about $2\frac{1}{2}$ piastres, an oke of salted butter for pilau 6 or 8 piastres, eggs 2 piastres a dozen, and grapes 1 piastre for a basketful.

There is a drawback to this beautiful land. The great ban-dogs of the shepherds, accursed and vicious, attack the traveller in his innocence, rushing upon him from the flocks, at times even with spiked collars for protection against their own kind. The horses hate them, and may perhaps be ridden as at a joust, if the rider carry a stout whip or stave, to tourney with them: or, if on foot, he may drive them off with stones.

Once we were partridge-shooting through an ancient Hittite city, and a werewolf of a dog ran against us from far off ; a stone was to hand (how great must David's joy have been !), and ended its parabola in impact on the canine nose ; a yelping monster returned for pastoral sympathy to its master. Indeed, not only these ban-dogs are not attractive, but the ordinary village dogs anywhere in these lands have nothing of the pleasantness of English tykes ; they yelp easily, like their masters. The pariah pup is round and fat and fluffy, but he, too, wails in terror for small cause. Still, I can see now two delightful little bundles of fur, woolly, flighty on their paws, almost ungainly : these were laughing at each other in barks under a little cromlech of grave-stones in Aleppo—not otherwise do children love to sport in coobidy houses made of a shawl on chairs.

Here to us at our first camp from Tekye Keui came village gossip of written stones, but promises made at evening in the East grow faint at dawn, and those who knew them failed us on the morrow. But in the end guiding hands directed us, and my friend found three and showed me : a boulder splashed with scarlet paint which might be a decayed writing, a great rock scratched with little manikins, and a third, most curious to see, the likeness of an Assyrian or Hittite king, full figure in incised rough outline of profile as though some casual wayfarer with another stone had scrabbled it.



VALLEY OF THE BALABAN UZU : KURDISH TENT

On the far side of the basin is the Gôk gorge, a funnel into the Sulimanli Dere whose walls show green serpentine and black rock ; some little caves here mark the hand of pristine man, though we found no implement of old handiwork or bone. A high-dammed flume runs swiftly by the side, mill-propelling in its course, made thus, as many in these parts are, to use its force and fall in rapid shoot where power is needed, at last to reach the little stream in Sulimanli Dere, a broad, expansive valley. This is the Chikurjak River, called by various names locally after the manner of the Turks, here Balaban Uzu, meandering through swampy ground, the lair of wild-fowl, duck, snipe and peewits. Then our horses, by our mistake leaving the proper track, began to plunge in the muddy pools, drawing their hooves with difficulty from the ooze ; the sucking clay clucked like the dominie in *Japhet in Search of a Father*. At last they floundered to a little causeway, trampled almost to oblivion by the buffaloes which wallow in these streams, often sunk to their upstretched necks in a luxurious bath. Here was the Turcoman village Sulimanli, where the hay-cocks dried on the roof-tops, and a tree rises from the little open space girt by the score of houses, fed by a little runnel. Outside their doors a few poor gaunt and ague-stricken villagers lay on mattresses, a warning that mosquitoes live in marshlands. Emerald-green against the dusty, gravelly dunes of the dry land, a tongue of grass

sward clove the monotony, and here were many gleaners heaping straw-cocks, and bambini compelling a long troop of oxen from their pasture. The peewits wheeled and tumbled, but gave never the chance of a shot to my gun ; only a snipe fell to me, and though I sought long in the ooze-beds, I never found it.

We visited a sunken marble pillar near here, inscribed in uncials and bearing the name Aristokles, and a hospitable Kurdish lady living in a large black tent gave us a bowl of *irân*, sour milk and water. It is the usual traveller's drink, though one must be of robust habit to stomach it.

Then on northwards, by the winding trickle of water, past Deliler to Kurtchalu, the stream widening and meandering through gorges pleasant in colouring, its banks clad with trees, and its pools full of fish ; and so to Asar Keui, where the houses are in two stories and have wooden gratings to the windows ; an old Roman column, built into the end of a wall, served a muezzin as minaret. This is a fertile land, peaceful, happy in orchards and gardens hedged about with thorns and thistles, and in this autumn the hips and haws gave token of past glories of roses. A giant pear-shaped cucumber or melon, fit for pantomime, hung heavy over the brambles. And so to Kilishler.

Here the road, now well made, zigs and zags up the steep hill to the summit, whence you may see the great valley of the Kizil Irmak, the ancient



WOMEN POUNDING GRAIN AT HAJJILAR

Halys, a river of which the actual course for twenty miles or so was represented by a dotted line on accurate maps. Its Turkish name, "Red River," aptly describes it, for it is a tawny-brown flood from thirty to fifty yards broad and from three to four feet deep in most places. The banks of reddish earth sometimes sloped gently to the water from the foothills, often with little copses of tamarisk, and at others, where the river passes through a defile, formed steep sides of rocky outcrops jutting out into the stream. By its banks on the first evening I put up a mallard and a kingfisher, and once a covey of red-legged partridges. Cotton is grown in some small quantity on the left bank, and there are two or three water-mills on the river edge. In these mills the chamber is about six feet high, made of wattle and mud built out on piles over the water-wheels, which turn horizontal millstones. Above these grinders are the grain-hoppers, like large funnels, from which the corn falls on the stones, and the vibration necessary for a continuous flow of grain is made by two tongues of wood which leap and scuffle on the revolving stone.

The women of this district wear bright jackets, skirts and trousers, and it is their custom to pound grain in the mortar common to all the village with great wooden beetles; one whom I saw at Hajjilar working at a carpet loom outside her door fled at my approach; I was told that it took twenty days to finish even a small carpet.

There is much held in common in these villages besides the grain-mortars, for at Hassan Dedi, near at hand, was a public baking oven of conical form.

I rode my horse down to the sandy banks of the river for a bathe, took his saddle off and left my clothes in a heap and mounted him again bare-backed, which gave the sensation of a firm grip. But as he went all unwillingly into the water the horrible flies which conceal themselves in all Eastern horses flew out of his hair and tangled themselves in mine, and I was forced to dive from his back to rid myself of these pests.

Garametli, the next village, has at least one good house with a whitewashed room wherein is a fireplace with a mantelpiece, and the crossbeams of the ceiling are supported on two wooden props : the good host gave us bread and grapes, and twenty of the inhabitants offered their opinions on the passage through the river-gorge in front of us. At the opening of this defile lies a ruined village with a tumble-down mosque, and thence the road becomes a sheep-track, sometimes crossing, sometimes winding round the spurs. Vineyards and gardens have been planted at the other end of the gorge, and shortly before Keupri Keui is reached are some red-roofed mills of European appearance, and a pleasant fall of water rushing violently, such as would draw a salmon-fisher, if only the pools were clear.

Keupri Keui is remarkable for its bridge, as its



BRIDGE AT KEUPRI KEUI

name implies. The village, which is on the right bank, is dirty, the water is all drawn from the muddy river, and there are a few poor shops which sell little. On the left bank near the khan are two rock-cuttings, one an incised niche, the other a figure, badly mutilated, about four feet high, apparently full face and with its head ornamented with a heavy crown. Round about this are the remains of an old fort strewn with potsherds.

Five hours' riding brings you to Denek Maden, the town near the lead mines, which are nearly two hours' distance. Two tumuli overlook this large town of five thousand inhabitants, where the markets are good and contain European stuffs. You may find blacksmiths, gunsmiths, carpenters, weavers and even a chemist, two mosques and six or seven khans. The chemist gave us a sample of the bitumen with which the country folk plaster their wounds, and told me that even in such a large place as Maden, there is none to perform one of the first Moslem rites, and a practitioner must be brought in from a neighbouring village. The mines are in the hands of a French company, and we went down by bratticed stempled shafts into the bowels of the earth by vertical ladders at the suggestion of M. Kaynadan, the superintendent. These mines had been anciently worked by the Genoese, who had left remains of pumps in the depths, and their struts were still to be seen thirty-eight metres below the surface.

There is not much disease or sickness apparent

in these parts. Sometimes you may see a poor natural tending the flocks, or pass a lame boy, or rarely a blind man or girl with some form of hip trouble. There is some malarial fever, particularly in the lower lands, and a short time before we visited Denek Maden there had been an epidemic of typhoid.

From Denek Maden we went by Halfêli, Bey Obâsi and Azzeddin to Karabekîr. At Bey Obâsi some of the women were completely veiled in a shroud-like white garment which left their trousers visible ; others wore their hair in plaits with coins stitched round their caps. At Karabekîr the inhabitants look well-fed, have black or brown hair, which is trimmed round the ears among the boys ; the whole head, or sometimes only the crown, is shaven. Curiously the water-vessels are made of wood in the same shape as those of pottery. Marigolds and purple and white convolvuli grow in the gardens.

We went to the village fountain where the women were gathered to draw the morning's water, and unwittingly offended. A damsel, certes comely, looked with some apparent interest on the two strangers who tried to photograph the group—perhaps more than she should have done, for a jealous, middle-aged crone, not over-prepossessing, suddenly blared forth maledictions upon us like a Wardour Street Jewess when you ask the price of too many of her antiquities without buying. Next minute the air was full of stones which



THE KIZIL IRMAK BELOW KEUPRI KEUI

these helcats threw at us—none hit, for the women of the East are like the women of the West in the matter of throwing—so that they fought in the shade. We retired as gracefully as possible out of range, where Ali the zaptieh found us and explained to these maenads that we were not Lotharios.

Hence our road lay by Awjila and Alembali into the more rugged lands of Eikar, where the dwarf oak showed itself again, and so by rugged paths to Chokurlu. Here was a large granary, such as one may often see in these hamlets, a girnel to store the harvest, built of great boards on boulders to allow free passage of air beneath. Near the top was a verandah from which the corn was poured into it, while two spigot holes at the base allowed the grain to be withdrawn when needful. A low, two-roomed house was near, its walls built of stone and plaster, and its flat roof made of beams, boughs, and mud, with sheaves of rushes drying atop, and faggots kept down by sticks. In the outer room on the beaten earth lay an oak trunk six feet in circumference, and on the doorpost to the inner room were pinned two paper amulets in Arab writing, to ward off face-ache.

From Chokurlu to Boghaz Keui, the Hittite capital, anciently Pteria, the road lies first over the rough mountain spurs, and thence up a long dale to the grey rock of the gorge which is visible from afar as you ride up the valley. Here in the hill-side are palaces, temples and sculptured rocks of

the ancient Hittite people, dating to the fourteenth century B.C., excavated by the late Professor Winckler, whose discovery of great quantities of Hittite cuneiform tablets (as yet unpublished) holds potential revelations of unknown value. First, on the lower ground below the hill slopes, is the palace which some consider to have been a temple, of which the ground plan remains ; its massy stones are four feet thick, and the slots drilled in them show that the lost upper portions must have been morticed with iron crampons. In the middle is the central court, which doubtless lay open to the sky, for a deep gutter in the pavement shows how the rain was carried off. It is probable that the roofs of the chambers round about were thatched with dwarf-oak foliage on cross-beams, as many houses are in these lands to this day: the pavements were poorly made, and have sunk in irregular undulations.

Above the palace, far up the hill-side, is the Acropolis hill, marking the rampart on the south side, and here the wall is thick and high, pierced with a long tunnel, and near is the bas-relief figure which some have called an Amazon. This is a theory which I should be inclined to challenge ; its appearance is certainly as much that of a man as a woman, and, even were it female, it is as likely to be a divine figure as a human being. But it may equally well be a god, or perhaps, as Mr. Hall thinks,¹ a king.

¹ *Ancient History of the Near East*, Plate XXII, 3.



THE KIZIL IRMAK BELOW KEUPRI KEUI

On the other side of the gorge which splits this ancient site in two are the famous sculptured rocks of Yazili Kaya, a great mass of marble contorted into fantastic windings and broad galleries sculptured in panels with mystic or historical scenes.¹

There is a little partridge-shooting to be had in these ruins, which are set amid copses of dwarf oak, and Weissberger and I had one or two pleasant afternoons thus, before he left for home.

For here ended our fraternity of travelling; here at Boghaz Keui was the parting of our ways, for my comrade's holiday was over. I farewelled him, and his pleasant person disappeared round a corner with the Bosniak boy and an escort, towards the Black Sea by Samsun. Yet even after this he greeted me by letter, left at Euyuk in the hands of a courier with a daintily ground stone axehead; and wrote also that his keupenek, of which he was so proud, had been stolen; this is a stiff, square, sleeveless shroud or mantle reaching from shoulders to ankles and, if I remember rightly, made of duffel. I had still some small collation to make at Boghaz Keui, and then pursued his route to Euyuk, a small Kizilbashi village on an ancient Hittite site, about five and a half hours from Boghaz Keui. On my way I flushed a snipe and a larger bird, stone-coloured with black and white wings, possibly a lapwing, and found a

¹ Boghaz Keui has been so often described that it is superfluous to report any account of it here: the curious will find the story of the excavations in the *Mittheilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft*, No. 35, December, 1907.

Greek tombstone at Kula, six miles south of Euyuk, which Sir William Ramsay translated for me later.

Euyuk itself lies in gently undulating country ; its citadel was built on a mound thirty or forty feet high, having a perimeter at the base of five hundred yards. A miserable village caps the top, built among the mass of fallen ruins and sculptures, which others have described. Two sphinx-like figures stare back towards Pteria, questioning every passing Ædipus with the everlasting Hittite riddle, " What meaneth the writing on our walls ? " A stork whose summer palace is perhaps in Holland has built a winter nest atop of one of them ; likened thus to the epistle of Jeremy in the Book of Baruch concerning the gods of Babylon, " upon their bodies and heads alight bats, swallows, and birds ; and in like manner the cats also." This was my most northern point, and I turned southwards again to Alâja. From this last little town, which is a three hours' march from Euyuk over bare fields and downlands, a macadamized road goes to Yuzgat, which we carefully avoided by reaching Sodêsi that night. There had been some silly suggestion of my toothless zaptieh Aziz that we should camp on the outskirts of Alâja, amid the alders in the overflown pools of the Balik Chai, which found no favour.

As we passed, a rainbow arched over the mosques as the sun smote the rainclouds ; rooks sailed over majestically. Standing remote from



GOATS ON THE KIZIL IRMAK

these swamps were three little villages called Sodêsi, dowered with orchards, marking the porter's lodge to the hill country, and, like so many others set amid cultivation, these marked the energy of their toil in runnels filched from streams and watermills a-rattle underneath. Willows and reeds thatched their cabins, and the lazy heavy reek of cowdung fires unrolled itself from the hearths. The little unseen fairies of the brooks played with the breeze amid the small flags and rushes, or lightly bruised the watermint with tender footsteps, that its fragrance rose amid the dandelions and daisies. Hills were beginning to form walls to this pleasant stream ; here and there were scattered dwarf oaks, and lower down the cattle grazed, or camels craned their long necks in unwonted pasturage ; on distant summits were the wens of ancient barrows. About midday we had ascended to a clump of splendid oaks, and straightway beneath our eyes, when the curtain of their leaves was passed, a rugged valley lay between jutting promontories and slopes leading us to Yuzgat, ten miles further. Around and about the hill-tops showed a change from a dull land of wold and down, and distant peaks cleft the sky like miséricordes. The Girim meandered fair in a collet of red, green and orange, marble and ironstone, where scarlet poppies grew amid the great willows mingled with the lighter red of wild rose berries.

Yuzgat is a large town, fair-mosqued, with

perhaps ten thousand inhabitants, under the rule of a *mutessarif*, a courtly young man who discussed with me the tablets of Boghaz Keui, where he had been for two months. The Director of the Telegraph, speaking a little English, had been, according to his own account, with Lord Kitchener and Sir Reginald Wingate in the Sudan. Yuzgat lies in a cup of the mountains under the hanger of the Soluk Dag, whence, if report be true, the giant Argæus may be seen on a clear day.

Here on the Soluk Dag had once been a pine forest, but now only tattered remnants of the trees remained where once the winds had whispered in them. Hark back to the good seafaring English county Hampshire and listen of a night to the lying winds singing chanties of the sea in the young pines darkling : when wrack of spring clouds play hide-and-seek with the moon, and the sea flaws come up the heather coombs carrying their false tales in the woods, so that the saplings grow restless at the mimic roar of breakers in their branches, and their green billowy needles rising and falling roll like great waves. And they must go down to the sea in ships, welcoming the wood-cutter when he fells them, for they credit these riotous babblers fresh from the bags of Lapland witches ; they shall be stepped in galleons and vessels of Ragusa, spreading broad-bosomed sails and leaving a hissing wake between port and port. O lying wind ! which knows that these stalwart



CARPET LOOM AT HAJJILAR

Hampshire firs are standing fettered in a moveless procession, Caryatids of the roadside, holding a wire path for Mercury's heels, and singing mournful Aeolian dirges of their imprisonment.

The Turkish country folk are without manners, and their curiosity leads them in groups to come and make free beside the visitor. I do not think that the desert Arab would do this, for he has a natural courtesy and neatness of wit which these thickheads of Anatolia have not. Yet these Turks are always willing to help about the camp for their own amusement and without pay. Once at Boghazlian a fellow, seeing my tent, drew aside the flaps of the door to look at me within; at another place I turned out a springald who was too familiar. Here after Yuzgat my notebook mentions that the people begin to be courteous, giving me the salute first: but it is probably only because of the polish and propinquity of a town.

Now the composition of an itinerary must needs be a husbandry of dried figs, a roster of unseductive lists of parishes and wapentakes, of towns and rivers; only appetizing to the traveller about to set out on a journey, and not to the epicure. It is for the writer to bear in mind the words of the poet Herrick—

“ But thou att home without ore tyde ore gale,
Canst in thy mapp securely sayle;
Veiwing those painted countries ”;

and to avoid making a jejune skeleton of what

should be a living story demands an adroitness which must conceal a dead cemetery of milestones, or a taxmaster's assessment. Yet it is a problem for which I myself admit I have no alkahest, pleading the difficulty of seeking human interest in the absorption of mapping six hundred miles of route in two months.

It is a coin-toss whether it be advantageous or no to maunbedevil my manuscript or follow Swift :—

“ So geographers, in Afric maps,
With savage pictures fill their gaps,
And o'er unhabitable downs
Place elephants for want of towns.”

Let this therefore be my excuse, which I find more pressing as the road continues over the shoulder of the Soluk Dagh, where were four unemancipated country abigails heavily laden with faggots on their backs.

At this point you shall see, by looking southwards, a panorama of great distances, a dale of broad lands surrounded by a rim of hills ; and descending for four hours come to Erkekli, a poor little hamlet of houses built of stone and mud bricks, yet rich in gardens. A line of slender poplars sentinelled a springhead (a benison upon them for their pleasant company that night !), and a few tumuli mark the ancient dead. The villagers ground their corn on a mill of two great stones, revolved by a bullock, and set their bricks of mud and chopped straw to dry in moulds in the sun.

Ever a source of reverential wonderment to the native visitor was Kiepert's map, which was unrolled for discussion, and I heard our zaptieh describing it to a greybeard who rode with us, how that its owner could repeat in order the townships of the morrow's route—"Erkekli—var! Ajemi—var! Boghazlian—var!" as we followed the willow-clad stream which feeds the crofts. Runnels percolate the soil and are led from side to side in little aqueducts of splitten boles: there are many Armenian and Turcoman villages hereabouts, and you shall note the women wearing black headshawls as veils.

A little further and we suddenly lighted on what had every appearance of hut-circles, where ancient dwellers had made their home. At a waterspring at Ajemi Kaiasir in these downlands these circles first show themselves, ten feet across, and there are many built about this granite outcrop for a mile or more adown the little streamlet. But except for the green moorland there is no counterpart of Grimspound in the dimpsy, of Dartymoor in the dusk; but they buried their dead in barrows on the crests and the grassy hummocks broke the even line of the turf. Below the village two old, low dykes, weather-beaten earthwalls, so met at an angle that, had the stream been dammed, they would have formed a pond with its pent waters, just in the way the modern natives use against the summer heats. Of stone implements I could find no trace.

Where the valley debouches a bridge leads the slight road across the muddy Konak Su, here joining waters with the Aje Su, a swift, turbid stream ten yards wide, knee-deep, with banks at times as much as ten feet high.

All the menfolk are now in the stubble, furrowing the land for the next harvest ; the little river of the Aje Su, all luxuriant in hay-clad margent, bore reminiscence of the Norfolk dykes and meres, and gave its shelter to plovers, hoopoes, and sandgrouse, or a rare green wagtail, which in their turn bring hawks to hover over the bare fallows. How shall a man ride early here in the parky morning through landscapes of misty, grey hills and purling becks under skies big with threatened rain, without thinking of Sutherland deer-corries ?

The steeps above many-camel'd Ganijer are of some white sedimentary formation, with a layer of pink tufa running like a ribbon in and out, which the inhabitants hew and square to build their houses : it was a cold place to camp, and the breeze, which had been at our backs for the last three days, piped up to a gale that night. Autumn is chilly in these parts, and it rains frequently, and although the packbeasts were as happy in their wadded saddles as snails in shell, my own horse, which had hitherto been warm enough without a blanket, was now beginning to feel the cold like us all, and this night he slept under an old waterproof coat. The Boghazlian

track lay along the Aje Su valley, where ever the men ploughed with patient oxen, and the gardens were green with grape-vines, complement to the red of the flat-topped hills. Sometimes we met with conglomerate, sometimes pebbles; even now the autumn rivers gave promise of spate. Beyond the little loch at Hammâm a group of tall trees, worthy of Corot's brush, shook in the wind against the sky's white surf.

'Tis a dirty little town, Boghazlian, which crouches low on the leas of the Aje Su, barely redeemed from its wretchedness by a large building here and there. They showed me a Greek inscription on a gravestone, which Sir William Ramsay has kindly translated, "Here lieth the most blessed and pious Kurikalos," but beyond this, and seeing one or two children with Judas-coloured hair, it was not interesting. Moreover, as a thunderstorm had been spending its fury on my tent, the canvas roof was a colander, and the river was swelling into a torrent; on the morrow its volume was spread wide, lying in muddy, shallow sheets of water for miles, and the peak of distant Argæus was capped with snow.

The soldier led the caravan, his mare probing for a ford, while as a tailpiece to the picture of four horses splashing knee-deep in the water there was old Mustapha huddled high on his saddle. To my mind came a jingle of expectation—deep ford—paper to a learned society—crossing water—didactic utterance—mouth the only safe

place for a watch—if horse stumble—heroic picture—plaguey wet—very—— And then, be damned to it, my horse did stumble, put his foot into a hole, and I slipped out of the saddle. With barely time to slip my watch into my mouth and hold up the camera in its haversack shoulder-high, I was floundering about in the muddy stream, waist-deep. I spent an hour on the bank getting a dry shift of clothing from the packs.

These rains had flooded other streams and, as we drew near Kara Shehir, a little tributary swollen in accord stayed our crossing, until the zaptieh boldly forded, and thence we came to Tashly Huyuk, a hamlet of a score of houses on the limestone, rich in a hundred cattle and thirty horses ; thereafter followed deadliness of broad steppe, dull fallow, and sage-brush, relieved only from its awful monotone by a rare village, or by an abrupt chasm, a few tumuli. Argæus pierced the distant clouds on my left front, and almost due south was the spike of Ismail Dagħ ; the treachery of clear air portrayed the rim of this plat of land as three miles distant, really a receding deceit of four hours' march. At first the little lizards were the only life ; beyond Jashuk came peewits, starlings, and perhaps geese and martlets. Near Kourshektash, a village built of limestone without mortar or mud, the causeway to Kaisarieh crossed our route, and here the plains ceased.

Earlier that day our goal had been jargoned as

Arpwar by a toothless fellow : this was Alti Punar in proper speech, and we camped within sight of it at Sarilar in view of peaked hills and eccentric fluted slopes of malm. Sarilar, another dirty little town, had one antiquity of note which Sir William Ramsay explained when I sent him a copy of its inscription, a Roman milestone of 249-251 A.D. in the cemetery. Now was the time to give up camping in the open and take to the khans, and, whatever may be the drawbacks, complete privacy at least can be secured, and tempers are thereby improved. We came through Alti Punar and over the shoulder of Ismail Dagh, passing five or six hut circles, little conical depressions. A little further the village of Akharja of seventy houses showed walls built with stones inset in mud, herring-bone fashion ; and so by fair macadamized road to Kaisarieh, a large city, where you shall find chiefly English goods in the markets, from sweets to sewing-machines.

Dominant over all his empery of this land is the great mountain Argæus, on whose cloud-topped head the snow was beginning to appear. Fair brooks run down the great ravines of his spurs, and high above the bastions of his base tower the twin peaks of this volcanic mountain, seamed and furrowed with ancient channels. Vines run luxuriant over the lynchets which mark the care of the villages, and the tragacanth grows plentifully. Under this towering pile lie the American

hospital and school of Talas, a few miles from Kaisarieh. This hospital contained forty beds, and was open to Christian and Moslem alike : it had been designed by Dr. Dodd, who with his wife had been in control of it for twenty-three years. These, my friends, gave me warm welcome, and I spent five of the most delightful days imaginable with them, shooting, picnicking, and climbing Ali Dagh, an enormous triple-headed volcanic cone with steep sides and stony tops.

I learnt some small matters concerning the peasant quacksalvers from Dr. Dodd. The remedies which they propose are difficult to explain, for they seem to have neither worth from practice nor excellence in magic. Steep worms in oil and rub this mess on a rheumatic patient, after testing its strength on a board which its virtue must penetrate if it be of value : or soak the heads of young mice in olive oil and apply this as a liniment. Let a consumptive devour young puppies, or give one who suffers from skin eruptions moles to eat : fumigate the eyes of him who is affected by night-blindness with the smoke of a sheep's liver.

On the 28th of September I farewelled my kind hosts and set forth to a notorious village called Hajjilar, whence, said the nurses in the hospital, the cases of gun-shot wounds came. It is a small village built on the side of a low, abrupt, black cliff, a sombre setting for an ill reputation, reflected grimly in a dank and stagnant pool fringed with

willows. Each grasping fellow here vied with his neighbour in mouth-swelling stories of ancient stones, how this one was one hour distant, that one two hours, another five ; asking a Turkish pound for their services. These Subtles recall the *Alchemist*—

“ I'll show you a book where Moses and his sister
And Solomon have written of the art ;
Ay, and a treatise penn'd by Adam.”

I always wonder what it was they proposed to show me, for our wrangling ended fruitlessly, and Mustapha led the caravan up the cobbled alleyways to the crest above the village.

We lay that night in a deserted cottage, snarled about with tangles of rampant vines ; by the morrow's devious, rocky road to Kizil Oren I heard the bee-eaters' plaintive song again and saw a magpie. The inhabitants of Kizil Oren say that there are five hundred houses in their village, but this is an exaggeration ; it is a hamlet curious to see, each house having its small stack of brown faggots drying on top. There is a large rectangular mosque built partly of squared stones from the ruins that lie in tumbled and shapeless heaps a mile away. From the terrace of these ruins the town of Injesu is visible in the wide valley below, lying in the fork of a V, scarped on one side by a broken range of hills through which flows a stream. The other side of the V, formed of hard rock, diverts this rivulet through the town, while the mouth of the V is barred by

old walls, loopholed with squints, sealing the opening. In the middle is the old Mustapha Khan with its stately architraves near the Mosque, built by the same Mustapha.

Ismail Dagħ lay directly in front of us across a terrain flat and uninteresting, bounded by low, rounded spurs, but it was the beginning of the cave-lands. Throughout this district are strange, ancient caves, fossicked in the soft formation for dwelling-places, and our road led by two small hills called Gazan Gaia, where were chambers hollowed out in stories, with footholds burrowed in the walls that their inhabitants might climb through manholes to the floor above, while the lower mattamores seem to have been for animals, for niches like mangers have been cut in the sides.

Beyond these caves lies the valley of the Kizil Irmak, and thither we went, following the direction of a tributary streamlet through undulating vineyards, now and then passing a volcanic cone. Ahead of us lay the village of Bogtcha, perched on a white slope, and thither Mustapha took the horses, while I went with the escort to a little spinney where lay, the natives said, the famous Bogtcha stone, a red Hittite monument inscribed in linear characters. There, hidden in a pleasant grove of bushes and slender trees by the little brook, it had been left by those who had last disturbed it, lying on its side almost washed by the water. Two months before the Government had sent to have it brought to the Museum from

the neighbouring hill on which it had been anciently set, and the villagers in transporting it to the stream upset it there, perhaps accidentally, and relinquished all intention of removing it. Yet they regarded it with a certain respect, inasmuch as it must be valuable if the *Hukûma* should see fit to send so far for it, and they suggested that I should have it set on its base higher up the bank, for the winter spates of the brook would else sweep it into the river. This is a habit of the people of these lands: a stone which has served them for base uses for generations acquires extraordinary value in their eyes when sought by a European, and they become childishly secretive and cunning about it. Like those in authority, they are ridiculously and suspiciously acquisitive of antiquities because of their monetary worth: they cannot get out of their heads that it is treasure of gold (their greatest desire on earth) which is concealed in these ancient places under ward of jinn. Once while digging for the Byzantine Research fund in Egypt, I sent forty-six great boxes of antiquities to the railway station: the stationmaster demanded that I should leave a guard over it, for the fellaheen held that they contained gold. Moreover, they consider that a squeeze or a copy taken of their precious stone (which you have discovered for them) depreciates the value of it: see, therefore, that you delay not to do this on your first discovery: and remember also that

men are vain beings and with a little care can be posed for a photograph in front of your spoil, as Hogarth found: even perhaps a little ingenuity of turning the camera may secure your object without having their important persons spoiling the plate. Next day, therefore, Mustapha found me six stalwarts to work for twelve piastres, and four of these brought new-cut poles for our business. The stone was a ponderous mass, lying very awkwardly by the brookside, and gave us pause for thought: but these semi-savages are very ingenious, knowing how to put simple tools to the best uses, and after two more men had added their weight and a master-mind had set a plinth of stones for it, we levered it upright and set it secure on a firm socle. Here it will, I hope, remain until the *Hukûma* again try their hands at removing it.

Hence to Urgub, by a land white in stark contrast to the horrid black of the previous lava, a soft sedimentary deposit in which the old troglodytes had dug their habitations. Urgub is the offspring of an ancient cave-settlement, for the houses are lodged on the sides of a precipice, some being held in place by revets, clinging to the rock like samphire. Little oil lamps hanging rarely were already shedding their light in the streets, and a locanda uttered fragrant invitation to a hungry man: however small these cookshops be, their pans have at least three messes ready, a meat stewing by itself, probably stuffed tomatoes

and a lobsouse of egg-plant and mutton. In the dim light in the open outside the khan lay camels, bullock-carts, with their drivers sleeping near; the tilt-waggons were inside the khan. On either side lie great cliffs, flat-topped with hard layers of volcanic stone as one goes farther from the town, such that the rains cannot penetrate from above, but the waters from old time, now diminished in their volume, have gnawed a path through the sandstone from below. A thousand gardens of willows, poplars, mulberries, thorns, blackberries, marigolds lie in the valley; and presently we saw strange rock cones, beginning on our right hand at the foot of the slopes, a dozen perhaps in a row, standing in serried lines pointing skywards with tapered peaks, in colour ranging from dark grey to white, and several feet in height, some still capped with a hard stone lump, the primary cause of this formation.

We were now exploring one of the blank spaces in Kiepert's map, which was scattered with village names by hearsay, and it was with great delight that I happed on a remarkable medieval Mohammedan ruin at Tamsa, a building with a beautifully carved gateway and façade, all wonderful with twisted arabesques and scroll-work, and well-built walls with loopholed chambers. Gradually we worked up to the level tablelands above Sowêsha, at which village we came by chance on what is rarely seen, a woman praying. The lower strata of these flats are some kind of sandstone overlaid

by a hard red volcanic formation, from ten to twenty feet thick, while on the bare and stony crest are pieces of serpentine. Hence we descended to the green lawns of Maurejân, round about which are scores of caves, some still perfect, others mouldering and falling in, quarried and chiselled as the old inhabitants fancied, with painted archways. Opposite the village of Orta stands a little old white church containing frescoes of saints; a saint with a long shield, another on horseback, and one with a lance. Maurejân has a mosque which was once a Christian church with similar frescoes, now smoke-blackened and reechy, and a mutilated Greek inscription let into the outer wall, with crosses cut into the stone. I found an axe-head of andesite in the valley, and an obsidian flake.

The caravan was now moving eastwards by the Soghanli Dere, past an immense gorge beyond which was a high peak cloven in twain, of which one tooth was mantled with an ancient castle, the village of Kaleh Keui lying on the upper slopes. Thence by Develi Kara Hissar down the slopes to the Great Plain of Argæus, dead flat grasslands watered by small rivulets; most of its villages are dirty and built with mud walls. At Yolâre on the south fringe I saw a pair of small ibex horns nailed to one of the houses; one small urchin wore a triangular amulet, a little bag of blue cloth, pendent over his forehead from his hair, and farther on a little maid clad in red with

ornaments part blue pinned to her shoulders. At the south-east corner of the plain is a beautiful valley, with the village of Yahyale, spreading along a stream of fair water wherein were trout, so the inhabitants said. Here were willows, poplars, and walnuts, flat-roofed houses of mud, a grey minaret set against a background of steep hillside covered with broken marble from the earth.

The weather was now constantly dirty and wet, and there was great comfort in getting the horses and myself into a khan at Everek. Twice I overheard myself described as *Alleman* in the bazaar as I rode to the governor, which I corrected; these rude fellows here ask directly if I can speak French or English, for some have a smattering of these languages. The market was fair, roofed in with reed matting; in the miserable rain the Greeks, Armenians, and Moslems huddled in their booths. A plate of meat and some grapes in a small tavern cost two piastres, and the poor hungry-looking server seeing that I had left the undesirable tags of meat sat down beside me and ate of these lees. The host of my khan protested vigorously that there were no fleas in his house (I had of late been stung like a tench); he was an Armenian who had been there six months and complained of stagnation. There also came to me in my room two well-dressed pundits, asking my opinions on the political crisis, why I never learnt, but they were shoo'd

forth at my words that I was but a poor archæologist. Towards evening the rain ceased and the watery sun shone forth, and as an island in the town my roof gave vantage for the sight of a glorious sunset. To the north grave Argæus, a little way across a vale, dim in the light autumn drizzle, towered above the town, with light ruffles of vapour half-way down its steeps. Its olive bastions shone clear in the dying rays which tinted the summits a fiery glow as far up as the misty pall which shrouded the peak. A lurid yellow sea of light held the sun in suspense, across which the westward clouds drifted: on the far side a monstrous cumulus hovered, grey, purple, white, shaped like some giant fungus spread against the delicious pink of the sky. Below this gorgeous revelry the poplar leaves twinkled, now white, now green; then the fungus stretched itself into a sleeping dragon, and the light died away.

To the Hittite sculpture of Feraktin is a journey of five hours, round undulating low hills, grass-clad and arable; the sculpture is on a little low cliff within a few yards of a stream. It consists of two scenes of a parallel nature, in bas-relief, in each case a worshipper making offerings to a deity; in the left-hand group the two figures, both the god and his worshipper, are in short, kilted tunics facing each other standing over an altar: over the god is the Hittite sign for "god"; over the king are Hittite signs for "lord of chiefs . . .

lord of chiefs," if my interpretation be correct. The second group is similar, but the figures are clad in long robes, and the deity is seated: over him is the group for "supreme god," and over the king perhaps "Matnr, ruler of chiefs," that is, Mutallu, or, as the Egyptians wrote his name, Mautenre, if there be anything in my decipherment. To the right of all this are characters which I have tried to show read "With the land of the Hittites I have joined alliance."¹

Hence I intended to go to Farasha, but as the caravan left Feraktin, the zaptieh said that there were rumours that there was an antiquity, a bird, five hours off. Visions of a Hittite bird, such as had been found before, rose before me, and expectations ran high, as we rode up the last gorge by Yeni Keui, a pretty little village, where at least one neighbouring hill is topped by fir trees. *Eheu!* the wretched guerdon of our toil was solely the ordinary cave-chambers in the marble rock with a sculptured front carved to look like columns supporting pediment and arch. Within these two chambers on both sides were low benches carved in the rock, and at the back a platform higher and wider than these. The doors had been made small, probably for warmth or easier protection. We retraced our footsteps down the gorge to Yeni Keui and thence to Shighle, a village with a copper-smith.

Would you not gladly by some temporary spell

¹ *Archæologia*, Vol. LXIV, p. 132.

be transferred to the Middle Ages? Climb then by the outer rickety stairway to the guest chamber, screened by its trellis of creepers, and behold Dame Juliana Berners in a long kirtle and with bare feet, a coronal of metal disks upon her handsome black hair, ready to welcome you, but, careful housewife that she is, never ceasing in her spinning, giving a right-handed twist to the whorl and making a hitch on the spindle at each lift. For her background is the panelling of dark *katiran* wood, veneering the walls like some old hall, and round about are benches made with arms, almost like settles. There is a high fireplace inscribed in Arabic "1295 Sahib Resûl ben Mohammed." Alas, Dame Juliana was inferior to that English lady of whom old Izaak speaks: she could not cook a meal, although she made some excellent *baklava*, that treacly, honey-sweet pastry. She made but little pretence of veiling before me: her neighbours climbed up to the roofs by niches in their walls, which were made principally of stones and plaster or mud.

How woeful it is when, weary with travelling and perhaps remittent fever, the traveller can find nothing new in his small library, nothing unthumbed, unread. It is an eternal problem, what books shall I take? Weight is the chief bugbear; I have heard of one recommending the Bible and *Whitaker's Almanack*; were it not for the melodramatic and suburban pose of the second, I would believe him genuine. More real was the naturalist

whose love of literature was so strong that of nights he felt the absence of mere mechanical reading compel him to study the labels on his jampots, which I verily believe can be true. Here at Shighle I turned to the advertisements in an American magazine in delighted amaze at their anthropological and philological interest ; the bagmen natives of these lands must actually find it to their advantage to insert photographic pictures of themselves to add a zest to sell their wares, yet at first sight it seems to be against nature. The Notre Dame figures were not carved by sympathizers.

At Sazak, my next halt, the house of Panus, a Christian, offered me welcome. It was a muddy little village which we had reached after crossing a rickety bridge over the Zamanti River. Two Christian natives came and asked what they could do, for, said they, "We are poor and there are no schools for our children," but I could not help them. The house of Panus adjoined two others with walls of mud and stone, knit with long beams, with a flat roof of mud and logs ; across a primitive courtyard of unlevel space was the main building in two stories, the lower being a kind of cellar, and the upper having a covered verandah and balcony. Rugs had been hung from this, and on a rope were strips of charqui, the jerked beef of the boys' stories of one's youth. I occupied the stable side, the flea room, and caught twenty out of twenty-two assaults. A few score pine poles lay

near in a heap, and there was a haystack on a roof : some steers were tied up outside my window. There was a small coffee-box carved out of a single block with a sliding lid on a shelf, and another was brought to me with two amicable lions nuzzling each other on the top, almost such as are on the gate at Mycenæ. Sarah, the daughter of Panus, busied herself with cooking some small fish on my behalf, while ever the rain descended in perpetual showers.

Now were the last stages of my journey begun, although I did not know it ; ague, be it quotidian or any other monkish name, makes continued travelling unpleasant. The difficulty in the East is a European midday meal : for breakfast eggs are always a reminiscent food, for tea or dinner something can easily be found : but lunch is barmecide. Once the traveller draws on his strength with perpetual riding and poor food, he becomes an easy prey to the demons of these lands, being particularly liable to malignant boils.

Snow had appeared on Ala Dagħ on the 10th of October, and we wandered through the hills from Sazak back to the everlasting plain of Argæus, where little streams meander. On its fringe a few sandgrouse flew away at our approach ; four mallards rose heavily out of a stream tangled with orange weeds, and there flashed past a joyful blue kingfisher. Once I observed a little green frog jump at a slender rush and cling to it four or five inches above the ground. Between me and



CARVED BOX FROM SAZAK : ACTUAL LENGTH 6 $\frac{1}{4}$ INCHES

the sun lay a patch of some succulent pink plant in the moist levels ; I thought of heather, and hoped to reach the fragrance of bog myrtle. The plain seemed endless as the afternoon drew on, and I hoped to lodge at Kuchu, but Mustapha declaimed against the bad and rotten barley which a little village would sell us, and we hurried by into the uplands again. Once I thought that I caught sight of a cave with façade graven with a hunting scene, but it was far for eyesight, and I was too weary to trouble about such mundane matters ; so do antiquities sink into nothingness when hunger leaves the emotions cold. Ultimately we stabled the caravan at Arapli Khan, a solitary building, and Mustapha's mess of burghul and melons found great favour. Many carts and carriages, frequently packed full of women, come into these garths at all hours, and it is marvellous how these poor girls endure their torments ; I saw three of them combing each other's hair thus in Nigde. Nigde lay a day further across dull country, although the hills are fine, and snow was still down on Ala Dagh. It is a pretty and fair-sized town, with mosques on an eminence and a good market, and I was glad to find a locanda to feed us, and took Mustapha with me to dine in the evening. His manners were those of a buck of the old school, and our entry attracted some comment which culminated in three cups of coffee. They brought in a conceited little Armenian who knew four words of English, " I know very much,"

to give me the pleasure of his company ; ultimately I went belated to the Governor, heralded by a linkman over the rugged cobbles, to ask for an escort, who took us on to Bor next morning.

Bor is near the ancient Tyana, and a notable Hittite inscription was found here. Far be it from me to urge my own decipherment of the Hittite hieroglyphics eternally, but it may be interesting to make some small reference to it, even at the cost of bringing in King Charles' head. The sculpture is that of a king, and it was from the second word in the inscription that Professor Sayce, very reasonably and cleverly supposing that here was the name of the city Tyana, deduced three sign-values. Beyond this he and I are at (I trust, friendly) variance about the meaning of the inscription ; I would have it that it begins " Araras of Tyana the great unto his lord Talkhas sendeth greeting : [Unto us thou didst write(?)] Make alliance with us," and it goes on to speak of a present of " Tyanian wood " between them. Araras I assume to be Ariarathes, a well-known name in classical authors for the kings of Cappadocia : Talkhas must be Tulka of the inscriptions of Shalmaneser II, to whose reign I believe most of the Hittite inscriptions must be dated, this king being an addition to my identification of a dozen of his Hittite foes or contemporaries in the Hittite texts.¹

We reached Eregli the next day, and the

¹ *Archæologia*, Vol. LXIV, p. 129.

whistle of the train at railhead overwhelmed old Mustapha with homesickness, nor was I sorry to end the journey. There was but the Hittite sculpture at Ivri̇z to see, a rock at the head of a pleasant trout stream, two hours' carriage drive distant. The picture is of a large figure holding corn and grapes, facing a second smaller figure raising his hand to his forehead, and some have seen in this a god of fertility with his worshipper. Here I cannot agree, for the hieroglyphics (with the reservations above) appear to me to relate to the meeting of two kings: over the larger is writ: "I am Tesup-mis . . ., I am the son of Araras (Ariarathes): we have given our hands (in alliance), giving documents(?) of our alliance," and over the smaller: "I am . . . Araras greeting my son."

Then Mustapha sold off the caravan and we took the train for Constantinople.

CARCHEMISH, 1911

1st Citizen's wife : Lord how fine the fields be, what sweet living 'tis in the Country !

2nd Citizen's wife : I poor souls God help 'em ; they live as contentedly as one of us.—BEAUMONT and FLETCHER.

“ **W**HEN excavations are successful,” said our chief D. G. Hogarth, “there is never a moment to spare,” a wise saying which T. E. Lawrence and I, acting as his idle apprentices, learnt in watching the progress of raking the mound of Carchemish. For you may dig for week after week, a weary and indefinite time of waiting, finding nothing, and then on a sudden the most glorious treasures will be revealed, tasking your time from dawn to sunset. So was it in the first year of excavations at Carchemish ; now would be inscriptions a-plenty to copy, now a dearth : ashlarred walls which had promised so well ended in empty earth and could not be traced : bourocks failed where uninviting levels produced. It was a virgin site save for some small diggings by Henderson and St. Chad Boscawen in 1880, whose discoveries in the days of Turkish *jahiliyyah* were transported to the British Museum ; none knew but that, hidden away in its recesses, lay the clue

to that best riddle of archæology which Clio propounds, the secret of those Hittite inscriptions which are found in the Asian provinces between Smyrna and the Euphrates.

So again to Port Said, in February, 1911, where a great gale, blowing to burst itself, sprang up from the south, hurrying clouds of sand from the deserts and whipping a flurry of racing spindrift from the waves at the canal mouth ; cargo hoys under the steamer's lee gave sanctuary to the cock-boats plying from shore and tossing unhandily near her side. The skipper held to harbour until four next morning, the wind unabating, and then put forth, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia, but Euroclydon abeam drove him towards Cyprus ; and on a sudden came a great flash and explosion as though a gun had been fired in the between decks. The purser looked out from his cabin as guiltily as I, for we had both taken cartridges with us, and conscience pricked : but it was a flash of lightning which had struck the foremast. On board was a party of those poor seasick folk who crowd after some white dragoman, bringing remembrance of that universal folk-tale in which villager after villager is impressed to follow a magic animal from contagion with either it or one of its train ; these growled that the captain had no business to put forth in such uncomfortable weather. The Jaffa landing was impossible, and so, willy-nilly, they were constrained to go on to Beyrut, where their cactus chins and

sombre collars proclaimed them as travellers. It is strange how from of old in these seas the amateur has offered his unsought opinion on the safety of the passage, against the master and the owner of the ship.

From Beyrut inland the ways were closed to me, for the snows on the Lebanon blocked the railway, and the caravan roads to Damascus were deep in ice. Northwards the pass between Alexandretta and Aleppo was choked, and the warmer horse-routes to the south by Damascus and thence to Carchemish were not commodious. There was left the bare hazard of finding the Haifa railway branch open between one blizzard and the next, and thither I went again by sea, and thence by train across that muddy cataract stream, the Jordan, and over the desolate steppes beyond, where endless showers of snow were whirling, to that frost-beleaguered city Damascus. By chance the line became passable to Aleppo beyond ; the panting engine climbed the hills into deeper snow, churning up great gouts and flinging them aside in showers, until a long drift claimed mastery. Thirty shovellers leapt from the leading coach to free its wheels ; thus did we come to the dirty locanda at Rayak. Again long before dawn the train started, but alack ! before ever a new mile was passed, the freezing snow clotted about the vizard of the fresh engine, broad-gauged and powerful, which thrashed its unavailing pistons like a storm-vexed ship's screw tossing naked in

air. Spent with its efforts, it backed slowly out of the clinging ice-grip and rested in the dark ; only the faintest tinge of turquoise was in the east, mirrored in the expanse of snow, crisp and cold, while a little moon cast shadows. Slowly the dawn came, the warm sun helped the spades, and the monster butted its way through at last.

Everywhere at the little stations the train was still a wonderment, and the dwellers in the beehive villages made it the occupation of their day to come out, mouth agape, and then solemnly trail home as it steamed away amid the melting snow-patches. Aleppo was clemmed with cold and famine, and the wretched Syrian travellers huddled round the single wood-devouring stove in the hotel ; the staple food was duck and such wild-fowl as were an easy prey in this pinching frost. Rumours of snow in the country delayed our expedition still further : moreover, my chief was still on the way out ; and the Wali was so convinced that Carchemish would be frost-bound and foodless that he telegraphed to Constantinople on our behalf for an extension of the time-limit for beginning work. Meanwhile I found my old servant Haj Wahîd and engaged him again.

Now came eight hundred Turkish soldiers by train to Aleppo, returning home after their campaign in the Hauran against the Druses. I watched them at the station with one of the consular dragomans ; " They have undergone much," said he : they looked hard after their schooling in war,

bronzed, bearded, dirty, but well booted, cloaked and armed. The bespectacled Wali came to welcome their arrival with a speech, whereof the sections began : "Soldiers !" and recounted the hardships which they had suffered ; then the band played four notes in a descending scale, and a roar of *Padishah chok yâshâ*, "Long live the Padishah," rose to heaven.

Aleppo is blessed with a good Armenian doctor, by name Altounian, and a good dentist of the same race, whose patient I became. In the entr'actes of his drill—O, but Ixion's wheel gave greater comfort !—I learnt some stories of his trade among the Arabs : "Wallâhi," say they, "ten piastres for drawing a tooth ! and Ibrahîm in our tribe only charges one, and he takes ten times as long about it as you."

At last my chief came, and with him Lawrence, and Grigori, a kind and portly *εὐίθης*, long celebrated as a tomb finder, a dowsers of graves with iron probe instead of hazel twig. There were yet to be procured spades and picks, which the smiths made to pattern ; then was hired a caravan of ten camels and eleven horses for the tents, tools, materials and food boxes, each beast at $27\frac{1}{2}$ piastres for the journey. Thus set forth our cavalcade over the undulating brown lands of the Hittites.

Bâb was our first halt, a dirty, muddy town, where, says Maundrell of the seventeenth century, is a good aqueduct. As we were strawing our beds in the khan, the face of one familiar to me

stared in at the door, and lo ! it was Nakhli, the muleteer who had taken me to Nineveh seven years back, and he, hearing of my arrival, had come with a greeting. On the morrow the foaming little River Sajur, still bearing its ancient name Sagura, now in flood barred our passage, but in a little we forded it. Our second servant, a beautiful young man, all girlish-pink and white, a poor, unsuspecting acolyte of the road, who had never before left his home in Aleppo, yet had covenanted to do our service as he was bid, fared badly in this romping madcap stream, being fearful. Or ever the water had rippled to his horse's fetlocks he had drawn knees to chin like primitive man at burial ; so when the depth increased and the beast tripped and fumbled over the clucking stones of the river-bed, the eyes of this great baby rolled in terror and turned to heaven prayerfully like an Ethiopian saint in a manuscript. Ribald men on the bank who had easily passed its terrors, holding their splitten sides, shouted in snatched breaths "Fear not !" but their laughter drowned their words. Poor wretch ! In the end he reached the far bank in safety, but this first adventure overmastered him, homesickness weighed heavy on him in Carchemish, and the degradation of cleaning boots completed his downfall, so that he returned to his father's house after two days.

The land here is brown rolling downs, cultivated with barley and licorice ; immense tracts of ploughland stretch out to the horizon, red earth

sparse of trees, where the beehive houses have ceased and given place to flat roofs. Little has changed since the time when Shalmaneser the Great, in the ninth century before Christ, warred with Benhadad, that Napoleon of Damascus who knit the west and north Syrian tribes together in his coalitions. For the Assyrian giant, again beginning to awake from the drowsiness that was fallen upon him in the eleventh and tenth centuries, bestirred himself to spread westwards, reaching out from the Tigris even as far as the Euphrates, to Carchemish itself, where the astonished townsfolk paid him tribute unquestioning. Tiglath-Pileser's heroic progress in the twelfth century had been forgotten in the long years of peace from which these careless Hittites had a rude awakening when Ashurnatsirpal set forth, thus to send a slogan through their hordes. So was left a legacy of fierce wars to the successor to the Assyrian throne, Shalmaneser, who repeatedly pressed his campaigns amid these lands. The common terror bound the Syrian tribes together, and the kings of the cities of Phœnicia, Southern Cilicia, Hamath, Israel, Arvad and even an Arab *shékh* banded themselves under Benhadad, the master-mind who saw the danger rising in the East. The hosts met at Karkar, so the Assyrian chronicler says, a village in Northern Syria, and the result was doubtful; it is not until the miserable Hazael smothers Benhadad and tries to make his mantle fit that the Assyrians make headway.

Assassination is the risk of Eastern and Irish kings ; it is hard that Benhadad should have thus paradoxically died in his bed. If there be any value in my decipherment of the Hittite inscriptions, the greater number of them would appear to be records of the alliances of these kings.

Jerabîs, the little village three-quarters of a mile distant from the mound of Carchemish, and half a mile from the river, contains the remnant of the ancient name¹ Gargamish, following all the traits of word-pedigree in these lands. It is difficult to trace the origin of the other form of the name, Jerablus, which, like Tarablus for Tripolis, bears on its face the print of $\pi\acute{o}\lambda\iota\varsigma$; I heard from an addle-pate villager that a third form was Jeralbîs, but this appeared to have no currency. The village itself is as such villages have been for hundreds and thousands of years, of square-built mud-brick houses with flat roofs, and a spring bubbles forth in its very midst, clear water babbling down to the Euphrates. Straight-stemmed poplars grow near, affording the beams and rafters and doorposts, each village having its growth of these graceful trees like the fragrant toys of curled pine-

¹ This was first pointed out by Professor Jensen, whose article I had not seen when I published a short note on this theory in the *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, Vol. XXXIV, 1912, 66. Maundrell (end of the seventeenth century) calls it Jerabolus " of a semi-circular figure, its flat side lying on the banks of Euphrates ; on that side it has a high long mount, close by the water, very steep. . . . At the foot of the mount was carved on a large stone a beast resembling a lion, with a bridle in his mouth, and I believe anciently a person sitting on it." All this is practically correct.

shavings in a Noah's ark. As in most Arab villages, milk, fowls, eggs, and bread of a paper-like thinness can be obtained, or a sheep bought for twenty-five shillings. The women weave a good coarse cloth. The largest house belonged to the licorice company and was used as a collecting station, whither the Arabs had brought masses of this root which lay against the outer wall in stacks. It was of one story, built principally of squared stone, plastered with mud and whitewashed, topped with a flat roof to which a stone stairway outside led, and girdled at the back with a small compound. The windows were, of course, barred openings, with shutters against the dust, and the floors of beaten earth. This house was offered us at first rent free, and although we did not presume that this would be the permanent condition of things, it was a shock to find, after we had settled in, that the grasping nature of Selîm Tûma, the big man of these parts, demanded the monstrous rent of £120 a year. St. Paul well understood the people to whom he spoke, for *certes*, the love of money is their bane. After this vice comes jealousy, not so much of their wives as of their fellows, for an Arab who has received his vails, cannot bear to see a greater *bakshîsh* given to another. A third iniquity is the commission your servant will take to himself on the moneys passing through his hands—often a sixth of the amount; nor can you amend this except with an infinity of trouble. The worst rogue whom I was able to detect in my

employ was one of the Egyptian *fellahîn*, when I was digging amid the western hills in Egypt. For some weeks this man, unhappily called Isa, had served me in a troglodyte life in the caves of the hills, and, as usual, I had accepted his word for his accounts, for life is too short to boggle at a tokensworth of malversation, but he betrayed himself through an overweening confidence, and a little matter made me suspicious that something was very wrong. For in the beginning the official watchman of the antiquities, who wore an armlet of inscribed tin like a London messenger, had baked bread for me and, as is the wont of human beings, his first stint was plentiful, but the second showed a woeful deficit in quantity ; at which Isa, rogue to me but still more inimical to the watchman, raised kitchen-outcry and refused further traffic. But baking is a difficulty in a small village, unless you can eat the common people's bread, and it was Isa who then suggested that we should ask the Omdeh, the head-man, to help us in our difficulty and give us of his manchets ; " but," said he, " he will accept no money for it, for it would be unfitting to his dignity." To take bread without payment was, of course, impossible, so that Isa fell in with my proposal to seek the Omdeh's servant every twelve days and pay to this underling the worth of his bread, for this way is the habit of the East. Thus did we for seven weeks, I delivering to him the moneys for the Omdeh's servant.

But ease of deceit had god-demented this numskull, and in his hybris he came to me with : " Sir, as we have not paid for our bread either this week or last, it is fitting that we give a double fee to-day to the Omdeh's servant." I therefore sought occasion to visit the Omdeh's house one afternoon, leaving Isa in his innocency outside. The Omdeh was from home, but his son gave me interview with my beneficiary. It was an old black lady, trembling and stammering at such a break in the even course of her life, who came before us : " Not a farthing has your servant paid me in all these weeks," said she, as I expected.

Oland of comic opera ! in two minutes most of the village had somehow heard the bruit that a bobbery was toward, and had strayed into the Omdeh's great room, and Isa, the delinquent, was haled in. To my Arabic, spoken slow that all might understand, he gave answer : " Sir, you have asked but one of the Omdeh's servants, and he has many." Whereat the Omdeh's son grinned : " She is the only one we have." Then the villagers took my part and a babel arose : the wretched Isa, the veins standing out in his neck in fear, was tormented with questions as though by the Inquisition, and like Luther, there he stood, God help him : revelation followed discovery : how he had bought fowls, eggs, oranges, rope, ladder, camp-gear and meats cheaply and sold them dear to me ; nay, even saying that the change of moneys cost a half-piastre on the English pound. In the

end he confessed to keeping back the bread money, and on the morrow, before the Omdeh as daysman, I accused him in the presence of the people, but the Omdeh was afraid to deal properly with him, or Isa had been astute enough to throw himself at the Omdeh's feet for mercy the evening before, as people said, so that I gained nothing but his dismissal and an empty promise that the money should be returned. Then I bethought me of the police; and the watchman of the antiquities, in whose breast rankled the memory of Isa's hostility, willingly carried a letter to Zarabi, the village where was a station, and brought back the word of the police: "Greetings to your Excellency, and we will have your man beaten whenever you will." This I deprecated, although he deserved it, saying that I wanted only my money, and in the end the Omdeh himself came to me, tapping his pocket and saying: "Here is your Excellency's money"; but as he had obviously paid it himself, for Isa was clever enough to pay nothing, to have taken it from the very hand who had given me the bread would have been more Gilbertian than ever. So perforce I left it, and I learnt afterwards that Isa had tried to interest several influentials in his sad case, that they might speak a word in his favour that I should take him back to service, for, said he, putting the final magnificent lie to his fabric: "I really gave the money to the Omdeh, but he would not admit it for very shame."

From the Euphrates westwards the ground rises

by a very gradual slope in long undulations to the low hills ; to the north-east are the snow-clad peaks of the Taurus, while far down the river-bank was the pimple of the mound of Shukh. The citadel of ancient Carchemish is now but a mound two or three hundred yards long : the curious who wish to know what it was like in Shalmaneser's time may see three pictures of it on the bronze gates from Balawat in the British Museum. It was one of the usual fords of the Euphrates until Shalmaneser established himself at Til Barsip, now Tel Ahmar, about fifteen miles below, where he could cross in greater security.

In March the river begins to rise with the melting snows, and subsides early in May : you may see sometimes whole families swimming down on inflated skins. March is a cold month in these lands, the thermometer frequently marking 45°-49° at seven in the morning. Great winds would rise in April, blowing up an abaddon of dust-devils (a king's ransom, forsooth !) and driving the men down from the excavations to seek less exposed places : a torrent of rain fell at the end of April. At Tel Ahmar in July a hurricane rose daily each afternoon while we were there, ranting down the river-valley, making it a dust-laden inferno for any work on the inscriptions, and here one could learn the reason for the Assyrian incantation against ophthalmia, which begins : " Thro' heaven blew the wind, bringing blindness to the eye of the man."

Occasionally I saw a few geese, storks, sandgrouse or plover, and once or twice a tern hovering over the swollen water ; a pair of sandpipers were courting on the fringe of the river-bank. Of other creatures we found scorpions and snakes under the fallen stones. There is but little to shoot until the doves come, about the middle of May, flying across the ancient city in flocks every evening for a period of three weeks, when they feed on the seeds of some plant amid the green corn. These offer all the sport of driven birds, and are at the same time good eating.

Sit in some small test-trench and wait, looking out southwards over the pleasaunces of green fields, the sun going down behind you, meet solitude to conjure memories of flighting. Dusk of highland lochside, with storm-driven mallards seeking haven from the sea ; sea-haer of Suffolk coast over dank sands of ebbing tidal river, with spectral flocks of knot and stint : grey mist of Norfolk marsh, the orange sedge rotting in the deek alongside, and the hiss of the little rain among the water-spiders, while distant plovers wheel, crying plaintively. Two little Arab boys wait for the empty cartridge-cases, lying hid behind a stone ; the first dove rises from the corn and flies wide of your butt. . . .

To shoot at birds on the wing is always a marvel to the Arab, for his firepiece is not made by Manton, although perhaps old enough, nor will he burn powder in such a wasteful practice. Nay,

more ; even the German engineers on the railway line in the following year, I am told, were inept at the game, and one was nicknamed by the Arabs *Abu Rish*, which means " Father of a Feather," because he shot a feather from one of these doves, and wore it in his hat triumphant.

But the most interesting bird was the black, glossy ibis of Birejik, which Mr. Ogilvie Grant identified for me from a description. A large flock of them would sometimes fly over the mound, and all unwitting at first I regarded them as cormorants, so near akin was their appearance and habit to my erroneous eyes, until the feathery plume behind their heads and long bill convinced me that cormorants they were not. It happened that we had one day to go to Birejik, a few hours' ride to the north, to dine with the governor, and here on the ledges of the high rocks they congregated in large numbers. They are a sacred bird, and I doubt not that they were so regarded in ancient times, for the men of the town told me that their yearly immigration to Birejik is heralded by three of them, two of which die on the way, but the third struggles through, falling exhausted on the sandy floor of the attenuated river. Here wait the inhabitants, and as it flutters helplessly to earth, they pick it up, succour it, and presently the rest of the flock are seen flying hither in the distance. A great feast is held in honour of their arrival.

By the middle of March the grass is beginning

to appear, and in a fortnight is a harmony of green against the grey stones of the ruins. The fritillaries have come forth from their cocoons and flutter low on the stones, and by mid-April the barley and wheat are thrusting forth their shoots, and the almond and apricock blossom in rare gardens. Now and again a fish rises heavily in the brown swirls of the river, but neither fly nor spoon inveigles them ; I saw two kinds, both heavy, coarse fish. I planted a garden in our compound in March, crumbling bricks from an old wall to augment the shallow soil, and drawing from the common manure heap in the village, where the women make the cakes of fuel. Our last peascod was shelled in May, when the beans were beginning to put forth pods, and the nasturtiums giving their generous colour. The sun-flowers were a foot high at the end of April, and bloomed in early June, and I scattered their seeds with mignonette broadcast on the side of the little rivulet near the mound, which was usually a mass of flowers and yellow-budded camel thorn. Everything dried up in June, for the temperature even in the house was 92° and 94°, though a great gale lowered it once to 70°. We hung great bunches of licorice plants adown the windows and splashed them copiously with water from above, that their evaporation in the draught might cool the rooms ; mosquito-netting nailed outside all openings kept the flies away. The fields of licorice look something akin to English

bracken from afar, and on the mound of Carchemish in summer pillars of smoke rising to heaven marked where the women were burning the heavy-scented rue for lye. Once three little mites strolled into the garden in search of adventure, and I went out to learn their desire, for Haj Wahîd had once caught some urchins throwing lighted paper into our room through the window. Mortal terror fell upon them, and the two eldest, of five and six years, made good their escape, but the smallest tangled himself in his flurry in a strand of string stretched between two stakes to keep off the sparrows, and failed: he raised a great bellow of alarm, wept, and in his paroxysm of fear stamped my first sunflower to death.

There came to me many who wished to be employed, and as the report of our fair wages penetrated to far corners, tramping fellows arrived from time to time. The wayfarer would say: "Greeting, sir; wilt give me work on the excavations? Nay, say not that it is impossible; why is it impossible? There must needs be a place for me. I am a poor man, and have no harvest to take my time." Then at a second refusal he would let fall that peculiar monosyllable of these parts, "*Ya*," equivalent to the German *So*. They would even bring small presents of eggs to blind my eyes, and I know not what fee Haj Wahîd exacted from the suppliants to say a word in their favour. "Come giftless," says the Turkish proverb, "and the master is away from home; bring presents,

and they will say, 'Welcome.'” The vizier is an important fellow to placate if you wish a favour of the Sultan.

As always, these mesquins sought help in sickness, but it was little that I could do save bandage their hands ulcerated in spadework, or tie up wounds; fortunately they heal quickly, but they must be roundly abused lest they apply their own methods of surgery as well. Once a workman showed me his little baby daughter running about contented with a sore wound in her neck. It was beyond anything I could treat, and the British Museum paid the expenses of healing her in Birejik. At first the father would not take her, on the plea that his wife was even then in that condition in which ladies wish to be who love their lords, but bombast to dismiss him changed his mind speedily, and all three went into Birejik with a donkey, looking like a Flight into Egypt. They who went to Birejik three came back four, and the man, a Kurd, thanked me very prettily, kissing my hand and laying it on his head. The little girl was nine days under the doctor, who sent her back cured of her gangrenous and scrofulous ulcer, of which she would otherwise have died.

Towards the end of April Hogarth, having well set afoot the diggings, started homewards to London, taking Grigori and leaving me in charge for the remaining two or three months of the season: hardly had he left when all who could

invent some subterfuge demonstrated their pitiful little roguery. From the unemployed shacks who came with word of mouth from Grigori that they should have work that very morning, to that little mammothrept Mazlum Bey, the Turkish commissioner, who tried to squeeze a food-allowance out of us, each was ready to try some vain but amusing cajolery.

The poor wretches of diggers had at first been under the thumb of the head-man of the village, and had little spirit against his oppression, but presently, with steady wage and good food, their hearts waxed bolder. In vain did the head-man come to Hogarth (it was before he had gone home) that he or his brother might be employed as overseer ; he was countered by bland acceptance on the condition that he should begin at the beginning and learn his trade by first working with the pick. "Nay," said he, "this is unfitting for a gentleman." It is the habit of these tyrants to mulct their villagers in whatever charges they can, and for the most part these poor serfs are deeply in debt. It was said at the beginning that the head-man had a neat trick of taking two piastres and a half each week from every man, on the pretext, forsooth ! that dismissal would otherwise follow. But the men relinquished this act of weakness as they gathered courage and a little fat on their bones, and it also came to the head-man's uneasy ears that we learnt of this monstrous thievery. It was the little water-boy

who told us unwillingly that he took thirty piastres from him each week, leaving him only fifteen. It reached us also that the Government were seeking cause against him, so that he had need to walk delicately, yet by his own fear once did he condemn himself. For one Sunday afternoon we observed him from the house-roof as he walked about the village, sucking his pencil (this they all do) and stopping each man and writing in a note-book at each colloquy ; he, in his turn, espied us watching him thus closely and ostentatiously, and malaise came on him—was he not suspect of writing blackmail in his table-books ? So in a moment he came to our garden in unwonted visit, and with sickly, deprecatory smile—the smile of the English bourgeois—thus, without more than a greeting from us, spake, “ Your lettuces grow well—I was but writing the licorice accounts in my pocket-book.”

Peace be with him, for he is dead ! and before we left he played the gallant lover, earning our respect. On a day Haj Wahîd, our servant, came in with an important and mystic air as of a play-actor : “ The head-man—the head-man of the village—has eloped with his cousin, setting her on his horse, and they have dashed off to be married.” It appears that these twain had long loved each other, but shame at the breach of ties of blood restrained them, for near cousinship is *haram* in marriage ; but in the end ἔρως ἀνίκατε μάχαν conquered, and he galloped down to her

house, thrust aside her women with threat of death, and played the part of Jock of Hazeldean, carrying her off to another village. The girl's brother was digging on the mound when the news reached him ; his face fell and his head dropped between his shoulders, and he left the excavations sadly, for on him fell the vendetta, and the head-man was a powerful enemy. Yet some weeks later tact and diplomacy smoothed over the affair, for one evening, the village being gathered together, first one and then another flung a contribution to the bloodgeld into a cloth until all present had paid their share, so that the head-man and his bride might live in peace.

On a Sunday there was a double wedding, the brides coming from Upper Jerabis and Lower Jerabis, and the bridegrooms also in opposite fashion. On the three days preceding there had been much dancing in the village in the evening ; here the girls, like most peasant women in this country, do not veil, and their carriage with men is not so severe as in the town, and they hold the men's hands in their ranks as they dance in line. A piper, playing his strident reed, sways alongside of them, and the line of dancers quavers and recedes, stamping a staccato measure in unison at recurrent periods. The moon gives light for their jollity, the women shrilling the *u-lu-lu* of the *tahlil*, and then, after three days, comes the wedding. Men and maids dressed themselves in all their best, and sallied

forth, the men on foot, the women on four camels ; those of the men who had horses galloped, curveted, and caracoled round the procession over the high-standing wheat, green in all its spring delicacy, picked out with yellow charlock and scarlet poppies. The bride went on ahead on a mare, conducted by groomsmen, and the women followed behind, out of place in this prologue. A medley of ululations and gunshots showed what was toward—O the brave powder play !

From the Lower Jerabîs came forth a throng alike in fine raiment and sumpters, even a camel for the bride, with a donkey bearing a gaudy box for the bride-clothes ; then halted these two bands apart, while riders pranced forward to parley. It was said that some question of dignity prevailed ; should our bride go first to them or theirs to us ? or should the wise men lead forward each bride at once ? The little problem of etiquette settled itself, and the brides exchanged villages, the lady of the lower town being brought up happily to us, when the Circassian factor of our Agha hurried down and demanded a great sum in waygeld to pass through his corn—a mean and stingy foist on a wedding day ; the head-man of the village himself paid half, for he thought to extract it later from the bridegroom. The crowd passed up to the bridegroom's house, where he had meanwhile been waiting impatient ; it is unseemly for him to fetch his bride.

At another time were evolved the beginnings

of a small strike on the diggings, engineered by a would-be demagogue, a certain Hallîl Jadûr, a laughing boy who nevertheless tried this folly, but there was no cohesion, and it failed. It began with some little trouble between one of our two zaptiehs, who hit a workman, and the report brought to me was that the zaptieh had spoken insulting words of the man's sister, a thing unspeakable. Then a discontented spirit ran through some of the diggers, and their spokesman Hallîl pretended he was uttering their views when he said that none would work for us while such a malignant zaptieh was employed: and as they ceased work for the evening, he diverted them from their peaceful return home, exhorting them to go to receive their pay and work no more. Now the majority of these ninety simple fellows cared little or nothing about the affair, and were content to draw their good pay without challenge; but this did not satisfy Cleon, who led their course to our house, so that they might take their hire and be finished with us—"None will work for you, sir." We took our seats at the usual place of payment, and began the customary dole, as though it were Saturday; and the first four took their money, but the others wavered, seeing that all were now like to be dismissed, for there were many others in these parts only too ready to be taken in their stead. The little zaptieh, ostensibly the cause of the trouble, a good little man in his way and harmless, was

hidden in our house, and presently, putting on stern faces, we took the three chief men aside and asked them comfortably of the matter: "Should we apply to the Turkish governor to judge the question?" At this, there was hurried jabber of imploring dissent: "Pray you, sir, let us have naught with the governor, settle it here." As is usual in the East, the matter settled itself, and ultimately we learnt that the actual words of insult were first used by the digger himself to the inoffending zaptieh, "Your sister is no better than she ought to be," to which the little zaptieh *tu-quoque*, "So's yours." I do not know if they had any sisters.

Next pay-day, Haj Wahîd, as was his wont, hovered about behind our seats, keeping a watchful eye on the change of moneys, and at last found a use for his few words of English—for Cleon came jauntily to receive his pay, and our black-moustached henchman growled, "Dis one no good," with which we heartily agreed, and, having long arranged to get rid of a pestilent disturber of our peace, dismissed him to his astonishment: so that he became an example for ten long weeks of idleness to the village not to stir up strife. Such an expedient is often meet for discipline.

The second zaptieh was less polished; his manners were tiresome, for he perpetually asked for medicines. One evening he came to the door with his usual request amid the loiterers who

talked with Haj Wahîd—an opportunity for bewitching him and dissuading him. The components of a seidlitz powder were mixed separately in two glasses out of his sight: the water still appeared to be common water to his eyes, and he looked expectant. A voice recited Abracadabra, and then at the magic word one glassful was tossed into the other; at once belched forth a violent storm of bubblings, frothing to overflow, with Medusa hissings, a wonder and a mystery! The importunist leapt back a pace, and a cloud of disappointed friendship spread over his face. “*Jânum*, O friend,” said he, “that thou shouldst have tried to hurt me, to say these words of gramarye over the water; so mightest thou have poisoned me.”

There was an aged man, Hassan Agha, a toothless old carl whom the sale of property made temporarily a rich man, and he immediately married again, to the amused scandal of the neighbours, who made satiric comments. Within a little the bride was missing, and this gave rise to gossip; alas! there was sadder and more mournful cause than this, for she was found in the Euphrates, where she had gone to draw water, and had slipped in and was drowned. They bore her poor body through the village to burial, but in a few days the silly relations, having seen a gaping wound which they ascribed to a murderous attack, made accusation of blood-guiltiness; and this reaching the ears of the Government, a

commission was sent from Birejik to make autopsy of the exhumed body.

At the end of the season we had orders to go down to Tel Ahmar to examine its written stones, to which Hogarth had been led a few years before, and a great barge was sent down for us from Birejik and awaited us near the mound. These boats are manned with two long sweeps, and swing and twist in the eddies of the current as they go down, and hereby one may understand the pictures of boats and rafts on the Ninevite sculptures, where the oarsmen face each other, but in order to return, their crew must tow them laboriously up-stream. A contrary wind arose, so that we moored to the bank after nightfall and bathed in the dark, warm waters and wrestled on the sand; these Arabs are poor at grips and know naught of locks or holds. Again a little, and the moon being now near its full, we pushed off and floated down to Tel Ahmar at midnight, past the great high-prowed ferry-boats. It is a village on the left bank, built close under the small, ancient mound which touches the river. The old city, fortified with walls of earth, sprang into prominence in the ninth century before Christ as an alternative crossing to Carchemish, which was never constant in its favours to Assyria, and Shalmaneser made it his own, placing monuments of himself therein, particularly two stone lions at one of the gates.

Wherefore when we landed there was every

hope of excitement, for although Hogarth had taken squeezes of the cuneiform inscriptions on the lions, the results had been too poor for my friend King to read more than a few lines therefrom, and the remainder had been a virgin book for hundreds of years. But the advent of a succession of foreigners (Miss Gertrude Bell was the first) to see these inscriptions led the inhabitants to be chary of letting me copy them without some demand for reward ; yet, the Government being our sponsors, it was unfitting to pay anything to the old gentleman who came out to take toll. The two lions at the gate, now fallen, fortunately with the inscription of each uppermost, bore a duplicate inscription, so that where one was broken the other frequently supplied the lacuna ; and it was with no little pleasure that I found that it proved that Shalmaneser had set these monuments up in *Kar-Shulmanu-Asharid* (the name is clear on both), which was the later name which he gave to Til Barsip, about which geographers have debated so much.

The other inscription was a splendid but broken basalt block written over with Hittite hieroglyphs, which surely indicates how much this town was swayed towards the Hittites, if its inhabitants were not of Hittite nationality. An Arab, a poor Bedlamite, a demented crack-pate lunatic reading the Hittite characters, had shattered this stone with a hammer for the treasure which its cryptogram revealed. Poor wight ! that in his researches

into Hittite he should incur the danger *De lunatico inquirendo*; truly in his environment he was at a disadvantage to more western enthusiasts or pseudo-prophets, and thereby as worthy of pity as was Omar Khayyám in the eyes of a Boadicea from the suburbs, who, I declare, resented the discussion of his heretic philosophy at a respectable dining-table. For the talk had been of the justification of suicide, and one had instanced Omar's views about the Soul flinging aside the Clay; and straightway quivered the angry beads, the offended bugles mimicked the aspen, and almost pleached arms formed pectoral at outrage of decent British traditional convention—a theologomachy forsooth at Sabbatothysia! “Yes, I have read some of Omar Khayyám, but then we must remember he had not our advantages.”

Then I farewelled Lawrence, who turned inland once more, while I crossed at Shalmaneser's ferry, which is now farmed out to a speculator, to await my carriage home. Again was the great game over for a time.

To L. W. K., H. R. H., and (in memory) P. D. S.-M.

ENVOY

Brothers,

I have sought diligently for a proper invocation to you, whereby the small matters composing this book might be fittingly dedicated : and yet I have found none to please me, save only this present word, Brothers. Nay, as an archer draweth his bow at a popinjay and striketh it well and truly, and yet by never so little he may miss his aim altogether ; so also did each other word of my selection seem but an inept shaft to hit the target of my meaning. Wherefore am I well-advis'd in employing this intimacy of language, after the custom of the East, where men constrain their speech to a wider subtilty of usage, calling their fellows Brother or Father in their occasion ; for one who travelleth with a friend, be it bodily or by conjuring up his presence in his mind, must esteem him in this sort familiar.

For each traveller in a far country in his lonely imagining hath shar'd with his absent brothers tent, or hostel, or that wider caravanserai wherein no master taketh toll for nightly lodging ; hath broken his fast singly in the cold of dawn, calling up a picture of his distant fellows to bid him God-speed in fantasy ; or hath ridden solitary, yet with the invention of some little conceit to solace the weariness of his unseen friend. So then, it seem'd good to adopt this manner of speech, in the debonair hope that you, too, might subscribe to its aptness ; and thus I crave your leave to indite this

poor diary to you as a memory of the days when we have been, as the Arabs say, rufaká together, both in sooth and in fancy.

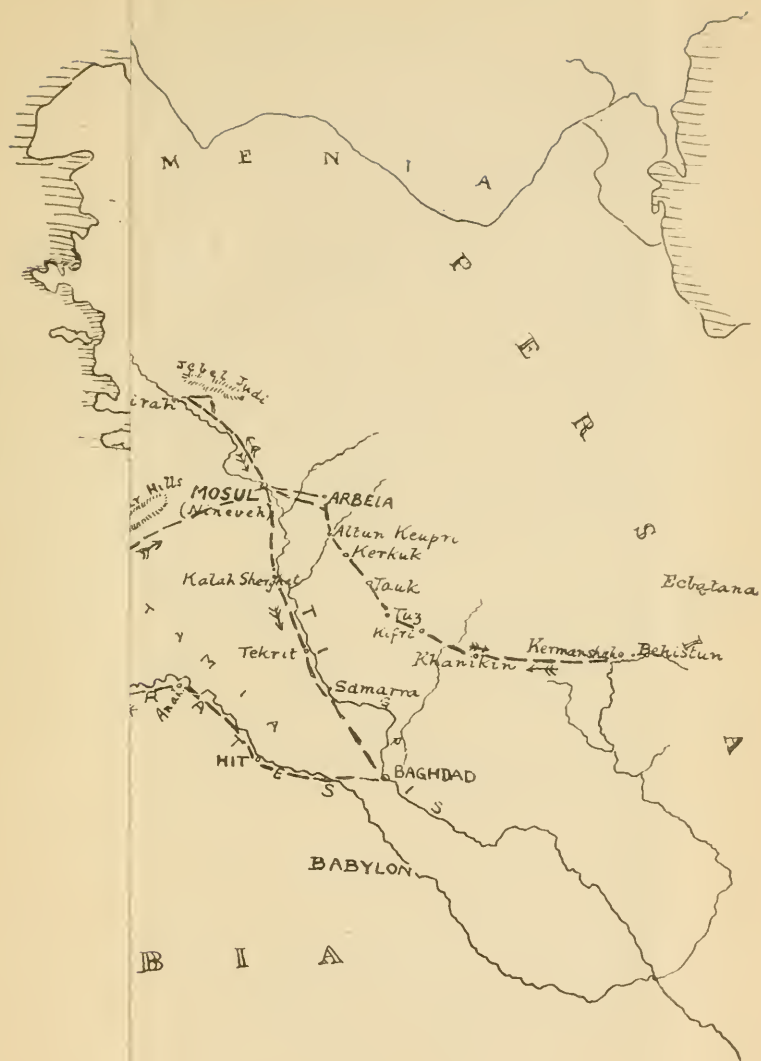
To seek out antient matters hath ever been a worthy mystery, even the honour of kings. Was it not the endless desire of the noble Asnapper to garner antique books writ on clay into his House of Rolls, or the love of King Nabonidus for dusty inscriptions of old time ? Wherefore, following the steps of these reverend masters in this guild afar and in all humility, I have so greatly pleasur'd in this pursuit that my devoirs to past delights compell'd me to do grateful homage with my pen, however inexpressively, and I set about it lightly, dallying again with the memories of those minutes which I held to most. Yet or ever I had progress'd but a little way in this trifling, the words of Koheleth well'd into my mind that it was a vain task wherein was nothing new, a blast on a buck's horn : others had long since written carefully and nicely concerning these things, wherein I perceiv'd that my ignorance was too great for me to meddle, and that my little book was like to be a cumber-world. For in these days, as formerly, it behoveth a man to be of those (as saith the Son of Sirach) which in a strange country are willing to learn, being prepar'd before in manners to live after the law. He will carefully study the divers tongues of the peoples of these lands, not only of the antients, but also of those who now dwell therein ; the rocks and stones in his path ; the way of the eagle in the air ; the trees and plants, from the cedars of Lebanon to the little Jacks-of-the-Hedge ; and the strange rites and customs which he shall compare with those of other peoples ; and a hundred other like matters, thus taking example by those famous men in the arts of travel who apply'd a wealth of bookish theoric to interpret the riddles of all the mark of Adam. Thus ran the counsel

of the wise men of old, such as each pilgrim should grasp. And now, when I scan the poverty of my ridiculus mus, I am asham'd at my temerity in putting forth such a hotchpotch of kickshaws, which is so remote from the teachings of the giants. A sojourner such as I hath no proper warrant to utter opinions, give judgments, or mete out even light fustigations, and it is with much misgiving lest in admonishing the moles in the eyes of others I should all unawares have publish'd the beams in my own. Doth not Herrick say—

“ A little streame best fits a little boat ;
A little lead best fits a little float ;
As my small pipe best fits my little note ” ?

But a truce to these prosings, lest I incur the just wrath of quidnuncs, who, like Milton's stall-reader, will exclaim, “ Bless us ! what a word on a title-page is this ! ” and so, without further excuse or apology, do I test the adventure of this small raft, like Sindbad on unknown seas, that it may be to you a token in remembrance of brotherhood.

THE AUTHOR.





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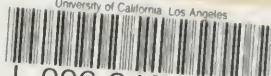
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