



DAR-UL-ISLAM

دار الإسلام



Mark Sykes.



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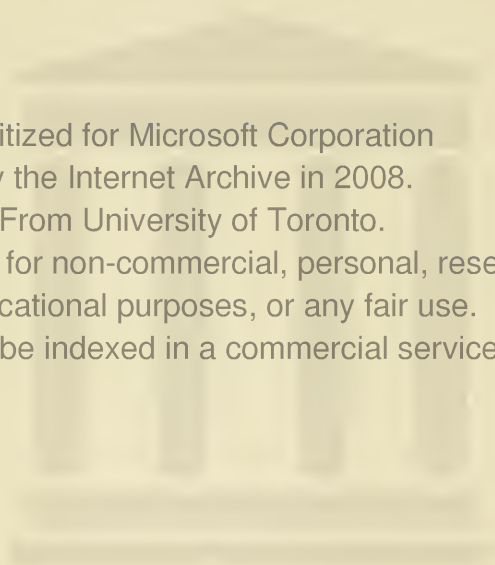
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INTERNET ARCHIVE



DAR-UL-ISLAM

‘What shall I tell you?’

MARCO POLO



Yusuf Shamali (Cook), Mustapha Kurdi, Jacob-el-Arab (Mr Sykes Sergeant), Mr. Sykes, Haili Sian, Yussuf Haddad (Dragonman), Mr. Smith, Haili K. Tafteh, Bero, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad the Persian.

N. B.—The Child is no relation of any person in the picture, but was put in by the Multicolors to bring good luck.

59833d

دار الإسلام

DAR - UL - ISLAM

A RECORD OF A JOURNEY
THROUGH TEN OF THE
ASIATIC PROVINCES OF TURKEY

BY

MARK SYKES

AUTHOR OF 'THROUGH FIVE TURKISH PROVINCES'
AND JOINT AUTHOR OF 'TACTICS AND MILITARY TRAINING'
BY MAJOR GEORGE D'ORDEL.

WITH APPENDIX BY JOHN HUGH SMITH

AND

INTRODUCTION

BY

PROFESSOR E. G. BROWNE

ADAMS PROFESSOR OF ARABIC AT CAMBRIDGE

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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LONDON

BICKERS & SON

1904

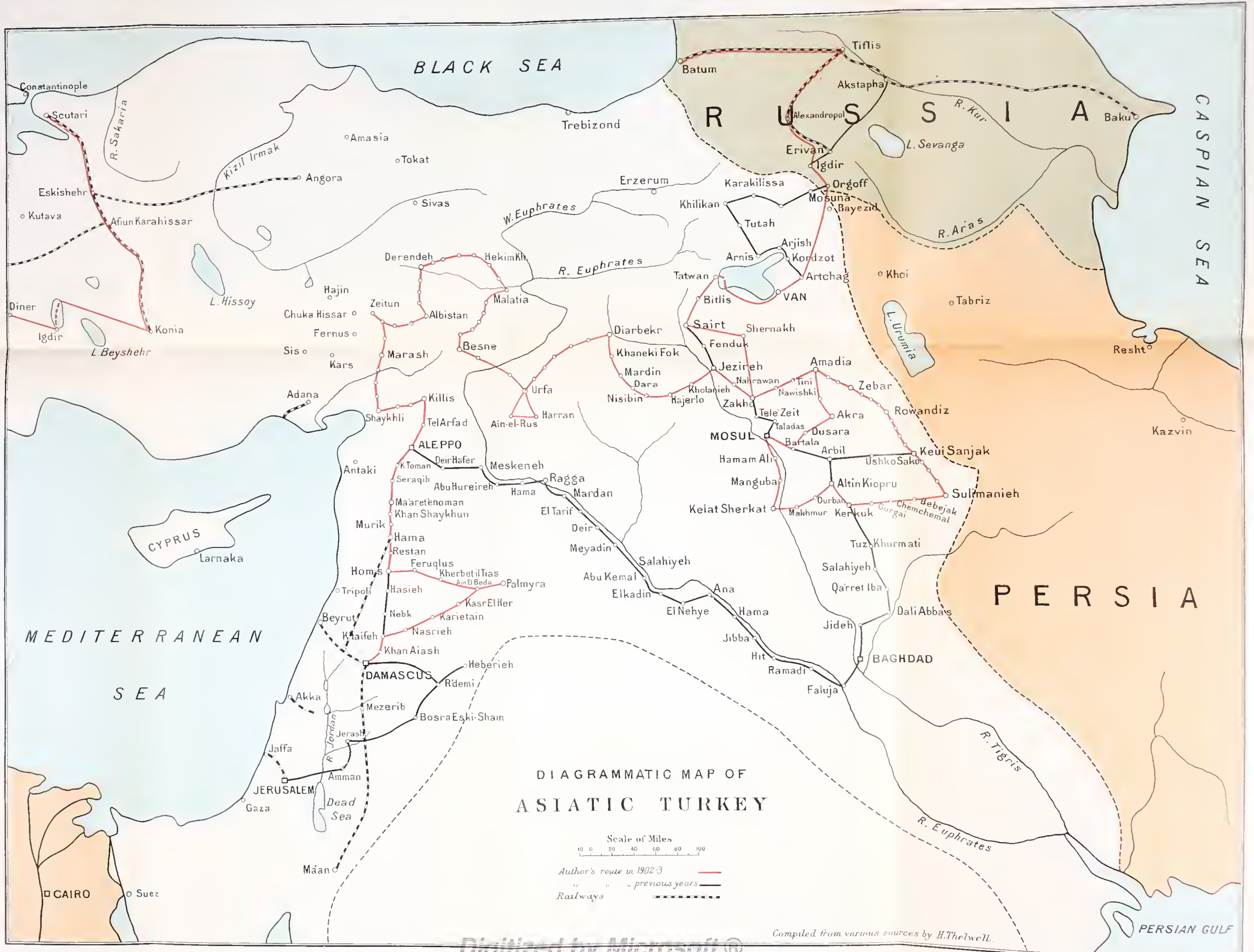
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TO THE
NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN
OF 'F' COMPANY, 3RD BATT. PRINCESS OF WALES' OWN
YORKSHIRE REGIMENT
WHO SERVED IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1900-2

AUTHOR'S ADVERTISEMENT TO THE READER

IN this brief note I wish to convey my thanks to those who so kindly assisted me in the production of the book : first, Mr. JOHN HUGH SMITH, who by his pleasant companionship suggested many ideas of which I availed myself ; secondly, Professor E. G. BROWNE, whom I thank not only for his condescension in writing the Preface, but also for his inspiring instruction in Eastern custom and mode of thought ; thirdly, Professor KEANE, who has reduced my spelling of Oriental names to order. My own, although interesting, was perhaps erratic. I would also thank SHAYKH HASSAN TAWFIQ for the Arab writing of my name and the texts which appear in various lithographs in the book.

I should like to point out that except for occasional notes I have left the whole narrative practically untouched, and it stands as it was written in DAR-UL-ISLAM.



INTRODUCTION

THESE few words of introduction to the book of my friend Captain MARK SYKES are written neither because I cherish any hope that they will add in any way to its value, or diminish in the least degree the risks—remote, as I hope—at which he hints in the opening paragraph, nor because I feel conscious of any special message to its readers urgently demanding utterance, but simply in response to his request; to which, remembering the many pleasant hours passed in his society, and the many occasions on which his entertaining anecdotes and reminiscences have relieved and brightened the tedium of academic life, I can only respond with a *sam'an wa tá'atan*, 'I hear and I obey.'

Captain SYKES has chosen as the title of his book the name DAR-UL-ISLAM, 'the Home of Islám,' a title specially appropriate to the Turkish Empire, with certain portions and characteristics of which the book deals. Just as to the mediæval Christian the world was divided into Christendom and Heathenese, so to the Muhammadan (I will not say 'the modern Muhammadan,' when, with
out

out Mr. H. G. Wells' 'Time Machine,' the Middle Ages can still be reckoned not more than a week distant from London) the world is divided into the DAR-UL-ISLAM, or 'Home of Islám,' and the *Dáru'l-Harb*, or 'Abode of War.' The former, that is, the territories mainly inhabited by Muslims and ruled by a Muslim sovereign, has, alas! been sadly contracted and circumscribed in recent times, so that, of all the vast empire of the Caliphs once included under this title, only Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and Morocco still survive as independent states, while it appears doubtful if all of these will outlive the present generation. Of these four, without entering into the vexed question of the Ottoman Sultan's claim to be regarded as Caliph or 'Commander of the Faithful,' we may safely assert that Turkey is, by virtue of certain very sterling qualities of patriotism, courage, and dogged endurance, the most stable, the most powerful, and the least likely to succumb. Hardly any one who has had opportunities of forming an unprejudiced judgment has failed to recognise these qualities, or has remained altogether unfriendly to a people who, whatever their shortcomings may be, command the respect and esteem even of those who least desire the continuance of the Ottoman *régime*. I speak, of course, of the genuine Turk—not of the hybrid Levantine, who is too often taken by the casual and superficial observer as a national type

type, and still less of that fearful product of misapplied European or American zeal, so faithfully portrayed by the author of this book under the name of 'Gosmobaleet.' The intrinsic value of 'Western civilisation' in the ordinary newspaper sense is doubtful enough, even if Captain SYKES' definition of it in Chapter II be deemed a trifle harsh; but as a 'fancy dress,' badly fitted on unwilling or unsuitable recipients, it moves to tears rather than laughter.

I cannot profess to agree with every view expressed in this book, least of all with the author's estimate of Abu'l-'Alá of Ma'arra, who, cynic and sceptic as he unquestionably was, must certainly be reckoned, as Baron Von Kremer reckons him, one of the greatest and most original poets whom Western Asia has ever produced. Yet it is a pleasure to read a book so full of acute observations and so devoid of cant; and it is to be hoped that it may do something to remove the beams from the eyes of the seekers after motes. The author has travelled much and seen something of life in four continents, besides going through the South African campaign; and he has made it abundantly clear that, in his opinion, it does not befit the authors of the crusade in China to say too much about Turkish 'outrages,' and that the Turks are not the only nation which entrusts important duties to incompetent hands. Neither is he deceived by the specious platitudes

so

so dear to that deplorable product of modern European democracy, 'the man in the street,' as to 'extending the blessings of Western civilisation'; rather he regards with unconcealed apprehension the contingency of the Western Asiatics becoming 'a prey to capitalists of Europe and America, in which case a designing Imperial Boss might, untrammelled by the Government, reduce them to serfdom for the purpose of filling his pockets and gaining the name of Empire-maker.' He even speaks, at the beginning of Chapter IV, of 'the blight of European influence'; does not disguise his preference for countries with 'a past' to countries with 'a future'; recognises the fact that there is more true equality, because less snobbery and pretence, in Asia than in Europe; and emphasises the great truth that 'Orientals hate to be worried and hate to have their welfare attended to.' 'Oppression,' as he says, 'they can bear with equanimity, but interference for their own good they never brook with grace.'

This leads me to speak of a matter which for the last fifteen years has constantly occupied my thoughts: I mean the selection and training of those young Englishmen who are destined to serve their country in the East as either its representatives or its administrators. The system adopted in connection with the Indian Civil Service appears to me most open to criticism, the selection being based entirely on competitive examinations, which

which can in no case afford any test of such important qualities as imagination, style, or personality, even if they were made to hinge more upon a knowledge of the languages, religions, and history of the East, and less on natural science, mathematics, and political economy ; which latter things, though all very well in their way, appear to me to be of quite secondary importance for the understanding of the character and idiosyncrasies of Eastern peoples, by which alone one would have thought it would be possible to govern them with tact, discretion, and sagacity. In this respect England has definitely retrograded since the days of the old East India College at Haileybury, where a really thorough training in Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, extending over a considerable time at the most impressionable period of life, produced men who really had some considerable acquaintance with the spirit of the East. It is, I think, generally recognised that Lord MACAULAY, whose deplorable dogmatism was proof against all arguments which did not accord with his own preconceptions, was more responsible than any one else for the destruction of Oriental learning in England ; but the course which he inaugurated has been steadily pursued by his successors, and ever since 1888, when I first began to teach Persian to Indian Civil Service selected candidates, three fresh changes detrimental to the study of Oriental languages have

have been introduced. At that period selected candidates spent two years at least in pursuing their special studies, and were permitted, if they desired to take an Honours Degree in Oriental languages or any other subject connected with their work, to remain at the University for three years ; while for Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit, prizes were given which, though of no great value, undoubtedly served as a great stimulus to work on account of the distinction which they conferred. The first retrograde step, taken, I think, in 1889, was the withdrawal of the permission to spend a third year in study ; the second, which soon followed it, was the abolition of the prizes, whereby, I suppose, a paltry economy of a hundred or two of guineas was effected ; and the third, which took place about 1893, reduced the period of probation nominally to a year, but in reality, what with vacations, delay in assigning provinces, and the like, to about six months, in which time it is expected that men whose minds are wearied with cramming, whose average age is certainly not under twenty-two, who are burdened with a quantity of legal and other subjects, and who know that, with the one exception of the vernacular of their province, hardly a pretence is made of taking Oriental languages seriously in the final examination, will obtain a knowledge of Persian, Sanskrit, Chinese, or Arabic which will be of some material

material use to them hereafter ! The large prospective pension will always induce a considerable number of good men to submit to the present or any other scheme which may be hereafter devised, even though it be still more closely assimilated to the Chinese type which appears to have been taken as a model. The contempt displayed for subjects which, though most germane to the nature of the service, are outside the ordinary school and university curriculum, is shown by the fact that in the open competition 900 marks are awarded for each of two varieties of mathematics, 750 each for Latin and Greek, and 600 for each of the natural sciences ; but for Arabic and Sanskrit, though the standard is appallingly high, only 500 marks. And similarly a great light of the University of Oxford remarked recently that 'no man worth his salt' would take up Arabic without the distinct prospect of a career : a fine conception of humane and liberal scholarship which tempts us to exclaim, in the words of a Persian poet—

Chu kufr az Ka'ba bar khizad, kujá mánad Musulmání ?

'When blasphemy arises from the Ka'ba,* where does Muhammadanism remain ?'

Turning now to the Eastern Consular Service, which is more germane to the subject of this book, a much brighter picture presents itself. This service has always

* The great mosque at Mecca, the holy of holies of Islám.

appeared

appeared to me, next to the diplomatic, to offer the most attractive of careers, and I still retain a vivid recollection of my disappointment when I found that the knowledge of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, by which I had hoped to enter it, afforded no means of doing so, only European languages being admitted in the entrance examination. On the other hand the successful candidates are almost always good linguists, men who have travelled or lived abroad, and whose mental freshness has not been destroyed by cramming with mathematics, natural sciences, and political economy; and their two years' probation, with its much higher linguistic ideals, is incomparably more valuable than that of selected candidates for the Indian Civil Service. The Foreign Office, moreover, which is responsible for choosing and training these Student Interpreters destined for the Consular Service, is, so far as my experience goes, not only the pleasantest Government Office with which to have dealings, but the most reasonable, and the development of this branch of its work, if at times slow, has been sound, steady, and always in the direction of greater efficiency.

Within the last year or so a still greater impulse has been given to the study of Arabic for administrative purposes by the scheme recently adopted by the Governments of Egypt and the Soudan for the selection
and

and training of candidates for their service. It would be out of place to discuss this more fully here, but I cannot refrain from expressing my profound conviction that if it endures for any length of time it will produce a class of administrators in the East who will command the respect and affection of those committed to their charge in a quite exceptional degree, and I believe that Lord CROMER and Sir ELDON GORST, to whom above all others this scheme owes its existence, will be gratefully remembered for all time as the restorers of that edifice which Lord MACAULAY destroyed. Captain SYKES, at the end of Chapter VI, has called attention to the point on which hinges all that I have said. 'It would be well,' he remarks, addressing 'budding British Consuls' (and the remark applies with nearly equal force to other young Englishmen serving their country in Eastern lands) 'for them to remember that, no matter what their feelings may be, it would be much wiser to maintain the best relations possible with (native) officials, taking every opportunity to entertain them, for if the Consul in a district knows the various functionaries personally and intimately, he will be able to act with much more effect in times of crisis ; besides, being well acquainted with the character and nature of the men he has to deal with, his influence will be stronger.'

Captain SYKES is an acute observer, and singularly

a

free

free from the prejudices which obscure the outlook of so many of even the most intelligent and conscientious travellers in the East. That he has in this book mingled many weighty observations and valuable suggestions with much matter couched in a lighter strain should not cause it to be ignored or laid aside half read by those who interest themselves in the state of the Turkish Empire. These I would remind of the old Arabian proverb, *Al-hazlu fi'l-kalám ka'l-milhi fi't-ta'ám*, 'the jest in discourse is like the salt in food.'

EDWARD G. BROWNE.

CAMBRIDGE, *March* 11, 1904

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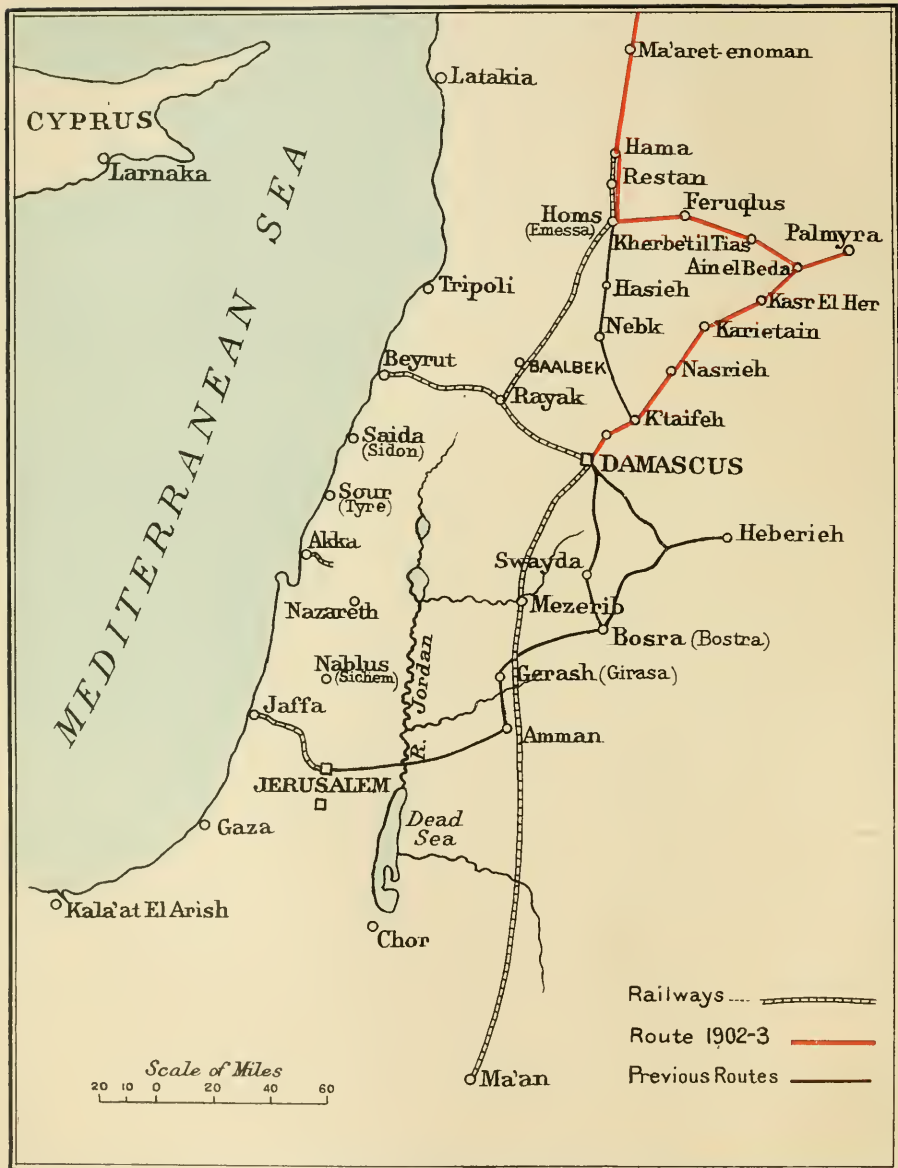
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Stanford's Geogr. Estab^t. London.

DAR-UL-ISLAM

CHAPTER I

MAINLY INTRODUCTORY

I MAKE no apology for this book ; if indeed I owe an apology, my crime is so grievous that I deserve no forgiveness for having added yet another gallon to that deadly, dreary, weary, dismal ocean of literature which is composed of bad books of travel. If the book is bad and dull, then let it lie ; it will sink slowly down in the course of years, pressed by the overwhelming weight of its younger brothers, towards a kind and blank oblivion. And after . . .

It was in company with Mr. John Hugh Smith that I started on an inconsequent journey through the Turkish Empire. We landed at Beyrut early in November 1902, intending to depart immediately for the interior ; this for a variety of reasons was impossible, and we sojourned most unhappily for many days in the deserted dwellings of the spring-season tourists. Eventually a portion of our luggage was released ; not from the grasp of corrupt Turkish customs officials, but from the clutches of some social labour problem at Marseilles, into whose talons it had fallen. We then made our escape, and I followed Mr. Smith, who had preceded

B

me

me to Baalbek, whither I went by rail to bring him the good news.

It was thus my good fortune to travel by the Rayak-Hama branch of the *Damas Hauran et Prolongements* Railway. I arrived at Rayak about 1.30, not more than an hour late, and there prepared to board the Hama train; this conveyance was filled with people, some frantically mounting, others excitedly descending from the cars. At one third-class carriage three native porters were wildly endeavouring to cram a Turkish officer, a Saratoga Trunk, a little Boy, and some Loaves of bread into a compartment which already contained three Mohammedan Women, a Fruit-seller, a Zaptieh, a Barber, a Prisoner, a Native mission teacher, the Zaptieh's saddle-bags, a Sword, Two umbrellas, a Bandbox containing a Sewing Machine, the Fruit-seller's Stall, and one hundred and fifty Oranges in a cloth; the cloth had burst and the oranges streamed through the chinks in the door not occupied by the porters wrestling with the officer; the Mohammedan ladies explained in brief that there was 'no Majesty and no Might save that of Allah, the Glorious and the Great'; the Zaptieh, who had not paid his fare, roared explanations over the Officer's shoulder; the porters thrust the Officer; the Officer pushed the fruit-seller; the Fruit-seller cast aspersions on the religion and ancestors of the Oranges; the Barber cried 'Shame!' on all for having so little self-control, while the Mission Teacher, on whom he was sitting, was too overcome to make any comment. Truly there was no engine on the train, nor was there any likelihood of its immediate movement; but it must not be supposed that orientals are never in a hurry; on all occasions

occasions of departure or arrival, confusion, violence and strife reign supreme ; fatalism is forgotten, and it is every man's duty to heave, to punch, to kick, to curse and swear, until the train, steamer, or caravan has started.

At the further end of the platform I found the chef de train, mécanicien, Controlleur des croisements militaires, sous-controlleurs de Voies et matériel, chef de gare, sous-chef de gare, député des filets télégraphiques, chef de génie, sous-inspecteur de Voies,* and some six other individuals of the Syro-Phœnician blend, engaged in a lengthy and earnest council ; various clerks approached the group and proffered yards of telegraphic tape ; these were consulted, reconsulted, referred to, put away, and solemnly noted in books, on envelopes, and scraps of newspaper. Here there was no haste ; matters were discussed with sublime calm, and though some rhetorical expressions were made use of by the Gallic members of the staff, and though the gestures of all were a little florid, there was neither excitement nor animation. Indeed, this was as it should be, for I learnt from the sous-chef de gare that thirty-six hours previously a train travelling at the horrible speed of twenty-four miles an hour had been hurled from the track, and though no one was killed, the permanent way had suffered, and communications were severed. When would the line be repaired ? Ah ! it was hoped, in half an hour. The whole staff had been engaged since the disaster in doing their all possible, but in the presence of major forces † who could tell ?

* These titles are provisional.

† 'Force Majeure' : Whenever a Frenchman has performed any particularly foolish act, or exposed his incompetence in some strangely obvious manner, the disastrous consequences are attributed to 'force Majeure.' An Englishman usually calls it 'Providence,' but I suppose since the French Revolution such an expression would have been derogatory to the 'Dignity of man.'

I was interrupted at this moment by a voice using violent expletives, whose pronunciation smacked of Chicago; I turned round, and beheld an American Colonel, whom I had met at Beyrut, pacing up and down the platform, apparently at the end of his patience and the following dialogue ensued :

Colonel (to the world in general): 'I offered two hundred dollars for a ride on their breakdown train yesterday. O, my Lord, why have I struck this crowd of low-down lazy greasers jes' when I wanted to get to Baylbeak?'

Chef de gare (to his subordinates, in a measured tone): 'Messieurs,—impossible de faire mouvement avant de prévoir la Direction à Beyrut.'

Sous-chef de gare: 'Mais, monsieur, il faut envoyer des boulons au croisement militaire avant tout.'

Colonel (to me): 'See here, boy; I like your face; now listen to this; I want to go to Baylbeak, that's the name of the blamed village, ain't it? I arrived here yesterday at twelve o'clock, and I have been stuck in this gol-durn hole ever since; I can't make these fools understand I want a lift as fur as the wreck, and I am ready to walk the rest; I am a big railroad man at home, and I am — in — if I ever saw such a chowdered-headed set of clams try to run ten miles of one-horse track in my life; look at that white-headed old duck there' (indicating the chef de gare); 'he reckons he is the Main Push, and I'm — if he ever done anything but eat and drink and say "imposseble" since I came here yesterday.'

Mécanicien (Greek): 'Moziou, voilà commeng li accideng est arrivé, li chef di Train fèsait li collection des bigletti, il a manquais di serrait li freeng alourss . . .'

Chef

Chef de Gare : 'Mais c'est Impossible !'

Colonel : 'There he is ; jes' listen ; imposseeble ! *imposseeble !! IMPOSSEBLE !!!* that word's as good as candy to him. That man call himself the Main Push ! Land sakes ! what a man ; you might as well try reason on the pyramids as that idiot. I told him I wanted to go to Baylbeak ; "Impossible !" says he. Then I says, "Take me as fur as you can" ; "Impossible," says he. Now you talk his gol-durn jabber, jes' ask him when this old ruin is likely to get a roll on, and tell him I want to go to Baylbeak and get done with it ; I can't eat the place, nor can I take it away ; I want to say I've seen it ; I don't *want* to see it, remember, I want to *say* I've seen it, and I am ready to pay two hundred dollars to get there to-night.'

Chef de Train (Levantine) : 'En Voitur sh'il vous blait.' *

It was true ! amid the consultations, harangues and arguments, an engine had stolen up to the train, and explained by violent blasts on a piercing whistle that in some ten minutes it would be so indulgent as to drag the carriages and any passengers who were hardy enough to remain in them. Instantly the directors and chefs and clerks and stationmasters and engineers and telegraph operators and porters and high officials and subaltern officers became possessed with hurry. Trumpets squeaked, bells clanged, whistles blew, peasants howled,

* As far as I can ascertain the Direction of D.H.E.P. Railway labours under the misapprehension that only Christians are fit for employment as railroad officials. This is a great mistake, and I was assured by several gentlemen, holding high positions on more 'serious' lines, that Moslems were far more trustworthy, besides being more reliable in an emergency and, as one added, 'they are nearly always sober.'

children

children shrieked, and I climbed into a first-class compartment in company with an officer whom I will call the *Directeur des Croisements Militaires* ; more shrieks from the engine, more blasts on the horn, a gush of steam, a puff, a clank, and the train moved forward—and stopped ten yards further on. A bag of iron nuts for the reparation of the line had been forgotten ; these were at last found, handed to the *chef de train*, and we started in earnest. The *Directeur des Croisements Militaires*, not precisely in the best of humours, was not very communicative, but softened somewhat presently, and began explaining the beauties of a *kilometric guarantee* * in such accidents, when the train, which had been flagging, stopped with a painful jerk. I looked out of the window and saw the engine-driver walk leisurely along the foot-board to the guard's van, where, having rolled a cigarette, he chatted with its occupant ; presently the two paid a visit to our carriage and consulted seriously with the director. The trouble was as follows : Since there is only one train a day on the Hama branch, it never occurred to the direction to have any arrangement of staff system, stop order or block signal ; the driver had just remembered that the breakdown train was at the scene of the late disaster, and he could not imagine whether the aforesaid train was going forward or back. In consequence, he deemed it necessary to consult with superiors as to which course it would be the wisest to pursue : he might run on and chance a collision ; he might reverse and back slowly to Rayak where he could

* *Kilometric guarantee* is a large sum extracted annually from the *Porte* in honour of each consecutive kilometre completed : in this way many embankments and deep cuttings are avoided.

telegraph

telegraph to Baalbek to send a man to look for the train ; or he might go on slowly, preceded by a boy with a red flag. The director wished to reach Hama that night, and being a Frenchman with little faith in the Destiny provided him by Allah, he decided on the red flag scheme ; therefore, after having dramatically commended the engine-driver for his remarkable forethought, he ordered the train to advance in rear of the guard, who was armed with a crimson banner.

About half a mile higher up the line we met the breakdown train grinding slowly round a curve ; another halt was called, and a court of inquiry was promptly convened, composed of the directeur, the guard of the passenger train, its engine-driver, and the engine-driver of the breakdown train. The two engines meanwhile stood twenty yards apart, like two unwilling goats on a plank bridge. At length the breakdown train was persuaded to retire and the passenger train advanced once more, the American Colonel cheering offensively. A little later we discovered a siding and crossed the breakdown train, narrowly missing being derailed, as the chef de train had omitted to close the points.

In ten minutes we reached the scene of the disaster, where four carriages in splinters were laid on their sides. Around these stood a group of Fellaheen, Italians and Frenchmen, making a crowd of perhaps sixty persons ; some scraped the ground with pieces of wood, others leisurely tapped the metals with stones, and there commenced a series of procrastinations and delays which would weary the reader, as they wearied me, were I to recount them. The American Colonel raved in helpless wrath. The directors and officials consulted. The workmen

workmen bungled, and the Fellaheen fought amongst themselves. The engine-driver advised, the passengers argued, and the French gangers proved absolutely impotent. This latter fact is worthy of notice, and a favourable comparison may be made with our own countrymen under similar conditions. If a drunken ne'er-do-well of the working class in England is put in charge of Basutos, Kafirs, Indian Coolies, or Fellaheen, he will by some strange means extract work from them. He will approach his gang with a stick; he will say— 'Here, you black beasts, this is a spade. See? Spade! Dig! Go on!' And, strange as it may seem, they will dig. His only argument will be his stick or his fist; he will not learn the language; he will not argue; he will treat them with rough justice; and most probably his gang will not only work for him but love him. On the other hand, a Frenchman in the same position will show a greater intelligence and will learn the language; he will exhort his men to work, will try to understand them; he will make them try to understand him; and the result will be noise and chaos and heartburning, and nothing will be done.

In two more hours the track was declared safe; the officials gathered round the engine; the engine groaned, coughed, snorted, and at last started on its way; the scene of the accident was passed in safety, and in forty minutes the intervening eight miles to Baalbek were covered successfully. There I left the train, and whether it is still on its way to Hama I do not know; but with it went every curse and malediction in my vocabulary.

From Baalbek we proceeded by rail to Damascus. An adequate description of the city would require a
volume



ANCIENT CUTTING AT SUK WADI BARADA. NEAR DAMASCUS.

volume of its own, so in mercy to the reader and myself I will refrain from writing it.

While at Damascus we were given permission by the Vali to inspect the public hospital which is now complete, and were shown over the entire building.

It is well constructed and scrupulously clean, and at the time of our visit there were about fifty male patients of all nationalities—French, Italians, Greeks, and natives of all creeds ; they were well attended to, and each had his bed-card correctly filled in ; we heard no complaints of any kind. The ophthalmic ward was a clean dark room, and the operating theatre was in perfect order. In the garden there is a separate building which serves as an asylum for the insane ; the lunatics were confined in clean, well-fitted cells, and were apparently as happy as their state permitted.

Now this to the average Englishman would sound small praise, and yet anyone who left Damascus fifteen years ago would never believe that such an institution could possibly exist. And there is no doubt that Nazim Pasha has done a splendid piece of work in arranging and bringing the hospital and asylum to the condition of efficiency and comfort which they now present.

As a little boy I was taken by my father to see the lunatic asylum of Damascus, and the scene remains as clearly painted on my memory as if it occurred yesterday. The Dragoman, I remember, called it 'the Foolish House.' At the gate we were admitted by a cheerful Turkish sergeant, who with ten other soldiers acted as doctors, keepers and nurses to the inmates of the asylum ; we were led through a low door in the wall to a yard, and I shall never forget the scene of misery and horror in
that

that court. In the centre there was a muddy tank, and about twelve feet from it was a circle of kennels, each about six feet by five; each kennel had a grille through which the wretched madmen clamoured and howled the livelong day; over their ankles in their own ordure, naked save for their chains, these wretched beings shrieked and jibbered! Happy were those who, completely insane, laughed and sang in this inferno.

But others were quiet and showed no signs of lunacy, only crying, 'Bread! bread! tobacco! tobacco!' with mournful persistency. These unfortunates, I remember, had cleaned out their hovels to a certain extent, and one poor creature had attempted to ornament his cell with newspapers. All were chained by wrist, ankles, and waist to a bar which passed through the wall and was padlocked on the other side. The only furniture of the asylum was a cat-of-nine-tails, and a board on which, when a madman died, he was washed previous to burial. We were told of one who broke his chains and escaped, killing some people on the roofs of the houses before he was caught.

To this day I can hear one of them playing with his chain and singing a crazy song.



DAWN AT AIN EL BEDA.

CHAPTER II

TO PALMYRA

AT Damascus, we gathered together our various belongings, organised our transport, and the Vali having granted us an escort of five delightful gendarmes,* we started on the 'Journey' in earnest. Our first objective was Palmyra, but the journey thither is extremely uninteresting, and a description is unnecessary. The distances and camping grounds will be found in the Table of Routes, where it will be noticed that the last day brings the caravan to Ain el-Beda.

Ain el-Beda boasts a khan of mud built on the truest principles of modern oriental architecture, with the roof fallen in on one side, and a terror-provoking bulge exhibiting itself on the other. It was inhabited by five Zaptiehs, who dozed and smoked in the guest-chamber. Having examined the latter, we decided to brave the unstable walls and lunch on the roof.

We left the tottering barrack at twelve o'clock and pushed on to Tadmor, on the north side of the pass;

* This word will in future be written Zaptieh, and must in no way be confused with regular soldier; many travellers have made some startling errors by mistaking the police for the army, and many false ideas have been gained in this way. The Zaptiehs are the mounted rural police, and are under no military control, but at the disposal of the civil power; the men are generally old soldiers, and the officers ex-sergeants of the army.

two hours before entering Palmyra we remarked many of the black tents of the Anazeh Arabs. A little further on a band of four Bedawin were riding towards the encampment, and wishing to bespeak them, we changed our direction, whereupon the lords of the desert spurred their steeds and bolted in the slimmest manner imaginable. The Kurd Zaptieh who accompanied us grinned in an inscrutable manner, and muttered something about taxes, martinis, and the religion of the Bedawin. My reason for noting this incident is to mark the change which has come over the affairs of the desert-men. Even fifteen years ago a Shaykh with many noisy and voracious henchmen was a recognised item in the Palmyrene excursion; also a false attack, demands of baksheesh, and general impertinence. Now the tatterdemalion Zaptieh, with his doubtful antecedents and antiquated snider, has replaced the romantic and tedious escort which performed such dubious service to so many travellers.

The Bedawin are the foundation of all that stands for Islam. They have been described in a charming and truthful manner by Lady Anne Blunt; and a legion of tourists and travellers, from Thackeray's young Bedwin Sands to the modern journalists, have written of them correctly or erroneously, dully or amusingly, as their intelligence moved them. Doughty, I think, in his learned but Meredithianly and Carlyleanly abstruse work gives the best sum total of their character. Rhetoricians and poets of the highest order, they have no place in a civilised community;* their

* Civilised. May I here be permitted to explain my meaning of this word? In text I intend it to express a community living in towns and in houses, suffering from infectious and contagious diseases, travelling in railway trains, able to read and write, possessing drinking shops, reading
love

love of freedom and open spaces, their incapacity and contempt for manual labour, absolutely forbid their dwelling in houses or villages.* They are not *doomed* like Jews and gipsies to wander; they love it. I remember an Englishman and his wife, who had been travelling near Mount Sinai, gave refuge to a Bedawi who was banished by his tribe; at the end of a fortnight in their camp he begged to be allowed to go for a walk; when asked for how long, he answered, 'Only a short time—five days'!

To see a Bedawi riding over the desert alone,† his lance over his shoulder, gives a sense of freedom and

newspapers, surrounded by a hundred unnecessary luxuries, possessing rich and poor, slums and palaces, and convinced that their state is the most edifying in the world.

* Sir R. Burton, in an anthropological note, describes the Red Indians as the Bedawin of the New World; a grosser libel was never penned. Beyond the fact that Arabs and Red Indians dwell in tents, there is no resemblance. The points of difference may be catalogued:

<i>Arabs</i>	<i>Red Indians.</i>
Courteous	Rude.
Humane	Cruel.
Give quarter	Spare none.
Bad shots	Good shots.
Take little interest in sport	Great hunters.
Highly cultivated	Savages.
Sober	Drunkards.
Modest in attire	Fond of dress.
Bad scouts	Observant scouts.

This is a very good example of Sir R. Burton's hasty style as opposed to his accurate and deeply learned one, in which the bulk of his works are written. I do not write the above in any spirit of criticism of the greatest English Orientalist, but that the note in question may not give a false impression to one who did not know Bedawin personally.

† It has been stated by more than one writer that a Bedawi will never ride alone, but as I have often seen one doing so, I venture the statement.

space

space which one must see to feel ; and yet, with this freedom and open-air life, independence of character and fierceness of temperament, they are not great warriors, and never appear to have gained any great mastery over their weapons. They depend more upon striking terror into their enemies or waylaying them in ambush than by beating them by hard fighting. From this it must not be supposed that Bedawin are by any means contemptible as soldiers, but war is a game which is very variously played by all nations : the courage and ferocity shown depend on the conditions and spirit of the war, even more than on the nature of the combatants.

The war in South Africa is an excellent example of the peaceful guerilla type. The troops engaged had no particular original animus against the Boers as Boers ; the Boers, although nominally fighting for hearth and home, had no grievance against the British on any other count than that of aggression ; consequently, there were hardly any battles in which quarter was refused, and hardly any cases of men being killed when they might remain prisoners. The war dragged on for three years. On the other hand, the Omdurman campaign was an extreme example of the opposite kind. The Dervishes knew that the English were bent on extermination and resisted to the last ; they knew that their supremacy and existence were at stake. The British knew that the Dervishes gave no quarter, and spared no one in consequence. The war ended in one tremendous battle.

Now the Bedawin intertribal wars have been going on for some six thousand years at least, probably without ten years of perfect peace. It is obvious that war was
necessary

necessary for the purpose of infusing manliness into the race and relieving the boredom of the desert, for to be a dweller therein, with no other occupation than that of moving from one spot to another, would produce a race of congenital idiots. It will be seen, therefore, that a race abhorring manual labour as degrading, eschewing settled life, and knowing no other amusements than horsemanship and a little hunting,* must be naturally forced by instinct into war; but wars of this kind must necessarily partake more of the nature of a game than a struggle for life and death; if there were long casualty lists and much destruction of property, the population would decline as in Paraguay, and those who survived would be ruined. It is for this reason that the Bedawin wars appear at first sight so absurd to an European soldier; but I think anyone who considered the Bedawin as wanting in courage would be committing a grave error. My own idea is that they would give way to a foreign aggressor until some vital interest, such as a grazing or camping ground really essential to them, was threatened, when they would astound their adversaries by a sturdiness and bravery of which their previous conduct had given no hint.

Much of one's admiration is lost when their treachery is taken into account; † I would as soon trust a London pickpocket as a desert Arab, for their greed of gold shows that the sons of Ishmael still have some of the

* The Bedawin are trivial sportsmen, and for a reason: they have no particular affection for flesh-meat, and consequently lack that great stimulus to the chase, the pot. It may be objected that the British Sportsman also lacks this incentive, yet is the keenest of all, but it must be remembered that his hungry ancestors endowed him with the instinct before the Conquest.

† It was this that poor Palmer learnt to his cost.

characteristics

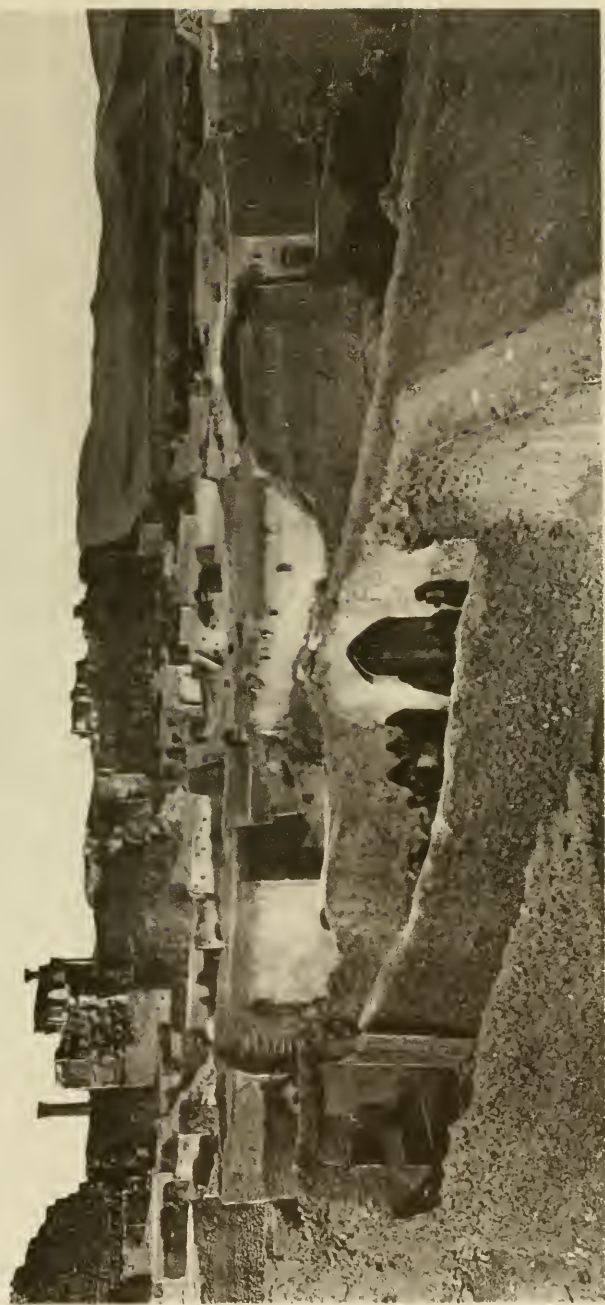
characteristics of the sons of Isaac, and it is a blot upon their nature. On the other hand, their treachery and avarice only show when dealing with strangers or enemies at war. Their lives are clean and moral, they know nothing of the evils of civilisation and luxury, and rare deeds of violence, owing to their fiery tempers, are the only social crimes known among them. The man who took the Bedawin from their present state of happiness and purity, and taught them to be civilised, to be rotted by foul diseases, to be emasculated by drink, to leave their tents and herds, to become spies, lawyers, soldiers, thieves, discontented citizens, millionaires and prigs, would be committing a crime crying to heaven for vengeance. Therefore you leading article-writers and mission teachers, beware how you approach the Bedow,* with your vessels of exceedingly sticky American varnish.

On arriving at Tadmor we found the khan in a state of some confusion, owing to a disgraced Pasha having arrived from Basrah on the previous day, en route for Stambul. The Shaykh of the village, Mohammad Abdullah,† presently appeared on the scene and greeted us with guttural cries, such as 'Hah!' 'Bars!' 'Montikorlo!' 'Splendide!' 'Dinny!' which we were told was French. Through the instrumentality of Jacob he informed us he had prepared a 'Dinny Vranzay' for the

* On second thoughts these gentlemen, *i.e.* the Mission Teachers and Journalists, have my full permission, for the Bedawin attained reason in the days of Job's early prosperity, and are not to be caught with chaff. In this they resemble the Houyhnhnms.

† This worthy who, in a greasy fashion, is rather handsome, has often been photographed, and his image palmed off on the unsuspecting tourist as a 'Chef des Arabes.'

Pasha



PALMYRA.

Pasha and insisted upon our partaking of it. We vainly tried to excuse ourselves from his hospitality, he only entreated us the more, and eventually hustled us into the guest-chamber, where we found the Pasha. A desultory kind of conversation ensued ; the Pasha gave us cigarettes which were smokable, and the Shaykh plied us with a sweet sickly lukewarm yellow liquor, which he called tea. This nauseous compound was offered us because we were English and, in his perverted imagination, would never drink coffee. He loudly boasted of his travels in Europe, and proudly told us that the dinner would be truly French ; eventually we were motioned to the dining apartment, and it is here that we must pause and excuse ourselves.

(1) Arab food, eaten with the fingers, though rich and coarse, is excellent for anyone with a good appetite and digestion.

(2) It would have been easy for the Shaykh to have given us such food.

(3) A dinner so filthy that a healthy man, fasting and riding for thirteen hours, cannot stomach it, excuses even a breach of the laws of hospitality.

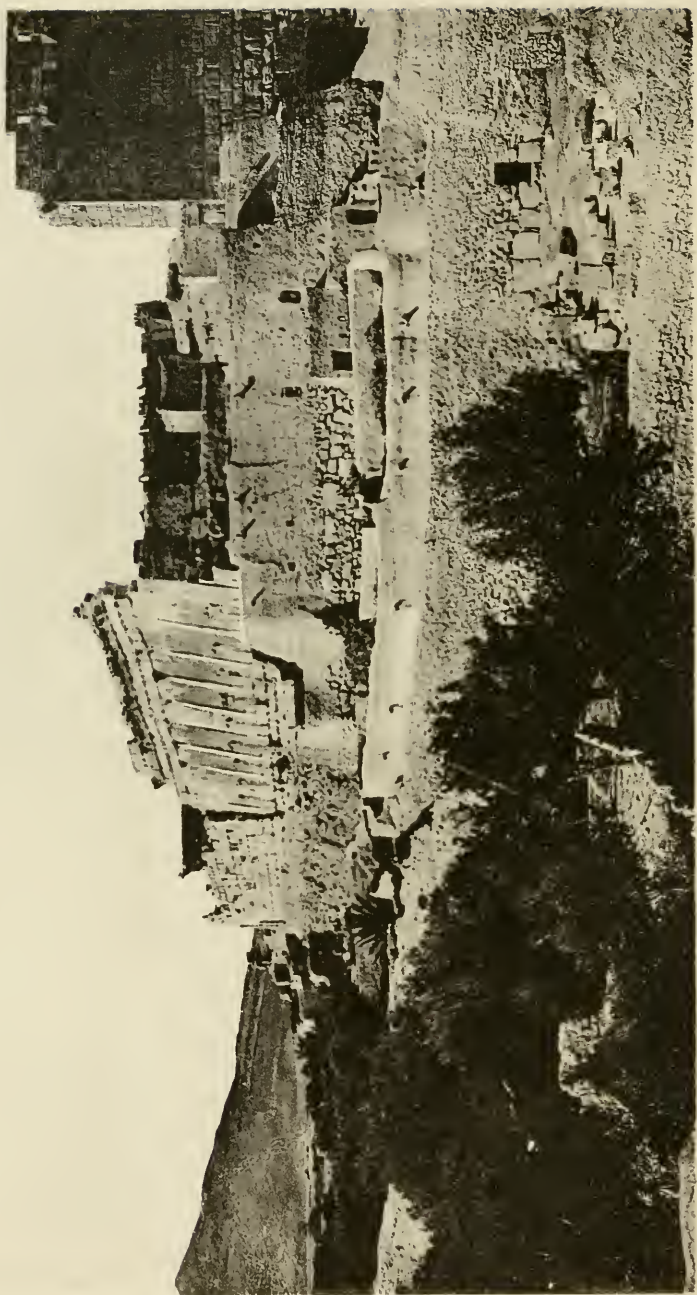
We were ushered into a dining-room, where we found a table covered with a fringed table-cloth ; upon it were flaps of bread and European crockery. The soup was brought in by a retainer, and the Shaykh, with the air of a man proud of his table, ladled it out bravely. The first spoonful did not disclose the full nastiness of the mixture ; rank weeds and vermicelli certainly were some of its components. Presently this steaming mess was removed and replaced by a dish of fat—fat of the ancient camel, a portion often reserved by the

Arab as lamp-oil! Here, however, the Shaykh used petroleum and fed his guests on this monstrous grease. This was flanked by more grease! The Pasha, unmanned, spat out his second helping, the partially chewed portion was deftly removed by an attendant and returned to the dish before the Shaykh, who had the grossness to devour it himself. Naturally we ate no more of the garbage, but the very sight and smell of the six other dishes were enough to shake the strongest stomach. Eventually we escaped, and I afterwards learned that the Zaptiehs who ate of the feast in another room were also intensely ill. But we will spare the reader further details, suffice it to say here was a typical instance of smearing the East with the Gosmobaleet slime of the West.*

Palmyra, as a subject for fine writing, is worn almost threadbare, and latterly Dr. Max Freiherr v. Oppenheim, in the course of two days' stay, managed to construct a brochure of some thirty pages; therefore we do not propose to relate the history of Palmyra, nor will we reproduce the paragraph under *Zenobia* from the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.'

* Gosmobaleet: This word is descriptive of that peculiar and horrible sickness which attacks a certain percentage of the inhabitants of interesting and delightful lands. The outward symptoms in the East are usually American springside boots (Jemimas) and ugly European clothes. Internally it is productive of many evil vapours, which issue from the lips in the form of catch words, such as 'The Rights of man,' 'Leebarty,' 'Civilizations,' 'Baleetical Affences.' The origin of the disease is to be traced to an ill-assimilated education of American or European type. The final stage is that in which the victim, hating his teacher and ashamed of his parentage and nationality, is intensely miserable. Just as Beriberi is almost confined to certain Races, Gosmobaleet usually attacks Spaniards, Italians, Bengalies, and such oriental Christians as may be subject to infection.

The



TEMPLE OF THE SUN, PALMYRA

The castle on the hill on the north side of the city, which according to the guide-book is of Turkish origin, is in complete preservation and well worth a visit; few books take much notice of it and few travellers appear to explore it. It is an excellent example of immense labour and bad building; though not constructed by the Royal Engineers, it is a piece of fortification as evil as anything ever built by them, even in South Africa; indeed one might almost say that some of the ramshackle block-houses round Kroonstad would have compared favourably with it.

The drawbridge and its stone continuation have collapsed, but by climbing a somewhat precipitous slope of rock an entrance can be effected. The building was evidently constructed by rule of thumb and wanders irregularly about the rock which forms its foundation; the loopholes, which are nearly all perfect, are skilfully constructed in some cases, although abominably bad in others. A noble view can be obtained from the summit; Palmyra, from that eminence, looks like nothing so much as a box of child's bricks wilfully thrown upon the floor; beyond, the desert stretches immeasurably, with a barren ugliness which is impressive, and the town seems but a puny deserted warren, ephemeral and trumpery before the eternal grandeur and terror of the Beida or Far Places. To the east we saw the dotted black tents of the Bedawin; the palaces and temples are in ruins, but the tents and desert remain.

However a great change is brewing for Tadmor. The eagle eye of Cook's agent in Beyrut has fixed on the business possibilities of the place, and in a few months

most probably an advertisement will blossom in Ludgate Circus, informing the world that—

TO PALMYRA AND BACK IN FIVE DAYS £10!
 RUINS AND TOMBS!
 SPOTS OF INTEREST!
 HOTEL—SPECIAL RATES! HOME COMFORTS!
 CHILDREN HALF-PRICE—WINES INCLUDED!
 RELIABLE GUIDES, &c.!

and Tadmor will have fallen once more ; her colonnades will be strewn with beer bottles and orange-peel ; the elderly virgins of England will be hustled with aching backs and tired eyes through her courts ; the dyspeptic colonels and ‘ Poppas ’ of America will be driven by chattering servants from Zenobia’s bath to Zenobia’s bed, from Zenobia’s bed to Zenobia’s temple ; the young Oxford Don will write poetry in the Temple of the Sun during the vacation ; the English clergy will write to the *Times* concerning the disgraceful charges of the hotel ; and Tadmor in the wilderness will be peopled as Jerusalem, Nazareth, and Luxor are peopled, by trippers and tourists ; Culchard and Podbury will reign under the paternal supervision of Cook the Omnipotent, and Palmyra’s glory will have departed. For in truth the ruins of Palmyra gain more from the situation than from the workmanship of the buildings ; anything more ornate, more florid, or debased it would be hard to find. If one might judge from the ruins what manner of man the Palmyrene was, one would conjure up a vulgar, pousy Syrian, dressed in an outlandish toga ; a wig of the latest fashion but one at Rome ; his sandals ornamented with cheap



TEMPLE OF THE SUN, PALMYRA.

cheap bronze studs from the pattern of the Governor at Damascus ; in fact, a kind of Park Lane magnifico.* For Palmyra gives the impression of a newly rich vulgarian aping his betters, and continually crying 'Blow the expense.'

I can imagine a Palmyrene supping with a friend at Damascus and talking somewhat in this strain—'Come from Rome, 'ave yer? Well, I bet yer there ain't much in Rome to beat Palmyra! Forum! Lor! yer should see ours! Jus' finished; we got some Greeks to give us a few 'ints. Capitol? Yah! You ain't seen the Temple of the Sun—real slap up, and no mistake. Bronze capitals! shine like real gold when they're polished; don't you talk to me about Acropolises until you've seen it; why I seen the Acropolis when I was doin' a bit of business down Athens way last year. Why, bless yer, yer could put the Acropolis in the front 'all of our Temple, and yer wouldn't know it was there! 'Ave some more o' them larks' tongues! And pass the Falernian!'

Perhaps some day, when the gold is exhausted, there may be a Palmyra in South Africa; one can imagine that the ruins of Johannesburg will bear a striking resemblance.

The real attraction of Palmyra is its solitude; the great noisy money-proud city overturned, shaken and deserted, the sand-worn colonnades, the crumbling temples, the ruined tombs, unprepossessing in themselves, have been beautified by decay, and rendered pathetic by their forlornness and silence.

* Indeed, is there not an extraordinary correspondence between the taste of Park Lane and that of Palmyra, and do not the stiff, ungainly, ill-carved busts and statues of Tadmor remind one of certain petrified shareholders who once graced a florid villa near Grosvenor Gate?

CHAPTER III

TO HOMS

WE remained among the ruins for more than a week, and then turned our steps towards Homs; halting once more at Ain el-Beda—from that place we started on a forty-mile ride across absolute desert, leaving at five in the morning under the guidance of an aged and incompetent Zaptieh, who volunteered with great confidence to show us the road. About four o'clock in the afternoon he announced that he had lost it, and we were consequently thrown into a state of considerable alarm, which was in no way soothed by the efforts of my servant Jacob to calm our fears.

'Jacob know the way?' 'Of course he knew the way! he had ridden over it two years before; true, it was at night and he had slept on his horse, but those mountains were near Feruqlus, not the mountain on the right of the mountains behind the others—no, certainly not. The Zaptieh really knew the way, only he thought he didn't; the way he thought he didn't know was much shorter than the way he did know but had lost!' 'Was Feruqlus to the right or the left?' 'To the left to be sure;' (interval by Zaptieh). 'Yes, to the right is Feruqlus, as Allah will bear witness; six hours or more, perhaps less, but surely not more than two days!' (Jacob continues). 'Have no
fear

fear, before daylight we will reach Feruqlus ; we are young and courageous,—yes, by God, I know the way ! but there is no doubt if we had a map we could find it more easily.'

We camped for a four hours' rest and trusted to our luck ; during the halt a Zaptieh of the escort entertained us with an account of his duties and calling.

*THE TALE OF KASSIM
AND THE SHAYKH OF THE DRUSES.*

' Truly God is great and the fire is warm ! These desert nights are cold, and I am getting grey now ; Wallahi ! When I was young I cared not for fire to warm my hands, and only needed to tighten my belt when I was hungry. Look you, in the Russian war I was at Sofia—a small town—the Muscovite wanted it, and we Turks fought them ; ahi !—ahi !—at Plevna, at Shipka, and elsewhere ; I forget their names now. The Russians won, but they are bad fighters. We killed a good number, but their cannons were better than ours ! And our officers were bad,—some touched Russian money ; by God, if we had English officers, we could eat the Russians from first to last, and leave not one.* Here there has been no real war. The Bedawin, what are they ? Cunning perhaps, but not fighters. We have a saying—" Bedawin attack you, fight them, but if they fly take another road." They are good at an ambush, but in fair fight they are like children.

' Then there are the Druses of the mountain. Ha !

* Probably this was said to please me, but it should be remembered that the young British subaltern, although not sympathetic to orientals, certainly inspires them with marvellous confidence.

they

they are real fighters—like lions they fear neither Sultan, nor soldier, and the English have given them Martinis.* They killed many of our men, but we beat them at last; I shot the Shaykh of Qanawat's mare, and he swore that sixty Osmanli soldiers must die for her ere he should sleep; but I was back at Damascus, so why should I care for him or his mare, or his wrath? A curse on his religion and the dawn of the day of his birth, and may God blast his dead! But in that business of the Druses there were many adventures and deeds and doings, rare shifts and traps! And among others the trick that Kassim the Zaptieh played on the Shaykh of Saleh. It befell in this way:—There was a certain Druse who was a robber and murderer, and when the fighting commenced, because he was a knave and a traitor he took thought, and reasoning that Druses were few and Turks many, decided to desert his brothers and make alliance with the Turks. Wherefore, he stole a good horse, and riding into Swayda, went in to the Kaimakam, saying—"Lo, such and such of the Druses have done me injury and I would be even with them, take me into your service as Zaptieh, and I will betray them"; the Kaimakam, seeing that he was a man of strength and cunning, accepted him as Zaptieh. Now this Kassim gave much help to the Turks, betraying the wiles of the Druses into their hands, gaining much plunder; for, being a Druse, he knew their trysting places and ambushes. Now among the Druses there was a Shaykh of Saleh, who was as a thorn in the side of the Turks; one day he would steal rifles, another

* I do not know where this fable originated, but it is firmly believed by every Moslem, Christian and Official in Syria. I suspect it was a wily piece of Druse bluff.

drive

drive off cattle, another raid the Fellaheen, until the Kaimakam of Swayda, growing fearful of him, set a price on his head, to wit, 30*l.* Turkish. When Kassim heard of this, his belly lusted after the gold, and he bethought him how he might come by it, for Kassim was a cousin of the Shaykh of Saleh ; therefore, one night he deserted his barrack at Swayda and rode into the mountain of the Druses until he came to Saleh, where he walked into the guest-room* crying, "Upon you be the blessing." But the Shaykh of Saleh cried, "Why do you come here, O Kassim, you who have deserted us and have become an enemy?" But Kassim answered, "O Shaykh of Saleh, I am a Druse, and your cousin, and I did but join the Turks that I might betray them into your hands. I got a rifle and cartridges from those fools, who believing my tale took my service ; I have gained weapons, and given lies in return ! But I am hungry with long riding ; give me food, O brother !" Now this pimp (whom Allah damn) asked for food that he might shelter under hospitality, for he knew not yet whether the Shaykh would believe his tale ; but the Shaykh of Saleh called for rice and butter and treated him as a brother, giving him kindness, while Kassim filled his belly and told tales concerning the Turks, saying that they had troops here, and cannons there ; thinking the while how he might gain money on his cousin's head. Presently he fell to recounting how the Kaimakam had a store of cattle in a certain village, which two men might easily steal away, as the soldiers guarding them slept, thinking all secure. Now the Shaykh of Saleh considered this plan, and

* In nearly all Turkish villages there is a 'Room' for the accommodation of strangers. Among the Druses this is always maintained by the Shaykh.

invited

invited Kassim to go with him that they might come by the beasts. Kassim, who desired this, consented, and rested in the guest-house for three days,* eating like a dog; then the two set forth and went together towards the village, and Kassim sang these lines of the old war song,—

Almighty Lord! Spare me my filly foal
That she may bear me bravely in the fray,

and the Shaykh answered,—

And I will deck her in a Syrian silk.
O! spare her, Lord, that she be shod.†

Presently Kassim cried: "A curse on my tobacco box, it is empty," but his cousin said, "What matter? I will roll thee a cigarette," and Kassim thanked him. Now while the Shaykh rolled the cigarette, he put down his gun, and Kassim seeing him with both hands engaged, snatched it up and shot him; then, cutting off his head, rode with it to the Kaimakam, and gained the money set upon it. That is the tale of Kassim, the son of a dog, and by God's will he may some day meet a fate as black as his book.'

I can vouch for the accuracy of this story, as, curiously enough, this very villain Kassim accompanied me as an escort when I visited Jebel Druse in 1898, and at the village of Saleh he was recognised by the inhabitants, who rose to slay him; I regret to say he escaped.

Concerning the Druses, I may be able to relate something from experience. When I was a little boy of ten,

* The delay in starting is truly oriental.

† ياربِ خلت لي مهراقي ❁ تكبروا صبرا نا خيالها
بشترى لها م الشام حرير ❁ بيطار يدق نعالها

I was

I was taken by my father to their mountain ; again when I was eleven, again when I was thirteen, and lastly five years later when I visited them alone. I have seen these people in the zenith of their power, when no Turk could have shown his face in the mountain, and their hospitality and dignity filled me with reverence. They appear a fine, stalwart race of men, governed by Shaykhs who could give lessons in good breeding to Ambassadors ; obliging and ever ready to assist, yet they would have as soon accepted baksheesh as a blow in the face. The hospitality was the hospitality not only of custom but of gentlemen, and the visit of a village Shaykh was more impressive than any tinsel pageant in London. Then came the time when they rushed impetuously into rebellion. They fought the Turks, as Turks have often told me, like heroes ; at first they gained, but eventually were defeated with heavy loss. The chiefs surrendered and were imprisoned.

Nine months after the last insurrection it was my good fortune to visit this splendid people, when there were men among them still bearing half-healed wounds, and the hill-sides were scattered with the bones of their comrades and adversaries—marks which testified to severer fighting than any we have known in late wars of discretion, for when Druse met Turk they fought to a finish, and not until the position became untenable.

A manly, noble race are the Druses,* perhaps

* One of the most charming traits in their character is their unboastfulness ; and the ready way in which they described the valorous actions of the Turks, to whom they gave every credit for bravery and humanity, filled one with admiration, for the conquerors and the conquered. It was delightful to hear a Shaykh and a grizzled old Turkish Captain chaffing one another about their various adventures.

destined

destined some day to play a great rôle in history : brave while practical ; chivalrous yet not quixotic ; I can think of no nation that can compare with them. As regards their religion, it is a mystery, and a mystery it will remain, for on this point every Druse, whether he is Oqhal or Joqhal,* thinks himself justified in cramming the traveller with a rigmarole of nonsense, apparently divulging every secret, and invariably concluding with a wink, which disappoints all who have not a strong sense of humour.

At 10 P.M. we started once more, and by good chance struck the caravan track, which was leading in a direction entirely different from that in which we were journeying. Then commenced a dreary moonlight ride from ten till four o'clock in the morning, when at last we heard a barking of dogs on the left, which denoted a Bedawin encampment ; eventually we arrived at the village of Feruqlus, which is inhabited by Arabs professing Greek Orthodox Christianity.

The native Christians of Syria are broken into innumerable sects and divisions, which are more than confusing. Almost every oriental version of Christianity is to be found there, and the number is increased by the Uniates, who are Maronites, Greeks, Syrians, Armenians, and Chaldeans, adding the word 'Catholique' to their denomination, which indicates that they are affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church ; while following most of their oriental ritual, they abandon the fundamental points of controversy.

The native Christians of Jerusalem and Bethlehem

* Oqhal (initiated) ; Joqhal (uninitiated). The Druses are divided into these two sections ; the former are learned in religion and eschew tobacco and wine, the latter are kept in ignorance and may do as they please.

are

are of all kinds, though their manners separate them from the rest, as for some reason they follow the Mohammedan customs, veil their women, eschew pig, eat in silence; and resemble the Moslems in manliness and readiness for battle, as no other Christians in Turkey, except the Chaldeans, the Nestorians of Hakkiari and Zeitunli Armenians.

The Maronites of the Lebanon are a curious race, exceedingly intelligent, fairly brave, but incapable of combination; inclining towards the Armenian in financial astuteness, born intriguers, cunning diplomatists, somewhat immoral, appallingly apt to pick up a superficial coating of European civilisation (confound the word, but there is no other), which transforms them into 'bounders' of the most vivid kind, but nevertheless a people prepared to work and hold positions of importance when they get the chance. Many of the Egyptian officials, journalists, civil engineers, &c., are of this race, and as long as a strong hand is kept over them they are worthy of the positions they hold, and far superior to the Bengali Baboo, as they have a backbone, which the Baboo has not.

The American Protestant College in Beyrut annually turns out a considerable number of useful citizens who are Maronites, though naturally there are some failures; but these are not the majority.

The Lebanon has been made a stronghold of French influence since the troubles of 1868, though this is somewhat on the wane now, for since the German Emperor's visit the international politics of Syria have been undergoing a considerable change.

For many years the Roman Catholic priesthood in
Syria

Syria was a great political lever, the French Government gathering all the Uniates under the protection of the Republic, but since the various enactments of the French Government against the clergy have taken place the patriotic ardour of the Jesuits has considerably cooled, as one would expect, and French prestige has fallen in consequence.

The Christian townsmen are good merchants and bankers, often wealthy and apparently quite happy. There is little to distinguish them from the Moslems save that their women do not veil, while the men are generally inclined to be fat and unhandsome.

The rest of the Christians of Syria, living in villages, are generally a poor race of people, resembling degraded Fellaheen, but of worse morals and physique; indeed, they are not worth a description, and are interesting only to archæologists in ritual and early Christian sectarian controversy.

The Shaykh's house, or rather hovel, did not offer many attractions, and in consequence of the five Zaptiehs taking possession of it there was scarcely cubic capacity enough to permit one to lie down; we therefore stretched our beds on the green, and having devoured some fried eggs slept till about two o'clock, when Jacob apprised us of the arrival of the carriage. The carriage we found to be an elegant French victoria, driven by a man of Homs; we climbed in, a Zaptieh mounted the box, and we departed, leaving the servants to follow the next day.

The bumping of the vehicle precluded any hopes of sleep; therefore we had the pleasure of shivering within it, desirous of slumber but with no possibility of attaining it.

Towards

Towards sunset the driver, who was a Christian, produced a bottle of mastic, which he applied to his lips, and having swallowed a considerable quantity perfumed the carriage with that particularly acrid spirit, compared to which Bourbon is as eau-de-Cologne. This operation he repeated until the bottle was empty, when with a joyful cry he flung it from him and lashed the horses into a gallop; but the spirituous exaltation of the driver was by no means communicated to his cattle.

Presently we began to trundle slowly over a ploughed field; one of us pointed out the road, which showed white in the dusk. 'That,' said the driver gravely, 'is the river.' Darkness fell, and the progress of the carriage grew gradually less.

'A curse on the religion of the horses,' said the driver.

'Go on, you drunken beast!' cried the passengers.

'Hurrah!' answered the driver.

'Damn this coachman's house!' muttered the Zaptieh.

'Yallah! O drunkard!'

At this moment the horses jibbed; we dismounted, and found them with their feet on the edge of a river bank, some twenty feet deep. The driver slid off the box. 'Go on, you pigs!' he cried. One of us bade him look at the river. 'River? What river? There is no river!' and so saying he strode over the precipice amid an avalanche of stones and a shower of sparks from his cigarette, and descended with considerable force into the stream below—this movement was followed by a deathly silence. We waited anxiously for a space, hoping for some sign of life, as the fall would have killed many a man.

'A curse

'A curse on the religion of this river!' came in a husky voice from below, and presently the driver emerged; he was put on his box once more, and we again started for Homs. We stopped at one village, where he remembered an enemy, whom he challenged to mortal combat, and left bawling curses in the darkness.

At nine o'clock we reached Homs, where we found the hotel *Alhamdolillah* (Laud to the Lord)! This hotel is an entirely new venture on the part of some Maronites and Druses, who, forgetting their old animosities, have combined to provide entertainment for travellers. What a combination! The astuteness and depth of the Maronite, coupled with the dare-devil, gambling spirit of the Druse, form an alliance that no purse will stand. The food was excellent, the accommodation unexpected, and the bill a stroke of genius—15*l.* sterling for nine days! This bill, artistically composed of unobtrusive items, mounted to the above total in the most natural manner in the world. Not one single item could we question, and the landlord, who provided the Druse element, presented it unabashed, but with a twinkle in his eye; for, as I have said, this mysterious people possess a decided sense of humour. It was explained to him that the Druses possess as great a prowess in finance as in war, but that his bill had need be reduced, or, if necessary, laid before the Cadi. The landlord shrugged his shoulders, instantly edited the account into more suitable dimensions, admitting that he was 'new to the business, and wanted to find out how far he could go'!

The railway does not appear to have greatly affected the town of Homs, and so wretched are its inhabitants that it is a matter of doubt whether anything could move such



GRASS-LANDS NEAR HOMS.

such a leaden-hearted race : pallid, pock-marked, and of miserable physique, they present the effeminacy of the Damascene Moslem, coupled with the poverty and misery of Fellaheen.

We rambled, as a guide-book would say, through the bazaars, and were an object of surprise to the desolate population, who, besides their ordinary stupidity, were suffering severely from Ramadan.

The only spot of interest which we visited, out of the ordinary way of travellers, was the tomb of Khaled and his son. It is situated in an apartment leading off an early mosque of no great architectural merit. The doors of this chamber are an excellent example of Arab wood and silver work, the interior face being especially fine in execution, but the tomb itself, beyond the historical interest, is not of any great beauty or curiosity. The faithful have presented their saint with some very trumpery 'ex votos' in the shape of swords and silver ornaments. As these are most probably the gifts of Bedawin and Fellaheen they do not disgrace the givers.

We also visited the Jesuits, who have a mission-school for Uniates, turning their charges into well-behaved little native gentlemen, and not into bounding sons of freedom, as some other religious gentlemen have done. It is to be noted with pleasure that the Jesuits give no encouragement to that brawling spirit of vendetta so dear to the heart of the native Christian, and that on Christmas Day the Greek and Armenian non-Uniates gathered to give greetings to the Catholics. The Rector said that the Uniates called on the Moslems in

D

Bairam

Bairam, and congratulated the Greeks on their proper feasts.*

From Homs we rode to Restan, a village perched on a commanding height and overlooking the river ; it is a picturesque spot, and the khan beside the bridge, although unfinished, provides passable accommodation for horses. The road is kept in good order by a system which is effective and simple, the villages through which it passes being held responsible for the repairs necessary by the Government. This scheme appears to be very satisfactory ; and in the event of more roads being made in the amenable districts, such as the Aleppo Province, the Euphrates Valley, Syria, and even from Baghdad to Kerkuk, it would be advisable to follow the example ; of course in Kurdistan and the wilder parts such an order would only serve to precipitate a revolution, but the Fellaheen people are easy to deal with, though not such abject slaves by nature as the Egyptian.

The tillers of the soil in Syria are the most countrified rustics in the world. They have all the characteristics of a yokel, except his manners : the same broad smile, the same simplicity, the same heaviness ; good, gentle people, cultivating the land excessively ill, squeezed most cruelly for taxes, annually sending their quota of men for the army ; patient as their own oxen, they never complain, but await destiny with the cry of ' Verily, from Allah we came, and to him we are returning.' Incomparably superior to the Fellaheen of Egypt, they have the making of a good race in them, but require schooling in

* I presume this will be cited by some as another instance of their extraordinarily vile, low, Popish, plotting, intriguing, scoundrelly, murderous cunning.

agriculture

agriculture and husbandry ; by no means lazy, they are strangely dull, and were it not for the richness of the soil would never be able to eke out a living for themselves. Owing to their ignorance of sanitation they fall heavily before cholera when it comes, and small-pox annually carries off a considerable number. Their manners and customs are borrowed from the Bedawin, whom they dread as their hereditary foes, and against whom until lately they have had to defend themselves. Even now the desert men occasionally raid outlying villages, and the Fellaheen, by tradition and necessity, bear arms when cultivating their fields.

Their villages are usually ill-built and uncleanly ; enormous piles of dung and filth mount up in the streets and open spaces, which some day will be of immense use in fertilising the already abundant land. Naturally a peace-loving people, they have been forced by circumstances into a state of semi-war, which has rendered them hardy, tough, and frugal. In religion they are strict Mohammedans, observing the fasts and feasts in a manner which shames their brothers of the town, whose fanaticism they lack.

Though moral, they are coarse in their similes and conversation, loving wonderful fairy-tales of poor men who become incredibly rich by the aid of afrits, or talismans, salted with the grossest Rabelaisian humour and quite Ibsen-like family complications. They are easy to rule, and will be easy to raise from their present state of squalor, for all their faults are those of ignorance or omission ; hence it is to be hoped that their future will be happier than their past—unless, indeed, the East becomes a prey to capitalists of Europe or America,

in which case a designing Imperial Boss might, untrammelled by the Government, reduce them to serfdom for the purpose of filling his pockets and gaining the name of Empire-maker.

Of course the above description is very general, and does not apply to various races who linger in certain villages, such as Ismailiyes, Ansariyehs, &c., but applies to the inhabitants who in Syria term themselves Fellaheen. The Fellaheen of the Euphrates Valley are totally different, being a wretched, washed-out race of sensual, stupid idlers, feeble in mind and body, vicious and immoral to a degree.

From Restan to Hama is an easy ride of five hours, through rich arable land which shows signs of considerable cultivation.

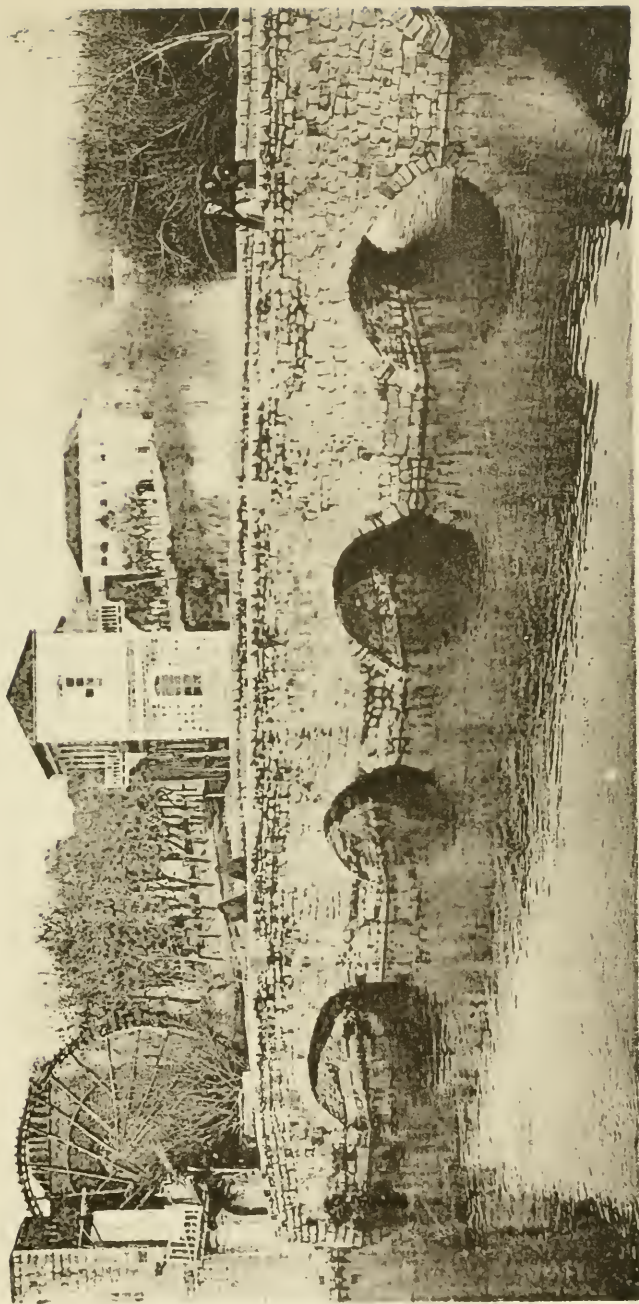


Photo by Mr. Smith.

HAMA

CHAPTER IV

HAMA

HAMA is excepting Damascus, by far the most picturesque city in Syria, and from some points of view reminds one of Constantinople; its fine arched bazaars resemble those of Baghdad, while its numerous water-wheels moan and groan in a manner not altogether unmusical; at times rising to a wailing dirge, at others descending to the bass notes of a violoncello. Some fine buildings are being raised in the town by natives, including a new bazaar which preserves all the characteristics of the old ones—a matter of congratulation in these degenerate days, when the blight of European influence so falls on all towns with a railway connection that hideous half-baked villas and corrugated iron bazaar roofs mar the appearance and destroy the interest of the dirty, but beautiful, cities of the Ottoman Empire.

It was our fortune to pitch our camp near Khan en-Nuri, attached to which is a coffee-house of the lower kind. In the days of Ramadan the perpetual din which arises between a khan and a coffee-house is more easily imagined than described. At dawn every fellah from the surrounding country bringing in his market stuff considers it a point of etiquette to smite upon the door of the khan, bawling for the Khanji in a raucous voice.

The

The Khanji is the heaviest sleeper in the district, and consequently the last man to be awakened. When he is aroused a long discussion ensues, through the crack in the khan door, between the fellah and the Khanji.

Fellah: 'O Khanji!'

Khanji: 'Eh?'

Fellah: 'O Khanji!'

Khanji: 'Yes.'

Fellah: 'Are you Khanji Mohammad or Khanji Abdullah?'

Khanji: 'Eh?'

Fellah (aside): 'A curse on the deaf one!'

Khanji: 'Am I deaf, to be cursed, or do I hear the voice of a Pimp?'

Fellah: 'Where is Khanji Abdullah?'

Khanji: 'Who?'

Fellah: 'Khanji-i A-b-d-u-l-l-a-h-ha-ha——!!!!'

Khanji: 'Why do you wake the folk, dog of a dog-son?'

Fellah: 'I wake folk?—I wake folk? Have *I* a voice like an old camel? Have *I* a——'

Voices: 'Silence, blight!' 'Be quiet, dog!' 'Pig! be still!' 'A curse on the religion of loud-voiced bellowers!'

Fellah (retiring): 'May God blast you and your religion and affairs, and the khan and its Khanji, and may his wife——,' &c., &c., &c., *until the indignant fellah's voice dies down in the distance, and the Khanji, being now aroused, commences rattling the key in the wooden lock that he may open the door.*

Khanji: 'Blast the key and its maker—(rattle, rattle, rattle)—the tooth is broken—(rattle, rattle). Eh, to the right! Oah! (rattle, rattle, rattle). Now it is nigh—
Yallah



ARABS OF HAMMA.

Yallah—Eh! Blast this key and its religion, and may Allah (*rattle, rattle*) blast (*rattle, rattle*) its (*rattle*) belief and—Alhamdollilah—Laud to the Lord——'

(*Enter three Cameleers*)

First Cameleer: 'That's my corn.'

Second Cameleer: 'You lie!'

Third Cameleer: 'Silence! It is mine, you thieves twain!'

A Traveller: 'Ya'oob! For goodness' sake tell the Zaptieh to keep those men quiet.'

Ya'oob: 'E-h! O brave! Silence me these cuckolds, that my masters may sleep!'

Zaptieh (under a blanket, rattling a snider): 'Curse you, swine of the herds! Begone!'

First Muezzin (from neighbouring mosque): 'There is no God but THE God, and Mohammed is the Prophet of God!'

Second Muezzin: 'The Prophet of God!'

Third Muezzin: 'There is no God but THE God.'

Thenceforward for one hour the Muezzins chant in splendid tenors, in wheezy wails, in hoarse croakings, the truths of Al Islam, and of all noises in a Moslem city it is the most pleasant.

When they have ceased a muttering is heard in the khan; a mule is being sold by an elderly gentleman.

Elderly Gentleman: 'By God! By these eyes! But she is a beauty! Mashallah, what legs! What haunch! And only a score of Turkish pounds! Wallahi.'

First Spectator: 'Ten French liras would be a high price for the weather-beaten old slug!'

Elderly Gentleman: 'Ten French pounds! Here!
take

take this mule and ten French pounds and a rottal of dung for a gift, you night robber !'

Second Spectator : ' Well, father, what say you to eighteen French pounds?'

Elderly Gentleman : ' Eighteen Turkish and she is thine, and the loss is mine !'

Third Spectator : ' French liras !'

Elderly Gentleman : ' Turkish Liras ! TURKISH LIRAS !! TURKISH LIRAS !!!'

Zaptieh : ' Go with your horse sale to hell, and give peace to us.'

Presently a man rides up shouting for corn ; the Khanji appears to object ; the horseman screeches until almost voiceless. Asked who he is, answers that he collects the Sultan's local tax ; if *he* is not entitled to forage for nothing, who is ?

The khan is never still for an instant, and when the elderly Khanji * is not engaged in active hostilities he sits on a stool, relating his grievances in a loud, high-pitched voice ; but the interval between squabbles is rarely of long duration. For instance, a Bedawi drives in sheep, who begin eating the fodder of a sick camel ; the owner of the latter rages with the Bedawi ; the Bedawi drives off the sheep ; one of them upsets a cup of coffee prepared for a Zaptieh who is on a journey and is not keeping Ramadan ; the Zaptieh gives battle with the Bedawi, and by that time the sheep are straying into various houses ; the Bedawi goes in pursuit, resulting in a wordy battle between the Bedawi and a householder, the first saying

* There is a mystery concerning the age of Khanjis all over the Empire. I once knew a youth of seventy, but he was an exception. Yet why they should be so old I cannot imagine ; what they were before they were Khanjis I could never ascertain.

that



HAMA

that the sheep belongs to his flock, the householder that it has been his property for two months and is being fattened for Bairam.

So through the whole day the quarrels and brawls continue until night falls, when the pious Moslems flock to the coffee-house to roar, smoke, play cards, and sing till daylight, and the Fellaheen once more begin clamouring at the gate of the khan.

The fourth day of our stay was marked by a scene of our own. A Bedawi tried to steal our dog at night. Jacob caught the thief, who broke away; the alarm was raised, the one hundred and fifty odd customers of the coffee-house emerged to join in the chase, and the thief was led back, Jacob, so overcome with fury as to be almost rabid, smiting the robber again and again, shrieking, 'Dyuz—Dyuz.' Whenever the man attempted to say anything in his defence a cuff over the head, a box on the ear, a tweak of the nose, would surely be the answer. At length we obtained a little quiet, and considering the robber's clothes were torn to pieces, his kaffieh lost, his eyes closed up with buffeting, and his nose broken, we dismissed him with a caution.

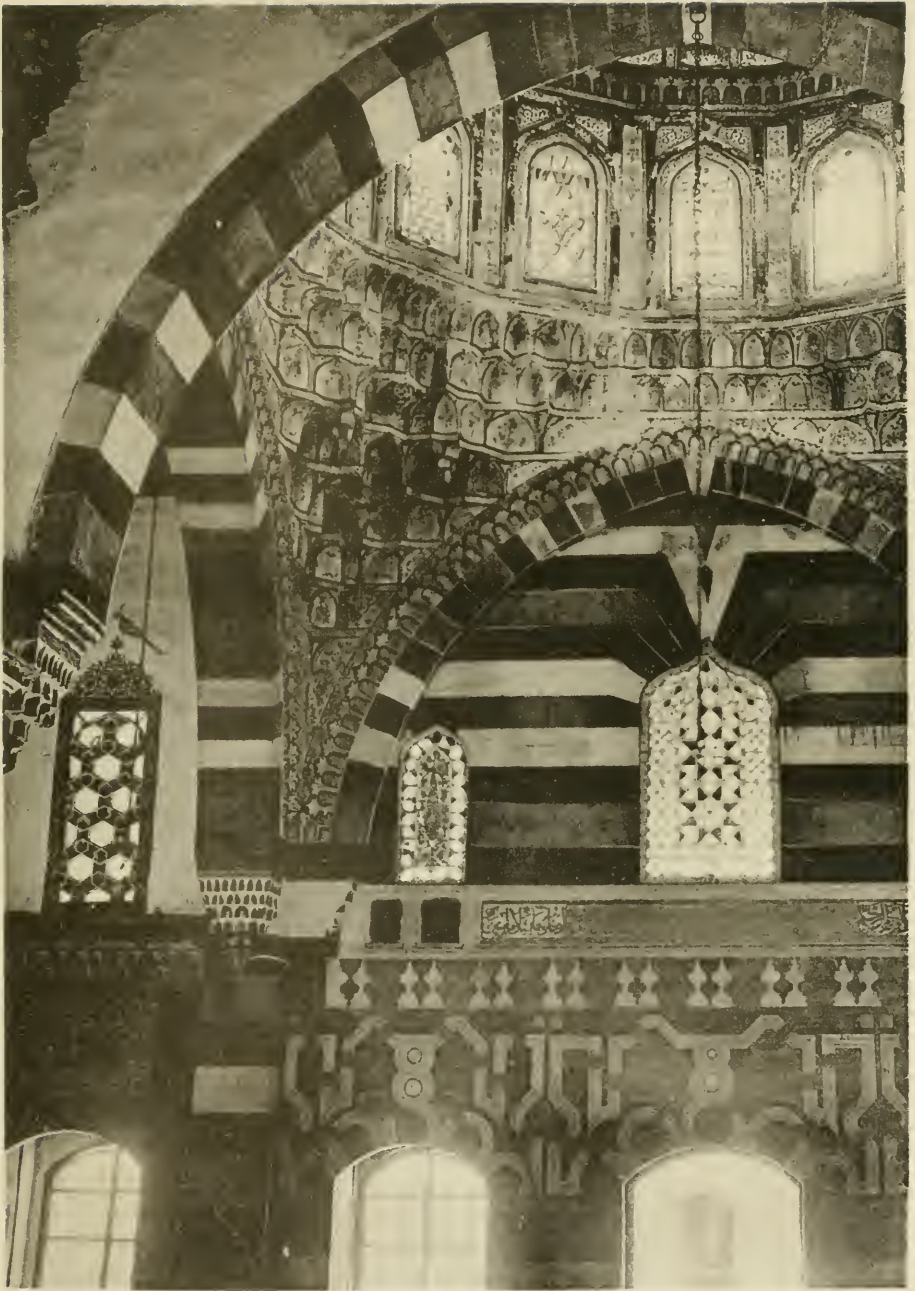
One day we received permission to visit the Mosque of Snakes, where there is an interesting column of marble carved into eight writhing serpents, which would repay any traveller for his visit. The Mosque itself, however, has no merit, and resembles many unnoticed ones in the district.

On our return we passed a richly dressed citizen of Hama supporting himself against a doorpost—he had been keeping Bairam by indulging in forbidden liquors. He gazed glassily upon the world, with a sort of surly

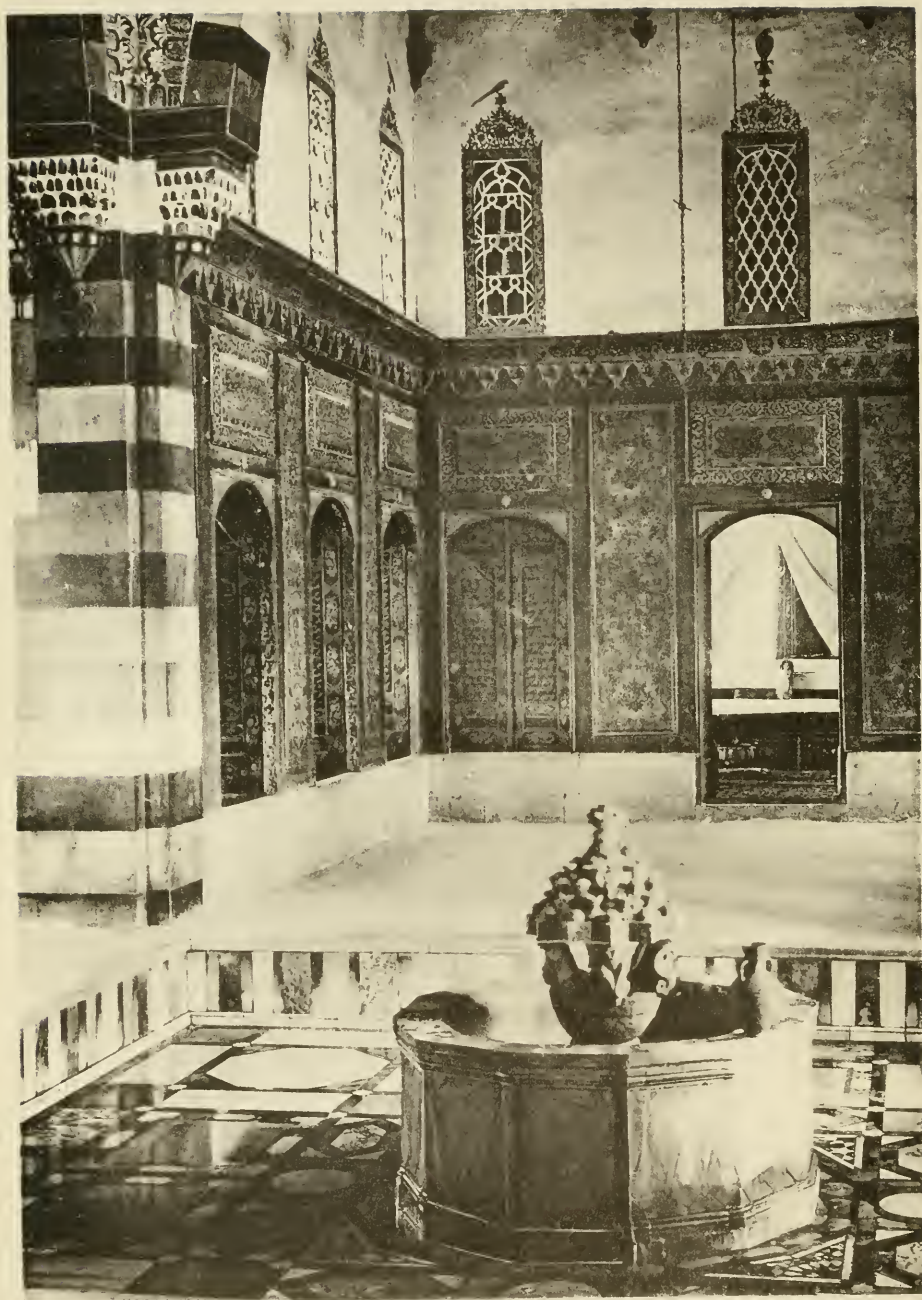
surly benevolence, from beneath a turban twisted all awry. Seeing Europeans passing, he raised his hand doubtfully and cried, 'Bonza!' Not quite comprehending him, we stopped. 'Bub—Bonza!' cried the citizen once more. The Zaptiehs who accompanied us came up at this moment. 'Boo—Boo—B—Bonza!' again reiterated the citizen with stately wrath; the Zaptiehs took this to be an insult, and instantly fell upon him; the citizen, however, was too dignified a person to brawl with Zaptiehs, and sat down in a puddle, sadly bemiring his holiday clothes. Just then one of his cup companions emerged from a coffee-house, and seeing his comrade seated in the mud, in the hands of the police, rushed to his assistance; the officer snatched a walking-stick from one of us and drove off the rescuer, at the same time delivering a fearful thrust in the abdomen of the reveller reclining in the road; this in some way brought that gentleman to his senses, and he explained, with many gasps, that he had endeavoured to say 'Bon soir' to the Beys, as it was a feast day. The explanation was considered sufficient, and we left him to be picked up by his friends.

By the kind assistance of some cavalry officers, we were enabled to visit a house of the Arzeb* family. A view of the exterior may be obtained from the Bridge of the Shaykh's house; its lines are graceful, and the dome which rises from the centre of the edifice

* This clan owes its present affluence to an ancestor who flourished a century and a half ago, and appears to have obtained immense bequests from the Government. By Mohammedans the family are described as great nobles, and by Christians as wicked tyrants; they possess immense lands and great wealth; indeed, a good portion of Hama is theirs, besides also the house we visited.



HOUSE OF THE ARZEB FAMILY AT HAMA



(Photo by Mr. Smith.)

HOUSE OF THE ARZEB FAMILY AT HAMA.

is noble in its boldness, though a critic might find the sides somewhat flat. The remainder of the building is severe, but well proportioned. The beauties of decoration are reserved for the interior.

After some trouble we obtained admittance, and were led upstairs into a Court, beautiful originally, but now marred by mud walls built for the convenience of the harem. The windows looking into the court are good examples of stone tracery, though nothing to compare with Delhi or Agra fretwork. From the court we were conducted through a small room into the large saloon, which is under the dome. No one who sees it can fail to be struck by the harmonious and well proportioned colouring. The room is semi-cruciform, the dome occupying a quarter of the roof-space ; the walls are of wood, delicately gilded in the Persian fashion with a minuteness and intricacy of detail which rivals the general effect in beauty. The square corners below the dome are filled out with excellent coloured stalactite work, which is alone worth the visit, the windows being lighted by richly coloured glass ; and although the signs of decay inevitable in an oriental building are not wanting, the whole impression is one of richness and taste rarely met with even in the East. The workmanship is entirely Persian, as is the whole of the building ; it is a triumph of the combined skill of artist, workman, and architect. Any traveller who visits Hama should not omit to attempt to see this noble specimen of Eastern architecture.

One evening Joseph Haddad (the dragoman) entertained us with the following story—it should prove exceedingly interesting to folk-lorists, as it bears so close a
resemblance

resemblance to the Keltic fairy-stories ; indeed Joseph's Jann are only the good people in disguise.

*THE PIPER AND THE JANN.**

‘ Now you must know when our Lord God cast out the Angels from Paradise, many repented, and such as cried out for pardon were stayed by the All-Merciful in their downfall. Some begged forgiveness while yet in mid-air ; these became the spirits of the wind and stars and moon, and are the best of the rebellious Angels ; others only relented when they struck the ground, and became the spirits of the earth, such as men may at times see : not altogether evil, nor yet entirely good, working mischief only against those who vex them. Now it is rare that a man may see them, and only if he should chance to sing or play music such as they love. What that music is no man knoweth, yet it may chance if one hum a song without words or meaning he may touch that note which charmeth the Jann, and they will appear to him, in the semblance of women, strange hounds, dwarfs, or such shapes as they choose to assume ; for it is possible for the Jann to take on the form of any living being. If it happen that a man see a Jinn in the appearance of a fair woman, and try to do her an evil, then he will become Jinn-mad for all his days ; he will pine, crying, “ I have lost her, I have lost her,” until he dies of grief ! But should a man do them no evil, then they will work him none, but rather help him ; and concerning this there is a tale of a man of Jerusalem :

“ There was once an Abbot of a Monastery at Jerusalem who desired to send a message to a Prior of his order

* Jinn, singular ; Jann, plural.



THE KING OF THE JANN.

at Nazareth ; therefore, after he had said his Mass in the chapel, he called a man of Jerusalem named John el-Alati, famed for his fleetness of foot, giving him the letter and bidding him take it to the Prior, and return in four days with the answer. John el-Alati agreed to do so, and having put the letter in his belt departed for Nazareth.

“ Now he went out by the Damascus Gate towards Nazareth, and to cheer the solitude of his journey he brought with him some reed pipes of the shepherds. After he had walked about half an hour he began playing certain notes at random, as is the custom of pipers before they commence a tune, when he beheld three small men, no larger than boys of eight years, but with great heads and long beards like he-goats, and one of them gave him the peace, saying, ‘ Where be you going ? ’ Replied el-Alati, ‘ To Nazareth. ’ They asked him if he would go with them to a wedding for which they were bound, to play to the guests ; but John el-Alati excused himself, urging that his message must be delivered at once. Yet the more he excused the more they entreated him to come, until one said, ‘ Do but mount on my back and I will bear you to the wedding ; ’ at which John cried, ‘ How can you, a dwarf, bear me, a grown man ? ’ And the dwarf answered, ‘ Do but mount on my back. ’ So he mounted on the dwarf’s back, whereupon the ground yawned and swallowed him and the dwarfs.

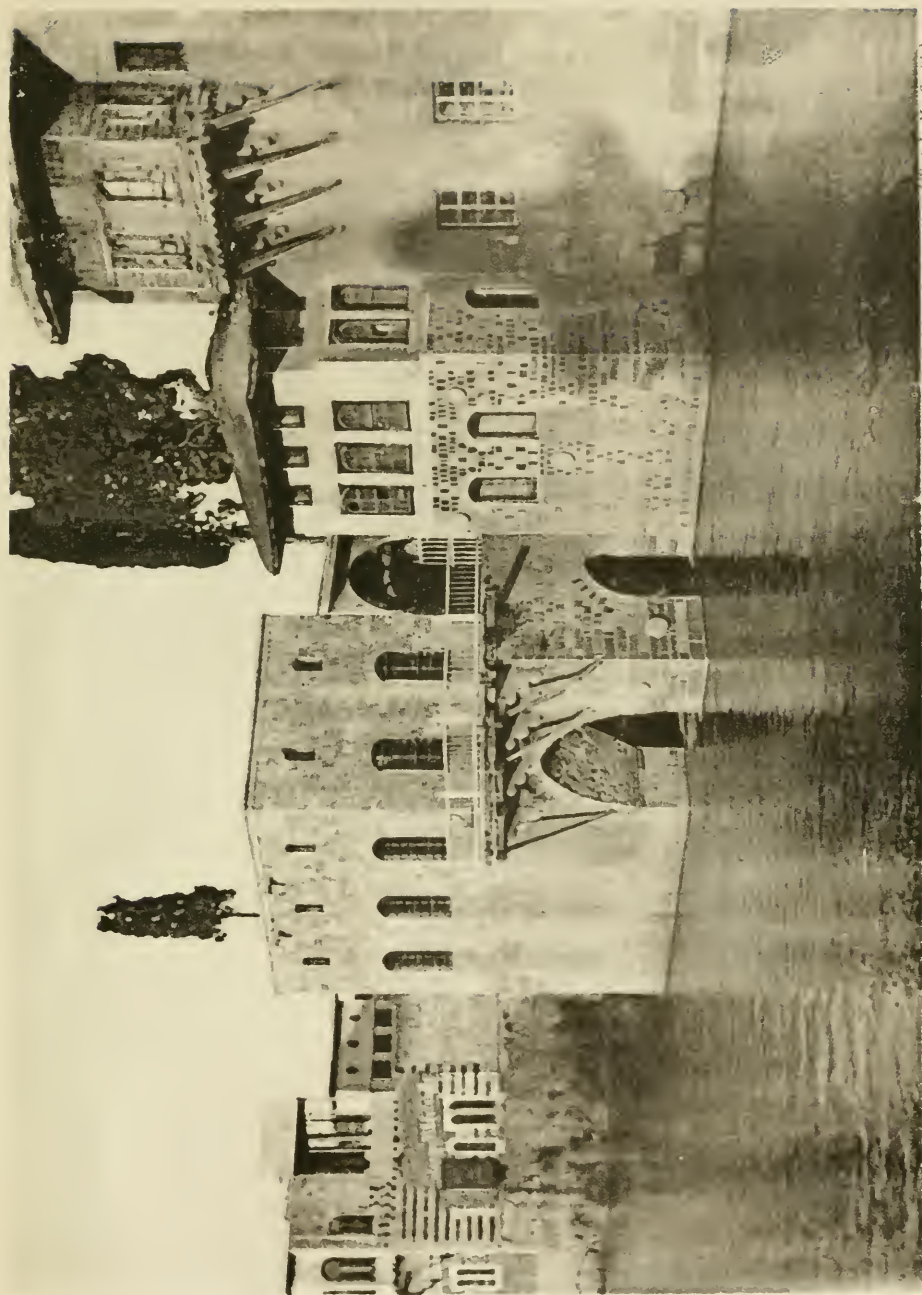
“ Now when he saw he was in a cave beneath the earth, he regretted having complied with the wishes of the dwarfs, for he perceived that they were spirits, and feared for himself in their hands. When the dwarfs saw him shaking

shaking with terror, as one with fever, they bade him be of good cheer, whereat he took heart and awaited what should happen. Presently they led him into a great hall, plated with gold and studded with precious stones. In the middle of the hall there stood a throne of gold raised on a dais, and seated thereon was the King of the Jann in the semblance of a dwarf such as those el-Alati had seen above, save that his beard was longer and his clothes more splendid. Around the King of the Jann stood his officers, wazirs and guards, all clothed in costly stuffs fair to behold. Then the dwarfs brought el-Alati before the King, and the King commanded him to play upon his pipes, and Alati played; whereupon they brought in a bridegroom and bride of the dwarfs, and celebrated their marriage ceremony, and feasted and danced until morning.

“ Now, when the junketings and merrymakings were over, the King gave thanks to Alati for his playing, and calling for his wazirs, cried, ‘ Who will bear our musician to Nazareth in the shortest time?’ Cried one, ‘ In five minutes.’ Cried another, ‘ In four.’ Cried a third, ‘ In two.’ Thereupon the King of the Jann bade the last-spoken come forward, saying, ‘ Is he the swiftest of you all?’ And the dwarfs cried, ‘ Truly he is.’ So the King bade el-Alati mount on the dwarf’s back, and the dwarf, striking the ground with his foot, rose through the roof of the cave into the air with such swiftness that the wind whistled like Iblis,* and Alati could scarcely take breath. Presently the dwarf cried ‘ Dismount and do your business within, for here I may not enter.’ And behold they stood before the chapel at Nazareth.

* Arabs attribute whistling to the devil. This shrill-voiced supernatural being may have some connection with Shakespeare’s ‘squeaking’ ghosts.

Accordingly



(Photo by Mr. Smith.)

HAMA.

Accordingly Alati dismounted, and, entering the church, found the Prior finishing his Mass, and to him Alati delivered the letter. Now, when the Prior read the letter he saw the date was only the day before, whereat he was surprised, asking, 'How come you here in so short a space, O el-Alati!' But Alati only answered, 'Give me the answer and let me be gone.' So the Prior, marvelling, wrote out the answer and gave it to him. Then el-Alati went out of the chapel, where he found the Jinn dwarf awaiting him; he mounted on his back once more, and prayed that he would bear him to Jerusalem; and the dwarf struck his foot on the earth, reaching Jerusalem in a stride, and setting him down before the monastery, left him.

"Now Alati related the whole tale to the Abbot, who was astounded when he beheld a letter from Nazareth whereon the ink was not yet dry."

CHAPTER V

TO ALEPPO

WE left Hama on January 10, after three hours' delay. As it was the first day much time was lost in making up the loads—so much that we had to stop the night at Murik, a village whose position, as recorded by Captain Drake, is liable to correction; it being further west than he places it. It is a typical Fellaheen village, and nothing remarkable occurred during our night there, except the following camp dialogue, which may amuse:

Scene: Our camp at night; Zaptieh dozing over a camp fire outside kitchen tent; all silent, weather cold.

Zaptieh (wrapping his cloak closer): 'Allaho Akbar, but it is cold—ugh!'

Cook (within the tent): 'Hey! Soldier!'

Zaptieh: 'Yes!'

Cook: 'It behoves me to make coffee for the others before dawn; will you know the time to wake me?'

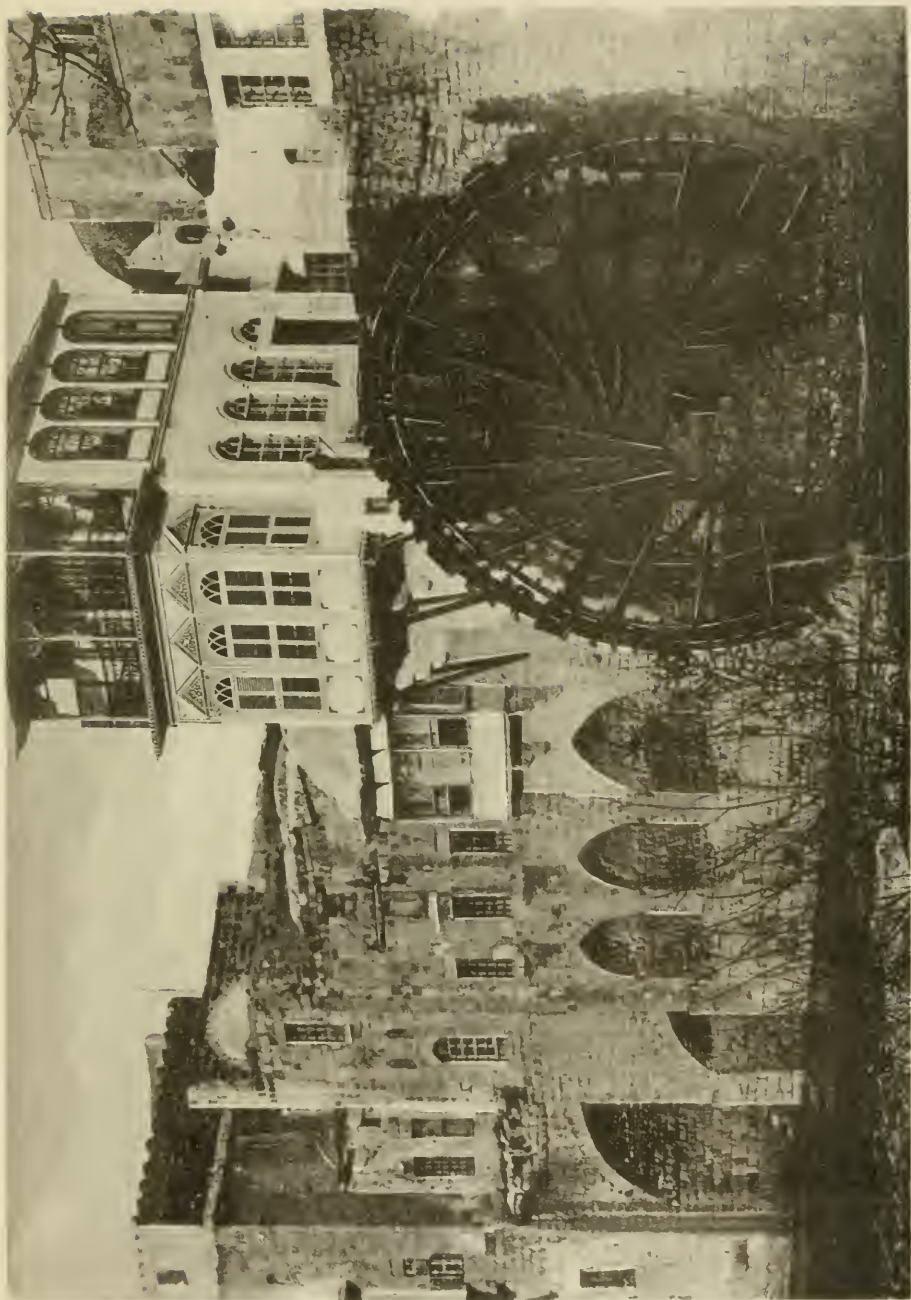
Zaptieh: 'Willingly.'

Cook: 'Hey! Father o' mine!'

Zaptieh: 'Well, O Kitchener!'

Cook: 'And how will you know the time o' night to awaken me? Hast a watch?'

Zaptieh: 'Verily I have no watch; but here in Murik there



NAURA (WATER-WHEEL) AT HAMA.

there is a cock of the cocks, who kens the hours and croweth at the fourth, sixth, and eleventh hour—and we call him the clock of Murik.'

Cook : ' Mashallah ! Has he a watch in his comb ? '

Zaptieh : ' No, but he croweth truer than all watches—gold or silver.'

Cook : ' Then wake me when he croweth his last crow ! ' (*Zaptieh sleeps ; a cock crows.*)

Zaptieh : ' O cook ! ' (*snores from within.*) ' Cook !! '

Cook : ' Eh ! '

Zaptieh : ' The cock hath crowed ; awake, and make coffee.'

Cook : ' Ugh ! Curse the cold—och ! ach ! It freezes enough to break steel. By God, it is colder than a Jew's nose ! O Yussuf ! O Jakob ! Awake ! Coffee for the frozen ! Awake ! '

Yussuf (in another tent) : ' What do you wake us for ? '

Cook : ' 'Tis past the hour of awakening ! Rouse, ye idle ones ! '

Yussuf (sound of matches struck) : ' 'Tis but midnight, fool of the age ! '

Cook : ' What ! '

Jacob : ' Damn you, dogson, whoreson fool and lunatic ! '

Yussuf : ' Here were we sleeping, and you must needs awaken us like a braying jackass from Lidda ! '

Cook : ' You soldier ! You ill-omened Kurd's donkey ! You senseless Persian bullock ! You worshipper of cocks ! See, your cock has lied, and may God blow fire on your cock's house, and his women, and his buying and selling, and the religion of cocks and Persian bullocks,

E

and

and fools who wake folk, and may I lose my eyes if this cock and soldier be not liars of the age, foreordained to lie, so that if they speak the truth their god the devil will not vouchsafe them sustenance! And may ye all be food for wolves and hyænas, soldiers and their chanticleers together!

From Murik to Khan Shaykhun is a ride of two hours, and it had been our intention to push on to Ma'aret en-Noman the same day; but at Khan Shaykhun we were met by four tattered Zaptiehs, who waved their arms, crying, 'Karantina! Karantina!' These Bullfrogs and Shadows led us to their 'Auntient Pistol,' in the shape of an Arab Uzbashi, who announced that we must return to Hama. That was out of the question, and we told him so. 'Then,' said he, 'you must stop here; there is no quarantine, but no one may pass.' Arguments and bribes were alike useless, so we rode round the village to search for a camping ground. On our way a Zaptieh, sent by the Uzbashi to stop us, rode into the mules and commenced beating the muleteers—this was sufficient to put the law on our side, therefore we vented our wrath upon him and his comrades. A cheerful little mêlée ensued, until the Uzbashi himself arrived and called a truce.

The action had lasted for five minutes; total casualties on our side one turban thrown to the ground. The enemy, however, suffered heavily: prestige totally lost, one black eye (severe), two bruised ribs from a Lee-Metford carbine used as a lance (serious)—the Uzbashi was in what is technically known as a 'state of mind.' Firstly, he might have exceeded his orders; secondly, he might have disobeyed them; and, thirdly, his men had been



SHADOW.

BARDOLPH.

KARANTINA!

NYM



London: Bickers & Son.

Stanford's Geogr. Estab^l London.

been beaten in full view of the village, where never in the memory of man had a Zaptieh received a black eye.*

A compromise was effected between us, by which we agreed to camp in peace, and he consented to despatch a man to Ma'aret for instructions. In this way two weary days were spent, during which we had leisure to inspect the khan, an interesting building of the sixteenth century. It is double the size of ordinary khans, having a second inner court, which is rare, besides a Hammam bath of four rooms. Under the foundations of the wall there is a deep well, apparently Roman, and in front of the khan a broad reservoir. In several places Christian emblems, crosses, chalices, &c., may be seen peeping through the masonry ; otherwise the village is without interest.

On the evening of the second day a hyæna, captured by the villagers, was brought to the camp for our edification ; the luckless beast had had its mouth *sewn up* to prevent its biting ; this vile piece of cruelty prevented us giving the showman any remuneration. I learnt the following day that it had been eaten. This appears beyond belief, but it seems that the hyæna is reckoned a delicacy among the Fellaheen of North Syria, though only the right side is considered clean. They justify this filthy practice by quoting some rigmarole from the Koran ; evidently the higher criticism is not unknown, even in that remote region.

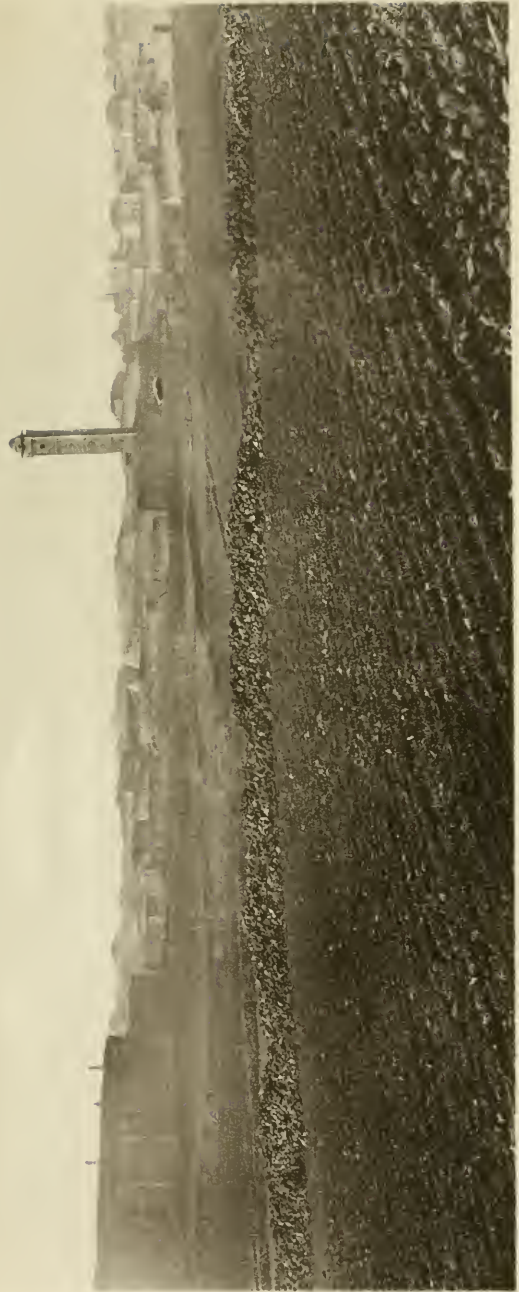
On the third day of our detention we announced

* I must admit that our behaviour was disgraceful, and if we had been imprisoned we should only have got our deserts. But the forbearance of the Turkish Government is almost unlimited ; when a European does get his reward, as a Russian Consul did lately, the browbeating and bullying of the authorities is not edifying.

that we would wait no longer, packed up our baggage, and after a long discussion with the Uzbashi, departed. We gave him excellent and weighty reasons for doing so.

The whole of the route to Ma'aret en-Noman is dotted with wells and tombs, all interesting and worthy of archæological observation; it is on such a road as this that the contrast between the South African veldt and Syrian open country is so remarkable—the former empty, unmeaning, where man is an uninteresting cipher, and the only thoughts of the traveller can be of the future; but in Syria every stone has an interest, every hill has been trodden into paths, man has left his marks on every rock; the very caverns are inhabited by troglodytes, and every stage of early society is to be seen—the cave-dweller, the nomad, the semi-nomad, the villager, the townsman. No one who has the least imagination can long remain unaffected by such associations. The road from Damascus to Aleppo has seen nations rise and fall, vanish, revive and die out; many have trodden its dusty paths, and there are more to come.

At Ma'aret en-Noman we were kindly received by the Kaimakam, who explained to us the reason of our delay, which is not sufficiently interesting to trouble the reader with. He was so obliging as to show us the tomb of Abu el-Ulla, the philosophic, pessimist poet of Ma'aret. Upon that bilious gentleman's tomb there is an inscription signifying, 'Here lies the crime of my father, uncommitted by me,' which might lead one to suppose that nature remedied her own faults. The mosque is of no great beauty, but possesses a minaret of splendid workmanship, although somewhat ornate,
and



MA'ARET EN NOMAN.

and is of a style seldom seen in Saracenic architecture—almost resembling the Chinese.

We were also shown the two khans, A.D. 1500, which are now turned into military and police barracks; the doors of plated iron bear many bullet marks, speaking of troublous times in the past. At the gate of the military barrack I noticed an infirm old man leaning on a rifle, performing sentry duty; I asked him how many years he had served, but he was too deaf to hear and too senile to reply; a brisk young sergeant explained that he was not a soldier at all, but a villager whom the guard paid to perform their duty. The vexed question of garrison guards is solved in this delightfully simple way—let the War Office read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

Between Ma'aret and Seraqib the road passes through many ruined towns and villages of the Christian period, 400–600 A.D.; these require a specialist's description, which, being unable to provide, we will omit, as an Irish editor remarked of his leading article. On the way we noticed a cavernous well, possibly eighty feet in depth, and to amuse one of the muleteers, a rifle was fired down it; a fellah passing by expressed his satisfaction at the noise of the explosion, stating that the well was inhabited by an afrit of immense stature, who robbed the villages in the vicinity, and was accustomed to emerge at midnight; he had been seen by many of the rustics, and also by some muleteers from Aleppo. This afrit may be of the same tribe as the one who nightly haunted the Jaffa road; his anatomy was composed of a lance, a large hat and two Abbai cloaks; his familiars were certain villagers who picked up what his victims left in their flight.

The

The whole country appears to be in a wonderfully flourishing condition. Huge tracts of rich, ploughed land, stretching as far as the eye can reach, bespeak a new era for North Syria, and if there were no difficulties of real property and government dues, it would be a profitable investment to buy land round Ma'aret en-Noman at the present moment.

Three more days brought us to Aleppo, a town so Europeanised that it would be superfluous to describe it.

But before leaving Syria it would be as well to take a review of that region and its present condition. One has heard so much of the devastating influence of the Turk, greedy Pashas and incompetent officials, from a host of interested and prejudiced persons, that it is worth while comparing facts of fact with facts of the counsel for the prosecution.

The population of Syria is so inharmonious a gathering of widely differing races in blood, in creed, and in custom, that government is both difficult and dangerous. Twenty years ago the state of Syria from Aleppo to Aqaba was roughly one of mild anarchy tempered with revolutions and massacres, while between Aleppo and Damascus the Bedawin wandered as overlords of the desert, plundering caravans within sight of the very towns and ever encroaching upon the cultivated lands to gain the coveted pastures. The towns, it is true, were in the hands of the Turks, but the situation might well be compared with that of South Africa when Lord Roberts reached Pretoria and the open country was in the hands of the enemy.

The Hauran and Jebel Druse were almost independent states, while the Leja was still white with the bones
of

of various expeditions sent to quell the vagabond guerillas who dwelt therein. Further South again the Adwan Arabs roamed at will, and the inhabitants of Salt even paid tribute to these rascallions, living in terror of their lives the while.

The Jordan valley was a refuge for footpads ; the road from Jericho to Jerusalem of evil repute as in the days of the Good Samaritan. From Jerusalem to Hebron, from Hebron to Kerak, from Kerak to Aqaba, the country was as lawless and uncertain as any in the world. At Kerak itself, when a certain eminent English divine was captured by Bedawin, he produced a Stambul firman. 'Where is the Sultan's signature?' demanded a Shaykh. 'There,' said the Englishman ; whereupon the Bedawi spat on the place indicated with every expression of contempt.

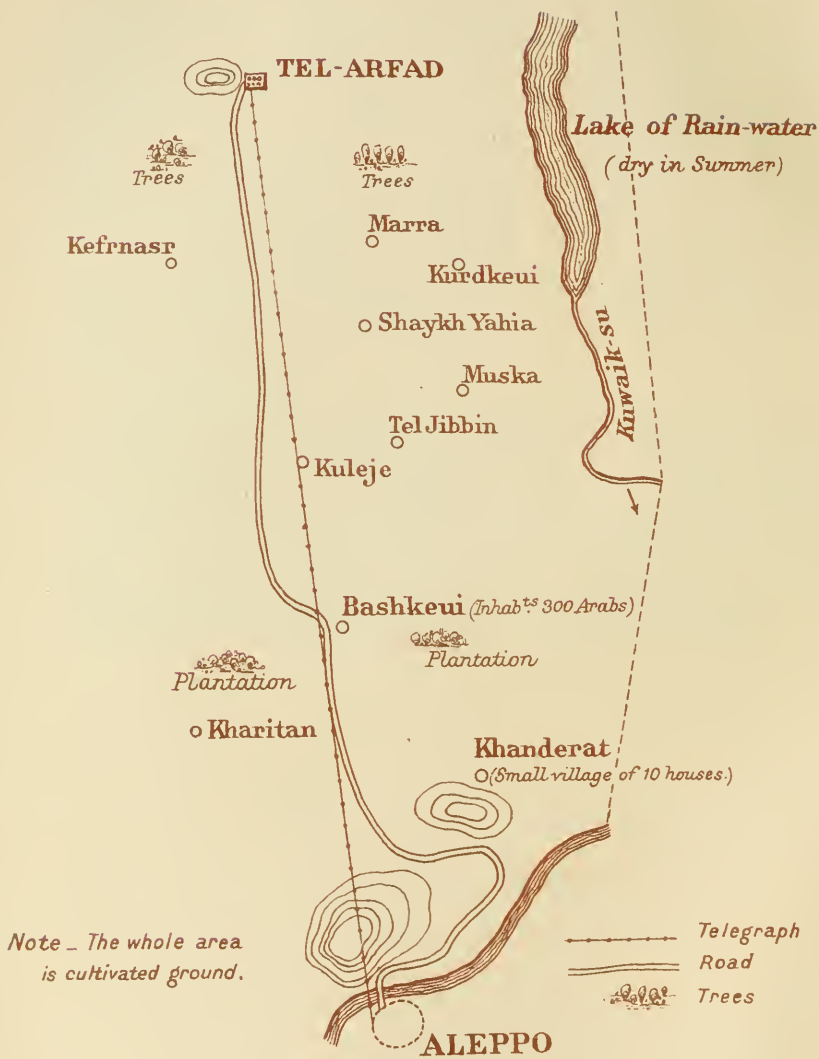
Annually the Haj pilgrimage was handed over to the tender mercies of the blustering Bedawin, annually it was more or less robbed, hustled, and sniped at from Damascus to Mecca ; sometimes attacked, at others only threatened ; then the wretched pilgrims gained merits for dangers which are now almost out of their reach.

The Petra district was once entirely closed to travellers for seven years ; now, indeed, matters are changed in a great degree. From Aleppo to Damascus the land is almost entirely free from Bedawin attack, and agriculture is pursued by the Fellaheen far into the country ; the Nomads act as shepherds for the townfolk, and the plundering of a caravan is unheard of ; railways extend from Damascus to Beyrut, Rayak to Hama, and Damascus to Ma'an. The Bedawin of Kerak are almost abject before the government, and in the town there is
a garrison

a garrison sufficient to punish any outrage. East of Jordan the Adwan are completely tamed, and the Zaptieh quarters himself in the black tent with as much impunity as in a village. The Hauran Plain is well governed, and improves, deriving considerable benefits from the railway communication. The Druses of the mountains have been subdued, at any rate for some time to come, and appear at length to be convinced that peace is better than hopeless war, while their conquerors appreciate their good sense and leave them alone as much as possible.

And the Turks have accomplished all this in spite of an impoverished exchequer, in spite of a steady demand for tax-money from Stambul, in spite of officials being months in arrears of salary, in spite of the army being unpaid, and in spite of the fact that Murray's Guide Book says that they are hated by every race and creed, and have not the physical force to govern the land.

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Scale - 4 Miles = 1 Inch



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Stanford's Geog. Estab. London.

CHAPTER VI

TO THE TAURUS

HAVING seen Mr. Smith and the caravan off to the Euphrates Valley, I mounted with Jacob and left Aleppo for the North. The first day's march brought me to Tel-Arfad, where in the absence of the cook we managed to burn a snipe, which formed a somewhat unpalatable meal. There is nothing of interest in the village, which is populated by Arab Fellaheen.

Tel-Arfad to Killis is a short march of five and a half hours, through country resembling that between Ma'aret and Aleppo, only possibly more cultivated and more fertile. A little before Killis one strikes the *chaussée** to Iskanderun; this is a fine piece of road making, and every credit should be given to the Valis of the province who constructed it on such slender means. The Vilayet of Aleppo is notoriously poor, and more than crippled by the amiable 'Russian loan' extortion. The road passes through four miles of splendid olive yards, which speak well for the richness of the soil.

On entering Killis I rode to the Kaimakam's konak, and unwittingly burst in upon the council, composed of the Kaimakam, the Mufti, the Director of Education &c.; but I was not permitted to retire, and had the pleasure

* *Chaussée* is the Turkish official designation for a made road.

of

of seeing municipal business in operation. A clerk read long reports at a great pace until interrupted by one of the councillors, whereupon a long but quiet discussion arose, invariably ending in a joke from the minister of education or the Kaimakam, which produced a hearty laugh from all but the clerk, who appeared somewhat inclined to have done—eventually I managed to leave, receiving the salutations of all the councillors. The town of Killis is important enough to be mentioned in the guide-book; its bazaars are large and the minarets of the mosques are slender and well built, being capped with stone peaks instead of the usual tin ones. The great mosque should on no account be missed. Its date is of the fifteenth century and it possesses a fine façade of six columns supporting pointed arches; four of these columns are granite monoliths, with fine bronze rings at the base and capital; their ornaments I should be inclined to give a very great age, as the moulding is either Byzantine or Roman in conception. The dome of the mosque is singularly beautiful and well proportioned.

Killis is one of the most polyglot towns in Turkey: the Arab forms a considerable portion of the population, while Kurdish, Turkish, and Armenian are freely spoken; consequently every other man is in some lingual difficulty with his neighbour, and the bazaars are a perfect babel. The new road is having a good effect, as the khans * are full of traffic, and fresh ones are being constructed; carriages and covered carts jingle through the town with a cheerful and prosperous sound.

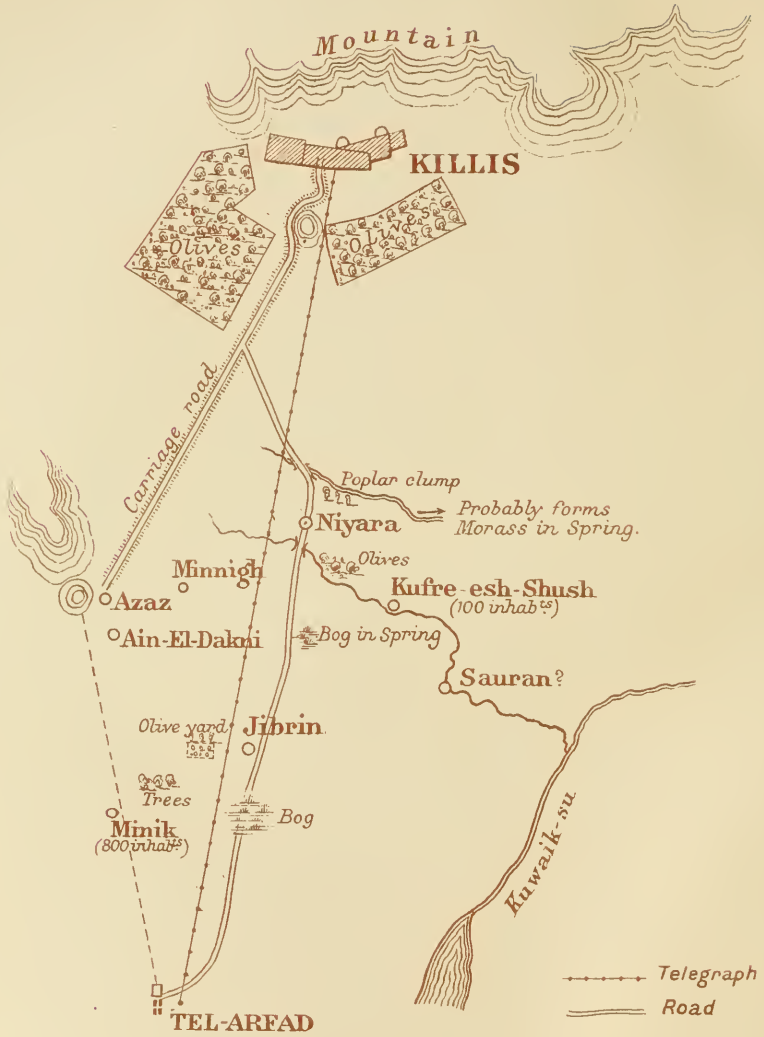
* The construction of khans is the most hopeful sign one can see in Turkey; it bespeaks energy on the part of individuals, available ready money, improved communication and increased trade, the four essentials to reform.

While



KILLIS.

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Scale - 4 Miles = 1 Inch.

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While walking through the bazaars I was met by the Shaykh of the Whirling Dervishes. He gave me a 'salaam-alaikum' which surprised me, and finding I knew a few words of Arabic, he led me into the college of his order, showed me the dancing place,* and treated me with great civility.

The Dervish Madrassi comprises some twenty-one members; these 'wicked and haughty fanatics' daily dispense rice, porridge and soup to the poor of all denominations.

I left Killis for Shaykhli the following morning, escorted by two Arab-speaking Zaptiehs. The road was excellent until we passed Karnabe, when we entered a series of kloofs, spruits, wadys, bogs and ravines, which made the journey as unpleasant as it was dangerous. The maps of this part of the country are absolutely unreliable, and only serve to confuse the mind. It is almost impossible to guide oneself by them in any way, and travellers would do well to remember this when in the district.† About two hours beyond Karnabe the great Boghaz Karim defile commences, and its wild beauty does much to make one forget the roughness of the road. Owing to my Zaptiehs showing themselves very suspicious of my movements, I was obliged to refrain from photographing this beautiful piece of scenery. The river runs noisily down the echoing ravine, while evergreen shrubs, holly, and olive trees cover the sides, which rise in some places almost perpendicularly. It is in such a

* Called by Moslems *Matra Zikker* *i.e.* the place of godly thought, because when the dervishes dance they are in a condition of holy ecstasy and contemplation.

† Supposing of course they do not make use of the beautiful, artistic and efficient one I have provided in this volume.

spot

spot as this that if one remembers some æsthetic drawing-room gush about nature and music, one feels disposed to laugh aloud—what blasphemy to speak of nature in a stuffy silk-hung den, reeking with fog and smoke and muffin steam.

On either side of the gulch the black tents of the Nomadic Kurds were visible; the blue smoke curling upward usually betrayed them before they were seen themselves, for their owners seem as anxious to conceal their dwellings as swallows or woodpeckers.

While riding round one of the corners of the Wady, I was surprised to see some ten or twelve Kurd ladies of all ages engaged in washing themselves, an operation so necessary that I willingly excused their indelicacy (for indeed they did not possess one stitch of clothing). However, they showed no surprise at us, and continued their ablutions quite unabashed.

Two more hours brought us to the hamlet of Essengeli, marked on the map with a note of interrogation—it certainly does exist, and is inhabited by some four hundred Turks. The headman stated that they had never been visited by a European in his memory,* or that of any other person in the village. I easily procured a fairly clean house, belonging to a notable whose reputation as a traveller is founded on the fact that he had been to Killis. My appetite for breakfast was by no means improved when I discovered that a part owner of the house was a leper.

It may interest some to know that instead of raising two stones to the graves, as most Moslems do, they put up a stick at either end and cover the grave with brushwood.

* A period not exceeding five years.

The



VIEW FROM ESSENGELL.

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Scale_ 4 Miles = 1 Inch



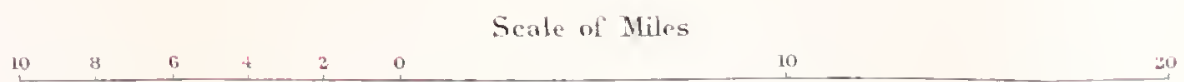
London: Bickers & Son.

Stanford's Geog^l Estab^l Lond

This Map is constructed from material supplied by the Trappist Monks at Shaykhli.



Red lines indicate roads



The road from Essengeli to Shaykhli leads through fine pine forest until the plain of Kara-Su is reached, where the rivers cause the whole land to be swampy and make riding unpleasant. We lunched with some wandering Kurds, who permitted themselves to be photographed. They appeared tame enough, and from all accounts are very good citizens; their tents are fine business-like erections, walled round the edges with stone, and upheld by poles symmetrically placed to support them.*

Nine and a half hours brought us to Shaykhli, the Trappist monastery, where I was accommodated by the monks. The Monastery was founded in 1882 after much Firman extracting, and has flourished considerably; there are at present ten monks and ten lay brothers, and the routine is precisely that of La Trappe, without any mitigation of its rigours—perpetual silence and perpetual abstinence being enjoined. The monks make excellent wines, both red and white, which should some day have a good market, although at present the sale is limited through lack of transport. Cultivation of the soil, and forestry are carried on by them, and it is noticeable that the surrounding Turkish and Christian peasantry have already taken some hints from the French Dervishes, as they call the Trappists. It is strange to find a French community in such a wild deserted spot as Shaykhli: far from every track, tucked away in a fold of the mountains, the recluses have found a peaceful resting place.

I remember once visiting a monastery of the same

* Unlike the Bedawin, who though they have never lived in houses have never learned to make or pitch a tent properly.

order

order at the beautiful Isles of Lérins, outside Cannes. As I was English, a monk, who was a fellow-countryman, was detailed from the community to show me round, and it astounded me that a man who had followed the severe discipline for years should be as full of merriment as a parish priest. While laughing with him one would suddenly look upon him with awe, remembering that it was his first conversation in his mother tongue for perhaps years.

Here it was the same. The Superior and such monks as one met were as easy in their manners as any layman who lived in the world, but with a rare look of contented cheerfulness. I slept under their hospitable roof, finding the vegetarian fare a pleasant change from corned beef and canned chicken, which, truth to tell, tastes excellent as a sample but palls on further acquaintance.

From Shaykhli I rode to Islahieh, a cheerful, well-built little village, which has been lately converted into a Kaimakamlik.* The resident official was a most enlightened man, who, though somewhat melancholic, nevertheless had ideas about his business, and had organised his little kingdom in a surprisingly short time.

Outside the village there stands a large ruined Turkish barrack, which the Zaptiehs glibly assigned to Ibrahim Pasha, but I subsequently learnt it was commenced and abandoned some thirty years ago by the present government. We slept the night in a hotel lately built in the village by an enterprising Moslem.

Islahieh was the first true Turkish town I reached on my journey, and the architecture was a noticeable change, for, whereas every Arab town shows a considerable

* Sub-district.

amount



NOMAD KURDS.

amount of masonry, and a surprising lack of woodwork, the Turks almost entirely confine themselves to building wooden huts and shanties of the flimsiest and most inflammable materials.

The following morning we rode to Bel-Punar, the winter quarters of the Dehlikanli tribesmen, who with the Jellikanli share the tracts of land in the vicinity; they work up towards Dumndum in the summer, but are in a kind of semi-nomadic stage, living in houses roofed with portable thatch screens, which they remove on migration.

I have never boasted as a lady-killer, or been honoured with that reputation, but I cannot conceal the fact that at Bel-Punar I left an impression on one which I flatter myself will not be easily obliterated. From the time of my arrival to the time of my departure, a maiden followed me uttering plaintive 'Mashallahs' and clasping her hands in a most passionate manner; her appearance I cannot bring myself to describe, but reproduce a sketch which may give some faint idea of her charms.

My host evidently was a friend of some Teutonic archæologist, for he sported a frock coat and a black waistcoat which showed a bagginess in the abdominal regions and was never intended to encase a Kurdish stomach. He produced from the recess of a leather pouch a much-thumbed postcard he had received from Berlin.

The Kurds are most hospitable, doing their utmost to make one comfortable; and notwithstanding that Mr. Lynch invariably alludes to them as 'the hook-nosed ruffian' or 'ruffians' it must be admitted that they are good hosts, and welcome one in a more friendly way than
many

many Bedawin, who, though profuse in their hospitality, occasionally give it in a take-it-or-be-damned manner, which is not at all times pleasant.

It is strange to find people in the stage of transition through which all races must have passed, the stage when houses are just invented, and the wandering instinct still survives. In the Dehlikanli dwellings many traces of the tent remain: the walls are of permanent stone cemented with mud, but the thatched roofs are supported on poles and the rooms are only partitioned off with rough rush screens; there is no chimney but the door, and the floor is merely the earth unplastered and unlevelled.

The next day we rode to El Yughlu, a Turkish village of little interest, and it is at such a place one regrets the noisiness and vivacity of Arabs. The Turk is a very good soul but excessively simple, while in an Arab village one's stay is always enlivened by battles and arguments crammed with every figure of rhetoric. Beyond broad practical jokes,* the Turks possess no sense of humour, while with Arabs it amounts to a malady, and it is for this reason I think they are so sensible to ridicule. In speech the Turks are expressionless, quiet and laconic, using few gestures or similes; but with Arabs it is almost possible to follow an argument while not comprehending a word of the language.

I have heard a person, who could speak with authority, state there could never be an amalgamation between Turks and Arabs, and I think there is no doubt this is true. A Turk will understand an Englishman's character much sooner than he will an Arab's; the latter

* See Kara Kõz.



THE KURDISH MAIDEN.

is so subtle in his reasoning, so quick-witted, so argumentative and so great a master of language that he leaves the stolid Osmanli amazed and dazed, comprehending nothing. The Turk is not, truth to tell, very brilliant as a rule, though very apt in assuming Western cultivation. This may sound extraordinary but is nevertheless true so far as my experience carries me. Every Turk I have met who has dwelt for a considerable period in any European country, although never losing his patriotism and deep love for his land, has become in manners, thoughts and habits an Englishman, a German or Frenchman. This leads one almost to suppose that Turks might be Europeanised by an educational process without any prejudicial result, for at present they have every quality of a ruling race except initiative, which is an essentially European quality. Their ardent patriotism is their only incentive; and their intelligence is scarcely sufficient to show them that serving their country as soldiers is not the only duty of citizens.

There are few Turks who would not lay down their lives for their country, there are fewer who would save it from internal decay; notwithstanding this, however, there are many able and great men in Turkish official circles, but they are paralysed in action by the limited field open to them, and by want of funds and lack of communication.

A Kaimakam may improve his Sanjak, a Vali his Vilayet; more than this it is impossible for one individual to do. A Colonel may bring his regiment to a pitch of efficiency, but he cannot organise the War Office, and so it is in Turkey; for while there is no way open for an individual to push forward reforms beyond a small area, there is no party in power following any definite scheme

of reorganisation. If there were five Valis acting in concert for the mutual improvement of their respective Vilayets, the whole condition of Turkey would be altered in a very short space of time ; but so long as matters remain in the present condition it would be Utopian to expect such a combination.

It has been already proved that for the present a constitutional government is not the one thing necessary in Turkey, and this reason is not far to seek. If there were a Chamber of Deputies at Constantinople the parties would not be Liberal and Conservative, Moderate and Progressive, Republican and Democrat, but Christian and Moslem, with Imams bellowing texts from the Koran as canvassers, and Armenians fudging the ballot-box ; Turkey would not be far off a series of revolutions and massacres such as would appal the world. But if parliamentary government is out of the question, an arrangement by which officials could be induced to combine for the good of the country is possibly less difficult.*

The ride from El Yughlu to Marash is a most unpleasant one in winter, leading through a desolate morass of sedges and weeds. My first view of Marash was obscured by a dense fog, which, like the early morning gun in *The Critic*, saves a description, already ably performed by Earl Percy in his 'Highlands of Asiatic Turkey.'

I was conducted through the bazaars of the town towards the Franciscan Convent, and had not proceeded any distance before an oily voice at my elbow cried

* The arrangement in question is that of good and regularly paid officials. The average Turk is as honest as the average Englishman when he receives his pay—and as dishonest when he does not.

'Hallow !



MARASH.



MARASH.

‘Hallow! good after-nûn, mai deah old fallow, do yew spik English, from ware are yew came?’* a question I may have answered impatiently, for the gentleman who addressed it to me retired somewhat hurriedly. This incident served to remind me that I was in Armenian lands.

‘Odysseus’ well chose the motto ‘’Tis the most distressful country that ever yet was seen’ for his admirable essay on Armenia in ‘Turkey in Europe’; he might even have quoted the Dean of St. Patrick’s on the subject of the distressful country, ‘A race of slaves oppressed, accursed, who truckle most when treated worst.’ At the Franciscan Convent I was welcomed effusively and instantly provided with a lodging; the monks were full of information, not in the least prejudiced, and did all that was possible to make one’s stay pleasant and instructive. They had all dwelt long enough in the country to be completely impartial, which adds greatly to the pleasure and profit of conversation.

While I was staying at the Monastery the Armenian Catholic Bishop called. There was a fine, open look in his eye, a hoarseness in his voice, and a good-natured manner, which entirely baffled me. ‘Was this an Armenian?’ I asked. ‘No,’ came the answer, with a jolly Falstaffian chuckle—‘I am a Kurd from Persia.’

One afternoon the commandant, Assad Bey, called upon me, and proved an interesting acquaintance. He had served in Egypt, where he knew Lord Kitchener as a subaltern, for whom he expressed a great esteem: ‘Un officier très capable, très comme il faut et très réservé’; he also knew several British officers, including

* I have endeavoured to reproduce the peculiar ‘slithy-tovish,’ soft tone of insolence of the Demnition-Product.

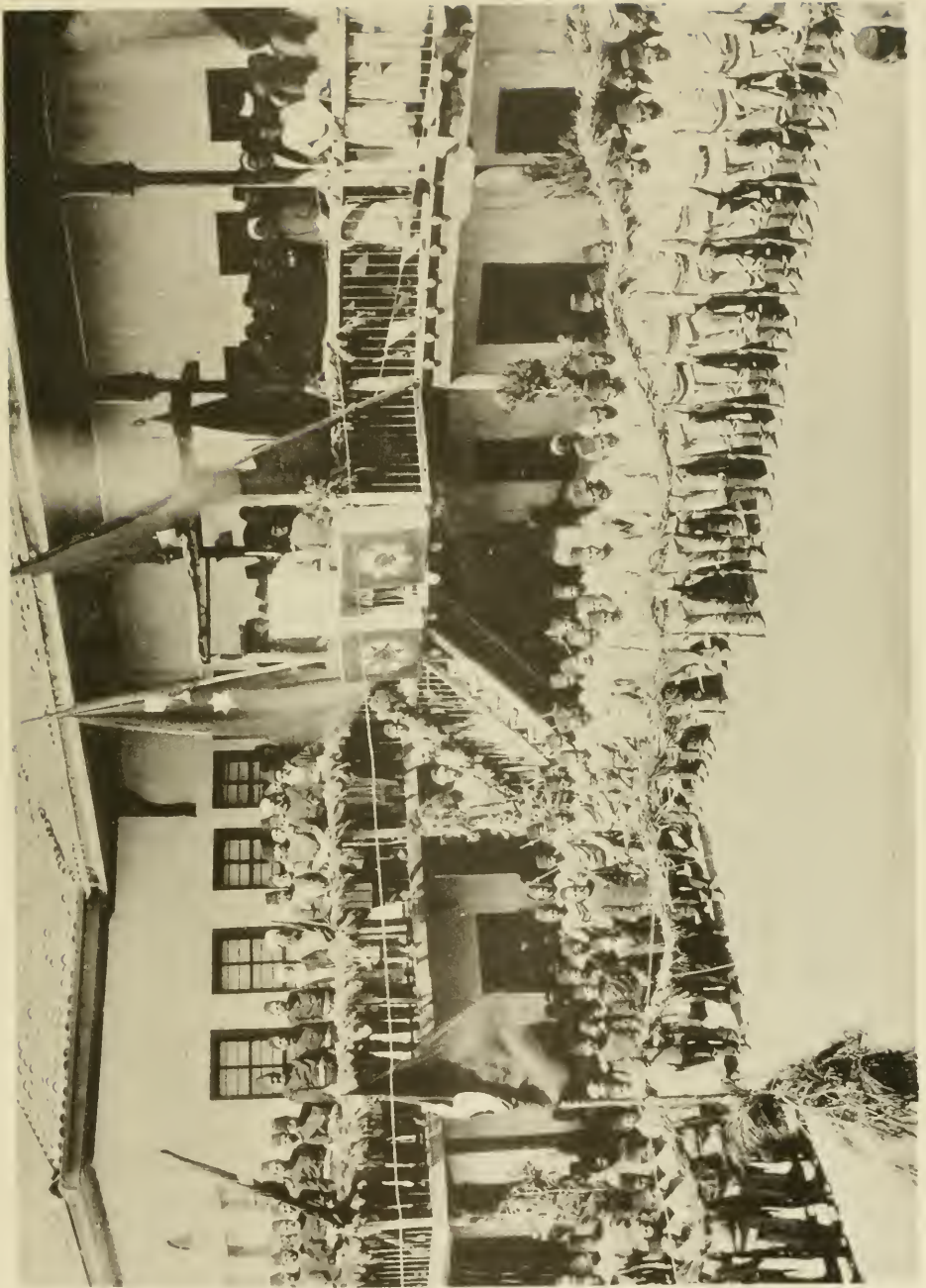
Gordon, Valentine Baker, and General Campbell—the latter he served with at Kars.

One day the secretary of the Mutessarif gave me permission to visit the Bostange Mosque; it is in a ruinous condition but contains some fine tiles, which, however, had to be washed before one could judge of their beauty. Some are a beautiful study in greens, merging from yellowish into a very striking emerald.

The French Government has established a Consulate at Marash.

If France has a Consul there, why should not England? There is no answer to that question, except that the Foreign Office will not trouble to send one; there might be another insurrection, and it is of the utmost importance that England should be correctly informed of what is actually taking place; besides which, it is not expedient that British prestige should be left out to grass in a district where another Power has a representative, particularly so close to the seaboard as the Sanjak of Marash.

If any budding British Consuls happen to read this, it would be well for them to remember that, no matter what their feelings may be, it would be much wiser to maintain the best relations possible with officials, taking every opportunity to entertain them, for if the Consul in a district knows the various functionaries personally and intimately, he will be able to act with much more effect in times of crisis; besides, being well acquainted with the character and nature of the men he has to deal with, his influence will be stronger. For strange as it may appear Turks will be much more ready to act on the advice of one whom they deem their friend than on that of a person whom they imagine to be biassed against them and in sympathy with their enemies.



GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AT MARASH.

CHAPTER VII

TO ZEITUN CITY

THE longer one stays in the Taurus, the more one pines for some district where the population is not composed solely of Osmanlis and Armenians. It is too depressing to find a country inhabited solely by dullards and sneaks: the dullards so dull that if the angel Gabriel walked into one of their villages trumpet in hand and announced that the end of the world had taken place three weeks previously, the only answer he would receive would be 'Evvét Effendim.' The sneaks are so cowed that they are hardly noticeable.

In every other part of Turkey, life is lightened by the presence of some other race, Kurds, Circassians, Arabs, &c. In the company of these, Turks* are cheerful and amusing, their character shows itself, and one can judge them better; but when their only neighbours are sworn enemies, the Armenians living in deadly and hopeless fear of them, they become so sulky and empty-headed that one grows hysterical with impatience.

One curious point about Turks is the difficulty they appear to experience in pronouncing the consonants of

* *Since writing the above I have travelled in Anatolia, where the Turks live alone. I found them the most delightful people I have ever met, besides being very intelligent.*

proper

proper names; there is nothing so exasperating as extracting the names of villages from the Zaptiehs or inhabitants.

Q. What is that village over there?

A. Awarot-loo-oj.

Q. What?

A. Awany ouroo loo-oj-oh!

Q. What?

A. Awarngourouloo-oh-oh!

Q. What?

A. Awarninginjooloroh oh la ho!

Q. Now one syllable at a time while I write it down.

A. Ha-jin-ogh-loo.

Q. Hajin Oghloo?

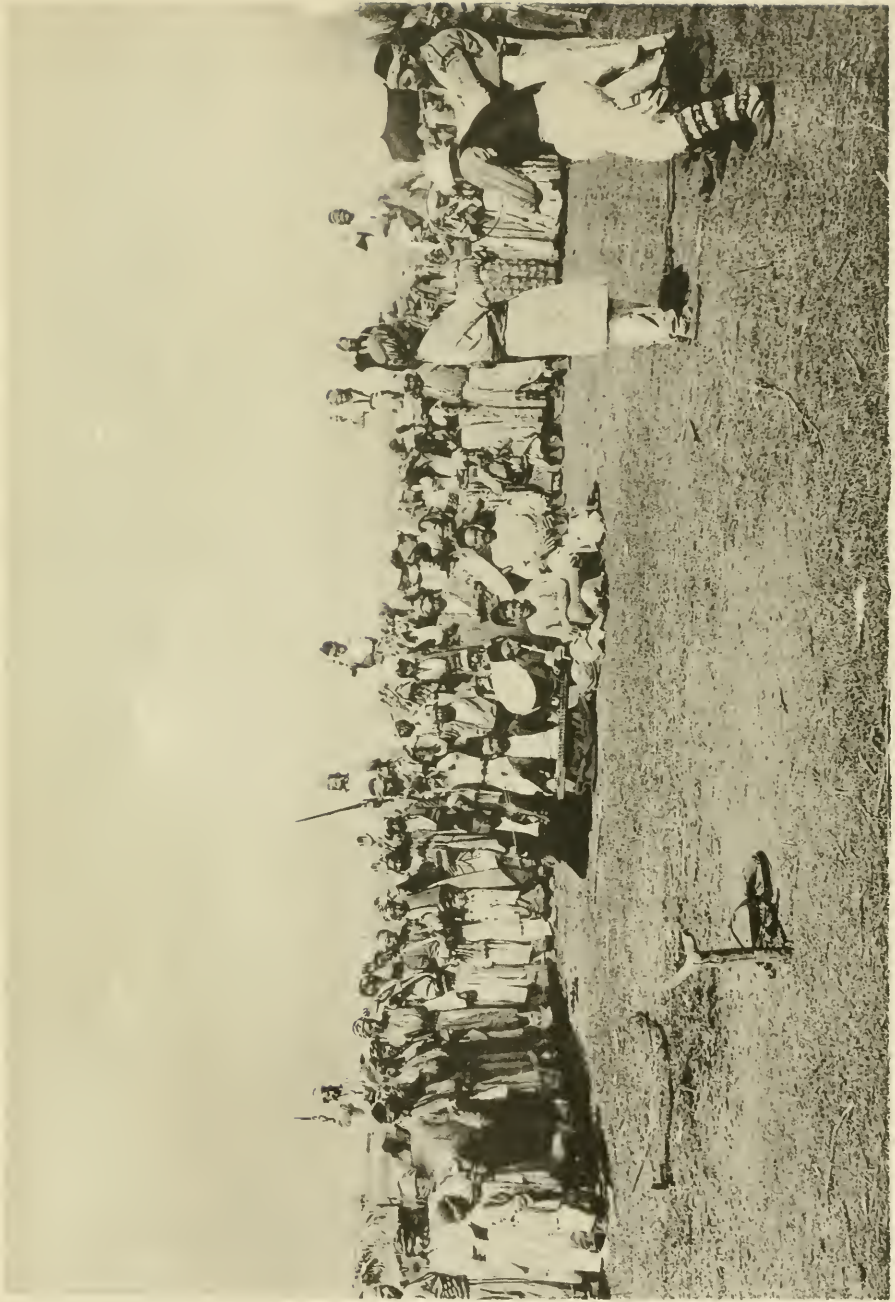
A. Yes.

They suffer the same disadvantage in either writing or pronouncing English proper names.

After five days' stay we left Marash for Zeitun, stopping the first night at Batsh Khan.

The scenery between Marash and Zeitun is of the 'terribly' impressive order in winter, the ground bare, the trees leafless, and the mountains shining with frosted snow; stunted oak, swart dwarfish pines and an occasional noble cedar form the whole desolate vegetation. This extends over immense vistas of rocky mountain land, and although not beautiful has an effect which pleases more than one would expect.

At Paj the bridge which spans the river is guarded by a small detachment of soldiers, whose general aspect of forlornness and boredom reminded me painfully of the many weary months spent in a similar position in South Africa. They were well guarded by some
fine



KURD FEAST NEAR MARASH.

fine dogs, who bayed loudly on the approach of any strangers.

On my arrival at Zeitun I was received with great kindness and ceremony by the Commandant of the Castle, who, besides being a very efficient soldier, was a pleasant host. I was led up to his sitting-room, where we discussed every topic under the sun—the South African war, Crete, German railways, etc. While the conversation was in progress three Orderly men marched in, the first bearing an immense caldron of soup, the second a hillock of rice and meat, and the third a basket of loaves. These were brought before the Commandant, who proceeded to taste them, and proffered them for my inspection. I can certainly answer for the rations being of ‘sufficient quantity and proper quality’ on that day, the bread being especially excellent, though I am afraid my friend Thomas would have turned up his nose at it.

I subsequently learned that the Commandant was a very remarkable man. He took over the command three years ago, apparently a very unassuming, dignified individual, by no means energetic. The Circassians who lived in the vicinity, and the more thievish of the Zeitunlis, thought the moment favourable for a little cattle-lifting and caravan plundering; this venture was by no means a success, for lo! the thieves were laid speedily by the heels, and instead of going to the country gaol, where they usually bought their liberty, the quiet grey-bearded colonel ordered them to be flogged. This was a most unpleasant surprise, for hitherto Circassians had been somewhat favoured, and thefts on their part were treated as little childish vagaries,
owing

owing to high spirits ; but in Takhsin Bey they met a master both severe and just. He pointed out to them that in gaol they wasted their own time and devoured the food of the State, while a flogging did them no harm and cost nothing. Fearful threats of revolution and massacre were muttered by these gentlemen as they returned home rubbing their aching backs ; but when their friends saw those portions of their anatomy which had been subjected to the lash, they perceived that the cultivation of their lands and the pursuits of peace were more profitable than the amusing but dangerous speculations I have referred to.

The result of this excellent policy has been to secure for the district of Zeitun a tranquillity hitherto unknown, which shows that a just and stern government is all that is required to reduce the most turbulent and truculent orientals to order.

The Commandant is wonderfully popular with all the surrounding people, who are, for the first time in their knowledge, reaping the benefit of a sure and straight-forward rule. He favours no one and is beloved by all ; the battalions under his command are well clothed, smart, and efficient ; the officers are kept up to the mark ; and, while very respectful to their chief, are on excellent terms with him and loud in his praises. It is providential that such a competent officer has been given the command, as Zeitun has always been a centre of disaffection and unrest.

The last insurrection was an excellent demonstration of what a pass an incapable officer may bring about, and serves as an illustration of the methods of the revolutionists. The following is as accurate a history as I could gather from various sources on the spot.

Some



MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT AND GARRISON AT ZEITUN.

Some Revolutionary Society, not being satisfied with the general state of affairs in Turkey and scenting collections and relief funds in the future, judged it expedient in the year of grace 1895 to despatch certain emissaries to Armenia. On the warlike population of Zeitun they pinned their hopes of raising a semi-successful revolution, and six of their boldest agents were accorded to that district. What the end of the revolution would be these desperadoes recked little, so long as the attention of Europe was drawn to their cause and their collection-boxes. These individuals, however, found their people by no means ripe for insurrection, and their influence was but small. True, there were certain persons ready to talk sentimentally and foolishly, possibly treasonably, but in no way prepared to rise actually in arms. However, an opportunity of embroiling their countrymen unexpectedly presented itself, by taking advantage of which they succeeded in forcing the hand of the Government.

It happened that a number of Furnus and Zeitunli Armenians were in the habit of going to Adana for the purpose of earning money as farmers and handicraftsmen; for some reason, the Government at that time issued an order that all strangers should return to their own towns and districts. The Furnus and Zeitunli Armenians were enraged at this action, saying that they were not permitted by the Padishah to earn sufficient to pay their taxes, which they considered exorbitant; consequently they were foolish enough to pillage some Turkomans on their way home.

The Turkomans addressed themselves in complaint to the Mutessarif of Marash, who decided to investigate the
the

the affair by a commission consisting of a Turkish Bimbashi (field officer) and an Armenian resident, escorted by five Zaptiehs. The agents saw in this move a chance of bringing matters to a crisis, and either attacked, or persuaded the villagers to attack, the commission, killing the Bimbashi and three of the guard, and carrying off the Christian commissioner with them. The surrounding Armenians, knowing themselves to have been originally in the wrong, and seeing themselves hopelessly compromised, accepted the inevitable and joined the revolutionaries.

The Government of Marash, having been informed of this affair, despatched a company of infantry to reinforce the garrison at Bertiz. The rebel leaders and their followers intercepted this party, and an undecided action resulted, owing to the assistance given by the Moslems of Bertiz. The next day the revolutionists decided to attack the garrison at Zeitun in order to force that town (whose inhabitants had but little inclination) to join a jihad against the Osmanli. After a brief resistance the Castle surrendered, through the incapacity of its besotted commander.

Having gained a victory of some importance, the Armenian force proceeded to the Kurtul district, where they plundered and sacked several Turkish villages, eventually seizing Anderim, where they burnt the konak. On their way back to Zeitun they committed some most disgraceful murders at Chukarhissar* in commemoration of the decease of the late Armenian kingdom, which was finally ended at that place.

* I was told some ghastly details, but I doubt the veracity of them, as they were related to me by a town Armenian, who recounted them with honest pride.

After



BRIDGE ON THE ROAD TO ZEITUN.

After this anarchy supervened. The Moslems and Kurds, infuriated by exaggerated reports, lusting for treasure of the wealthy but feeble bazaar Armenians, massacred and overwhelmed them at Marash and elsewhere. The Turkish Government, now thoroughly alarmed, had concentrated two divisions, one at Marash, under Ferik Pasha, who showed an extraordinary incapacity during the massacre; the other under a reliable soldier, Ali Pasha, at Adana. The latter with considerable promptitude swept forward towards Zeitun, driving before him the Armenian population, and although certain 'outrages'* were committed by his troops during the march, I do not think that he is in any way to blame for the conduct of the campaign. It would have been a grave military fault to have left a hostile population in his rear; and the Armenians he called upon to surrender were already too overcome by panic to accept terms, and either awaited destruction in their villages, resisting to the last, or fled to the town of Zeitun, where the revolutionary agents, in order to maintain their prestige, were cramming the population with absurd falsehoods of a British relief column landed at Alexandretta.

One of them even sent out messengers, who returned with hopeful letters which he himself had written. But this impostor and his colleagues were not satisfied with the general disloyalty of the inhabitants, and felt that some deed should be committed which would absolutely debar the people from any hope of mercy from the Government. Accordingly, they assembled the

* These would not be so called if committed by any other troops than those of the Turkish Army.

refugees

refugees driven in by Ali Pasha, and repaired with them to the konak, where the imprisoned garrison was quartered, and proceeded to murder them with bestial cruelty. It must be remembered that this piece of villainy can in no way be imputed to the population of Zeitun, but to the disgraceful ruffianism of the revolutionaries and the crazy fanaticism of the exasperated and hopeless villagers. It must also be recorded to the credit of the Zeitunlis themselves that after this abominable butchery several crept into the yard and rescued some seventy soldiers who survived beneath the corpses of their comrades ; fifty-seven of these were handed over at the end of the war. It is a relief to find in all these bloody tales of Armenia such noble deeds of kindness on the part of Christians to Moslems, and Moslems to Christians, and that nearly every massacre can bring similar cases to light.

After that foolish slaughter the revolutionary agents may have plumed themselves on a striking piece of policy. Zeitun was compromised beyond recall, and the town prepared to withstand the siege to the last ; but here the chapter of Zeitun closes, for within three weeks Edhem Pasha, a noble example of what a cultivated Turk can be, arrived on the scene, and with the assistance of the European Consuls concluded an honourable peace with the town ; containing, alas ! a clause by which the miserable causes of all this unhappiness and bloodshed were allowed to return unmolested to Europe, where they probably eke out an existence as distinguished as their military adventures.

It would appear a grave fault on the part of the
Powers



ZEITUN CITY.

Powers to have allowed the revolutionary agents to escape, for had these wretched bungling intriguers been hanged, as they richly deserved, it would have strengthened the hand of the Ambassadors at Constantinople. It would also have completely dashed the hopes of the Armenian secret societies, who, no longer misled by the sentimental gush of certain journals, would have perceived once and for all that, though the Powers were prepared to stop massacres, they were in no way ready to assist those who wantonly provoked them for their own ends.

As to how far the Turks were in the wrong, who can judge? They have a side which should be considered, as it is impossible for them to allow a revolution to be impending in the heart of their country when threatening enemies appear on every frontier. They have their own homes to consider, and if they had allowed the revolutionaries to continue their intrigues, there is little doubt that a formidable insurrection would have broken out whenever the moment was favourable. Also it must be borne in mind that in the event of an Armenian rebellion it was the intention of the conspirators to have perpetrated similar massacres; and while no excuse can be made for the conduct of the Turks in slaughtering Armenians, it should be remembered that massacre is still a recognised method of policy throughout the East, and until lately in the West. Why, indeed, should one say lately, when the behaviour of the allied troops at Pekin is a matter of to-day?

The necessary killing in India after the Mutiny, although carried out more formally, was just as merciless; and from all one can gather the gentle Skobelev pacified

pacified Central Asia much as the Turks aborted the Armenian revolution.

It is also a fact that the Armenians have an extraordinary habit of running into danger without possessing the courage to face it, and the revolutionists from abroad were always prepared to provoke a massacre in order to induce the Powers to assist them. I have good reason to know that these wretches actually schemed to murder American missionaries, hoping America would declare war on the supposition that the Turks were the criminals. Therefore, with such sordid intrigue and ruthless policy running side by side, it is hard to judge. I have known one man of Turcophil views eventually reject his opinions in horror ; again, many others almost fanatically in favour of the Armenians, became so disgusted by the baseness of their nature as to abandon them with satisfaction to their fate.

Personally I think that the public moral sense of Europeans is practically wanting in orientals, and unless this is assumed one cannot attempt to comprehend them ; meaning that an oriental is capable of all personal goodness, such as acts of personal friendliness, personal devotion, personal self-sacrifice, and brotherly love to those of his own creed—such virtue as is exemplified in the highest type of pro-Boer ; * mercy to one's enemies and mercy in public matters are absolutely lacking. Whether this is a defect, and, if it is a defect, whether it can be remedied by education, or whether it is caused by race or religion, are questions which must be left to philosophers and men of science.

In the evening I took a turn round the Castle walls,

* I am not one myself.

and



OFFICERS OF THE GARRISON, ZEITUN.



WOMAN OF ZEITUN.

and had the satisfaction of seeing a splendid sunset over the valley, the river winding like a silver ribbon down the immense avenue of snow until it was lost in a blue haze, above which the huge tumbled peaks stood silhouetted against a golden, cloudless sky.

The next morning I visited the city of Zeitun, and I think I never saw or smelt a more squalid, filthy, disgusting sink; although inured to the ten thousand putrescent odours of the East, I was miserably defeated at Zeitun; so appalling was the stench that I was unable to stay in the town for more than fifteen minutes, therefore I cannot give any description of its buildings, parks, squares, and palaces. The inhabitants, some eight thousand in number, deserve mention on account of their courage, in which they happily differ from the rest of their brethren. They once had the reputation of being fine brigands, but that side of their character seems to have evaporated.

I was able to get on easy terms with one Zeitunli, and he was a Zaptieh in the Government service. His tale was as follows:—

‘Seven times have I fought the Turks, and now I am in their service to keep the peace; I have killed many in war—so many I pray God will forgive me! And the Turks killed many of us—our women, never! Never did we touch any of theirs, or they any of ours; but for men there was no quarter, either for us or for them. But what care I? In battle I forget where I am, and kill and kill, and may the Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me, whether I die in bed or in battle!’

He was as unlike the town Armenian as it is possible for any man to be: six feet two inches high, broad in proportion

proportion, with merry, twinkling eyes, which reminded me so forcibly of certain islanders I have met in the British Army, that I could not but think of one private who had been a noted Fenian, and on being asked what his political opinions were, retorted, 'As long as I've this * red coat on I'm for the Queen, God bless her! an' when I haven't—well—' (with an irresistible smile), 'begod I don't know what I am!'

At present everything appears very quiet, and there need be no reason to expect further troubles, unless the garrison is lessened or the Commandant superseded by a less competent one, such as the colonel who surrendered during the last insurrection.

At Zeitun I attained the rank of a Brigadier General; sentries presented arms with hoarse cries wherever I passed, soldiers shuffled uneasily if I looked at them, and a day-and-night sentry was placed over my luggage. However, an Arab sergeant did not approve of this, and indulged in the following soliloquy towards the world in general while looking at my luggage; and the following dialogue ensued between him and my servant:

JACOB AND THE DISCONTENTED SERGEANT.

Sergeant: 'Ha! ha! many salaams, many compliments, for a stranger who travels in a strange land Who pays for this? Himself? Nay, his Government! Who would travel in this accursed frost-bitten country in winter unless to seek out secrets? He learns the road; he is a sure guide for invading armies. The English are coming, Mashallah! They make maps of the roads ere they strike,† and we, forsooth, must salaam

* I find it impossible to render phonetically the subtle dental th.

† Indeed Mashallah! and again Mashallah!!

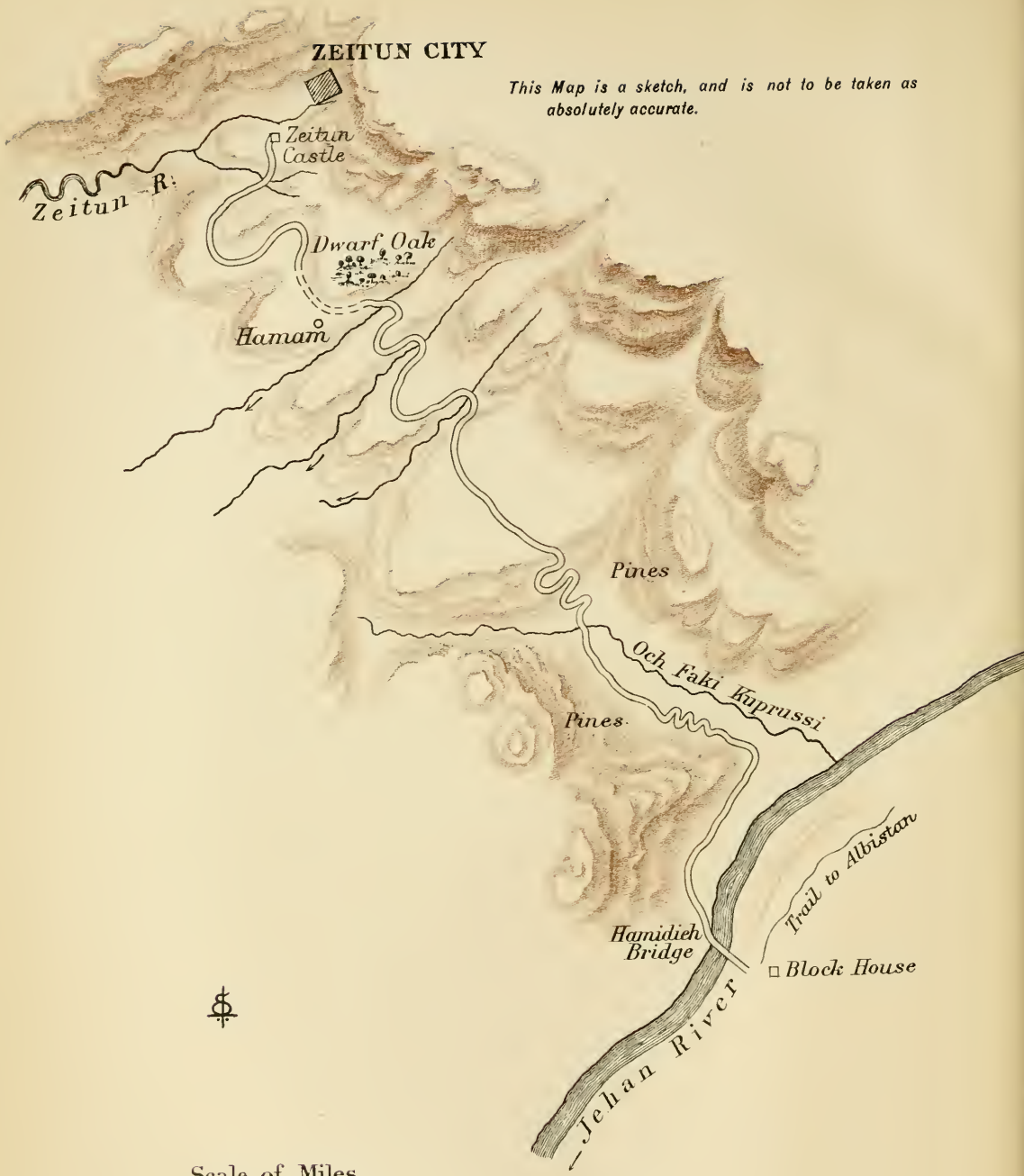
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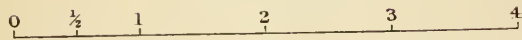
BATTERY OVERLOOKING ZEITUN CITY.

ZEITUN CITY

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Scale of Miles



London: Bickers & Son.

Stanford's Geog. Estab. London.

and give assistance. It was not so under Sultan Abdul Aziz!' *

Jacob : 'What say you, O brave one?'

Sergeant : 'I say what I say! a word—who pays for thee and for this stuff? List to his answer, men!'

Jacob : 'Who pays me?—my master Wallahi! a fool's question!'

Sergeant : 'He pays thee perchance, but who pays him?'

Jacob : 'God hath granted him money, which I Alhamdulillah, share! No one payeth him.'

Sergeant : 'Ah! that is thy tale; mine is different. I say he cometh here to work as a scout, a forerunner a path-finder, and I say his Government payeth him!'

Jacob : 'And I say thou art a windy fool!'

Sergeant : 'I a fool!'

Jacob : 'Truly a fool, son of a fool, and a father of witless fools!'

Sergeant : 'You are bold, my fair youth!'

Jacob : 'Yes, I am bold!'

Sergeant : 'I am a soldier of Abdul Hamid; would you have me tell these Moslems that the soldiers of the Sultan are fools?'

Jacob : 'Would you have me tell the Bimbashi how much weight you gave me as seventeen rottals of barley this morning?' (*Collapse of the Sergeant.*)

Sportsmen who read this book should note that splendid ibex, lynx, panthers and partridges are to be obtained near Zeitun, while the route from Ekbes to Marash is stocked with boar, teal, snipe, wild duck, and panthers in great quantity.

* Sultan Aziz is dragged in, in and out of season, to compare with the present régime.

CHAPTER VIII

TO ALBISTAN

AS the direct track to Albistan was blocked with snow we were obliged to make a détour via the Kussuk Pass Bridge, and it is certainly the more interesting road. About ten minutes after repassing the Hamidieh Bridge one enters the pass named El Kussuk, where the road becomes rocky and in places absolutely terrifying. The scenery is stupendous, the defile itself being one of the most beautiful in Asia Minor. It is impossible to describe its beauties to one who has not seen it; and to one who has description would fall short of his knowledge. What does it avail to say that the mountains are riven asunder, as by giant hands! that the cliffs hang over on either side as though trembling to fall! that the jade-green river rushes roaring down the cañon! that frozen waterfalls spout out on either side, rigid as the frost has nipped them! that the towering mountains hide the sun at two o'clock!—what does it avail to say these things to one who has not seen them! Scenery, like music, cannot be depicted in words; and but a vague shadow of the real can be put before the reader. It is in the face of such a magnificent display of nature that man feels his own insignificance—only a little wrinkle in a little earth, and we are overwhelmed



THE KUSSUK PASS.

whelmed. I defy a dowager, a Guards subaltern of ten days' service, a millionaire who has been knighted, or even a Hughligan to stand in the Kussuk without admitting their affairs to be little, little things and themselves pitiful little people. One thinks of Gulliver's remark: 'And I must admit, had I seen at that moment some English lords and ladies dressed in their birthday clothes, acting their various parts, I should have been strongly tempted to laugh.'

On the way we met some men who appeared a little different from ordinary Moslem peasants; they turned out to be Shiah, named Alawieh, who, as the Zaptieh bitterly remarked—'calling themselves Moslems, in reality are but accursed Persian mules.' We also came across one of those pathetic incidents so common on Turkish highways. A poor old peasant, overcome by fatigue, lay helpless on his back, hardly able to move; had he lain there till midnight he must have perished of exposure, as hundreds do annually in Asia Minor. We gave him cigarettes, and as soon as some muleteers passed we persuaded them to give him a lift to the block-house at Hamidieh Bridge.

We halted that night at Balkeui, a clean Turkish village of about two hundred inhabitants, five hours distance from Hamidieh Bridge. It is a pleasing sign of the times in these parts that about ten Armenians from Marash and Zeitun were staying in the village, and appeared on very excellent and equal terms with the Turks.

The next morning at about eight o'clock we set out for Ambararasi, Halil (the groom) satirically remarking that he hoped we would find Peris there, as we were mounting

so near heaven. About two hours after leaving Balkeui, the barometer pointed with a fairly accurate finger to a rise of some fifteen hundred feet; the cold became intense, and the road appalling; a premature thaw had induced a small rivulet to run down the mule track, a sharp frost had arrested its course, and in consequence I found myself head downwards in a snowdrift, my legs, I presume, waving gracefully in the air. I heard my horse scramble to his feet, and on being extricated I discovered him picking his way carefully among some bushes; a shrill appeal to the Prophet announced that Halil had suffered my fate. A deep and voluminous curse upon the respective religions, wives, fathers, mothers and graves, of snows, mountains, rivers, and ice showed that Jacob had followed suit.

Then commenced one of the most unpleasant and dangerous rides, or rather wrestles, I can call to mind. Rotten snow, frozen mud, and thawed, frozen, rethawing ice formed the metalling of a road in places eleven inches wide, nearly always flanked by a roaring torrent or a sharp declivity. Our spirits declined as we saw the apparently unending series of mountains to be crossed, while a cold and piercing wind, carrying with it occasional snow flakes, in no way served to revive them.

At lunch I thought it politic to issue whisky to the whole party. Halil the Moslem* partook of it, he

* As a pick-me-up for Orientals I can strongly recommend the following mixture :—

3	tablespoonsful	of Worcester sauce
1	tablespoonful	of whisky
$\frac{1}{2}$	„	„ aqua pura.

I tried a similar beverage on Basutos in South Africa with astonishing results.

said



NEAR AMBARDARASI.

said, merely medicinally ; Jacob and Michael, although usually teetotallers, admitted, ' Il vaut quelquefois.' The Arab Zaptieh alone refused with scorn the proffered liquor, and retired with some haughtiness behind a tree, where he consumed his lunch alone. On returning from this collation he showed a cheerfulness of manner, coupled with a brilliance of eye, that I could by no means understand, until, as he was explaining to the world at large that I was the noblest Bey Effendi he had ever served, and for whom he was prepared to die in the snow or on the battlefield, the air in his vicinity became magically perfumed with aniseed. I think the quantity of alcohol in the liquor made of that substance equals ninety per cent.

We plodded on after lunch much as before, save that as the snow grew thicker, the 'going' became less dangerous, and we reached Ambardarasi at about four o'clock. The village is inhabited by Kurmanji Shiah named Sinnaminli, who appear to have nothing very remarkable about them save that their beards are of extraordinary length and their children are very beautiful. I saw a little girl of about eight years of age with true auburn hair hanging down to her heels in a thick plait.

On my arrival the master of the house, in order to show his hospitality, attempted to take off my boots. I could not persuade him to desist, and a fruitless struggle ensued between the worthy gentleman and a tightly laced shooting boot encased in spat putties, and adorned with a patent fastening jack spur ; having torn his thumb with the rowel and broken his nails with the buckle, a contrivance he in no way comprehended, he retired, baffled,

to

to the corner, where he stared at my feet with a puzzled and pained expression, only relieved when the luggage had to be unpacked, when, to his great content, he succeeded in making himself useful.

The next day was a repetition of the preceding one, snow, ice, frost, and bright sun necessitating blue spectacles ; although only a distance of fifteen miles had to be covered eight hours were taken to achieve them. Jacob was suffering from a mysterious malady known as a ' colpe de vent dans l'estomac,'* and his temper was by no means improved by the disease. While discussing with him what I should give him to cure it, he gave me the following useful medical information.

ON MEDICINE.

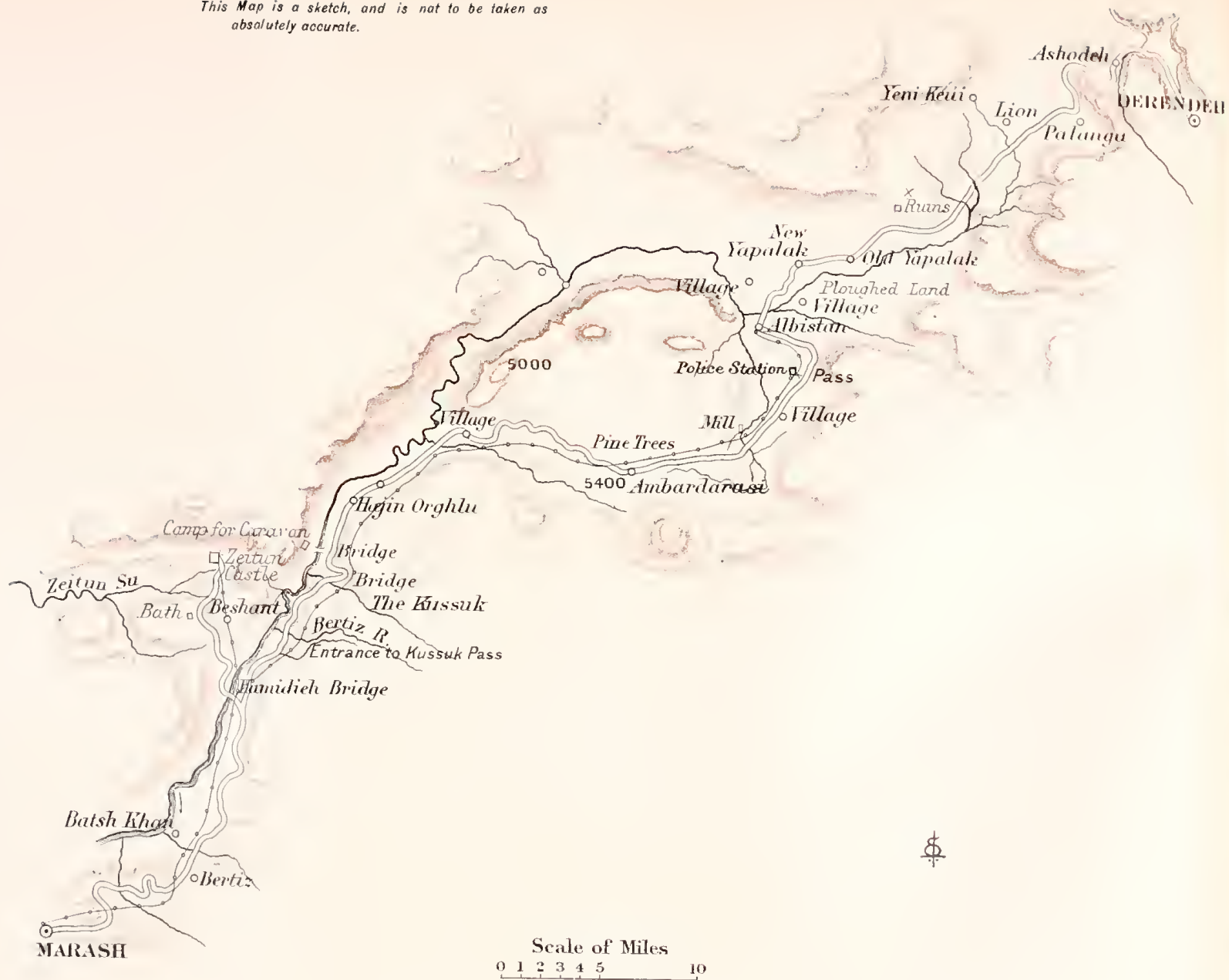
'Now concerning ailments and diseases and their remedies much has been learnt and much is to be learned. Some things are known certainly, others remain to be discerned, but of those things which arise from experience of the wise and are well known it is my intention to speak.

'There are four substances or materials which are hostile to the body : heat, cold, fatigue, and the evil eye. The first of these is the most dangerous, for if a man travels in a hot country and his body becomes filled with heat, this substance will engender fevers in his brain, colic in his bowels, or sores upon his limbs. The brain fevers are brought about by the heat entering his mouth in the form of air, solidifying in his belly, and subsequently rising in vapours to his brain ; the first thing to

* Medical men should note this name ; the continual reiteration of Appendicitis is becoming wearisome.

be

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Scale of Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5 10

London Bickers & Son.

Sturton's 1859 Estab. London

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be done in this case is to purge the fever from his entrails. The patient should be hung by the heels in a cool place and his head dipped in a bucket of iced water ; a strong emetic should then be given, and when he hath vomited he will be cured, for the vapours of the heat will fly to his belly and his fever will abate.

‘ If a man absorb heat through his skin it will strike his breast like fire, and colic will ensue. The doctor’s first care must be to prevent the heat increasing by the motion of the blood. To effect this he must tie strong ligatures of cord about the legs, arms, toes, and fingers of the sick man, until those limbs swell and become black ; then a red-hot iron must be laid upon the stomach, for it is known that heat flieth to heat ; therefore the heat of the metal being sharper will draw out the heat of the body and the colic will cease. If heat should strike the body suddenly and mingle with the blood, it will take the form of sores and boils, and for these the best cure lies in the cleansing of them with ashes, which are the coldest of materials ; when the boils are cooled, the fat of a sheep, petroleum, or the dung of horses will form a strengthening unguent.

‘ Cold is a harder and more refractory substance than heat, for cold entereth a man’s bones, and being silent for many weeks will suddenly emerge, causing cramp, colds and rheumatism ; the longer cold remaineth unobserved, the greater the force with which it will make its exit. Thus, if cold enters into a man’s bones when he is twenty years of age, and departs when he is fifty, it will leave him a shaking palsy, and this can only be cured by walking over the burning hairs of a she-bear. This is most marvellous. Cold also entereth the eyes and produces

produces blindness and running and violent pains. For this there is no cure but the will of the Healer, save by tearing out the eyes by the roots.'*

We reached Albistan at about five o'clock and proceeded to the konak, where the Kaimakam had received instructions from Zeitun, Aleppo, and Marash ordering every kind of honour to be shown me. He carried out his instructions to the letter, almost following the custom mentioned by Sir R. Burton in the 'Arabian Nights,' which necessitates the host never leaving his guest until ten miles from the house. He was eventually persuaded to take his leave by the servants, at my instigation, clanging pots and pans, unpacking the luggage, flinging blankets and fur coats on the floor, opening the windows and making the bed.

The next morning, at seven o'clock, I was aroused by the commandant of the troops paying me a visit in bed, where I held a 'petit lever.' The commandant (a redif officer) spoke some French, which made the visit less tedious; he, however, could give no information, as he had only lately arrived.

There was a good deal of mystery about the Armenian Catholic priest, whom I proposed to visit. First a servant came asking whether I would lunch or dine with his master; the lunch was accepted. Then came another messenger who, Armenian-like, whispered most cautiously, just as a stage villain would, into Michael's ears before the five policemen sitting in the room. Michael, pretending not to have heard him, called Jacob aside, and whispered at length into his ear; Jacob called upon the Zaptiehs to retire, and then hissed the following

* His dissertation on the evil eye I have omitted; it would fill a volume.
tale

tale of blood into my ear : ' The Armenians of this town are frightfully oppressed. The Kaimakam has a grudge against the priest, whom he wishes to assassinate ; the Kaimakam has received a long letter from Zeitun ordering you to be watched ; you must not go to lunch with the priest—there is great danger.'

It eventually appeared that this rigmarole meant that the priest had been called away to a funeral, and would prefer me to lunch with him the next day.

The largest mosque in the town was built by Allah Ed-Din Seljuki, A.H. 670, and although now in a dilapidated condition was possibly once an imposing building. Returning from the mosque I met a boy carrying six fine trout, one weighing about nine pounds : these we purchased for the sum of six metallics, and I congratulated myself on being able to change my diet a little, tinned Irish stew having begun to pall. The fish were handed over to the Kaimakam's cook, who repaired with them to the kitchen. What was my rage and frenzy when I discovered that the idiot, having scraped them with a rusty knife, had rolled them in a composition of mud and ashes, making them appear like filthy conger eels ! I remonstrated, and the ass, knowing a little Arabic, bleated out that stock excuse, ' Ahsan hake !' * My temper was lost. I seized the fish from his foolish hands, flung them through the door, and sent him flying after them. I returned to the kitchen to warm some ' roast fowl,' boiled in London six months previously.

If the reader has any fault to find with this part of the journal let him remember that I had to cook every meal for myself ; further, that I appreciate good living

* ' It is better so.'

and

and had nothing but rice and venerable goat where-with to vary my tinned provisions.

My account of Albistan must be meagre, as the cold was so intense that it did not permit one to do much sight-seeing. The bazaars are poor and squalid; the inhabitants, rich in materials, are but paupers in money; there is no outlet for trade, the town being in an isolated position. The Armenian question appears to be happily dying down and there are no complaints, although I took particular pains to ascertain if there were any.

Shut up in the house for a day by bad weather, I found that my library was by no means extensive, the only light literature being the diary of the immortal 'James' and Dickens' 'Christmas Books.'

To read Marley's Ghost while toasting a piece of tinned plumpudding on a fork over a charcoal brazier, in the draughty saloon of a governor's rickety palace in a dismal Turkish town, is an experience. All the comforts of an English winter come before one; one thinks of friends at home, rubbing their hands over a fine coal fire, surrounded by doors that shut, bells that ring for servants, dinners and luncheons that are cooked by cooks, horses with frost nails, roads that are carefully sanded, streets that are swept, letters that arrive, and if one is inclined to be conceited one may imagine—of course they really talk of other things, but I say one may imagine—the conversation turns to oneself, someone might say, 'Where's Sykes?' And the answer would be, 'Oh, he's in the East, lucky fellow, out of this beastly cold—Constantinople, or Peking, or Calcutta, somewhere in Persia, you know.' Little do people in England know of the chilly bitter East in winter. The East conveys to the

the average mind a palm-tree with stately individuals smoking 'cool Narghillies' and drinking 'foaming sherbet' beneath its pleasant shade. Little do they realise the nightmare that winter becomes in the Taurus Mountains, the wretched towns knee-deep in the snow that Providence has sent, and will doubtless remove in a few months; the wind roaring and whistling through the dark icicle-hung bazaars, the inhabitants baking over red-hot stoves or dying of pneumonia; the trees gaunt and bare; the rivers ice-bound; the Muezzins with their prayers almost frozen on their lips wailing against the storm that Mohammed is the Prophet of God; the dogs growing lean and savage as winter goes on; a dead mule lying in the market place with a few carrion crows hopping about his rigid limbs—there you have some idea of the utterly depressing, dismal wretchedness of an oriental town when the thermometer remains six degrees below freezing for two months on end. There is no attempt to make anything cheerful or to improve the season. 'It has pleased God to make it cold, and it behoves us to accept it,' so winter is accepted with the same apathy and fatalism as an earthquake and tidal wave, or any other calamity.

It was at Albistan that we found it necessary to purchase a horse. The following is the closest verbatim report of the transaction I can give—

THE HORSE SALE.

Scene: A court in the Governor's palace, Albistan.

Horse-dealer: 'And upon you be the blessing! It is said in the bazaar that you want a young horse for your journey.'

Jacob

Jacob: 'And upon you. And what of that?'

Horse-dealer: 'Well, I have a fine young stallion of pure race, which I must part with in my necessity.'

A Casual Friend: 'Ay! Verily God is great, and what he says is truth!'

Jacob: 'Well, my brother, where is the horse?'

A Police Officer [*in a whisper*]: 'Beware, friend Jacob, yon fellow is a thief of thieves.'

Jacob: 'Am I a blind man? [*To the horse-dealer*]: Show your cattle.'

[*Enter horse.*]

Dealer [*stroking the animal*]: 'Must we part, my pearl? [*Horse kicks.*] God's curse light on thy harem, pig! There, my lord, gaze upon him!'

Jacob: 'And upon the splint in his foreleg—eh?'

Dealer: 'A splint! Mashallah, a splint! As clean run a foreleg as a gazelle's! As smooth as a marble column! A splint, quotha! A splint! Look, lords and gentlemen! Who sees a splint?'

Various Friends of Dealer: 'There is no blemish'; 'truly a fair foreleg'—'one that would never stumble!'

Others: 'No splint! Why, there is a wart like Mount Ararat!'

Dealer: 'Behold the man who sees splints where there be none.'

Jacob: 'I see splints where there are splints, and broken-winded, cow-headed mules where they be likewise.'

Dealer: 'Away! one and all, and an end of sales. [*Leading horse.*] Away there! I can sell him to the Pasha if he will buy him.'

Jacob

Jacob : 'Then God help the Pasha and Abdul Hamid if they must be thy customers.'

Dealer [*led back by friends*] : 'I'll have none of him, I'll not sell.'

Friends : 'Come, brother, be not obstinate ; he will give thee a fair price.'

Dealer : 'Well, hard words bring no money. [*To Jacob*] : Will you buy the horse ?'

Jacob : 'And the price ?'

Dealer : 'Thy will !'

Jacob [*pressing money into the dealer's hands*] : 'Well, here be three pounds Turkish, and a pound too much !'

Dealer : 'Three pounds Turkish ! Here, I have business, and no time for talk ; take back this money !'

Jacob : 'Never, thou hast accepted.'

Dealer : 'Extortioner ! Must I be robbed ? Friends, see, this man would take my horse by force and rob me for this—this—look !'

Friends [*taking sides*] : 'The man is robbed.' 'No, he is the robber.' 'Who said the horse was lame ?' 'I did.' [*Babble.*]

Policeman : 'Silence there ! Here, my Lord Jacob, and you, horse-dealer Ahmad, what quarrel is there ?'

Jacob : 'O brave ! This thief bringeth to me a long-toothed eunuch of a town-bred hack and selleth it to me for three pounds, the bond being made and the word given, he then——'

Dealer : 'A word—a word ! I *will* speak !'

Jacob : 'Hark, he revileth us all for his own villainy !'

Dealer : 'Good and noble and valiant soldier, listen to me ; because my children lacked bread I brought my only horse for sale. Here cometh this wicked Kurd
from

from the mountains, snatcheth the steed from me, giveth me a false price, and then maketh outcry !'

Jacob : ' A lie, thou king of cheats ! Here is my tale : I offered him three pounds Turkish.'

Dealer : ' And I refused. Could I not sell this horse at a better price to a beggar ?'

Jacob : ' A curse on the religion of horse-dealers.'

Dealer : ' And a curse on high-handed robbers !'

Policeman : ' Now, horse-dealer, what is thy price ?'

Dealer : ' A fair question ! Four pounds Turkish.'

Jacob : ' Never ! Thou hast taken the price, and a high one !'

Dealer : ' Is it come to this, that I am to be robbed, and my children must starve, and I a *Moslem* * die of want because ——'

Policeman : ' Silence ! O Jacob ! Wilt give him a baksheesh ?'

Jacob : ' If needs be I must ; here, then, is another mejedeh.'

Dealer : ' Ha ! Well, I take it ; but ——'

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

On Sunday, before leaving Albistan, I attended Mass at the Armenian Catholic church. The Ordinary of the Mass is so closely adhered to by this people that it is easy enough for any Roman Catholic to follow it ; not as with the Greek Catholics, where there is such an amount of marching and countermarching on the part of the priest, and so many other various devotions in progress at the

* The ' I a *Moslem*' is the dealer's trump card, as Jacob is a Christian. It will be noticed that the policeman cuts the sentence short, and Jacob gives way rather suddenly.

same

same time, that it is beyond the comprehension of an uninitiated spectator.

After Mass there was a wedding. The Armenian marriage service appears a very extraordinary and complicated ceremony. The bridegroom on this occasion was a very small withered little fellow with a large auburn curl overhanging his forehead, which gave him the most extraordinary resemblance to a certain kind of Cockney 'Arry; the bride was closely veiled, and beyond an occasional bob of the head gave no signs of life. Part of the proceedings entailed the crowning of the couple with wreaths of artificial flowers, and the bridegroom's head was so small that the diadem slipped over it, and did duty as a necklace. The poor man's nervousness was such that he could not extricate himself until a kind friend from the congregation came forward and pulled it off. The incident was so humorous at the time that I was obliged to fight my way out of the church in order to indulge in the unseemly laughter that was choking me.

At the konak I found the various officials gathered to bid me adieu, including twenty-five Zaptiehs, who stated that as I was their father and mother I should be grieved to hear their pay was somewhat in arrear,* and begged me to remember that they loved me very much. . . .

* The Zaptiehs of this district are among the lucky few who are paid.

CHAPTER IX

TO DERENDEH

WE rode on to Yeni-yapalak, a village some four miles from Albistan, where the Shaykh, who was exceedingly hospitable, is the possessor of a very beautiful guest-room. We asked him if he would sell it us to take to England—‘Willingly,’ he replied, ‘if it were not that I should then have no place in which to receive another English Bey Effendi if he came.’ It was again pleasing to see several Armenians in the Shaykh’s house, whom he served with coffee with his own hands.

While stopping there I noticed the intelligence and vivacity of the company, which I could in no way associate with Osmanli stolidity, but which rather reminded one of the Arab. I enquired of what race were the inhabitants, and they stoutly answered that they were Turks; notwithstanding this, however, one of the Armenians winked very knowingly. On subsequent inquiry from the Zaptieh it appeared that they were Alawieh Shiahs. This curiously isolated people were until lately nomadic, but have been induced by the Government to live in villages. Their religion is supposedly Shiah, including that extraordinary reverence for Ali which appears to run into every kind of extravagance wherever it obtains.

The

The men, who never cut their beards, are strikingly handsome and exceedingly intelligent: their sense of humour approaches the Arab; their bright eyes, quick movements, and smartness in repartee make it easy to distinguish them from the slow, ponderous, and phlegmatic Turkish peasant, although their dress is precisely the same. Their women are remarkably good-looking, and their children beautiful.

They are excellent farmers, being as good as Circassians, using similar wheeled trucks. Their houses are well built; and I noticed in their villages that the snow was systematically cleared from the streets, a thing unheard of among the Turks or Kurds. Jacob remarked to me that they were very like Druses; I was at once struck by the similarity and am curious to know if there is any relation between the two. Without any scientific data, and speaking only from observation, it seems to me that there might be some connection—the good looks, the progressive methods of cultivation, the superior intelligence and secret religion, serve as a hint which would be well worth following up. Lord Warkworth's description of the Avshars of Yalak in no way tallies with the Alawieh, with whom I think some travellers have confounded them. It is to be hoped that any one who is in the Taurus will make as much investigation as possible concerning this interesting people.* The Shaykh accompanied us a short way out of the village mounted on a pretty little stallion.

From New Yapalak to Old Yapalak is a ride of about three-quarters of an hour; the latter village is

* Antiquaries had better note that at New Yapalak there is a marble Ionic column which looks as if there might be something worth digging for.

inhabited by true Osmanlis—a remarkable contrast to the cheerful Shiah.

Our ride from Old Yapalak to Yeni Keui, on the following day, bid fair to be our last. We started with a fine frosty sun, the ground thawing pleasantly beneath its rays. About three hours later on, however, the sky grew cloudy, and signs of an approaching blizzard were not wanting, little cold puffs of wind bringing small powdered flakes of snow and leaving soft woolly packs following behind. Seeing this the Zaptiehs wisely advised us to abandon our visit to the lions and make for Yeni Keui. To reach that village we were obliged to leave the main track and make across the snow. This seemed no great feat, but the going was so heavy that the horses plunged over their hocks in the deep drifts. Just as our whole party were ploughing through a particularly steep and difficult valley the blizzard broke with fearful violence, and for a few moments one could hardly breathe or see. The wretched animals seemed paralysed, and two lay down quite helpless. We struggled on, but when the squall had passed, to our surprise and dismay, no village was in sight; only a long-stretching vista of drifted snow hemmed in by rolling clouds close to the ground, our old track completely hidden. The fact that we were hardly able to move more than three-quarters of a mile an hour, with no sign of the direction of our destination before us and the certain knowledge that if we were out after nightfall a most unpleasant death awaited us—a death which a great number of muleteers had suffered that very month—served to make a sufficiently unpleasant situation. Luckily, however, we saw two men on foot eight hundred yards



HITTITE (?) LION (?)

yards to our left : to these we made signs of distress, and they came to our assistance as quickly as they could and led us in the right direction. Although we had only two miles and a half to go, we were three hours in reaching the village ; indeed, so exhausted were we on our arrival that another half-mile would have been too much. We soon found an evil-smelling hovel, where we were glad enough to lie down and rest.

Here we found three Zaptiehs awaiting us, having been despatched hither from Derendeh.*

The next day we walked out to the ' probably Hittite lions.' Only one is standing ; the other was overthrown, according to local report, by a European wit travelling in the neighbourhood. They are both fine examples of early impressionist work ; indeed at first one is at some difficulty to distinguish the head from the tail, which is just what is wanted in a really artistic presentment ; the spectator then gets in harmonic touch with the sculptor. These lions have every advantage of the Rodin School : they are repulsively ugly, hopelessly misshapen, their mouths are growing in the middle of their chests, and, further, they bear no more resemblance to lions than the bandy-legged, sinewy, simian green gentleman at South Kensington does to St. John the Baptist.

From the Rodinian lions we struggled on towards Derendeh, having left Halil behind with a horse that had fallen ill. The road was so heavy that we only reached Ashodeh about three o'clock, and were obliged to stop there.

* It is hardly necessary to draw the reader's attention to the extraordinary thoughtfulness on the part of the authorities in despatching these men to look after a solitary Englishman ; yet in some books one would suppose that the valiant traveller pluckily and resourcefully fought his, or her, way.

Ashodeh is credited in the guide-book with two thousand houses. If this is correct, which I cannot doubt, the five hundred inhabitants, who form the total population, must be well off for lodgings. The Armenian church and convent were not destroyed during the massacres but were in ruins some years previously. According to the local Armenians things are now progressing very well, and there is no present cause for complaint.

Indeed, although one does not wish to be too sanguine, there certainly appears to be a decided improvement in the situation in the whole district, and if the Armenians are by no means in good circumstances, there is a prevailing tone of better feeling between them and the Moslems which has the outward appearance of a more hopeful time to come.

The following morning, about an hour after leaving Ashodeh, we reached Derendeh, the Mudir of the former town, a Circassian, insisting on accompanying us. On our arrival we were well entertained by the Kaimakam, who had received telegraphic instructions from the Vali of Sivas in anticipation of our arrival: two rooms were provided for us above the local café, and every care was taken that we should be comfortable. No sooner were we under cover than the snow came tumbling down in heavy flakes; half an hour later Halil entered, weeping, with the news that the sick horse was dead.* Poor beast! The snow and cold had been too much. This was our first casualty.

There are moments when one has doubts as to one's

* My dear wiseacre, although you have travelled in Turkey you are quite wrong—he brought the tail with him as a proof.

own intelligence, and when I found myself staring at the snow and smelt the café oozing through the floor, and blew my nose, in which there was a cold, and cleared my throat, in which there was a soreness, and shook my head, in which there was an ache, I pondered on the five snow-strewn days that lay between me and Malatia, and thought that if ever there was an obstinate, self-proved idiot he was an Englishman who rode through the Taurus in winter. I had been warned, and in my pride and folly had disregarded the warning, and now I was justly punished.

Similar thoughts were evidently passing through Jacob's mind as he glared at me, crying, 'Ah! sir, what evil have we done that our Lord God should have hardened our hearts to come into this accursed land of Kurds and Armenians and Turks—fools so simple that they do not flee from it, but remain here to starve!'

The town of Derendeh is not exactly described in 'Murray's Handbook,' which states, on p. 261, that 'the *old town*, now partly in ruins, lies on the narrowest part of the river gorge, and is dominated by a strong castle on the right bank.'

As a matter of fact, the strong citadel is a miserable heap of ruined mud buildings; the masonry, such as remains, is hardly more than dry stone walling, and the whole castle is not worth climbing the mountain to see. The ruined town still possesses a few houses and three mosques; the rest, a space of about 150 acres, is merely a mass of broken walls and fallen houses. The konak is situated in the ruined town, as also a small bazaar and large khan, which is still in use.

The new town straggles for about one hour and a
half's

half's walk down the gorge : it contains three hundred and sixty Armenian houses besides two thousand Turkish and Kurdish. It possesses some fine gardens, and in the future will be a large market for vegetables and fruit. The town is blessed with a boil, much the same as that of Aleppo but not quite so formidable ; the scar it leaves behind is not larger than a threepenny piece.

The inhabitants of the district have adopted the Circassian or Cossack flannel hood for winter wear—a curious innovation—and this sudden alteration of fashion in dress is very striking in the so-called unchanging East. As a matter of fact orientals often do alter their customs in a very curious and unexpected manner : tobacco and coffee, for instance, were adopted quite suddenly, although now it would be hard to imagine the East without either.

It was our evil fortune to encounter a fall of snow at Derendeh so heavy that every route was blocked, and we were caged like rats in a trap. Of all the dismal places to be snowed up in, a Turkish café is the worst : the temperature varies from stifling heat when the stove is lit to freezing point when it goes out : a feat it performs twice in each hour. A tinker kept a shop next door, who was tapping every tune one knew on his wares. The wretched dogs crept up to catch the warmth of the rooms, and huddled round the doors, snapping, snarling, and growling day and night. The smell of stale narghillies, bad cigarettes, and dirty hot water pervaded everywhere, and the tinker's tunes were only interrupted by the rattling of the backgammon board.

From my window the only sight I could see was the ever-falling snow and a tumble-down minaret, up which a worthy old gentleman climbed in all weathers. I could see

see his jaws moving, but either the wind was so high or he was so husky that he was inaudible.

Four days later it ceased snowing, and a thaw set in. A thaw in England is generally an unpleasant period—in the Taurus it is a damnable one. Although there are no water pipes to burst, yet every house is flooded; for the roofs, being flat and only plastered with mud, are turned into slushy poultices. The various dogs, cats, and mules that have perished in the streets during the frost, and which the snow has covered, begin to attract attention; the offal heaps, silent during the cold months, now proclaim with loud voices that ‘there is no sanitary officer but the dog and the vulture,’ and forthwith begin their appointed task of reducing the surplus population with enteric, typhus, and diphtheria. The brick-arched bazaars sag and fall in where the melting snow has weakened the keystones, crushing anybody whose *Taqdir* * provides them with a martyr’s † death.

In the offices of the Valis and Kaimakans the water drips from the ceiling into files of official reports, and makes short work of those priceless manuscripts. In the houses of the rich the windows of the selamlis and harems are being patched with brown paper, while poorer inhabitants temporarily prop up their dwellings with poles, and begin seriously to contemplate building fresh ones. The mule tracks and chaussées are ripped and torn with floods; embankments slip down; culverts vanish; and bridges, tired of their stationary lot, slide gently off their piers, and hurry down stream; marshes

* Destiny, from Arab ^{قَدَر} to decree, predestine.

† Anyone on whom a house shall fall is a martyr. Mohammedan belief.
and

and swamps appear in the most unexpected places—in the governor's reception-rooms, in the foundations of the barracks, in the floors of the cafés, and in the baker's ovens. Yet of all this discomfort the inhabitants make no complaint: the Vali is just as dignified on his divan if his secretary has to throw him reports and papers across a little stream in the centre of the room; the gossip and chatter in the cafés is none the less because the customers have to perch themselves on tables; the soldiers are not more miserable because a barrack-room collapsed, killing ten men the night before; the merchants are not distressed if caravans are delayed two or three weeks. No one shows any surprise; no one does anything to improve matters; everything goes on as usual. And it is for this reason that it is so hard for a European to understand an oriental. English people under the same circumstances would fret and fume, curse the Government, sweat and toil, until the authorities took some action; but in the East, not only do people do nothing themselves, but they would by no means be pleased if the Government did. The Government in India have had experience of this inexplicable trait during the plagues and epidemics, when the people have almost threatened rebellion unless they were suffered to rot in peace. Orientals hate to be worried and hate to have their welfare attended to—oppression they can bear with equanimity, but interference in their private affairs, even for their own good, they never brook with grace.



CLIMBING.

CHAPTER X

TO HEKIM KHAN

AFTER five days' delay we escaped from Derendeh and made across the Dumanleh Dagħ for Hekim Khan. The snow having covered all previous tracks we were obliged to employ five pioneers to break up a road, and even with their assistance we found the going difficult. The cold was intense, and the wind blew angrily over the mountain ridges as we crossed them, carrying finely powdered snow particles along with it.

The conduct of the Zaptiehs and Turkish muleteers was splendid. For once I had the opportunity of observing a perfect demonstration of the fact that the Turks are a ruling race, and in what their superiority lies. While the Arabs with me—although as faithful, hard-working men as one could wish—raved, shrieked, cursed, and flew into childish passions, were ready to give up in despair, and always required leading, the Turks were stolid, dogged, and business-like. If one fell head over ears with his horse on the top of him, he would only grin and pass the word to the others that there was a drift to be avoided. They trudged steadily, never gave signs of fatigue, always used their judgment, gave orders to one another quietly, and never once lost their tempers.

They

They reminded one of English soldiers who mean to accomplish a long march and have set their teeth.

I saw in several places apparent signs of an ancient road, and advise any archæologist passing through Derendeh to explore carefully the likeliest places between that town and Dumanleh.

Dumanleh, a small village where we put up for the night, is inhabited by Kurds. We left next morning at an unknown time, as for some reason all our watches had stopped, and there being none in the neighbourhood it was impossible to ascertain the hour. The winding winter road forces the traveller to visit nearly all villages on the line of march; which is a compensation from a geographical point of view, as none of them are marked on the map. The country is more densely populated than one would suppose, and requires accurate and careful surveying—I give a little sketch map, which shows the rough lie of the land. The plain of Chiftlik is carefully irrigated by the inhabitants (Turks), who rear fine sheep and Angora goats. The chief landowner's name is Ahmad Effendi, who resides at Chiftlik.* We passed the villages of Guernlu and Chiftlik, stopping the night at Selamli.

The plain of the Chiftlik villages must be very beautiful in summer, being surrounded by mountains and watered by two fine rivers, the Tokhana-su and Aivalu-su, both of which join at the south end of the plain and dash into a deep cleft in the mountains, emerging at Mesgedin. In the course of the seven odd miles we covered between Dumanleh and Chiftlik the barometer registered 5,000, 3,800, 4,200, 3,200, 3,700 feet above sea-level, which

* Chiftlik signifies property, usually Crown land, in this case that of Ahmad Effendi.

will



VILLAGE DWELLING KURDS OF GUERLU.

will give some idea of the ascents and descents to be accomplished.

During the ride I accidentally threw aside a crust of bread, and so gave great scandal on account of the noble Moslem custom which I infringed; for bread and olives are considered gifts of God, and must never be thrown away. A piece of bread found on the ground, if clean, must be eaten; if soiled must be picked up, and at the same time brought to the mouth and forehead with the exclamation 'Staghfrallah,' *i.e.* 'God forgive (the man who dropped it);' then it must either be given to a cat or a dog or burnt. Travellers should remember this custom, particularly if they buy food at a pastrycook's and eat it on the premises, in which case fragments should be left on the counter, whence they will be gathered and given either to the poor or to the dogs. The superlatively Europeanised and vilely barbarian inhabitants of Beyrut considered this custom foolish, as one would expect.

From Selamli we rode past two more villages named Chiftlik to Golunjak—at least that is the noise the inhabitants make when asked what it is called. The district is a very healthy one, and the people are excellent farmers, using carts and irrigating the land with broad canals. A good number of the men speak Arabic, having served in Yemen: a fearful ordeal for mountaineers accustomed to an arctic winter. Some of them told me they had been on service there eight years, and during the whole of the time there was more or less war.

The Turk as a soldier shows a heroism that no other race can boast: willingness to face any danger is nothing compared with that stubborn sense of duty which makes
a man

a man ready to endure eight years of misery in a climate of hell, unpaid, unclothed, ill-fed, continually at war, with no hope of glory, no hope of reward, no bounties, no banquets, no encouragement. We who pride ourselves on our army having borne the South African campaign with endurance and fortitude must reverence and respect the Turks who bear ten thousand times more, and consider it as nothing but their ordinary duty.

Think what these mountaineers must have suffered during those eight years: the march to Alexandretta, the six weeks' grilling in a pestilential, leaking, overcrowded Turkish trooper, the appalling heat, the epidemics of cholera, the strange land, the miserable barracks, the impossibility of any communication with home, and this for eight years. It is hardly credible that men would bear it, and yet those who did made no complaint, and only smiled as they related their experiences. The Turk has something in his nature which may astound the world yet.

After seeing those men there is nothing surprising in the fact that they marched from Bokhara to Vienna, and if circumstances arose no one who has seen them would be astonished if they marched to Paris. But there is little doubt that this heroic military service is responsible for the steady decline of the Turkish population and a corresponding increase of the Christian.

The Christians are exempt from conscription, and the Ashirets* are almost so, while the Osmanlis, in virtue of being rulers, have to bear the heaviest burdens of military service, the period being six years with the

* Ashiret signifies such races as are under tribal government: Kurds, Hakkiari, Christians, Bedawin Arabs, and Yezidis.

colours



THE KING OF ENGLAND'S DAUGHTER IN DISGUISE.

colours and two in the reserve ; while in the outlying provinces of Yemen, Tripoli, &c. they complete their whole duty with the colours. This period of six years, from twenty to twenty-six, prevents many marriages, and proportionately decreases the birth-rate, as, in ordinary circumstances, a Turk would marry at eighteen ; for a Turk of thirty must certainly be counted as a European of forty-three, and consequently the probability of small families is increased. The only remedy I can suggest is to reduce the colour service and increase the reserve, besides forming a militia reserve, a force which if seriously attended to would be very efficient owing to the excellent military material provided by the Turks. The chief objection to this is that in Turkey mobilising reserve regiments would be slow, owing to the lack of rail transport ; but this does not apply to the country round Constantinople, Konia, and the whole of European Turkey, where it might be adopted with success.

My business and occupation, according to the inhabitants, varied in each town. At Zeitun I was a British Government spy ; at Derendeh I was the King of England's eldest daughter travelling in disguise, which included two weeks' beard, blue goggles, and a fur cap ; but at Golunjak I became an English pasha travelling at express command of Abdul Hamid, and receiving from him a salary of £200 a month and all expenses paid, which was gratifying.

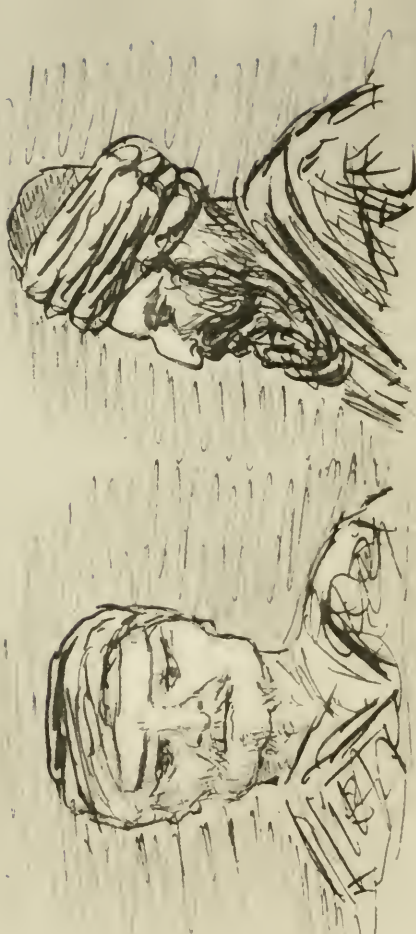
We left Golunjak at about nine o'clock, and commenced the ascent of the Tuz Oghlunun Mountains, which lay between us and Hassan Shelabi. As the distance is only about nine miles, we hoped to reach the latter in the afternoon ; but the snow, in places six feet deep

deep, which we had to blunder through, cut through, trample through, and drive through, made our progress so difficult that when we reached Gubkhani, a small Kurd village about half-way, we and our horses were too exhausted to move any further, and we halted for the night. The fatigues we had undergone since leaving Derendeh were as much as any men could stand, and our horses' ribs stood out like gridirons, our faces were swollen, our eyes bloodshot with the glare, our limbs ached in every joint, and we had hardly energy enough to cook the fragments of a turkey we luckily had by us.

The house we put up at was a typical Kurd dwelling : three dwelling rooms built round a front hall, wherein lodged ten cows, all our horses, some sheep, and five dogs. These dogs are fine cream-coloured black-muzzled beasts, powerful, fierce, and faithful. It is a curious thing that Turks and Kurds do not hold dogs in horror and loathing as do the Arabs : in all the villages north of Marash the fine Kurd mastiffs roam at will in and out of the houses, while an Arab would consider his home almost polluted if a dog slept within it.

On being asked if he had any 'antikas,' my landlord produced a china plate, which turned out to be a beautiful piece of Sèvres. How this gem could have got into the hands of its owner is impossible to imagine. The good man valued it immensely, and would not part with it at any price.

Having a spare evening and nothing to do, I translated 'Jeames' Diary' to Jacob, who was vastly interested in the tale : his comments give a curious insight into the oriental point of view of things. He saw nothing absurd in a footman moving in aristocratic circles



Turk of Essengli | Turk of-Golunjak

A CONTRAST IN THE TWO TYPES OF TURK.

circles—why should he? Snobbery and distinctions of class were absolutely unknown to him, but he considered Jeames a fool, for the following reason: ‘His fate was with Mary Ann Hoggins. It was her fortunate influence which brought him the money: she was his luck—any man of sense would have known this. Directly he tried to marry Lord Bareacres’ daughter he lost his money; when he eventually married Mary Ann his money came back.’ This demonstrates the curious way in which fatalism and luck are blended in Eastern minds: for instance, when a native groom of mine bought a horse with his own money, it went lame and had to be sold; he bought another, but in order to avoid his ill-luck he bought it nominally for me in the name of his nephew, aged three.* It is very fortunate for a traveller to have the reputation of being lucky, for everything will go well: his servant will be cheerful, his horses be well fed, and misfortunes will be faced bravely.

The inhabitants of the tract of country between Derendeh and Hekim Khan are mostly Turks, with a few Kurdish settlements: they are a very fine lot of people and far more intelligent, clean, and cultivated than the Turks between Killis and Albistan. Among the latter a distinctly Mongolian type of countenance is often noticeable—broad, flat, expressionless faces, scanty beards, and low foreheads—while the Taurus Turks have fine features, full beards, and bright, piercing eyes. Their intellectual superiority is very noticeable in their dwellings, which are well planned and carefully built; also when met casually on the road they are ready to give correct information as to distances and difficulties, instead of

* That is to say, he bought it as a present from his nephew to me.
answering

answering any question that may be put with that stupid, pigheaded stare of unspeculating eyes.

The Kurds, although good-looking, are not so fine as their nomadic brothers we stayed with at Belpunar, nor do they show such cultivation as the Turks.

The few Armenians who live in the villages appear to be the happiest specimens of their race I have seen, and there seems to be little distinction between them and the Moslems. I saw them in many of the headmen's houses talking on such easy terms with the others that one would never dream there was an Armenian question at all. They in no way resemble any other Armenians I have seen, except those of Zeitun, being inclined to fair hair, short noses, and blue eyes; it may be that the Armenians of this quarter had some other blood infused into them before the Turkish invasion, otherwise it is hard to understand how men nominally of a race as distinctly marked should be so different from the remainder. On the other hand the town Armenians of Marash, Albistan, Ashodeh, and Derendeh are just the same as those of Van, Bitlis, and elsewhere—dark, round-shouldered, and heavily nosed.

CHAPTER XI

TO MALATIA

WE started soon after sunrise, and were delighted to find that the snow decreased with every mile. In about two hours we reached the chaussée between Sivas and Malatia, and never were people more thankful than we when we indulged in a trot along the high road, imagining that our labours were ended.

The chaussée is well kept up by the Government, and considering the trying floods and spring torrents it is in very satisfactory condition: the gradients and curves are well calculated, and the drainage properly attended to. Riding round one of the bends our horses shied violently, and we were confronted by the most extraordinary four-legged beast I have ever seen: its head was of shaggy wool, its eyes tin plates, its feet human, and its body of red flannel, while a voice in its interior cried 'baksheesh' in muffled tones. Its keeper, who led it by a rope, having silenced it with a stick, explained that the animal was composed of two boys and a table-cloth, and that it was waiting for a wedding party. It appears that this beast holds the road against the married couple, compliments them, gives the bride a piece of leaven—as an antiseptic against the evil eye—and receives baksheesh in return. Its name is Maya Devesi, the camel of leaven.

Here is a curious version of the Arab custom concerning leaven and marriage. A piece of leaven is placed on the lintel of the house ; when the bride enters she places her hand on it, and one of the husband's parents strikes her hand into the paste until it makes a perfect impression ; then the unmarried young men struggle for the paste, and each one tries to secure a piece. The leaven is supposed to nullify overlooking, witchcraft, or glare of the evil eye.

We were talking to the camel keeper when a band of thirty horsemen rode up, who were going to escort the married couple home. They were headed by a standard-bearer carrying a white flag, to show that their mission was one of peace, although every man was armed to the teeth : they were friends of the bride's father, and were bringing two horses and a Persian rug as gifts from him to the bridegroom's parents. We accompanied them to Hekim Khan, where they were met by another party of outriders. It then appeared that the bridegroom was the Mudir's son, and in consequence the whole town was holding a holiday ; so we found but few people prepared to give us any attention. But the Mudir presently came himself, and stayed a short time : which was a piece of the greatest politeness, considering the event he was celebrating. The Armenian Catholic priest, who was at the wedding, accompanied him ; the two seemed on excellent terms, and went away together. I eventually saw them standing together on the roof of the Mudir's house. The Armenian population—some two hundred and fifty people—also attended the wedding, and forbidden liquors were served out to them, as they were Christians.

From Hekim Khan to Hassan Badrik we again followed



WEDDING PARTY NEAR HEKIM KHAN

followed the chaussée. The only piece of information to be given is that the great bridge which crosses the river is broken. (Any European who has travelled along the road during the last four years and reads this will remark '*Connu.*')

At Hassan Badrik we found a carriage which I longed to get into, but the owner refused to let us have it, as it was waiting for the post. In vain my servants said that I was the greatest and most important pasha, general, ambassador, and prince that had ever travelled in Turkey; the gentleman would not surrender his vehicle, and we had to retire defeated.

After staying the night at a good and cleanly khan, we rode on to Malatia *via* Eski (Old) Malatia, the old town some six miles distant: it was abandoned when Hafiz Pasha made his headquarters at New Malatia previous to receiving the sound thrashing his incompetence earned at the battle of Nezeb. The old walls are interesting, but, having been used as quarries, do not present a very symmetrical appearance.

We reached Malatia * itself at about three o'clock, and put up at the Capuchin Convent, where there is one monk and a lay brother. The town is getting over the massacres, which brought fearful destruction, including the burning of the Roman Catholic mission, now newly built at the expense of the Government.

When one first hears the tale of the Malatia massacre, one says, now indeed there was no excuse for the Turks;

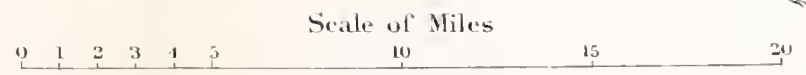
* In my diary I find this note on the distribution of money at Malatia. Fifty families with perhaps £1,000 apiece, 100 families with perhaps £100 apiece, the remainder live on barter. Very little money at all—work all summer and store food for winter.

this was a brutal, organised attempt to destroy a harmless population ; but on inquiry it is the same foolish, hopeless tale, the usual boastful Armenian threats, the inevitable noisy talk of freedom and liberty ; the cry that the Turks were on the verge of collapse ! the arms collected ! the usual pointless intrigue and the inevitable betrayals by each other ; the final provocation given and the natural outbreak of the Moslems, resulting in a massacre. The Armenians had intended to fight ; had prepared for a revolution ; had collected weapons from all parts ; but as usual, on the very first onslaught they were hopeless and panic-stricken, and what they intended to have been a battle ended in a pitiful slaughter.

The only few who maintained anything like a bold front were those who took possession of the Armenian Church and held it against the mob ; but my admiration for them was lost when I learned that these miserable hounds when they saw the Franciscan monks escaping from their convent fired on them at two hundred yards in hopes of killing a European, and so forcing the hand of the Powers. This ruse I have alluded to before, and it seems to be a favourite stratagem, exhibiting the Armenian nature in its most unpleasant light.

How massacres could well have been avoided is hard to imagine. The Armenians insisted on threatening revolution ; openly boasted that the Powers would help them ; silently intrigued against the Government ; silently betrayed one another's intrigues ; collected arms and gave offence to the Moslems, and yet possessed no more cohesive fighting power or military capacity than rabbits. On the other hand, their enemies the Turks and Kurds, the bravest and boldest of men, were so ignorant that

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



that they believed the Armenians would be assisted by the Christian Powers. Hearing vague rumours and anxious to defend their faith, anxious to loot the bazaars, moved in fact by the feelings of the Crusaders (this is said in no irreverent sense), with a nature no more savage than the troops of the Powers at Peking, they eventually broke out in irresistible fury, the weaker, intellectually superior to the stronger, constantly pressing against the stronger, constantly taunting the stronger, constantly writing silly poems about the stronger, until one day the stronger rose in his strength, delivered himself over to blind rage for twenty-four hours, and the mission-bred revolutionaries and their hopes of an Armenian republic were dashed to hopeless ruin. What, indeed, was the Turkish Government to do? Weak, badgered by the diplomatists, seeing a rebellion brewing, unable to imprison the guilty, obliged to release the revolutionaries, their only hope that the revolution might be averted was that the Moslems should be first in the field.

The town of Malatia itself is now getting over the troubles of 1895, but is still a miserable place; indeed, it never can have been much more. All the buildings of interest were in the old town, and the modern one is merely a collection of mud houses. The bazaars are useful, as they offer facilities for purchasing the necessaries of life, but otherwise they are without interest. The mosques are ornamented with minarets of wood; the konak is poor, and the market place a sink. At a distance Malatia, like many Mexican towns, is impressive, and on closer inspection it further resembles them, for it reveals squalor, bad building, and offal heaps.

I was told on good authority in Malatia that there
was

was a first-class carriage road in winter to Arga. Being more than tired, and wishing to rest my poor horses, I hired a carriage at some expense. This was a fairly presentable four-wheeled Russian cart on springs, drawn by two horses : it rolled luxuriously up to the door of the convent, and having inspected it I prepared to start. It was at this very inopportune moment that Halil chose to strike, having had some trouble with a Turkish muleteer. There ensued a fearful scene of outer darkness : teeth were gnashed, arms folded, tears shed, the upshot being that, much against my will, I was obliged to discharge him. This event cast a considerable gloom over our departure, Jacob, who shared the carriage, being in frantic grief at having to part with his friend.

We drove along merrily for about ten minutes, when we stopped with a grinding, jarring jolt. The driver jumped down, looked at the wheels, lit a cigarette, and motioned to us to descend. We did so, and the spectacle of wreckage in the underworks is not to be described. The front wheels had dropped into a square watercourse, all four springs had broken, the two axles were bent beyond mending, the right-hand step was festooned round the left-hand front wheel, the pole had come away from the carriage, and the body appeared to be miraculously suspended above the litter. What I had often expected in oriental carriages had at last happened : THE PIECE OF STRING on which the stability of the whole fabric depended had snapped—the rest was a matter of course. As the saddle horses had gone on, there was nothing to do but to get another carriage ; after an hour's delay a similar, but springless vehicle was procured, and then we realised the badness of the road,
the

SHIAH VILLAGES ROUND ARGA

<i>Names as Headman pronounced them</i>	<i>Names in Headman's writing</i>	<i>Names as Headman pronounced them</i>	<i>Names in Headman's writing</i>
HASSAN SHIELEBI	حسن شيب	DADANIN KEUI	ده دانه كوي
HASSAN BADRIK		KAMAKAWAK	كاه نون
HAJI KEUI	هجر كوي	KEUI SULEIMAN	كرد سيمانه
KULUK KEUI	كولور كوي	GUL PUNAR	كديون كار
BALAJIBASHI KEUI	باله جيباشي كوي	URAN	اوريه
KURAJA	كوره جيه	KARA TARSI	كوره تارسه
BALABAN	بالابانه	DADAFANGI	ده ده تانگ
MINAIK	مينك	EKINJELAR	اكنجر
KARAHUK	كوره هوك	KHAN CHARLEH	خان چارله
ESSI KEUI	اسن كوي	KEL AGHLI	كهل
KERKUZ DARAKAKIN	كركوزه ده ده تارنجه	KUJIKLI	كوجيكلي
HASIR JEBAR	هاسير	BAIRAM USHARET	بايرام اوشاره
CHERMAKI	چرمكوي	DUMUKLEH	دومكليه
ZEWIAK	زهويه	KADER USHARET	كادر اوشاره
KARA KHAN	كوره خان	KUBAT USHARET	كوباد اوشاره
KUSHTAGHAN	كوشته افغان	TATAR USHARET	تاتار اوشاره
KARLANKUCH	كارلانكوه	KASSIM USHARET	كاسم اوشاره
KILISSA	كليس	KEUI SULEIMAN	كوي سيمانه
MAMARZARLEH	مارزاره	KULANAR	كولانه
BUDALARUSHARET	بودلار اوشاره	KEHALAR	كهاله
ZEYBANLIK	زه بانيك	KAPAZ	كپاز
(?) SHAHAN ASHMAR KEUI	شاه اشمار كوي	HAJI USHARET	هجر اوشاره
KEL HALIL	كهل	BEKIR USHARET	بكر اوشاره
TATAROWASSEH (?)	تاتار اوشاره	HARUN USHARET	هارون اوشاره
CHIKLIK	چيكليه	(?) TAJAR JEBAR	تاجر جبار
PAULAT DARIK	پولاد ديك	DABKIN	دبكن
SHAWUKLEH	شوكله		
SUCHALEH	سوحاليه		

the tenderness of our skins, and the brittleness of our bones. For nine weary hours we were cruelly jolted over the fifteen miles which intervened between Malatia and Arga. About two miles outside that town the team gave out and we had to walk, until two horses were sent out to our assistance by the Colonel at the barracks.

We were led to the cavalry station and more than hospitably entertained by the Commander, who is land agent to the Sultan, the whole of the surrounding country being Crown land, including no less than seventy-five farms and villages. This fine estate is conducted on excellent lines, reapers and European agricultural implements being used. The beasts and sheep are first-class animals, and I was shown a bull which would certainly fetch a prize at an English agricultural show, though the judges would be puzzled to class him. The barracks also constitute a stud farm, containing seventy blood stallions and mares: these are splendid types of arab horseflesh, and in the whole stud I only remarked about two inferior animals. The yearlings were a likely looking lot, being carefully attended and exercised.*

While workmen were digging in the vicinity last summer they struck upon some carved fragments of stone: the masonry was followed up with the result that a portion of a Byzantine basilica was laid bare. The discovery is one of great importance, as the pavement is beautifully tiled with marble, and a portion is worked in extraordinarily fine mosaic. I procured photographs of

* The stallions are kept in training, and are consequently in good condition and quiet. The same principle is followed in American breeding studs in the blue grass country in Kentucky. I have often wondered why it is not so in England, where the thoroughbred stallions are more like wild beasts than horses.

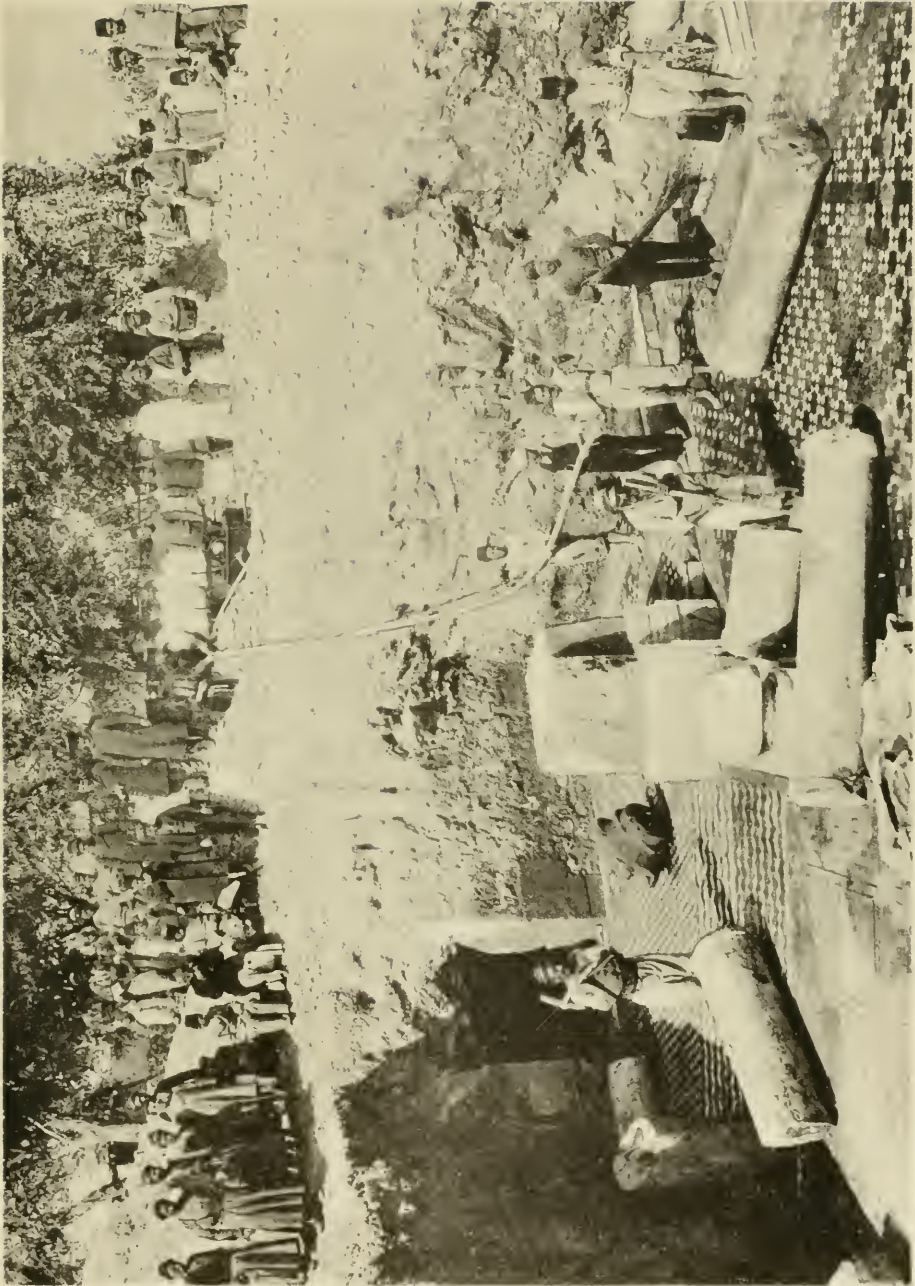
the

the excavated portion. The capitals of the columns are gilt, though owing to the weather there will soon be few signs of the gold. The basilica was evidently an important one, and considerable pains must have been devoted to its ornamentation; though the walls have fallen there are signs of a gold mosaic cornice running round the building; the central columns were encased in marble, and the iron clamps and rivets by which it was attached are still visible. The columns were frescoed, but next winter will undoubtedly efface all traces of painting. There are two sepulchral monuments also, both bearing inscriptions, but the only one legible is of no importance. The find is the most valuable one of late years in Asia Minor, and much more is undoubtedly to be discovered and learnt from what is hidden beneath the rubbish. It should be investigated by practical archæologists at once, as it is to be feared that unskilled excavation might damage the beautiful monuments which are doubtless hidden beneath the untouched soil.

The mosaic pavement is unique in point of size and preservation. It is to be hoped that the authorities at Constantinople will take the requisite steps to preserve to the world one of the most beautiful monuments of Byzantine art.

The Colonel in command gave me every facility to draw and take inscriptions, and is eager for some archæologist to make further research. He intends excavating the whole building next summer, and is intensely interested in the discovery.

The day we left Arga the clouds thought fit to let fall five inches of snow between 7 and 11 A.M., which obliged us to stop at Uran, a Shiah village, of the same



THE PAVEMENT LATELY DISCOVERED AT ARGA.

same race as those of Yapalak. There was no mistaking them: the same open countenances, the same well-built houses, the same artistic decoration. As the Zaptiehs put up elsewhere, I was able to extract some information from the headman. He told me that his people came from Persia originally, but why or when he could not state; he also gave me a list of villages inhabited by them in the vicinity, which should be of use to future travellers. They do military service, and are treated as Moslems, but evidently there is not much love lost between them.

The inhabitants of the village are great sportsmen, and on entering the headman's house we found his selamlik * occupied by an indignant-looking falcon, who turned his back on the company, and screwing his head round at right angles glared in that angry and offended manner peculiar to all birds of prey.

The headman was very communicative, and after a considerable beating about the bush I managed to worm out of him the following account of the Alawieh faith:—

Private prayer is enjoined once a day.

This prayer is secret, but contains reference to all the great prophets—Isa, Mohammed, Moses, Abraham, and Ali.

An Alawieh is bound to admit his faith on being asked directly.

A man may marry three wives, but may never divorce. If a wife is unfaithful she may be killed, but not divorced.

Ali is the best of men, excelling even Mohammed in

* Saloon, reception-room, where the visitors are welcomed with the usual Salaam alaikum.

goodness

goodness ; if Ali had not existed God could not have created the world, but Ali is emphatically not divine.

The Alawieh await the coming of Imam el-Mahdi, who is in hiding.

The Alawieh are visited once a year by a Mershed, who holds a service, recites the law, and gives definite readings and interpretations of the sacred books. If he pays another visit in the course of the year he does not hold any religious conversation ; there is no fixed time for his visit.

The Alawieh do not permit temporary marriages.

Veiling is not enjoined.

They observe *twelve* (?) days' fast and feast at Mo-harum.

They admit the five collections of traditions.

They do not admit Jews or fire-worshippers as Ahl-i-Kitáb.

The Mershed for the surrounding villages is one Mul Ali, living at Beulam.

The above I give as it was given to me ; it may be a hoax, my leg may have been pulled beyond all knowledge, but it was spontaneous and not produced by leading questions. Anyhow, if there is a secret religion behind it, there is a distinct knowledge of Shiah doctrine, though some remarkable departures from it.

After leaving Uran I was unable to make any notes, geographical or otherwise, as the whole road from Arga was enveloped in a dense fog which never lifted, and dead reckoning was impossible owing to the bad road ; two feet of snow, temperature about sixty, and a ground thaw included. On the way we passed the remains of a massive Roman bridge, commanded by a ruined castle



NEARING ALBISTAN.

castle, but the snow made any investigations impossible. Travellers who wish to locate it and explore for a road, of which there are no obvious signs, must ask for Su Chateh Kuprussi.

Our unpleasant ride at length brought us to a very decent village called Chuduk; the Zaptiehs, however, said that there was a much better one (Gunlu)* about ten minutes further on, where there was stabling. We started off and soon were plunging hopelessly in deep slushy drifts. I myself nearly broke my neck, and had my horse not been too exhausted he would have certainly trampled me down. There is no position more undignified or less assuring than being stuck fast up to your waist in snow with a frantic beast heaving, lashing, panting, and gasping within three feet of your head. However, we got through our difficulties somehow, and in three-quarters of an hour reached the village. The withering glance of hatred, contempt, and scorn that Jacob cast upon the Zaptieh who had led us this dance I never saw equalled. The Zaptieh himself was duly abashed and expressed his profound regret.

The last tin of camp rations having been broached, we were discussing what we should cook for dinner, when luckily a Kurdish gentleman produced an excellent partridge, of which he made us a present.

The following morning, still enshrouded in a dense fog, an easy ride of three hours brought us to Surghi. This village is a rich and prosperous one, and is inhabited by Osmanlis: the people are dull and idle, and the headman's house is squalid.

We made an early start from Surghi, crossed the

* The inhabitants are Shiahs.

plain

plain, passing an unknown river by a bridge, and struck into the mountains. The climb was a hard one, and evidences of the bad winter were to be seen in the numerous abandoned bales and loads littered on the road-side, bespeaking desperate hard work for mules and men.

We ascended for some two hours, and when we reached the highest point the barometer recorded 5,800 feet, the greatest altitude we had yet attained. A frosty wind blew away the mist which had enveloped us for three days, and a magnificent prospect of snow mountains was disclosed. We passed a small police post which reminded me of the South African blockhouse, as it was commanded on all sides. One would not have expected ignorant Turks to have been so well informed of the latest methods of fortification.

Three more weary hours of wading through snow and climbing over rocks brought us to Erkenek, a poor Turkish village of about four hundred inhabitants, and here we lunched in abominably bad tempers. I scolded Jacob for no reason, and he took 'Rages' equally easily. Haji Ibrahim the muleteer said that he and his horses were as good as dead, and the Zaptiehs wagged their heads, muttering 'Chok fana' ('very bad!'). There was sufficient reason for our low spirits: for five days we had been enduring the most unpleasant privations; the cold and snow had fairly eaten into our bones; yet here we were within a day's ride of Behesni (Besne), and no sign of abating snow or improvement in our condition. With these despondent feelings we scrambled on to our worn-out beasts, and plodded on through half-frozen drifts of mud and ice.

About half an hour after leaving Erkenek we breasted
a rise



SPRING !

a rise against the sky line, Jacob leading; when he reached the top I heard him cry, 'Allah-Ham-do-lillah! Allah Hamdolillah!' and throwing his cap in the air he jumped down from his horse. In a moment I joined him, and saw to my delight an immense stretch of snowless green wooded valley and hills; the thaw had cleared all, and from miserable, bitter, icy winter we descended in ten minutes into pleasant, balmy, early spring. Birds were singing in the trees, the clouds rolled back, and we thanked our God we were delivered from the most awful journey I have ever undertaken.

Never in South Africa, Burmah, India, Mexico, or Turkey have I experienced such an appalling month as that between Hajin Oghlu, and Erkenek, for at Erkenek our troubles ended, as five more hours brought us, tired and happy, to Pavreli. I subsequently learnt from Jacob that, considering united prayers were better than single ones, he had combined with the Mohammedans in offering gifts for our delivery. The difficulty of different creeds was overcome by making Abraham the intercessor, as he is common ground; a lamb was vowed to him at Malatia, and was to be slaughtered at Urfa, the nearest point to his birthplace.

About two hundred yards below the Pavreli Bridge, which I photographed, there are three piers of an ancient one: this bridge must be of great antiquity, as the whole lie of the ground has so changed as to render its position apparently useless, the cliffs descending sheer to the bridge; but these cliffs are composed of earth evidently washed down from above.

Is it possible that the Roman road from Samsat (Samosata) to Malatia ran through Pavreli, Erkenek, and Arga?

If

If excavations were made directly into the hill, from the piers, the question might be definitely settled. Certainly, the Pavreli-Erkenek route would permit troops moving on an emergency in winter: a matter impossible by the other route; and the strategic importance of this fact might lead one to suppose that there may have been a second road.

The whole length of track between Pavreli and Besne runs alongside, and sometimes upon an ancient paved causeway, the construction of which very much resembles the one between Derat and Bosra (Bostra), in the Hauran, although the various windings and curves almost prove it not to be Roman.

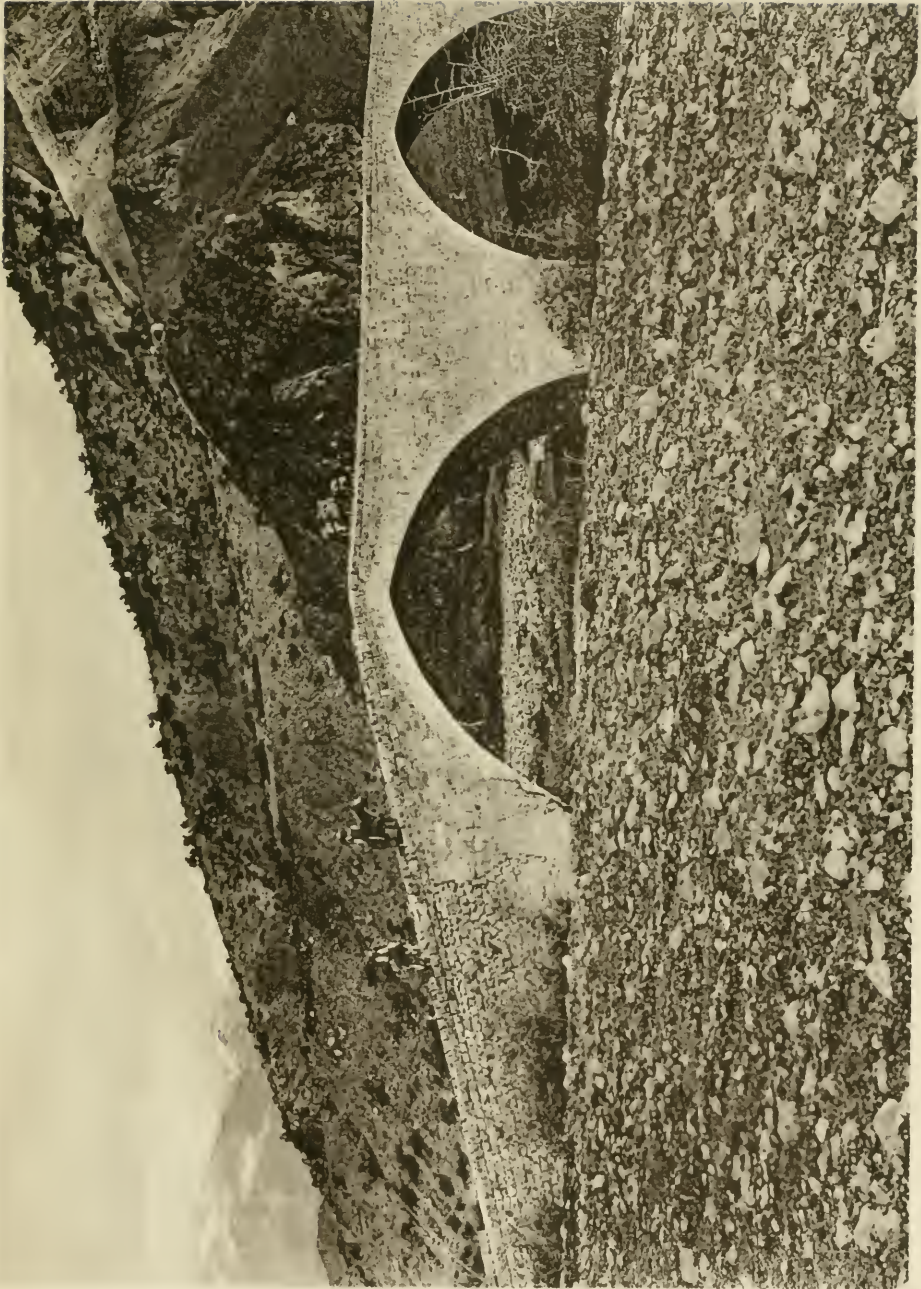
From Pavreli *via* Erkenek to Besne is no more than six hours with the path in bad condition, so I take the liberty of correcting Murray's excellent handbook in one of the few mistakes I have come across.

Besne is a pleasant little town of some 8,000 inhabitants: it is remarkable for having entirely escaped the massacres, although possessing a mixed population. The reason is that one of the leading Mohammedans behaved in a very noble and practical manner by dropping some Kurds who were beginning the usual preliminary, the result being that the trouble was, so to speak, squashed, as the rioters were unable to cry out 'Ho, ye Moslems!' when a Moslem had done the business.*

* The psychology of a massacre is very simple; it is the work of a mob acting under the following impulses:—

First degree: Hate Armenians; have been told the Armenians intend a revolution; have been told so by Armenians; have heard it hinted that the Government wish a massacre; rumour goes that the Armenians have concealed weapons; they desire to plunder; they desire to fight; they massacre!

Second degree: Say twenty-five per cent. are loafing about; hear shots;
The



BRIDGE NEAR PAVRELL.

The only thing strange to me about the massacres is that almost invariably the women and children were spared. I made direct inquiries, and all bear out the fact that the women and children were unconsidered ; it was the able-bodied male population that was the object of the rioters, and supposedly to prevent a revolution.

The evening we arrived at Besne Jacob entered with a very penitent, crushed, sorrowful Halil, who had followed us from Malatia ; he begged to be taken back, and I was glad enough to do so. A man who will ride from Malatia to Besne in winter to be forgiven is not a man to throw away. The interview between Halil and Jacob previous to my seeing him was instructive in Eastern politics.

Scene : A Khan at Besne.

[Halil discovered. Enter Jacob.]

Jacob : Hi there, Haji Ibrahim, to the horses, and a curse on idling ; [*sees Halil*] and upon you be the blessing. Now, Ibrahim, has the chestnut been watered ?

Halil : My brother !

Jacob : Well, and my brother, so you are in haste to return to the Holy City ! You have fared well ?

Halil : I have fared so far but——

Jacob : But remember, give my blessing to Abu Shaker, and all my compliments to the Mudir, and tell our brother muleteers that we are still in good health ; and your road be easy and your voyage pleasant.

cry of 'Ho, ye Moslems !' Run to see what is the matter ; strike for the faith ; the Armenians have risen and they massacre.

Third degree : The remainder ! Fire ! Blood ! Murder ! Kill ! They massacre.

Halil

Halil: So be it, and good-bye, my brother; and [bending down, bending his forehead] I am a fool of the fools to anger my master and desert my brother; and upon me be the blessing of God, for I was mad, and I curse the day of my madness. And, more, let me die in this blighted foreign land, far from home, forgotten by all—by my master whom I tended in sickness, by Jacob who is as my brother, by all—and let some damned Osmanli tend the horses that I worked night and day to save! Jacob!—O Haji Jacob!—have you nothing to say for me?

Jacob: And what should I say?

Halil: A word to our master!

Jacob: A word to my master, whose head aches with my protestations, who would fling me out of his service if I but mention your name, whose rage is as a ghouls when he hears of you and your folly! Am I also mad?

Halil: Alas! I was mad!

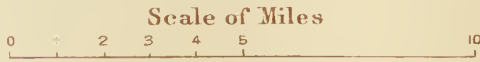
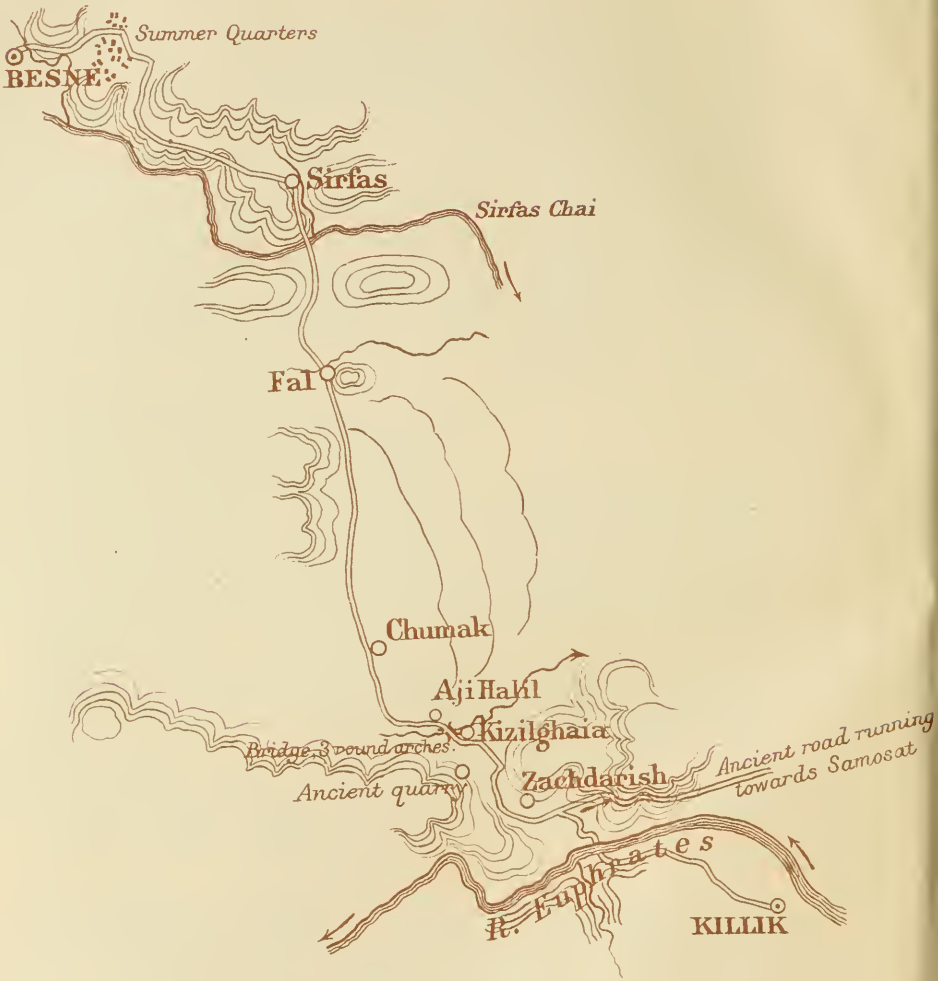
Jacob: Ay, you were mad, but are you so no longer?

Halil: Wallahi! I am convinced of my folly. Do but say a word. I will be humble. I will work as I worked before. O Haji Arab, do but bring me to him!

Jacob: Taijib! But . . . &c.

The prison at Besne was a wooden cage, next the room I inhabited. It contained three Armenians who would not pay the military tax, and a Kurd. Pending the erection of an asylum a lunatic shared the prison with the others, which was rather a nuisance, as it was all the Zaptiehs and convicts could do to keep him in order. As to the curious state of prison life in Turkey, it will be sufficient to note that the brutal Zaptiehs shared

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



London: Bickers & Son.

Stanford's Geog. Estab. London.

shared their rations with the prisoners ; that the prisoners strolled about the Konak ; that they helped Jacob cook the dinner ; talked to every one ; and at sundown one of the down-trodden Armenians went out to buy some bread for the Zaptiehs and prisoners.

From Besne we rode to Killik, a road that appears to have been very little visited by Europeans. The first village is Sirfof, an interesting place, as it was once a large town ; three minarets of fine workmanship remained, one decorated with some striking blue tiles.

The next is Fal, where there are evident signs of a paved road of great antiquity. My reason for saying this is that on the top of it there is a Turkish fountain built at least three hundred years ago ; and if the road was so little considered three centuries back one cannot but suppose that its date is early. The same road appears to run right away to the Euphrates, when it turns to the right. I at first took it to be Roman, but was told by the Zaptieh that it was made by Sultan Murad : this I accepted until we reached the Zakharish pass, where there is a cutting of Roman or ancient workmanship. On examining the ground closely I found there were two roads sometimes overlapping, the upper one cobble (Turkish) and the other slab and pavement, such as the Roman road in the Hauran. Before entering the Zakharish pass I noticed an ancient quarry on the right of the path, and discovered four rock-hewn tombs, but with no inscriptions.

About three miles further on we reached the ferry at Killik, and having crossed the Euphrates marched to Hewek, a large Zingari or gipsy village, passing three villages *en route*. The change in the inhabitants from
K the

the fine, burly, bearded mountaineers to the bastard yellow-toothed wastrels who call themselves Kurds, and inhabit the hills between Besne and Urfa, is remarkable. While the former were well-built, hospitable, dignified, hard-working, and quiet, the latter are noisy, stunted, diseased, degraded, and idle. Their houses are mere hovels, their rich fields are ill-cultivated, their manners indecent, and their dirt disgusting. Instead of being content with politely looking at a stranger, they treat him with rudeness and clamour noisily for baksheesh. Their complexion is also extremely dark, almost that of the Egyptian, and their physique miserable. They reminded me forcibly of the wretched inhabitants of Deir Zor, another half-bred race, containing, as these people do, a good dash of Beladi* Arab blood.

The Beladi Arab, although a very excellent person, does not propagate a very fine half-bred race, either with Kurds or Turks,† and this fact is rendered very noticeable to any one travelling from Malatia to Urfa, and thence to Diarbekr. At Besne this deterioration commences, and at Fal the houses show signs of inferior building; the inhabitants are squalid, and Arab influence shows itself outwardly in the Egal.‡ From Fal onwards the decline grows more and more noticeable; the costume loses all Turkish character; the Abbai cloak and Egal replace the coat and turban; the complexions grow darker, the physique poorer, and the dwellings more wretched. At Urfa the cross-breeds are Turkish in language, Kurd in rascality, and Arab in idleness. This

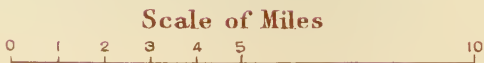
* Beladi signifies town or village dweller, as opposed to the nomads.

† Ibrahim's Hamidieh are an exception.

‡ Camel-hair ropes for retaining the head-dress.

perhaps

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Stanford's Geog. Estab. London.

perhaps explains their bestial behaviour during the massacres, which is distinguished from the events at Marash and in the towns by the fact that women and children suffered.

Following the southern population to Harran, the Turkish element dies out completely and leaves a vile, bastard race of Arab and Kurd, dwelling half the year in battered tents and half the year in beehive-shaped kennels, infinitely fouler than the filthiest Kafir kraal. This dismal *débâcle* ends in a climax at that veritable human dust-bin Deir Zor, where the low Arab is to be seen at his worst. South of Deir the Arab steadily improves ; at Anah the people are clean, hard-working, and handsome ; at Hit the town is orderly and well built ; and at Baghdad the town Arab is the contemporary of Harun er-Rashid, keen-witted, humorous, and rhetorical as ever, speaking his language with grace ; a good man of business and a gentleman. North of Suverek the degeneration decreases, and the villages grow less miserable, and the race becomes more purely Kurd.

Urfa and the road to Diarbekr have been so often described that I will refrain from giving any account. Diarbekr also has been recently detailed in full by many travellers.

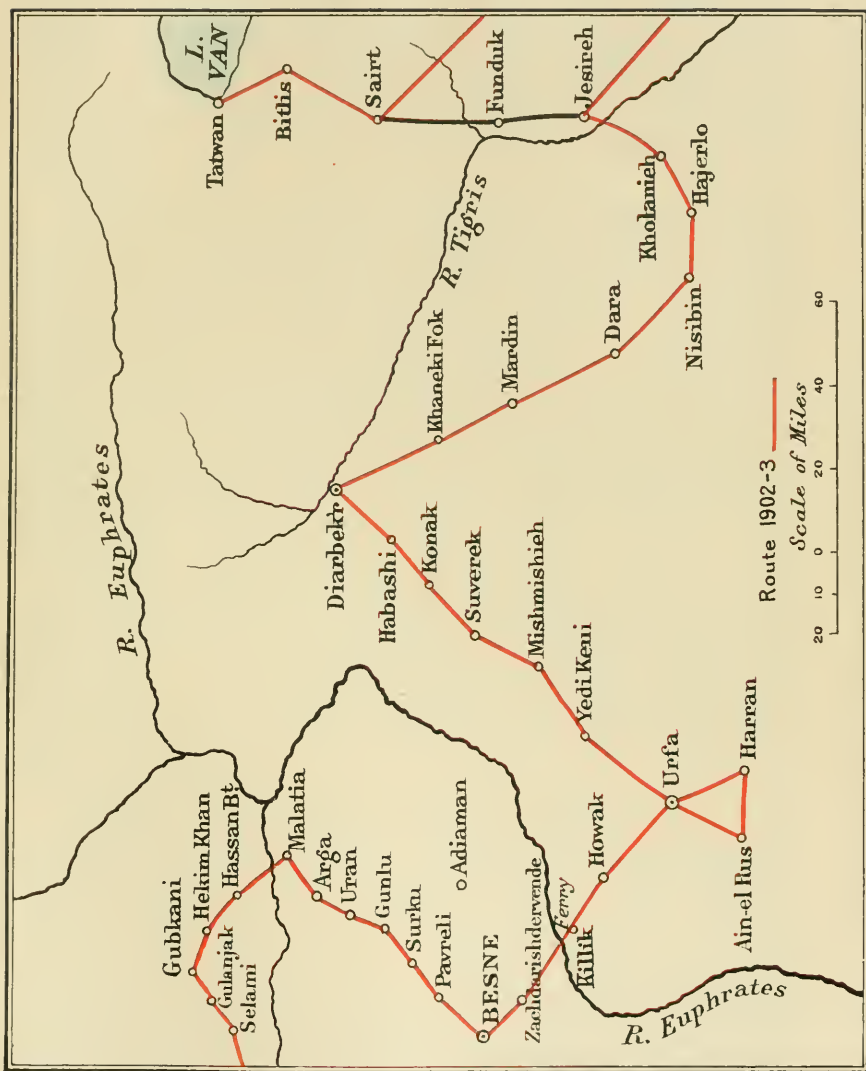
CHAPTER XII

DIARBEKR TO DARA

S MITH having departed on a raft to Baghdad, I marshalled the caravan, and the following day left Diarbekr for Mardin, stopping the first night at Khaneki Fok.

It is a pleasing fact that the low-bred worthless squalid race who stretch from Deir to Suverek have no place on the east slope of the Karaja Dagh. The very first village on the Tigris side is a noticeable improvement, and all along the route the improvement is maintained, two-storied houses not being uncommon here. The inhabitants are pure Kurds, darker than the Dehlikanli, but similar in physique and appearance, though their exceedingly picturesque costume is very different, consisting of a short blue surcoat over a linen tunic which reaches to the knees, very prettily worked woollen stockings, and a high rolled turban. Although these people have an evil reputation as robbers, and are neither courteous nor hospitable, it was a relief to find a race who showed such superiority to the wretches we had just left.

The road is a good example of the impressionist style of engineering, in which the Turkish Government *chaussées* excel. The artistic way in which a bridge is suggested by five stones in the middle of a river, the
subtle



Starobrn's Geog. Estate-London.

London: Bickers & Sou.

subtle insinuation of a made road by ten yards of pavement in the centre of a boundless plain, the carefully considered gradients which exist on the gentle slopes and are conspicuous by their absence on the steep hills, cannot fail to fill the observer with admiration for the ingeniousness of the designers and workmen.

We passed the Karaja Dagh once more and for the last time. Of all scenic and topographical humbugs the Karaja Dagh is the most worthy of exposure. On some maps it raises a bold, knobby head, ostentatiously labelled 6,562 feet, apparently starting out of a level plain, more impressive than Ararat, more noticeable than Everest. As a matter of fact it is a low, hilly range, feebly capped with snow, and ugly. The rolling lands at its base and the easy rise of its peak eliminate any appearance of beauty or grandeur.

Between Khaneki Fok and Khaneki Takht, on the left-hand side, there stands the ruin of a Byzantine castle and church. The scenery between Khaneki Takht and Mardin grows dreary and desolate; the ground grudgingly yields a few patches to cultivation, but is generally rocky and barren.

Mardin has been described by many travellers, and needs no words from me to establish its reputation for curious situation and striking appearance. The inhabitants are among the cleverest masons in Turkey: every house of consequence is not only well built, but nobly designed and delicately ornamented, the architects being common workmen, uneducated and poor. The great minaret, for instance, rebuilt about seventeen years ago, is a prodigy of good work and artistic skill, and was
designed

designed and executed by a foreman mason, whom I found engaged in the building of an outhouse.

It is strange that an ignorant peasant should be able to conceive original plans, and intuitively know the exact amount of ornamentation required to beautify without overloading. Yet the artistic masons of Mardin by no means fulfil the Ruskin ideal, for on being questioned they stated that they not only detested the work, but would willingly undertake any other kind of business if they could.

The town is at present in a very critical financial condition. Formerly the inhabitants made a good profit from the excellent cloth they produced, but Russian and European chalk-stiffened shoddy has completely ousted them from the market. Their other mainstay of business, which was peddling on the plain with the Arabs and Kurds, has been rendered impossible owing to the predatory habits of the Hamidieh, who seem to have made themselves so peculiarly unpleasant last year as to bring their surrounding neighbours to the verge of ruin; as a result the streets of Mardin are thronged with beggars and broken tradesmen. The formation of Hamidieh from the Lowland Mesopotamian Kurds would appear to be a greater mistake than organising the irregular regiments on the Russian frontier, who certainly have some military value, possessing practical knowledge, mobility, and hardiness; whereas the Kurds of Mesopotamia seem absolutely useless for purposes of severe fighting, and only show bravery when in contact with panic-stricken villagers or noisy, inefficient Bedawin, whose ideas of warfare are limited to much galloping and roaring, without risk of casualties. According to all the accounts
I could

I could gather, it is doubtful whether more than twenty Kurds of the great Ibrahim have fallen during the last sixteen months.

If Ali Pasha of Aleppo was given a free hand and two thousand men, he could most probably quieten the whole district in a very short time : four battalions and three hundred Mafrazies* would suffice to maintain peace and security. This is apparently the last thing the Government wishes, for the authorities at Constantinople desire the loyalty of the Kurds in war far more than the peace and quiet of the Jezireh (Mesopotamia). Where the advantage lies in having a gang of ne'er-do-weels marshalled into nominal battalions, whose only business in the event of hostilities would be to destroy Turkish territory ; whose ignorance of the country † they would be operating in would nullify the little value they might possess as guerillas, is not quite obvious, save the acquisition of paper army corps which every possible enemy of Turkey knows could never be mobilised with effect. But the Turkish Central Government evidently lays great store by them, and every brass-badged footpad is permitted to work his blessed will unrebuked and unchecked. One result of the policy is certain : the petted and spoiled Hamidieh will grow more and more insolent until, under the guidance of one or other of their chiefs, they will rise against the existing Government, when they will receive the sound thrashing they have deserved since the day of their formation.

Last year, for the short space of four months it is true,

* Mounted infantry.

† It is very improbable in the event of war with Russia that any serious fighting would take place south of Diarbekr.

the

the Turkish Government did do something towards tranquillising the country, and a very small army of occupation—three battalions—sufficed to reduce the braves of Ibrahim Pasha to abject submission without firing a shot. Near Ras el-Ain these pitiful bullies were made to perform the services of camp pioneers to the troops. When I heard this from an unimpeachable eye-witness peace entered my soul.

Although one condemns the Government for their apathy, it must be remembered that the Mardinians and plain villagers are equally incapable; the Hamidieh show a wholesome respect for the tougher hill-dwelling Kurds of Khaneki Takht, who grin expansively when asked if they are ever troubled by them. The fact is that the villagers of the plains would not be robbed if they showed a bold front and defended their belongings as men, instead of groaning helplessly at the destruction of their property. A caravan of sixteen armed muleteers surrenders meekly to a couple of blustering Circassians, as if it were the only course to pursue.

The Druses of the Hauran act quite differently under the same circumstances, and are consequently as immune as the hill Kurds behind Mardin. The Hamidieh do not seek glory in their marauding expeditions any more than the late Mr. Isaac Gordon.

My stay at Mardin was lengthened by a tedious affair with the authorities, one of the muleteers Mustapha Kurdi having been attacked by a drunken soldier, and slightly stabbed in the hand. The fact that Mustapha was a Persian subject, and that the Mutesariff was absent, complicated matters to such an extent that I think I
wasted

wasted more valuable breath in twenty-four hours in paying tedious calls and in interviewing everybody of consequence than during all my previous travels. The soldier * was eventually court-martialled and found guilty.

The case having been satisfactorily settled (for the sake of other travellers I took it *au grand sérieux*) we left Mardin on Palm Sunday for Dara, amid the stares of some thousand persons who were gathered to witness our departure. It subsequently struck me that this demonstration had some affinity to Martin Chuzzlewit's 'send off' to Eden. The caravan was escorted by five mounted infantry, and we were also accompanied by a Chaldean priest, two Bedawin, a horse dealer going to Mosul, a Syrian Christian, and a few others who deemed the protection of the escort an advantage.

The first part of the journey passed without incident, the soldiers scouting in a business-like way. About two hours before we reached Dara, one of the soldiers who carried a bugle began blowing lustily on his instrument. We galloped up to him and found a party of thirty men on foot advancing on our right flank in extended order. We lined up between them and the caravan, which we sent on to its destination at full speed,—when the men got within shouting distance they were asked what was their intention. They bawled back over their rifles that there was a big Ghazu † of Ibrahim's people advancing,

* As most probably English fanatics will seize upon this as an instance of the bestial ferocity which with such unfairness they attribute to the Turkish soldier, I may as well state that Mustapha subsequently told me that he had been drunk on the occasion, and had previously boxed the soldier's ears.

† Arabic for war party.

and

and that they were retiring to drive their herds into the hills. This proved to be true enough, and through my glasses I could see a party of about two hundred horsemen gathered round a ruined village two miles behind us, apparently waiting. We conformed to the position, and having ordered the caravan to make as short a time as possible, guarded our rear and right flank as well as our numbers would permit. I watched the movements of the Ghazu with great interest, and presently noticed them retire in a large huddled mass, driving sheep before them. Occasionally a few puffs of smoke were to be seen, until they disappeared in a fold in the ground, when a party of six or seven detached themselves and galloped to a village, whence a large column of smoke soon arose, showing the place to have been fired, according to their excellent custom. The whole affair reminded me forcibly of one of the expeditions of the Kroonstad tame Boer corps.

The ruins of Dara are extensive but uninteresting, as they are merely heaps of broken stones, and only in very few places are there any signs of building; the most curious relic is the water-gate in the city wall, which is a fine piece of ancient fortification. The wall passes directly across the stream, and the water emerges through arched sluices: these were probably defended with grilles, flanked on either bank by formidable bastion towers, and further defended by a redoubt a little down stream. On the west side of the city there are large quarries and rock-cut tombs, but nothing of any note or beauty,

That evening a gang of marauders paid a visit to
some

some shepherds camped on the other side of the village ; consequently a gentle and doubtful succession of shots whistled and hummed from that quarter until midnight. No one paid the slightest attention, however, and they grew tired of the amusement on the advent of a slight shower of rain, which probably damped their priming.

CHAPTER XIII

DARA TO HAJERLO

WE left Dara for Nisibin (Nisibis), passing on the way a village built amid the ruins of an imposing fortress of Byzantine structure, inhabited by an unfortunate race of people who exhibited every stage of syphilis, even the little children being tainted. I understand that the Circassians were more than decimated by the malady, and that is the reason why the colony at Ras el-Ain was such a failure. I expect that it will prove a great stumbling-block to German schemes in Jezireh, as the disease of a peculiarly malevolent type, though rare among the Nomads, Kurds, and Bedawin, is rampant in the villages with which colonists would come in contact.

At Nisibin I visited the acting Kaimakam, who commenced a tedious discourse upon the peaceful and flourishing condition of the country. True, there were Ghazus, but only among the local Ashirets, and nothing to do with Ibrahim Pasha or Bedawin; they were quite quiet. This point of view was particularly interesting after our adventure of the previous day.

I carried with me a letter to one of the Jewish notables of the place directing him to show me the Synagogue, reputed to contain some priceless MSS.

Firstly

Firstly, I discovered that the poor man had been dead for ten years ; secondly, that his son, an elderly gentleman, could not read Hebrew ; thirdly (when a Rabbi arrived who *could* read the letter) that the synagogue in question was at Mosul.

The Jews at Nisibin form a large and important Israelite colony : their origin is only noticeable in their large unshapely hands and long flat feet ; and their appearance is much improved by oriental costume, in which any man with a thick nose, dark hair, full beard, and Semitic lips looks noble and dignified. It is indeed a pity that their brethren at home have assumed European attire. Imagine how picturesque and interesting a walk in the City near the Stock Exchange would become ; what a blaze of colour Capel Court would be if the children of Israel retained their ancient and handsome dress !

Young Salmon, the outside broker, canoeing on the river with Lewis McTaggart, in red Kaffieh and green garments, would be a much more pleasing spectacle than those gentlemen now present in ill-conceived blazers and striking flannels. I trust that the Uganda Zionists will adopt my suggestion.

The 'sight' at Nisibin is the church, and that is so restored and bedevilled that it is difficult to realise what manner of place it was when originally built. Beneath the altar there is a small crypt containing the grave of a saint, as the guide-book says. The only other remains are a few Doric columns.

A strange little incident took place when the Kaimakam paid me a return call. I happened to ask my servant to translate a question. The Kaimakam, not understanding

understanding him very well, gave an inappropriate answer, when a voice from the back of the crowd exclaimed in faultless French, 'Pardon, monsieur, son excellence n'a pas tout à fait compris. Permettez-moi que je lui traduise encore,' which surprised me not a little. The speaker came forward, a tall handsome man of perhaps thirty years of age, dressed in the local costume, but with a face not in the least corresponding with it. The Kaimakam looked at him somewhat suspiciously, but made no comment while the stranger continued to translate.

After the Kaimakam had taken his departure, and several persons with loathsome diseases who clamoured to be instantly cured had been removed, I ventured to ask the man how he came to speak French so perfectly, and to be stranded in such a wretched, desolate spot. His answer was as follows :

'I was born at Constantinople of Italian parents but Turkish subjects. My education was good, and I became a guide. Eventually I obtained a place as "cafetier" on an Austrian Lloyd steamer. One day I landed at Constantinople and a police agent saw some newspapers sticking out of my pocket ; I was arrested and condemned to be exiled here. Three times have I tried to escape ; twice I reached Jezireh, and once Mosul, but each time I have been brought back.'

The fellow's story was corroborated by the police, with whom he was on excellent terms. His only complaint was that he could not obtain work, and that he did not receive the pay usually allotted to exiles ; he had perfect freedom, except that he could not leave the village. If his tale was true—and there appeared little reason to doubt it—what a fate was his ! One day

day in brass buttons serving passengers between Marseilles and the Levant, the next day bustled off to Nisibin, a mud village in Mesopotamia, with a few score of Jews, six Zaptiehs, and some Kurds for companions. The attitude of the police was also interesting—no malice, no tyranny, only a little inclined to laugh, as he was himself. Indeed, so whimsical was his situation that he could not refrain from smiling while relating his history.*

The road from Nisibin to Hajerlo is enough to make anyone enthusiastic as to the Baghdad Railway, for with no other transport than solitary caravans, and in spite of the unsettled state of the country, the whole land is one vast cornfield stretching east, south, and west, only limited in the north by the barren mountains. I venture to prophesy, if ever the railway reaches Nisibin, there will be no difficulty as to its being completed or its paying.

There would appear to be little or no impediment to the construction of this railway as far as Nisibin, except the goodwill of the Government, and I do not think any difficulty would be experienced either from Bedawin or Hamidieh. Three battalions between the Euphrates and Tigris would be ample for its protection, besides two hundred men for patrol work and two stout fences of barbed wire.

* I subsequently learnt at Jezireh that my exiled friend had also inserted three inches of cold steel into somebody's waistcoat at Constantinople, and during his stay at Jezireh started a gambling hell in that unsophisticated town, but he never made any allusion to these facts. It is a pity that no correspondent of some leading paper has ever met this gentleman. What a pathetic 'atrocious,' what a stirring 'outrage,' might not have been drawn out of him !

The

The strangest clause in the Firman is that insisting on a broad gauge. To make a pioneer railway over rough prairie lands, mountains, and rivers on the principle of the P.L.M. is a piece of extraordinary folly ; the only reason one can conceive is that the Continental engineers have had no experience of the matter.

It appears to me that all these great railway schemes, which never come to anything, would be better replaced by smaller and less hazardous ventures. I have never understood why companies have not been formed in Irak for the purpose of constructing horse-railways from city to city, always taking advantage of native assistance and local conditions ; for instance, a tram line from Baghdad to Altin-Kiopru would be easy to construct and maintain with local assistance, and, considering the density of the population, would certainly pay if run on the Mexican principle. Horses are cheap, labour is cheap, the freight is light, no staff is required, and the ganging and road-making are trivial.

As regards the German colony scheme there are several objections. If Germans of the proper type wish to colonise they have a better field open in America, Australia, and South Africa. The climate here is unsuited for colonisation, and the country is already partially populated ; if the railway is made the colonisation will resolve itself most probably into German land agents and overseers. The use of Germans as gangers, station-masters, and subordinates will not bear practice ; they would require exorbitant pay and be liable to sickness in summer.

So far as I can ascertain, the Germans are not exactly sympathetic to orientals, and are seldom popular.

The

The 'Sedan smile' is a form of facial contortion incomprehensible to all, and does not command respect; and in warm climates the shameless Hun abandons stays: consequently his figure makes a poor show on horseback,* and he is not a sportsman.

The effect that the railway will have on the country is not to be prophesied. I can imagine two totally different results, both possibly wrong: the first—and the wish may be father to the thought—that it will bring peace, cultivation, and order, followed by a gradual reviving of the Arab population under the influence of wealth and education; that the Kurds and Bedawin will be glad enough to bring in their wool and meat for sale; that native manufactures may increase, and that the mineral wealth of the country may eventually be developed without European assistance; and that the main profits of the company will be derived from internal and export traffic rather than from import and European transport.

On the other hand I have a horrible presentiment of the people being hostile to the railway, of Germans flooding the land with abominable rubbish, and a general collapse of such native arts and crafts as survive; of the railway running solely to the advantage of the European, sapping the country with an extortionate guarantee; and an eventual occupation of the land by a race as unsympathetic to orientals as they are to us, lording over the country with a grossness of tyranny such as only square-headed, snub-nosed, sentimental, parade-ground-drilled, commercial Teutons could display.

* Even the Emperor's seat excited ridicule at Jerusalem.

But in that case I pray on my bended knees they will colonise, and that I may be granted enough life to see the next generation diseased, lax, fat, and orientalised. Wallahi! the revenge of time would be complete.*

* Since writing the above I have visited Anatolia, where the Levantine 'Deutscher' is to be seen in scant numbers, but I found no reason to excise.

CHAPTER XIV

TO JEZIREH

OUR march to Khail Aniez the next day was most interesting to any one wishing to learn something of the people.

We were accompanied by a most amusing Persian Dervish, who scornfully protested at the very mention of Kerbela, and spat at the idea of being taken for a Shiah. He marched about five hundred yards in front of the caravan singing very beautifully in his own language. I rode up to him to listen, whereat he began talking in Turkish. I explained that the only language I knew at all was Arabic, and that of the smallest quantity. It happened that the Dervish knew as little as I did, and in consequence I was able to understand him better than an Arab, who rolls all his words in a bunch, nips off the ends, and lets fall such a torrent of Q'K'Cafs and hghrains* that unless you have an excessively sharp ear it is difficult to follow him. The Dervish proceeded to soliloquise over the state of the country in this manner: 'Now in Persia there is law! there is order! We cut off a thief's head in the open square, and all the other thieves, seeing the deed, are filled with fear. The soldiers of Persia keep open all the roads, robbery is

* This is the best phonetic spelling I can make of those sounds.

unknown (?); but in this land of pigs there is safety neither in house nor highway; and how, alas! shall I ever reach Kerbela for my pilgrimage!' 'Are you a Shiah?' I whispered. The Dervish answered not a word, but the wily, roguish look that twinkled in his eye confirmed my suspicions.

Presently we reached a broad wady, and as I had not quite got my eye adjusted to the atmosphere for rifle practice I took four or five sighting shots at various ranges. In less than as many minutes some fifty men came marching out from an encampment about a mile from the other side of the road in open order, and, notwithstanding the threats of the Zaptiehs, came creeping on in the most unpleasant manner. Heads bobbed up in all directions, and where the country had appeared uninhabited, little parties of armed men came sauntering up to the caravan. They said they had heard the shots, and thought that a Ghazu had attacked our caravan, and had come to give assistance; but the curious way in which they haunted our rear made it necessary to tell them that unless they stayed still they would be fired on. The main body halted and consulted for a few moments, during which time we hurried the mules out of range and, as they were on foot, made a capture hopeless without casualties. About ten minutes later the whole party had vanished, and not a trace of them was to be seen. The gnome-like fashion in which these people appeared and disappeared was so uncanny as to make one feel somewhat nervous.

About half an hour farther on we met a Bedawi who had strolled from Baghdad and was going to Mardin to do a little business. He was a true Bedawi of the Bedawin

Bedawin : he laughed at our caravan, made some cutting remarks about my riding, walked on, stopped abruptly, shouted after us that we had better leave no stragglers in the ruined village ahead, and muttered something about looking at the Shaykh's tomb there. This the Zaptiehs took as a hint. A quarter of a mile from the little village we saw a tomb with a white dome. I halted the caravan and advanced cautiously. About two hundred yards from the building two of the Zaptiehs spurred their horses into a gallop, dashed up to the door, thrust in their rifles, and called on any one within to surrender. Shrieks and curses issued from the chamber, and presently three individuals crept out with guns in their hands : these were snatched from them as they emerged. One of the three suddenly broke away and vanished into the ruined village before we could catch him ; the other two were bound and requested to give an account of themselves. Why had they loopholed the tomb? Why had they no fewer than six guns? Why were some of the guns in the loopholes? Their answers, except that they were prefixed by Wallah! Billah! Tillah! reminded one very much of the replies given by Mr. Dan Leno when he is apprehended in some peculiar villainy at the Drury Lane pantomime.

Why were they in the tomb? Of course they were *in* the tomb, and didn't deny it ; but they were in the tomb because being in the tomb they were not outside, and that was a matter reasonable enough. They were obviously not robbers, as that wretched, lying Bedawi had stated. Who ever believed in a Bedawi? All Bedawin were liars and bold robbers. They had hidden in the tomb for very fear of that particular Bedawi, having
seen

seen him approach.* Had we been a smaller caravan we should have suffered from him, but truly the reason they were in the tomb was that the tomb was that of a Shaykh whom they held in great reverence, and whom they annually visited in order to obtain a blessing. Why was it loopholed? Oh, of course, that *might* seem strange; but the air in the tomb—the Shaykh although a holy man was but mortal, and went the way of mortals. Why were the rifles in the loopholes? Because they were the best place to put them in; and there were six rifles because—but ear-boxings and rib-bangings here cut the story short.

It is worthy of remark that the cook punctuated all these answers with Akrut, while the Persian Dervish wiped the tears from their eyes.

We secured all the rifles, and the muleteers having emptied the tomb of the eatables it contained we marched off the prisoners. During the scuffle one had been knocked down and his nose scraped; wherefore when he had been comfortably tied up, the Persian Dervish bathed the injured organ with water and put his turban on straight, at the same time admonishing the thief of his villainy. The whole way the men protested and raved that they intended no harm, but on perceiving that we were going to pass a certain village they flung themselves down and shrieked for mercy. Then the truth came out.

They belonged to a village in the mountains at feud with the village before us, and they had taken up their quarters in the tomb in the hope of waylaying some of the inhabitants. They were thieves and villains, only for the

* He was armed with a tobacco pipe.

love of God they implored us not to take them near the dwellings of their enemies, for the inhabitants knew them well and would assuredly kill them.

This was a consideration. We could not avoid taking them through the village if we kept them, and as I had no wish to have them slain on my hands, after a consultation with the Zaptiehs we let them go, keeping the rifles and telling them that we should warn the people with whom they had their quarrel half an hour after their release. They fled away as fast as their feet could carry them towards their native hills, never turning aside to visit the tomb, which was still full of various goods.

We lunched at the village in question, Bartarza, where there is a little pool full of sacred fish as voracious as those of Urfa, but by no means so numerous. The people upbraided us for not having killed the thieves, but were comforted by the prospect of digging round the tomb for stolen property.

The country between Hajerlo and Khail Aniez is rocky and less fertile: it has also been fearfully raided by the blackguard Bedawi Shaykh Ibn Faris, who, with the late Mustapha Pasha, reduced the land to absolute desert.

Six hours' ride over very rocky country, past several Kurd villages, brought us to Jezireh, where I had the pleasure once more of meeting two charming Dominicans whom I had known at Van and Mosul. One of them instantly apologised for not having come to tea when I invited him at Mosul four years ago.

Riding into the town we passed the tomb of Mustapha Pasha, the great Hamidieh chieftain, who was killed in

1902. This man's history is a strange one: leader, first, of a small Kurdish tribe, he was promoted by the Sultan to command the Mirwan Hamidieh, and his villainous behaviour while holding that office brought upon him the hatred of all. Even now his tomb is guarded, for fear his enemies should steal his body and burn it.

Mustapha's tomb is worth a visit, if only to see the interesting Dervish who sleeps in it, and is ready to ask for a trifling remembrance from the lowest Kafirs. The tomb contains several other graves; but the late Agha's is distinguished by a marvellous equestrian figure, and ornamented with a silvered glass ball.

As we passed, the Zaptiehs all spat, as did some townsfolk, muttering, 'May the grave of the pig be defiled!'

This famous pasha I have had killed for me in a variety of attitudes and in many places.

1. By an heroic private who shot him on the parade ground in front of his regiment.
2. Leading a desperate attack on a determined foe.
3. Alone while riding through a wady at night.
4. Ambushed with all his men and fighting to the last.
5. By regular troops who formed his escort.

These accounts, like those often laid by witnesses before the Psychological Society, though vastly entertaining by no means further one's knowledge; and as nearly all evidence on the subject is of the same kind it is hardly worth the trouble of writing down, for no sooner has one gathered one set of interesting and undoubted facts from excellent witnesses than they are completely destroyed by

by the unanimous testimony of other equally reliable persons.

I at length got the true story of his death as related by his two Christian secretaries.* Mustapha Pasha, having spent the summer with his tribesmen and flocks on the south shore of Lake Van, was returning through the country of the Shernakh Kurds, with whom he was at war. The tribesmen of the district intercepted him at the Shernakh pass, and for two days held him at bay. On the third day Mustapha grew impatient and pressed the attack with some success. Presently he cried, 'We must force through the pass to-day or never,' and taking careful aim with his rifle shot a man of the enemy dead, whose comrades retired. Then Mustapha said, 'We will eat before we go further.' Some bread was brought, which he took in his hand. Just as he was putting it to his mouth a spent bullet struck him in the forehead, and he fell dead on the ground without a groan.

So ended one of the most ruthless adventurers that ever distressed the peace of Turkey in Asia.

The Kaimakam of Jezireh was a new political experiment on the part of the authorities: he was a Bedawi! To press a Bedawi into the civil administration is indeed a venture. Kaimakams are usually of three kinds: the first and best, and most numerous, a young Turk, † wearing a collar and frock coat, fairly energetic, cherishing hopes of reform, and though not *abruti* yet somewhat melancholic and despondent; the second, a disgraced official suffering from gravel or dropsy or over-eating, dismal to the last degree, mourning over his fall, and

* This was corroborated by the Shernakh Kurds.

† By this I mean a Turk young in years, not a political suspect.

usually

usually bombarding his Vali with piteous letters praying for forgiveness ; the third, an ignorant, uneducated Turk of the old school, corrupt as one of Queen Anne's statesmen, loving a joke, loving a drink, half Falstaff, half old woman ; courteous, nervous, and conceited, ready to sell his soul for a little money, fond of children, dull and obstinate as a mule, yet rather lovable withal—but a Bedawi Kaimakam ! A Bedawi living in a *Sérail*, holding audience with the bishops ! A Bedawi in command of Zaptiehs ! The very idea is a joke. Yet there at Jezireh I found such a one. What a contrast to the coarse-featured, asp-headed Kurds and solemn, stolid Turks ! His small, lean, intelligent face, his rapid gesticulations, his modulated voice and courtly air marked him from the rest with extraordinary distinctness.

And his administration was different from that of other Kaimakams. When the Kurds robbed his villages, instead of appealing for instructions to the Vali he took the matter as a personal insult, rode out in Ghazu with his Zaptiehs, charged at their head, lilliluing and whooping, 'Alai-hum ! Alai-hum ! I am the brother of such a one, son of such a one ! Alai-hum ! Alai-hum !' His restless, nomadic spirit also prompted him not only to patrol the town at night in search of robbers but to visit the villages of his district by day—a thing unheard of in the annals of Kaimakamlis.

Mr. Wilfrid Blunt will regret to hear that this excellent man wore a hideous suit of European-made reach-me-downs, although he still retained the *Egal* and *Kaffieh*.

While at Jezireh I was honoured by a visit from Tahar Agha, nephew of the late lamented Mustapha Pasha

Pasha, and for seven years tyrant, tomfool, and humourist of that town. He was a stout, puffy-cheeked, sallow-skinned, coarse-featured man with a hoarse, guttural voice, a thick, grating laugh, and a rolling, dignified gait. His record is worth attention.

When Mustapha Pasha was promoted from the county gaol to the rank of general and loyal vassal of the Sultan, he chose Tahar Agha to see to the municipal welfare of the flourishing town: this the Agha undertook to attend to, and showed his capacity in an extraordinary and remarkable manner. He was of opinion that Jezireh wanted rousing; he considered that the people were insufficiently cheerful or hospitable, and lacked public spirit. To set a good example he started a series of junketings and merry-makings on a magnificent scale in his own house, and to such feasts he invited all his friends from the Kurdish camps and settlements, and regaled them with sheep, rice, bughol,* milk—in fact anything that happened to take his fancy in the gardens and shops of his townsmen. As payment for such trifles he wittily remarked that the honour of providing for such a nobleman as himself was sufficient.

His humour was of a rare Barry Lyndon type. For instance, when an aged and venerable Cadi was posted to the town he presented himself before the Agha in snow-white turban and flowing robes, seeming to be the dignified philosopher that every elderly Turkish dandy loves to appear. The chieftain saluted him with a yell of laughter and asked the old gentleman where his harem was: a gross enough insult in the East. The reverend man replied with some solemnity, 'At Sairt, O Agha.'

* Wheat porridge.

What?

‘What?’ cried the Agha, ‘at Sairt—at Sairt? And you here full of youth and gallantry? Are all the women in Jezireh to be in danger because you will not pay sufficient to a muleteer to transport your wives hither? Wallah! But this must be attended to.’

‘But, O Agha!’ interrupted the Cadi, ‘I cannot bring them here!’

‘You rogue!’ yelled the Agha. ‘A determined, hot, wild fellow like you would break into our harems at the pistol’s muzzle. By God! this must be quickly mended.’

‘Consider, O Agha, I am eighty years of age; my beard is white, my head is bald. I never think of such things,’ pleaded the Cadi in alarm.

‘Cunning!’ returned the Agha, ‘cunning! to plaster your pate with lime and bat’s blood* and bleach your beard; but you cannot film the keenness of your covetous eyes—they betray your thoughts! No, we will mend this; you must be married!’

‘Married!’ gasped the Cadi. ‘But my wife in Sairt will——’

‘Your wife in Sairt, say you?’ cried the Agha. ‘And what of our wives in Jezireh? Nay, but you must be married!’

‘O Agha! O Bey!’ wailed the Cadi.

‘There is but one other remedy,’ said the Agha, his humour taking a ferocious turn, ‘and that is often death to a grown man.’

‘There is no might and majesty save in Allah the Glorious and the Great,’ muttered the Cadi. ‘I will marry if you insist.’

* Depilatories.

Then

Then the Agha laughed till his sides ached. 'Send for Fatima, the scullion ; deck her as a bride ; fetch the Mufti, and make ready a three days' feast. Mohammad and Hassan have sheep ; go get them !'

So the poor old Cadi was married to the kitchen-maid then and there, and the feasting at the public expense were of a more luxurious and extensive kind than usual.

On another occasion the Agha invited some particularly saintly mollahs to his house, when music and dancing were provided.

'Ha!' cried the Agha, 'these gypsies dance but poorly ; let us see how reading the Koran affects the legs. Show your grace and agility, O Shaykhs !' And forthwith the good men had to waddle, hop, and snap their fingers to the tune, while the Agha and his retainers roared and sang an accompaniment. Eventually he told the mollahs that their faces were not symmetrical, and shaved off one side of their beards and moustaches to make them so.

Again he forced liquor down the throats of some descendants of the Prophet, and having rolled them in the mud exposed them to the public.

On the death of Mustapha his régime came to an end, and now he lives very quietly in his own house. His brutality and joking are typically Kurdish, and interesting in that respect.

The Chaldean Catholic Bishop had an impressive countenance, but was a weak, nervous man whose life under Mustapha must have been intensely wretched. It is curious that the Church dignitaries of Turkey should usually be so very flabby ; it is particularly unfortunate,
for

for a bold determined man can effect much, and on the priests and bishops so much depends.

The second night of our stay was somewhat exciting. At about midnight awful howls issued from the town; drums were beaten, bugles blown, and presently a scattered fusillade burst upon our ears. What was the matter? Had a massacre begun? A glance at the moon explained—there was an eclipse.

Pliny says ('Nat. Hist.' Book II. Ch. 12), As for the moon, mortal men imagine that by magic, sorceries, and charms she is enchanted, and therefore help her in such a case, when she is eclipsed, by dissonant ringing of basons.

The Mohammedan population of Jezireh at the time of my visit was a little excited. One of the mollahs had been cheated in a matter of business by a Christian, and in consequence suffered from visions which hinted that if the Government were not adverse a little wholesale looting would purge the land of the evil. Most appropriately Mustapha Pasha was one of the saints who communed with the holy man.

As the Zaptiehs were all taken off on a foray of the Kaimakam's I was provided with five regular infantry bearing Mausers * which the wily Germans have unloaded on the Turks.

* This rifle is not half so bad as many suppose. Its chief points are : (1) smokeless powder ; (2) bore a little larger than that of the Lee-Metford ; (3) lead bullet ; (4) admirable bolt ; (5) rim cartridge ; (6) abominably complicated tube magazine running up the barrel containing ten rounds ; (7) excellently finished, as nearly all German weapons are. On the whole it is quite good enough to compete with the crutch-butted, gimcrack, ill-finished, clumsy, heavy Russian Mauser, the very sight of which is balm to the soul of an Englishman who still believes that Russia might advance on India, for when he sees it the belief becomes a hope.



FERRY AT DURNAKH.

CHAPTER XV

EASTERN KURDISTAN.

FROM Jezireh we proceeded to Khantan, where we were delayed by rain. From Khantan we rode to Durnakh, on the banks of the Khabur River, which we found swollen beyond all expectation and running at a fearful pace, the only ferry being a little ten-skin kellek (raft). Fording appeared out of the question, and yet somehow we had to transport twenty-two horses and mules across the torrent. To me this appeared impossible, but six Kurds and a Yezidi arrived on the scene and announced that they could get the animals across; we accepted their services, and they gave us an exhibition of skill and courage such as I have never seen equalled, and the sight was more exciting than even a bull-fight.

The first man stripped to the skin, got on to my horse bare-backed, and rode him in up to his belly; then the horse slipped and both were out of sight under the boiling yellow flood. In three seconds they appeared a few yards lower down, the horse's head and neck and the man's shoulders being visible, turning in the swirling water like corks. Even the yelling muleteers were hushed for a time, only breaking the silence with muttered exclamations, 'Ya ibn Dawud! Ya Haji Mohammed!' I gave both up for lost when suddenly the pair rose, struggled

struggled to the bank, and emerged, the man still riding. In this way these gallant fellows swam all the animals across in succession without a single mishap. I have heard it said that all inhabitants of Turkey fear water. Let those who believe this go to Durnakh in flood time.

Durnakh to Zakho is a short ride of two hours, which brings one to the bridge that spans the river ; concerning this bridge the following legend is told. Many years ago workmen under their master were set to build the bridge ; three times the bridge fell and the workmen said, 'The bridge needs a life.' And the master saw a beautiful girl, accompanied by a bitch and her puppies, and he said, 'We will give the first that comes by.' But the dog and her little ones hung back, so the girl was built alive into the bridge, and only her hand with the gold bracelet upon it was left outside.

At the foot of the bridge I found the local Agha, Yussuf Pasha, superintending the collection of the sheep-tax, in which as a large landowner he has an interest.

It is at Zakho that breechloading rifles* begin to be seen in the hands of all who can buy or manage to steal them, Martinis, Sniders, and Burdans being the most numerous—cartridges of any calibre appear to be obtainable. I saw a British Lee-Metford, Mark II. in the hands of a shepherd. What a history it could tell! Probably stolen near Peshawur, sneaked to Cabul, drifted

* The question that often presents itself to the traveller is, Why do the Turks permit the frontier Ashirets to remain armed with breechloaders, martinis, &c. when by a little exertion they might pacify the country by collecting these weapons? The answer is extremely simple though unlooked for. If the Turkish frontier tribes were disarmed they would be at the mercy of the Persian Kurds, with whom they have been at feud for many years. This would entail maintaining a frontier force to protect them, which in the present financial state of affairs would be an impossibility.

to



BRIDGE AT ZAKHO.

to Suleimanieh, sold, stolen, smuggled, and hugged over three thousand miles of the most wonderful country in the world.

Zakho is a town of perhaps four thousand inhabitants : Chaldean, Kurd, Jew, and a little Arab form the ingredients of its population, while a few Yezidis and gypsies camp in the vicinity, each race having a distinct language.

The Bishop, whom I had met before, spoke French and accompanied me to the Kaimakam, who was very ill and past any serious work. I presented the latter with a tonic compound and some Livingstone rousers, for which he was very grateful.

On returning from the Kaimakam I met Yussuf Agha, whom I invited to dinner, with his secretary and the Bishop. When they arrived, some three hours before the appointed time, a long and desultory conversation ensued, the Agha being very bitter and caustic about the Government. I presume the sheep-taxing had not been quite to his liking. He demanded railways and progress, liberty and no taxes ; was very contemptuous of the Hamidieh of Ibrahim Pasha, and probably spoke the truth when he stated that they were only fit to rob Fellaheen and fight Jews. On the other hand he admitted that the late Mustapha, though an accomplished villain, was an able general.

Yussuf Pasha's position is something between a deputy commissioner, a feudal baron, and an English landlord. He has a Government appointment, a seat on the district council, farms his land well, and leads his tenants to battle when at war with another tribe. He said that he would much like to visit Europe, and had

M

long

long intended to do so, but that he dreaded to leave his property so long exposed to attack from without.

Towards the end of dinner he became obviously uneasy, and peered nervously into the darkness, at last shouting for coffee. The Bishop whispered to me that our illustrious guest was anxious to go home; I asked why, and was told it was not wholesome for Aghas to stay out after sunset, as friends had a habit of taking a mean advantage of stone walls and darkness.

I gained an insight into the untruthful habits of native Christians by the action of the Syrian priest who visited me in the dead of night with the following blood-curdling tale:—The Chaldean Bishop, Yussuf Agha, and the Kaimakam had leagued in a desperate plot to assassinate me when I left Zakho. The Christians of Zakho (that is, of course, the Syrian Christians of Zakho) were weeping when they thought that one so young, so handsome, and so rich was doomed to death. As this kind of tedious lie is so often produced I did not hesitate to inform the conspirators of this betrayal, over which we all laughed heartily. On my return to Zakho, three months later, I may note that the Syrian priest did not repeat his visit.

The events of the next two days are of no importance, as I was suffering from malaria, and the outward world concerned me not in the slightest. . . . When I had recovered I despatched the caravan and cook to Mosul, lest the sight of it should excite the cupidity of the local nobility of Amadia, whose open-handedness is famous.

Before leaving for the latter place I paid a State visit to the Pasha, whose progressive ideas extend to very excellent maps and a shelf full of books. This visit I performed



AGHA OF ZAKHO.

BISHOP OF ZAKHO.

AGHA'S SECRETARY.



MOUNTED INFANTRY (SIVARAS).

I performed at the request of the good Bishop, who said it would place him in a better relation with the Pasha, whose friend he was, and with whom he wished to stand well. I fear a certain noble author would condemn my action as 'pandering to the ready designs of a crafty prelate, already the slave of a not too scrupulous proselytism.'

The Siyaras* who escorted me rode in front with arms supported—a thing absolutely forbidden except to the highest native officials; but the picturesque effect of the procession was somewhat marred by the Bishop's mare becoming very restive, which necessitated the assistance of two Chaldeans, who held the Bishop on. This would appear ridiculous in a European, but with an oriental it is otherwise, and the Bishop looked as dignified as if on his episcopal throne. The Pasha was all smiles and welcomed me with every kind of compliment.

Our first march brought us to Nawishki, a distance of seven and a half hours. The scenery throughout is delightful in springtime, not from any peculiar grandeur, but from the luxuriance of the vegetation and the carefulness and neatness of the cultivation—always a pleasing sight, and in Turkey giving hope to the most hopeless.

On the right-hand side we passed the Zakho Hills, tilted at right angles to the rest of the globe, presenting a strange, abrupt, wall-like appearance. Unfortunately

* These Siyaras, who have the tax-collecting to perform, are also a fine, business-like set of men, good shots, keen-eyed, and cunning. The way in which they manage their mules up and down hill would make even an Australian admit that they were fairly smart. These Siyaras are neither Zaptiehs nor regulars, but a kind of volunteer military police provided with mules by Government, subject to discipline, but not conscript. They are, in my opinion, the pick of the Turkish army, and can well be considered equal to our best colonial regular regiment, such as the Cape Mounted Rifles.

I was not able to obtain a photographic effect owing to the flatness of perspective. Any geologist who passes may well spend a week on the war-path amongst the crevices and cracks of these ranges, though I fear for his boots and his shins. But of course these are of no consideration in the interests of science.

All along the road nearly every man we met was armed with a very effective Martini and bristled with cartridges—in one place we met a band of sixteen so equipped, but they appeared very peaceful, and never offered to molest us. Tribal conflicts in these parts are by no means the picnics of the Bedawin and Mesopotamian Kurds, for the mountaineers know as much of cover, scouting, and guerilla warfare as Brother Boer or any colonial.

From Nawishki the road led us to Tini, passing several villages, which I name in the sketch map. One of these (the second Ras el-Ain) had come to serious grief at the hands of one of my escort and fourteen of his companions. It appeared that the inhabitants (Kurds), having refused to pay sheep-tax, had assaulted the tax-gatherers, discharging Martinis at them and waving swords in a warlike manner. My friend and his fourteen companions were the avengers: they captured the criminals, burnt their houses, looted some others, and brought the evildoers to prison. These, after their release, dispersed, and in consequence the remaining inhabitants, who paid their tax, are much richer than before, as they have appropriated the belongings of the others.

We passed several ruined villages, and it would be as well here to notice that ruined villages in Turkey in Asia do not necessarily mean a state of things worse than
than



VIEW TAKEN NEAR NAVISIKI

than when those villages were inhabited. Murray's 'Handbook to Syria' says, with a throb in its voice, 'Syria is a land of ruins, and the ruins are increasing every day.' Of course they are ; but the handbook does not explain that people in Turkey, especially Kurd and Arab, in whom the nomadic instinct still remains, will move off on the very slightest pretext and build another collection of huts two miles farther on. Further, as Sir Richard Burton says, 'Orientals build, but never repair,' and when a village has become dilapidated the owners as often as not will abandon it and construct another.

The scenery the whole way is delightful, mostly leading through a forest of dwarf oak, well stocked with game of every kind ; and any sportsman at Mosul would do well to pay the district a visit.

The village of Tini is inhabited by some Chaldeans, whose characteristics are good-looking women, dirty, impertinent children, well-built houses, and an unlooked-for lack of hospitality. On visiting the Shaykh's room not even a glass of water is offered, which in a rich house one is apt to take a little amiss after the extraordinary kindness of the Moslems.

While writing my notes during the day I had occasion to refer to my maps. I had nearly every map that is to be had of the country ; and if the noble compiler of one of them reads this let him learn that he is, in the words of Mrs. Gamp, 'a bold, bage creetur.'

Amadia is situated about six hours beyond Dawudieh. We reached it early in the afternoon, and, at risk of repeating known things, I will venture to describe the town.

It is strikingly situated on a spur jutting out of the Hakkari

Hakkiari Mountains. As a position for observation and defence I should deem it almost perfect even now; for the heights behind, which command it, are inaccessible. It is true that for a 'stickler' the sides are somewhat too abrupt; but as they are practically unscalable this does not matter. The track which leads up to the town is steep and almost dangerous. The city gates exhibit a little good carving, though somewhat marred by earthquakes, and there is a curious figure of a man in the rock just by, which may be of the Misty Hittites or later, but is so defaced that only the most learned and boldest of antiquaries would dare to give it a date.

The Madrasseh at the bottom of the wady, built by Sultan Hassan, is now a ruin. It is nothing remarkable, but its position is very beautiful. The minaret in the centre of the town is not worth climbing, as the view is no better than at the bottom, and the citadel is merely a ruined barrack built by the Turks in the reign of Abdul Mejid, when the country was first conquered.

I visited the Kaimakam, who suffered from creeping paralysis and was sick. It is strange that the Government should place these impotent old invalids in charge of the most turbulent and disorderly districts; but—but—well, I have seen men as incapable employed elsewhere, so we must not twit the Turks for not being better than we are ourselves.

From the Kaimakam I went to the Bishop, whom I was overjoyed to find entertaining all the local Moslem officials—the Cadi, the Mollahs, the Commander of the Redif, and an Agha. He was a fine man, intelligent, unbiassed, and on excellent and proper terms with the Mohammedans. The best proof is that he discussed
the



VIEW FROM AMADIA LOOKING TOWARDS ZAKHO.

the Macedonian question with them at length. He told me that Mar Shimmun, the Nestorian Primate, was dead.

Mar Shimmun had been Bishop many years, and his position and history have been carefully described by Lord Warkworth. His declining years had been much troubled by the intrigues of his brother or cousin Nimrud. Matters reached a climax when the latter descended to Mosul, with many members of the episcopal family, to become Catholic Chaldeans—at this juncture Mar Shimmun died. Now it is a matter of modern discipline in the Nestorian Church that a bishop should be of the episcopal family, and should never have tasted flesh since his birth, and for this reason certain children are set aside as possible bishops. Some of these had gone with Nimrud, and on Mar Shimmun's dying there was no one to be consecrated except a boy of sixteen, who is now Bishop of the Nestorians. What the end will be I cannot foretell, but it looks as if the Nestorian Church would very soon cease to exist. The next day Nimrud and his train arrived, freshly converted, from Mosul.

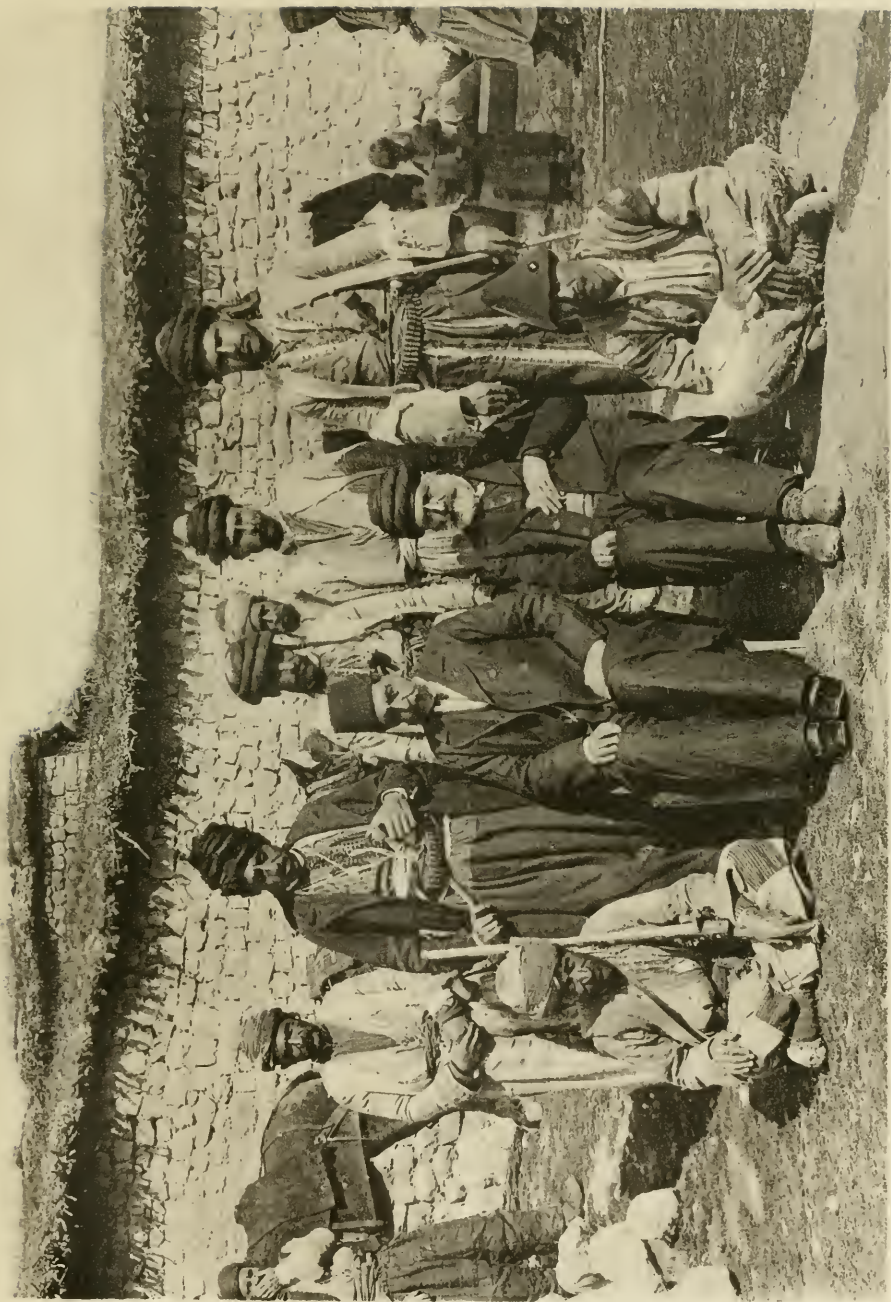
Of course the Dominicans are bound to accept people of the kind when they present themselves—it is not to be avoided—but the whole affair seems very disreputable and blasphemous. It is not a matter of faith or morals. At a village near Mosul, named Alkhosh, the inhabitants became Moslems, much to the annoyance of the Government, whose position in such cases is somewhat delicate, and in fact may be compared with that of a certain Militia sergeant-major who put down a recruit as R.C. Two Sundays later the recruit paraded with the Wesleyans. 'What's this!' cried the sergeant. 'T' service is shorter,' said

said the recruit. 'What!' cried the sergeant. 'Fall in with the holy Romans. Hi'll teach you to change your God in the middle of the training and upset my roster!' And that is much what one would like to say to the converts of Hakkiari.

Of course the conversion is an advantage in one way, inasmuch as their priests will receive education and discipline. As far as one can make out, they require both; but as for spiritual good I do not believe a single Nestorian would give a fig for Filioque, or Nestorius, or Mater Dei, or Mater Christi, or union with Rome. But they primarily desire monetary assistance from without and wish to annoy their enemies within. I do not suppose that Nimrud is a greater or less ruffian than any of the other Nestorians; although he greatly detests the English Mission, who, he says, came to build up a Church and have ruined it: which means, I presume, that they have not assisted him financially in his schemes.

It is regrettable that the Nestorians should be so torn with feuds and tribal enmities, for although blustering and shameless mendicants they are a fine, manly, bold people, with all the Moslem virtues and none of the vices—a thing rare in native Christians.

To me it is a matter of regret that missionaries should attempt conversion in Turkey at all. Did they attempt to proselytise Moslems I would admire them. That, however, is an impossibility; for not only do the missionaries undertake to make no such attempt, but Al Islam once bred in a man wrecks his mind for any other belief. The simplicity of the creed, the canting formality of the prayers, the low ideals, the force with which belief in Islam or nothing is driven home from early youth



NIMRUD EFFENDI AND HIS RETAINERS.

youth make it impossible for a Mohammedan to become anything but an Agnostic or remain as he is.* As theologians and word-spinners they could beat any scholastic of the thirteenth century; and if any one would attempt to point out to them the absurdities the Koran contains he must be prepared to have the tables turned upon himself. It is, in fact, as impossible to turn an oriental Moslem into a Christian as an English Christian into a Jew; hence all missionary labour in Turkey must be confined to Christians; and what the object of turning one kind of Christian into another can be I leave it to the reader to imagine.

To turn a Jacobite into a Little Bethel Peculiar Anabaptist, to convert the Little Bethel Peculiar Anabaptist *né* Jacobite to Roman Catholicism, and to reform the Roman Catholic late Little Bethel Peculiar Anabaptist *né* Jacobite into an American Keswickian Presbyterian would appear to be a sowing of wind and a successful harvesting of cyclones.

* This of course is a generalisation, but the number of converted Moslems per 1,000 in India bears out the statement.

CHAPTER XVI

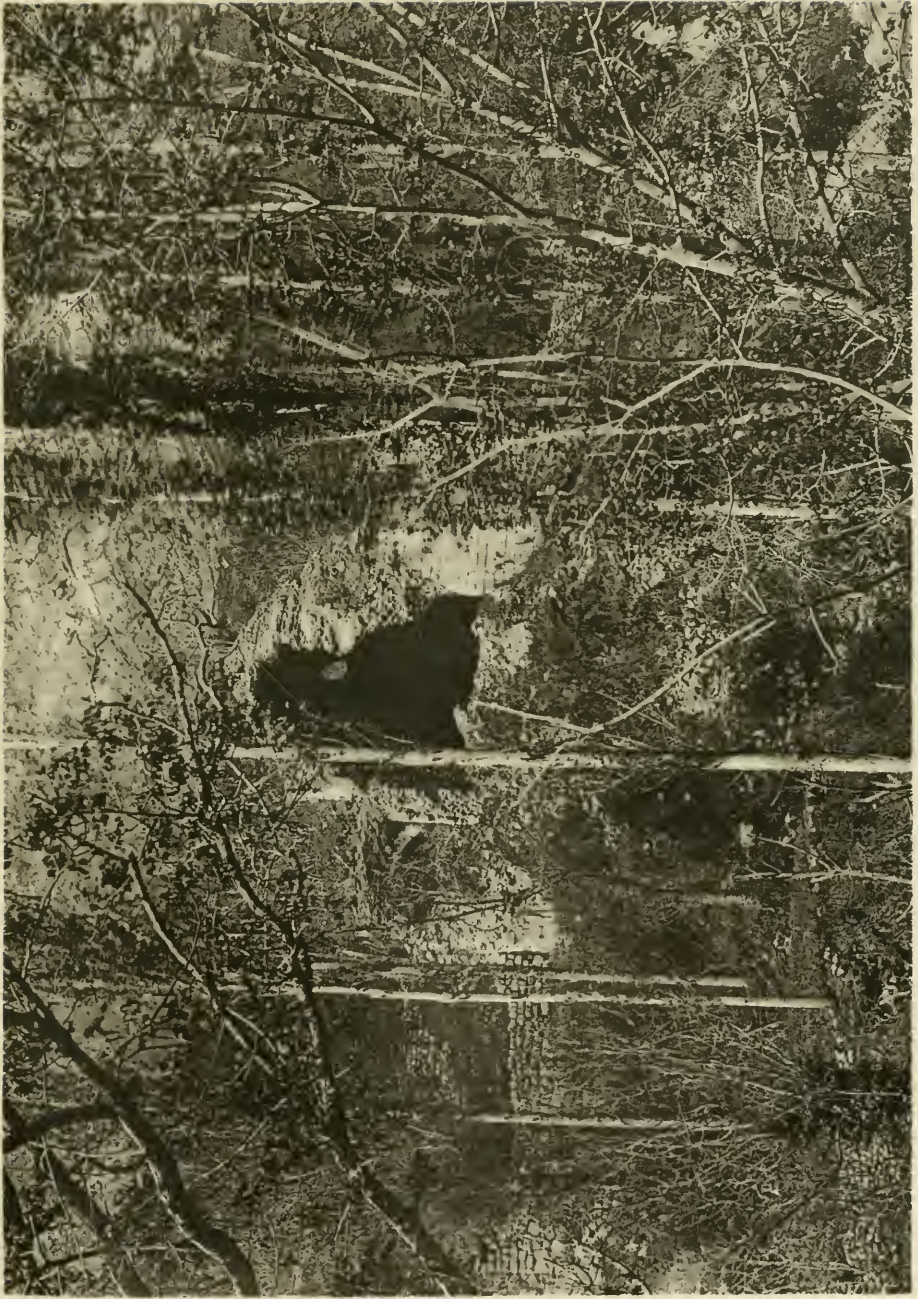
TO AKRA

I ARRANGED to start for Akra the next morning, having previously intended going by way of Zibar, but the authorities objected, saying they could not answer for the road, as the tribes were up.

Just before leaving, however, there arrived a messenger to ask me if I minded going via Zibar, as a considerable action had been fought by the troops with the Herki Kurds ; Hajji Agha, the chief, had been killed, and the enemy had retired between Akra and Amadia, leaving the Zibar district quite clear. This I was glad enough to do, and started for Zibar with six infantry Zaptiehs, who had authority to shoot if necessary.

The road is bad for mules, but by no means so awful as the inhabitants of Amadia would make out, and it winds through most splendid scenery, the first pass being particularly beautiful ; the mountain tops had just enough snow to make them picturesque ; the towering cliffs closing in make one almost giddy from below. In places the road is paved, which makes the travelling more difficult than where it is not, and farther on it leads through a dense oak forest.

We called at the villages to ascertain the latest news of the fighting ; but all that we could find out was that
the



RUINED COLLEGE BELOW AMADIA.

the Herki Kurds had come through in all haste two days previously, closely followed by troops, who between them had eaten a good deal, though refraining from plundering. On this expedition I was obliged to put up in various native houses for safety.

I have read in the book of a well-known traveller in Turkey that no one can gain any idea of the country without dwelling in the native houses. If any traveller supposes that when he stays in a villager's hovel he sees it under ordinary conditions he is woefully mistaken.

The very presence of a travelling gentleman in an oriental village is an event; the whole conversation is but on one topic, that of the new arrival. Why is he here? What does he seek? If a ring-tailed baboon talking English, riding on a white elephant, accompanied by two policemen, were to enter a Yorkshire village and quarter himself in one of the houses, what impression would he get of the people? Just about as correct a one as an Englishman in any village between Adana and Baghdad.

Who pretends to understand orientals? Few Europeans who have lived among them all their lives would admit that they had fathomed more than their own ignorance. Burton, Burckhardt, and a few others may have known something, but not all. There is one man of my acquaintance who knows more about orientals than possibly any living European, but he in no way admits that he knows everything. Indeed, it is not a good thing to know too much of orientals; if you do, perhaps you may wake up one morning and find you have become one. Horrible instances of this kind have occurred; and any one who has seen an oriental European usually retires to a convenient distance to be sick.

We

We stopped the night at Sharana as the houses were clean, and my Zaptieh, in order to obtain more entertainment for us all, told the headman that I was a great pasha from Stambul sent to negotiate with Shaykh Sadiq : which is one of those thoughtful little things Zaptiehs do, and so bring the traveller a respect which is not always his by rights.

That night I surprised my host with my electric torch. This instrument is an excellent touchstone of race in Turkey, and under its influence the inhabitants display their various characteristics in the most amusing way. Suppose one showed it to an Arab Shaykh ; instantly every person present gives signs of admiration and wonder : 'Mashallah ! Mashallah ! As bright as the sun ! A moon in the hand !' and all would be eager to have the mystery explained. Every kind of criticism and comment would be made, each man speculating as to the uses of the instrument. On the other hand, you might enter the crowded guest-room of a Turkish village and flash it in every man's face without interrupting the monotonous conversation, nor would the phlegmatic Osmanli even turn his head to avoid the glare, or go to the trouble of moving his eyes to see whence it came.

With Kurds it is again different : they were always interested, but not as the Arabs. Their first question would be, 'Where can we get one like it ?' And the eagerness with which they snatched it and the reluctance with which they returned it gave a good idea of the extraordinary covetousness and thievish disposition of these people.

Next day we started off at 6.15, and commenced a long ride over ground which I could not have believed it possible



DERASHT PASS, LOOKING TOWARDS AMADIA.



TAKEN NEAR REDENIA, LOOKING TOWARDS SHERANA.

possible for mules to cross. The villages we passed all complained of the hardships they had suffered at the hands of the Kurds. Two miles from the village we slept at there is a sulphur spring; and near the village of Meseri I noticed a rock-hewn cave. We then crossed the Mountain Range marked B on the map; at the top of the pass there are eight wells.

About an hour later we met a Kurd who told us that the Herki were doubling back towards Zibar, and in consequence we had to make a southern *détour* to avoid clashing with their arrangements. Two hours farther on the Zaptiehs began wrangling about the road, which, it turned out, they had all lost. Consequently we wandered on until sunset, and then camped in a delightful spot in the forest by a river; but the scenery and charms of nature were somewhat marred by our knowledge of the close proximity of roving bands in no way kindly disposed to any one. I remember a lark lifted its voice in beautiful song, but, so irritable did I feel, I could have wrung its little neck—however, the night passed off without event.*

I fear whoever reads this will imagine that I have been afflicted with a more than usually oppressive fit of dulness—but I beg that he will remember that dodging war-parties all day and making up maps all night do not conduce to fine writing.

The next morning we felt our way carefully up the valley, and eventually espied a village named Sian, which we approached. This was a signal for a general stampede

* I had an opportunity of seeing for myself how slack oriental guards grow towards daylight. British officers cannot go wrong in attacking at 3 A.M.

of

of the inhabitants, the women vanishing into the woods, the men taking cover and levelling their Martinis, howling the while. I guessed that this was owing to a misapprehension on their part, and held up my white helmet. This was sufficient to reassure them, and they came forward explaining, with many excuses, that they had taken us for the enemy. They had been fearfully plundered by the Herki, and used as billets by the pursuing column; they said that they were sick of such things, and would stand it no longer, though we were welcome enough: a thing which they proved in a very practical way by entertaining us to an excellent breakfast. We learned with some pleasure that Akra was only four hours distant, and that our losing the road had not taken us any distance out of the direct line. The village we breakfasted at was half Chaldean, half Kurd, under a Kurdish Agha.

The road to Akra took us straight over the last Range by a very severe road. On one of the horses casting a shoe, Halil, following King Lear's advice, sewed up the hoof in a bag of felt, which, much to his surprise, wore through in five minutes.

The view at the top of the pass is very impressive, as one suddenly comes in sight of a vast rolling grass plain which stretches miles and miles, eventually melting into the hazy gentle hills round Mosul, while behind the tumultuous mountain landscape forms an extraordinary contrast. The track on the Akra side of the pass put all former experiences in the shade, and the passing of it ended in the laming of one of our horses.

The town of Akra is apparently thrown against the rocky hillside in a very haphazard manner. The streets are



BEFORE REACHING AKRA.



KAIMAKAM AND MEJLIS AT AKRA.

are terraces between the houses, so that the roof of one dwelling is the doorstep of another; and, though picturesque, this has its disadvantages, as one of the mules discovered. Seeing some weeds he fancied growing near a chimney pot, he trotted across the roof, and just as he had grasped the tempting morsel his hind leg vanished into the ground; awful screams rent the air—or rather earth, for they came up through the chimney pot, and an aged lady appeared through a kind of trap-door and poured forth fearful abuse. Meanwhile the mule remained with head and forelegs alone visible, and, by the sounds, kicking various household goods to pieces in the dining-room below.

After the animal had been extricated, and the angry gentlewoman pacified, we went straight to the Kaimakam, and having reported our arrival pitched the tent between a particularly savoury dunghill and the graveyard. Presently a messenger arrived, asking us to go to another place, where the Kaimakam was taking tea and Kaif. I cannot translate the word other than by saying that various writers and natives tell me it means—

1. Enjoyment of friendship.
2. Drunkenness, &c.
3. Taking ease.
4. A short ride.
5. A pleasant, cool spot to sit in.
6. A pavilion.
7. A banquet.
8. A wedding night.
9. A happy meeting.
10. Home.
11. Brown study.
12. Love

12. Love in idleness.
13. Delight.
14. Opium and its effects.
15. Tobacco.
16. Repose after fatigue.
17. Rest after Turkish bath.

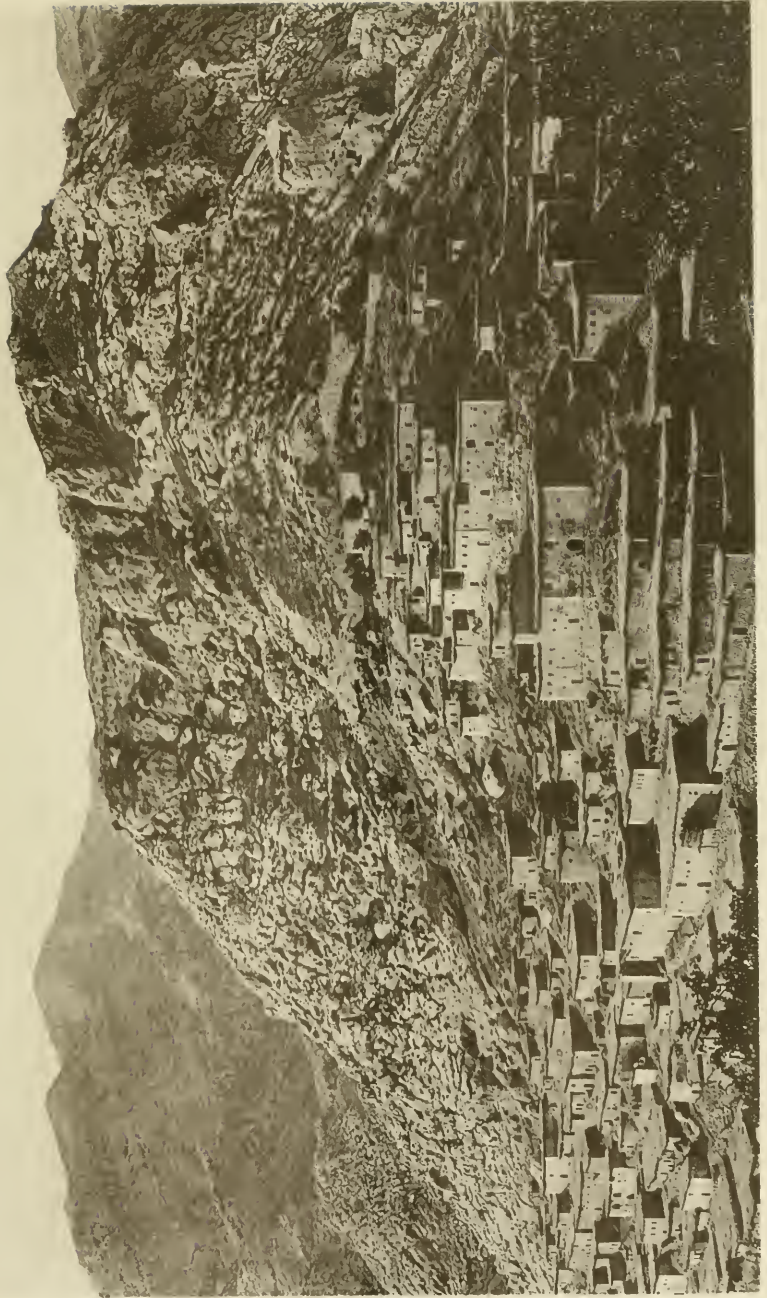
I found the Kaimakam and his staff all seated on tombstones in the shade, talking about nothing in particular. As usual, I was bombarded with questions. Was Kruger the better man with the sword or a lance? Was the war over with Dransfiral? What was I doing? Had I a fano goref? &c., until I was nearly exhausted. In the middle of this cross-examination a subaltern arrived covered with dust, and much out of breath, stating that he had come with 100 Mufrazies. The meeting broke up soon after, and I returned to camp.

Among the official papers at the Government office was a memorandum concerning one Loord Ranilshogis* going to Persia, requiring all and singular to give him every assistance. This shows a remarkable solicitude on the part of the Government. What perspirations of feverous fear must Kaimakams have sweated when that young nobleman passed through their district!

The Chaldean priest brought me a Syriac Testament, about two feet by one and a half, bound in wood—MS. on vellum, no illustrations, but a few pages in gold writing. It had evidently been rescued from burning. Following particulars—

Testament, A.D. 1248; written by Mar Elia.

* I presume Lord Ronaldshay. The noble Earl must not be annoyed at the contortion of his name, for my own has been through various official documents as Börk Saheeks, Mak Suz, Mik Sehs, Mourghos Six, John Summers, Anak Simmons, McSnee.



AKRA.

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



London Bickers & Son

Stanford's Geogr. Estab^t. London.

CHAPTER XVII

TO MOSUL AND THE TIGRIS

OUR journey through the mountains being ended, I pushed on to Mosul with all possible speed, thus passing from Kurdistan again into the land of the Arabs. The borderland between the two races is inhabited by half-breeds, but these in no way resemble the low trash of Urfa : they are a fine race, clean and hard-working for orientals. I must admit I was rather pleased to see once more a wild and woolly Bedawi tending his flocks outside Mosul.

'Odysseus' very truly says, in his splendid book, that it would take a clever man to distinguish one race from another by physiognomy in Turkey in Europe, and so it is round Mosul. There are Yezidi villages, Kurd villages, Christian villages, Arab villages, Kurd Nomads, Arab Nomads, Bedawin, Semi-Nomads, Shiahs : in fact, every kind of creed and race ; and though a Hill Kurd can be as easily distinguished from a Bedawi as a negro from an Englishman, the intermediate races present every combination of the two types. I have seen men known as Kurds exhibiting every Arab characteristic, and Egal-wearing village Arabs so coarse-featured as to make one doubt whether the Arabs are a handsome race.

But there are all kinds of puzzling faces in Turkey.

N

How

How is it that, now and then, amid a group of round-stomached, brown-skinned little rascals, tumbling in the dust of a Fellaheen village, you will see a flaxen-haired, blue-eyed child with a face that Millais would have been glad to catch a glimpse of?

The ride to Mosul is pleasant enough after the town is in sight, for it presents a fine appearance at two miles' distance, much belying the squalor of its streets and poverty of its bazaars. The inhabitants are of the true, proud, bigoted, conceited, town Arab tribe, such as inhabit Hama, Homs, and Damascus. Eloquent, cunning, excitable, and cowardly, they present to my mind one of the most deplorable pictures one can see in the East: diseased from years of foul living, contemptuous of villagers, with all the loathsome contempt of a stunted cockney for a burly yokel; able to quote poetry in conversation; hating the Turks—their immeasurable superiors—as barbarians; idle beyond all hope, vicious as far as their feeble bodies will admit; ready to riot and slay for the sake of fanaticism as long as there is no danger; detesting Europeans with a bigoted, foolish, senseless hatred; insolent yet despicable; ready to cry 'Kafir' to a stranger, and fly ere his head is turned. With minds of mudlarks and the appearance of philosophers, they depress and disgust the observer.

What a fall indeed is here! These miserable beings are the descendants of Arabs who, under their caliphs, ruled over an empire the history of which, though still unwritten, is one of the most glorious in the world; whose literature was the noblest, whose science was the most advanced, whose philosophers were the most subtle of their age. Yet I believe that this fall is not owing to degeneration

degeneration of a worn-out race, but merely the result of environment and dirt. The haughty pride, which is now absurd, will when education comes, as it must, save them from becoming Europeanised in the paltry manner of the Gosmobalet. The poetic tags in conversation show a little of the old spirit still surviving; so let us hope for the men of Mosul.

Great Britain's interests are represented by a flag and a native Christian named Nimrud. This gentleman, who cannot talk English and is conversant with very little French, is the sole official resident on behalf of the British Government in a large turbulent town, the seat of a Vali whose jurisdiction is further from headquarters, and weaker, than in any other part of Turkey. It seems incredible, but it is so, and Nimrud Effendi is the only protector of many Indian British subjects. Of course France has a consulate, and a flat-capped official represents the influence of Holy Russia.

To my great joy I picked up a *Spectator* in Mosul, and read it from cover to cover, including advertisements. As I had been riding for thirty days through land which is richer than any I had seen in South Africa, a phrase 'deserts of Asia Minor,' *à propos* of the Baghdad Railway, appeared a little out of place.

I found the English antiquary, Mr. King, prosecuting his excavations with great industry. Although interested, I am not an archaeologist, and consequently anything I might say would not only be secondhand but impudent. There is one point, however, which is open ground, and that is the remarkable delicacy of the sculpture, *i.e.* the moulding of the limbs and anatomy, which is wonderfully accurate and fine: a matter

surprising enough to one accustomed to the bulbous-calfed deities and kings in the British Museum.

Again, it is interesting to note that a number of objects detailed in the carving survive to the present day: the Kellek raft, the Chaldean cap, the pointed boots, the method of building mud walls at a slight angle for stability, the encasing of brickwork in limestone slabs, and the village castle with bastion towers surviving amongst the Zibar Kurds.

We left Mosul for Kalat Sherkat, sending the caravan to await us at Altin-Kiopru, and made our first day's halt at Hammam-Ali. The route follows the Euphrates fairly closely, and leads through country interesting in view of the Baghdad Railway. It is badly cultivated, yet so rich as to yield fine barley crops, though the straw is poor and short. We passed several swarms of locusts in the footganger stage; but owing to the lateness of their appearance the damage they effected was slight, though we met many people coming from the west, whose crops had been utterly destroyed.

The whole district is thickly populated with Arab tent-dwelling Fellaheen, who are a cheerful, kindly people. They follow the same mode of life as the semi-nomads of Harran, but are superior in every way, owing to the greater purity of their blood and lack of contact with Zaza Kurds. It appears to be the custom when reaping to present a small sheaf to any person of consequence on the road, begging alms in return.

At Hammam-Ali there is a hot sulphur bath, whence the place takes its name. It bears a great reputation in the neighbourhood, but as I discovered two lepers and
an

an interesting case of lupus sitting in it I omitted to test its stimulating qualities.

From Hammam-Ali to Manguba the road turns off from the river and enters the desert, which is certainly a very misleading word when applied to the Jezireh Plain. A more appropriate one would be prairie or veld, for such indeed it is; and even in May it is not difficult to see what splendid grazing land it had been a month before. We stopped at the village of Shora, where a bullet-headed Albanian officer dwelt in a fine konak as Mudir. Twenty cavalry are stationed there, and act as desert guards. We learnt, much to our regret, that the whole of Jerullah's force had left a few days before our arrival.

The chronic by-war which is at present dragging out its course between the two divisions of Shammar Arabs had taken a very serious turn owing to a fearful conflict in which, as far as I could ascertain, three men were actually killed, and in consequence of this appalling disaster Jerullah had been obliged to place his army of fifteen thousand men under the protection of the twenty soldiers at Shora. From this it will be perceived that Bedawin intertribal warfare is more a country gentleman's pastime than anything else. It requires good horsemanship and courage equivalent to that necessary to a hard-riding foxhunter. It is very romantic and must be intensely amusing. The long rides, the singing of war songs, the individual combats, and the lack of great danger make up a sport unrivalled in the world. Any young gentleman who can use a lance and can ride straight will spend a very pleasant spring in either camp of the Shammars if the Shaykhs will accept him, which
I am

I am almost sure they would be delighted to do. A rifle or a revolver would be out of place.

From Shora to Manguba is a short ride. We passed several encampments of the Fellaheen, who are as simple, as gentle a folk as one could wish to meet. Poor people ! They are almost at their last gasp on account of the locusts, which have devoured their crops for the last three years.

Concerning the locusts I noticed a curious occurrence. By the river side the banks were abrupt to within ten feet of the water : on this little beach a large number of locusts were imprisoned, as they could not contrive to climb any height, and owing to lack of grass their wings were not developed. Some black ants were using them as food, and killing them by sawing off their heads, which with the springing legs were carried away, the soft bodies being left behind and covering the ground thickly.

Manguba to Kalat Sherkat, a dull ride of seven and a half hours, is through cultivated land more wretched than desert, for the crops were ruined and the ground was thick with locusts—the cause of the destruction.

About three hours later we passed Giyarra, a petroleum spring, which is surrounded by a lake of solidifying pitch. Here is a small Government establishment of retorts and workers. The landscape is a most extraordinarily hideous one, stinking smoke coiling up from the retorts, the workmen foul beyond all filthiness, and in the distance the black lake, the yellow hills, and a mass of broken boilers and worn-out petroleum tins in the foreground.

Jacob tactfully remarked, ' *Maintenant nous sommes en*

en Angleterre.' And so true was the remark that I could have knocked him down.

When we reached Kalat Sherkat we discovered that there was a famine, and a journey to El Hadr was out of the question. Many were our prayers of thanksgiving that we had not gone there direct, as we originally intended, for had we done so we should have lost all our horses from drought.

About ten o'clock I was visited by the agent of Lynch's Company, who was on his way to Mosul. He talked English, and gave me a bottle of the very best Irish whisky, for which I hereby tender him my most grateful thanks.

The next day was occupied in ferrying over the river, a privilege for which five Jibbur Arabs pay the Government 150% per annum and make their own profit. Of all the dangerous ferries in Turkey—and they abound—the one at Kalat Sherkat takes the first place. The boat is a replica of that extraordinary ark which creaks across the stages of English provincial theatres when the heroine has to be rescued. On land this vessel would be excellent used as a hen-roost, or, with creepers, it would form a romantic summer-house; but as a ferry boat it is by no means an unqualified success. The bottom is flat, the sides are flat, the bow is square, the oars are saplings, the rudder an oar. The ferrymen, who can swim perfectly, provide themselves with life preservers of inflated skin, and encourage the passengers by praying loudly that God may grant a safe journey: a prayer in which I joined with great heartiness.

Three mules and a pony were bundled in, and the whole camp kit flung on one side in order to give that picturesque

picturesque list which every oriental seaman considers essential to perfect navigation.* The rowers gave one last prayer, the Shaykh of the ferry seized the rudder, the boat sagged a little in the middle as we slipped into deep water; Jacob turned up his eyes, and the bank began sliding away as we whirled and slithered in the current. Halfway across the mules began to kick, we twisted in a sickening manner over a whirlpool, and the rowers and coxswain rent the air with prayers. I felt excessively pious and sentimental; no one would know how I had died, drowned in the Tigris. The morning halfpenny papers would say, 'British traveller drowned in the Bosphorus by the Sultan!—all the winners'!—a little stone in a quiet churchyard—died abroad—[damn that mule]—so young, so soon forgotten. It will appear at my club on the tape tapped out in little blue typing with my name twisted into McSnee by the Indo-European Telegraph. I hope Father Gavin will remember me on Sunday at Farm Street Church—(bump!)—(all the mules fall in a heap)—O Lord! (bump!) 'Alhamdolillah!' shrieked the boatmen. 'Laud to the Lord!' We had arrived at the other side. Now the curious part is that when the rest of the caravan came across I looked on with perfect calm and was rather amused.

From the ferry we rode to a large encampment of Jibbur Arabs, who dwell in villages in winter, and show their sense by migrating into tents in the summer. I do not know if attention has been drawn to the fact that this semi-nomadic life is the most practical and sensible one possible. Curiously enough, there is a return to this

* I once saw a crowded Turkish troopship leave Smyrna at an angle of 25 degrees.

system

system in America, where jaded townsmen go off on camping tours in the summer. The reason is identical, and it would be a great blessing if the custom was introduced into Europe. No one who has seen the change worked on a militia regiment in twenty days would doubt this.

The Jibburs are a charming race of people—quite dignified enough and rather more hospitable and vivacious than the real Bedawin ; not that I wish to disparage the latter, but with them there is, as I have already said, a bluntness of manner which makes hospitality rather unpleasant. The thing that struck me chiefly about the Jibburs was their jollity. Hardly a man spoke without a laugh or a merry smile : a thing a Bedawi would consider excessively gross, which opinion occasionally converts a reverend Shaykh into a solemn and courteous owl.

The children of the Jibburs are trained as sportsmen, and on our asking for a fowl the whole infant population sallied forth, accompanied by the camp dogs, and chased the chickens until one was run to earth in a saddle-bag.

A Shaykh made me a very pretty compliment—
' Our thanks to you for visiting us are as many as your horses' footsteps from Damascus.'

CHAPTER XVIII

TO KERKUK

THE next morning, as the Zaptiehs did not know the way well, a Shaykh volunteered to escort us as far as Makhmur. He rode a good mare and carried his lance well, which, by the way, was a much better type than the ordinary one. As the road, according to the maps and the inhabitants, has never been traversed before, I made a sketch map, which I think is accurate—at any rate it would help a traveller. I will also, at the risk of dulness, describe the route as minutely as I can.

Three-quarters of an hour's straight ride towards Makhmur brings one to an ancient canal, at least thirty yards broad, between enormous banks. Our guide stated that it ran straight to the Zab from the Tigris. The land in the vicinity is arable if irrigated, and this canal points not only to a high perfection in the art of engineering, but to an immense population.

From the canal to the low-lying hills is a distance of half an hour, where there are some mounds, which I think may be artificial, and a small permanent spring. After passing the hills one enters a broad open tableland, eight hundred feet above sea-level, dotted with villages. All these have had to be abandoned owing to the locusts and three years' obstinate drought. It is a fearful

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Scale - 8 Miles = 1 Inch.

London Bickers & Son.

fearful sight to see a land so stricken, and a philosopher would have plenty of food for reflection : the rich land, marked with furrows which no rain has washed away ; the deserted villages not yet in ruins ; the blazing brazen sun in a blue sky, scorching and cracking the ground like a red-hot hammer ; and over all, the myriads of locusts, now driven to devouring one another in the monstrous wildness of which they are the cause ; not a bird, not a gazelle, not a vulture in all this barren plain, which three years ago was as green and fair a spot as in all Irak ! Could Mr. Swinburne but have seen this in his anti-Jovian days, Mashallah ! what an outburst we should have had. But the Arabs and Kurds have been reared in a different school, and bear the scourge without a murmur. They may have their faults, but in times of disaster their nobility is so striking that no one can see them without reverencing them.

Three hours from the hills we passed more artificial mounds, and three hours further on we reached Makhmur. Outside the village are the remains of an ancient town, 420 yards a side, surrounded by a square of mound walls as at Nineveh. In the centre is a large mound, on which I presume was the citadel. Several villages have been built over these works but are now abandoned, so there is no particular objection to excavation.

The town of Makhmur is quite new, and owes its present condition entirely to the Sultan, who holds much property in the vicinity. At his private expense a fine khan, bazaar, and sérail have been built : an act that has brought a great deal of business to the town, which ten years ago was only a little village. It is connected by telegraph with Arbil (Arbela). The temporary depression

depression owing to the drought and locusts has not affected it so much as one would expect, as it is used by passing caravans.

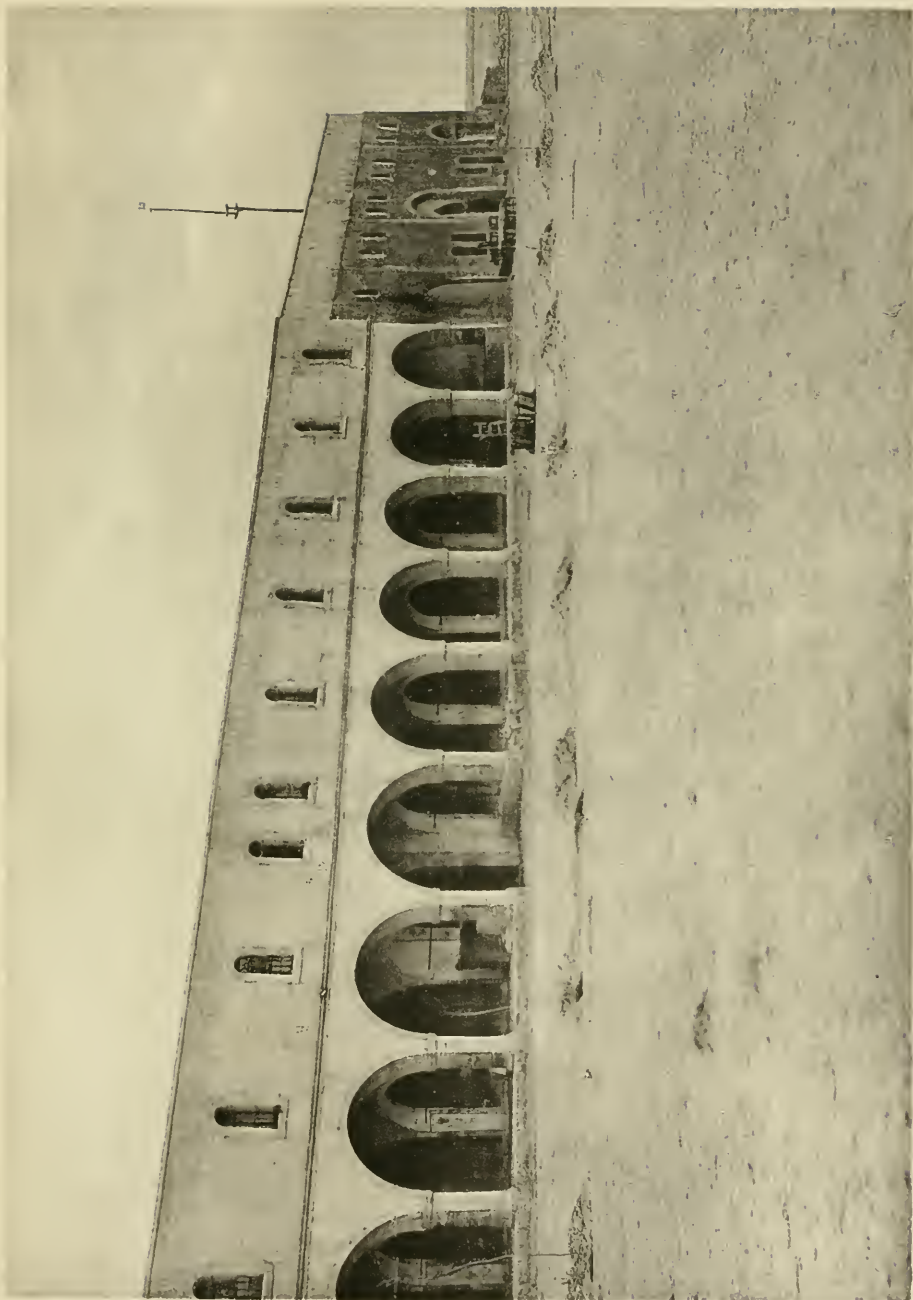
I called upon the great Kurd Agha Ibrahim, chief of the Djziey Kurds, who number twelve hundred families. He considered that the amalgamation of Arabs and Kurds produced a fine race of people,* and stated that his business extended to settling all civil disputes between his people. In fact, an Agha's jurisdiction covers the powers of the Courts of Chancery, Divorce, Probate, and King's Bench, criminal and religious matters alone going before the Government officers.

An example of that delightful spirit of true equality which is inherent in orientals was shown in the company present at my reception—the Agha himself, the captain in command of the troops, a blind beggar, a Christian shopkeeper, a telegraph clerk, a couple of servants, Jacob, myself, and, lastly, a butcher, who came to settle the price of a sheep with my servant, which he discussed across the Agha over a cup of coffee.

Now I ask my reader to imagine the Duke of Devonshire entertaining a stranger in his house in the company of a butcher and a crossing sweeper. We shall never reach that pitch of equality, never! And yet Americans have the impudence, the impertinence, to attempt to school these people in democracy!—they, fresh from the land of the Kentucky Colonel, the Boss, the Millionaire, and the Four Hundred! Why, in America every other man you meet is telling you how equal he is to everybody else; but in the East the

* This opinion may have been biassed, as his father was a Kurd and his mother an Arab.

equality



SULTAN'S NEW KHAN AT MARHMUR.

equality is so truly perfect that nobody ever speaks of it, just as in England people do not thank Heaven that there are no locusts.

The Agha was in possession of a Russian Mauser, which he showed me. I was surprised to see it had a Martini action; but it seems that the Russian action was so complicated and badly made that he had been obliged to have it removed and the Martini put on. He was loud in his complaint of the inferiority of the weapon, for which he had paid a long price. On examining my Lee-Metford his comment was that, although ugly, it would stand work in the mountains—which is perfectly true.*

We stopped the night at Makhmur in the khan, which is new and comfortable. The next morning we crossed the Hassan-Ghazi Pass, named after a Kurdish saint whose tomb is there. The Djziey Kurds hold him in great reverence, and deem it a merit to be buried there; the graveyard is a refuge from feuds and robbers: no one who flees thither will be slain, and any person may leave his goods there without a guard in perfect safety. The sincerity of this extraordinarily accommodating belief is proved by the fact that the whole graveyard is littered with odds and ends, cradles, bales of cotton, bags of rice, stocks of firewood, doors, rafters, fencing, wattle, hurdles, pots and pans, left by various persons who have gone on journeys or removed owing to the temporary abandonment of the villages. This is a quaint instance of unconscious civil law among a nation of the wildest robbers.

The east side of Karachok Dagh is a precise replica

* The Lee-Metford is undoubtedly inferior in detail to the Männlicher, the Lebel, the Mauser, and the Krag; but in durability it is superior to all.

of

of the west, but it is still inhabited as the other was. The population is entirely Kurdish, and every man carries a Martini of the Suleimanieh make. The mountain range has evidently acted as a kind of barrier against the locusts, as they are by no means so numerous, nor has there been so great a drought. The sheep seem to thrive well enough on the pasture, as they are fat and the yield of wool is good.

At Durban we put up at the residence of an Agha, who was away in his tents watching the harvest which was in progress. The women wear curious heavy, loose, dark dresses and large turbans, which are by no means graceful; the men, quilted coats, very clean linen drawers, and a large blue turban, generally rolled square *à la* Hamawand, whom, by the way, they hold in great hatred—I presume owing to some shrewd scratches they have received in the past.

I was told there had lately been some disturbance around Arbil owing to the arrival of the people who left the Makhmur villages making a little free with the property of the inhabitants—an interesting instance of necessary invasion, comparable in miniature to the driving forward of the barbarians. I wondered if at the back of all that upheaval and explosion, that smashing and incursion, that slaughter and wreck, there was a locust nibbling and gnawing and hopping in the rear, driving all before him and making movement an absolute necessity.

In the middle of the above noble and inspiring reflection I was interrupted by distant shots and loud shrill shrieks from the Kurds who had been dozing in the courtyard. In less time than it takes to tell, the whole village

village was in an uproar. Five of my Zaptiehs flung on their cartridge-belts and hied away; such men as had horses jumped upon them barebacked; Martinis appeared miraculously in every man's hand; the women ran on to the roofs with sharp, twittering cries, and I confusedly learned that the village was to be attacked in force.

I had a horse saddled and sallied out with a Zaptieh after the rest. My reasons for doing so were threefold: (1) If the village was attacked and taken I could escape at short notice. (2) If it was attacked and not taken, I could claim an escort the next day on the score of having assisted the inhabitants. (3) I very much wanted to see how Kurds fought among themselves.

The Zaptieh and I discreetly ascended some pleasant little hills where there was plenty of cover, and had a look at what was going on. A few shots were being fired from a crowd of some thirty persons about a mile away, whom I took to be the enemy, and the villagers advanced in two lines, the first consisting of fifteen mounted men, the second a party of two hundred on foot a furlong behind, shrieking war-cries, and well extended to twenty paces. Presently the enemy came running forward and I expected the battle would begin; however, they proved to be only harvesters, mostly women, who had sent in the alarm. Two muleteers had stolen a donkey!

The Zaptieh who had come with me was meanwhile busily engaged in filling his capacious saddle-bags with barley, which he found in a field hard by. When I asked him why he did this he briefly replied, 'I have been a soldier thirty years—I am not a recruit.' So I gather the veteran is much the same all the world over,
whether

whether he figures in Section D, or fought under Osman Pasha.

The thing that struck me most was the extraordinary keenness of every one to enter into the engagement ; even the little boys of nine and ten came out, and the women urged the men on, a few even going out themselves. The conquest of such a people would be by no means amusing. As I wrote the above everybody was dozing quietly as before.

From Durban to Altin-Kiopru* is a short ride of three and a half hours, crossing the Zerguezavand Dagh. The view from the summit of the pass is very fine and gave me much assistance in making my little sketch. Thence to Kantara, or Altin-Kiopru, or Al Kibri, or Al Kabra, or El Kabr, or Elti Kubri, is a short ride through many villages, all correctly marked in the English map of Persian Kurdistan.

Just before entering the town I was subject to a curious and interesting method of paying honour and extorting baksheesh. A man darted forward and cut a sheep's throat, so that the blood spurted on to my horse's hoofs, crying, 'Avaunt evil !' The explanation of this is that if ever a man of consequence should pass a town an animal should be killed in the fashion described, so as to

* I was once rather taken to task by a German editor for calling Altin-Kiopru 'Kantara,' who scornfully remarked that 'Probably greatly trusted Dragoman provided-information-so-misleading-thus-young-traveller.' However, if the German editor will kindly go to Makhmur and ask the way to Altin-Kiopru, he will spend many pleasant weeks in the mountains ; he may make some startling discoveries, and among others he will find that Altin-Kiopru is generally known as Kantara. The explanation is that both terms mean much the same thing, *Kantara* being the Arabic for 'Bridge,' *the bridge* taken in a pre-eminent sense, and *Altin-Kiopru* the Turkish for the 'Bridge of Gold,' the bridge *par excellence*.

give

give fate a life in lieu of one of the honoured person's animals; and the gentleman in question is bound in honour to pay for the sheep, whose flesh is distributed to the poor. This is also a custom at weddings and at the birth of a first son. The theory is that the bloodshed will propitiate evil, which proves it to be a survival of very ancient times.

At the town I found the caravan and muleteers very much abashed. A Hamawand beggar, who had acted as odd man for the cook, had snatched a horse and gone off with it three days previously. The Turkish Government officials had behaved with the greatest promptitude, despatching twenty Mufrazies in pursuit, besides wiring to Suliemanieh and Kerkuk, the result of these operations being that the horse-thief was run to earth a little south of Kerkuk, and five hours before my arrival the horse was brought in, very much done up, but quite safe and sound. I deem the above a very fine piece of police work, and showing a very creditable organisation, considering that the country and its inhabitants must have been in the thief's favour.

I know there are some old travellers who will wag their heads and suggest that I was a fool to let the caravan go on alone. It is a dangerous thing to do generally, but when travelling with your own muleteers, whom you know, it is perfectly safe, and the horse would have been stolen whether I had been there or not.

I called on the Mudir, who was profuse in his apologies for the horse-stealing affair, which he took very much to heart. However, a gun-metal Waterbury put him completely at his ease.

A Baghdad merchant who has been made Beladieh

o

was

was present, and announced that he had been to England on a commercial tour three years previously, when he was the guest of the late Sir Albert Sassoon, whom he held in great esteem, and said that the merchants of Liverpool and Birmingham were the most hospitable men in the world.

That evening the Mudir sent me a fine young stallion in return for the watch, which I had to accept in form, as the Anglo-Indians do, though I really believe that I could have taken it.

In this matter of gifts Easterns are very curious ; they truly understand the pleasure of giving great gifts as few Europeans do. The proof of this is that beggars are seldom deemed a nuisance, and the only rebuke I have ever heard administered to them is that their demands are inopportune. I remember the horror with which an Arab was filled when he saw a London policeman apprehend a woman begging in the streets, it struck him as the most disgraceful injustice, as he could not conceive a person begging who had any other means of subsistence. This is easily understood, for the sturdy vagrant is seldom seen east of Constantinople, except in the person of a very occasional Dervish. Yet the beggars never want, and they have their Shaykh, as every other guild has. It appears to me very near a realisation of the Christian ideal, which somehow even the Charity Organisation Society cannot achieve.

From Altin-Kioprü to Kerkük took us seven hours and a quarter, although this should not be reckoned as the usual time, eight and a half being caravan pace. The road is rather dangerous while crossing the rolling range of mountains before entering Kerkük, as it is liable to
raids

raids on the part of the Hamawand, a fierce, intelligent tribe, of whom more will be said later. The safety of this little area has in some measure been secured by planting a settlement of armed Kurds, who are held responsible, and I presume have some standing arrangement with the former robbers.

No observer can fail to be struck by these hills, the extraordinary symmetrical patterns marked by the long row of peaks rising in parallel lines, each turned out as if in a mould, each with corresponding dimples and creases in its sides. It struck me that it was this formation, which is characteristic of Irak—as the isolated, flat-topped kopje is of South Africa, or the steep, grassy, rolling hills are of the Yorkshire Wolds—that gave the sculptors of Nineveh the idea of the conventional quilt-pattern background which indicates mountainous country. If one considers the matter a little, the conventionality becomes far less unmeaning than one at first imagines.

On our arrival at Kerkuk we found no sign of John Hugh Smith or Haddad. I attended the *sérail* and found the Mutessarif was absent, and a vice-governor in his place, who was a holy man, typical of the official holy men of Turkey, a tribe against whom I have an unconquerable prejudice.

The Vice-Mutessarif of Kerkuk was an excellent example of his kind, with a sandy beard, shifty grey eyes, and pompous, weak, haughty expression. He could hardly conceal his detestation of me as a Giaour, and entirely failed to hide his ignorance of his business when papers were brought him. He might look as owlish as he would, but he always had to refer to his clerk to know what they were about.

The Beladieh, who was a pleasant, intelligent man, presently arrived, and asked me if I would choose to put up at his new office, which was just built. This I was glad enough to do, as camping ground is difficult to find near Kerkuk, and the office was a most palatial dwelling, such as I have seldom seen in Turkey, with doors that shut, windows without brown paper, and a pleasant, shady balcony all round.

Here I spent an unprofitable hour reading Mr. Zwemer's 'Cradle of Al Islam.' One finds repeated therein the cry of every missionary and churchman in Moslem lands, the cry that Al Islam is the root of all evil; that Mohammedanism is the rock on which the East is stranded; and that until the creed of the Prophet is destroyed there can be no hope for Turk, Arab, Persian, or Indian. The arguments supporting this theory appear generally confined to statements that the religion is retrogressive; that Mohammed was a bad man; and that to any one who has been educated a Presbyterian-Christian, and knows only his own dogmas, and hates Mohammedanism with a blind hatred, it is difficult to understand a man believing in the Prophet of Mecca.

It is hard to see that Mohammedanism is any more retrogressive than Christianity, as regards steam-engines, newspapers, electric light, uncorrupt civil administration, &c. It is true that Mohammedans observe their religion with more care than European Christians; but if the latter observed the teachings that are dinned in their ears a good deal of business would come to an end. I know many pious Christians who, if I gave them a sounding box on the ear, would retaliate with a counter on my nose



OUR HOUSE AT KERRUK.

nose, yet would be much offended if they were told that such a course was unchristian. I know others, men of means, who would be by no means pleased if I told them they would probably be damned ; yet they are very good, excellent, and pious Christians.

Who would pretend that Christianity was observed to the full extent ? If every one obeyed the law the world would be heaven, and we should be back in Eden ; and there is reason to suppose that progress and civilisation, like death and marriage, have no place there. As a matter of fact, religion and progress, or morals and progress, have nothing to do with one another.

That Mohammedanism is disastrous to morals in some directions no one who has visited a Moslem country can deny ; but that it affects the arts, other than actual portrait painting, it is ridiculous to affirm. As a matter of fact, people adapt their religion to themselves and their vices, as Dickens said.*

Suppose for a moment that by some freak of fate the tables had been turned, that the West had been converted to Al Islam, and the East had adhered to Christianity—of course morally Europe would have been lower than at present, the East higher—but would not everything else be much as it is ? Would not England be the great maritime power ? France and Germany the great military powers ? We should have no National Gallery possibly, but we should have progressed in commerce, science, and war just as we have done. What has the New Testament or the Koran to do with making money, or examining substances, or travelling at a great speed ? The

* 'My little woman,' says Mr. Snagsby, 'likes to have her religion rather sharp, you see.'

jingoes

jingoes might occasionally preach Jihad when it suited, but otherwise things would be just as they are, while in the East affairs would stand at that everlasting dead full stop which they reached soon after the architectural failure at Babel.

The truth is that morals and material progress have no correspondence, and the most perfect race morally may be dull and backward materially, and *vice versa*; the East has twisted Al Islam to its own bent; the West observes Christianity at its own convenience.

In the afternoon I went round to call on the Commander Pasha, a Major-General in command of the Kerkuk division of the Baghdad Army Corps. He was a delightful man, typical of the best Turkish military class, Europeanised to the extent of chairs, tables, good wholesome cooking, and education; yet he retained all the virtues of his race: he was merry, courteous, and easy yet dignified in his manners, and expressed great delight at seeing a stranger. He had seen a great deal of service, starting as a captain in the Russo-Turkish war, and having just returned from Yemen,* where he had spent twenty-two years on the general staff. He was most popular with his men.

He presently asked me whether I would like a drive, which I accepted. A very smart phaëton, drawn by two handsome little arabs, was brought to the door; the Pasha, his aide-de-camp and I mounted, and off we went at full gallop. The Pasha had no nerves at all, and with a bland and gentle smile dashed over ditches, broken walls, and canals in a way that made my flesh creep.

* His account of that little-known country was most interesting, but would be out of place here.

Luckily

Luckily, he was an excellent whip, or I fear we should have come to an untimely end. After the drive the Pasha invited me to dine, which was a seasonable offer, as my own kitchen required mending.

The following evening the General was my guest; but afterwards he paraded the band, which discoursed various tunes. Usually the Turks insist on playing European music, of which, I regret to say, they always make a fearful mess, the reason being, I think, that they cannot *hear* it as music. That evening the band played the 'Marseillaise' and one or two German marches, after which I was asked to select anything I chose. I begged for some Kurdish airs, which the General pooh-poohed; but the bandmaster said that the men all knew them, and my request was granted; and play they did. They understood what they were about; they talked to one another on their instruments, as it were. The melody was pretty, and ran through the music much as that provoking hint of a march does in Tchaikowski's Symphony, dying away into a melancholy wail in the reeds, and coming crashing back on the brass and drums. It was easy to see that the players enjoyed it more than blaring along the 'Blue Danube,' out of time, tune, and place.

Kerkuk is a large, growing town, and numbers 70,000 inhabitants, including many villages which are now almost suburbs. It is a military centre of the very first importance, and it is here that the Fifth Army Corps must mobilise from Mosul and Baghdad; it is excellently situated for this purpose, both by position and condition, and is the racial and lingual limit of Arabic. The Jibburs and a few scattered tribes occasionally camp on the

the west side of the town. The surrounding country is growing in prosperity ; and if the great railway is ever to exist this town will be the market garden of Baghdad.

A few days later Smith arrived, and we left for Sulei-manieh, reaching Kurgai the first night, passing ugly, earthy ranges of rolling, cultivated hills, which require better farming than the Kurds bestow to make them really productive.



ESCORT OF HAMAWAND KURDS.

CHAPTER XIX

TO SULEIMANIEH

THE country around Kurgai is divided between the Hamawand and the tamer Kafroshi (?) Kurds, who are quite crushed by their bold and obstreperous neighbours.

Kurgai to Chemchemical is a short ride of three hours, but we were obliged to stop owing to sickness. Chemchemical is a poor village town, the seat of a Kaimakam, a telegraph clerk, an apothecary, half a battalion of infantry, and a very noble, distinguished, and highly descended Agha, named Hamed Reshid Haider, who is wealthy and hospitable. On the night of our arrival he entertained the whole company with a banquet which required ten men to carry it, who marched into the camp bearing their various smoking bilious burdens.

The inhabitants of the town are entirely Hamawand, who, under the sharp rule of the lately appointed authorities of Kerkuk, have been reduced to comparative quiet. These Hamawands have long been known as famous warriors and brigands, before whom even the Government troops have occasionally had to retire; but their power was considerably broken by Ismail Pasha, who hammered them into suing for peace some fourteen years ago; after this they were unruly or submissive according

according to the probity or intelligence of the succeeding commanders. For instance, in 1898 Kerkuk itself was not secure, and caravans with large escorts were liable to attack within sight of the town. In 1903 the country was as quiet as any other, caravans were safe, and the roads open. This result has been achieved by various prompt arrests, by demonstrations in force, and by honest co-operation between the civil and military, the lack of which is the cause of more disasters in Turkey than corruption and wilful misgovernment. The Hamawand continue their intertribal feuds with the kindred Jafs and other Ashirets, but in such affairs the troops do no more than hold a watching brief for the Government, whose policy is only to safeguard caravans and interfere to prevent one side annihilating the other.

The Hamawand Kurds present a type almost distinct from any other of that race, for whereas the Kurds of other tribes tend to brawn and muscle, heavy jowls, thick bristly whiskers, and overhanging brows, the Hamawand are slimly built, almost to weakness, with small unhand-some features and thin beards; in fact, the latter sometimes being absent until quite late in life. These curious distinctions rather surprise the traveller after all he has heard of their prowess and valour, which, however, are undoubted, though it cannot be denied that when a Hamawand is relating any anecdote of war he will not depreciate the quality of his valour or that of his comrades. Perhaps to be a Kurd is to be a braggart, but it is not also to be a coward—like the Portuguese, they have their 'fighting days.'

The fever-doctor being absent, our various ailments were patched up by the bone-doctor sufficiently to enable

us

us to pay a visit of State to Reshid Agha at his house, which was a poor enough structure for so great a person, for he is excessively wealthy in material, though possibly not in money. The interview was by no means interesting, and all one can find to say of the Agha is that he is a worthy man, but I think a little frightened of his new responsibilities, for the Commander Pasha has fallen upon him, praised him, flattered him, gained over and made him directly answerable for his district by making him chief of the police, the police being recruited from the Agha's tribesmen. This is a master stroke of policy, and has pretty well smothered the Hamawand without fighting, for Mukhsin Pasha has at his disposal a force sufficient to smash any opposition, and the Hamawand cannot commit any extraordinary outrage without directly challenging the Government. The half-battalion stationed at Chemchemical has been placed there to assist and supervise the Agha.

We left Chemchemical the next day, accompanied by eighteen of the Hamawand Zaptiehs, who are certainly a new development of the civil power, being the most Kurdish of Kurds, without so much as a trouser-button to distinguish them from the rest of their brethren. The road is almost passable for wheeled traffic, and it is to be hoped that with the increase of order and security a chaussée will be made to tap the immense agricultural wealth of the Suleimanieh valley. The Hamawand Kurds who inhabit it are particularly industrious farmers, and carry on considerable irrigation; besides this, until the end of June, the valley is productive of the very finest grazing, and the sheep are quite equal to first-rate Australians, though the flesh is a little rank.

The

The Bazian Pass is a curious 'nek' in the range of hills formed from upturned strata. In former times the pass was evidently of great military importance, for it is defended by walls, and in front of the gate there is a ruined khan or fort, the masonry appearing to be Mohammedan; there are signs also of an ancient road other than the *chaussée*, abandoned fifteen years ago. At Bazian we found Hamawands from the villages dwelling in tents mostly made of light matting. The women have a meretricious appearance, which reminds one of the 'Yellow Book' illustrations.

We resumed our journey at 3 A.M. for the sake of the coolness, and the delightful scent of the grass and flowers before dawn, at a temperature of 60° F., was very refreshing.

A little farther on we fell in with some regular Zaptiehs, who presently came to high words with our escort, the regulars maintaining that they should have accompanied us, the escort pouring scorn on them, saying if robbers had come they would have fled. A Zaptieh retorted that he could shoot any one of our men with ease; in a moment the Shaykh's son had grasped the insult. He slipped a cartridge in his Martini, and had not some of the elder men checked him would have ended the argument then and there; as it was, he dealt the Zaptieh some fearful blows with the barrel of his rifle, and made him pay the full penalty of his rashness in insulting a Hamawand.

The escort presently began playing various Jerid games, but with an adroitness and skill such as I have never seen equalled. The way in which they could miss one's ear with a Martini or revolver bullet at thirty yards filled me with admiration; but joking apart, they rode like
centaurs,

centaurs, and the extraordinary facility with which they managed their rifles, firing right and left and turning completely in the saddle, would convince any one who doubted the capability of mounted irregulars pursuing broken infantry. The Hamawand present an efficiency in the arts of war little met with in orientals, reminding one forcibly of the practical Western ways of the Circassians; and as horsemen they are accoutred in a business-like and sensible manner: their cartridges to hand, a good Martini without a sling, and a revolver complete their armament.

A saddle well girthed up and well made, and a bridle attached with straps, are a different equipment from that of the noble Bedawin Shaykh whose bell-rope halter, wooden saddle, unwieldy lance, and rusty curling scimitar make him an unpractical soldier. How often have I seen such a one, uttering the fiercest war cries and exhibiting his horsemanship, slowly and ignominiously come to pieces: first a red top-boot falls off, then the Egal flops over his neck, then the other boot is lost, then an Abbai, then the Kaffieh, and lastly the wooden saddle slips round, and the haughty fellow falls unhurt on ground as hard as iron.

As we approached Suleimanieh the ground became more and more cultivated and irrigated. About an hour's distance from the town we were met by a civil guard of honour, headed by a Circassian officer and the Beladieh. This addition made our cavalcade sufficiently imposing, comprising no less than thirty armed horsemen.

Suleimanieh is an unimposing city of one-storied mud houses, situated in a hollow, and stretching over a considerable area. It presents no striking feature, and is mean and insignificant

insignificant in appearance ; notwithstanding this, it is a wealthy city and the centre of caravan trade from Persia and Baghdad. Its inhabitants are town-bred Kurds, who, although they compare unfavourably with the villagers, by no means present that spectacle of degradation and squalor exhibited by town Arabs. It has been suggested that this is owing not so much to the Kurds' mental superiority as to their tougher natures, which are not so apt to specialise in vice and sloth, as Arabs will when they have nothing better to do. I think the Turkish proverb, ' Stupid as a Kurd,' must be as false as the idea that a Kurd will not work.

We were entertained at the house of an Agha, who held a position on the Mejlis, and were subjected to considerable inconvenience by the curiosity of the townspeople, who commenced collecting at the door at 6.30 in the morning and continued there until dark.

The second day at Suleimanieh we spent in examining the various smiths, who are engaged in manufacturing Martinis. The trade is the principal industry of Suleimanieh, and over one hundred and fifty masters work in the town and surrounding villages. The weapons they produce are, on the whole, good and reliable up to 800, 900, 1,000 yards, the number of weapons produced being as many as 9,000 per annum, or even more. The method of manufacture is curiously complicated, one master making barrels by spirally welding strips of sheet iron, heating and cooling it slowly to steel ; a second manufactures locks and springs, while a third pieces, smooth files, and browns the rifles, a fourth agent putting the weapon on the market. The rifles vary in price according to the quality and finish, the cheapest

cheapest being 2*l.*T., the more expensive 4*l.*T. These rifles are all very close copies of the Martini-Peabody, even the patent marks and printing being imitated.

The importance of this factory cannot be too greatly insisted on, for through its agency the Kurds are gradually being armed and brought to the knowledge of weapons of precision. Every year of its existence brings the Turkish frontier tribes to a pitch of greater military efficiency, and there is no doubt that the Government is well aware of it and eyes this armament with favour. In such a country, so well adapted for guerilla warfare, every man armed with a breechloader is of military value, and every year sees invasion grow more difficult. At the time of the last war hardly a Kurd was possessed of more than a flintlock, and a revolver was a treasure of price; now every man of the Ashirets sports a Martini and a plentiful supply of cartridges, which he is capable of using with some effect.

The history of the factory dates back to 1877, when the Hamawand made a raid into the Caucasus, captured a Russian arsenal, and returned with a large supply of Burdans. This rifle possesses a particularly ill-contrived bolt action, and the blacksmiths of Suleimanieh, uninitiated in the mysteries of the 'resisting shoulder,' proceeded to copy it. Much to their surprise, the bolt generally flew back in the marksman's face, and so severe was the lesson they received that they have never been persuaded to adopt any action other than the Martini, which is certainly a sound enough contrivance.

Suleimanieh for the present is a very peaceful town, and the Government has shown a laudable activity in keeping the various tribes in order as regards the outer world

world. Until two years ago an annual fair was held, whither the Jafs, Hamawands, and others congregated for a merry-making. At this meeting, it is said, forbidden liquors flowed in some profusion, and the tribesmen, imbibing the same, passed from generous, forgiving friendship to a condition of quarrelsome remembrance of feuds. The proverbial coat was trailed and trodden on ; knives, bullets, and chaos followed, and a general Donnybrook ensued, which usually ended in the plundering of shops and houses. This institution has been abolished by Government, to the great joy of all peaceable persons and the annoyance of the village Kurds, whose love of a vulgar 'spree' is almost Hibernian in its exuberance. Even at present the people pass the time of day in discharging Martinis when they feel in the mood—the direction of the bullet is left to the All-Merciful—the only reason for firing being the delightful explosion, a sound always grateful to Kurdish ears. This curious and dangerous custom is maintained at night with greater regularity than by day, the object of the fusillade then being to inform thieves that the houses are inhabited by bold armed men, prepared to defend their goods at all hazards, in spite of all comers.

While at Suleimanieh we were accommodated at the house of Abdur-Rahman Agha ; he not only entertained us, but insisted on feeding the twenty-four pack animals we had with us. The kindness of the local authorities in providing us with excellent medical attendance deserves notice. Both of us were in no state to travel, and three first-rate military doctors were detailed to attend upon us. These doctors were quite as good as any Europeans, and showed much knowledge and practice of their profession.

After



COUNTRY BEYOND SULEIMANIEH

After nine days' stay at Suleimanieh we were at length sufficiently recovered to ride six hours at a stretch, and accordingly left for Keui Sanjak. The Mutessarif gave us an escort of twenty men and the local Agha's nephew, to ensure a good reception in the villages.

The first day's ride brought us to Dartut (five hours). The east side of the valley is almost entirely given up to grazing, and we passed large herds continually. It is obvious that the country between Dartut and Suleimanieh must be fairly tranquil, as the shepherds were mostly unarmed and evinced no anxiety at our approach. The whole country was dotted with black tents of the Hamawand and Dartut Kurds.

I was much interested at the attitude of the tribesmen and servants towards the Agha's son. It was one of deep respect and friendliness, wherein there lay something more subtle than even the charming devotion of an old English country servant for the son of the squire. There was a certain equality of friendship between the youth and his henchmen, yet never presumed upon.

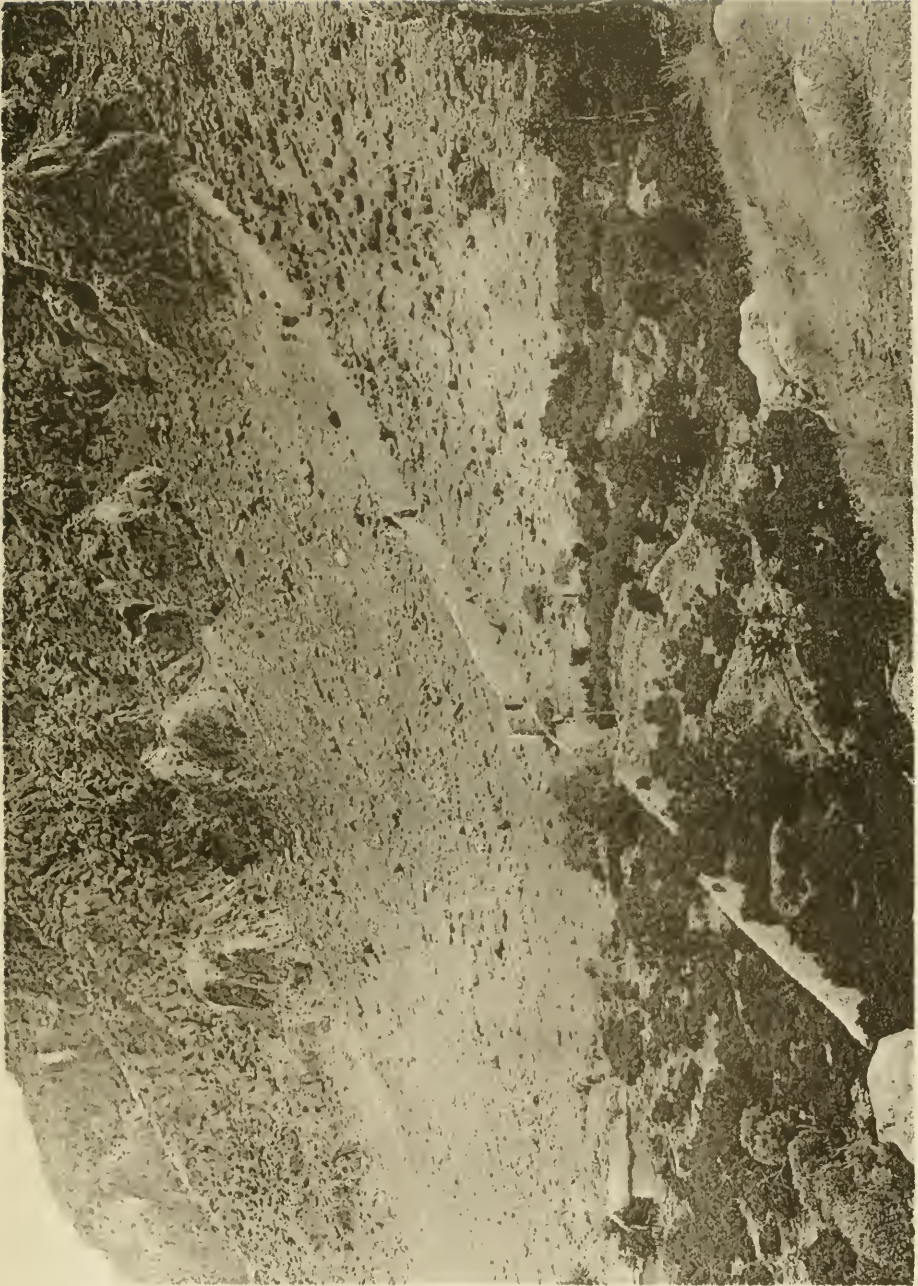
I suppose that class prejudice is among the benefits conferred by the dead chivalry of the West, which, beautiful as it was, noble as it was, excluded the 'Manant' from consideration. Now in no part of Turkey in Asia does the 'Manant' exist; even the Armenian is not a 'Manant,' for it would not have been deemed extraordinary if, at the very height of the troubles, a Kurd or Turkish Agha had invited an Armenian bootmaker to dine at his table and take refuge in his house. Here we Europeans must bow to the East, for after a century of
P revolution

revolution and fuming, and chatting and legislating, we are not as near true fraternity and equality as the Kurdish Agha.

From Dartut we proceeded to Sardasht (five hours). The Suleimanieh valley closes in at the latter spot, and a steady rise of two miles brings you to the height of 3,500 feet. The scenery here becomes more rugged and typical of Northern Kurdistan, and the number of trees gives life to the landscape, though the people still retain some tincture of Baghdad influence in dress.

Sardasht is a fine village which boasts a Government seat, occupied at the time of our visit by an obliging but despondent Mudir, who pined for the delights of Pera, and by no means appreciated the pleasures of solitude and contemplation, which he had every opportunity to indulge in. He must have a weary existence. Coming out of the village we met five boys from sixteen to ten years of age, bearing eight Martinis between them.

That evening I spent much time in trying to extract a little information out of the travels of a certain English gentleman concerning the road between Keui Sanjak and Rowandiz. I only succeeded in discovering that in the summer of the year of grace 1901 a long line of cliff changed slowly from glorious magenta to the deepest tints of hyacinth and iris against a saffron sky (a fact geologically important); but as to the road, or water, or forage, I found nothing, and in consequence retired to rest, a Radical in an abominable temper, and dreamed of Kurdish Aghas writing to the 'Times' on the sanctity of the Sabbath, from which vision I was rudely awakened by eight or nine shots from an outlying picket and sleepy cries from the camp. I reached the scene



RUINED CASTLE AT SARDASHT.

scene of battle as quickly as my ill-suspended pyjamas would allow me, and found the escort firing at an individual who was beating a hasty retreat down the wady. The latter was, I presume, a horse thief, a class not uncommon in the country.

The noise and cries of the guard had sufficed to arouse every one. John Hugh Smith I found using language I would blush to repeat, and wrestling with his rifle, which was apparently jammed. Yussuf Haddad was explaining to every one that he had been smoking a cigarette at the moment the shots were fired—a fact to which he attached great importance. Mohammad Ali, the veteran of the Sultan's *garde de corps*, meanwhile stumbled about, rubbing his eyes and looking for a weapon. The cook did not deign to issue from his studio, but clinched all arguments past and to come by growling the magic word 'Akrut,' and once more composed himself to slumber—as eventually did every one else.

The next morning we called on the Mudir, who showed us over the ruined fortress which cuts the village in two. It is a semicircular, bastioned wall, containing a space of about six acres, the rear being defended by precipitous cliffs. In the centre of the walled area is the ruin of the citadel, a structure of necessity and not of beauty, which may be one hundred and fifty years old. It is attributed by the inhabitants to some Persian 'Pashas,' but the oldest of them could not remember its having been other than a ruin.

The scenery between Sardasht and Dukhan (four hours) is very pleasing to one who has sojourned in the bald, ugly plains and hills of Irak for any period. On

the right the mountains are well wooded, the valley is fruitful, and the oleanders, which at the time of our passage were in full flower, gave a beautiful touch of colour to the scene ; the rough, yellow, coarse dry grass only serving to intensify the freshness of the green and pink clusters which marked the course of the numerous streams that flow from the mountain side. On the left an extraordinary jagged range of impassable mountain cliffs reared themselves to a prodigious height. About half-way to Dukhan, on the right-hand side of the valley, there is a curious shelving rock, which lies along the mountain side, resembling a serpent creeping upwards. It is honoured by the following legend :

A girl and boy once loved one another, and fled together into the mountains. From a cave a large serpent emerged and advanced towards them to devour them. The girl prayed God to spare them, whereupon the serpent was transformed into a stone and the lovers into a pomegranate tree, which grows in the mouth of the serpent.

At Dukhan we had to pass the river. A little colt which followed its mother, a Zaptieh's mare, clung on to her back while she swam across. In some way it kept her mane in its teeth and one foreleg over her shoulder. On the other side of the river we found four Zaptiehs awaiting us, who had been sent from Keui Sanjak. The presence of these four men, who had been waiting for us for two days, gives a good idea of the solicitude of the Government for travellers and of the efficiency of the police officials.

From Dukhan to Keui Sanjak (seven hours) there is a delightful road through the mountain up to the
Keui



THE HILL OF THE SERPENT.

Keui Sanjak pass (see Map) (3,700 feet). There is a fine view, whence the mountains of Persia may be seen.

The next three hours' journey is across dull, uninteresting land, stocked with gazelles, which we disgraced ourselves by missing on several occasions.

CHAPTER XX

TO SHERNAKH

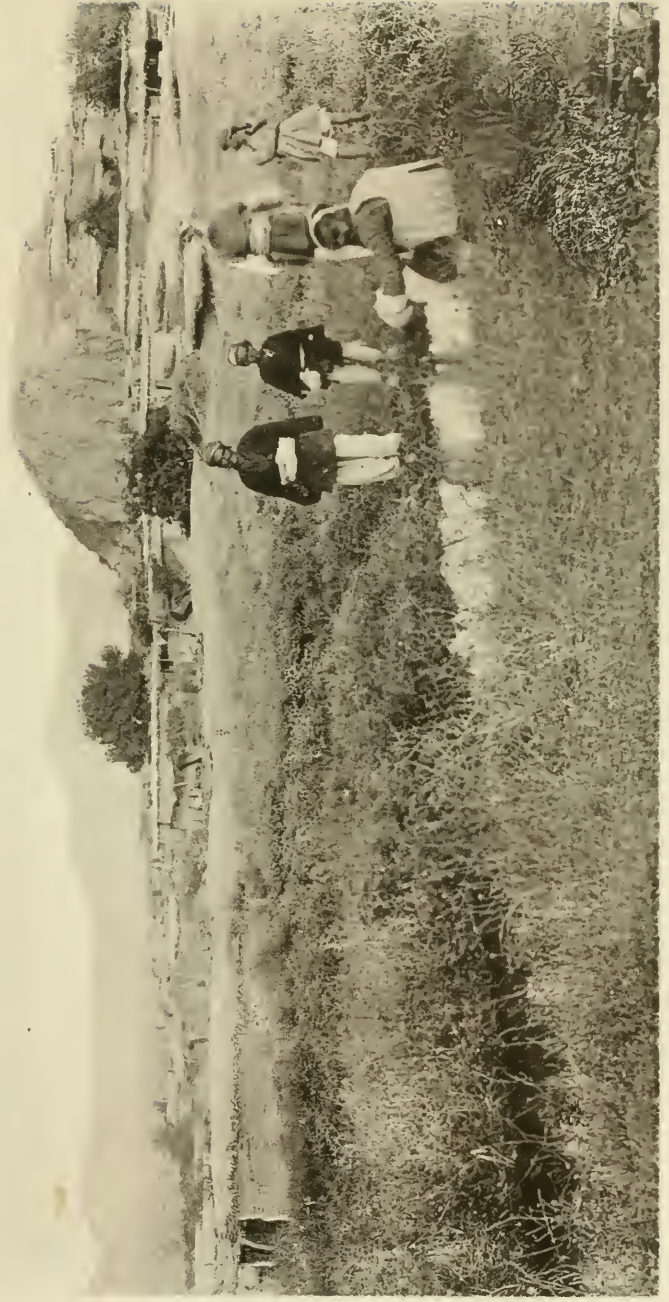
THE town of Keui Sanjak is less squalid than Suleimanieh, and possesses a few presentable houses. It is interesting as being the N.E. boundary of the Assyrian style of building, which survives there as at Mosul. The gardens are well stocked with apricot, mulberry, and cherry trees ; but the science of horticulture is not very well understood, and the yield is poor in quality—indeed, the wild fruit is almost as good. The inhabitants are neither interesting nor attractive, being inferior Kurds, without intelligence or manners ; but the Kaimakam, a solemn soul, did everything he could for us.

We decided to send Jacob to Mosul with the luggage, and make a détour across the cooler Kurdish mountains. In order to avoid the beaten track we persuaded the Kaimakam to let us go to Rowandiz *via* Rania, and this journey we performed slowly, to facilitate the making of a sketch map, halting the first night at Khaderan, the residence of an Agha who is now living at Rania.*

The next morning, half an hour before reaching the

* In case an unwary traveller should be misled, I may state that Taktak is six hours' distance from Keui Sanjak, and not four miles, as stated in a book of authority.

village



RANIA

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Red lines indicate Author's route



Scale - 5 Miles = 1 Inch

London: Bickers & Son.

Stanford's Geog^y Estab^t London.

village of Rania, we crossed a small rocky range of five peaks named Dahli Bisman, and a little further on were met by the Kaimakam, the Cadi, the local Agha, and a commando of some sixty henchmen, retainers, Zaptiehs, officers, and regulars, who formed a line drawn up at the salute in our honour—a wild, fierce, warlike band, splendidly mounted, mostly dressed in their own picturesque costume, save such as were in the employment of the Government, who sported a few crescent-stamped buttons from Steyr.

After we had acknowledged the honour done us, and had shaken hands with our hosts, we moved on towards Rania, twenty men riding behind us, twenty a hundred yards in front, while ten weaved across the road at a steady canter directly before us, firing, twisting and twirling, yelping and cheering as the spirit moved them.

On our arrival at the village we, as usual, were led to the konak and entertained by the Kaimakam. The konak of Rania is a pearl among the Government offices of Turkey. The entrance is effected by creeping through a stable, then through a fallen wall and over the roofs of an adjacent house. The building itself is a long low room, lighted by a door and some crevices in the paper-glazed windows. The ceiling is concealed by sacking, in which the swallows have built their nests, while the furniture consists of a row of hard knotted benches, whose only defence is a red calico cloth, through which the nails and splinters pass with surprising pertinacity and distinctness. At the further end of the room, suspended from a nail, hangs the ensign of the Government—a large gingham.

The company was varied and interesting. The
Kaimakam

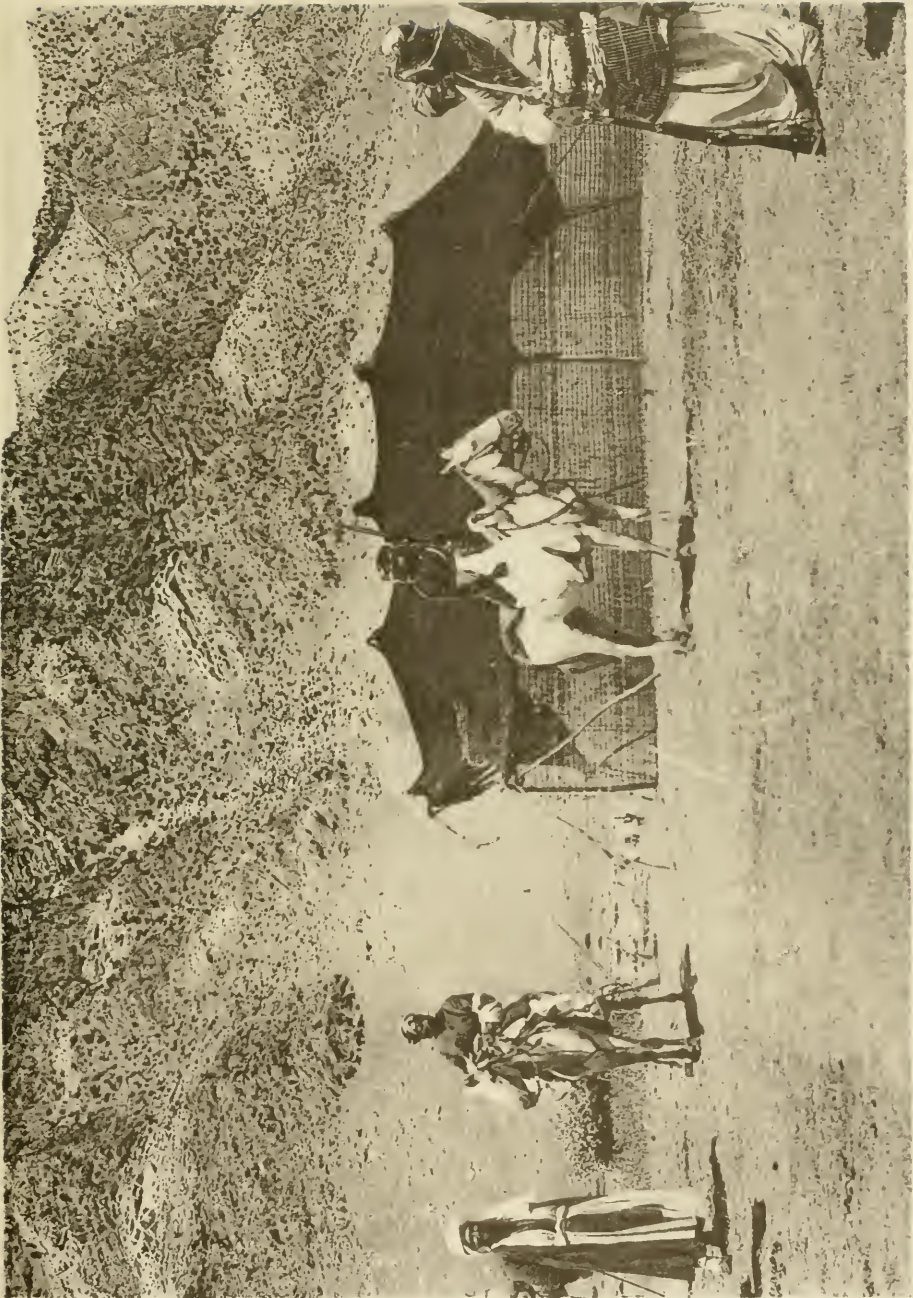
Kaimakam on our left was a Kaimakam of the Kaimakams, bulbous-nosed, white-haired, cheery, and politely anxious. Opposite sat the white-turbaned Cadi, learned in religion and in marriage law, ready to expound any difficult Koranic text given at a venture, dignified and full of sweet compliments. Curled up on a bench sat the municipal clerk, writing busily with an impossible pen on an impossible piece of paper, twitched into a cocked hat between his finger and thumb. At the other end of the room sat an Agha with an unpronounceable name, six foot high, broad in proportion, his hand resting lightly on his khanjar, while squatting on the floor and divan a host of cartridge-girdled Martini-bearers grinned at us with terrier-like cheeriness: men with grey beards and snub noses; men with twisted sleeves and wadded coats; men with heads like hawks and men with frosty chins; ugly men, tall men, short men, gallowglasses of the Agha on their best behaviour, friendly to the Government, all bearing a look of good-natured villainy such as the Kurdish countenance alone can show.*

After three cups of good coffee and two of abominable tea we were permitted to depart and inspect the village of Rania. It is a small town of three hundred houses, inhabited by Aku and Bilbas Kurds. The streets are clean, and the wattled fences, which are used for sheep-pens &c., show handiness and intelligence in the inhabitants.

In the afternoon the Kaimakam invited us to tea in the courtyard of his house. The guests sat round on

* The Bedawi hides his thievish or law-breaking qualities under a cloak of dignified, pompous, frowning, pirate chivalry; but the Kurd is a simpler soul, and if he has a weakness for doing wrong he knows it, and grins humorously and unashamed in your face.

benches



IBRAHIM AGHA, CHIEF OF THE AKU KURDS.



AKU KURDS.

benches of a kind even more excruciating than those which formed the furniture of the konak. On one was an Agha of great dignity, a police captain of severe countenance, the municipal clerk still engaged in writing, and two Arab gentlemen from Baghdad, who looked so wise and noble that one could never imagine a smile on their lips. The legs of the bench were weak—not only weak, but unstable. When the clerk strove gently to grasp his notepaper they creaked ominously; when the Agha lay back his head and stroked his beard noiselessly and politely they trembled; when the dignified gentlemen exhaled ‘Mashallahs’ or ‘Staghfirallahs’ the whole fabric quivered. At this appalling crisis entered a stately white-turbaned Mollah (sixteen stone if an ounce), gliding over the ground smoothly towards the fatal piece of furniture. He mounted, he crossed his legs, and with a rending, splintering sound the overcharged divan collapsed. The dignified gentlemen, the clerk, the captain, the Mollah, smote the earth with a thud—every one laughed aloud.*

Did those inscrutable men move? No! there they remained among the ruins, and in a few seconds the clerk was writing, the officer was frowning, while the Agha, the Mollah, and the dignified gentlemen murmured compliments and ejaculations once more.

The next morning we started for Rowandiz. About three-quarters of an hour beyond Rania we entered an encampment of the Aku Kurds, and paid a visit to Ibrahim Agha, the chief. The Agha was a tall,

* To an untravelled reader this seemingly natural consequence would appear trivial; but on my honour—or on oath in court of law, if need be—I will swear to any Anglo-Indian officer or consul that it is true. To one who knows the East it is the most striking climax.

handsome

handsome man, with a fine, intelligent, open countenance. He entertained us, and by special permission of his spiritual director allowed us to take his photograph. The tribal piper played several airs in our honour, on an instrument more melodious than most oriental musical contrivances.

On our departure the Agha escorted us to the next village, where he left us somewhat abruptly. Our officer explained that he was at some misunderstanding with his uncle's son, and was consequently confined to the south end of the valley.

The scenery grows more beautiful towards Golan, a village situated in an amphitheatre of towering mountains which culminate in a grand and stupendous mass on the north side. The valleys are exceedingly fertile, and the tobacco, which is grown in great quantity, is of excellent quality, and must some day count in the commercial development of the district.

The direct road to Rowandiz, a difficult and dangerous one for horses, leads one through the Nalkiwan Pass, which is reached by a tremendously steep ascent on the south side. Once the summit is attained, the traveller finds himself in a broad, rocky valley, shelving down towards the north, flanked on both sides by steep peaks and crags. A little below the head of the pass is a beautiful ice-cold fountain, named Gurumangal, which after the fatigue of the ascent is more than refreshing. The Kurds on the Rowandiz side are entirely different in dress and appearance from the Bilbas and Aku. They are true mountaineers, with no knowledge of a horse. They wear baggy trousers and wadded short jackets, and a small twisted turban.

We



LANDSCAPE FROM THE NALKEWAN PASS, LOOKING TOWARDS RANIA.

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



London Bickers & Son.

Stanford's Geogr. Estab. London.

We camped the night in the village of Garowan, whence we rode on to Rowandiz the next morning, in two and a half hours, passing through the valley of Garowan.

About thirty minutes before reaching Rowandiz we passed the opening of a deep and gruesome gorge, winding in and out of the mountains on the right of the path. It would make a famous background for any artist illustrating Dante's meeting with Virgil, and even at midday has a shuddering effect on the observer, with its dark abysmal depths and craggy perpendicular sides. Strangely enough, neither afrits nor ghouls have ever haunted it. Possibly this may be owing to the proximity of the town, which is situated at the north entrance.

Riding and musing through these lonely valleys, one's mind cannot but wander into the past and essay to pry into the future. Wild, grey, craggy rocks, and green wooded villages, what have they not seen? The early races fighting, clinging, slipping, staggering, and swaying; of these, in the history books, one can get a faint glimpse. Those heaps of heads and hands, those contorted, hook-nosed, elbow-bound men of Nineveh, who throw darts and javelins, they are from these mountains, where the Kurds, Persians, Turks, perhaps even some mild-eyed Armenians, have fought, conquered, and been conquered in their turn.

Rowandiz is a clean little Kurdish town at the foot of the hill, containing a small Jewish settlement of fifty souls. Above the town various Turkish officers have built some pleasant villas and houses. It is commanded by an old Kurd blockhouse, and at a small distance the insignificant ruins of a castle stand on a yellow, bluff, steep-sided knoll. The castle and blockhouse were
constructed

constructed eighty years ago by a certain Mohammad Pasha, of a noble Rowandiz family, who conquered many tribes and gained such power that his influence extended to Keui Sanjak and Amadia. He built many castles, and was assisted by the Persian Government, who supplied him with cannon. All went well until he attempted to seize Arbil, whereupon the Turkish Government arose from its coma of apparent paralysis, laid out manfully, drove the Agha into Rowandiz, surrounded him, knocked a hole in the wall of his castle, blew up his towers, I believe killed him, and established Ismail, a rival Agha, as governor of the Persian frontier district. He in his turn revolted, and was attacked by the Pasha of Baghdad (then Governor-General of the Mosul and Baghdad Provinces), commanding a force of six thousand men. The Turks were victorious, and the Agha, deserted by his followers, fled to the hills. The army pursued the beaten Kurds to Amadia, where they held out for four months against a desperate siege, but eventually surrendered conditionally. After the fall of Amadia Ismail was captured, and despatched probably to, and in, Baghdad. Since then the Turkish Government has generally been supreme and is always represented in the district.

At Rowandiz we met a young Turkish official whose lingual knowledge of French was so opposite to his comprehensive ignorance that I cannot refrain from reproducing an instructive conversation in which he and we took part :

Y.T.O. : Bonjour, messieurs ; soyez les bienvenus. Nous espérons que vous êtes en bonne santé.

M. Sykes : Merci bien, monsieur.

Y.T.O.



NEARING ROWANDIZ.

Y.T.O. : Ah, non, je ne crois pas !

Mr. Smith : Comment ?

Y.T.O. : Oui, monsieur.

M. Sykes : Est-ce que vous aimez cette ville de Rowandiz ?

Y.T.O. : Non, je n'ai jamais visité Rania, mais on dit que c'est une ville assez agréable.

Mr. Smith (who has not quite fathomed the mystery, and lusts after information) : Est-ce que les paysans Kurds sont intelligents ?

Y.T.O. : Mon grand-père était né à Yanina, ville grecque, mais moi je vins de Constantinople !

This continued for thirty minutes.

The road to Zibar leaves Rowandiz by the bridge-gate, which commands a magnificent view of the gorge into which the river rushes on its way to the great Zab. This gorge resembles the cleft to which I have already alluded, and seems to have no relation to the mountains and general conformation, but appears as a huge passage carved in the rock. In Ireland it would certainly be the Devil's bandbox, or some other property of the carman's non-resident landlord. The river is spanned by a nerve-shaking unrailed bridge, but our heavy-loaded mules staggered over it and reached the other side in safety by the providence of the All-Merciful.

Leaving Rowandiz to our right we followed the track of the Sherwan Valley, putting up at Habedian, a small village where we found fifty Mufrazies encamped. Their business is patrolling the valleys and turning back any parties of marauders who come from other Ashirets. The village of Habedian is overlooked by a precipitous rock, in the face of which is situated a natural cave,
used

used as a refuge. On the summit are the foundations of a castle of the unlucky Mohammad Pasha.

The inhabitants of the Sherwan Valley are a squalid type of Kurds and poor farmers, and are a strange contrast to the intelligent Shoras south of Nalkiwan.

The whole of the Sherwan Valley, which is one of the richest that I have seen, watered by a perennial stream, full of timber, and offering splendid grazing, is practically a wilderness, save for the five villages I have marked. The reason of this is the proximity of the wily and pious Shaykh Sadiq, of Neri, who was being repressed with some effect. However, if the present excellent policy is maintained there is hope of a repopulation of the valley. Vines, pear-trees, cherry-trees, oats, barley, and apples may be grown with great facility, besides excellent tobacco, which reminds one of the Havana in flavour.

The route from Habedian to Mergasor is a delightful ride of five and a half hours through oak forest. The village of Mergasor is situated at the pass at the head of the valley, and from it a grand view can be obtained of the surrounding mountains: a view which carries the eye from mountains in sight of Van to those commanding the frontier near Suleimanieh.

We left Mergasor early, and passing over the ridge entered a continuation of the valley, full of villages (see Map), well cultivated and prosperous. At Dara Tu, where our Zaptiehs commandeered a breakfast, we found three Mufrazies, who had so many empty cartridge-cases that we asked them the reason. They stated, with many smiles, that eight days before they had been sent to the village, their company of sixty men had driven seventeen
Kurds



THE RIVER GORGE AT ROWANDIZ.

This Map is a sketch, and is not to be taken as absolutely accurate.



Scale 5 Miles = 1 Inch.

Starford's Geog. Estab^o London.

London: Bickers & Son,

Kurds of Shaykh Sadiq's force into a blockhouse, which they had taken, killing two, wounding one, and taking the remainder prisoners, sustaining no casualties themselves. They reported the enemy to have been armed with six Wurnzel rifles, one Mauser, four Burdans, and the remainder Martinis. The affair was very characteristic, and the unboastful attitude of the men delightful. The Sherwan Kurds were apparently very pleased, and had given assistance to the troops.

A little beyond Dara Tu the road turns to the left, and after three stony hours brings one to the intermittent ferry at Rezan, situated at the junction of the Zab and Baradost Rivers. We camped for the night near some Rezan citizens, who, with the remainder of the inhabitants of the country, have leased their houses to the fleas for the summer, and dwell in bowers of dead leaves and sticks.

The next morning the problem of crossing the river proved more difficult than usual, as the Rezan Kurds were by no means so bold as the men at Nahrawan, and the river was both swift and deep.

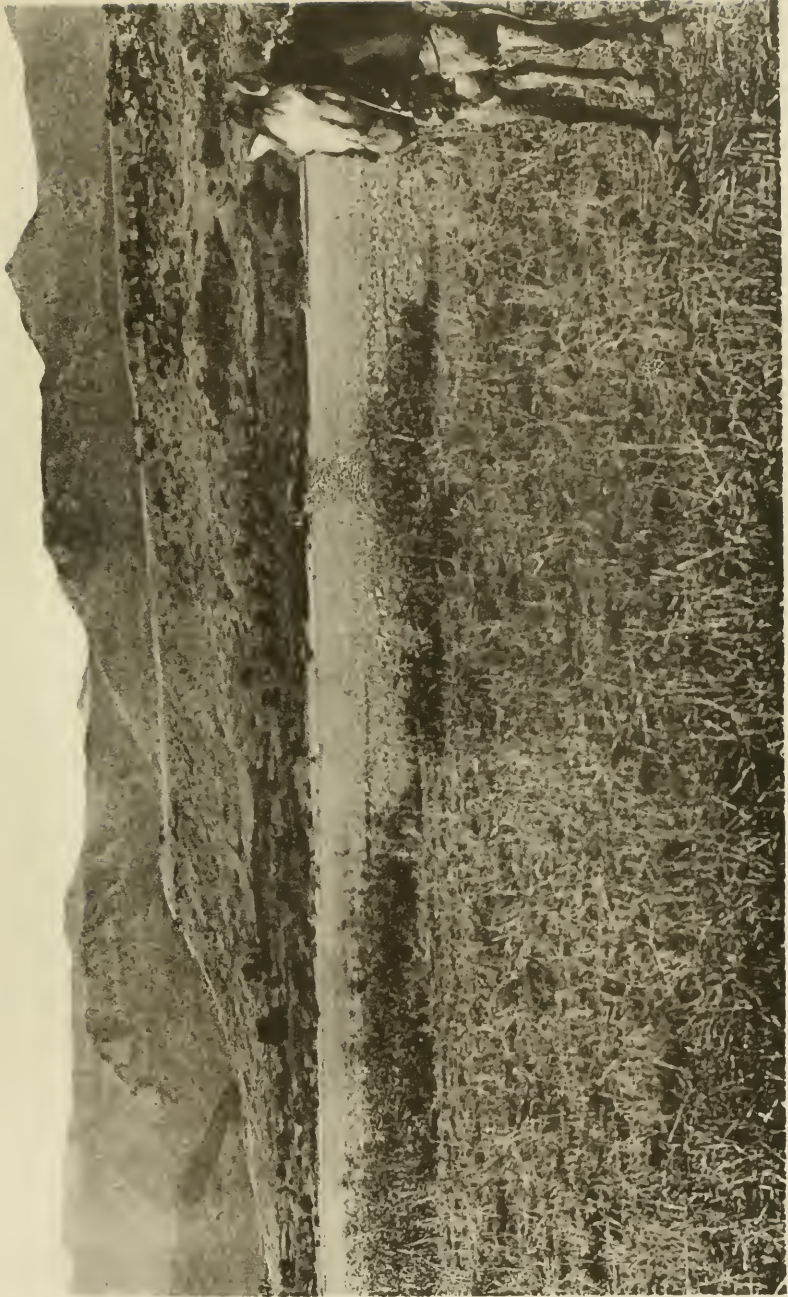
I crossed in the little ten-skin kellek which did duty for ferry; and on the opposite bank I found Hussein Agha, chief of the Zibar Kurds, waiting to cross on his way to join the regular troops operating in the mountain. He was a pleasant, humorous man, with very sly eyes, which twinkled rather viciously at the mention of Shaykh Sadiq. We had a long conversation, during which he expressed his intention of visiting me in England.

After many weary hours, the horses were at last driven and dragged across, and we started for Bira-Kiopru

Kiopru, the central village of the Nahieh of Zibar, which is marked on nearly all maps as the town of Zibar, a mythical city which never existed. The village is the headquarters of Hussein Agha's Ashiret, and is ornamented by stone blockhouses and a little castle—these buildings were all peppered with bullet marks, showing signs of some recent trouble. We found a detachment of sixty infantry under a captain, who had been left in command in the absence of the colonel, who was commanding the flying column. It was here that we learnt the true history of the late troubles, of which I heard such vague rumours during my march from Amadia to Akra two months previously.

The following was related to me by Hussein Agha, and subsequently by various Turkish officers and Kurds, and is, I think, correct in the main :

Shaykh Sadiq wrote to Stambul complaining that Hussein Agha was a man of very loose habits, and was leading the Moslems of Zibar into the paths of vice and wickedness, and begged the Sultan's permission to remonstrate with him. This was granted. The remonstrance took the form of four thousand men, armed with good rifles, making their appearance on Hussein Agha's borders and announcing their intention of annexing the land to Shaykh Sadiq's territory ; then they advanced across the river, occupying the village of Nefaqi and the adjoining hamlets. There the bulk of the inhabitants and Mohammad Agha, the sub-Agha of the Zibar Kurds, fled into the mountains. However, a certain Hajji Agha and some followers joined the invaders and proceeded to Bira-Kiopru, where Hussein Agha's available force, only three hundred men, was gathered in the castle and
blockhouse



VIEW TAKEN FROM REZAN, LOOKING ACROSS THE ZAP



HUSEIN AGHA AND HIS SONS.

blockhouse. The Zaptiehs and troops (twenty men) took refuge in the castle, but had no part in the fighting, as they had no orders to interfere.

Sadiq's men, on their arrival, surrounded the village and demanded its surrender. 'To hell!' answered the stout Hussein, and a siege commenced. Meanwhile news of the affair had reached Mosul, and the Government promptly despatched two regiments, who arrived at Bira-Kiopru eight days after the siege had begun. At the first sight of the advance guard of the relief column the invaders retired without fighting and dispersed to their various homes; Hajji Agha alone remained in the field. His situation was desperate, for he had betrayed his own tribe, and was now deserted by his allies. He fell back to Nefaqi, where with twenty followers he occupied the castle; there he was found by a company of infantry, to whom, after a siege of three days, he surrendered unconditionally, and was shot with two of his companions, the remainder of the garrison being despatched to Mosul, prisoners of the Government. Matters then settled down to a certain extent, but a few roving bands still remained in the mountains at the time of our visit.

From Zibar we proceeded to Nefaqi, through the inland route traversing the Gallé Polunja pass, a very formidable piece of ground for mules to cover. It was here that my horse, Osman Shawish, who had carried me for nineteen hundred miles, died of sunstroke and colic—poor beast, he was well enough in the morning, but suddenly dropped after noon, and expired in an hour. With all the pluck of an arab, he stood up until within five minutes of his end, struggling to keep up

Q

with

with the caravan he had followed so long : his attempts were pitiful to see, and it was a sad relief to all when he gave the final shudder. The last breath whistled back through his distended nostrils, and his bloodstained eyes glazed from agony to peaceful death. We left him where he fell, and pursued our way to Nefaqi, where we found Mohammad Agha once more in possession of his castle. It is built on the principle of a double bastion redoubt, and is pierced with loopholes in every conceivable position. It is not a marvel of fortification, but I have seen much worse defences planned by persons better qualified than a Zibar chieftain. The building is ornamented by ibex horns set in the wall at intervals. We found these trophies lying in the streets and on the dunghills—had we succumbed to the temptation, we might, with a little trouble, have collected enough skulls to establish an unrivalled reputation as sportsmen.

The Agha explained to us that he had returned only five days previously, and we must excuse him showing the usual hospitalities, as the village was actually very short of provisions.

That night, about one hour after dinner, when we had crept into our blankets and were preparing to sleep, a distant howling of dogs broke through the stillness, and a few shots from some watchers in the hills were heard. Instantly every man was on his feet, every dog was yelping, and every woman shrieking. Joseph cursed the religion of Kurds, Kurdistan, and devil countries ; I vainly tried to blow out a lantern through a glass side. John Hugh Smith used language from the pit concerning his rifle, again jammed beyond all unjamming ; while an aged, incompetent, toothless Redif Uzbashi mumbled
‘ Fear



VIEW OF THE AMADIA VALLEY, TAKEN NEAR HERIKE. LOOKING EAST.

'Fear nought, fear nought.' At this moment a donkey raised his tuneful voice. By the third 'honk' thirty of his brothers were in full blast, and the men of the village were sallying into the valley below, firing and yelling as they ran. In such a scene of noise and disaster I felt I had no legitimate part, so, picking up my rifle and bandolier, I retired quietly behind a stone wall. This impression had, curiously enough, communicated itself to the whole of our party. Presently the din in the village subsided, and we could hear the noise of fighting in the hills, occasional shots, and a shrill, broken stream of sound, as the Kurds gave tongue in answer to the cries of their enemies. Meanwhile there arrived a messenger from the Agha chieftain stating that 'two of his cousins' had made a raid on the sheep, and were endeavouring to drive them off; but he, the Agha, had no intention whatever of leaving the castle, as he had been previously enticed away in such a manner by the late Hajji Agha, who had had the bad manners to occupy it in his absence. He hoped that his men would drive away the marauders; and stated that it was a most disgraceful violation of law and order, and that the Government ought to attend to it immediately; that he would himself, if it were only a little safer; and that no one could get a wink of sleep or a minute's rest or quietness, and that he'd go off the next day and shoot some of the blackguards, rob a village two miles away, and so get even with them.

From Nefaqi to Amadia is a journey of two short days, but travellers should beware of the Jellie Meruz pass; the ascent or descent is a disastrous experiment for shod horses to undertake—I think we lost nine shoes

in forty minutes.* It was impossible to photograph the view from the summit.

The road thence to Amadia is excellent, passing through delightful glades, finely irrigated rice-fields, and well-built villages. At Amadia we found the Kaimakam and Bishop much surprised at my return, but as hospitable as ever.

The town on the day of our arrival was in a state of considerable excitement owing to the return of the chief Agha from his pilgrimage to Mecca, the whole of the Moslem inhabitants having sallied forth to meet him with donkeys, horses, and noise. We were unable to view the procession very closely, as the religious feelings on such an occasion run rather high, and a blessing is reckoned to belong to those who welcome a Hajji.

We visited the Agha next day and gave him our 'respectful felicitations.' He was a small, weary old man, and appeared glad that the ordeal was over. If it be remembered that he looked on travelling as a fearful and dangerous venture; that he had probably never walked a mile, except under pressure, in his life; that his sole amusement was smoking in a state of comatic doze—his religious act will appear admirable.

From Amadia we followed my previous route to

* There is a better but longer road by the river, but this was impassable owing to 'Dushman' or enemies in the road. The normal state of Zibar is insurrection, which must be distinguished from insurrection. For instance, A. Agha is at feud with B. Agha; A. robs B., B. complains to the Government; the Government admonishes A.; A. remains quiet. B. attacks A.; A. complains to the Government; Government admonishes B.; B. is impertinent; Government sends soldiers; B. calls in C. for help; C. assists B.; Government soldiers kill two of B.'s men; C. retires to his own country and becomes 'Dushman' or enemy, as no one knows what he is going to do, while B. is once more peaceful.

Zakho



AMADIA FROM THE SUMMIT OF THE MINARET.

Zakho, accompanied by some Jewish muleteers of the latter town. These men were typical of the section of their race which dwells in Mesopotamia, fine-featured and dark, but rather short in stature; they were merry and obliging fellows, and appeared on good terms with the Nazarenes and true believers. Our servants looked on their overtures and willingness to assist with a kind of dread, for the oriental Jew has a great ability in putting his victims under an obligation and subsequently pouring regretful, tearful, side-winded abuse on ingrates.

The night before reaching Zakho we camped in the virgin forest far from a village, by a cool stream, which appeared romantic and delightful. Romance, however, rubbed off after sunset, when the mosquitoes stung savagely, the wild beasts growled, the jackals wailed, the hogs rattled their tusks against the trees, the insects twittered, and the Zaptiehs and sentries squibbed and challenged into the brushwood at real or imaginary robbers, who certainly existed at no great distance.

After an uneasy night, we passed on to Zakho. On the way we found a basket fish-trap in a stream, which we opened, and from it withdrew a fine live trout and several barbel and coarse fish, which proved excellent eating.

At Zakho we found the Agha, to whom John Hugh Smith took a great dislike, dubbing him a vulgar cad, which perhaps was not a very unsound criticism. However, he entertained us, and, without previous questioning, launched forth into a long description concerning a castle of great antiquity situated on his estate, hitherto unvisited by travellers. He so fired our imagination that we decided to make an expedition to the place and discover

discover it. The nearest village was something of a détour, but, considering that the object might repay, we deserted our heavy luggage, which we despatched to Sairt, and, turning southwards, rode across the valley to Bahnuna. The journey was uneventful, as the inhabitants were not only of a peaceful disposition, but much too busily engaged in getting in the harvest to trouble strangers. We passed two or three Christian villages which showed every sign of prosperity.

Ever since the massacre it has been considered necessary by nearly all the Christians to pull very long faces when asked about their condition, though more often than not there is no ground for this contortion. For instance, a Chaldean priest told me, with a serious and mournful countenance, that one of the men of his village had been shot more than twelve months before by some Kurds while he was wandering in the vicinity of their flocks by night ; when lawlessness has reached such a pitch that a poor man may not go out sheep-stealing, it is indeed time to make some inquiry !

On our arrival at Bahnuna we were met by the Agha, whom we immediately questioned about the famous castle ; he too gave a stirring account of it and minutely described the bazaars, inscriptions, towers, and gates it contained ; he also related its history.

Many years ago—fifteen hundred, or at least eighty—the English and Russians had held the country. Imam Ali had invaded it and captured the castle, driving out the Christians.

We felt very hopeful, and arranged to walk up to it the following day.

Early next morning the Agha and some friends
announced

announced that they would show us the way, and we started full of expectancy, dreaming of our names going down to posterity as the greatest antiquarian explorers of the century. One hour's hard walking brought us to two large stones. 'This is the gate,' said the Agha, with honest pride; a few more paces brought us to some oubliette-shaped cisterns (I am not geologist enough to say if they are natural); 'those are the stores.' A little further on we found a valley containing a number of stunted oak-trees. 'There is the castle!' We stared aghast—there was the castle, a few traces of the foundations of a village of any age and any period. 'Where—where are the inscriptions?' 'There,' said the Agha, pointing to a water-worn rock. Our rage knew no bounds. Yussuf broke out into a complicated curse about the religion of castles that were not castles, coupled with an elaborate joke about lizards and monkeys and their strongholds, which, notwithstanding that he repeated it several times and laughed very heartily over it, I could not quite fathom.

The remains are probably those of a Christian village, as a winepress is cut out in the rock on the northern side of the valley, and near it are the foundations of a very large wall. The place is certainly worth a visit for the splendid view it commands—on the left it extends to the mountains of the Zibar Kurds, and on the right to the Nisibin hills, a distance of one hundred and fifty miles.

In the first agony of our disappointment we were undecided whether we should write a letter to the Pasha telling him we had found a gold-mine there and advise him to dig, or follow the lead of that romantic genius

M. de

M. de Rougemont and evolve a people and history out of our heads. The latter was more than tempting, for there would be plenty of persons to whom such a discovery would be convenient, and we might have settled the vexed question of the Hittites for ever, or at least until that remote period when other simpletons may visit the 'Kasr es-Slib.'

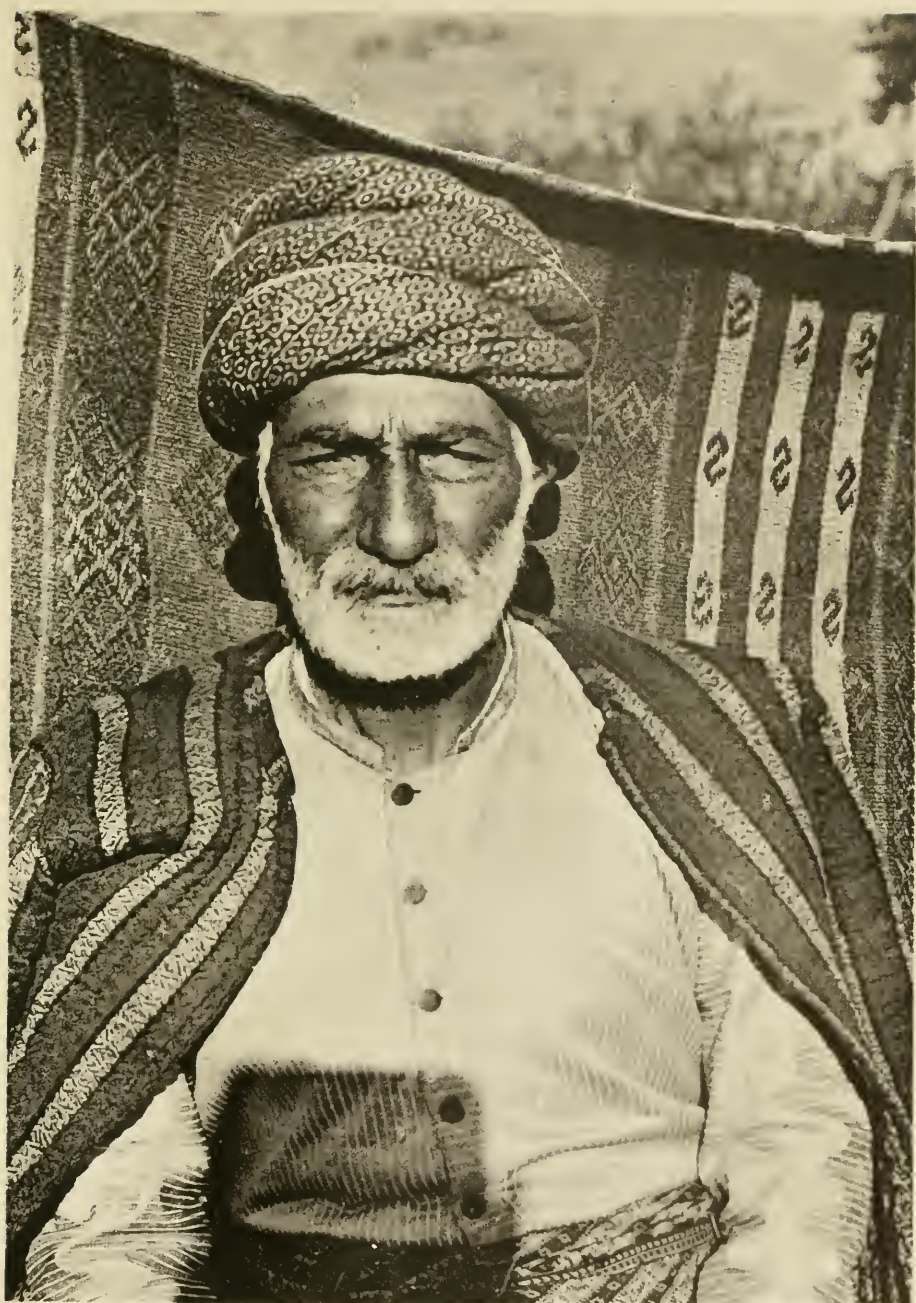
As we were out of the beaten track, and, according to the inhabitants, were the first Franks to visit that part of the world, we kept to the mountains instead of returning to the valley, and proceeded to Marsis. The journey is a short one (six hours), but passes through the most beautiful forest scenery, the grim bleak mountain-tops forming a splendid contrast to the green cultivated valleys. Every village makes a charming landscape picture in itself, the houses being well and picturesquely built, and the inhabitants fine, industrious, handsome people. Blue eyes and fair hair are common among them, though the dark, swarthy complexion predominates.

Before reaching Marsis we entered a deep gorge and descended from 5,000 to 3,000 feet, entering the Marsis valley, which is full of fine, prosperous villages.

At Marsis we found Abdi Agha, who seemed to possess a very pleasing personality: he was entertaining a merchant from Mosul, who was engaged in collecting wool for trade and tobacco for other purposes.* The fact that the Christian merchant brought so large a sum as 700*l.* Turkish on his person says much for the tranquillity of the country. It was interesting to learn that the Mosul merchants have standing arrangements with the Aghas for such business.

* He was not employed by the 'Régie.'

This



ABDI AGHA.

This Christian we at once recognised by the fact that he was fat, stealthy, insolent, and cringing—a combination of qualities by which in Mesopotamia Christians* may be said to be distinguished from Moslems. This despicable creature, with that love of mischief-making and ‘Boliteek’ which marked him to his tribe, told the Agha that we were spies sent to watch his country, and in consequence we were prevented from going direct to Shernakh, but were obliged to make a long détour to Kondik, a filthy little hamlet away in the sweltering plains.

On our way to the latter we passed Sheranish, a Chaldean village. Except that its inhabitants were more industrious, more dirty, and more unhealthy, there was little to distinguish them from Kurds. The village contains a large and massively built church.

Two furlongs below we noted the heavy foundations of a tower of ancient construction; tradition ascribes it to the masons who built the bridge at Zakho. Beyond the valley we crossed a steep ridge and descended into the dusty, hideous, broiling plain, and in two hours camped at Kondik. The inhabitants were wretched beings, bastard Kurds, poor, rude, uncultivated, and diseased beyond all belief.

From Kondik we doubled back to Herbole, a large village very picturesquely situated in a valley which drains into the Aazil-Su, and does not actually contain it, as Mr. Lynch’s map shows; the villagers, who were a vast improvement on those Christians I had previously seen, had cultivated every available acre with vines, corn, rice, and orchards. Their houses were well considered, and their church handsomely designed.

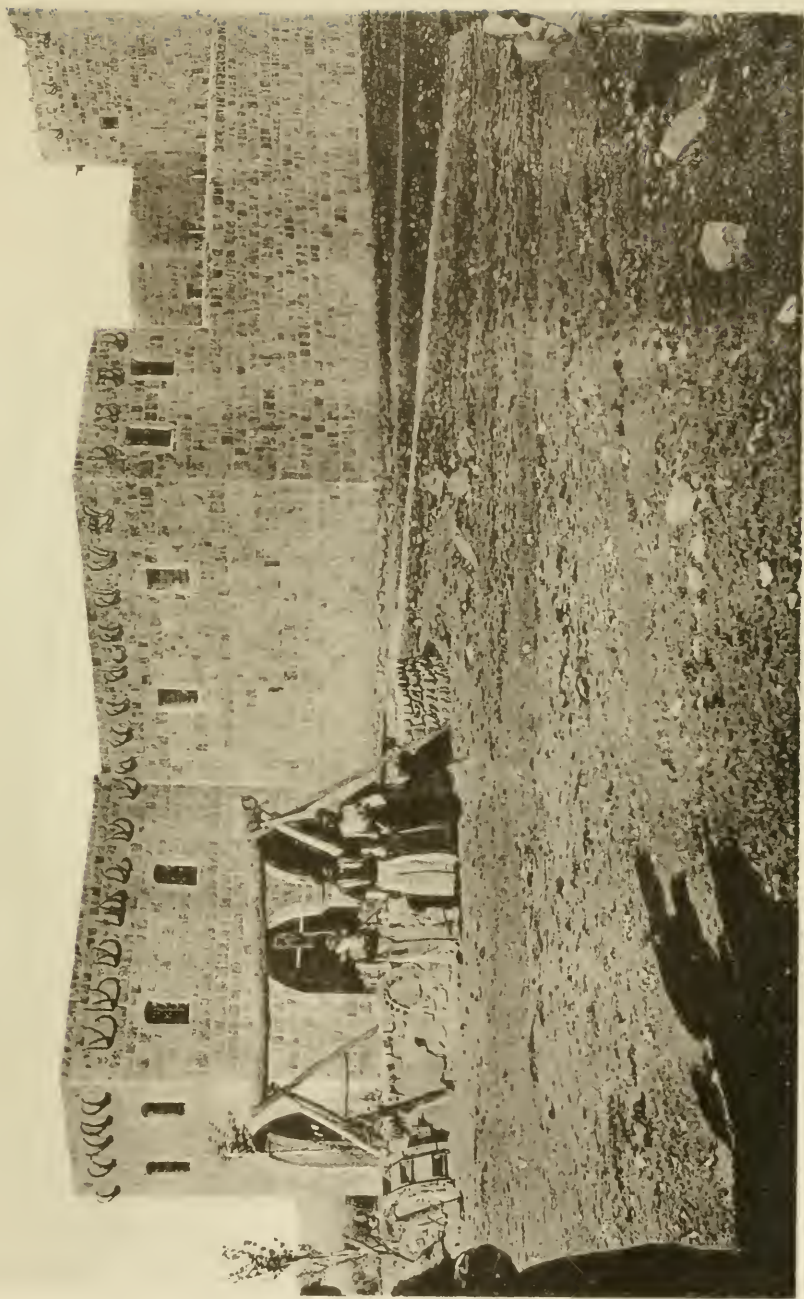
* Excepting Chaldeans.

Our Jewish muleteers began to make themselves particularly tedious and offensive, swearing with all the volubility of their race that they must make three days to Shernakh ; this folly, however, was corrected by a few timely cuffings from the Zaptiehs, which reduced them from angry, avaricious tears to pleasant smiles.

At Shernakh we found two fine castles, built of grey stone, loopholed for a large garrison, and surrounded by a strange cornice of ibex horns. The largest castle contained a young and somewhat bumptious Agha, whom we took to be the chief of the tribe, and to whom we accordingly delivered our letter of introduction. This he snatched rather rudely, and after a quarter of an hour's conversation stated that it was not addressed to him, but to his uncle, who lived in the other castle thirty yards away. We suggested that he should deliver the letter to his relative, but the young Agha offered many objections, and eventually it appeared that for the last ten days the two families had been shooting at one another across the road, owing to some dispute about the leadership of the tribe ; and though matters had been arranged, there was still a little coolness in their relations.

We presently called on the rival, and found him a much more pleasing character than his nephew, though his general good-humour might have been owing to the fact that he had gained the better of the dispute.

The Shernakhli Kurds are the tribe who performed such a signal service to the empire in accidentally shooting Mustapha Pasha of Jezireh : they proved rather disappointing, for though some very fine men were to be seen among them, the bulk were neither of good physique nor apparently very intelligent.



CASTLE AT SHERNAKH.

CHAPTER XXI

TO THE END

THE next morning we left for Deh,* passing the spot where Mustapha was killed. The account given by the Kurds who accompanied us exactly corroborates the report of the Christian secretaries, only they stated that the troops of the Government came up to the place after the death of the Agha, and, having ascertained what had occurred, camped there that night and returned to Sairt the following day.

It will be seen that the Government policy is to allow the frontier tribes to pursue their feuds and little wars amongst themselves, but never to permit the stronger to overcome the weaker completely; to insist on the fighting tribes not interfering with strangers and caravans, and to keep hostilities as local and as limited as possible. To this policy the Ashirets silently assent, and very seldom offer any resistance to Government troops, generally retiring before them without firing. The result of this policy is to ensure the loyalty of the Kurds in war, for these gentry know well that the Russians would never permit an arrangement so sympathetic to their instincts. This system is very sensible, and maintains the Kurd *moral* in a way that no other can.

The Kurds have many points of resemblance to the

* The name of this town is pronounced Deh-heh.

frontier

frontier tribes of India, and peaceful life would destroy their courage and physique in a similar way; for it is a fact that our recruiting ground moves steadily north as Northern India is pacified, the British Government looking on tribal conflicts beyond the border with a mild eye, for the identical reason that the Turks permit the Kurdish feuds to continue.

From Deh, a small Armenian village, we proceeded to Sairt, where we found ourselves once more on the beaten path, and as we had completed a nine months' journey, and had had a sufficient though by no means comprehensive view of the Turkish Empire, we turned our steps towards Van. Our journey was without any particular incident, save that I was foolish enough, in spite of former experience, to allow John Hugh Smith to persuade me to embark on a boat to cross Lake Van. We were of course wrecked, and that within four hours of starting, through the senseless cowardice of the Armenian crew; but we were hospitably received by their friends the Kurds. As this is a precise replica of a former adventure I encountered four years previously, and described in 'Through Five Turkish Provinces,' it would be superfluous to re-write it. After we had landed and were joined by the caravan we proceeded on our way.

The day before we reached Van, Michael fell from his mule and broke his collar-bone. The poor fellow was in horrible agony, and had to be taken on horseback to Akhtamar, where an Armenian Bishop holds his diocese. There we found an Armenian who held a high official post in the Turkish service: he possessed a victoria, and we begged him to lend it us to convey the injured man a short distance in search of medical aid. This
the

the amiable gentleman refused to do. His disgusting behaviour annoyed me the more, as Michael, being a Christian, had a greater claim on his sympathy; and, further, we had had ample proof that every Turk, Kurd, and Arab whom we had met would have given every assistance in the same situation, if not from kindness, at least from shame. But this person, like most of his fellow-countrymen, had no shame; though, by asking all his Moslem subordinates within his hearing what they thought of their chief's behaviour, I trust we stirred up the cavity in his heart where that quality should be.

The district around Van I found in a far more peaceful state than at the time of my previous visit in 1899. Caravans moved with impunity on all roads except that leading to the Persian frontier, and between Bitlis and Van large numbers of mules might be seen picketed beside masses of merchandise, unattended by any other guard than two or three muleteers. Of course we heard some terrible tales, but most of them were closely allied to the following pathetic history of a former British Consul's cook, which is instructive.

A certain British Consul once possessed an aged female Armenian cook, who for some reason left the Consul and returned to her village. A little time after, a wild-eyed man entered the Consulate and informed the official that his unfortunate old servant had been foully done to death and her house burnt by brutal soldiers, who had massacred the population of her village in revenge for a crushing defeat inflicted on them by bold revolutionaries. The Consul started off with a heavy heart to ascertain the last sad details, and that night, when eating a dinner cooked by the 'murdered woman,'
under

under the glowing rafters of her 'ruined home,' he heard the true story from the lips of the 'corpse.'

After a short stay in Van we sold our equipment and drove in arabas to the Russian frontier, passing many encampments of Hamidieh Kurds on our route. It is important to notice that the Hamidieh are fine horsemen, superbly mounted on useful ponies, and that they are well armed. So many travellers insist that they are wretched scarecrows, mounted on sorry screws, that it is well to dispel this idea. Personally, I have not a very great faith in these irregulars for the purpose of offering a decisive opposition or pushing home an attack ; but every rifle, and particularly every mounted rifle, counts in a modern battle, and a force of four or five thousand men who know every fold in the ground, whose horses are in admirable condition, who are fair shots, and whose mobility is greater than that of European cavalry over forty miles, is an addition to an army that no commander would despise. The chief objection to Hamidieh is that which may be offered to all irregulars—*i.e.* the depredations they invariably commit on the commissariat of their own side.

After three days' driving we reached the Turkish frontier, where we were hospitably entertained by the Customs officials, who gave us a lunch, and, having passed our luggage, sent us on to the last Turkish detachment, which lies at the foot of Mount Ararat.

On our arrival at the frontier a guard of honour gave us a last salaam, and we walked over the hill to the neat little tin-roofed barrack which marks the limit of Holy Russia. Within we found fifteen soldiers in clothes untattered and untorn, neatly dressed, tall, fair-haired, broad-browed

broad-browed, sleepy, peaceful peasants with bandy legs, bow legs, cow hocks, flat feet, and weak knees ; for such physical failings are by no means rare in the Muscovite army. From crown to belt the men compare favourably with any Europeans ; from frog to heel they are the most rickety, shambling creatures imaginable—like Hamlet's old men, with most 'villainous weak hams.' The Russian Army Clothing Department evidently recognises this fault, and endeavours to conceal it by means of top boots and loose trousers. But they avail nothing ; and our officers when they see a Russian on the sky-line at three thousand yards will distinguish him by the remarkable simian angle of the knees, inwards or outwards, as the case may be.

The contrast between the Russian and the Turkish soldier is extraordinary, and almost governed by the law of opposites :

<i>Turkish.</i>	<i>Russian.</i>
Clean under-linen.	!
Foul, tattered uniform.	Smartly dressed.
Armed with German Mauser.	Armed with a Russian contrivance.
Alert.	Half asleep.
Stoutly built.	Loose-jointed.
Intelligent.	Slow.
Ugly face.	Handsome.

The only point of resemblance between the two is their unflinching good-humour and inexhaustible patience. As regards individual intelligence and initiative, I think the Turk may be expected to score heavily ; in drill they both appear fairly bad.

No

No sooner had we crossed the frontier than official regulations made themselves felt. A long-nosed, sandy-haired, yellow-toothed sergeant explained that no one might proceed until morning. Such was the order, and we accordingly spent our last night in camp on the frontier. Next morning we reached the Customs station after two hours' jolting, and found the officers absent on a visit. The absence of the sentry and of the officers at a post of three hundred men, where no guard was mounted, points to considerable and refreshing slackness.

Eventually they returned, and, having most kindly entertained us with a variety of fiery liquors, proceeded with the inquest on our luggage. They followed out their abominable red-tape-begotten orders to the letter, but with as little inconvenience to us as was possible. Nevertheless, every article, every pin, every trick, every toy, was examined and noted, shaken, twisted inside out, weighed and measured, and (laud to the Lord!) put back into its proper place. Then we marshalled our retainers and once more set out for Igdir.

Igdir is an unimpressive little town, inhabited by Armenians of a particularly greasy and cunning type. I regret to say that some two hundred of these gentry are languishing in the local gaol for 'baleetical affencis.' They appear unpopular, and, strangely enough, the universal opinion is that they are dishonest tradesmen, liars, and bad citizens. Their appearance would tend to confirm this judgment.

The evening of our arrival was enlivened by a lengthy discussion with the police, who were anxious to obtain information on the following points: our age, religion, parentage, destination, occupation at home,
ditto

ditto abroad, father's name, grandfathers' surnames, place of departure, time absent from home, and future plans. These questions took us some time to answer, and the answers some time for the police to comprehend; but the matter ended without bloodshed, although Jacob was asked if he was an Armenian (am I a dog?) and Mohammad Ali if he was a Shiah (curse the creed of, &c.)

The next morning our Armenian landlord presented us with a modest bill of eighty roubles for one night's lodging! We were obliged to pay this thief; but it was some satisfaction to expend a little breath in abusing him and hearing our abuse translated. I once shook my fist within an inch of his nose. Armenian-like he turned pale, and gripping the counter of his bar bleated out 'Hit me! hit me!' I luckily remembered Mr. Pickwick, and saved myself a lengthy sojourn in the county gaol.

From Igdir we drove to the railway and boarded the train, which proceeds *via* Alexandropol to Tiflis and Batum. It was delightful to hear the civilised Russians on board talking so beautifully of progress and light; they are marvellous orientals! A Russian engineer who shared our compartment discoursed on Dickens, Thackeray, and Shakespeare; he also pointed out to us how gloriously noble was the mission of Russia in civilising the barbarous, backward East—not brutally, as England does, but gently and paternally. My eyes filled with sympathetic tears, and Smith's voice broke with a catch in it as he murmured to himself, 'Dear, dear old Russia!' in a way that even Mr. Stead would envy. 'These people are but children,' said the engineer, pointing to the country-side.

At Alexandropol we discovered that the 'children' had been rather naughty. In fact, they had killed several people, had upset a train into a river, had wrecked Baku and fired the oil-wells, had shut up the bakeries in Tiflis, and had stopped the trams running. The sweet and gentle Government had entirely failed to restore order by shooting some dozens of them, and was scratching its imperial head, wondering what it was going to do next. For although in the Caucasus you cannot move without stating your age, birthplace, parentage, destination, business, great-uncle's surname, colour of father's eyes, &c. the country swarms with revolutionaries, and robberies with violence exceed those in the adjacent Turkish provinces by a considerable percentage. The usual remedies, of ordering infantry squads to fire volleys point-blank into small crowds, or of sending squadrons of Cossacks galloping down the streets, seem to be somewhat inefficient; but as the civil police, although armed with sharp swords and heavy revolvers, invariably discreetly retire in event of trouble, there appears to be no other method of restoring order.

When we reached Tiflis we heard news of a little trouble at Mikailoff, where some eighty persons had been killed and wounded; the train service had been taken over by the military, and the station was crowded with troops. I experienced a keen sense of pleasure in seeing two companies hopelessly clubbed by a major, and felt there was still hope for the Indus.

We stayed a day in Tiflis and saw poor people for the first time since we left Europe. By poor I do not mean Dervishes, or beggars, or cripples, or blind, for in Turkey there are many of these, but they are not poor. They

They have but to ask for bread, and a Zaptieh, a Pasha, a Shaykh, an Imam, a street boy, a merchant, a soldier, a robber, a peasant, or a baker will give it to them without comment ; for in Turkey, unless there is an absolute famine, no one need starve. But in Tiflis we saw the poor of Europe—the poor who live in foul, narrow alleys, the poor who stare with gaunt grey faces of hopeless misery, the poor who work for a miserable wage, the poor who build railways and manufacture ‘civilisation.’ Tiflis has some fine modern buildings ; Tiflis has a picture-gallery ; Tiflis has a museum ; and Tiflis has slums, wretchedness, and want in its back streets. Tiflis is, in fact, a European town ; the East has been rolled back for a time, and the happy, swashbuckling, open-handed people, who fought and loved and lived their lives, are now ground into the mill of progress ; and we must take off our hats and salute that subaltern of Cossacks who is riding down the street at the head of a squadron to save a tramcar from the hands of the strikers.

With that noble picture before our eyes let us end the journey.

CHAPTER XXII

A LAST CHAPTER

ABOUT three months after my return to England I once more proceeded to Constantinople and had the good fortune to see three most interesting sights—to wit, the Selamlık, the Hamidieh Infant Hospital, and the Ashiret School, which, if I may be permitted, I will describe in order.

The ceremony of the Selamlık has been seen by so many that an account of it may be considered superfluous ; but, on the other hand, it was such a surprise to me that I think I am justified in relating what I saw.

We reached the Ambassadors' Lodge with some difficulty, and from the balcony overlooking the narrow parade-ground beheld the mass of troops, through which our carriage had ploughed a passage, shuffling, shunting, and marking time as their officers shepherded them into position amid a crowd of carriages.

Presently the victorias and broughams of the Pashas, tourists, and ambassadors were swept, with much locking of wheels and cracking of whips, into the oblivion of a side avenue ; a party of German cadets marched on to the lawn of the lodge and formed up on the terrace ; the blue-coated troops beyond the railings lined each side of the road, and the yellow gravel was clear. Presently a glittering company of staff officers formed two deep,
and

and marched down the road: these were the chief generals of the Ottoman État-Major, marshals, colonels, brigadiers, A.G.'s, and quartermasters-general. Anything more extraordinary than this parade of elderly gentlemen would be hard to imagine. Any one of them alone would have inspired respect. Seeing him, one would say, 'Here is a most important personage!' But no less than forty celebrities tripping two and two, under the fierce blaze of a sun which shone cruelly on every patent-leather-booted gouty toe, was hardly inspiring. All that can be said is that the veterans passed through the ordeal with as little loss of dignity as possible; indeed, I think Europeans would appear at even a greater disadvantage. Imagine Lord Roberts and Sir Redvers Buller in full uniform marching abreast down Pall Mall before some six thousand spectators!

After the last general had covered the course some smart broughams, containing the Court ladies, drove past. Then there was an interval, during which the long lines of troops remained motionless; but any one observing them closely would have noticed that their eyes continually rolled in their stolid heads towards the point whence the Imperial carriage would come. At last, at the top of the hill, there was a slight bustle; a belated subaltern rasped out his sword and stepped into his place, the lines of troops quivered in expectation of the word, and from amid the generals, in all their splendid uniforms, into the open space, guarded by the finest infantry in the world, and under the eyes of the ambassadors of Europe, there shuffled an old, green-turbaned, ragged, bare-legged, tottering crossing-sweeper, who quietly swept the ninety yards of sandy road over which the Sultan
was

was to pass. This, to the Englishman, may seem an absurd anticlimax; if it does, it will serve to remind him that he is a snob hereditary, and that it is not his fault that old age and rags appear to him ridiculous.

When the crossing-sweeper had ended his labours and retired behind the troops there was another pause. A policeman waved his hand, we heard a distant cheering, and a victoria appeared round the corner; it descended the hill at an easy pace, the troops sprang to the Present by companies and cried, 'God save the Padishah!' Within the carriage sat two men facing one another, the one a vast bulky figure with his back to the horses, the other—what? I gazed with the greatest curiosity; before me sat the Sultan—the man who ruled over the Bilbas Kurds, the Hamawand, the Bedawin, the Armenians, the Turks, the Chaldeans, the Arab Fellaheen—the Caliph of the Moslems—the descendant of those fierce nomadic chiefs who swept from Central Asia to the walls of Vienna—the man whose word is law to the wild fanatics of the East and whose name is anathema to the wilder fanatics of the West—the man whose hand is felt in every province of the Ottoman Empire and whose power is unknown; for whose sake four hundred thousand men are ready to leave their homes and die—the man concerning whom quite uncomplimentary motions have been passed by British vestrymen in council—in the slowly moving victoria sat Abdul Hamid, whom *our Old Man of the Mountain* once dubbed 'The Great Assassin.' Often had I read descriptions of him as a pallid, ghastly man, with a painted face and a henna-dyed beard—as a red-capped sensualist—as a trembling, cowering craven—as a wild-eyed homicidal maniac—a
drivelling

drivelling, premature dotard—as anything you please—for journalists must have bread and the halfpenny papers must sell—but I saw none of these things: instead, an elderly Turkish gentleman, a little round-shouldered, with keen, intelligent eyes, a hooked nose, and a full dark grey beard. As he passed he saluted the ambassadors in a manner less mechanical than most monarchs, and I found myself staring at the half-lowered hood of the victoria, above which I could still see the red fez and the white-gloved hand once more raised to the salute.

Behind the carriage marched the Sultan's personal bodyguard and a few servants, and I was reminded that this was indeed the Eastern Sultan. Everything that had passed before—save the incident of the crossing-sweeper—might be seen in any European capital on the occasion of a review or the laying of a foundation-stone; but this little bunch of irregularly walking men who followed the carriage could only be seen in the lands of the Rising Sun. It was the same little bunch of men who ran behind the returning Hajji at Amadia or who run behind the Agha's son when he is married. Berlin drill, frock-coats, glitter, Europe, and railways were forgotten, and I realised that it was the Commander of the Faithful going to pray. The victoria turned the corner and vanished among the trees before the mosque. 'There is no God but God,' wailed a voice from the minaret. 'There is no God but THE God—and Mohammed is the Prophet of God'—the Sultan was at prayers.

Shortly after, the service within ended and the Sultan returned; he drove round to the back of the Ambassadors' Lodge, and presently the opening of a window above announced that he would hold a review. The
Artillery

Artillery band marched into position opposite, and the march past commenced.

First came the Artillery on foot, an uninteresting body, as they were unaccompanied by their guns. The Turkish Artillery is a very dark horse indeed, and marvellous tales are told of its inefficiency, even of its non-existence. It is said that the guns are unhorsed, that the ammunition does not fit them, that the officers are unskilled, and the men untrained—yet somehow, whenever it is wanted it invariably puts in an appearance; and a friend of mine who was on the Greek side at Larissa told me that the shooting was unpleasantly steady and accurate. Perhaps it is that the Turk is a born gunner; his great bodily strength, his stolid indifference to what is taking place to his right and left, his slow, decisive movements, and his capacity for tiding over deficiencies of harness with string and raw hide, make him easy to train and easy to place in a battery.

After the Artillery came the Engineers, in khaki Norfolk jackets; and then the Albanians in white. The Albanians reminded me so vividly in face and physique of the Irish regiments that I could hardly forbear laughing. There was the same trifling slackness, the same glare of devilry, humour, and truculence, and the same heavy black moustaches and deep blue eyes. These Albanians are the 'wicked men' of all other Turkish subjects—the 'Erna-ut,' according to the Arabs, is a fiend who lives on human flesh, and according to the Greeks they are frightfully 'savage'; but I think in the Levantine mind savagery and bravery are synonymous. It was noticeable that the Albanians either refused to adopt or had not been trained in the German march-past

past strut, and consequently to other than Prussian eyes presented a more pleasing spectacle.

The regiment swung down the road, and was followed by the green-turbaned Syrian Battalion, recruited from the Arab Fellaheen of the vilayet of Damascus and the Qudus Sherif. They are picturesque soldiers; but, although picked men and finely uniformed, did not impress me as much as I had expected.

On the heels of the Syrians came the regiments of the line—the true Turkish soldiers—the mainstay of the empire—stolid, inflexible, broad of brow, broad of back, and broad of chest, tall, heavy, burly men, soldiers by birth, tradition, and instinct. On these men German drill is wasted; they are not beer-drinking, mild-eyed conscripts to be damned, cursed, brow-beaten, and prodded into marching by the left (most unwillingly) to danger; they are soldiers like our own linesmen—not desperate, roaring fighters as the French, prone to glorious victory or blind panic-struck disaster; nor yet such as the Boer and Colonial, ever ready to retreat with individual intelligence to safety; but soldiers prepared to die on the word, ready to retire on the word, ready to starve on the word, ready to perish, ready to advance, to fight, to watch, to dig, and to accept good fortune and evil chance, not as strange incidents, but as natural events. As soldiers—save that the Turks are physically capable of greater endurance—they are identical with our own men. When I say our own, I do not mean the recruit boys in the home battalions, the Australians at five shillings a head, or the Yeoman, but the English private of line, as he is in India.

After

After the last of the line battalions had passed, the Artillery band ceased playing, wheeled out of sight, and the ground was once more vacant, when the most extraordinary little animal suddenly pranced into it on its hind legs—a little, strange, hopping creature in an absurd cocked hat and baggy trousers, a marionette-like mechanism in a frock-coat, with side-spring boots and a brass-bound sword, a fantastic shape marvellous to see ; and behind came a most self-conscious little band playing out of time and tune in ghastly discords. The little thing skipped down the road, and, having saluted the window where the Sultan stood, led the noisy band to the saluting base, where, by a piping cry, it halted it. Then with an effort it straightened its jerking legs, and behold we saw the band of the German Training Ship ; it had come to play the cadets past the Sultan *at the heels of the Turkish line regiments*—in a moment they came, some forty pimply Prussian hobbledehoyes, flinging out their legs like ballet-dancers from Bedlam or cake-walkers from Colney Hatch. Here, indeed, was something laughable—something more absurd than the old crossing-sweeper ; but it was not oriental. It was from the West ; from Germany ; the fountain of wisdom, philosophy, art, and science ; and many of her high-born sons and daughters who thronged the lawn gazed, not with aching sides, but with calm, contented faces, seeing nothing ridiculous or apish in the fandango which their compatriots danced before the Caliph.

After this insane exhibition, which was not without political importance—for that day the Sublime Porte had come into direct opposition with Russia and Austria on a question

a question of Macedonian affairs—after the ignoble parade came the Cavalry, headed by the UrtoghruLancers, a fine crack regiment, but no more typical of the Turkish Army than the Life Guards are of ours. More interesting were the two new Volunteer Regular Hamidieh regiments which followed. These corps had been in existence only four months, and earned great praise from the foreign officers present by their accurate wheeling and smart turn-out; their uniform and equipment may be taken as a direct copy of our new cavalry pattern. The colour of the tunic is dark khaki; a long rifle slung over the shoulder, and a sword on the saddle, are the weapons; while a great-coat rolled forward, a blanket folded Numnah-wise, and two wallets complete the outfit. The saddle and bridle were not remarkable for any distinction. The headdress is a high Circassian cap, and has earned some unpopularity as bearing too near a resemblance to the Cossack. The march past of the Cavalry completed the review.

The following day we visited the Hamidieh Hospital. This institution was built at the private charge of the Sultan on the death of one of his daughters. It was designed for the relief of poor children of all denominations, and no one can deny that this was a noble act. No expense was spared on the building or on the medical equipment, and every instrument and appliance of the most modern kind is provided. We were shown round the buildings by Ibrahim Pasha, the chief medical officer. The wards were delightfully clean and airy, and the little boys and girls of all ages seemed as happy as their sickness would permit; the way in which they chattered and

and laughed to the Pasha and the doctors was a proof of the kindly treatment they received.

Two wards had been lately set apart for the victims of the Macedonian affair : one contained fifteen Moslem women and girls hideously and frightfully injured in the dynamite outrage on the railway line ; one poor girl, who was soon to become a mother, had sustained injuries in the face too horrible to describe. I was shown a photograph of her before operation, in which the wisdom teeth were exposed ; the surgery which had restored her face to a semblance of humanity was skilful and admirable. A German sister told us that the girl's husband had seen her for the first time since her disfigurement on the previous day, and that after the interview the heart-broken man had sat weeping for a time in the garden. One thought of the noble fellows who, with the funds at their disposal, had brought this about with the avowed intention of provoking reprisals on their fellow-countrymen when they had retired to a safe distance ; and one wished that the fiery Mollahs of England could also see and think before they preached their Jihad. Dynamiting all and sundry to attract the attention of disinterested persons to your collection-box is an ingenious method which commends itself to all true patriots, particularly the Fenian who lives in America, and is filled with righteous wrath at the state of Ireland ; or the gentle Bulgar in Sofia pining on the woes of Macedonia. The conclusion arrived at by these two types of patriot must be correct. The righteousness of such deeds can only be appreciated by men who can consider the matter calmly and judicially in a safe retreat. Were they inhabitants
of

of the country where their heroic measures were enforced, their judgment and point of view might become unbalanced and subjective to their personal safety, and they would lack the necessary sternness of character requisite for the laying of the schemes as well as the performance.

It is also interesting to notice the excellent reserve of the British Press on the subject of this act and others of the revolutionists. If it had been performed by Turks in Bulgaria, or by Boers in South Africa, one might have apprehended an outburst of hysterics; but as the victims were only Moslem women little notice was taken, and an obscure three lines of print, at the bottom of a page, sufficed for most papers. This is a matter for congratulation. A calm appreciation of facts is worth all the gallons of black slime that were ever slapped on to the pages of a journal in the printing.

In the soldiers' ward we saw several officers and men wounded during the guerilla fighting: among others a colonel who had been struck in the wrist by a ricochet or expanding bullet. In a Röntgen-rays photograph we saw the eleven splinters into which the bones had been broken; thirty minutes before our arrival nine had been extracted, and he had only just revived from chloroform; nevertheless on our coming into the ward, where he sat smoking a cigarette, he jumped to his feet and insisted on remaining standing until we had left. With men of such endurance and physique one could dispense with many comforts and impedimenta essential to the very existence of European troops.

In the afternoon we were conducted to the Ashiret
School

School, which is an educational institution of the greatest consequence in the Ottoman Empire: it derives its importance, not so much from the excellence of the teaching or the brilliance of the scholars, as from the motives which brought about its foundation, and the class of students who form the bulk of its pupils.

The Ashiret School was founded by the present Sultan for the purpose of teaching the sons of distinguished Aghas and Shaykhs of the tribes of Kurds and Arabs, who are ruled on the patriarchal system. The boldness of the idea and its far-reaching object point to a higher statesmanship than is usually attributed to any Turk.

The tribes, who are only indirectly governed by the central power, must be obviously strong races, otherwise they would have been completely subjected to authority; consequently for the Sultan to educate these patriarchal rulers and risk the chances of strengthening their powers, that they may be more efficiently equipped for the office into which they are born, shows a manful and fruitful policy, entirely divorced from the schemes and intrigues which are usually supposed to form the political ammunition of the Oriental Ruler and his Ministers.

The youths who are brought as pupils to the Ashiret School are gathered from the remotest corners of the empire—Tripoli in Barbary, Yemen, Eastern Kurdistan, the Hauran in Syria, and Mesopotamia. Many of these boys, when they first arrive, are ignorant of the outer world in a degree scarcely imaginable to an Englishman.

Take

Take, for instance, the mental view of a Bedawi Arab boy, ignorant not only of writing, but of the existence of letters: a boy who imagines that his tribe's feuds are the politics of the world; who conceives himself and his relatives to be persons of the highest importance, not only to the Sultan of Turkey, but to the Sultans of the West; who also pictures the whole globe as being similar in some fashion to his own deserts, and who supposes every town to be a mud village inhabited by low-born and contemptible persons who work with their hands; a boy to whom the words 'ship,' 'palace,' 'sea,' 'railway,' 'forest,' 'quay,' 'harbour,' 'carriage,' 'school,' and 'book' convey an impression no more sensible than would the word 'parallelogram' to one who had never heard of geometry; and yet, withal, a boy by no means stupid or uncouth. The change wrought on the mental vision of such a youth by six years' residence in Constantinople is almost beyond belief. Even if he learns nothing from his books, his point of view will be entirely shifted from a small remote valley to an eminence of observation. And such a change, in a greater or less degree, must be brought about in every boy who attends the Ashiret School. Therefore, when I visited the institution I was filled with the greatest interest concerning what I should see there.

The building is situated on the hillside overlooking the quay and landing-place of the Messageries Maritimes. On our arrival we found the boys paraded in a hollow square, ready for our inspection, and I scanned the ranks with the greatest curiosity, nor was I disappointed. The boys were boys any school might be proud of: clean, well-set

well-set up and intelligent, diverse in countenance, but similar in independence of bearing; the sons of the fierce rulers of the untamable races; Kurds of the mountains, and Arabs from the far places; unafraid, untamed, but endued with reason and knowledge of the outer world. Many of the boys were called from the ranks to speak to me, and I found, greatly to my satisfaction, that each one had learnt the lesson of knowledge, but, not unbalanced by it, desired to return to his own people. I asked one young Bedawi how many years he had been there. 'Four,' he answered. 'How many more will you stay?' 'Two,' he replied. Then I asked him, 'Which are better, houses or tents?' His yellow eyes blazed with remembrance, he hesitated a moment, and cried 'By my God, tents!' There was one of a superior race. No 'Gosmobaleet'; no weak clutching at a stranger's creed; no uncertain discontent; no shame of ancient custom. From that one sentence I knew there was hope for the East, and that hope is not founded on the adoption of spring-side boots and bad manners by native Christians, but on the wild, brave, manly races who, having learnt, have weight and character enough to retain their own nationality.

I will not trouble to describe the various courses of study pursued in the school; they are sound, but elementary. Those boys who were brought up to answer questions in the schoolrooms were neither better nor worse than Belgians, or French, or Italians. Let it suffice that they had learnt and, as I have said, what is far more important, they have retained their individuality.

The

The various dormitories and eating-rooms were scrupulously clean and wonderfully well appointed. When I thought of the young Bedawi Shaykh folding his clothes up on his bed-head and sleeping on a spring mattress between sheets under a snow-white counterpane, I laughed aloud—' By my God, tents are better.'

The principal of the establishment told me that while the Arabs outstripped all their comrades in intelligence and aptitude for work, the Kurds were more capable of originality.

So much for the Ashiret School, and may each of the ninety boys in it go forth and help the empire to work out the foreordained but unknown.

On our way back from the school we crossed the thundering bridge to buy some trifles in Stambul. Driving through the broad open square which is behind St. Sophia we passed the funeral of a Hamal porter. In Moslem countries it is customary for the friends of the dead to carry them to the grave, taking turns to put their shoulders beneath the load; but this poor rough coffin was only borne by three, and no one followed to mourn or help. In the midst of the bustle of the street, the cracking of whips, the cries of the hawkers, the laughter and playing of the children, this sad, shuffling, labouring group had a piteous and forlorn appearance. On the other side of the road walked a Palace aide-de-camp tightly laced in a smart Prussian uniform: he jingled his spurs and clanked his sword in the manner of the Continental officer; he curled his moustache like a fop and smoked his cigarette with an air of languid condescension, in excellent imitation of the lieutenant of

s

Western

Western Europe and his marvellous swagger, born of years of peaceful armament; but still, when this man saw the funeral, he hooked up his sword, threw away his cigarette, and, stepping out into the street, put his shoulder under the coffin and strode along sharing the burden with the three ragged porters. . . .

لَذَّةُ الْكَلَامِ كَلِمَةٌ

TABLE OF ROUTES

ROUTE No. 1.—*Damascus to Palmyra*

Inhabitants of villages	Camping grounds	No. of hours for mule caravan	State of road	Water, where obtainable on road
Arab	K'taifeh	6 hours	Passable for carriages	Many wells
"	Nasrieh	9 "	"	"
"	Karietain	7 "	"	No water at this camping ground. Camels required
Nil	Kasr El-Her	9 "	"	Sulphur spring at Ain El-Bèda
"	Ain El-Bèda	7 "	"	Water plentiful at Palmyra
Arab	Palmyra	6 "	Rough	

ROUTE No. 2.—*Ain El-Bèda to Homs*

Nil	Kherbè 't it-Tias	7 hours	Passable for carriages	Water cistern sometimes full
Greek Catholic, Arab, Arab, Turk, Christians	Feruqlus	8 "	"	Spring at Feruqlus
	Homs	8 "	Rough	Many springs on way-side

ROUTE No. 3.—Homs to Aleppo

Inhabitants of villages	Camping grounds	No. of hours for mule caravan	State of road	Water, where obtainable on road
Arab	Restan	6 hours	Macadam road in good repair	Plenty of water
Arab, Turk, Christians	Hama	5 "	" "	" "
Arab	Murik	5 "	Bad road for carriages after rain	" "
" Christians	Khan Shaykhun	3½ "	" "	" "
Arab	Ma'aret en-Noman	7 "	" "	" "
Arab	Seraqib	7½ "	" "	" "
Nil	Khan toman	7 "	" "	" "
Turk, Arab, Christians	Aleppo	4 "	Rocky road	" "

ROUTE No. 4.—Aleppo to Killis

Arab	Tel Arfad	7 hours	Rough road for carriages	See map
Turk, Kurd, Armenian	Killis	7 "	Good road for carriages, last 6 miles Macadam	" "

ROUTE No. 5.—Killis to Shaykhli

Turk	Karnabe	3 hours	Impassable for carriages, but good mule road	Water plentiful
"	Essengeli	5 "	Difficult mountain path	" "
French convent	Shaykhli	8 "	Good mule track	" "

ROUTE No. 6.—*Shaykhli to Marash*

Turk	Islahieh	5 hours	Road leads through forest. Swampy in winter. Good guide required	Water plentiful
Dehlikanli	Bel-punar	6 "	"	"
Turk	El-Yughlu	5 "	Better road for mules.	See map
Armenian, Turk	Marash	6 "	Very bad road in winter	"

ROUTE No. 7.—*Marash to Zeitun*

Nil	Batsh Khan	7 hours	Good mountain path .	See map
Military post	Hamidieh bridge	4 "	"	"
Armenian	Zeitun	4 "	Military road	"

ROUTE No. 8 (WINTER).—*Hamidieh to Albistan*

Turk	Hajin Oghlu	6 hours	Very difficult road .	See map
Alawieh	Ambar Darasi	(Snow) 8 hours (without) 6 hrs	Rough mountain path	"
Turk, Armenian	Albistan	(Snow) 9 hours (without) 6 hrs	Good mountain path .	"

ROUTE No. 9.—*Albistan to Derendeh*

Inhabitants of villages	Camping grounds	No. of hours for mule caravan	State of road	Water, where obtainable on road
Alawieh (?), Buyuk Kurd	Yapalak Yeni-Keui	2 hours (Snow) 6 hours (without) 4 hrs	Good road	See map
Turk, Armenian	Ashodeh	(Snow) 7 hours (without) 5 hrs	"	"
"	Derendeh	2 hours	"	"

ROUTE No. 10 (WINTER).—*Derendeh to Malatia via Hekim Khan*

Kurd	Dumanleh	(Snow) 8 hours (without) 4 hrs	Rough mountain path	See map
"	Selamli	(Snow) 8 hours (without) 4 hrs	Mountainous	"
Turk	Gulanjak	(Snow) 6 hours (without) 2½ hrs	Good road	"
Kurd	Gubkhani	(Snow) 5 hours (without) 1½ hr	Mountainous	"
Armenian, Turk	Hekim Khan	6 hours	Last 5 miles Macadam road	"
Turk	Hassan Batrik	7 "	Macadam road	"
Armenian, Turk	Malatia	7 "	"	"

ROUTE No. 11 (WINTER).—*Malatia to Besne via Arga*

Turk	Arga	8 hours	Road good for carriages	See map
Alawieh	Uran	3 "	Mountain path	"
"	Gunlu	4 "	"	"
Turk	Surku	4 "	"	"
Kurd	Pavrelli	8 "	"	"
Mixed	Besne	6 "	"	"

ROUTE No. 12.—*Besne to Urfa*

Kurd	Zachdarishdervende	8 hours	Good mule road	Plenty
Turk	Kilik over Euphrates	1 "	—	Springs at villages.
Zingari	Howak	8½ "	Passable for carriages	See map
"	Urfa	8 "	"	"

ROUTE No. 13.—*Urfa to Diarbekr*

Turk	Yedi-Keui	7 hours	Good road. Passable for carriages	Plentiful supply
"	Mishmishieh	7 "	Very rocky	"
Türk, Kurd, Armenian	Suvereke	6 "	Good road. Passable for carriages	"
—	Konak	6 "	"	"
Kurd	Habashi	6 "	"	"
Mixed	Diarbekr	4 "	Macadam road	"

ROUTE No. 14.—*Diarbekr to Jezireh Ibn Omar*

Inhabitants of villages	Camping grounds	No. of hours for mule caravan	State of road	Water, where obtainable on road
Kurd	Khaneki Fok	8 hours	Fair carriage road	Plenty of water at villages
Arab, Armenian, Jacobites	Mardin	8 "	Rough stony road. Impassable for carriages	"
Kurd	Dara	6 "	Good road. Carriages pass	Water scarce
Chaldean, Arab, Jew .	Nisibin	5 "	"	"
Kurd	Hajerlo	7 "	"	"
"	Kholamieh	6 "	Rocky road. Impassable for carriages	"
Kurd, Arab, Chaldean	Jezireh	6 "	"	"
ROUTE No. 15.— <i>Jezireh to Saïrt</i>				
Kurd	Nahravan	8 hours	Rocky mountainous road	Water plentiful
Chaldean	Fenduki	9 "	"	"
Kurd, Arab, Chaldean, Armenian	Saïrt	6 "	"	"
ROUTE No. 16.— <i>Jezireh to Zakho</i>				
Yezidi, Kurd	Khantan	6½ hours	Good open country	Water plentiful
Chaldean, Jew, Kurd, Arab	Zakho	5 "	"	"

ROUTE No. 17.—*Zakho to Mosul*

Kurd	Tel e' Zeit	8½ hours	Rocky road	Water scarce
Arab	Taladas	8 "	Passable for carriages	Water supply moderate
"	Mosul	6 "	"	"

ROUTE No. 18.—*Zakho to Amadia*

Kurd	Nawishki	7½ hours	Fair road for mules	Water good
Chaldean	Tini	7 "	"	"
Chaldean, Kurd	Amadia	5 "	"	"

ROUTE No. 19.—*Amadia to Akra*

Kurd	Sharana	7 hours	Very difficult road, almost impassable for mules	Plentiful
Kurd and Chaldean	Sian	12 "	Road much better	"
Jew, Arab, Kurd, Chaldean	Akra	6 "	Road almost impassable	"

ROUTE No. 20.—*Akra to Mosul*

Mixed Kurd, Arab	Dusara	8 hours	Carriages pass	Water scarce
—	Mosul	8½ "	"	Water plentiful

ROUTE No. 21.—*Mosul to Kelat Sherkat*

Inhabitants of villages	Camping grounds	No. of hours for mule caravan	State of road	Water, where obtainable on road
Arab . . .	Hammam-Ali . . .	5 hours . . .	Carriages pass . . .	Water plentiful
Military post . . .	Manguba . . .	7 " . . .	" . . .	Water scarce
Jerboor Arabs . . .	Kelat-Sherkat . . .	7 " . . .	Ferry . . .	Water plentiful

ROUTE No. 22.—*Kelat Sherkat to Altin-Kiopru*

Kurds . . .	Makhmur . . .	7 hours . . .	Good road. Carriages pass	See map
" Kurd, Arab . . .	Durban . . .	6½ " . . .	" " " " " "	" " " "
	Altin-Kiopru . . .	5 " . . .	Just passable for carriages	Water plentiful

ROUTE No. 23.—*Altin-Kiopru to Suleimanieh via Kerkuk*

Kurd, Arab . . .	Kerkuk . . .	9 hours . . .	Road hilly, just passable for carriages	Water scarce
Kurd . . .	Gurgai . . .	5 " . . .	Just passable for carriages	"
" . . .	Chemchemal . . .	3 " . . .	" " " " " "	"
" . . .	Bebejak . . .	6 " . . .	" " " " " "	"
" . . .	Suleimanieh . . .	6 " . . .	" " " " " "	"

ROUTE No 24.—*Suleimaniéh to Keni-Sanjak*

Kurd	Dartut	5 hours	Good road for mules. Impassable for car- riages	Water plentiful
"	Sardasht	5 "	"	"
"	Dukhan	4 "	"	"
Kurd, Chaldean	Keni-Sanjak	7 "	"	"

ROUTE No. 25.—*Keni-Sanjak to Mosul* (supplied by Jacob el Arab)

Kurd	Ushko Saka	7 hours	Impassable for car- riages. Good for mules	Water scarce
"	Arbil	5 "	Passable for carriages in summer	"
Chaldean, Arab	Bartala	6 "	"	Water plentiful
Mixed	Mosul	4 "	"	"

ROUTE No. 26.—*Keni-Sanjak to Rowandiz via Rania*

Kurd	Khaderan	3 hours	Good mule track	See map
"	Rania	3 "	"	"
"	Golan	6 "	Bad mule track	"
"	Garowan	7 "	"	"
"	Rowandiz	2½ "	Better road	"

ROUTE No. 27.—Rowandiz to Zebar

Inhabitants of villages	Camping grounds	No. of hours for mule caravan	State of road	Water, where obtainable on road
Kurd	Habedian	3 hours	Good mule track	Water plentiful
"	Mergasor	5½ "	"	"
"	Rezan	6½ "	"	"
"	Bira Kiopru (Zebar)	3 "	Difficult ferry	"
ROUTE No. 28.—Zebar to Amadia				
Kurd	Nafaqi	7 hours	Road difficult for mules	See map
"	Hariaq	6 "	"	"
"	Amadia	3 "	Good road for mules	"

APPENDIX

*JOHN HUGH SMITH'S DIARY OF A JOURNEY FROM
ALEPPO TO URFA BY WAY OF DEIR ZOR AND
THE KHABUR.*

ON January 27 I left Mark Sykes at Aleppo and started for the Euphrates Valley, intending to join him again in forty days at Urfa.

For the first two days the road runs through country of very little interest. On each side a vast cultivated plain stretches to the horizon, dotted here and there with little villages of mud-built beehive-shaped huts. It is said by archæologists that these are relics of the Assyrian Empire, since the houses carved on the stones found at Nineveh are identical with them ; but the great objection to this theory is that villages built in this style are found in a very limited area, and that far away from Nineveh. They begin as far south as Khan Shaykhun, and their northern and eastern limits are Kilis and the Euphrates.

I slept the night at a little village, Deir Hafer, and the next day reached Meskene and the Euphrates Valley. Here the whole character of the scenery changes, and I saw the gleaming river flowing through stretches of brushwood flanked by low chalk hills, but it vanished from view on our reaching the valley. I saw camps of black tents for the first time, and knew that I was in the country of the Bedawin. Roughly speaking, the whole of Mesopotamia from Meskene to Deir Zor, and as far north as Urfa and Mosul, is peopled by Arabs who for centuries have pressed north from Arabia. They are divided into tribes of which the Shammar and the Anazeh, who inhabit the country north and south of the Euphrates respectively, are the most important. These are the richest and most warlike of all the Bedawin tribes, but it must not be forgotten that they are only
two

two among many. Along the Khabur, for instance, one finds the Aghedaat, the Gibbur, and the Baggara, pastoral people, who do not wander very far ; and along the Euphrates one meets the Afudli, so-called Bedawin Fellaheen, who live in tents, but who cultivate the ground and have herds of sheep and buffalo ; the towns of Mesopotamia are peopled by Arabs who have forsaken their old way of life—and it must be confessed that the Bedawi deteriorates rapidly when he no longer lives in tents. A more miserable and diseased race than the inhabitants of Deir Zor and Ragga it is difficult to imagine, and it must take many generations to convert a Bedawi into a sleek and industrious town Arab, such as those to be found in Damascus or Baghdad, who would seem almost to belong to another nation.

At Meskene I camped for one night, and the next day moved across the valley to the Euphrates. I came upon the river suddenly, flowing slowly and smoothly in the frosty sunlight here and there breaking into brilliant shallows. After we had shouted for some time the ferry-boat appeared. It was a large punt propelled by two Arabs in some mysterious method of their own which was neither rowing nor punting, but a combination of the two. Then I had the mules unloaded, but before the first batch could be embarked a violent quarrel broke out between Mustapha, a Kurdish muleteer, and one of my escort of soldiers. Mustapha made statements about the soldier's mother and sisters that I hope, and indeed believe, were mere suppositions ; then they fell to fighting in the noisy, harmless way of Orientals. I separated them and took the soldier aside to calm him, leaving Joseph to superintend the business in hand. Presently the latter dashed up to me and said, ' With the muleteers I can do no good, though I curse the father and mother of each one of them.' Yet somehow, after two hours of threatening and shouting, everything had been carried over, and we started, intending to pass the night with some Bedawin Fellaheen. We rode for three hours through country very typical of Northern Mesopotamia. Close to the river it is possible to raise crops by artificial irrigation, while beyond a rolling grass plain stretches northward ; such a country would be almost ideal for graziers, who would not need

so

so much capital as agriculturists, for which calling the present population is entirely unsuited. All Bedawin are herdsmen, but inveterate hatred of manual work will render it necessary to introduce an entirely new race if Mesopotamia is ever to be cultivated, as the advocates of the Baghdad Railway propose.

Difficulties such as these have been entirely neglected in the literature that has arisen over this project. German authors, notably Herr Paul Robach, show a great knowledge of the possibilities of the country, though it seems strange that their arguments should be supported chiefly by facts drawn from archaeology, while entirely neglecting such a question as the want of labour. But of this I shall have more to say later.

About four o'clock in the afternoon I reached my camping-ground close to the tents of some Bedawin Fellaheen, and, on dismounting, was met by a man who came from the Shaykh's tent inviting me to coffee. Here I found a number of ragged Arabs sitting gravely round a wood fire on which was placed the large coffee-pot that stands on every nomad's hearth from Hadramaut to Kurdistan. Besides the Arabs there were a few soldiers, who had come to collect taxes, and who checked all complaints on the subject of the exactions of Ibrahim Pacha, the commander of the Hamidieh, in which my host seemed very anxious to indulge. The Shaykh himself was an old man, who suffered from deafness and some mysterious malady whose nature I was unable to understand, and which I was requested to cure. After about a quarter of an hour I returned to my tent, where in a short time I received a return visit from the Shaykh. I gave him coffee, and he departed; but I was not left in peace long, for soon two Greeks appeared, who were living in the Bedawin camp and collected liquorice, which they sold in Alexandretta. It may here be mentioned that this drug subsequently finds its way to America, where it is used for the adulteration of tobacco.

Again after dinner I paid a visit to the Shaykh's tent, hoping to elicit some information from the men who gathered there; but they were too full of the injustice and exactions of the Hamidieh to speak of anything else, and on this subject it was not safe to talk in the presence of the soldiers. This was the
first

first glimpse I had of that movement which will probably in future have so large an effect on the destinies of Mesopotamia—that is, the gradual retreat of the Arabs before the Hamidieh, who are mostly Kurds by race, and whose strength lies in their superior armament and the support of the Government.

Next morning I started for Jaafa, where there is a ruined castle,* on the bank of the Euphrates, which I was anxious to visit. My road lay through a grass country, dotted here and there with a few black tents, near which I saw large flocks of sheep. About 11 A.M. I saw in the distance the castle of Jaafa, which I reached after another two hours' ride. It stands on a mound (which I think is natural) high above the low stretches of brushwood that line the river-bank; behind it is a range of hills—one of those ranges that confine the Euphrates on both sides as far as Ragga. Unfortunately the walls and towers, built of clay brick, stand in ruins, and the castle is not nearly in as good a state of preservation as that of Palmyra, which it resembles in many respects. Fortunately, however, a minaret, standing in the centre of the mound, is almost perfect: it is crowned with an inscription which Joseph deciphered, composed of a sacred text of no importance, and from which the builder's name is gone. As to the date or the history of the castle I could find no reference; but Joseph was full of information, explaining all antiquities, as is his wont, by a book of Bedawin fairy stories, of which he is very fond. At a short distance from the castle is the tomb of that Sultan Suleiman which has recently been restored, and to which an Arab has been attached by the present Government to preserve it from profanation. Who this Sultan was I was for a long time unable to discover. My soldiers suggested that he was the Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. Of course this is nonsense, as he died in Europe. The tomb contains, I believe, the father of Ertoghrl, one of the earliest of the Ottoman sultans, who, according to Creasy, was drowned in the Euphrates.

* This castle has not, as far as I know, been described by travellers; I was directed to it by Mr. Shallum, the dragoman of the British Consulate at Aleppo.

In the course of the evening I heard that the northern Anazeh, under Hakim Beg, were in the neighbourhood ; and as the servant of the tomb professed to know of their whereabouts I determined next day to go and visit them. It will no doubt seem strange that the Anazeh, whose usual camping-grounds lie to the south of the Euphrates, should have crossed the river. The reason was that, owing to the war between Ibrahim Pacha of the Hamidieh and Faris Pacha of the Shammar Bedawin, the Anazeh had crossed the river in summer, when the water was low, to help the former ; for the Anazeh are the hereditary enemies of the Shammar ; but the river had risen behind them, and consequently they were unable to return to their usual winter quarters in Arabia.

Next morning (February 1) I sent the mules on to a camping-ground some six hours distant, and taking Joseph, a soldier, and Mustapha Kurdi, with some provisions, started off, with the servant of the tomb as a guide, to the tents of the Anazeh. We left the river behind us and rode into the rolling grass-land of Upper Mesopotamia ; but, though we came upon many encampments, we could not find that of the Shaykh, and after four hours' riding gave up our quest and tried to rejoin the caravan. This, however, we were not able to do, although we found the road by which it had passed, and heard vague reports of them from two Bedawin who were eating a jackal they had just shot. At last, after a long day of ten or eleven hours, we rode towards some lights that we saw at some half-hour's distance ; these turned out to be an encampment of poor Bedawin, flying from Ibrahim Pacha, who had recently plundered them. I passed the night comfortably in the Shaykh's tent in front of a blazing fire, after a fairly satisfying supper of hot bread and sour milk. My hosts were so poor that they could not afford coffee.

Next morning with the first grey of dawn I rode into Ragga, some three hours distant, where I was joined later in the day by my caravan, which had passed the night with some Bedawin. Ragga is a wretched town, built of mud, populated by low Bedawin who have left the nomad life, a sprinkling of Kurds and Turks, and a few Circassians from Ras el Ain. The

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position

position of the town is rather fine: it stands on rising ground above a bend of the Euphrates. Close behind the town are the extensive ruins of an old Abassid palace of Haroun al Rashid. These consist of a high mud wall enclosing a square of many acres, in which stand the ruins of a mosque in fair preservation, a fragment of the old palace, and in one corner a gateway in almost perfect condition. In every direction fragments of porcelain tiles and pieces of broken alabaster are strewn upon the ground. To-day the ruins, which consist of dingy clay bricks, give little idea of magnificence, but doubtless these were originally decorated with tiles that now lie scattered and broken. The Government have forbidden the natives to dig for antiquities in the ruins—a wise provision, since these will be preserved for properly equipped scientific expeditions. They would probably secure some fine specimens of Arab tiling and porcelain and a few inscriptions in Kufic, such as one which I tried in vain to copy.

The next day I crossed the Euphrates again on my way to Deir Zor. The road winds through thickets and desert inhabited only by poor Bedawin, and is devoid of any interest. At last, after three days, I reached Deir Zor, for which I was heartily thankful, though the town does not possess any very great attractions. It lies at the distance of some three-quarters of a mile from the Euphrates, on the banks of a small and dirty stream spanned by an iron bridge, and though not inconsiderable in size it has no fine buildings, the houses for the most part being built of mud, with here and there a modern stone serai barrack or hospital of squalid and pretentious ugliness. The population is identical with that of the Ragga. The children and some of the men are often good-looking, but many lack an eye or else squint—a misfortune terribly common among Arabs. Deir Zor is the seat of government of an independent mutesarif, whose chief duty consists in keeping the Bedawin tribes in order and in extracting from them such taxes as it is possible to collect. Of course the problem of governing nomad Arabs is one of extreme difficulty, owing to the fact that they differ in race and language from the Turks, and moreover have their own tribal organisation

organisation ; also they resent any interference with their petty and interminable quarrels. The Turkish Government is content to let them fight among themselves as long as one tribe does not get too strong (in which case soldiers are sent to help the weaker) and caravans and villagers are not molested ; and fair order is kept throughout the country by means of police placed on the banks of the Euphrates and the Khabur at intervals of about a day's ride.

While I was encamped outside Deir Zor I saw an example of the dealings of the Government with the Bedawin, which is suggestive and interesting. Some of the Anazeh, who had come to the town to make purchases, had left their camels, with a few women to guard them, in an open space not far from my tents. Suddenly I saw policemen rush out of the town to seize the camels—a score or so in number. These were impounded, and the men and women put in prison. I asked why, and was told that a rich grazier of Homs had lost some lambs to an Anazeh 'ghazu'—as plundering expeditions are called in Arabic—and these camels would be retained till restitution had been made. This is not the action of a strong Government, but it is characteristic of a policy which is, perhaps, the best possible, and to a certain extent successful ; for the country is as yet really unsubdued. For it must never be forgotten that though the Shaykhs of those tribes who are perpetually at war, such as Faris and Muslet of the Shammar and Gibbur Arabs and Ibrahim of the Melli Kurds, may be called Pachas, it does not follow that they are really attached to Turkish rule, and, though gangs of brigands have been organised into Hamidieh regiments of irregular cavalry, that they necessarily are, or would be, loyal soldiers in time of war. The determining factor in this case, it seems to me, would be the opinion of these tribes with regard to the position of the Sultan as Caliph, and the extent to which the war in question was regarded as jihad. Were it so regarded, I think the Kurds would join the Turks against the common enemy. As to the Arabs, it is difficult to say. I have been told that in secret the Sultan's claim to the Caliphate is scorned by them.

I think that those who write of the present weakness of Turkey in many cases forget the great element of strength which the Sultan possesses, and which may be called 'the potential unity of Islam.' Divided as the Ottoman Empire is in time of peace by petty tribal and racial jealousies, it always seems to me possible that when confronted with a real danger these would disappear in the greater passion of religious enthusiasm.

Before I leave the subject I ought to mention a story told me by one of my escort, which illustrates the relations of the Turkish soldiers to the Bedawin. I had been asking questions about the Anazeh. 'Do I know them?' he said. 'Wallah, I do; did not I wound thirteen of their men and camels that day at Mudik? Thus it was. I and my comrade were there, and the villagers came and said, "The camels of the Anazeh are eating our water-melons; go and drive them away." So I and my comrade went to fetch our mules from the place where we had left them tethered, and when we came there, his mule had broken loose. So I left him to catch it, and mounting mine took my rifle and rode as fast as I could to the field of water-melons. But as I went my belt of cartridges broke and fell to the ground, and such was my haste that I knew it not; so I came upon the camels and the men of the Anazeh that were with them, with a mule and a rifle indeed, but no cartridges; and I cried to them to drive away the camels. But they laughed and pulled me from the mule and beat me. Further they said to me, "We will kill thee"; and I answered, "Well may you do this, seeing that I am unarmed; but this matter also is in the hands of God." But one of their Shaykhs rode up and said, "What! Will you kill this man, who is the son of the Sultan? If you do this thing the matter will never be finished." So they let me go, and I returned and found my cartridge-belt and my comrade, and then we came again to them and shot, and I wounded thirteen men and camels, and Wallah! one man with two shots in the arm.'

I spent three days at Deir Zor, encamped near the town, and passed my time in collecting information concerning the country on each side of the Khabur, through which I proposed to travel

travel. For most of this I was indebted to a delightful Circassian, colonel of the police, who did all that was possible to help me.

I must not forget to mention the sentries who guarded my tents. They came out four in number on my arrival, bringing with them a coffee-pot and some old quilts, as they intended to pass the time in sleeping and conversation; but when they saw my Mauser pistol, with which I was shooting at a mark, they became filled with emulation, and spent most of the afternoon firing with a Remington at a tin pot 100 yards away. Unfortunately they placed the pot, through sheer absent-mindedness, between them and the town, through the streets of which, therefore, the bullets whistled, until they had the misfortune to frighten a superior officer, who rode angrily out of the town to stop them. One of them, Ramazan Shawish, had a delightful repertory of stories which he told me every evening. He is a born *raconteur*, and I advise any one who passes through Deir Zor to inquire after him.*

On February 10 I crossed the Euphrates for the third time. By 12 noon we had the camp pitched on the other side of the river close to a village called Hasaniyé, directly opposite to Deir Zor. Some twenty yards from my tent-door was the great river, which grew blood-red in the sunset—one of those Eastern sunsets which are the bane of all readers of books of Eastern travel.

Previous to the foundation of the Hamidieh cavalry under Ibrahim Pacha, Northern Mesopotamia was divided between the pure Arab tribe of the Shammar Bedawin, subject to whom were the less important tribes of Baggara, Gibbur, Aghedaat, and Sherabin, and the Kurdish nomads who were constantly fighting among each other. The Shammar were practically supreme throughout Northern Mesopotamia, and their camping-grounds extended as far north as Viranshahir, a small town to the south-east of Urfa. But some ten years ago the Kurdish nomads were formed into Hamidieh regiments of irregular cavalry under

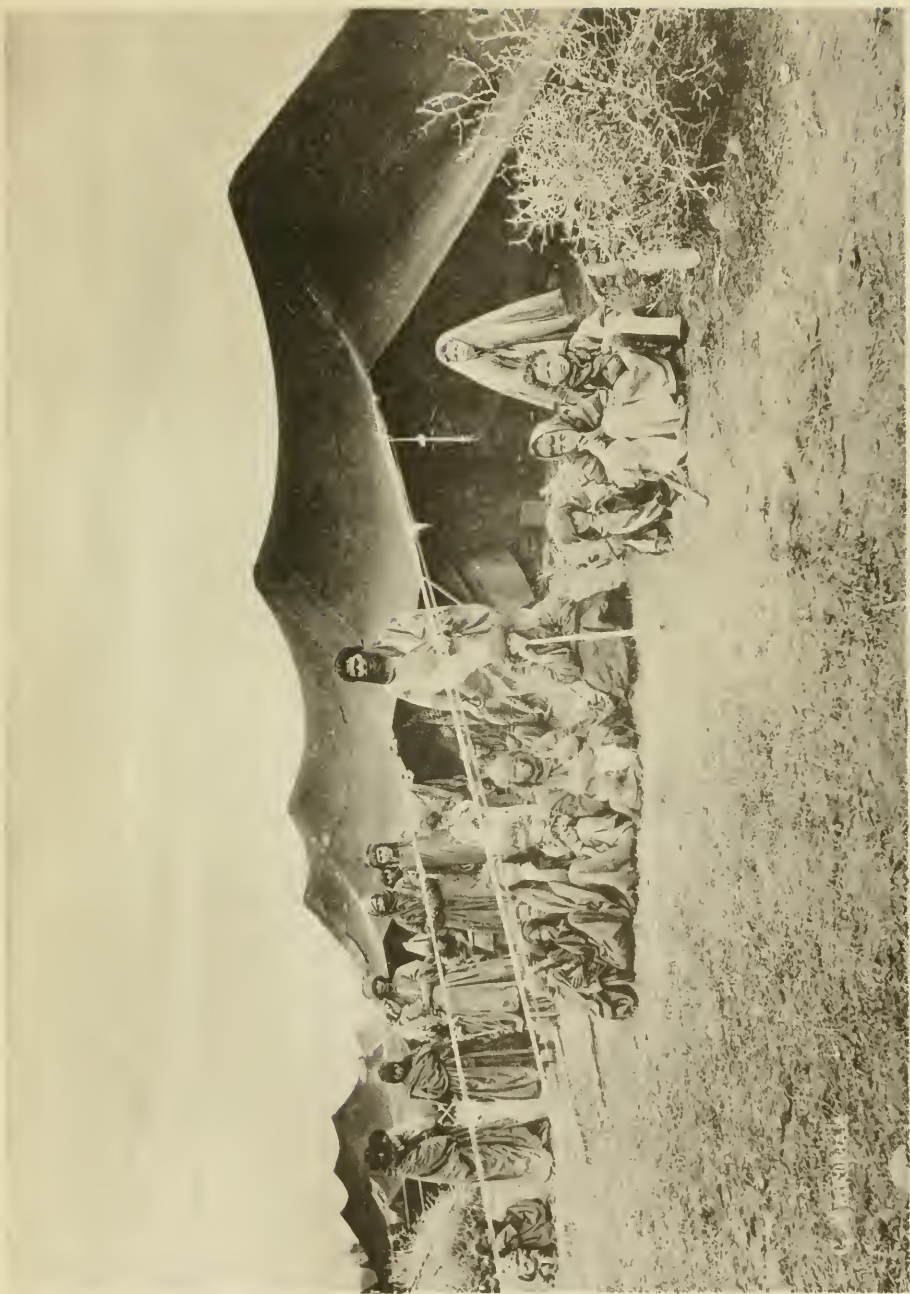
* These were of so oriental a character that, in the absence of a Kamashastra Society, the retailing of them had better be delayed.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim Pacha, originally Aga of the Melli tribe, and of mixed Kurdish and Bedawin descent. Further, as soldiers of the Sultan, they are armed with Martini rifles. This at once gave them a conspicuous advantage over the Arabs, who were at the same time weakened by disputes between Faris, the Shaykh of the Shammar on the Khabur, and Jarulla, Shaykh of the Shammar near Mosul. Two years ago war broke out between Faris and Ibrahim Pacha. At first the Arabs had the best of it, and drove the Kurds back to Viranshahir, which they nearly captured; but at that moment the Government, fearing lest the Arabs should grow too powerful, sent soldiers to help Ibrahim Pacha, and they were driven back. Then Faris summoned his nephew Jarulla from near Mosul, and the southern Anazeh, to help him, while Ibrahim Pacha summoned the northern Anazeh under their chief Hakim Beg. Jarulla came from near Mosul, but since his family had for many years been at war with Faris he chose to fight against him rather than for him. Hakim Beg, on the other hand, who had crossed the Euphrates to help Ibrahim Pacha, refused to fight against the Shammar when he heard that they were allied with the southern Anazeh. This produced a temporary lull in the hostilities; but just before my arrival in Mesopotamia matters had been further complicated by a telegram from Constantinople ordering Ibrahim Pacha to send Jarulla back to his own country. Faris, however, had refused to let him pass, and active hostilities between them were expected every day.

I may note here that the Bedawin swim the river on inflated skins. They place their clothes inside the skins, which are then blown out, and not only support them, but keep everything dry. The ferry is naturally dear, and its dearness is generally enhanced, if one is not careful, owing to the fact that its proprietor is an Armenian, who will assuredly attempt to cheat the unwary.

My first day's march was a long one of ten hours from Hasaniyé to Sauar, a police post on the Khabur. The view on either side of the road was monotonous; there was nothing but a scantily turfed plain stretching to the horizon. Midway
between



BEDAWIN.

between Sauar and Hasaniyé, at a distance of fifty yards from the road, is a spring of water. I spent most of the day in talking to a Kurd, Mahmoud by name, who was coming with me for protection, his eventual destination being Mardinc, whence he hoped to take sheep. Though dressed in rags and riding on a lame pony, he had three hundred Turkish pounds in his belt. Ibrahim Pacha he hated ; Faris of the Shammar he liked, who gave him safe-conduct on the payment of a pound per flock of sheep.

I reached Sauar towards evening. It is a little mud fort, close to the river, and surrounded by the tents of the poor Bedawin, who manage to raise scanty crops of millet by means of artificial irrigation.

The next day we left for Margada, a camping-ground six hours distant on the river-side. For the first time we heard that the political situation was at all serious, and there were rumours of plundering expeditions wandering about the country. These, however, I was assured would not attack me, since I had an escort.

The road that day lay along the river-bank, beyond which lay the rolling plains of Southern Mesopotamia, covered with tents of the Baggara and Aghedaat. To my left hand there was still little to be seen but the boundless plain, dotted here and there with low hills on which are the graves of the Bedawin. In front of me was a low tableland called El Hamma, that runs east to the Khabur.

I reached Margada earlier than I had expected, and so pushed on to an encampment of the Aghedaat, some two hours distant. Here I was hospitably received, though the Shaykhs were absent : they had gone to Faris, whose allies they were, to help him. There were about a hundred tents in the camp and many flocks of sheep, but I saw more boys and women than men—these had gone to the war, and their horses and lances stood no longer at the doors of the tents.

Next morning I left the Bedawin and started for Sheddade, some seven hours distant. The road lay through desert, a mile or two to the west of the Khabur, which we did not meet again
till

till we reached our destination. I could see through my binoculars that the country on the other side of the river was covered with Bedawin: these were the Shammar under Faris, and they would move on the morrow, against Jarulla, who was camping in the Singar Hills, the purple outline of which broke the horizon to the north-east. Between the two armies lay a few soldiers who would try to stop the fighting if it were possible, and if not, return to their station.

Sheddade, which I reached about three in the afternoon, is a mud fort for police overlooking the Khabur. There is a ferry here for those who take the desert road to Mosul, which crosses Northern Mesopotamia and passes close under the Singar Hills. Behind the fort rises a low hill crowned with a Bedawin graveyard: here, I believe, lies Mohammed Emin, Shaykh of the Gibbur, of whom Sir Henry Layard gives an account in one of his books.

Next morning I started at 7 A.M. for Taban, or rather for a camping-ground opposite Taban, a hill that lies to the east of the river.

At Sheddade I had left the two policemen who had come from Deir Zor and taken two others, one of whom had an eventful history. He was from Kerkuk (he told me), and in early life was a brigand by profession, preying on the caravans from Baghdad, and, like most of the Kurds near Kerkuk, making occasional expeditions into Persia. But, preferring, as he said, a quiet life, he had turned policeman, and was not altogether satisfied with the change. 'What have I got from the Government?' he said. 'Nothing; my horse is my own, my rifle is my own. If I do not get my pay regularly I shall go back to my old life.'

Towards 11 o'clock we drew near to Agage, the site of the Assyrian city Arban, which was visited and excavated by Layard; and I galloped on ahead of the caravan to see the ruins. Their situation is impressive. The river, lined with dry and rustling reeds, winds close under the hill, which rises precipitously above it. Layard, I found, had driven horizontal passages through the cliff, by which he extracted the sculptures
which

which are now in the British Museum : these passages are now inhabited by jackals and hyænas. At the mouth of one of them lies a small man-faced bull, three feet in height, which is inferior in workmanship to the sculptures of Nineveh. Mr. King, of the British Museum, explains this by saying that it represents the provincial art of Assyria. I stayed about an hour in the ruins and then rode on to the camp of the Baggara Bedawins opposite to Tell Taban.

Next day was a short one, and by 12 o'clock I reached my destination, Tell Heseke, a station for infantry mounted on mules at the bend of the Khabur, which henceforward flows east, and not south. The Tell is probably the site of a ruined town, and stands up amid a grassy plain, here and there broken by hills of obviously volcanic origin, while to the south lies the low range of Jebel Abd ul Aziz. Between Tell Heseke and Urfa I heard that the road was more insecure than that by which I had come ; consequently I had taken letters from Deir Zor to the officer in command to furnish me with a further escort. When I arrived, however, the officer was absent, and as only two soldiers remained at the post I had to wait a day till more arrived. I was not altogether displeased at the delay, as my men and mules were somewhat tired ; and I spent my time in collecting stories from the policeman and the ex-brigand touching his past life. These were mostly so sordid and ghastly that they completely divested me of any sentimentality with regard to highwaymen and such like which I may have acquired.

In the afternoon of the second day I heard the sound of a trumpet and saw the officer in question trotting towards my tents with twenty infantry men mounted on mules. He had just arrived from Sheddade, where he had succeeded in getting in between the armies of Faris and Jarulla, and so preventing a fight.

From this fact those who know Lady Anne Blunt's ' Bedouins of the Euphrates ' will realise how much the Government has strengthened its position with regard to these tribes, and also they will understand the character of the Bedawin warfare. I am far from denying that this may be serious when
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any important interests are concerned ; and by 'important' I mean interests that concern property, such as camping-grounds—these the Bedawin, who is a Semite, and a Semite of a particularly pure race, takes very seriously. But it must be remembered—and those who have studied Lord Beaconsfield's career are not likely to forget it—that one of the chief elements in Semitic success is the possession of a brilliant imagination which finds an outlet in a certain histrionism. Well, the Bedawi is to a great extent a histrion, and much as I like and respect him, I must admit that his ferocity, his chivalry, and his generosity are to a large extent myths—myths that he has created himself, and propagates persistently and well.

The officer gave me the required escort of eight mounted infantry. It is not too much to say that these soldiers have to a great extent quieted the country-side. Their method of procedure is to ride out when they see a ghazu passing and drive it back, taking what they want from it ; consequently the officer in command comes to be easily the best mounted man in Mesopotamia. He has a white delul or trotting camel, eight or ten Arab mares of the best, and a white mule, rachwan ; that is to say, broken to a kind of swift amble, very comfortable for long journeys.

I left Tell Heseke for Ras el Ain. My way lay through the desert with the Khabur on my right hand and Jebel Abd ul Aziz on my left. Between these two landmarks the road runs through the plain, here and there relieved by Tells, which are probably the ruins of ancient towns. Such certainly is Tell Migdel, visited by Layard in 1850, and Tell Roman on the north side of the Khabur, at the foot of which is a strip of land where pomegranates and grapes grow every year. There is no local tradition of their having been planted there, and the only possible theory for their existence seems to be that they are the relic of an old town, whose ruins are now completely grass-grown. According to the Bedawin, the country-side abounds in ruins, and would probably repay the visit of an archæological expedition ; for it must be remembered that Sir Henry Layard never left the Khabur and no archæologist has visited the plain to the north.

I heard

I heard that some years since a cave was found containing statues of men and women, apparently at a great feast ; my informant added that those who made this discovery fled away in terror, considering the place to be haunted by devils. About three o'clock in the afternoon I reached the tents of the Sherabin Bedawin and encamped for the night.

The evening was disturbed by a quarrel between the cook and the dragoman. Its origin was obscure, as are most Oriental quarrels, and it probably would have ended peacefully but for the fact that Joseph Shamali, the cook, cursed the religion of Joseph Hadad, the dragoman, which between Arabs* is an unpardonable offence. Joseph Hadad became dramatically aggrieved, and, sitting on the ground with his head wrapped up in a kafijeh, explained to me and to a circle of admiring muleteers that if he had been in Jerusalem, and not in this 'dam-debil country,' he would have stuck a knife into the 'bollo' of the cook ('bollo,' I should explain, is a word compounded of the English 'belly' and the Arabic 'ulbo'). After about two hours he was pacified, partly, I think, by my refusal to take him seriously.

Next day I continued my journey to Ras el Ain. The country was the same as on the previous day, with the exception that we left the range of Jebel Abd ul Aziz behind and marched towards the hills that lie to the north round Viranshahir. About three in the afternoon I passed Safah, a little Circassian village, and soon after saw to the south the gleam of some distant marshes ; about four o'clock we crossed a tributary of the Khabur and reached Ras el Ain. This little town stands close to the source of the Khabur, which rises, lukewarm and slightly impregnated with sulphur, in a wood of willows. The site is attractive to a degree to one who, like myself, had seen nothing but desert for several weeks. The spring is surrounded by a pool of rippling, limpid water, swarming with fish ; and throughout the adjacent meadows are herons, kingfishers, spotted black and white, and yellow wagtails. One would expect to find a town on so

* I should also mention the fact that they were both Christians ; no Christian would dare to curse a Moslem's faith.

charming

charming a spot, and it is evident from the ruins that were shown me next day that, though the existing Ras el Ain is but forty years old, it stands on a much older site. I believe that it was originally the seat of a crusading bishop, a view which is confirmed by the fact that a mediæval helmet of obviously European workmanship has lately been discovered near the town. On all sides—to the south, west, and east—stretches a rolling plain; on the north only is the horizon definitely broken by the snow-capped mountains of Kurdistan.

The inhabitants are, with a few exceptions, Circassians, who came to Mesopotamia forty years since, some nine thousand strong, and tried to found a colony in a Mohammedan country. At that date Daghistan had just been conquered by the Russians, against whom a traditional hatred exists to this day. Accordingly they built Ras el Ain, Garra, Safah, and several other towns, whose names have perished and which stand in ruins throughout the surrounding country. But circumstances have not been favourable to them. The land, of course, is abundantly fertile, but local conditions are unsuited to agricultural prosperity. On all sides are tribes who live by plunder: to the south the Shammar, to the east Yezidis, to the north the Hamidieh. Thus the Circassians have been prevented from settling down to a peaceful existence as in Syria, where the colony of Jairash is a great success. Further, their numbers have been thinned by a disease which rages in Northern Mesopotamia, and by the emigration of many of their number to Deir Zor, Ragga, and Baghdad, where they pick up a precarious living by horse-dealing. I heard a story of their relations with the Shammar at the time of their arrival in Mesopotamia, which is of a certain interest, though probably legendary in character. This is how it was told me by one Mirza at Ragga:

‘At first when the Circassians came to Ras el Ain, the Shammar made ghazu against them and took their cattle and horses; but one day the men of Ras el Ain caught twenty of their Bedawin and slew them. And one they took and bored a hole in him and blew him up full of wind, as one might blow up a sheepskin; and then they set him up outside Ras el Ain

so

so that all who came by said, "Mashallah, what is this? See what the Circassians have done to the Shammar." But the Shammar bethought them how they might be avenged, and they devised this plot. They came to Ras el Ain and said, "Ho! ye Circassians, the Anazeh have made war on us; come ye and help." And those who knew not the deceit of the Bedawin went with them—many men, each one with his rifle—into the desert. And the Shammar said, "See you not those horsemen there in the desert? They are the Anazeh; now, do ye, who have rifles, go in front; we are Bedawin, and have but lances!" So the Circassians went forward, and, lo! there were no Anazeh, but only another band of the Shammar. Then were the men of Ras el Ain caught between two bands of the Bedawin, before and behind, and that day there fell of them fifty.'

I had letters to the Shaykh of Ras el Ain from the officer in command at Tell Heseke, and I was treated with the greatest courtesy: he invited me to his house, and when I refused on the ground that I had my own tents he sent me a lamb each day as a present.

The morning after my arrival I went to his house and was served with a meal of tea and cakes, followed by Bedawin coffee, in the company of the chief man of the town. The room in which I was received had a divan running round the sides. I was given a seat next the fire; beside me was Joseph Hadad, to act as interpreter; next to him a Circassian from the same tribe as Shamil, who made so brave a resistance against the Russians, and beyond him other friends of the Shaykh. I was besieged with a torrent of questions about the Transvaal war and about England. Some one said, 'Inshallah! [Please God] one day the Sultan and the King of India will make war together against the Muscovites.'

The only other amusing incident that I can recall of my stay at Ras el Ain was Joseph's attempt to sell a Circassian a lame horse. The latter walked round the horse, looked at his teeth, and said, 'Wallah, he is older far than my mother.'

Short as my stay had been among the Circassians, I was
greatly

greatly impressed by the many qualities which would under more favourable circumstances achieve something substantial: they are a race of brave fighters, and yet are not fighters only. Unlike the Bedawin, they do not consider ghazu as anything but a *pis-aller*. They are intelligent in a particular hard-headed way, that reminds one more of Europeans than of Asiatics; and consequently, when they are introduced into the Turk's administration, they make themselves felt, and become conspicuous, if only for villainy.

Further, their carved silver work possesses artistic merits of a very high order: it is bold in design and delicate in execution. Curiously enough, this side of their character has deteriorated under Russian rule, and the Circassian work I have seen at Tiflis shows signs of degeneration and vulgarity. I think it should here be said that the idea, that found favour in Germany some years ago, of colonising Northern Mesopotamia is chimerical; the climate is not suited to Europeans, and the non-success of the Circassians, a people accustomed to the mountains of Daghistan, is a proof of this.

It would be difficult to imagine any country more unattractive than the desert between Ras el Ain and Viranshahir, or weather more dismal than that in which I traversed it. It was a grey, cold, windy day, and the march was a long one through dreary wastes of uncultivated land that showed no signs of life, till I reached a camp of Nomad Kurds about four o'clock in the afternoon, and soon after cultivated fields, and then Viranshahir.

The most striking characteristic of this town, which I should think would render it unique, is the fact that it is built among ruins, which stand untouched amid khans and bazaars. It is surrounded by a wall of evidently Byzantine origin, and it contains a basilica in a fair state of preservation; while close to the town are the ruins of an ancient castle and a number of subterranean tombs with stone doors that open and shut, most of them marked with a cross, while on the lintels are Greek inscriptions. It is inhabited by Kurds and Armenians and Syrian Christians, who own all the stalls in the bazaars and cultivate the surrounding country. It is for this latter purpose that they
are

are encouraged to come to the town by Ibrahim Pacha, the Commander of the Hamidieh Cavalry, who seems to have ideas as to the development of his territory. Where his rule exists the Christians have suffered neither robbery nor violence.

There is no representative of the Turkish Government in Viranshahir, which is governed entirely by Ibrahim Pacha, on the whole well. For those under his rule there is protection and justice ; for the surrounding country there is neither.

I passed the night in a khan, and as the mules wanted shoeing I was forced to pass the next day there. Then my departure was further postponed by the fact that a river outside the town, which I had to cross, had grown impassable owing to rain. Consequently I had three or four days to watch the effect of the Hamidieh system, for which I was afterwards not sorry.

I have already mentioned that Mesopotamia is inhabited by two races—the pure Arabs and the Nomad Kurds. These latter were formed into irregular cavalry, on the model of the Cossacks, some ten years ago. The method of procedure was as follows : The weaker tribes were first armed, so as to neutralise the power of the stronger, and then the stronger were admitted into the organisation. For example, in this case the Melli tribe was enrolled first under Ibrahim Agha, who was subsequently raised to the rank of Pacha. This strengthened him against his neighbours the Karagetchi, whom he defeated, and who subsequently became incorporated with the Melli tribe into one regiment of the Hamidieh.

What the Sultan's object was in forming these regiments it is difficult to say. It has been suggested that they were to be a counterpoise to the Cossacks, or again that, in the event of a Turkish army advancing into Armenia to meet invading Russians, they might protect its flank against Bedawin raids should the Bedawin prove disloyal to the Sultan. Also I have heard it said the object was to secure the more efficient enrolment of all Mohammedans ; and certainly, when the inhabitants of a certain village were enrolled as Hamidieh, fifteen men turned up who had previously reported themselves dead to escape taxation. Of these conflicting theories the first has always seemed to me
the

the most probable, for it must be remembered that the Hamidieh system extends throughout Kurdistan, and the advance of the Russian army would be considerably harassed by the appearance of these irregulars on their flanks.

But the effect of this organisation has been of the greatest importance in Mesopotamia. Formerly the Arabs, who, like many Semites, will not work with their hands, held the country as far north as Viranshahir. Now all is changed, and the Shammar rarely venture north of the Khabur: that is to say, that a large strip of country is open to settlers to pursue an agricultural life, and should the Baghdad Railway be made the settlers would come in from Armenia and from Kurdistan, for the superstition that the Kurds will not work has no foundation. Already, as I mentioned above, a certain start has been made. The Armenians, who, whatever their vices, are good agriculturists, cultivate the land in the immediate vicinity of the town, and in certain cases the Kurds have given up their nomad existence and have settled in villages. Of course, in other districts of Mesopotamia, in the neighbourhood of Severek, Diarbekr, and Mardin, this side of the Hamidieh system does not appear. When Ibrahim Pacha's men come to that part of the world they come as cowardly and brutal brigands.

These facts are of interest when the possibility of the Baghdad Railway, as a prosperous commercial enterprise, is being canvassed throughout Europe. The two great difficulties in the way in the conversion of this country into an agricultural paradise have always seemed to me to be the lack of labour and the lawlessness of the Kurds. Should it be found that the Kurds themselves will cultivate the ground, we have Saul among the prophets indeed, but a solution of the problem.

At last, after three days' delay, I started for Urfa. The first stage was a short one, through cultivated country, with the snow-covered mountains of Kurdistan on my right hand; after four hours I reached Giaur Hori, a small Kurdish village, where I spent the night. I found here a Christian graveyard and a stone-covered cistern in a very perfect state of preservation. During the afternoon a large caravan came past on its way
from

from Urfa to Mardin : it was under the escort of four Circassians, and had passed a ghazu of Karagetchi Kurds in safety. Its immunity was due not so much to fear of these Circassians as to the fact that they are in collusion with the Kurds, and no caravan escorted by them is touched ; thus, when the ghazu came near to the caravan the Circassians pointed out a man who had paid nothing for their protection—he was immediately robbed of his cloak and the beast he rode. Further, with regard to these Circassians, I may relate this story : At Viransahir my Lee-Metford rifle had excited the envy of every one, and one day three Circassians came to the mule soldiers who composed my escort and said, ‘ When you have started to-morrow we are coming to attack you, as we want the beg’s rifle. You will fire at us, of course, but do not hit us, and we will give you 10*l.* if we get it.’ Unfortunately for them the sergeant replied, ‘ Come ! and when you have taken our rifles you shall take his ; but as for the matter of shooting and not hitting, this is in the hands of the “ Compassionating and Compassionate.” ’

Next day I started from Giaur Hori early, as I had a long day before me. I took all precautions against attack, keeping the mules together, and sending out scouts in front ; luckily we met no one, though we saw abundant evidence of the ghazu’s path. Here in the road were empty Martini cartridges ; in another place I found a ruined village that had been sacked the day before, and when, after ten hours’ riding, I came to Merj, the khanjee was full of stories of the previous day’s events. A ghazu of eight hundred strong (I will not answer of course for Oriental accuracy with regard to numbers—probably it consisted of eighty men) had plundered the Khan and village and taken away 5,000*l.* worth of property. Probably this last estimate is ridiculously high, but its extravagance is significant.

Of course the facts are in the highest degree discreditable to the Turkish Government—all the more so because the Hamidieh are soldiers of the Sultan, and owe their organisation and armament to him. Still I would insist that there is a side to the Hamidieh’s system which gives hope of better things, since the Hamidieh are beginning that displacement of the Arab

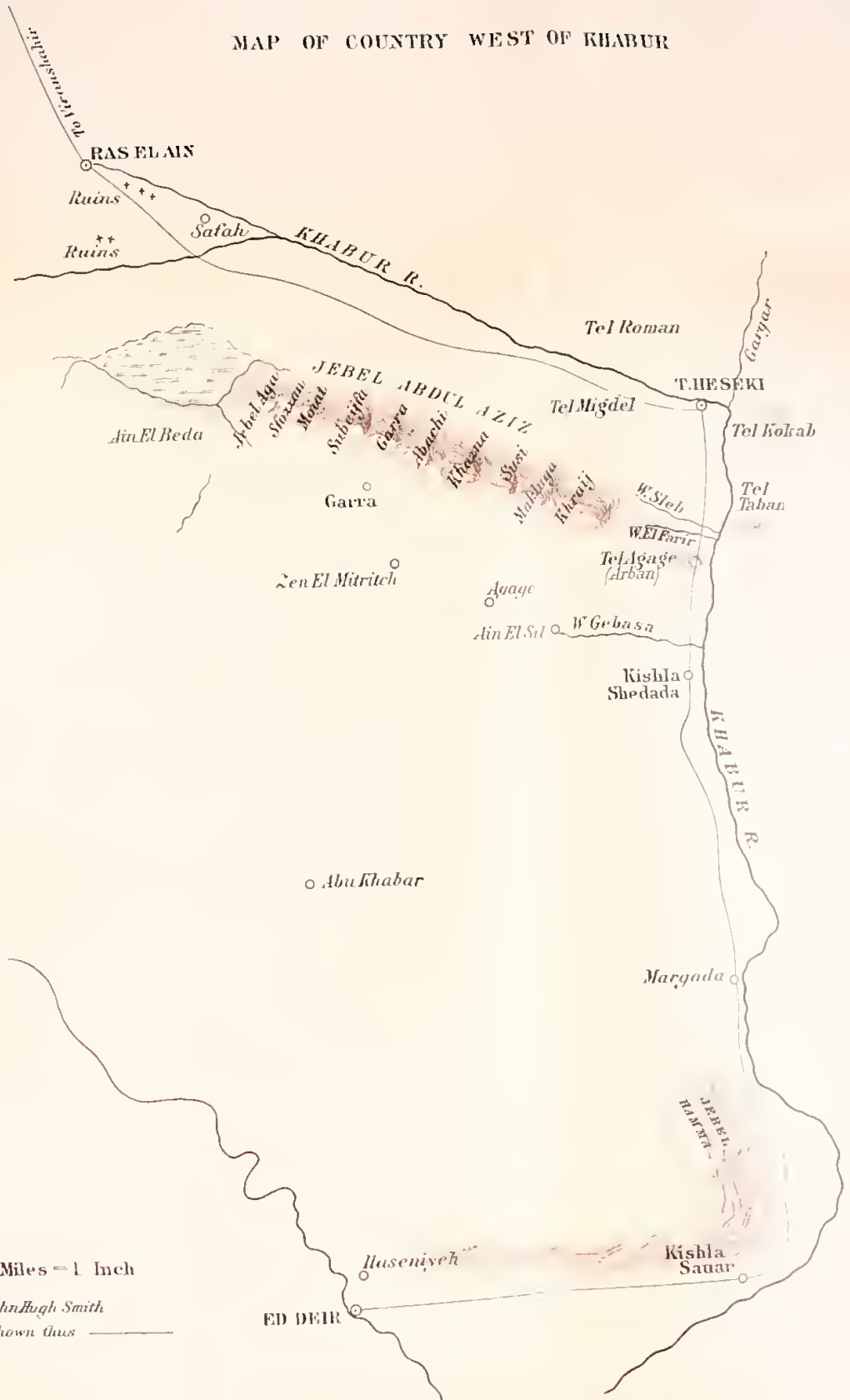
population which is necessary if Mesopotamia is to become a wealthy agricultural country. And if civilisation, as most people believe, depends on economic progress, there is cause for rejoicing in that the economically efficient should become politically preponderant.

Of course no one regrets more than I do the change from the simple dignified life of the nomad Arabs to the so-called civilised life, under modern conditions; but then I am not perfectly sure that civilisation does depend on economic progress.

The country between Giaur Hori and Merj is beautiful in a wild way, the road passing between low hills, and in one place through a rocky gorge, above which stands a Roman castle.

Next morning I left my caravan and rode into Urfa, which lies under a low range of grey hills and is surrounded by cultivated land.

MAP OF COUNTRY WEST OF KHABUR



Scale 14 Miles = 1 Inch

Route taken by John Hugh Smith
Feb & Mar 1903 shown thus

London Bickers & Son

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