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PLAIN OF MELAKH, AND RIVER EUPHRATES.

BEDOUIN TRIBES

OF THE

EUPHRATES

BY

LADY ANNE BLUNT

EDITED, WITH A PREFACE AND SOME ACCOUNT OF THE ARABS AND THEIR HORSES

BY W. S. B.

MAP AND SKETCHES BY THE AUTHOR

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TO

HIS HIGHNESS

NEWAB BAHADOOR EKBAL OOD DOWLEH

THE ILLUSTRIOUS DESCENDANT OF THE

PRINCESS OF OUDE

PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

At the present moment, when all eyes are turned toward the East, and when Asia, long forgotten by the rest of the world, seems about to reassert itself and take its old place in history, the following sketch of what is actually going on in one of its most famous districts should not be without interest to the English public.

The Euphrates valley is familiar to every one by name, as a future high-road to India; and we have it on the highest authority that its possession by a friendly power is vital to British interests. Schemes, too, are known to be on foot for running a railroad down it to the Persian Gulf, and advertisements have appeared, with maps on which such a line is already traced. Yet how few, even of those who write these things, have any acquaintance with the regions talked of or knowledge of the tribes which inhabit them!

The fact is, the Euphrates is more of a mystery to the general public than any river of equal importance in the Old World. It has never been popularly described, and, since the days of Xenophon, has hardly been described at all. With the exception of Colonel Chesney, who was commissioned by William the Fourth, in 1835, to survey the river, and who has given us two bulky volumes of statistics and an excellent chart as the results of his expedition, no traveller, as far as I am aware, has made a study of the district or narrated his adventures there in print. Till twenty years ago, the Euphrates was a dangerous neighborhood for Asiatics as well as Europeans. The Ánazeh were lords and masters of the river; and travellers were right in giving it a wide berth. But now the caravan-road is a tolerably safe one, at least in the winter months; and there is no reason

why some enterprising Cook should not lead his "personally conducted parties" from Aleppo to Bagdad as easily as from Dan to Beersheba. Still, I think I am not mistaken when I say that the author of these volumes is the first *bona fide tourist* who has taken the Euphrates road, and I make no apology for publishing her experience of it.

With regard to the author's further adventures, and the account given by her of the Bedouin tribes of Mesopotamia and the western deserts, I shall also, I think, be excused. The desert, indeed, has often been described, and most of the tribes here introduced have been visited before, but the circumstances of the present journey are new; and these volumes will be the first attempt at giving a comprehensive view of Desert life and Desert politics. No previous traveller has, as far as I am aware, visited the Independent Shammar, in Mesopotamia, or the Ánazeh, in the Hamád.* The desert has been usually to Europeans a sort of Tom Tiddler's ground, where, instead of seeking the tribes, it has been an object to slip by unseen. Circumstances have, in the present instance, changed the position; and the desert has been for a time the home of the traveller, as it is of the tribes themselves.

For my own share in this work (the chapters at the end of the second volume), I fear I have hardly so good a plea to urge. "For twenty years resident at Bagdad," or "for nine years engaged in missionary work in Syria," inscribed upon the title-page, would, I know, enhance the value of what I have written; but this cannot be. Neither the author of the journal nor I can lay claim to a more serious position toward the public than that of tourists, who have had the good fortune to see a little more than is generally seen, and to learn a few things more than are generally

* Sir Henry Layard may, perhaps, have something to say to this, but his diaries are not yet published; while Dr. Porter, Canon Tristram, and Mr. Graham know only the tribes of the Syrian frontier. Mr. Palgrave passed through the desert as a townsman, and gives a townsman's account of it. The only living picture published of Bedouin life and politics is the "Récit de Fatalla," quoted by Lamartine, and by some accounted fabulous.

known. We left England with as little intention of instructing our fellow-countrymen as travellers need have; and it was not until we saw that fortune had put us in the way of acquiring really valuable knowledge that we set ourselves seriously to work. At the same time, I would remark that the value of labor done is not always in proportion to the time bestowed on it, nor even to the skill or courage of the performer. Chance often plays a considerable part in the most serious undertakings; and chance has favored us here.

To begin with, our journey was made at an interesting moment, when the Bulgarian war was at its height, and when the strain on the resources of the Porte had so far relaxed the bonds of discipline in these outlying provinces, that the inhabitants were at their ease with us in speech and action. Then we had the singular good fortune to reap a whole harvest of information, which others had been preparing for years, in the very field we had chosen.

Again, in our visit to the Bedouin tribes, circumstances obliged us to go without escort, interpreters, or, for the most part, guides, a position which, as it turned out, more than anything else predisposed those we came to see in our favor. There was no real danger in this, or real difficulty, but it was unusual; and the Bedouins fully appreciated the confidence shown in them. They became our friends. The Desert, last winter, like the rest of the world, was in confusion; and we were fortunate enough to be witnesses of a crisis in politics there, and of some episodes of a war. In these we could not help being interested; and the sympathy we felt in their troubles reacted on our new friends, and invited confidences which would hardly else have been made to strangers. We thus acquired, in a few weeks, more real knowledge of the Desert and its inhabitants than has often been amassed in as many years spent in the frontier towns of Syria.

This must be my excuse if, in the concluding chapters of this work, I have ventured to speak somewhat *ex cathedra*, and if I have allowed what was originally only to have

been a journal to assume a more pretentious garb. These chapters I am alone responsible for. They are an attempt to epitomize the information collected in the Desert; and though I am far from vouching for the entire accuracy of my sketch of life and manners, and still less of the stories I have repeated, I can at least affirm that I have taken little from books, and much from direct sources.

I have added what I think will interest many—a sketch of Arab horse-breeding, with a genealogical table of the descent of the thoroughbred Arabian horse.

The choice of a proper system of spelling has been a great difficulty in the editing of this work. Neither the author nor I have any knowledge of written Arabic, or, colloquially, of any Arabic but that of the Desert. It has, however, been repugnant to our taste to adopt a system entirely phonetic. "Ali" cannot be spelled "Arlee," nor "Huseyn" "Hoosain," without one's eyes aching. On the other hand, few English readers would care to see the French "Ouady" or the German "Dschebel" for "Wady" and "Jebel." We have taken refuge, then, from greater evils in a modification of the old "*lingua franca*" spelling used by Galland, in his translation of the "Arabian Nights." The vowels are written as in Italian, except in the case of the long *î*, or before a double consonant, where they follow the English rule, the consonants also being as in English. We do not, however, pretend to accuracy, and wherever a conventional spelling exists, have allowed it to override our rules. The whole work, I must explain, has been written in haste—more haste than would be excusable, if new travels did not lure us back prematurely to the East.

In conclusion, and while protesting complete submission to the learned on all matters connected with Oriental lore, I take my stand against the merely untravelled critic in the words of the excellent Arabic proverb, which says, "The off forefoot of my donkey stands upon the centre of the earth. If you don't believe me, go and measure for yourself."

W. S. B.

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BEDOUIN TRIBES

OF THE

EUPHRATES.

CHAPTER I.

"Wherein of antres vast and desarts idle,
Rough quarries, rocks, and hills whose heads touch heaven,
It was my hint to speak." SHAKSPEARE.

Projects of Travel.—A Visit to the Royal Geographical Society's Rooms.—We start for Aleppo.—The Voyage to Scanderoon.—A Bagman's Tale of the Euphrates.—Aleppo Buttons.—We land in Asia.

WE left England on the 20th of November, 1877, with the intention of visiting Bagdad, and of spending the winter in some part of Asia, where we should find the climate good and the roads not too much frequented by Europeans. We had already visited more than one Arabic-speaking country, and had acquired a taste for Bedouin life and manners, with a little of the Arabic language, and we were anxious to improve our knowledge of these things by a more serious journey than any we had yet undertaken. There had, indeed, been a sort of progression in our travels, and we had been carried by them always farther and farther eastward, passing from Spain to Barbary, and from Barbary to Egypt, and thence to Syria, so that it was natural that the Euphrates valley and Mesopotamia should be chosen as the scene of our next campaign.

When it had come to actually planning our journey, however,

a number of difficulties at once began to show themselves. It was surprising how little information was to be got, even from the sources of geographical knowledge most respected in England. Bradshaw, whom we naturally consulted first, held out the golden hope of a regular line of land communications through Aleppo, while on his map a railway route was freely traced; but it was more than doubtful whether all this could be taken literally, and whether the absence of dates and tariffs in the account did not point to the advertisement of some future scheme rather than to a statement of existing facts. At the Royal Geographical Society's rooms, to which we next turned, we were shown the maps and surveys made by Colonel Chesney in 1836, as the latest on the subject, no traveller connected with the society having visited the Euphrates valley since that date, unless it might be Mr. Layard or Colonel Rawlinson.

We were recommended to take Constantinople on our way, and to consult the British ambassador there, or, on second thoughts, we might call on Sir Henry himself, who was in London, and would be sure to pay all possible attention to our inquiries. From his long residence at Bagdad, he would be the fittest person to advise us. Sir Henry, to whom Wilfrid sent in his card, received him with courtesy, and explained that the Euphrates Valley Railway had not yet been opened; that a land journey by that route was impracticable, owing to the hostile tribes which inhabited certain villages on the river; that the usual road to Bagdad lay through Diarbekr and Mosul, an interesting route, but passing too near the seat of war between Russia and Turkey to be recommended at the present moment. Sir Henry, all things considered, thought we could not do better than take the line of Turkish steamers which made trips weekly from Aleppo to Bagdad. On these we should be safe and comfortable; Messrs. Lynch of Tower Street would give us all particulars, and Messrs. Cook could no doubt supply through tickets if desired. But, though we went away rather crestfallen at so simple an answer from our oracle, Messrs. Lynch could tell us nothing of any steamers but their own, which

were on the Tigris, not the Euphrates; nor could they suggest any shorter way of reaching Bagdad than by Bombay and the Persian Gulf. The only other person who gave us information on the subject was a gentleman who had travelled some years ago in Persia, and who had descended the Tigris from Mosul to Bagdad on a raft. He supposed that something similar might very likely be found on the Euphrates, and described the raft as a pleasant and commodious way of travelling, especially in hot weather, as the passengers sat for the most part with their feet in the water.

Besides this difficulty in the matter of correct information about the country we were going to, there were other obstacles, which at the time seemed even more serious. Kars had just fallen, and Armenia was supposed to be full of disbanded troops, flying from the seat of war. Osman Pasha was invested in Plevna, and every soldier and even every policeman in the Ottoman dominions had been hurried away to Constantinople for the defence of the capital. The newspapers were full of sensational tales of massacre, insurrection, and disorder in the provinces thus stripped of their protectors; and it was asserted that a general outburst of Mussulman fanaticism was imminent. English travellers, especially, might be expected to fare ill, for the feeling in Turkey was growing very bitter against England, who had "betrayed" her. At best the whole country was overrun by deserters from the army and by robbers, who were taking advantage of the disturbed times to set law and order at defiance. One paper asserted that a mutiny was hatching in India, another that the plague had appeared at Bagdad. It did not seem to be the proper moment for going to such a country.

Fortunately, however, we are too old travellers to be easily impressed by tales of lions and robbers, even supported, as they were in this instance, by the authority of special correspondents of the *Times*. Wilfrid declared that they were all nonsense, that Aleppo was not in Armenia, and that the last place a beaten army would retreat to would be the Syrian desert; that if the plague existed at Bagdad, so did the small-pox in London, and, finally,

that we should "know all about it all in due time." So I was fain to be content with his assurance, and to hope for the best; and, as it turned out, no moment could have been more favorable for the journey we were proposing. If the Turks had been victorious, they might perhaps have grown insolent and dangerous, but in their misfortune they were only too happy to grasp any hand as a friend's. The conscription, too, for the army had taken all the riotous youths away from the country districts, few but old men and women remaining, while, as for the absence of soldiers and police, it was being hailed by all honest men in Syria as a pleasant respite from most of what made life irritating. Besides, no one in Europe can imagine how very slowly news travels in the East, nor how very suspiciously it is received even when at last it comes. We had finished our journey, and were coming home long before the news of the Sultan's disasters was fully known in the desert. It was nevertheless with something like the solemnity of a last farewell that we embraced our friends and finally turned our faces to the East.

The first point for which we were to make (guided by the only definite piece of information we had acquired) was Aleppo, of which the seaport, Alexandretta or Scanderoon, may be reached from Marseilles by a line of steamers which makes its weekly tour of the Levant. I will not describe the twelve days of our voyage further than to notice the occasions on which we received intelligence of the mysterious land which lay before us. The captain, honest man, had navigated the Mediterranean for nearly forty years, but had never before heard of passengers landing at Alexandretta on their way to Bagdad. Aleppo he had heard of. It was a hundred miles inland, and there was no road to it. Tourists gave it a wide berth on account of the button which bears its name, a strange and not very agreeable malady, which attacks all who stay in or even pass through the district. Of this he gave us a most alarming account, which I will repeat, deducting his exaggerations, and premising only that we neither of us fell victims to its dangerous presence. The Aleppo button is a swelling which

comes upon the face or hands, or sometimes upon the feet, and breaks into a boil. It lasts for six months or a year, and then goes away. Except in the case of children, or when aggravated by attempts at treatment, it leaves hardly a scar, but, while it lasts, it is an annoying disfigurement. Any attempt to drive it away makes the evil worse, and nothing can be done beyond keeping the place untouched and waiting till it heals. Children suffer more severely than grown-up people, for it is difficult to keep them patient under the irritation for so long a time; and the consequence is that nearly all the inhabitants of Aleppo are scarred deeply either on the forehead or the cheek. It is not known what causes the button, whether the water or the air; no régime and no care seem able to elude it, neither is there any known remedy. Some ascribe it to the water of a certain stream at Aleppo; but Mosul, Bagdad, and indeed all the towns of Upper Mesopotamia, are subject to it, under different names and slightly different forms. At Bagdad it is called the "date mark." There are also terrible stories of travellers being attacked by it years after they had forgotten their danger. "Quelques fois après dix ans," said the ship's doctor, "le bouton vous vient." But enough of this not very pleasant subject.

At Smyrna a commis-voyageur from the Pays de Vaud came on board and added his mite of information. He was "travelling in pills," he told us, and offered to take anything in exchange for his wares, from a cargo of figs to an ostrich feather. He had seen much and suffered much in the cause of trade, having pushed his fortunes on one occasion so far as Abyssinia and the Blue Nile. He had travelled from Tiflis to Bagdad, and from Bagdad to Damascus with a caravan. It had cost him, he said, £300 and a deal of trouble. He had never heard of any one visiting Bagdad for pleasure, and advised us, if we *did* go there, to do a little business in silk. It might help to pay our expenses. He had seen the Euphrates. It was a large river like the Rhone, but without steamers on it. The inhabitants were "de la canaille." He thought we should do better by spending

the winter at Beyrout, where there was a French hotel and a café chantant.

More precise, if not more amusing, informants were a Pole in the Turkish service and a French engineer, on their way to Adana. One had bought horses at Deyr, a town on the Euphrates, and the other had taken part in an experimental voyage made by a government steamer up the river four years before. Neither of these considered a land journey practicable, except by Diarbekr and Mosul, a five-weeks' march by caravan, and then by raft down the Tigris. Nobody went by the Euphrates, while the other was a post-road. "Et fréquentée?" we inquired. "Oui, mais mal fréquentée." It did not sound assuring.

But, on the 5th of December, our doubts and hesitations, if any we had, were brought to a sudden end by the arrival of the *Alphée* in the bay of Scanderoon; and in the early morning of that day we found ourselves fairly landed in Asia, with our troubles close before us.

CHAPTER II.

"My father, you must know, was originally a Turkey merchant."
TRISTRAM SHANDY.

The Port of Scanderoon.—Relics of the Levant Company.—We agree with a Muleteer for Conveyance to Aleppo.—Beylan Ponies.—We cross the "Syrian Gates."—Murder of a Muleteer.—Turkish Soldiers.—Sport on the Orontes.—A Night in a Roadside Khan.—Snow-storms.—A Dead Horse.—The Village of Tokát and its Inhabitants.—A Last Day of Misery.—We arrive at Aleppo.

ALEXANDRETTA, or Scanderoon, as it was called in the days of the Levant Company, of which, if I conjecture rightly, the elder Shandy must have been a member, is now little more than a collection of hovels by the sea-shore, surrounded by a marsh and backed by the steep slopes of the Amanus hills. Its position, in a land-locked bay possessing good anchorage, the only good anchorage on the Syrian coast, and at the far corner of the Mediterranean where Asia Minor and Syria meet, made it a port of great importance once; and for many years it was the chief station of the English trade with India. But the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope brought Scanderoon its first misfortunes, and the overland route through Egypt its death-blow. It is fifty years now since the Levant Company wound up its affairs and disappeared (the East India Company, its imitator and rival, has done so since); and nothing remains in token of its former prosperity in this its principal seaport but a pile of ruins, its "Commercial House," and the graves of the many Englishmen who lived, made money, and died there. It was certainly a melancholy sight, this commercial house, the haunt of bats and frogs; for the marsh had already reclaimed its prey, and the court-yard was now some inches under water. It gave one the ague to look at it. Scan-

deroon, at the present day, boasts neither inn nor mosque, and its bazaar was burned to the ground some weeks before we arrived; but it is still the nearest seaport for the Bagdad caravans, and if ever the Euphrates railway is more than a project, may again become the rival of Alexandria. The marsh, they say, might easily be drained, and with it the fevers now common would disappear. The town enjoys about the most beautiful view in the world across the bay to the Caramanian hills, just now white with snow.*

We were lodged comfortably at the vice-consulate by M. Catoni, a Corsican by birth, and lately appointed British vice-consul, as he had previously been Swedish and Greek. English travellers are rare at Alexandretta, and we were most hospitably entertained by him, all trouble being taken off our hands in the matter of arrangements for our journey to Aleppo. Hadji Mahmoud, a respectable carrier of that town, was sent for, and engaged to convey us and our baggage for four hundred piastres (£3 4*s.*), and see us safely to our destination. He was a good-looking man, as most of the Syrians are, handsomely dressed in a striped turban, a striped jacket and striped trousers, with a pair of new red morocco boots, of which he seemed not a little proud. Three mules would be enough for our baggage, and he would provide horses for ourselves. It seemed a reasonable sum for the four days' journey, as we were in December, and the roads might be expected to be bad. Not that there was any sign of winter yet where we were. Alexandretta, with its blue sea and cloudless sky, looked the home of an eternal summer; and only the snow, a hundred miles away on the Taurus mountains, showed that winter had begun. We were to take a provision of bread for the road, as none was to be had there; but we should find, it seemed, eggs, and the traditional fowl which waits for travellers in every quarter of the globe. The consular cook went with me to market, and with his assistance I purchased thirty of the flat Arab loaves, just as they were turned out of the oven, some salt, pepper, a flask of oil, a frying-

* This account was written before the annexation of Cyprus.

pan, and a string of onions. With bread and onions one may travel far.

Thus provided, and with a good bag of *beshliks*, the base coin of Syria, for immediate needs, and spirits rising at the prospect of fine weather and the new country open before us, we rode out at an early hour on the 6th of December, through the swampy streets of Scanderoon, across the marsh and by a rising road toward what are called the Syrian Gates, the mountain pass of Aleppo. It was a warm morning, and we could have almost been persuaded to leave our heavy cloaks behind us but for an appearance of wind far out at sea. The marsh was full of kingfishers, sitting on the telegraph-wires, and now and then pouncing with a splash into the water. Our ponies, ragged little beasts, stepped out at a good pace, and the bells of the leading mule jingled merrily. There was a sense of expectation in the air with the thought that we were at last fairly on our road through Asia, and that mysterious promise of adventure which makes the first day of a journey only less delightful than the last. Our road now left the causeway, which had crossed the marsh, and wound among the ravines and watercourses of the hill-side. We had plenty of fellow-travellers, riders on mules, horses, donkeys, and camels, and people on foot (for this is perhaps the greatest high-road in Asia). But they passed us without remark or salutation, and only one or two exchanged a nod with Mahmoud. As we turned the shoulder of the hill we were met by a violent wind which nearly blew us back over our ponies' tails, and sufficiently explained the "white horses" we had seen out at sea, and the enormous capotes into which Mahmoud and his assistant Kasim had built themselves. Two hours' struggle, however, brought us to a place of shelter and a halt in the town of Beylan,* the first station on our road, where the consular *cavass*, who had hitherto led the way on a good-looking white horse with three shoes off and one shoe on, made his salaam and left us at the khan. The khan was a respectable

* Beylán, a corruption of the ancient Pylæ, or Gates of Syria.

place enough, with a row of empty rooms on an upper floor, bescribbled with the names of sailors and Levantine shopkeepers, mostly French, who had stopped there on their way to or from Antioch; and there we waited half an hour while a *kháwaji* (coffee-seller) fried us some eggs, and brought coffee from his shop hard by.

We were now fairly left to our own resources; and these, for the moment, appeared very slender. The few words of Arabic we had picked up in Algeria and in Egypt would not at all pass current with Hadji Mahmoud and his fellows, good honest Syrians, quite unused to guessing the meaning of words in an unknown tongue; for we were far away from the region of dragomans, Jew peddlers, and the nimble-tongued donkey-boys, who haunt the steps of tourists in those parts of the East which they have made their own. Here all things were as purely Asiatic as if we had been at Merv or Ispahán. Hadji Mahmoud, however, was good-natured if not quick-witted; and we had the whole stock of our patience yet untouched, and were prepared to live as we could till better times should be. So we readily consented when he seemed anxious not to lose time, and begged us to go on and overtake the mules, which, having had some minutes' start of us, were already beyond the crest of the pass. It was blowing a hurricane there, and was bitterly cold. The view overlooking the lake and marshes of the Orontes far away toward Antioch was very beautiful, and we could see where Antioch lay, its position being marked by a pointed hill and the white line of the river to our right.

We had now passed the highest ground, and soon began to descend toward the plain, which cannot be many hundred feet above the sea level; but the fall of the hill is gentler here than on the western side. Coming down, we met four or five hundred men on the march from Aleppo — soldiers on their way to the war; but very few were in uniform, and at least thirty of them wore wooden handcuffs shaped like stocks, and fastened in the same way. These, it turned out, were deserters under arrest. Fifteen

hundred, we afterward learned, had left Aleppo, but two-thirds had managed to desert on the road by paying a mejidie each (four shillings) to their major, and when recaptured, as some of them were later, they had complained loudly of the money not being restored. The soldiers we saw were a fine-looking set of men, in good condition, but in depressed spirits; leaving their homes, poor creatures, for the doubtful glories of war. They talked little either to each other or to us, and only a few stragglers inquired how far it was on to Beylan. I was very sorry for the poor fellows, as theirs is a hard lot — no pay, little food, and a forlorn chance of ever returning. They must have just heard too the news of the fall of Kars.

We had hardly passed the last soldier when we came to a grove of olive-trees. Here, about three weeks ago, a muleteer was murdered by some Turcomans of Mount Amanus. He was accompanying a rich merchant of Aleppo, who, being an invalid, travelled in a litter. The Turcomans stopped his caravan and demanded £4000, the exact sum he had in specie concealed in the litter, but the merchant showed them only bills of exchange, which he told them represented the money. These the robbers would not take, and, turning upon the muleteer, their accomplice, they called him a false friend and shot him through the head. The merchant arrived safely at Aleppo with both his gold and his bills.

The sun was setting as we reached the group of mud hovels where we were to pass the night, and which go by the name of Diarbekrli Khan. I confess that my spirits sank as I peeped into one after another of these most uninviting dwellings; but our tents were in England, and the wind was chilly, and there was nothing else to be done: so we chose the biggest hovel, or the emptiest (for there were ten or a dozen men in each), and made ourselves as comfortable as we could with a barricade of luggage round the space allotted us on the platform where travellers sleep. The construction of these khans is simple—four mud-walls and a roof of thatch, with a post in the centre, to which a lamp is hung;

for floor, the natural earth; for fireplace, a hole in the ground; and for beds, the raised platform I have spoken of, which is exactly the same as that which hounds have to sleep on in their kennels in England. The arrangement is not so bad in practice, however, as it sounds. On the platform you are more or less out of the reach of things crawling and things hopping, and it is wide enough for you to make your bed on it in its breadth. Once there, you cannot be trodden on by accident, or jostled by the people crowding round the fire.

We were tired with our first day's ride, and as soon as we had spread our quilts, slept soundly for an hour or more, in spite of the noise and of the strangeness of our fellow-lodgers, who after all, peasants as they were, had better manners than to interfere with us in any way, and who, when we woke up, let us have our share of the fire to warm our bread at, as they had already let us have more than our share of the platform. Only there seemed no prospect of anything to eat beyond what we had brought with us. Everybody munched his bread as we did, apparently well satisfied with that for his evening meal. A little coffee was made and handed round, and about midnight the chuckle of a fowl announced that dinner was being thought of. But we were then long past caring, and in the land of dreams again. A boy with the whooping-cough on one side of me, and the loud snoring of a muleteer, were the last sounds I heard that night. Then the khan and all in it were still—all but the cats, which prowled about till morning, creeping stealthily round us and snuffing close to our faces.

At cock-crow Hadji Mahmoud aroused the house, declaring that it was time to be off, as we had a nine-hours' ride before us; and long before you could distinguish, as Mohammedans say, a white thread from a black one, everybody had crowded back to the fire to warm their hands, beds had been rolled up, and boots put on.

We were the last to move; and when the baggage, with Hadji Mahmoud, had been despatched, and the other travellers gone, we had a few quiet minutes to ourselves at the fire, where the

khanji brought us coffee and his bill. We made him very happy with three beshliks (half a crown), and so our night's adventures ended.

It had rained since the day before, and the wind outside the hut was chilly. I had a headache; and we both felt tired and sorry for ourselves. But there was no help for it now; and we mounted and rode away, following the edge of the hills in a northerly direction. Our road had now descended almost to the plain; and presently a great marsh appeared to our right, its presence announced by swarms of water-fowl, which rose as we came near it—snipes and plovers and herons, and now and then a flight of ducks. I noticed several pochards and teal, just as on our ponds at home; and especially some very handsome red and white ducks, which must have been sheldrakes. This marsh is crossed by an ancient causeway, probably of Roman construction; and along it we passed, turning sharply to the right, and eventually coming to a high bridge over the river Orontes. Here Wilfrid dismounted, anxious not to lose so good an opportunity of securing us against another dinnerless evening, and was lucky enough to stop a couple of shovellers as they were flying up the river. They fell, too, most fortunately, exactly on the bridge we were crossing, or we could not have picked them up. Then Kasim begged for some coots which were dabbling about close by, and a family double shot brought four to the bag. Encouraged by this, we tried a drive, but it was unsuccessful; and the weather seeming to threaten serious mischief, we had to be content with what we had got, and make the best of our way to get in before the rain. We must have passed nearly a thousand camels in the course of the day, some driven by Bedouins (probably Agheyl), some by towns-people, and most of them, I fancy, carrying corn for the government. Some were certainly so employed, for one large caravan was headed by an immense camel bearing the Turkish flag and escorted by soldiers. These were, I think, the finest camels I ever saw, and in splendid condition. We got to Afrín just in time, for the rain was beginning to fall, and before night it came down in torrents. We were

lucky besides in being able to cross the ford there that evening, for sometimes caravans are delayed for days by the flooding of the small muddy river, a branch of the Orontes, over which there is no bridge or ferry, and camels are stopped after rain altogether by the marshes.

The khan at Afrín was what they call in Arabic the "brother" of the last, but much more crowded. Among others round the fire were some soldiers, who looked at our map and asked us about the war. They seemed intelligent, but with the vaguest ideas of geography, and they asked particularly about the fall of Kars. We told them the news was true, but that Osman was doing well at Plevna. The little old *khanji* came up to us during this discourse, and begged us, in French, not to say that things were less than right with the army in Armenia, as the soldiers would be angry. "I am a Christian," he said, "and am glad the Turks are beaten, but *they* don't like it." I made him cook the ducks for our supper, and fry us some onions. The soldiers sat talking politics all the evening, and almost came to blows; but rowdiness in these countries has not the assistance of drink, and seldom leads to harm. Not but what I suspect Hadji Mahmoud of a taste for *arrack*, or he would not have such a glittering eye, or be subject to such sudden fits of cheerfulness without apparent reason. I hope I do him wrong.

We started on our third day's journey, fortified, in all the coats and cloaks we possessed, against the rain, which was falling heavily, and a bitter wind, which was blowing from the north. Our road was one of the most cheerless that can be imagined; a track of rusty mud, winding over a wilderness of low, stony hills, on the crests of which the wind cut keenly as a knife, changing the rain to sleet. In the hollows there was an occasional lull as we labored up to our horses' hocks, across what had once been fields, the little beasts going gamely on, in spite of every hideous combination of rock and mud which could bring a creature to its knees. Walking was impossible, though Wilfrid tried it more than once; for the rocks were as slippery as glass, and it was

all he could do to keep his footing. My feet were aching with the cold in a more excruciating way than I ever remember to have felt, and my fingers were numbed to insensibility, though I kept them well in my pockets. We sat like patient bundles on our horses, letting them choose their own road and go their own pace, with the reins upon their necks, in trust of Providence and of that excellent good-sense it had endowed them with. I think a fall any time that day would have been the end of us, and that neither horse nor rider would have risen out of the slough again. Once we passed a dead horse, with its owner, an old man, standing over it, the picture of despair; but it was the retreat from Moscow, and each had to shift for himself. There was no stopping. The camel caravans had already given it up as a bad job, and we occasionally passed a hundred or so of these beasts, grazing in sheltered places, while their masters waited snugly enough under their bits of black tenting, and with the loads piled round them to make a barrier against the wind. It was a wretched ride, and we did not stop for an instant all day long; nor were we able to derive the smallest satisfaction from the thought that we were crossing the battle-field on which Zenobia was defeated by Aurelian, and that the ruined towns, which stood every here and there upon a crest of hill, had been destroyed by Joab in the reign of King David. The whole country seemed to have been populous once; and there were thousands of acres of excellent land lying unploughed there for centuries. Now all was deserted. Once or twice we passed a village, and it was evident that the little plain on which it stood had been under cultivation lately; but this year, owing no doubt to the war and the consequent loss of labor, not a twentieth part had been furrowed. The thistles had it all their own way.

The tenure of land in Turkey is peculiar. The soil belongs to the Sultan, who receives rent in the form of a land-tax, ten per cent. on the gross produce, from any one who chooses to plough it. The act of doing so gives a right of occupation to the farmer, which only lapses if he allows the land to lie fallow during three

years. Should he do this, his neighbors may scramble for possession; but, in ordinary circumstances, the tenancy is perpetual. These tenures are bought and sold, just as though they were freehold, or as we buy and sell leaseholds in London. But I fancy there is very little competition, and that most land in the province of Aleppo has no marketable value whatever. A Syrian we met at Aleppo informed us that the best building ground in the city was to be bought for fifteen piastres the pik, or 1*s.* 3*d.* the foot; and that, just outside the town, it might be had for one piastre; in the country, for nothing at all. We hear too that several Europeans have tried the experiment of occupying waste land, but none with success. The government discourages all such schemes. Yet there must be millions of acres of good land in Syria, well watered and in a healthy climate, only waiting to be used.

In gloomy speculations on the miseries of mankind, and the particular misery of having frozen feet, and hands which were long past feeling pain, our day passed by. At last the little town of Tokát came in sight; and we were floundering on its pavement in the delightful certainty of shelter, if not of food. Mahmoud had friends at Tokát, and took us, not to the khan, but to their house. It was a square building of hewn stone, and apparently of great antiquity, an exact cube of fifteen feet, without window or opening of any sort but the door, which was two steps down from the level of the street. The inside was vaulted with perfect regularity, and had been freshly whitewashed to an appearance of neatness and comfort we did not at all expect. There was no flooring but the rock; but this was perfectly level, and there were nice clean mats spread over half of it. Four huge sepulchral chests, containing corn, occupied the corners; and a sarcophagus, as linen cupboard, stood in an arched recess opposite the door. On one side was a fireplace, on the other a thing looking like a dove-cot, apparently of earthenware, and designed, as pigeon-holes are in public offices, for holding rubbish. The whole place, cupboards, pigeon-holes, sarcophagus and all, was beautifully white, and looking as if cut out of one piece. Indeed it was an extremely pretty room, off the

floor of which you might, as they say, have eaten your dinner; and that is what we were soon doing. A tidy woman with a little boy received us, and welcomed Mahmoud with a torrent of amiable inquiries. She brought a brazier with a live ember in it, and lit a fire of sweet-smelling twigs, at which we thawed our hands, and helped us to take off our wet things and lay out our beds upon the floor. But alas, there was no coffee, nor anything to eat but half a dozen eggs, with our bread and the remains of a fowl from Afrín. But, all the same, it was a delightful meal, and there was a jar of water in a corner, with a tin cup, where we could drink.

Our hostess was a good honest body as one would wish to meet, who spent her time spinning cotton with an old-fashioned wheel and rocking the child's cradle with her foot, like any English laborer's wife of fifty years ago. On little Akhmet, or, as his mother called him, Akhmet Beg, she spent a deal of affection, and everybody who came into the house was called upon to do his share of nursing and amusing. Mahmoud was made comfortable with a dish of eggs and a pile of quilts on the floor, and we in our corner did our best to get warm. But it was terribly cold, in spite of the brazier, and we were chilled to the bones. We tried to converse with Adóuba, as the woman was called; but her Arabic and ours did not agree, and we could not get far. Indeed, we found our few words of the Egyptian dialect quite unintelligible, and we had to begin everything afresh. The accent and even the words were all changed from those of Cairo. This was very vexatious. Adóuba went on spinning while there was light to see; the spinning-wheel was like a drum, and to the droning sound of it I went to sleep at dusk. I woke up again just before the lamp was put out, and saw that the husband, Halíl, and his wife had rolled themselves up in a heap by Akhmet's cradle on the fireplace side of the room. Hadji Mahmoud lay comfortably snoring, a shapeless lump of quilts, on the arch or sarcophagus side. We had possession of the space commanded by the row of pigeonholes—really the best part of the room; but we could not sleep

for the cold, and remained shivering. Outside, the rain pattered and the wind blew all night.

I hurry over the remainder of our road, as in fact we did the next day, chasing the minarets of Aleppo, which we had caught sight of five hours before reaching the city. It was still raining heavily as, at the turn of a hill, we suddenly came upon Aleppo, with its border of trees and gardens, and its fortress, towers, and minarets making one of the most agreeable sights in the world. We did not stop to admire, but, with a crowd of other travellers and mules and horses and asses, hurried into the city, and were soon at the lokanda door, and at the end of our troubles. Well, as Bewick says, "Good times and bad times and all times get over."

CHAPTER III.

"Set you down this,
* * * that in Aleppo once
* * * * * *"

SHAKSPEARE.

We are entertained by a Wise Man.—Tales of my Landlord.—How Jedáan laughed at the Pasha's Beard, and made his Friend Ahmet happy.—The Ánazeh and their Migrations.—We are inspired with the Idea of visiting the Bedouins.—Seyd Ahmet and the Jews.—A Sturdy Beggar.

I SHALL always consider it a fortunate circumstance, little as we thought it to be so at the time, that the severe storms, for which the winter of 1877–78 will long be remembered in Syria, held us for a whole month weather-bound at Aleppo. Not that the town itself particularly interested us, though it is an excellent specimen of a purely Oriental city, but because the delay gave us time to look about us, and to get some idea of the country we were going to, and of the manners and customs of its inhabitants, all of which information was, later on, of the greatest possible service to us.

We had hardly been more than a few hours at our lokanda, a poor cooped-up place with a court-yard like a well, before Mr. S——, the British consul, to whom we had letters, called, in company with his amiable wife, and hospitably compelled us to exchange our dismal lodgings for his own comfortable house. The Consulate, though partly ruined by an earthquake five years ago, is an attractive building, set on solid stone arches across a river. There is a pleasant sound of water underneath the rooms, and a pleasant lookout over market-gardens from the windows—just the sort of place Orientals choose, who have more love of trees and running water than fear of damp. The house was a convent once, and still has a cloistral look. There is a grotto in the garden

where the nuns used to be buried, with graves cut in the rock containing bones. I found part of a skull there and some ribs, lying in one of them, uncovered; but these things are common in the East. Close by, like a fortress of hewn stone, stands a mill; and there are a few willows and mulberry-trees, which, with the water, attract crowds of holiday-makers on Friday afternoons, making the river-bank a country imitation of the Sweet Waters at Stamboul.

Here we found, besides the bodily comforts of food and shelter, ample entertainment for our minds, hungry for knowledge of the lands which lay before us. Our host, a man of sixty, with nearly thirty years' experience of Eastern life, was in truth an authority on all matters connected with Turkey and, what interested us far more, the Desert and its strange inhabitants. Here, for the first time, we learned the truth about the Euphrates valley and Mesopotamia, and the caravan roads practicable and impracticable for travellers. Mr. S—— had been himself, in his younger days, a bold and enthusiastic explorer of the desert. He had made friends with the Bedouins, and passed among the tribes almost as one of themselves. In him we found at last an intelligent sympathizer with our love of adventure, which the rest of our world had been at such pains to discourage; and we owe it to him that our vague scheme of spending the winter in the neighborhood of Bagdad took definite shape, and resolved itself into the plan of which this book is the result.

It was, as may be imagined, a delightful surprise to us to find thus, at the very threshold of the East, so excellent an expounder of the Asian mystery; and when the north wind blew day after day more furiously, and the rain changed to snow, and reports reached us of caravans brought to a stand-still in the mud or snowed up in the mountains, we were easily persuaded to stay on, listening to the "tales of our landlord," and always with increasing interest. These turned, as I have said, principally on Bedouin life and manners, things at which we had hitherto looked with the half-contemptuous ignorance with which the European world re-

gards them, but which we now found set before us under a new and fascinating light.

The Euphrates valley, we discovered, was neither an absolutely impracticable route nor a mere every-day excursion, to be undertaken with a light heart and a handful of Cook's coupons. No line of steamers ran as yet on the river, though one had been projected, and a government boat had occasionally made the voyage, and even taken passengers on board. There was, however, a caravan road, more or less protected by a series of small forts and patrols of soldiers, which in winter-time was used by the more adventurous merchants of Bagdad and Aleppo for the purposes of trade. Down this we should in ordinary times run no serious risk in travelling; and even now, though the war had stripped the forts of their garrisons, our host was of opinion that we might safely venture. The only risk to which we should be exposed would be that of encountering roving parties of Bedouins; and these Mr. S—— represented to us in a less alarming light than they are generally shown.

The politics of the deserts bordering the Euphrates he explained to us thus: The left bank of the river had from time immemorial been inhabited by the Shammar, a numerous and powerful clan of pure Bedouins, who exacted tribute from the tribes of Mesopotamia, while the right bank was tyrannized in like manner by the Ánazeh, a still more numerous and more powerful clan, which held the whole of what is called the Syrian desert, from Aleppo in the north to Neje in the far south. These two great tribes were constantly at war, and marauding parties from either side occasionally crossed the river to plunder and ravage the enemy's territory. Travellers who should come across such a party would run a certain risk of being plundered, though there was no fear of their suffering personal violence. The valley itself was inhabited by a number of peaceable shepherd tribes, tributary to the fighting tribes; and from these there was nothing to fear. About twenty years ago, moreover, the caravan road had been occupied by the Turks; and these small tribes were now to a cer-

tain extent under government protection. Of the Shammar, and the country east of the river, our host knew nothing; but with the Ánazeh he was on terms of familiarity, and, from the fact of his having often rendered them little services with the government, had claims upon their good-will. To them he promised to give us such introductions as should secure us from harm.

The consul was an excellent narrator; and some of his stories seemed as though fresh from his countryman, Walter Scott. Among others we were struck by those relating to a certain Jedáan, one of the Ánazeh sheykhs, who at the present moment figured as the Rob Roy of the Desert. This Jedáan, it appeared, was to a certain extent a soldier of fortune—that is to say, he did not belong to any of the "noble" families of the Ánazeh, but had worked his way up from a rather obscure position, by his military skill and courage alone, to the rank of supreme leader of the most powerful section of the Ánazeh. A few tales of this hero may not be out of place here, and will serve as an introduction to him and his fellows, when they come in their turn in person on our stage. The occasion on which the consul made his acquaintance with Jedáan was as follows: In 1857, when Asmeh Pasha was military commander of Aleppo, being a man of some energy of character and desirous of distinction, he made an expedition against the Fedáan tribe of Ánazeh, of which Jedáan is sheykh. Its headquarters at that time were on the plain of Melakh, by the Euphrates. Mr. S—— was asked to join the expedition, as the Pasha wished to have a European for witness of his skill. Ásmeh himself commanded the party, which consisted of two battalions of rifles, two squadrons of cavalry, and four guns. They had about sixty miles to march, and bivouacked the first night on the hill above Jabúl. There was no moon, and the sky was cloudy, and in the morning it was discovered that the mules, which were used for the artillery, had disappeared. Cavalry horses were, however, impressed into the service of the guns, and a second march brought the Turks to within ten miles of the plain, where they expected to meet their enemies. But again, and in spite of extra

watching, a panic occurred among the animals at night, and many were missing next day. Ásmeh Pasha was exceedingly angry at this, but continued his march undaunted, arriving early at the edge of the cliffs which overhang the valley of the Euphrates. In the plain below a camp was visible, with a tremendous stir going on in it. It was the Ánazeh hurriedly crossing the river. They had fancied that the troops would have gone back, after losing their horses, and were now retreating with all speed. Only a herd of some five thousand camels remained undefended. These the Pasha determined on securing.

The army was accordingly marched down to a point on the plain where a little *tell*, or mound, offered a strategical position on which to place the guns; and a party of cavalry was sent to intercept the camels from a possible retreat in the direction of the Euphrates. The manœuvre was well executed, and the camels surrounded; but while all attention was being directed toward these animals, a party of eight horsemen appeared swimming the river, which was then low; and, before the lieutenant in command was aware of his danger, the leader of these had galloped up and run him through with a lance. The soldiers, scattered and taken by surprise, gave way, and the whole party, soldiers and Bedouins, came straight toward the mound, where the main body of infantry and the guns were posted. The Pasha ordered the artillerymen to fire, and himself pointed one of the guns; but the result of the discharge was only that one of his own men was brought to the ground. The noise, moreover, of the guns occasioned a stampede among the camels, who went off in a body, trampling down all that were between them and the river, while the Bedouins, calling out as they do "*haá-ó-haá-ó*," led the way, and succeeded in taking the whole herd across. The leader of this successful rescue was Jedáan, whose brilliant exploit ended the expedition. Ásmeh Pasha returned to Aleppo without other trophy of his valor than the loss of two men.

This incident gave Mr. S—— a great curiosity to see more of the hero of the adventure, and circumstances favored his wish.

Not many weeks later he received a message from Jedáan, begging him to intercede with the Pasha, as he was desirous of peace, and of the privilege of trading with the town: at least, he urged, the consul might give him a safe-conduct when he came to make terms at Aleppo. Such an appeal to a foreign consul is not an unusual proceeding with the Bedouins, who are always alternating between the pleasures of war and the advantages of peace, and who are afraid of negotiating straight with the Turks, on account of their notorious ill faith. Mr. S——, however, though wishing to see Jedáan, could not guarantee his safety in Aleppo, and declined to give him the safe-conduct. But either the letter was misinterpreted, or Jedáan would not be refused; so one morning, without further announcement, the sheykh appeared at the consulate. He was asked what brought him there. "Your letter," was the answer; "and I claim your protection." The case required some consideration, but in the end it was decided that, though he could not remain under British protection, protection to return should be granted him. The consul bade Jedáan be off, if he valued his life, but ordering his own horses to be saddled, mounted with him, and, escorted by the consular cavasses, rode with him through the town. In such company Jedáan was safe from the police, and, once outside, was too well mounted to be in any danger. At a mile from the gate they parted. But Jedáan, with a feeling of gratitude not common among the Bedouins, or in the expectation, if you will, of future favors, did not forget the benefit, and has remained the consul's faithful friend through life.

Mr. S—— returned the sheykh's visit soon afterward, when the usual bribe had secured to the latter a deed of amnesty; and the first thing Jedáan took him to see in the Fedáan camp was a troop of artillery-horses in their equipments—his trophy from the war.

Jedáan since then has been sometimes outlawed, sometimes amnestied by the government, but he has never put his neck again in jeopardy by entering a town. He is now the leading warrior of the Sebáa, who have accepted him as their military chief, and he

has the reputation of being the longest-headed of all the Ánazeh sheykhs.

On another occasion, tired of war and listening to the intrigues which the government is always at pains to work among the tribes, the Fedáan agreed to acknowledge another sheykh in Jedáan's place, a cousin of his own, and recommended by the Pasha. Jedáan found himself deserted by his followers, but would not accept the deposition they had voted. He rode alone into his rival's camp, met him at his tent door, and killed him in the presence of all his men. Nobody after this disputed his right to be leader.

At the time when we first heard of him, he was carrying on war with the Roála, the most powerful tribe of the Ánazeh, and every day brought in news of his valiant deeds. Of these I will give an account later, when I come to speak of the desert feuds and politics in which we came to be mixed up; but I have mentioned these incidents as an explanation of the interest which this picturesque outlaw inspired in us. What wonder that it was soon our principal desire to make his acquaintance.

Another of the desert heroes was Akhmet Beg. He was sheykh of the Moáli, a tribe founded, according to tradition, in the eighth century, by Theodora, wife of the Emperor Justinian the Second, in honor of a son of one of the Ommiade Caliphs of Damascus, to whom she was attached.* The tribe originally consisted of slaves, bought by her, and from this circumstance is known as the Moáli, or "property" tribe, and as such are held in but moderate estimation by the pure Arabs. But their sheykhs, being descended from the Caliphs, hold a great position, and are always given the title of Beg, unknown, except in this instance, in the desert. Akhmet

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* Justinian the Second fled "to the horde of the Chozars, who pitched their tents between the Tanaïs and Borysthenes. The Khan entertained with pity and respect the royal suppliant; Phanagoria, once an opulent city, on the Asiatic side of the lake Mæotis, was assigned for his residence, and every Roman prejudice was stifled in his marriage with the sister of the barbarian, who seems, however, from the name of Theodora, to have received the sacrament of baptism."—Gibbon, "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

was a man of herculean strength, and, standing over six feet high, was considered a giant by his fellows. He was handsome and brave, and we have often since heard him spoken of as the "properest man" ever seen among the Bedouins. "Ah," they say, "you should have seen Akhmet Moáli" (for the name of the tribe is often added to that of the individual). He had a passion for "great horses," or, rather, for great mares, to suit his size and weight. The appearance of him alone would put thirty men to flight. The shaft of his spear, too, was sixteen feet long, "like a weaver's beam." He was covered with the scars of old wounds, and had sworn not to "die in bed like a gentleman of Aleppo." He was, moreover, an honest and an honorable man, unlike Jedáan, who was always a "wild fellow." On one occasion he had rescued Mr. S—— and his son from a band of Shammar, by whom they were surrounded. The sudden charge of Akhmet on his great white mare had put them all to flight, and he had even pursued the party and recovered the consul's horse, which they were carrying off. In this affair he had dropped his lance, and used only a *dabús*, or mace, studded with nails, and had brought this down on the head of the man he was pursuing, and killed him on the spot.

This honest giant was once in love; and his conduct of his affair of the heart, with its unromantic ending, is a good trait of desert manners. There had been an old alliance between Akhmet and Jedáan, and they had taken the oath of brotherhood, which binds the swearers to give mutual aid and protection in time of war; so the Moáli and the Fedáan had for some years fought side by side. But it happened that in one of Jedáan's numerous quarrels he was left to fight it out alone, although he had sent word of his difficulty to Akhmet. As soon, then, as the fighting was over, he despatched a messenger to ask explanations of his brother, and the answer he received was as follows: "Akhmet refuses to fight for the husband of a woman he loves." This was the first news Jedáan had of his brother's displeasure on account of his marriage with a Moáli girl two years before, and by whom

he already had a son. Jedáan's conduct on the occasion was characteristic. "This is too small a matter," he said, "to stand between friends. Take her. She is yours;" and he sent the woman to the Moáli sheykh's tent. She is still living, I hear, with the Moáli, and has children by both husbands.

Akhmet Beg got his wish of not dying in a bed only two years ago. He was run through the body in a *mêlée* with the Shammar, and died without a word. His place is now held by his cousin Mahmoud, who has spent some years at Constantinople, and is supported by the Turkish government. Mahmoud Beg is, however, unpopular with the tribe, who are said to be only waiting to depose him, till Akhmet Beg's son, now fourteen years of age, shall be old enough to take his legitimate position as sheykh.

With such tales as these our December evenings passed pleasantly enough; and the original plan of a mere journey down the river to Bagdad expanded into the wider scheme of a systematic progress through the Bedouin tribes. A page from my journal will show how the idea first took a definite shape:

"*December* 15*th.*—Wilfrid was talking to-day with Mr. S—— about the Ánazeh, and their annual migration toward the Nejd; and a discussion arose as to the limit of their wanderings southward, Mr. S—— asserting his belief that these occasionally extended even to Jebel Shammar and the Nejd. No European, however, he admitted, had ever accompanied the Ánazeh on their journeys, and he himself had visited them only in their summer-quarters, the upper desert of Syria. It would be very interesting to solve this problem; and Wilfrid, without thinking that the answer would be an encouraging one, asked whether it would be possible for a European to tack himself on to the tribe, and so make the journey with them. Mr. S——, to his surprise, answered that it certainly could be done, and why should not we do it? According to him, it would not even be a dangerous experiment; and only tact and patience would be required, in enduring the tedium of Bedouin life during several months, and the courage to be all that time beyond the reach of Christian help. Wilfrid

is now full of the idea. For me, I am only afraid of being away from England longer than we intended, and we should get no letters all the time; otherwise the plan seems agreeable enough. The actual travelling would not be tiring, as the Bedouins, when on the march, go quite slowly—ten or twelve miles a day—and we should have an opportunity of seeing, what has always interested me, the original home of our English horses."

It was settled then that we should start, as soon as preparations could be made for so serious an expedition, and join the Ánazeh, wherever they might be. They had already departed from the neighborhood of Aleppo, and were supposed to be somewhere to the south-east, between Palmyra and the Euphrates; and Mr. S——, as a first step, sent at once for a certain Seyd Akhmet, the sheykh of a small tribe living on the borders of the desert, to get more certain information of the strength of the Ánazeh and their proceedings.

The next thing, and this was my especial business, was to have a tent made, for the only tents procurable at Aleppo are the round Turkish ones, which are quite unsuited for an expedition in light marching order, such as we intended to make. A Turkish tent is a very cumbrous affair, requiring half a dozen people to pitch it, and a camel to carry it. It is, besides, easily blown down, and is miserably draughty in cold weather. So we agreed it would be better to have a tent made on our own plan—a plan which had stood the test of more than one campaign, and always satisfactorily. It is low, but covers for its size a great deal of ground, and can, in wet or windy weather, be made almost air-tight, while under a hot sun it is transformable into a gigantic umbrella. But I will not describe it further, although, as it was in great measure the work of my own hands, I took some pride in it when it was finished, with its red lining bound with white braid. The actual sewing was done by three Jews, who came every day to the Consulate, and stitched from dawn till dusk, at the rate of half a crown each, sitting cross-legged on the floor in an outer room; very honest workers, and careful of every shred of stuff given them. As I

was standing by them, giving directions one morning, and showing them how to turn the edge of the outer seams, so as to keep the roof water-proof, a strange figure suddenly strode into the room with a loud "Walláh," which made the Hebrews start. This was Seyd Akhmet, the skeykh of the Hannády, and, as he was the first Bedouin we saw, I will transcribe my impressions of him as I wrote them:

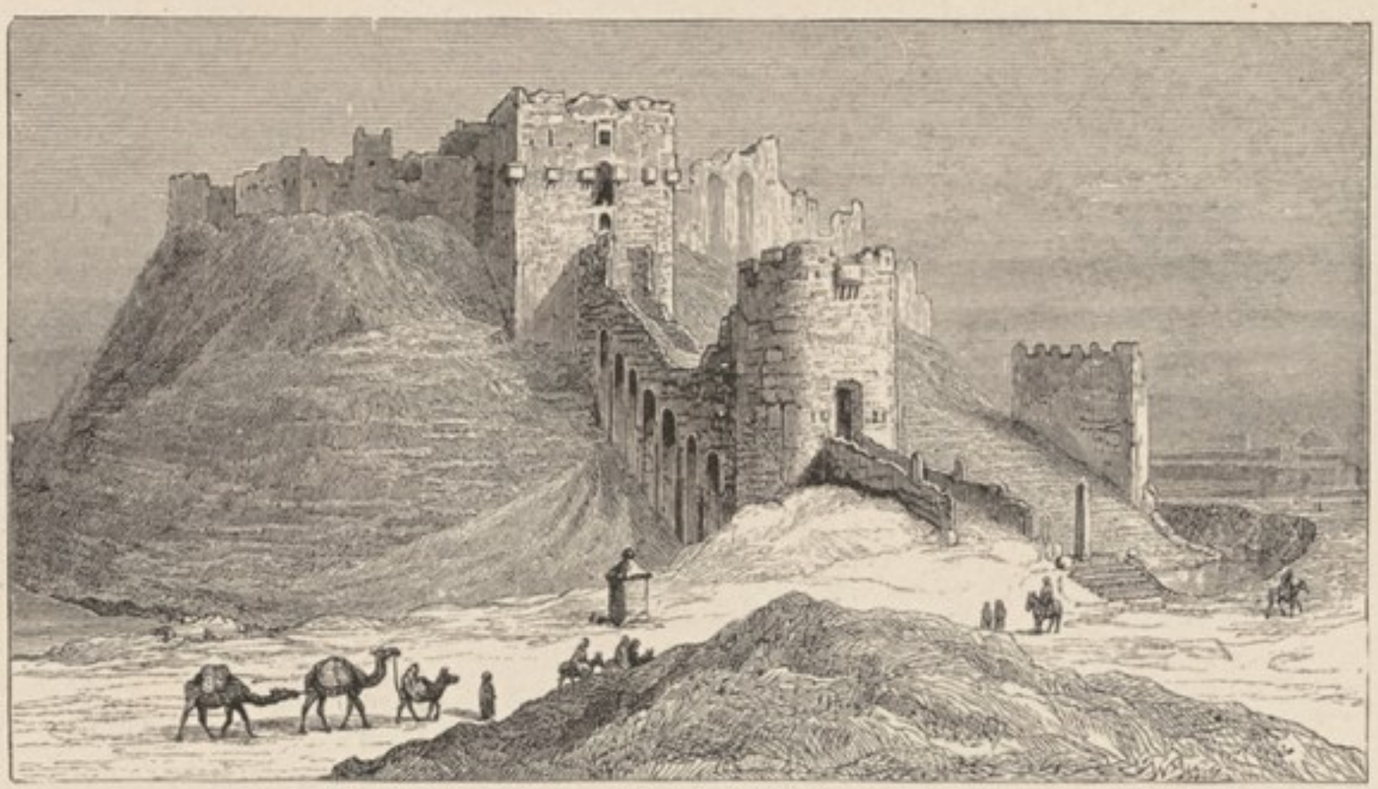
"Seyd Akhmet is a rough-looking, ugly man of fifty-five or sixty, without other distinction than what his Bedouin cloak gives him, and his good-natured countenance, considerably tempered with craft. He is just what they used to call in England, in the days of lonely farm-houses and unfrequented roads, a "sturdy beggar" —a mixture of good-humor, effrontery, and servility, neutralizing each other perpetually, and preventing you from either wholly respecting or wholly despising him. You are forced to laugh. I confess I am not displeased with his face. I am delighted to find, too, that I can understand his Arabic a little better than that of the servants here. This is, I suppose, because he comes originally from Egypt. He pronounces the g's or j's hard. The Bedouins, too, speak more distinctly than the towns-people, who clip their words and leave out their k's, just as Londoners do their h's. Seyd Akhmet's words come rolling out one by one, and we have time to recognize at least some of them.

"He informed us that the Ánazeh left the neighborhood of Aleppo some weeks ago, and are at the present moment congregated at the foot of the Bishari hills, some twenty miles north-west of Deyr, a village on the Euphrates; but, as he expressed it, they all have their heads now turned toward the south, and may be expected to start in a few days for the Hamád, or Great Desert. There they will linger perhaps for another few weeks, and then move altogether southward. We asked him about Jebel Shammar and the Nejd, but he does not seem to know much about this. His own tribe never moves far away from Aleppo. After telling us all he knew, he began to grow plaintive, asking, in a begging voice, whether we were going to give him 'nothing to eat' (a Bedouin

paraphrase for money). He had been sent for, he said, from a long way off, and was hungry. He even performed the little pantomime of pulling an empty purse out of a corner of his shirt-sleeve, to show that he was penniless. It must have been put there on purpose. He was very funny with Mrs. S——, whom he pretended to be much afraid of, fearing her evil influence with her husband; and creeping up, when she was looking another way, he suddenly tied a knot in her shawl. This, it seems, is a form of appeal among the Bedouins when they would seek protection, and signifies that the supplicator appears as the 'individual' of the person he would propitiate—'sa chose,' as one would say in French. All this was not very dignified; but there was a good-humored twinkle in the worthy man's eye which half redeemed his action from servility, and he took the matter with the best possible temper when Mrs. S—— sent him about his business."

I have given this description as that of the first Bedouin we saw; and though poor Seyd Akhmet was not a very distinguished specimen of his race, it will give an idea of the common Bedouin way. The Hannády, it must be remembered, are not a "noble" tribe, being, in fact, of Egyptian origin, and they have been contaminated by their long connection with the towns-people of Aleppo. No Ánazeh sheykh would condescend to such manners. But as yet we knew nothing of this.

Thus started, the idea of visiting the Ánazeh rapidly grew into a settled plan, Mr. S—— promising to see us, at least some part of the road, on our way.



CITADEL OF ALEPPO.

CHAPTER IV.

"En la ciudad de Xeres
Se crió un zapatero,
Llamado Curro Lopez.
De nada tuvo miedo."
ANDALUSIAN BALLAD.

The Castle of Aleppo.—Inscription relating to King David.—Legend of St. Zacharias and the Muédin.—The Prisons of Aleppo.—Strange Justice.—Curro the Kurd.—We give half a Crown to a Murderer, and offend Public Feeling.

ALL this, while I have said nothing about the town of Aleppo, which was to have been the subject of last chapter; but the fact is, both Wilfrid and I are extremely poor sight-seers, and care for anything better than looking at mosques and monuments, and it was with difficulty that at the end of a fortnight we summoned up courage to pay a visit to the citadel. It would certainly have been foolish to omit doing so, for the fortress of Aleppo is probably unique in the world as a purely artificial place of strength. It consists of a circular mound half a mile across at top and some three hundred feet high, cased with smooth stone after the fashion of the pyramids. Around it runs a broad ditch, about sixty feet deep, and cut in the rock, to which time has given all the appearance of a natural ravine. The summit is crowned with massive walls of red sandstone, and is reached by an imposing gate and covered way containing a staircase. There is one clear unbroken face of masonry two hundred feet sheer, and an arch spans the moat at little less than that height. Who first made the mound nobody knows, but the existing walls of the fortress were built by Khosroes, King of the Persians, in the sixth century. Saladin took it June 12th, 1183, and Malek-ed-Daher, his son, possessed it

after his father's death in 1189.* A rampant lion, Khosroes's device, may still be seen on the walls. The whole is much rent and dismantled by the earthquakes, which have visited Aleppo at intervals of about fifty years ever since the time of Justinian. Nothing less could have touched such masonry. It is strange that in these days, when everything is known, so grand a monument should have so little notoriety, but Aleppo lies out of the track of the Syrian tourists; and to more serious sight-seers, fresh from Babylon and Nineveh, an antiquity dating from the sixth century seems but a Cockney affair. There was, however, formerly an inscription in Hebrew, pointing to a much older date. It was on a wall, close to the gate of the castle, and was thrown down and buried by the earthquake of 1822. It ran as follows: "Joab, son of Zeruiah, in the days of David the king, took this castle from Hadadezer king of Zober, whom he smote in the Valley of Salt." I have this on the authority of the chief Rabbi of Aleppo, who remembers it. It may yet be rediscovered among the rubbish which chokes up the building, and seems worth recording.

Besides the fortress, there is little of interest in Aleppo, though the town is handsomer than most Oriental cities, being built throughout of stone. There is one great square tower, however—the belfry of St. Zacharias—to which a curious story is attached, not yet, as far as I know, noticed by travellers. It appears that, after Aleppo was captured by Khaled, the general of Omar, the Christian churches were, according to custom, converted into mosques, and a muédin was sent to each tower to give out the daily calls to prayer. But it so happened that the muédin who first ascended the tower of St. Zacharias fell from the top and was killed. A second met with the same fate, and, when a third was chosen, he, being an old man and frightened at the end of his two predecessors, stopped below in the church to pray instead of going up the stair, and, while thus engaged, was addressed by an aged

* See Abulfeda and Kamel Altevarykh, in "Recueil des Historiens des Croisades."

man who told him not to fear; that he, the speaker, was Zacharias, and that he would spare him from the punishment of his sacrilege on one condition. This was, that at midnight he should give an extra call, repeating part of the Greek liturgy. The muédin assented, and the Christian call has been repeated ever since, handed down orally from muédin to muédin to the present day, but unknown to the faithful of Aleppo, who hear it, but do not distinguish the words. These are, "*Kardús Allah, Kardús el Káwi, Kardús illési la yemút, erhámna,*" or, in Greek, "*Ágios 'o théos, ágios 'o íschyros, ágios 'o athánatos, eléison imás.*" The story may be apocryphal, but the practice is certain, and is the only instance in Islam of a midnight call to prayers. Moreover, the words are strange, place and circumstance considered.

December 29th.—We thought we should like to see the prisons, and a certain celebrated robber confined there, of whom we had heard tales which interested us. Accordingly, we went to-day to the serai and called on Kiamyl Pasha, the present valy of Aleppo. He received us with the usual Turkish politeness, conversed with us in English, and at once granted our request. But first he proposed that I should visit his 'house,' and himself led the way through a couple of rooms where several secretaries sat writing, then along passages, up and down steps, round corners, and lastly by a steep stone staircase into a large square court with a square tank of water in the middle of it. At the door of a handsome room, furnished with French tables and chairs, we were received by the reigning wife, a young lady apparently about seventeen years of age, and of an agreeable countenance, with almond-shaped eyes; she comes of a well-known family, being the grand-daughter of Jessar Pasha. She wore a crimson merino dressing-gown, trimmed with narrow black lace; and a piece of gauze passed under her two long plaits of hair and tied in a bow on the top of her head, completed the costume. We sat down on chairs and talked, Kiamyl interpreting, for she speaks nothing but Turkish. When coffee was over, I thought that the visit might end; but the Pasha would not move until I had eaten some sweets and seen the chil-

dren. A fat nurse brought in a tray with some bergamot, which is better than the name promises, for in taste it resembles clotted cream. The same nurse then fetched the two children, a baby and a boy of three, both dressed in dingy blouses of dark calico, of whom their parents were evidently not a little proud. After sufficiently admiring them, I took leave, and was reconducted by the Pasha to the reception-room, where Wilfrid had been waiting for an hour trying to make the time pass by smoking cigarettes and conversing with Kiamyl's eldest son, a very shy young man, who hardly ventured to open his mouth.

The Pasha then sent an aid-de-camp to show us over the jail, which adjoins the serai, or official government-house. A prison is not usually a cheerful place, but this was an exception; and if ever it is my fate to be shut up for six months, I trust it may be at Aleppo, rather than at Lewes or Guildford, or any other of the well-ordered establishments of a Christian country. Here the prisoners, apart from the loss of their freedom, have little to complain of. The jail consists of a great open court, with a row of buildings on two sides of it, and a cheerful south-easterly aspect. The walls on the other sides are not so high but that there is a pleasant view of the citadel and part of the town. The cells for common prisoners are on the ground-floor, and those into which we looked seemed comfortable enough with carpets and cushions —just like any peasants' rooms in a Syrian village. Three or four men inhabit each; and they enjoy there the full privilege of eating, talking, quarrelling, or sleeping, as it suits them, or of joining in the general society of the prison-yard, subject only to the surveillance of a squint-eyed jailer, and the occasional discipline of his stick. An upper story, with a cheerful balcony, low enough to allow of conversation with those below, is reserved for the more dangerous prisoners, murderers, highwaymen, and debtors. Some of these were in chains, but all looked fat and healthy, and, being dressed *en bourgeois*, were undistinguishable from the most respectable citizens of Aleppo. In fact, the prison-yard might, from its appearance, have been taken for a rather animated part of the

bazaar, only that there were no shops, and that the honest fellows lounging about were without visible employment or occupation. One of those pointed out to us was a boy of eighteen or nineteen, the son of a former cavass of the English Consulate. He was under condemnation of death; and the history of his trial will serve to illustrate the strange way in which justice is administered in the Ottoman Empire. His father, a very worthy man, was, as I have said, one of the consular cavasses (armed men who attend on European officials to protect them and add to their dignity). He was a Mussulman; but one day, being jeered at by some ill-conditioned fellows in the bazaar as the servant of an infidel, he had foolishly resented their laughter, maintaining that his service was honorable, and had been hustled by the mob and stabbed to death. The matter was of course taken up warmly at the Consulate, and the murderers were arrested, and convicted on the evidence of by-standers. But the execution of the sentence was stayed, on a memorial being presented purporting to have been signed by the principal inhabitants of the quarter where the witnesses lived, and stating that these witnesses were well known as professional givers of false evidence. The men accused were about to be released, but, in deference to a telegram from Constantinople, were detained until a commission should arrive to pronounce upon the case. The commission, under Reshid Effendi, reported the signatures attached to the memorial to have been forged, and ordered a new trial. Now it is necessary in Turkey that, in cases of murder, the nearest relative of the deceased should head the prosecution, and this had been done on the occasion of the first trial by Ibrahim, the young man we saw in prison to-day. But just as proceedings were being opened a second time, another murder, in no way connected with the first, took place in Aleppo. The cavass's son was arrested for this, tried, and condemned; and he being, from his present position as a felon, disqualified for prosecuting his father's murderers in the case he was conducting, the trial has fallen to the ground. I think it hardly necessary to make much comment on this, but I will add that Ibrahim's previous character was a good one, and

that the evidence on which he was condemned is considered unsatisfactory. I should be very sorry for the young man, if I were not convinced that the matter will be compromised, and that, on his assurance that he will not prosecute his father's murderers, he will himself be released. The story is a curious one, and I should like to recommend it to Lord Salisbury's notice.

We were disappointed of seeing Curro, the picturesque brigand of whom we have heard so much, as he was removed a few days ago to the prison at Jaffa. His history is so like that of his namesake Curro Lopez in Spain, that we might almost suspect him of plagiarism.

He began life as a *zaptieh* (carabinero), succeeded to a small property, a vineyard, at Aïntab, in this province, and for some years led a quiet, uneventful life. Unfortunately, he had a neighbor who coveted his land, and commenced a suit with him for its possession. The neighbor was richer than he, and won the case; and Curro, disgusted with law, took to the hill ("el jebel," Arabic; "el monte," Spanish). His first exploit was the counterpart of José Maria's. He stopped a captain of infantry on his way to Homs, took from him seven thousand piastres, which happened to be just the price of his vineyard, and sent him to Aleppo with a bill for that sum drawn on the valy. After this, he got together a band of followers. His plan in choosing his men was to run a race with each candidate to the top of a certain hill, and if the man kept near him, to enlist him. He was himself an astonishing runner. He generally went on foot, but on festive occasions, such as weddings, feasts of circumcision, and the like, he often appeared exceedingly well mounted. He was a little man, but good-looking, and excellent company; so he was a favorite everywhere, and might be met at most of the merrymakings in the country. He was polite and brave, but, unlike his Spanish namesake, only shed blood in self-defence. This was remarkable in a Kurd, for such he was by birth. He was distrustful of his comrades, sleeping none of them knew where, and joining them every morning at daybreak. His exploits might fill a volume. They were generally of

a dramatic kind. He once met a peasant carrying a basket of grapes on his head. "What are you carrying that heavy basket for?" he said; "have you no donkey?" "No," said the man; "my donkey died, and I have no money to buy another." "What do donkeys cost in your village?" he asked. "Five hundred piastres." "Well, here is the money. Get a beast to do your work, or, when I come this road again and find you with your baggage on your head, I will cut it off." Another time he came across a man who had been working in Aleppo for a year to get money enough to marry a girl he was engaged to, and who was going home to his village with the produce of his year's labor. The man begged Curro to leave him his money, otherwise he said he must go back and begin again. "What!" said Curro; "can you be married for six pounds? Nonsense! You can never have dancing at your wedding for that. Here is something to make the sum respectable. I hate a pauper wedding." The man went on his way rejoicing.

A Turkish effendi, travelling from Aleppo to Orfa, encamped near the village of Katma. The villagers sent to invite some of his followers to a merrymaking, and the effendi, unsuspecting, consented. All, or almost all, his servants went to the village, the inhabitants of which, being Kurds, were in league with Curro. In the middle of the night the brigand lifted the flap of the effendi's tent and requested him to give up his money. This done, Curro looked round and saw several fire-arms, and among them an English double-barrelled fowling-piece, which he took up and examined. "I must have this," he said. The effendi in vain besought him not to take away this gun; he should never be able to get another, and, being a sportsman, should be miserable without it. But Curro laughed, and, handling the weapon, found it was loaded. "Coward!" he said, "and you did not dare to shoot me?"

A Jew of Aleppo, a British subject, was robbed by Curro of some merchandise, and made a claim through the British Consulate of £160. Curro, hearing of this, wrote to the Pasha, begin-

ning his letter "My dear friend," and explaining that the total value did not exceed £27. He enclosed a regular merchant's invoice of the goods, with samples, to show the truth of the statement, and said he felt obliged to do this in the interests of honesty.

Once meeting a bridal party on the road between two villages, he joined them, and introduced himself. They assured him they had no money, being poor people, but he answered that the gold coins on the bride's neck were a legal tender. "What!" said the girl, "and you call yourself Curro?" The brigand gave up the coins.

Curro used to go into Aleppo in broad daylight and openly walk about the streets and bazaars, where everybody knew him, yet nobody, for a long while, betrayed him to the authorities. But fate of course was waiting for him, though he had escaped it many times. He was taken at last in a trap laid for him by a miller, a Christian, who was a friend of his, and who used to lodge him at Aleppo. Soldiers were hidden in the mill, and Curro was seized and delivered up to justice. There was no charge of murder made against him, but he has been condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment for robbery. Mérimée would have made a good story out of this.

Before going, we asked to see the prisoner who had been longest in jail. He was called down from the balcony, and made to stand in an attitude of attention and display his singularly unattractive features. He had committed a murder eighteen years before, and seemed a brutal, ill-conditioned fellow, but we were sorry for his long imprisonment, and Wilfrid gave him a *mejidie*. (The prisoners have to find themselves in everything but bread-and-water.) The proceeding, we were sorry to see, gave offence to the officials present, and we felt rather ashamed at having thus publicly rewarded crime—a feeling which increased when Mr. Nakóus, the consular dragoman who was with us, took us aside and explained that we had made a mistake. We begged him to assure the governor of the jail that our intention was merely a charitable

one. "That is very well," said Mr. Nakóus, "and I perfectly understand your feeling; but it should have been a piece of gold, not silver. A crown-piece was unworthy of a gentleman of the Bey's distinction." After complimenting the Pasha on the excellent state of his prisons, we returned to the Consulate much impressed by all that we had heard and seen.

CHAPTER V.

"Two pairs of boots, lined with fur, were also taken."
COCKLE'S ADVERTISEMENT.

We buy Horses, being resolved to join the Ánazeh.—Hagar.—News from the Desert.—Wars and Rumors of Wars.—Jedáan at Bay.—The World is much "mixed up."—A Chapter on Politics.

IT was now definitely settled that we were to join the Ánazeh, and throw in our fortunes with them for the winter, and that we were to start as soon as our arrangements should be completed, and a break should occur in the weather. But a journey of such uncertain duration could not be undertaken lightly, and there was much to prepare, and much to be thought of, before leaving Aleppo.

Besides the tent, which was now finished, we had horses to buy and mules to engage. Seyd Akhmet was of use to us in procuring the first; and, as it happened, the moment was a very favorable one for purchasers. There had been fighting in the desert, and nearly every day a mare would be brought in, often with spear-wound still gaping, in evidence of her being prize of war. These mares were easily distinguishable from the beasts possessed by the towns-people, by their ragged, unkempt appearance and their emaciated state; for many of them had been ridden day and night from great distances to be brought to market. I cannot say that in general they were good-looking; but here and there there was an animal of fine shape and evident breeding, though wofully disfigured, maybe, with broken knees or marks of firing.

After much picking and choosing, however, Wilfrid was fortunate enough to secure, for a very moderate sum, one of those mares, rare enough, as we found out afterward, even among the

Ánazeh, which make one understand the relationship existing between our English thorough-bred and the Arabian horse. She was not remarkably handsome, being ewe-necked, and having a strange, wild head; but her depth of girth and her long, muscular hind-quarters gave promise of what she really possessed in a wonderful degree, speed and staying power. These we might find very necessary in our adventures. Endurance of fatigue on the road and hardiness under want of food are qualities that may always be reckoned on in buying an Arab horse, no matter what his looks or what his pedigree; but speed is exceptional, and confined to the best strains of blood. Hagar, as we called her, was of the Kehîlan-Ajúz breed, the fastest, the stoutest, and the most English-looking of them all. When purchased, she was in very poor condition, having just gone through the severe training of a campaign. She was bred by the Gomússa, the most notable of the horse-breeding tribes, had passed from them to the Roála, and had now been captured, and ridden some two hundred miles in hot haste for sale to Aleppo. She was a five-year-old mare—a bay, with black points. We never met anything in our travels which could compete with her over a distance, and she has often run down foxes, and even hares, without assistance, carrying thirteen stone on her back. She was of a mild, gentle temper, and always went smoothly on, without fret or hurry, and with the long, low stride of an English race-horse. She never gallopped better than when she seemed worn out with work. She had the advantage, too, for Wilfrid, of being tall, fifteen hands—an unusual height among Arabians.

My own mare was to have been a Maneghíeh, also a powerful mare; but, as it turned out, I never rode her, for she got an accidental sore back before we started, and it ended in my starting on a horse lent me for the occasion, which I changed later for something better at Deyr.

The consul, who was to accompany us for a part of our journey, had provided himself with a sorry-looking, cream-colored pony, of no pretensions to breed or good looks, but which he knew. It

had formerly belonged to the courier who rides with the post from Aleppo to Alexandretta, and was bred at Beylan. It was the type of the low-bred country horse of Syria, resembling very closely the Assyrian war-horses on the bass-reliefs at Nineveh. The likeness is striking, and the form of both animals contrasts curiously with that of the Arabian horse, not known at that time, perhaps, in Assyria.

Then we had a cook to engage, and lit upon a real treasure in the person of Hánna, a Christian of Aleppo, who had never, indeed, been out of his native town, and who spoke the most mincing of town Arabic, but who proved a faithful and courageous servant in all our subsequent adventures—this for only two hundred piastres (forty francs) a month.

As for baggage animals, the first part of our journey would be along the Euphrates valley, where the ground in wet weather would not be favorable for camels; and it was agreed that we should engage our old friend Hadji Mahmoud and his mules again, and trust to purchasing camels later, when we should have joined the tribes. In this we broke through our usual practice, which is, to buy everything, and hire nothing on a journey; but beasts of burden seemed far from plentiful at Aleppo, and we were assured that we should find a better market for them at Deyr, which was but two hundred miles off, and where we should know exactly what our further proceedings were to be. This, as it turned out, and as we ought to have foreseen, hampered our movements considerably, and obliged us to go, not where we would, but where we could get our muleteers to go. Besides these things, we had cloaks, boots, tobacco, and sugar to buy, as presents for the sheykhs whose hospitality we were about to claim. These gifts are entirely conventional, and do not in any way represent payment for services rendered. The offering of a cloak is a complimentary usage, and its value must be nicely graduated according to the rank of the giver and that of the receiver. As we afterward found, it requires some tact to know exactly whom to honor and whom not to honor with these presents of ceremony; and an inch or two of embroidery

more or less may make the whole difference in your position with a sheykh you are anxious to oblige, or with his neighbors whom you cannot afford to offend. The boots are less necessary, but they also are usually given, to be passed on to servants; while the tobacco and the sugar are offerings which more nearly touch the heart, and are added as something more than a symbol of good-will. With them the inner tent is propitiated—the screened-off dwelling, where the women cook and chatter.

A few more pages from my journal will explain the excitement in which the last few days of our stay at Aleppo were spent:

"*December 30th.*—This morning a wild-looking little Arab, in a very tattered cloak, and mounted on a rat of a mare, rode into the garden with Seyd Akhmet and his nephew, Jemáa. He was an Ánazeh, of the Gomússa tribe, who had been sent by Ibn Mershid, their sheykh, with his compliments, and a message that, hearing of our intended visit to the Ánazeh, he hoped to have the honor of receiving us. The man had come in from Bíshari, a ten days' ride; and the fact shows that the Bedouins have a well-organized system of obtaining news, as it is not three weeks since our journey was first talked of among ourselves, or a fortnight since Seyd Akhmet heard of it. Besides his message, he had a serious piece of news to give. It appears that the Roála are at open war with the rest of the Ánazeh. According to his account, it was begun by their stealing some camels belonging to the Sebáa, a rich but unwarlike tribe, who, in the fighting which accompanied the raid, lost five of their men prisoners to the Roála. These, contrary to all law and custom, and for some unexplained reason, had their throats cut by the victorious tribe; a thing the like of which has not happened for generations, if ever; whereupon, fearing the vengeance which would certainly follow on their crime, the Roála fled to Hóms, and put themselves under the protection of Yusef Pasha, the Turkish governor. He, pleased enough to interfere, invested Ibn Shaalán, their sheykh, with a robe of honor, and the title of sheykh of the desert, and sent a body of troops to help them. In this evil company they advanced against the Sebáa,

who retired before them, sending to Jedáan for assistance, which was at once given. The Fedáan and Sebáa together now turned upon the Roála, put the soldiers to flight, and captured twenty of their enemies, whom Jedáan at once treated as they had treated the five Sebáa. He then returned to the neighborhood of Deyr, where he still is, while the Roála have fled south into the Hamád. This is an ugly story in every way, but it need not have any effect upon our own proceedings. The Roála will naturally keep clear of their offended kinsmen, and will not go with them to Jebel Shammar this year; and it may even be fortunate, as their being all in trouble may make Jedáan still more anxious to do a service to so powerful a friend as Mr. S——. The Ánazeh, however, are likely to hasten their journey southward, and we must start immediately if we wish to find them still within reach. Wilfrid sent at once for Hadji Mahmoud, and agreed that he should take us, with five baggage mules, to Deyr, and that we should start on Wednesday. . . ."

"*January 3d*, 1878.—Great news has come from Deyr. The Roála, it appears, upon their defeat by the Sebáa, sent to Ibn Sfúk, the Shammar chief, for help, and he despatched at once his nephew, or cousin, Smeyr, to the Hamád. This Smeyr, after seeing the Roála, went on to Jebel Shammar, to claim the assistance of Mohammed Ibn Rashid,* which in turn was granted; and now the southern Shammar, with Ibn Rashid at their head, are marching with the Roála to attack Jedáan and the rest of the Ánazeh in the north. Jedáan has left Bíshari, and has taken a more defensible position at Esseríeh, where the Weldi, a tributary and friendly tribe, are encamped, and where there is a line of hills about half-way between Palmyra and Deyr. The latter town is frightened at these preparations for war, and troops are being sent there from Aleppo. On the whole, a pretty kettle of fish; and our prospects of getting to Jebel Shammar this year are growing doubtful. Wilfrid says our best chance is to join Jedáan

* Brother of Telál Ibn Rashid, Mr. Palgrave's friend.

at once, help him in his fight with Ibn Rashid, and then, if victorious, go down with him south as he pursues the Shammar. But this will depend on the chances of war; and Mohammed has guns, while the Ánazeh have none. Another plan, he thinks, would be to join the Roála, by which means we might easily make friends with Ibn Rashid, and go back with him; but our sympathies are more or less pledged to the Sebáa now, and we could not side against them in a crisis like this. Mr. S—— is on friendly terms with both; but his principal ally is Jedáan: so to Jedáan we must stick. Besides, it is a far cry to Jebel Shammar; and Mohammed can hardly take the field in any great force. The Roála muster perhaps twenty thousand lances; but the Sebáa can bring twice as many into the field; and Ibn Rashid's matchlocks will hardly make matters equal between them. Jedáan, too, has the reputation of being a great warrior and a prudent general, and has chosen his ground. Let us hope for the best. If fighting takes place during our stay with the Ánazeh, Wilfrid will be expected to take his share of it. He would not wish to use fire-arms, unless fire-arms were used against him; but it is as well to be ready, so we have spent the morning casting revolver bullets and making cartridges. To quote Canon Tristram: "As we dropped our bullets into our fowling-pieces, I breathed a fervent prayer that no blood might be shed."

January 4th.—Seyd Akhmet came again with confirmation of the war news from Deyr. Everybody is of opinion that Jedáan will be beaten, and perhaps even forced to surrender, at Bíshari; for it is by no means certain that he will be able to make good his retreat on Esseríeh. Ibn Sfúk and the Shammar from Mesopotamia have probably already crossed the Euphrates to cut him off, and, if they succeed in this, he will be isolated, as the Moáli and the rest of his allies are still far to the north. Wilfrid fancies they make too much account of Ibn Rashid's guns, which are no doubt wretched pieces of ordnance, and it appears there are only two of them; but everybody here thinks Jedáan lost. This is likely to be the greatest war ever known in the desert since the

Ánazeh drove out the Shammar two hundred years ago. If Jedáan has to surrender, the Sebáa, who are the richest and most civilized of all the tribes, will be reduced to poverty, and with them the Fedáan, who have the name of being the greatest warriors. The laws of war will give everything they possess—mares, camels, sheep, tents, down to the pots and pans—to the conquerors; and these great tribes will have to depend on the charity of the Moáli and the Beni Sakkhr, or even their old tributaries, the Weldi, Aghedáat, and others.

We had a council of war in consequence of this news—Seyd Akhmet, who has agreed to go with us, giving us a lively picture of the state of things in the desert. "The world," he said, "is much mixed up at present" (*makloot*, mesclada, *mêlé*), and it may be better to wait events; "but the Beg, whose servant I am, must decide. When he says the word 'mount,' I am ready." Wilfrid is all for going on at once to Deyr, where we shall be nearer to what happens, and where at least we shall see something new, and be on the spot to act as circumstances may suggest. It may be an excellent opportunity, too, he thinks, for buying horses; as, after the battle, property will change hands, and is very likely to be sent to the hammer. I hope Jedáan may prove a match for his enemies; but I don't quite like throwing in our lot with him just now.

January 5th.—There is a new account to-day of the origin of the war in the desert, which just now interests us a thousand times more than all that is happening in Bulgaria and Armenia. It appears that Meshúr, the young sheykh of the Gomússa, a Sebáa tribe, the very one who sent us the polite invitation a few days ago, has been the principal cause of it all. There was some dispute about camels between the Sebáa and the Roála, both Ánazeh tribes, but old rivals; and the Turkish government, being on bad terms with the former, supported the latter in its pretensions. Sotámm Ibn Shaalán, the Roála chief, thinking to settle matters, called upon Meshúr, and, contrary to all etiquette, did so in company with some Turkish officers who were staying with him. This Meshúr resented, and, in the dispute which followed, Ibn Shaalán was run

through the body by the young man with his sword. Mehemet Ali, a former cavass of the Consulate, and a man who knows the desert well, brought us this news; but he only half believes it, and does not believe at all the story of prisoners' throats having been cut on either side, as it is a practice quite unknown among the respectable Bedouin tribes.

Hadji Mahmoud has backed out of going with us, and insists upon double the usual price for the hire of his animals, on account of "war risks," there being some possibility of our meeting a Shammar expedition on its way to help the Roála. Mr. S—— would be no protection to us against these, as he has always been on bad terms with the Shammar, and is known as a friend of Jedáan. We shall probably have to take an escort, after all, from the Pasha, who is sending troops for the protection of Deyr, which place seems to be in danger of pillage by one party or the other. It is tiresome, as we shall lose our independence; but we know so little of the country as yet that it is best to be on the safe side.

Thus filled with doubts and fears, and reports of war, and anticipations of adventure, the last days of our stay at Aleppo passed. How little the sequel justified our apprehensions will presently appear. In the mean time, before finishing the chapter, I will explain what proved to be the real nature of this desert quarrel of which we heard so much. We did not learn it with any certainty till long afterward.

The real history, then, is as follows: The Turks have at all times held it as a maxim, in their government of Syria, to keep the Bedouin tribes wholesomely engaged in internecine war; securing, by this means, for the country districts adjoining the desert, immunity from molestation by their unquiet neighbors. It is also a time-honored practice with the Pashas to remove quietly such of their political opponents as they conveniently can, by any of the old-fashioned methods now disused in Europe; and the result, I am bound to say, generally justifies the means, morality apart. It was thus that, two years ago, finding Súliman Ibn Mershid, the Gomússa sheykh, assuming too powerful a position with the Sebáa

tribes, the then governor of Deyr, in the interest of the public safety, invited him to dinner, and, having entertained him honorably, sent him back, with presents in his hand, to die of an unexpected and hardly natural death in the desert. Súliman's people, who adored their chief, were displeased at so sudden a result of the Pasha's hospitality, attributing the sheykh's disease to a certain cup of coffee he had imprudently partaken of alone; and a coolness ensued between them and the Turkish authorities in consequence. This was adroitly used to produce further complications detrimental to the Bedouins. The Sebáa have, from time immemorial, enjoyed the right, conceded to them by desert custom, of the pasturage opposite Hóms and Háma; while the Roála, their rivals, have occupied the neighboring district of Damascus. This year it happened that the latter, grown rich in camels, through a succession of favorable breeding seasons, were looking round them for additional pasturage, when they bethought them of the differences existing between the representatives of Súliman Ibn Mershid and the Turks.

It is the weakness of the Bedouin position, in regard of the government, that, though quite independent of their control during great part of the year, they are obliged in spring to seek a market for their young camels, horses, and wool in the neighborhood of some one or other of the towns. They also have their year's supply of corn to purchase, dates, coffee, tobacco, and even clothes. For this they depend on the good-will of the Pasha in power, who always makes them pay a round sum for the privilege of trading; and their necessity gives him the opportunity for any intrigues which he may be planning among them. A fixed price was paid yearly by the Sebáa for their privilege, and the use of the pasturage of Háma and Hóms. But Sotámm, the Roála sheykh, came forward this year with an offer of nearly twice that sum, and, by a private gift of mares to the Governor of Háma, secured his support in occupying the pasturage in their stead. The Sebáa, coming up from the south, found the Roála already in possession; and, refusing to retire, were presently attacked by them, and by a body of Turkish

infantry, Sotámm's allies. The camps of the Moáyaja and Gomússa, two of their tribes, were sacked, tents, household furniture, camels and mares taken, and the Sebáa were driven back to the southern desert. These now called upon Jedáan, their new *akíd*, or military chief, to help them with his own tribe; and, thus re-enforced, they turned the tables on the Roála, who, deserted by the Turkish government, which had got all it wanted, were left to fight it out alone. Jedáan defeated them in a pitched battle near Jabúl, taking many mares and killing some fifty of their men (a large number for a Bedouin battle); and they were forced back in confusion to their old quarters near Damascus. It was then that they sent to Ferhán, the sheykh of the Shammar, and to Ibn Rashid, for help; and that Smeyr, Ferhán's cousin, was despatched on a diplomatic mission to Hîyel to negotiate matters for them with his kinsmen of Jebel Shammar. There seems, at one time, to have been an expectation of the latter's really helping them; but Ibn Rashid never could have seriously thought of dragging his pieces of ordnance five hundred miles across the desert on such an expedition. Smeyr's mission failed; and the Roála, being still pressed by their enemy, retreated to their winter-quarters in the Wady Sirhán, leaving Jedáan with the Sebáa to enjoy their triumph at Bíshari till, at the usual time, they followed them in their migration into the Hamád. At the time we left Aleppo, Jedáan was still at Bíshari.

This rather long and, I fear, dull account, is necessary for the right understanding of the Bedouin politics which so much interested us all through the winter. Later on, and when the chief actors of the drama come upon my stage, I hope to make these matters more generally entertaining.

CHAPTER VI.

"Shall pack-horses,
And hollow pampered jades of Asia,
Which cannot go but thirty mile a day,
Compare with Cæsars and with cannibals,
And Trojan Greeks?"

SHAKSPEARE.

We leave Aleppo.—Wandering in the Dark.—An Arab Village.—The Desert.—First View of the Euphrates.—A Wéldi Camp.—Zaptiehs.—A Melancholy Exile, and a Dish of Francolins.—Bivouacking by the River.

January 9th, 1878.—For a party of old travellers, such as we are, our start this morning certainly was disgraceful. Upon a journey, it is prudent to make the first day's march an easy one; and for this reason we had chosen Jabúl as our stage, only fifteen miles from Aleppo, hoping to be in early enough in the afternoon to get our things about us before it should be night. It had been arranged with Seyd Akhmet that he should take us to the house of one of his people there; and we thought that the arrangement would save us trouble, and that we should find food and shelter ready for us on this, the first night of our journey. But all has gone wrong.

Wilfrid, of course, was up at cock-crow, and had the baggage out in the yard almost before the sun was up; but the rest of the preparations were not so forward, and it was half-past nine before the baggage animals could be despatched. So far, however, so good; but with ourselves it was a different matter. First, a message arrived from the Serai to inquire whether we really intended to start this morning; for, in the East, it is not usual to start on the day fixed, and the escort we had agreed to take was but half ready; then Mr. S—— discovered that he had certain matters of business to transact before leaving the Consulate, and despatches to write;

a mare, too, which had been purchased to share Creamy's duties, was found, unaccountably, to have a sore back, and Seyd Akhmet had not appeared. Lastly, it was agreed that, so much time having been lost, it would be imprudent not to wait a little longer, and have breakfast first.

In the course of the morning the zaptiehs, or mounted police, four men and a sergeant, arrived, representing, they informed us, the body of fifty regulars promised by the Pasha. The fewer the merrier, we thought; for, in truth, they are not very attractive companions, if looks be any index to character. The sergeant, Súliman Aga, is a broad-shouldered, powerful Turk, with a heavy, dark countenance, made darker by a black head-dress. He wears a sort of military cloak, but is not otherwise in uniform; and his men are undistinguishable from the country people, at least to unpractised eyes, except by the color of their *kefiyes* (handkerchiefs for the head). They seem good-humored, though, and perhaps will improve on acquaintance. At half-past one the horses were saddled; and, a little after, the last adieus made. Then we all mounted; and, accompanied by a crowd of retainers from the Consulate, crying, as the custom is, and kissing the consular stirrups, we rode away, with only four hours of daylight before us, and no chance of getting in before dark. Seyd Akhmet, moreover, neither came nor sent; and it was doubtful where we should find our baggage, as the house of rendezvous was not exactly in the village of Jabúl.

However, we were too pleased to be off, to think much of possible mischances. It was colder than ever; and, as we took our way across the desolate hills toward the south-east, the wind was just in our faces. The sky was like lead, and seemed to threaten snow. The track we were following was very like that by which we arrived from Alexandretta—stony and muddy; but I should have proposed a canter, as soon as we were outside the town, to warm ourselves, and make up for the lost hours of the morning, if it had not been that Creamy was hardly equal to it, and could not be left behind.

This, however, is to be our last day in cultivated ground, and we must have patience. To-morrow we shall be in the desert. Every here and there we passed the sites of old villages, or perhaps towns; but their names are forgotten. Just at sunset we caught sight of the salt lake on which Jabúl stands, and presently we descended from the upper country into a plain, just now turned into a swamp by the heavy rains we have been having. Through this we floundered for an hour or two, Creamy coming even once or twice to his knees—a not very pleasant accident for his rider, as the water was almost freezing; and at one moment there seemed a prospect of our having to spend the night out-of-doors. At last, however, we heard dogs barking, and then saw a light, which we knew must be a village, though it was not Jabúl; and to this we rode through water up to our horses' knees. It is rather a disagreeable thing to have to ride into an Arab village in the dark, as it is sure to be surrounded by a honey-comb of wells, and holes for storing corn; and more than once I found myself on the brink of one of these; but horses seem to see in the dark, and there is an Arabic proverb to this effect; so I let my beast grope its own way with a loose rein. The village was not Jabúl; but its inhabitants directed us on our way, and, half an hour later, we were much relieved at hearing a horse galloping toward us. It was a scout sent out by our anxious host to show us the way to his house. A wretched place it is, as all the fixed habitations of Arabs are—comfortless as a tent, without doors, or windows, or floor, and, being immovable, inconceivably dirty. No wonder the Bedouins refuse to change wandering homes for such as these. We were shown into a little room about eight feet square, with a bit of dirty sacking hung up before the door to keep out the wind, and a bit of dirty carpet laid down on the dirtier floor, and a couple of dirty cushions in a corner. In this our baggage was piled, all muddy, and squalid, and comfortless. A wretched night, but we have agreed it shall be our last under a roof, be the cold what it may.

After all, Eyssa, our host, received no notice of our arrival till the baggage came; so he has not had time to make us a feast.

We have devoured our dinner almost in darkness—the cold legs of a turkey—provided, fortunately, by Mrs. S——, and are looking forward, with no pleasant prospects, to our night's rest. A girl of fifteen, Eyssa's sister-in-law, was sent to milk some ewes just now, which are folded in a yard about a hundred yards off from the house; but she did it in fear and trembling, on account of wolves, she said, which the cold weather has driven down to the villages. One came into the yard this very afternoon.

Eyssa's father, Batrán, was sheykh of the Hannády when they were sent from Egypt by Mehemet Ali; a brave man, but ill-famed for his cruelty. On one occasion, having taken prisoners thirty of the Shammar, he cut their throats and threw them into a cave near here. At his father's death, Eyssa was too young to succeed as sheykh, and his uncle, Seyd Akhmet, took his place. We asked Eyssa how he could be content with the life of a *felláh* (or cultivator of the soil) when his father had been a Bedouin. He said it paid better. He was growing rich. The fact is, these Hannády are Egyptians, hardly true Bedouins. No Ánazeh, I suppose, would consent to such a transaction. Mr. S—— asked him, too, what had become of Seyd Akhmet. "What!" he answered; "you have known Seyd Akhmet these twenty years, and you have ever known him to keep his word!"

January 10th.—Jabúl by daylight is not more attractive than Jabúl in the dark. Like all the villages bordering on the desert, it is the type of wretchedness and squalor, and life in such places would seem to have no redeeming feature to make it tolerable. Pastoral life, to be attractive, needs to be nomadic; and the Arabs, even after they settle and become ploughmen, insist on keeping sheep. The consequence is, the ground for some miles round their villages is poisoned, and trodden down by their flocks, and is a barer wilderness than any part of the desert. A fixed sheep-fold, especially in rainy weather, is as disgusting as a pigsty. As we looked out in the gray morning and took note of all this, it was not hard to understand the contempt a Bedouin feels for his fellows who have become "felláhin."

Warned by the discomforts of our arrival yesterday, we made an earlier start, and a very few miles brought us fairly into the desert. The sun came out, and there seemed a chance of more genial weather; and with it our spirits rose. There was at first a kind of road or track leading across a perfectly level plain toward a conical hill between us and the sun; but this gradually disappeared, or we left it, and as we got beyond the poverty-stricken radius of the village, the ground assumed a more cheerful aspect. The loose stones had disappeared, and our path was over a light, crisp soil, thinly covered with grass; nothing to break its uniformity but occasional lines of mole-hills, straight and regular as if drawn mechanically, and sometimes a couple of hundred yards long, and here and there clusters of jerboa holes — except for these, the most beautiful galloping-ground conceivable. At the foot of the tell, or mound, when we arrived there, we found the first tents. Shabby as they were, they had a look of neatness, after the houses we had left. They belonged to the Hannády — Seyd Akhmet's people—and in the neighborhood were flocks of sheep, each with its shepherd. It was an agreeable scene, and made us regret that we had not made a better day's march yesterday and pitched our own tents alongside of these. Wilfrid and I rode up to the top of the tell, from which there is a really fine view of level plain stretching green on every side. It is interesting, too, as being the scene of Jedáan's late battle with the Roála; and Wilfrid's mare, Hagar, who probably took part in the fight, grew very fidgety as we got near the place. This may, perhaps, have been an accident, but it helped us to realize the scene of battle. The name of the tumulus is Khsáf.

Some ten miles to the south-east appeared another hill, which was pointed out to us as the next landmark for which we had to steer. We left Mr. S—— and the zaptiehs to escort the baggage, and pushed on. Everything was new and delightful to us; and there was a lightness in the desert air which made us long for an adventure, if adventures had been possible in such a place, and in such company as the tiresome Turkish police. We rode up to

one or two of the shepherds and asked them a few questions, which they answered amiably enough. They were very busy separating the new-born lambs from their mothers; for weaning begins here almost from the day of birth. Then we saw a flock of something we took for gazelles or bustards, but which turned out to be cranes from the lake. There were, besides, rooks, gray crows, kites, and several small hawks. Presently we came to a little stream with a border of greener grass on either side, where there were more shepherds. We let our horses drink, as they had had no water since yesterday. This bit of desert is more attractive than any we have seen in Algeria or Egypt. Any part of it would make a race-course.

From the second hill we were to see a guard-house; but of this there was no sign, so we waited till the caravan came up. It consists of seven baggage beasts (six horses and a mule) driven by two *kátterjis* (muleteers), Hadji Mahmoud's brother and another. Our cook, Hánna (a Syrian Christian, and not a woman, as his name would seem to imply, for Hánna is Arabic for John), is mounted on the very pony Wilfrid rode from Alexandretta. He has got himself up in a Bedouin disguise, of which he is as proud as Punch; and Mr. S——'s servant, Júrgy (George), in similar attire, rides a colt of his master's, and leads the mare with the sore back. Súliman, the sergeant, has a cross-bred Arab, which is a good walker, and seems up to his rather heavy weight; and the other zaptiehs have rough-looking beasts, one of them only a two-year-old. Mr. S——, in a long, black cloak, and with a yellow handkerchief bound round his hat, gives dignity to the procession. We have come too far to the right, it appears, and now strike a line due east, and follow this all day, till at about three o'clock we come to broken ground, announcing the neighborhood of the great valley of the Euphrates, which we are in search of. Mr. S—— enlivens the road with tales of Bedouin life and manners, and relates the story of his rescue by Akhmet Beg (mentioned before) on the spot where the adventure happened. Suddenly we come to the edge of the plain, and the valley is before us. Much

as I have expected of this, and often as I have tried to imagine the scene since we first decided on our journey, the reality surpasses all.

The valley of the Euphrates is a deep, broad cutting in the desert, with chalky cliffs bounding it abruptly on either side. At the point where we came upon it, it is about five miles wide, and perhaps a hundred and fifty feet below the level of the upper plain. The valley is a long, level meadow, green as emerald, and covered with flocks of sheep. We counted twenty of these, with perhaps a thousand sheep in each. Above were the tents of the Wéldi, an honest and thriving tribe of Arabs, who often take charge of sheep for the Ánazeh when they go south, or for the towns-people of Aleppo, with whom they share the produce. A sheep here may be worth five or six shillings. This part of the valley is called the plain of Mélakh; and it was here that Jedáan had the skirmish with Ásmeh Pasha. We could see the river winding to and fro in this great meadow far away, fringed with a deep, brown belt of tamarisks, in great curves and reaches. It seems as big as the Danube at Belgrade. On our way down the cliff, which was by a side ravine, we passed the grave of Abd ul Áziz, one of the Shammar chiefs, who was killed in battle here by the Ánazeh ten years ago. It is only a cairn of stones.

After this, we turned to the right, and went on close under the line of cliffs for an hour to a place where the river, having crossed the valley, sweeps round in a fine bend. Here it has been proposed to make the station for steamers so soon as they shall run. Indeed, the steamer, which has been occasionally sent up for government purposes from Bagdad, already makes this its extreme point up the river; and a little fort and some buildings have been erected for the protection of the place. It is called Mésquineh, and is not marked on the maps. We found all deserted on account of the war. We have looked inside the huts, and have decided that we will sleep out-of-doors.

January 11th.—Mr. S——, who has not been on horseback for several years, was so much fatigued last night that we were really

alarmed about him. As soon as we arrived at Mésquineh, he got off his horse, lay down on the grass, and went sound asleep; nor could we wake him even for dinner. He is well again to-day. I suppose our day's journey yesterday must have been close on forty miles. It was fortunately a warmer night than most of those we have been having lately, for the katterjis arrived so late that we had not time to think of pitching a tent. We only got out our carpets and blankets, and slept as we were—on rather short commons too, for no arrangements have been made for our commissariat, and the remains of the turkey and bread was about all we had. Poor, however, as our night's lodging was, we all agreed that it was far better than another such experience as that of Jabúl.

One advantage of sleeping out-of-doors is, that everybody is ready to get up in the morning. It was so cold that, long before dawn, the servants were astir, making a fire and boiling water for the coffee. There is plenty of good fire-wood from the tarfa, or tamarisk jungle, which fringes the river; and, as soon as it was light, we had breakfast, packed up, and were off. Our course lay along the right bank of the river, which here has a general direction of nearly due east. We passed close to the ruins half-way up the cliff of Bállis, or Bállesis, principally remarkable for a very tall octagonal tower of Saracenic architecture; an imposing structure, and giving a notion of the importance of this region in former times.

A little farther on, we passed another ruined castle, Dipsi, standing on the extreme edge of a jutting piece of cliff, and secured formerly from assault by a deep cleft cut across the tongue of rock connecting it with the upper desert. In all probability there was once a drawbridge across this. The river just below gives a sweep right under the cliff, so that there is no means of passing below, and one is obliged to climb to the upper plain again. The cliff here is composed of a substratum of chalk, with a conglomerate crust above. The chalk, being the softer of the two, is in many places hollowed out into caves and recesses, which the conglomerate overhangs. These are much used by birds and beasts. Jack-

als and foxes occupy the more accessible caves, and hawks, jackdaws, and rock-pigeons the higher ones. I think I noticed a Bonelli's eagle roosting in one last night, but I cannot be quite sure.

The road now cuts off a bend of the river, crossing a bit of very stony desert, and then goes down again into the valley. From the high ground there was a fine view over miles of tamarisk jungle, in which the river is lost; and on the plain below were a number of mud-huts in ruins, called Ábu-Ghréra. This is one of a series of villages made by order of Áslan, an enterprising Pasha, about four years ago, for the Ánazeh, whom he thought he had persuaded, or bullied, into abandoning their nomadic life and becoming fellá-hin. This, of course, they never had the remotest intention of doing, and the huts were never inhabited.

As we skirted the river, we came upon numerous flocks of ducks, geese, plovers, and, in a small lagoon caused by a late flood, some hundreds of coots. The sergeant, Súliman, could not resist this sight, and unswaddling his gun (for he had it well wrapped up in a red leather case, besides other coverings), went off to stalk his game. But the coots would not sit still for him to take aim, and fluttered away; so he prudently reserved his fire. Wilfrid had left his gun with Hánna, which was vexatious, as we were grievously in want of provisions. A little before sunset, we came upon a Wéldi camp, set at the edge of a tamarisk jungle. Some five-and-twenty soldiers were already quartered on the Arabs; and our escort were, of course, delighted at the prospect of talking, which is one of the dearest pleasures in the East. So we were made to dismount and accept the officer's hospitality (the Wéldi sheykh being thrust unceremoniously into the background), and sit on his carpets and drink his coffee, while he entertained us with stories of wild beasts, which, he informs us, infest the neighborhood. Like all Turks in this country, he is very sorry for himself, bewailing his dreary exile from Stamboul, complaining of the Arabs and the place where he is quartered (it seems to us a garden of Eden), and of the boils with which his hands are covered. He is

indeed a piteous sight. He was left at this camp when the rest of the troops were withdrawn for the war, and has been here nearly six months, having no occupations, amusements, or what are called "resources within himself." He urged us to spend the night in his tent instead of sleeping out-of-doors, as we should certainly be carried off by lions in the night. Only a fortnight before, some mules had been seized and devoured in broad daylight, and a child had been taken out of a tent somewhere close by. He was delighted to see travellers, and condoled with me very earnestly on the hardships of the road, hinting that he was accustomed to quite a different kind of life, comforts and luxuries "such as these poor Arabs," waving his hand, "had never dreamed of." He asked about the war, or, rather, about the prospect of peace; and when we told him that this was likely, went on repeating in a plaintive voice "Inshalláh, inshalláh" (please God, please God) for nearly a quarter of an hour.

Hánna had by this time come up, and Wilfrid, taking his gun, went down into the jungle to see if he could get us something for dinner; for he had heard birds calling in the wood, which he thought must be some kind of partridge. He was away till quite dusk, and we heard him fire several times. I confess that, until he returned, the lion stories haunted me, and I had not a quiet moment. He came back, however, and told us that he had followed the birds he had heard a considerable way, and had found that they were calling, as pheasants do when they fly up to roost, but he had not succeeded in getting a shot at one. The wood was full of magpies, and it was difficult to distinguish in the thickets what birds the others were. He had killed a magpie in mistake for one, and then, coming to an open space, had sat down. Presently woodcocks began flying over his head, and he had got three. The jungle abounds with jackals, which we heard all the evening whining close to the camp; but Wilfrid neither saw nor heard any other wild beast. We made our bivouac under a bush just outside the camp, where the soldiers talked and sang half the night. This, with the barking of dogs and the fidgeting of the

soldiers' horses, made the evening not one of undisturbed repose; but we were tired, and slept well.

Although the nights are cold, we do not suffer, as we have plenty of things—first an oil-skin cloth on the ground, then a Turkey-carpet, then each a cotton quilt folded double, to serve as bed. Over us we spread our eider-downs; and, over these again, a Turcoman carpet, and another oil-skin over all. In this way we do not feel even the heavy dews which fall at night.

January 12th.—It was a bright morning; and across the river there was a beautiful view of Jaber, an ancient castle, and once a place of importance.* We had no sooner left the camp than we saw a pair of francolins enjoying the sunshine, just outside the jungle; and Wilfrid was fortunate enough to get them both. The cock francolin is certainly one of the most beautiful birds in the world; and seems to stand about half-way between the partridge and the pheasant. He has a magnificent plumage, black, spotted with white; his back and wings russet, and his legs red. The hen is plainer, and might be taken for a hen pheasant that had lost her tail. Like pheasants, they seem to roost in trees, and they were, no doubt, the birds that Wilfrid heard calling last night. Hánna was in ecstasies at the sight of such capital provisions, and has given us a dish this evening worthy of Brillat-Savarin. Indeed, the francolin seems to realize the poet's dream who wrote,

> "If the partridge had the woodcock's thigh,
> It would be the best bird that ever did fly."

Besides these birds, of which another brace was brought to bag, Wilfrid got three or four rock-pigeons, than which there is nothing better for the cooking-pot. So we are now in clover.

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* Kalat Jaber, besieged in 1146 by Zengui, ruler of Mosul. He was assassinated, and his army retired. Jaber sustained several other sieges. See Abulfeda, "Recueil des Historiens des Croisades;" Benjamin of Tudela, "Charton Voyageurs Anciens et Modernes."

SARACENIC MILL ON THE EUPHRATES.

CHAPTER VII.

"Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon."

Lion District of the Euphrates.—The Afúddli Hunters.—A Bedouin Barnum.—The Kaimakam of Rakka.—A Wild Ass.—Sport in the Tamarisk Jungle.—A Wonderful Horse.—We arrive at Deyr.

We have been riding to-day along a narrow track between the cliff—which is here very abrupt, and composed in part of white marble—and a dense jungle of tamarisks, overgrown and matted together into huge thickets by brambles and honeysuckles. This seems to be some miles deep, and is said to be much frequented by wild beasts. It was just here that, three years ago, a Bedouin of the name of Bozán was killed and eaten by a lion. The lion of the Euphrates, or Babylonian lion, is not usually a dangerous beast; but every now and then there is one which, having accidentally tasted human flesh, becomes a man-eater, just as tigers do in India. These are much feared by the Arabs; and on this particular occasion the friends of the man killed seem to have behaved with great cowardice. They were Khryssa Arabs, an Ánazeh tribe, and were riding home one evening in a party of half a dozen, when they observed a lion following them. Bozán was the only one of the party with fire-arms, the rest carrying the usual Ánazeh lance; and he, out of bravado, fired his pistol at the lion, who growled and disappeared, and the party went on their way without hurrying, or, indeed, thinking anything more of the matter; but about half an hour later, it being then nearly dark, the Arabs heard a shriek, and found that Bozán, who was riding last, as they were going along the narrow track in single file, was missing. They

were frightened, and, without more ado, galloped away. In the morning, however, they returned to see what had happened, and found the remains of their companion's body about fifty yards inside the jungle. I was rather glad when we were well out of this disagreeable neighborhood, and in a more open country.

The valley was here again very broad, and there were wide grassy plains, interspersed with tamarisk bushes. In some places there were acres of land furrowed up as if with the plough, but in reality by the wild boars, which must be very numerous. No wonder the peasants, in cultivated countries, dislike them. Here there is nothing to be injured. The sun was getting low, as we passed some ruins, Greek or Roman, which are marked on the map as Zenobia's baths. They are of flat bricks and concrete, mere bits of ruined wall, still called el Hámmam (the baths). Near these we found a camp of Afúddli Arabs, a low tribe, but interesting as having the reputation of being brave men, and lion-hunters. Their camp is peculiar, and unlike any other we have seen.

The Afúddli are hardly nomads, as they only occasionally move their camps, and never leave this jungly district of the river. They have no sheep and but few ordinary cows, but keep great herds of buffaloes, on whose produce they live. The buffalo, they say, is not afraid of the lion, and so can inhabit even the thickest parts of the tamarisk wood without danger. The herdsmen always go armed with guns, as well as short spears, and are said to be good shots. The Afúddli have no tents, properly speaking, but make themselves huts out of the tamarisk boughs, laced together while still growing, and roofed with a bit of tenting. The camp, near which we now are, is about two hundred yards inside the jungle, and is reached by lanes, or passages cut through it, and fenced with a kind of wattle made by interweaving the branches. These lanes twist and turn about so as to form a labyrinth, which it is difficult to get into or out of. The huts thus become an irregular village connected by streets, and in front of each there is generally a small clearing of half an acre or so. We rode in just before sunset, pell-mell with the cattle, which were cantering home

for the night with their tails in the air. The people were hospitably anxious that we should sleep in their huts, but these were not inviting; and the open spaces in front of them were covered with the sharp points of underwood which had been cleared, and would have made but uncomfortable lying; besides, there was not a blade of grass there for the horses, which are now reduced to what they can pick up. So Wilfrid decided that, lions or no lions, we should sleep in the open to-night. We have chosen our bivouac on a high bank, where there is grass, and with a deep hollow between us and the jungle. Wilfrid has taken his gun and gone for a walk, while Hánna and I have been very busy getting dinner ready, and a very good dinner I think it will be.

Mr. S—— has quite recovered from his fatigue now. The Afúddli have been telling him how they shoot the lions. Whenever one is heard of, they try to surround him, taking their buffaloes with them; and if they manage to wound the lion, these soon trample him to death. The Turkish Government has offered lately a reward of three pounds for every skin brought into Deyr, and the people here have claimed it several times.

Only a fortnight ago they managed to kill two lions under the following circumstances: A cow had been found one morning killed and partly eaten; and a man of a neighboring tribe, the Súbkha, volunteering to make the attempt, a pit was dug near the carcass, and the man left in it to watch by night for the lion. He was partly covered over with tamarisk boughs, and when his friends came in the morning they found a lion sitting on the top of these, apparently in his turn watching the man. The Arabs fired, and then rushing in with their spears managed to kill the beast, and brought it to the little fort we passed to-day for the reward. Then, they assure us, during the following night, while the dead lion was lying in the yard of the fort, a hideous roaring was heard outside, and presently a lioness appeared and made an attempt to get inside. But the door was fast, and, after firing a great number of shots with no effect, they at last killed her too.

Both these lions were skinned and stuffed, and are now being

carried round among the tribes on a donkey by an enterprising Barnum, who they assure us is making his fortune by the show.

This is, of course, the Babylonian lion, whose peculiarity is that he has no mane. He is, I should think, one of the rarest of beasts.*

Sunday, January 13th.—A wet and heavy fog. Got some good buffalo-milk from the Afúddlis, and were off by eight o'clock. The sun rises now about half-past seven. Ali Beg, a Circassian, the new Mudír of Palmyra, overtook us this morning. He is well mounted on a handsome brown Segláwi Jedrán horse, and left Aleppo two days after we did. He is on his way to his post, to which he is just appointed by his brother-in-law, Kiámyl Pasha. He gave a heart-rending account of the night which he passed in an Afúddli hut. This is the first *bonâ fide* traveller we have seen on the road.

The country was much like that of yesterday, until, after crossing a bit of desert to cut off a bend of the river, we came in sight of Rakka, the only inhabited place since Jabúl. From a distance we supposed it to be a large town, and indeed it was so once; but now there are but half a dozen inhabited houses. It stands on the opposite shore of the river, in Mesopotamia, and has to be reached by a ferry two miles below it. We should not have gone across, but that Súliman was anxious to show us a mare there which had a great reputation; and we were a little curious to see the place nearer. We left our horses with one of the Zaptiehs, and were ferried to the opposite shore in an unwieldy boat, something like a Noah's ark cut in two. The Euphrates is about a quarter of a mile wide at this point, and there is a sloping beach on either shore, which is unusual on the river. I thought I should have had to walk up to the town; but Súliman, in the high-handed way common to Zaptiehs, took possession of a mare and foal teth-

* Three of these lions were shot from the English steamer which plies between Bagdad and Bússora, only three years since. One of them, when wounded, charged into the water, and attempted to board the boat. This happened on a part of the Tigris where there is no jungle.

ered hard by, and impressed her into our service. Wilfrid walked, and shot a good many francolins, which abound here. Mr. S—— rode the sergeant's horse, which he had managed to bring over with him in the boat. There is some cultivation here, and we met a number of Arabs, men and women, on their way to the ferry; the former I thought very good-looking, with regular features, and teeth dazzlingly white. The women, who were driving donkeys before them loaded with brushwood, and looking at a distance exactly like porcupines, stopped us to ask news of the war. "*El Sultán mansúr?*" ("Is the Sultan victorious?") "*Shuéya,*" we answered ("Not very"); and they burst into roars of laughter. The fact is, there is little love lost here between the Arabs and the Turks. This was when Súliman was out of hearing, or we should have said "Inshalláh," the proper way of turning an indiscreet question.

Rakka was a Saracenic town, built, it is said, by the Caliph Haroun al Rashid as a summer residence. The walls only of the city are standing, with two gates, in what we call the Moorish style of architecture—that is to say, they are built of brick, ingeniously and fantastically arranged about a horseshoe arch.* They are crumbling away at the base. All ruins seem to perish in this way, like trees, at the root, I hardly know why.

We were disappointed at finding no houses within the walls—nothing but a few tents. The Kaimakam received us with much formality, and the usual cups of coffee, and a narghileh for Mr. S——, who conversed with him in Turkish. He was a little man, in a loose, wadded smoking-coat and worked slippers, European trousers, and a fez. He had a fair complexion and rusty beard, untrimmed and very dirty. He seemed stupid, and, like all the Turks in this country, supremely wretched. A little bright-eyed secretary, probably a Greek, explained to him all he was too slow to understand; for the talk was of politics and the war. After this he took us out to see the mare which had been sent for, a

* Zengui, son of Ak Sonkor, assassinated before Jaber, was buried at Rakka.

Seglawíeh Jedrán, own sister, they told us, to a celebrated horse we had seen at Aleppo. She was a handsome bay, but without action, and her hocks were badly capped. We had thought of exchanging the Maneghíeh with the sore back for her, but the negotiation did not proceed far. Some other mares were then driven in from below the town, and came galloping up, headed by a little wahásh, or wild ass, which had been caught as a foal. It was now a year old, and seemed tame enough till touched; then it lashed out furiously. In color it was ruddy, with a broad dark line down the back. It had short ears, a drooping hind-quarter, and legs like a deer. The Kaimakam complained of its mischievous disposition, and of a trick it had of biting the tails of the mares it was with. We asked for news of Jedáan and the Ánazeh, but nobody could give us any information; so we wished the official and his friends good-bye, and departed the way we had come. Once over the ferry, we had a long gallop to find our caravan, which had stopped at some tents on the plain opposite Rakka.

January 14th.—Hagar, who is generally "as good as gold," played us a trick this morning after she was saddled by galloping off to some mares, which were grazing on the plain half a mile from where we had camped. It was a brisk morning, and I suppose she wanted to warm her limbs, poor thing; besides, she had had a good feed of barley overnight, instead of the usual millet. Súliman and I set off in pursuit, but she would not let him get near her, and I had a good deal of cantering about too before I could persuade her to let me take the rein. This delayed us, and we made but a short day's journey, nothing more remarkable occurring than a successful stalk of pigeons, which brought eight to the bag at a double shot. We are of necessity "pot-hunters," and Wilfrid has no cartridges to waste on fancy shooting. It was a desolate day's ride, or else the sameness of the river scenery is beginning to tell on us; and we have been glad to stop at the first pleasant spot we came to early in the afternoon. This is a little different from the camps we have chosen, or had to choose, lately. The cliffs on the side of the valley here give place to green slopes

not unlike downs; and in the hollows of these, a little way back from the river, we found a camp of Subkha Arabs, with their flock of lambs, which never goes far from the tents, in a circular depression, well sheltered from the wind and green as a spinach bowl. Here we have stopped, and laid our beds out on the slope, where they look most comfortable. Wilfrid is off, as usual, to the river and the tamarisk woods, where he likes to wander till it is dark. I have asked him to write a description of one of these woods. It is as follows:

"The tamarisks are about as high as a ten years' growth of alder copse in England, and stand about as close together. They are generally open at the stem, so that you can make your way through them with a little stooping. There are paths, too, made by the wild boars, which it is easy to follow; and the ground is clear of rubbish, so that you need make no noise in walking. It is as well, before plunging in, to take your bearings by sun or wind, as the jungle is lower than the surrounding land, marking, in fact, the high-water level of the river in times of flood; and you cannot often see more than a few yards before you. The boughs above are thick with magpies' nests, the accumulation of years, and their owners chatter and scream at you as you pass. You go forward cautiously, recollecting the wild-beast stories the Arabs told you, and at which you laughed a little while ago. Now the snapping of a twig makes you look quickly round, half expecting to see the quiet eyes of a lion glaring at you through the underwood. But this is soon forgotten; for you hear birds calling about fifty yards in front of you, apparently from the trees. The francolins are just beginning to roost, and you stop and listen till they call again. A bird seems close to you, and yet you cannot see him; and at last he flutters down from a great thicket where he had his perch, and is hidden again before you can get your gun to your shoulder. While you are looking into the tangled mass of brambles and honeysuckles around you, out jumps a pig with a great rush, and you fire without seeing him. It is just as well to miss, for if you chance to wound him, and he turns, he has you here at his mercy.

Your shot, however, has probably flushed the francolin, and you get a snap shot at him as he rises. You wander on and on, still lured by the expectation of something new; and following a fairly straight track, well trodden by the feet of pigs, you come suddenly on the river flowing silently and swiftly, a mass of turbid water, some dozen feet below you. There you see geese, if there happens to be a bit of backwater, or maybe a pelican. You are glad, at any rate, to correct your dead-reckoning here by a look at the open sky; and you generally find that you are considerably out. But the sun has set, and it is time to go home, in as straight a line as you can keep. The jackals are beginning their whining chorus; and far away across the river you hear a roar. Is it a lion or a camel? Most probably the latter. On your way back, you come to an opening, cut by the Arabs for firewood, and sit down to take breath. A bird flits noiselessly past you, and alights on the ground almost at your feet. It is joined presently by another, and, for an instant, you think they must be owls. You jump to your feet and fire. They are woodcocks. You wait for another flight, but cannot wait long, for it is getting dark. You are afraid now of being benighted, and stumble back through the wood as fast as you can, coming now and then upon a jackal slinking across the path. You look with some anxiety for the watch-fire your friends will have lighted on some high ground to guide you back. The moon begins to show, and by its light, just as you are at the edge of the wood, you perceive, walking parallel with you, and apparently intent on cutting you off from the open ground, a gaunt, red beast, moving swiftly through the trees. Your heart jumps to your mouth, as it stops with a loud, impatient roar, and you feel that you have been a fool to stay out so late—only an instant, and it moves on, and you recognize a belated cow hurrying back to her calf, tied up since morning in the camp where you have stopped. So, as romance writers say, you 'breathe once more,' and follow her. Then, in another minute, you are emptying your pockets, amidst the '*mashallahs*' of Hánna, Jurgy, and your other friends."

January 15*th*.—In the middle of the night we were woke by a

startling clap of thunder just over our heads, and by the horses breaking loose and careering wildly about. Another flash and a clap, almost together, sent Hagar right over us; and it is lucky nobody was hurt. Then the rain came down. We thought we were in for a regular ducking, but fortunately it did not last long enough to wet us through, and we slept on again quietly till morning. We resolved, however, to take this as a warning, and to pitch our tents for the future. They will save us, at least, from the heavy dews, which are almost as bad as rain.

At daybreak we heard cries and lamentations in the Subkha camp. A man had died in the night, and they were taking him to the top of the hill to bury him. We asked how old he was. They said "His beard was not yet white."

This has been a short day's journey; a good deal of time wasted stalking red geese, only one of which was bagged. While waiting for the bird to be blown on shore (for it fell into the river) I saw three enormous wild boars on the opposite bank, up which they presently scrambled and disappeared in the tárfa. About mid-day we came to some lagoons, or perhaps inlets from the river, quite covered with ducks and coots; and, seeing this, we agreed to halt for the day. We have been very busy putting up the tents. Ours looks very comfortable, with its red lining, and the prospect of sleeping in it seems an unheard-of luxury after all these nights spent out-of-doors. It is just as well, though, for the sky is very threatening, and it is very cold. Wilfrid came back from exploring the lagoons and a peninsula beyond them, with ducks and woodcocks, and is so pleased with the place that we are to stay here the whole of to-morrow. We saw a good-looking mare to-day hobbled, some way from any tents. She has probably been left, on account of some defect, by the Ánazeh, when they went south. They often do this, it appears, if for any reason their mares cannot travel, giving part ownership in them to some Subkha, Wéldi, or other low Arabs. The new owner has a right to the first filly born. This mare was very like an English hunter, but with a better head. She may have been fifteen hands high.

January 16th.—A nice quiet day, in spite of the high wind blowing. Wilfrid out shooting most of the time. I give his bag—nine francolins, one duck, one teal, one pochard, and three wood-pigeons. He also saw a couple of wolves, and an infinite number of water-fowl, but had more walking than shooting. However, our kitchen is now in fine order. Hánna has turned out to be a capital cook, and he is very careful of the provisions given him. Our Aleppo bread still holds out well, and is eatable enough when toasted. We had it baked hard, to start with, which is the best plan.

I forgot to say that yesterday we passed the graves of two Germans, murdered four years ago on their way up from Bagdad to Aleppo. They had started, we were told, without any baggage, but were well mounted. The people of Deyr, desirous to get their mares, followed them when they had passed through the town, and waylaid them. I suppose they made some resistance; anyhow, here by the wayside their journey ended, and their lives.

I woke in the night, hearing a sound of lapping in the tent, and found a four-footed animal close to my pillow, with its nose in the milk-pail. I had no time to think what it was, but caught it by the hind legs and drove it out. Some think it was a jackal, others a dog.

January 17th.—A wild morning; flights of geese passing overhead at daybreak, and immense flocks of rooks and jackdaws, wheeling and clamoring, as they do in England before a storm. We were half inclined to put off our journey again, especially when rain began to fall; but the tents were soon down, and we started, wrapped in our thickest cloaks and overcoats. The road to-day led up the cliffs, and over a long tract of desert, across which the wind blew pitilessly, and presently it began to snow so thickly that we could only see a hundred yards or so in front of us. The wind was fortunately at our back. There was no track visible, and it seemed doubtful whether any of the party knew the right direction; but we came upon a shepherd who put us right, and by degrees the storm abated, and before mid-day the sun struggled

out, and then we got down into the valley again, and halted some minutes under the lee of the cliffs. However, it was no use stopping, as we hope to get to Deyr to-morrow; and we pushed on all day till near sunset, when we came to a ruined wall at the edge of a tamarisk-wood, where there were some tents, and a flock of kids feeding under shelter of the wall. We were soon busy making a fire, and warming at least our fingers, if no more. I don't think I ever remember such a piercing wind, except, perhaps, when we were snowed up on the Shótt el Sherghi, in Algeria, four years ago. It was quite dark before the kátterjis arrived, and we were frozen to the bones. Now we have got the tents up, and are out of the wind. There is nothing so snug as a tent in windy weather, for there are no draughts. It is nearly full moon, and the sky is clear. The tent is already frozen stiff: so are my hands.

January 18*th*.—The water in the pail under the eaves of the tent had an inch of ice on it this morning; and a rope, which had given way during the night, still stuck out straight and stiff where it had broken. Hánna has enlivened the morning by a little theatrical scene about a piece of cord, secreted by some of the Arabs who have supplied us with milk. These are Aghedáat, another low tribe; and small thefts must, I suppose, be expected. However, Hánna insisted upon the lost article being restored, and appealed to Mr. S——. Seeing that the matter was becoming serious, the Aghedáat began to accuse each other, and at last gave up two men as the culprits, and with them the lost cord. It was amusing to hear Hánna lecturing these poor thieves on the folly and wickedness of their conduct, and to see him theatrically fastening horse-hobbles to their ancles. Súliman, more practically inclined, gave each a sound box on the ear, and there the matter ended.

These Aghedáat, it appears, have some good mares, which they get from the Ánazeh; and there had been some talk overnight about an extraordinary horse of the Máneghi Hédruj breed to be seen somewhere in the neighborhood; so when, shortly after starting, we met some men who offered to take us to see this beast, we

readily agreed to go with them. The Máneghi breed, though much esteemed, is not usually handsome; but this they declared was an exception. "Máneghi ibn Sbéyel"* they kept on repeating, in a tone of tenderness, and as if tasting the flavor of each syllable; for the reverence of blood here amounts to fanaticism. We turned out of the track, and went for a mile or so through brushwood, coming at last to an open space where some women were rolling up a tent they had just pulled down. The "goodman" was away, they said, on his horse, gone to borrow donkeys to move his camp with to fresh quarters. A horse of the Máneghi's nobility could not, of course, be used for baggage purposes. We had hardly done talking when Mohammed appeared, driving half a dozen asses in front of him, and mounted on a meek-looking little black pony, all mane and tail. This was the celebrated sire of which we had heard so much; and I feel sure that the people about had a real belief in his good qualities, and could not understand why we should find fault, merely on account of his looks, with an animal so nobly bred. We did not stop long, but, excusing ourselves for our lack of enthusiasm by saying that black was not our lucky color, we departed.

We were now determined to reach Deyr to-day, so, leaving the baggage to follow, and sending Súliman forward to announce our arrival, we pushed on. It seemed a long way, to our impatience; but at last, from some rising ground, we caught sight of a point on the horizon which we knew must be the minaret of Deyr. A little later, we met three travellers, merchants of Bagdad—the only wayfarers, except Ali Beg, whom we had met with in our ten days' ride—who told us the town was close at hand. Then, as we were crossing a little plain, behold a cavalcade of horsemen advancing toward us, and in their front an elegant young gentleman in European clothes, who introduced himself as the Pasha's secretary, and delivered a polite message from his master entreating us to honor

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* Ibn Sbéyel, of the Gomússa, a tribe of Sebáa Ánazeh, possesses the most esteemed strain of Máneghi Hédruj.

him with our company at the Serai, where the oxen and fatlings had been killed for us, and all things were ready. This we were not at all prepared for, and we at first hoped that some compromise might be come to in the way of pitching our tents in the Pasha's neighborhood; but the young man was inexorable, and would hear of nothing less than an unconditional acceptance. So we consented, and Wilfrid, rising to the dignity of the occasion, assumed all possible gravity in answering the salute of the fifteen men, who represent the military force of the Pashalik, drawn up by the roadside in our honor. Next, a deputation of the principal townsmen, on their best horses, and, in fact, everybody who could get up a four-footed beast, came out to escort us to the town, forming a cavalcade of some forty or fifty horsemen. These from time to time, and instigated by the young man who again led the way on his sorry nag, with his trousers much tucked up, and showing a pair of neat "side-spring boots," started to perform the *fantasia*, the common form of polite welcome among Turks and Arabs alike. This I need not describe. Lastly, at the first house of the town, mounted on a handsome black mule with trappings and tassels of black and gold, and attended by half a dozen servants, stood His Excellency Húseyn Pasha, waiting in state to receive us. There was no refusing such noble offers of entertainment, so we are now at the Serai, not altogether loath, after all, to exchange our rough life out-of-doors for clean rooms with carpets spread, and, oh luxury! in an inner chamber the paraphernalia of an almost Christian bed!

CHAPTER VIII.

"This accident may, at least, serve as a warning for us all to let well alone."—MARIA EDGEWORTH.

Húseyn Pasha's Paternal Government.—The Ottoman Policy in the Desert.—"Divide et Impera."—We are placed under Surveillance, and hospitably thwarted in our Design of visiting the Ánazeh.—Deyr, the best Market for pure Arabian Horses.—First Talk of the Shammar.—Their Hero, Abd ul Kérim, his Adventures and Death.—They threaten Deyr.—A dishonest Zaptieh.—I fall into a Well, and am Rescued.—We depart for Bagdad.

HÚSEYN PASHA, Governor of Deyr, is a man of fifty or thereabouts, with a dignified exterior, and decidedly handsome features, in spite of a grizzled beard, and of the inevitable button which afflicts all faces in these regions. He is an Aleppine by birth, and in sympathy is an Arab rather than a Turk, being only Ottoman in so far as he represents the traditional policy of the empire by paternally misgoverning his province. I do not say this to his discredit, for I believe him to be as honest an official as can be found between Aleppo and Bússora; but the Turkish Government has never sanctioned any other system of administration in Arabia than one of oppression toward the weak and deceit toward the strong. This Húseyn loyally carries out. In manner he has all the courtesy of the Turk joined to something of the Arab frankness, which impressed us very favorably, and made us hesitate in the final adoption of a title for him which more than once suggested itself to us—that of the *faux bonhomme.* I am still ashamed to say anything but what is good of a host so hospitable, and a protector so lavish of kind protestations as was this amiable *múteshérif;* and, if it were possible to dissociate his early reception of us from the tiresome insincerity of his subsequent behavior, I should say that he was one of the best and kindest friends we met with

on our travels. A disagreeable suspicion, however, recurs, as I write, that from the first his hospitality was not altogether without motive. I sometimes fancy that, even before our arrival at Deyr, he must have had notice of the object of our journey, and received a hint to throw pleasant obstacles in our way; and that, being a shrewd man, as Orientals are shrewd, he had resolved on a little plan of action which should load us with civilities and polite attentions from the outset, and conduct us in the end with all honor and despatch to the nearest point of his frontier. Nor is this improbable.

The Turkish Government has always been very jealous of foreign intrigues among the Bedouin tribes, whom it is their policy to keep as children in ignorance of all that passes in the outer world. It has equally been their policy to sow dissensions among them; and, as I have already described, by good fortune or good management, the most dangerous tribes were this winter hotly engaged in civil war. It would be a pity, the authorities doubtless thought, that so satisfactory a state of things should be interfered with by mere busybodies from Europe, who might possibly inform the Bedouins of the ill turn things had taken for the Sultan in Bulgaria, and of the denuded state of the garrison towns and military roads of Syria. "Divide and rule," was an excellent motto; and Europeans had before now attempted to unite the tribes against Ottoman rule, or patch up peaces between them out of foolish humanitarian motives. Moreover, any day might bring the news of a crisis in the affairs of the empire; and England was known to have her eye on the Euphrates. What, then, more likely than that ours should be a semi-official mission, to spy out the nakedness of the land? A British consul would hardly have come so far from his post without political motive; and Mr. S—— was with us. Húseyn, wise in his generation, may well have argued in this way. Only he would have been wiser still if he could have guessed that honesty in dealing with us would be the best policy, and that by sending us, under pledge of silence, to the Arabs he would have gained all his object. The details of his plan, if plan there was,

were ably carried out. His hospitality was absolute and complete as that of any desert sheykh. He would allow no word or suggestion of our occupying any other house but his own, or of our pitching tents and living outside the town. "That would do him too great dishonor." He had already abandoned his own apartment to us, and had hired a room for himself elsewhere. We should stay a week, ten days, a month, the whole winter, with him, and he should still be less than satisfied. He was our servant and *vakíl* (agent) in all that we might require at Deyr, whether horses, if we wished to buy them, or mules and provisions for the road, when the time should come. But of this he would not speak. A feast was ready for us in-doors, and the wind was blowing furiously down the street. Even Wilfrid allowed that our vow of spending the whole winter out-of-doors must be broken here. "*No hay rimedio.*" We consented, and were at once installed in our honorable captivity. Once within the walls of the Serai, we were, of course, under our host's eye, and nobody could come in or go out without his sanction. It would be difficult for us to communicate with the towns-people of Deyr, except through the Pasha's servants; and no agent of Jedáan's was likely to venture inside His Excellency's court-yard to give us information. Mr. S——, fatigued with the journey, would be only too willing to stay quietly in-doors; and we were strange to the ways and language of the place, and could not run about for it for ourselves in the bazar. All information, then, could be cooked for us before being served up, and we were practically helpless. That this was the case, we afterward had ample proof. All the sheykhs of importance have spies and correspondents in the town, who, if we had been encamped outside the town, would at once have come to us, hearing the report of our intended journey; but Húseyn, as we discovered later, gave orders to have strange Arabs carefully "*consignés*" at his door. It was impossible to get any one to speak on the subject of Jedáan.

Húseyn himself was an agreeable talker, but conversed more readily with Mr. S—— in Turkish, the official language (no *em-*

ployé, were he from Nejd, would speak Arabic), than in Arabic, on the subject of our visit to the Ánazeh. He could not recommend our even attempting it in the present state of things. War, as we knew, was raging in the Syrian desert, which was infested with *ghazús*, or marauding parties, of forty or fifty men each, over whom Jedáan himself had no control. From these the Pasha could of course give us no security. It was all he could do to preserve his communications with Bagdad. Moreover, Jedáan's position was exceedingly precarious. He had beaten the Roála; but these had gone to the Jôf to get help from Ibn Rashid, who might any day appear in the Hamád. The Shammar of Mesopotamia were in arms, and sure to attack him as soon as they saw their opportunity; and, lastly, there was a split among the Sebáa themselves. Besides all this, it was too late. Jedáan was gone from Bíshari, "and who knows where the Bedouins are, when once they move?" They were probably by this time far away south pursuing the Roála. We should do better to stay quietly at Deyr with him, the Pasha, for a month, when the Ánazeh would be coming north again, during all which time he would be our solicitous and grateful host. Then, when the tribes had renewed their *rayamán* with the government (an annual convention for trading purposes), he would, inshalláh, take us himself to Jedáan. "Inshalláh" was all we could answer, thanking the Pasha for his kindness.

In the mean while we were treated with almost royal honors. A guard of honor had orders to attend us wherever we should go, on foot or on horseback, outside the gates of the Serai; and the inhabitants of the town, little inclined as Arabs are to show respect to persons, were constrained to stand up as we passed in the streets—a rather tiresome piece of ceremony to us, who would rather have made friends with them. We felt inclined to say *en bons princes*—"Thank you, good people, for your loyalty, but *do* sit down."

Our first day was devoted to receiving deputations, always, however, in presence of our host. First there were the town councillors, grave, elderly Arabs in Bedouin dress (for here the Syrian

tunic and turban are unknown), who came in barefooted, and sat uncomfortably on the edges of the Pasha's chairs, or on the ground, according to their rank on the "local board." From these no information could be had, except that Jedáan was "*beyíd, beyíd, and' el Hamád*" (far, far away in the desert). Then there were Christians, of whom there is a population of about a hundred at Deyr, headed by their priest, a long-nosed Chaldean from Mósul, who were more familiar and more talkative. These all had grievances. They had come from their homes at Aleppo or Mósul to make money, and had not made enough. They sought our protection for the recovery of bad debts. Then there was the army, represented by a lieutenant; and a man who had farmed the taxes of last year, and could not get his arrears paid on account of the war; and women—but here our patience was exhausted, and we begged that the rest might come another day.

In the afternoon we rode a little way from the town to exercise the horses, who seemed to be as much in want of fresh air as we were ourselves. My horse had broken out into a sort of rash, caused by the hot stable, and Hagar seemed to have caught a cold. We went toward the hills, which are here about a mile back from the river, and got what view was to be had of the town. Deyr is built of mud, and, like most of the villages on the Upper Euphrates which we afterward saw, stands in a dreary wilderness. The river, picturesque as it generally is, with its wild tamarisk-woods and glades of grass, is bare and hideous wherever the Arabs had made a permanent settlement. The sites, also, are usually the least interesting, being chosen for some agricultural advantage —an island, or a low alluvial tract near enough to the river level to be easily irrigated. The ancient cities, as we see by their remains, were, on the contrary, perched on commanding positions on the cliff; and this probably represents a difference in circumstances between the past and present dwellers in the valley. Formerly, as I imagine, the towns defied the Bedouins of the desert round them; now they pay them tribute and live on sufferance. This was certainly true till a few years back. The consequence is,

the villages lie undefended, and without regard to strategical position. They seem to depend on their poverty for protection. Deyr is especially uninteresting. Even the river loses its dignity there, being, in fact, but a narrow branch, the main channel passing on the other side of a low, flat island, made hideous by rude attempts at cultivation. All is bare for miles round, except where the ground is broken by patches of ill-ploughed, ill-sown, ill-watered fields of barley. Nature may be hard-featured in the desert, but here it has been made repulsive, as a plain face is by painting. The town itself stands on a little eminence—its own ruins; for there is evidence of its antiquity in the mounds and traces of canals which extend behind it, while the wilderness of graves around is that of a large city.

Deyr has been further disfigured by the embellishments of an enterprising Pasha, who gave it, some few years ago, a grotesque imitation of a European faubourg. That is to say, a broad, straight road was traced, with a barrack, a "public garden" enclosed with an iron railing, and half a dozen houses with a second story. The principal of these is the Serai. Outside the town, among the graves, if the evening is fine, women walk or sit; boys throw stones, or play at rounders and hockey; while young men ride about cantering in eights, to break in the colts they have bought from the Ánazeh, and teach them to change their leg easily. This is the only cheerful sight.

Deyr is well known as a horse-market, and is perhaps the only town north of Jebel Shammar where the inhabitants have any general knowledge of the blood and breeding of the beasts they possess. The townsmen, indeed, are but a single step removed from the Bedouins, their undoubted ancestors, and have preserved all the prejudices and beliefs common to the desert tribes almost untouched. They usually purchase their colts as yearlings, either from the Gomússa or some other of the Sebáa tribes, and, having broken them thoroughly, sell them at three years old to the Aleppo merchants. They occasionally, too, have mares left with them in partnership by the Ánazeh; and from these they breed according

to the strictest desert rules. It is therefore, for a stranger, by far the best market for thorough-breds in Asia; and you may see some of the best blood at Deyr that can be found anywhere, besides having a guarantee of its authenticity, impossible under ordinary circumstances at Damascus or Aleppo. There are, I may say, *no* horses at Deyr but thorough-breds. We made several purchases —a chestnut mare, Sáadeh Togán, well-known, as we afterward found, in all the desert round as one of the handsomest and best, but thought to be barren; a three-year-old bay filly, Maneghíeh Slaji, which beat Hagar over a half mile; and a pony mare, also Maneghíeh, for which we exchanged the horse I had been riding, as it was thought more convenient that we should have only mares upon our journey: all these at very moderate prices, thanks to the penniless state of the country, the scarcity of purchasers, and our friend Húseyn's kind authority. Súliman, the Turkish zaptieh, negotiated the purchase of the first, which gives too good a trait of manners to be omitted. The mare belonged to a *hojja*, or learned man of the town, who had had her some years, but could not ride her on account of her high spirits; and who, finding that she had failed the last two years to produce a foal, was anxious to sell her.* Súliman, without letting him know the name of the purchaser, agreed with him on a price; the money named was paid, and he was sent to hand it over to the owner.

But the Turk could not find it in his heart to let him have all the money, and kept back five pounds. The hojja complained, and came to us for the mare, saying he would have her back; whereupon it was discovered that another fraud of ten pounds had been committed on ourselves, the man having, in fact, received fifteen pounds less than the sum we had given to Súliman. This tale is typical, not only of the dishonesty, but still more of the stupidity, of the ordinary zaptieh. If Súliman could have been content with cheating us, nothing would have ever come to light about it; but his greediness spoiled all. The Pasha was very grave

* This is almost always a reason for selling.

when he heard what had happened, saying that it brought disgrace upon his house, and he made the sergeant refund the money. Súliman did this reluctantly, pleading that he had a wife and children to support. Wilfrid would have given the ten pounds to the poor man who had been cheated, but Húseyn begged that the matter might drop there. The man had had his money. So we were fain to be content, and even to forgive Súliman, who came next day with ashes on his head and a face of repentance. I am sorry we did so, as he afterward proved quite unworthy. Dishonesty in money matters is not confined to Turkey, I fear; but less shame is attached to being found out there than with us. We afterward discovered that the miserable sergeant had not only made this large coup about the mare, but had kept most of the small sums, mejidies and beshliks, which we had intrusted to him during our journey from Aleppo, as payment for milk and bread, in the places where we had stopped.

Húseyn had several horses and mares in his stables which he was proud to show us; but, except on such occasions, they never left their mangers, as he is a timid rider, and afraid to trust others on their backs. Among the rest, he had a fine Hamdani Simri, badly broken-kneed; but broken knees are a defect no one here considers of consequence. I suppose the horses who have them are thrown down as colts; for, when full grown, no Arabian ever falls, however careless he may be about tripping. During all our travels we never saw an accident of this sort. Now I return to my journal.

Sunday, January 20th.—New plans. The Pasha assures us that it is quite out of the question our going to the Ánazeh at present, and proposes instead that, as we are unwilling to stay longer than need be at Deyr, we should pay a visit to the Shammar in Mesopotamia. We are loath to abandon our original plan; but the main feature of it, the visit to Jebel Shammar, is at any rate impossible this year; for, whatever else is doubtful, it seems certain that Jedáan cannot now go nearly so far south. Indeed, we are beginning to think that the tale of the Ánazeh going there

at all is untrue. For myself, I am quite as ready for the new plan, thinking that we should be doing a foolish thing to entangle ourselves just now in the Ánazeh disputes.

The Pasha has explained to us the political position of the Mesopotamian Shammar. They are a large and powerful tribe, indeed the only fighting tribe east of the Euphrates, and have been the rivals and enemies of the Ánazeh ever since they first came into the country. Their sheykh is Ferhán ibn Sfúk, in whose family the dignity of chief is hereditary. He is on good terms with the government, and has lately been made a Pasha, with an allowance from the Pashalik of Bagdad of about £3000 a year. In consideration of this, he has engaged to keep his people quiet, and, if possible, to induce them to settle down as cultivators in the valley of the Tigris, giving the example himself by living at Sherghát, a place about sixty miles south of Mósul. Húseyn, however, thinks that there is more show than reality in the arrangement, as far as Ferhán is concerned. It is certain that the Shammar are not at all pleased with the sheykh's submission. They look upon him with some contempt even, as he is the son of a Bagdad woman, and talks Turkish, which he learned at Constantinople many years ago, when he was hostage there. The more independent members of the tribe seceded long ago from Ferhán, and put themselves under his half-brother, Abd ul Kérim, about whom we have already heard many stories.

As Abd ul Kérim is a great hero in recent Bedouin history, I may as well put down here all we afterward learned of him. His mother was of the Taï, a tribe held to be most noble by the Bedouins, though tributary to the Shammar; and on this account he was preferred by his people to Ferhán. He led them in all their wars; and, as long as he lived, his elder brother had no authority out of Bagdad. He appears to have been of that chivalrous type so much admired by the Bedouins—open-handed, generous, and brave. He never would make peace with the Turks, and they often suffered severely at his hands. He and Jedáan had known each other as children, being of the same age, and Jedáan

had been sent, during one of their truces (for the Shammar and Fedáan are always enemies), to stay some months, as a sort of pledge of peace, in the tent of Abd ul Kérim's father, Sfúk. Abd ul Kérim had, indeed, been a sort of patron of Jedáan's in early life, having giving him money and camels, and set him up, more than once, when Jedáan had got into difficulties; but afterward hereditary hostility of their tribes made them enemies. Jedáan, from having been a poor man of no particular account among his people, rose, through his skill and bravery, to be leader of the Fedáan, and then of the whole Ánazeh clan; and, consequently, he and Abd ul Kérim were at constant rivalry and war. On one occasion, Jedáan, with fifty followers, was surprised and surrounded at nightfall by a large body of Shammar, who, as the custom is in the desert, waited till daylight to make their attack. The Fedáan had little chance of escape, and were resigning themselves to capture and spoliation in the morning, for their mares were tired and the enemy was fresh, when, in the middle of the night, a man came to them from the Shammar with a message to Jedáan from Abd ul Kérim. He was riding a white mare; and the message was to the following effect: "Abd ul Kérim, in token of their ancient friendship, sends his own mare to Jedáan, begging that he will ride her to-morrow. She is the best in all the Shammar camp." Thus mounted, Jedáan fought his losing battle the next day, but escaped capture, thanks to Abd ul Kérim's mare, his men being all taken prisoners. The story takes us back to the days of Saladin.

Abd ul Kérim was a proud man, and took every opportunity of insulting and annoying the Turks, sending the valy of Bagdad back without receiving him, one day, when he came out to visit him. He was therefore looked upon as a mere outlaw at Bagdad. To this he owed his death. The circumstances, as I heard them related, were as follows:

Abd ul Kérim was in love with a cousin of his own, a daughter of his mother's brother, and consequently a Taï,* who was equally

* The Taï women are reputed the most beautiful of any in the Desert.

attached to him, and he had intended to marry her; but, for some reason not explained, she was given by her father to another suitor. The girl sent a message to Abd ul Kérim, telling him what had happened, and begging him to take her away from her new husband. This the lover made haste to do, arriving with all possible speed, and followed by twenty horsemen. But the plot was discovered; and when Abd ul Kérim arrived, he found the husband there with his friends, who, drawing his sword, cut the girl in pieces before his eyes, calling out to him, "You wanted her. Look, she is yours to take or to leave." What happened at that moment I do not know; but Abd ul Kérim seems to have gone crazy for awhile, and to have roamed about the country for several days destroying every one he met. They say (but this, of course, is an exaggeration) that he sacked forty villages. On this the governor of Mósul sent out a large army to attack him, and he was driven south across the Euphrates, into the Móntefik country, where he took refuge with Nassr, the Móntefik sheykh, who, being on good terms with the government, sent him prisoner to Bagdad. He was forwarded thence to Mósul, where the Pasha hanged him publicly on the bridge, like a common felon. The news of Abd ul Kérim's death spread consternation through Mesopotamia, and for a time the independent Shammar seemed permanently broken; and, there being no other of the Sfúk family old enough to be their leader, Ferhán regained his credit, and was once more acknowledged sheykh of the whole tribe. Meanwhile the Taï woman, Abd ul Kérim's mother, a person of great dignity and influence, fled with her youngest son Faris, and the rest of her belongings, into Nejd, where they remained two years or more. Now, however, they have returned, and Faris is gradually resuming his brother's position, all the more warlike of the Shammar having joined him. But of this later.

Faris, it appears, is a young man of high spirit and of great personal attractions, "a great schemer," the Pasha says, and has succeeded in getting together a large number of followers, who live independently of Ferhán and of all other control, in the northern

half of Mesopotamia. He would be an interesting person to see, especially as he has probably never spoken to a European in his life. The Pasha thinks he might send a message to him proposing a visit. That would be much better than going to Jedáan, and I think it probable we shall do it. Otherwise there seems nothing possible but to go to Bagdad. The difficulty is to get started with the tribes, as, without help or introduction of some sort, it is impossible to go to them. Whatever we do had better be done quickly, as Wilfrid is fretting at this life in-doors.

January 21st.—A new complication has arisen, and I really begin to suspect that the Pasha does not intend us to go anywhere but back to Aleppo. A man came in this morning with news that a band of Shammar have made a pounce on the Buggára, a small pastoral tribe occupying the left bank of the Euphrates, just opposite Deyr, and have carried off eighteen mares and five thousand sheep. It sounds rather like an excuse for putting off our new expedition; but the Pasha appears really frightened. He talks of Deyr being sacked, as, indeed, it might be any day by the smallest tribe in the country, and has sent off a messenger to Aleppo, threatening to resign his post if not speedily supported by troops. He has got just fifteen men here, including Súliman and the others who came with us, and, though he has plenty of arms and ammunition, he cannot get any of the towns-people to come forward and help in the defence. He has sent a message to the town council, offering arms to all who will enroll themselves; but the councillors have prudently sent no answer. I suppose they are not so frightened as the Pasha. Wilfrid suggests ditches being dug across the ends of the streets, or, still better, that negotiations be entered into at once with Faris, who is only fifty or sixty miles off. It appears that it was not his men who took the Buggára sheep, but people from the south under Míjuel, one of Ferhán's sons, who are on bad terms with Faris; and Mr. S—— thinks that Faris might be induced to help the government against his nephew, if properly applied to.

January 22d.—Another story of marauders. Míjuel, according

to report, came yesterday and claimed tribute from some tents close to Deyr. Each tent had to give a carpet, a sheep, or a sack of barley. The Pasha is more than ever frightened and perplexed. Wilfrid suggests that we should go on a mission to Faris; but this Húseyn will not hear of, without first sending a messenger. He sent for Beder Aga, the captain of the zaptiehs, and told him, in our presence, to get ready for a long ride, and then wrote a letter to the effect that, "if Faris wished to gain favor in the eyes of the government, now was his time. Deyr was just now without troops; but some were expected, and in the mean time Faris would do well to keep the country quiet; he would be paid for it, and would earn the Pasha's gratitude." A postscript was added, so Húseyn assured us, informing Faris of our desire to make his acquaintance and intention of paying him a visit.

Beder Aga took the letter, and then sat down, as if awaiting orders. "You understand," Húseyn said, "you are to take it to Faris." "Yes, Effendi." "And you are to go at once." "Yes, Effendi." "Now, directly." "Yes, Effendi." "Then why don't you go?"—Beder Aga made no answer, but held out his right hand, moving the thumb and fingers suggestively, as if counting money. The Pasha was silent. "How am I to go?" says Beder Aga. "Why, on horseback, to be sure," says His Excellency. "And my wife and children, are they to go too?" "Of course not." "They *must* have something to eat, then. Give me a month's pay of my arrears, and a month for each of my men." Húseyn seemed embarrassed. "Nonsense!" he said, "what do you want with so much? Take a week's pay." The captain saluted, and went out in silence.

Wilfrid has been shooting to-day on a small island, and came home with a dozen francolins. He saw several boars.

January 23d.—I have just had a wonderful escape. We were all riding quietly down the high-street of Deyr this morning, with two zaptiehs following; when, without the slightest warning, and in view of every one, I disappeared, mare and all, into the ground. It was like the stories of people being swallowed up in earth-

quakes. I had no time to think or to call out. Down we went, with the soil from the street above pattering on my head, as it seemed to me, into the bowels of the earth. It was a well which Omar Pasha, in his modern improvement of widening the street, had lightly bridged over with planks, and left, a pitfall for the unwary. The planks had rotted away, and we fell through. Fortunately the well was not deep, and the recent rains had filled it with mud. With my arms stretched up, I could just reach the hands which were stretched down to me from above, and was out in an instant. With the mare it was a more difficult matter. Poor beast, she was wedged so tight that she could not even struggle, and had to wait there an hour or more before she could be dug out. A sloping way was made to the bottom of the well, and then ropes were passed round her, and she was dragged up the incline by main force. When untied, she jumped to her feet and neighed, having till then made no attempt at struggling. A human being could not have shown greater sense. In the midst of our anxieties, the good Pasha arrived, shaking his head ruefully with an expression of being dreadfully shocked at such an accident having occurred under his jurisdiction. "*Wah, wah, wah!*" he repeated, holding up his hands; "Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!"

The Pasha's house is certainly very well ordered. He has a capital butler and a capital cook, and all his other servants are attentive and polite. The stable is liberally provided with all that horses can want, and our mares are getting fat and frisky. We keep them out-of-doors, in spite of the cold weather, snow, and rain, much to the horror of the head-groom; but they certainly do better so, when well clothed, and ours have three blankets, the outer one reaching to the heels. In travelling, it does not do to let beasts sleep out-of-doors one night and in the next. The open air is always best for them; but they ought, except in very hot weather, to be thickly clothed. Want of sleep at night makes horses thin sooner than want of food. Besides the blankets, our mares have coats of their own a good inch long, and we never clean or dress them in any way. They look rough, but they keep in health.

January 24th.—Beder Aga has not returned, if he ever went, nor has the Pasha alluded in any way to his message to Faris. I think the whole thing was, perhaps, a mystification, to turn our attention from Jedáan and the Ánazeh; or he may have repented when he saw that we took the proposal seriously. Now he only talks of our going on to Bagdad, and even Mr. S—— thinks this will be best. He cannot himself go farther with us, as his consular district ends here. It seems an "impotent conclusion" to our vast ambitions; but we console ourselves, as the French did after the battle of Worth. "*Nous reculons pour mieux sauter.*" The Pasha thinks of nothing but the possible sack of Deyr, and his own forlorn position far away from house and home. He has none of his family with him here, and is a true Aleppine in his horror of the desert and fear of danger. "Why, why did I leave my home?" is the burden of his complaint. "What false ambition lured me, what love of the name of Pasha? Woe worth the day, woe worth the hour when I turned my face from Aleppo, and came out to die in this wilderness." We know not how to comfort him, our hearts being all in the desert, and not at all in the town. He talks of packing up and going, if not speedily relieved from anxiety by the arrival of troops. We and our affairs are quite forgotten in this deeper grief.

January 25th.—A caravan, escorted by some soldiers, has arrived from Aleppo. It will go on to-morrow for Bagdad, and we, in despair of anything better, have agreed to travel with it. We cannot stay all the winter at Deyr—it is too terribly dull; and we may as well occupy the time, between this and the return of the Ánazeh northward, in seeing the lower portion of the river, and the city of the Caliphs. Mr. S—— will at the same time return to Aleppo, promising to meet us here again the first week in March, and this time really take us to Jedáan. We are to try in the mean while to get to our friends, the Shammar, through Colonel Nixon's help at Bagdad. The Pasha there *must* have troops to send with us, if he likes to do so. It seems a roundabout way to go to work through Bagdad, which is three hundred miles away from the direction we

wish to take; but I have some confidence that, when thrown entirely on our own resources, we shall manage better than now when we are under tutelage. Wilfrid, of course, has hitherto left all arrangements to the consul, who knows the country, which he does not; but when shifting for ourselves, we have never yet been prevented from going where we had a mind to. So we hope for the best.

Now that it is settled we are to go to Bagdad, the Pasha is most energetic in hastening our preparations of departure. We have hired two mules for the baggage and a pony for Hánna, paying a thousand piastres (eight pounds) for the whole journey, half in advance. We would gladly buy beasts instead of hiring, and be independent; but we promise ourselves that luxury at Bagdad. There we shall get camels, and go where we like and do what we like. The great thing now is to escape from Deyr, where we feel as in a prison.

A colonel of regulars, with twenty men, mounted on mules, has arrived from Tudmor to re-enforce the garrison here; so Húseyn Pasha is happier again. He will also be able to send three or four men with the caravan, which starts to-morrow morning. We are leaving our heavier luggage here, many of the things required for our expedition to the Jebel Shammar being now unnecessary. Mr. S——'s tent, too, will stop here, and our own things go into two large bags we had made in England for the purpose—just a mule load—the tents and provisions on the second mule, and Hánna on the pony. He (Hánna) is very doleful and out of heart at the prospect of going on with us alone, and he has an attack of fever; but we must get on as we can. Súliman begs to be taken on; and, having forgiven him, we have not been able to refuse. I fear he is a bad man; but at least we know him.

January 26th.—A false start. The katterjis, instead of coming at eight o'clock, came at twelve, and then only brought one mule. Wilfrid insisted upon the other two animals being produced, and had the baggage taken down into the yard. A deputation from the caravan waited on us, begging us to put off going till to-mor-

row; but Wilfrid had the luggage loaded, and then only yielded to the entreaties of our amiable host. Indeed it was too late to start at two o'clock now, in the winter; but, without some show of determination, one might be put off from day to day for a week, before getting away. This has occupied us the whole day, and now I am too busy to write more. I feel as if I should never wish to see Deyr again. Yet we are to be here again in six weeks—"Inshalláh!"

MIEDDIN AND LEANING MOSQUE.

CHAPTER IX.

"While you and I within our cots
Are comfortably lying,
My eye! what tiles and chimney-pots
About their heads are flying!"
SEA SONG.

A fresh Start.—We join a Caravan bound for Bagdad.—The Son of a Horse.—Turkish Ladies on a Journey.—How to tether a fidgety Horse.—Salahíyeh.—An Encampment of Agheyl.—The Mudír of Ábu-Kamál's.—Wolves at Night.—Wild-boars and others.—The Boatswain's Log.—Palm Groves.—We arrive at Ána.

January 27th.—We have left Deyr, and are once more comfortably housed, thank God! under our own tent-roof. It has, all the same, been rather a trying day, though the sun was out, and we had our faces to the south. Mr. S—— has left us, and we are at last thrown upon our own resources. We feel now for the first time the miserable deficiency of our Arabic; and already Súliman, relieved from the control of consular authority, shocks us by the lightness with which he bears his disgrace. He has assumed a patronizing, half-contemptuous tone, which makes us look forward to a long journey in his company with anything but pleasure. Even Hánna, the precious Hánna, looks very green and gloomy, complaining of a swimming in his head, the effect of twenty grains of quinine he took this morning. At any moment, we are afraid, he may break down.

The caravan with which we are travelling consists of some thirty mules and horses laden with square bales of cotton goods, probably from Manchester, and half a score of kátterjis dressed in gay Syrian tunics of red and gold, partly on foot, partly mounted on diminutive asses, which they use as a sort of extra set of legs, their own touching the ground as well, the whole led by a jaunty pony

with bells on his neck, whose evidently superior breeding carries him in front under a load which might crush two animals of meaner spirit. We could see at once by his face that he was born for better things, and the poor little beast seems to feel it too; for every time we pass the caravan he makes prodigious efforts to join us, moving thereby the wrath of his masters, who decline to have the caravan put out of its pace for any one's whim. "A pretty beast," we remarked, the first time we went by. "Praised be God!" answered the man, completing our sentence, which, to conciliate ill-luck, should by rights have ended so, "his father was a horse." "Ibn hosán" (the son of a horse) is a term used when the dam is less than thorough-bred, and though complimentary enough to a baggage-pony, is an insulting expression when used about an animal of more pretension. A little apart from the rest of the caravan, and forming a conspicuous feature, there is a tall mule carrying an immense pair of hooded panniers, led by a countryman in breeches open at the knee, gaiters, a red sash, a jacket, and a handkerchief twisted round his head, who might very well pass in Andalusia for a native arriero with his hat off, for the costume is the same. He would be called there a "hombre de confianza," for he is in charge of two Turkish ladies, who sit in the panniers. They are the wife and mother-in-law of a major of regulars at Bagdad, and have undertaken this very serious journey, I am sure, without the least suspicion of what they were doing; for it is impossible to suppose that any amount of devotion to the major could have faced the thought of a four weeks' journey, penned up in this way like fowls in a coop, and looking out from a pannier, lurching all day long like a ship at sea, on a world darkened by a thick cotton veil. Or why do people say that there are no real domestic ties among Mohammedans?

There are four zaptiehs with the caravan besides Súliman; and one of them, Mahmoud, being an Aleppine, has made friends with Hánna. He seems a good sort of man, and has helped us with our tents and mares. We are encamped about half a mile from the village of Miéddin, in a sort of peninsula where there is grass,

and where, from its position, we are not likely to have any attempt made to steal our mares. The caravan and Súliman and the rest of the zaptiehs, all but Mahmoud, are gone to spend the night in the village, and we are here at last in peace and quietness, the Mudír of the village with his friends, who came out to pay their respects, having been politely got rid of. The sky is clear, the night starlit, and we can plainly see Miéddin, with its leaning minaret. Our mares are tethered close to us, with their noses inside the tent, being prevented from coming inside altogether by heel ropes. They are enjoying a huge feed of corn, after having picked up all the grass they could get for a couple of hours. We have only got Hagar and Tamarisk (my new pony) with us, the rest having gone back to Aleppo with Mr. S——. Mahmoud, the zaptieh, rides a little gray colt not two years old, which is very playful and frisky, and manages to break away from its tether every five minutes. Tamarisk, too, is very fidgety.

January 28th.—A cold and frosty morning. Súliman, though he had spoken very wisely overnight about the advantages of early rising, did not appear till eight o'clock, and even then the kátterjis had to be waited for. As we were at last riding away, the Mudír joined us with as much of a cavalcade as he could get together to do us honor. There was the usual fantasia, in which we especially distinguished a bay mare, an Abeyeh Sheraák, they told us. It is curious that all the best gallopers are bays.

A very pretty filly was brought to us, by-the-way, yesterday, a "mahwardi," or rose-colored "Kehîleh." She was so handsome that we entered into negotiations with the owner, who was probably an Aghedáat or Buggára. He could not, however, tell us anything more of her breeding than that she was "Kehîleh," without any additional name, which is as much as to admit that she is not "hadúda;"* so we did not pursue the matter further. This is a good instance of a fact we have already once or twice tested, namely, that Arabs, except in the towns, will not tell a falsehood

* Hadúd, or fit to breed from.

about their horses' breeding. There was nothing but *principle* in this case to restrain the man from lying, for there were no lookers-on; and by his honesty he lost a good price for a beast he was anxious to sell. This is more remarkable, as in all other matters truth is the exception, not the rule, among the Arabs.*

To-day's march was through a cultivated district, and consequently uninteresting, except from the large flocks of sand-grouse† we came across from time to time. These birds are too well-known to need description, and the variety we here find is not different from some that we have seen in Egypt and elsewhere. Wilfrid got a family shot from his mare, as a large pack rose in front of him, and brought down five. Though pretty birds, they are poor eating. At about mid-day we came to a large lagoon covered with wild-fowl, but there was no cover near it, and no chance of shooting. We wasted so much time here that the caravan passed us, and before we caught it up it had come to a halt at some Aghedáat tents, in the middle of a barley-field.

This camp had probably been there all the winter, and was disgustingly dirty, and full of noisy dogs; so, to the grief of our followers, zaptiehs, kátterjis, and even Hánna, we insisted upon proceeding. In vain Súliman, with a mixture of impertinence and entreaty, assured us that there was neither grass nor water on the road before us, and that, horror of horrors, we should have to sleep in the *berríye* (desert). We told him to mind his own business, and to come on or not as he pleased. He followed us sulkily. Before long we came to a very nice place just under the cliff, with plenty of good grass, bushes for firewood, and a little pond where there were ducks and teal. Here we have stopped; and a very pleasant place it is, far from all sounds of man and beast. Already Hánna has got a capital fire lighted, and the sand-grouse

* Compare practice in Great Britain and elsewhere, and see chapter on horses.

† Sand-grouse. *Gutta.* Kata, "a partridge-like bird," according to Palgrave. Compare Marco Polo's account of birds: "Grands comme des perdrix, ont les pattes faites comme les perroquets, la queue comme les hirondelles, et volent moult bien."

and pigeons cooking. The two zaptiehs are in good-humor again, as I hear them laughing and talking incessantly. But for the red sunset, which threatens rain, we should have not a care in the world beyond that of digesting Hánna's immense dinner.

January 29th.—Tamarisk was a great trouble to us all night, stamping and pawing, and breaking away in spite of all her feet being hobbled. This was perhaps on account of the jackals, wolves, and hyenas, which cried and howled round us so as to frighten Mahmoud into keeping up a fire. He remarked very ruefully, in the morning, that it was a "terrible thing to sleep in the desert among the wolves." I confess I like them better than I do the Arab dogs and fowls, and the incessant talking of the men. My mare is certainly a very tiresome creature, and, in spite of her good looks, I cannot get fond of her. She is full of "tricks and subterfuges," and seems to have a fixed determination to go back to Deyr. This may account for the story we heard of her when we bought her. She was stolen about six months before, and was away nearly two months, but appeared one evening at the ferry opposite Deyr, and insisted upon being taken across. She had a Bedouin pad on her back, and had no doubt been among the Shammar, but had given them the slip, as she is trying to do with us now. Though tied and fettered hand and foot, she manages repeatedly to draw her peg; but Wilfrid has hit upon a plan which seems to be effective. It is to shackle the forefeet, and then pass the head-rope loosely through the fetter before tying it to the peg. This gives her nothing fixed to pull against, and she seems much disconcerted.

Toward sunrise a bitter wind rose and blew into the tent, freezing us to the bone as we were packing; nor could we get off till the kátterjis came, for they had gone back to the caravan to spend the night. This is one of the miseries of travelling with hired animals, but they shall not be let out of sight again. We had two or three hours to-day of desert, and passed the ruins of Salahíyeh, a town of the same date, and much the same size as Rakka. It has a fine gate in the middle of the west front, called the "Bab esh

Sham," the Syrian Gate. Salahíyeh was probably the town where the Damascus road formerly branched off from the Euphrates, after following the river westward from Ána. All is deserted now. On returning to the valley we found a large plain of green barley before us, interspersed with thorn-bushes, which the Arabs had not thought it necessary to clear away. Across this we went for a mile or so without following any track. Indeed, the path we have so long pursued has now disappeared, except in places where there is a narrow passage between rocks, or some other natural feature, which compels the few travellers to tread in each other's footsteps. In many places, too, the track has been broken into by the river, and an incautious person going along it in the dark might very well be led, before he knew what he was doing, over the bank, which is very abrupt, and into the river. This portion of the valley is much the most thickly inhabited and the best cultivated that we have seen yet. After the barley-fields we found ourselves in a sort of open wood of large tamarisks, each tree growing on a separate mound of sand. It is difficult to know whether the mound causes the tree, or the tree the mound. We found some Agheyl encamped here with their camels, and stopped to drink coffee with them, which, as usual, they hospitably offered. They were on their way from Bagdad to Aleppo.

The Agheyl are a peculiar race (perhaps I should say tribe), for they are pure Arabs, though not "noble," whose head-quarters is Bagdad. They never seem to stay much at home, but travel backward and forward on the great caravan roads. They go very slowly, so as not to tire their camels, eight or ten miles a day, and carry goods "à très petite vitesse" between the towns. They have the reputation of immaculate honesty, and seem good friends with everybody, townsman, Turk, and Bedouin. They do not carry tents, but pile their camel-loads in a circle at night and sleep inside. They are cheerful, good-natured people, and very hospitable. They leave their women and children at home at Bagdad, and only the men travel.

We passed through the wood till the sun was getting low, and

still there was no sign of Ábu-Kamál, where we were to pass the night. If the katterjis had been with us, we should have stopped and camped where we were, but now that the track had ended we did not care to risk missing them altogether by waiting for them to come up; so after Wilfrid had climbed to the top of a tell or tall mound, where there were four graves, and which overlooked a large tract of country, and seen nothing of the caravan, we agreed to gallop on and get into the fort before dark. Wilfrid had caught sight of it about three miles off in front of us. This we did, and had a delightful gallop, Tamarisk keeping up with Hagar much better than I had expected. The zaptiehs were soon left behind, and in about a quarter of an hour we found ourselves at the fort of Ábu-Kamál. The man in charge, who has the rank of Mudír, received us with much amiability, and immediately had a lamb caught for us and slain. He took us on to the roof, and tried to make us come inside a little pepper-pot of a turret, where he lived, and in which a huge fire had been lit. We preferred stopping outside and lying down on the roof, where we were soon sound asleep, for we have had a very long march to-day. When we woke, it was nearly dark, and the moon and stars were out. Hánna had arrived with some rugs, and his cooking apparatus, which never leaves him. There is no wind, and we have got a candle on the terrace, so that I can write; and now dinner is ready—three dishes, all made of the same lamb, while our host, who will not sit down, stands shivering by to wait on us. The night looks frosty, but the kátterjis are announced, so we shall have our beds, and not be obliged to take refuge in the turret.

January 30th.—These forts on the Euphrates all consist of a square court-yard enclosed by a mud wall twelve feet high, and without other opening to the outer world than a single gate-way. Inside are low rooms along three sides, used by the zaptiehs or by travellers, the flat tops of which make a terrace, where there is generally an upper chamber like a box, in which the head man lives. From this he looks down on all the country round, and spends his time watching for caravans which do not come. A dull

life. Our host informs us that, after all, the Ánazeh are still in his neighborhood, only two days off! So we have been befooled by the Pasha. He tells us, too, that Jedáan passed by here quite lately, with one hundred and fifty horsemen, coming back from across the river, where he had been on a camel-lifting raid against the Shammar. It is very provoking, and too late now to change our plans.

Our road to-day was through a pleasant country, no more cultivation or inhabitants of any kind except birds and beasts—great ponds surrounded with brushwood, where Wilfrid got some shooting. One drive which I made on Tamarisk was especially successful, producing five ducks of different sorts. This is much the nicest part of the whole river, and would be a capital place to make one's head-quarters for a shooting excursion, as there are pools and marshes with plenty of geese, ducks, snipes, and other aquatic birds, while the big tamarisk-woods are full of francolins, woodcocks, and wild-boars. Wilfrid saw several of these, and had a snap shot at a wolf, who went away with a broken leg.

It is a great comfort to have got rid of the caravan, which stayed behind somewhere yesterday. We are now encamped at a place called Gáyim, where there is a little stream of running water (the first we have crossed), and a nice open plateau of grass above it, with a fine view of the river and of the tamarisk-wood below. There is another guard-house at a little distance, to which we have sent for corn. The guard-houses on this side of Deyr are most of them still garrisoned, in spite of the war—that is to say, they contain two or three zaptiehs each, and it is considered prudent to encamp more or less in their neighborhood, as there are ghazús (marauding parties) about, and Jedáan is close by. The caravan itself would not, I am sure, for any consideration, spend the night outside their walls. * * *

I was rejoicing in the solitude and beauty of the place, when, lo and behold! an immense caravan with dates from Ána, which, finding us encamped here under the protection of Súliman, has settled itself down beside us, and intends passing the night.

There are hardly any camels in this party, but about a hundred donkeys, which bray incessantly, almost drowning their masters' voices, and that is saying a great deal. The blessings of wood, water, and grass are dearly purchased at the expense of a night of noise and watchfulness, for we shall have now to sleep with one eye open and fixed on our mares, for fear they should be stolen. The zaptiehs are not of the slightest use as guards, for they sing one half of the night, and then sleep soundly the other half. However, we must make the best of it, and Hánna has made us a capital dinner of teal soup, búrghul with little bits of meat in it from yesterday's lamb, and a fowl with fried onions. I hear the howling of jackals and wolves; and doubtless the huge fires of the caravan do much to keep away wild beasts. Mahmoud, like all Aleppines, is very timorous about these, and declares that the mares see them at night whenever they look out into the dark. I now have to alter the stuffing of my saddle, which is not quite right, so I leave off.

January 31st.—The donkey caravan was off this morning before we were, and its place was immediately occupied by hundreds of magpies hopping about and looking for scraps.

We have got into a new sort of country. The cliffs on the right bank of the river have entirely disappeared, and low downs intersected with ravines have taken their place, while on the opposite bank there is a fine headland marking the corner where the river, after a good many miles of nearly southerly course, takes a general direction eastward. The valley has narrowed considerably, and is not, I suppose, more than a mile across, while the tamarisk-woods have disappeared, they tell us, for good. We have also crossed to-day and yesterday a number of wadys leading to the river, the most remarkable being the Wady Ali. None of these had any water in them, in spite of the rainy winter we are having, and it is difficult to understand under what circumstances they can ever be rivers, though the water-marks in their beds attest that they must sometimes be full. It is somewhere near this bend of the river that Colonel Chesney lost one of his steamers in a hurri-

cane when he was surveying the Euphrates. There is a curious entry about it still preserved among the consular archives at Aleppo. It is the account of the storm given by the English mate of the surviving steamer, who was in charge when the accident happened. His crew was an Arab one, picked up, I believe, at Ána. This is all I remember of it: "The windy and watery elements raged tremenduous; prayers and tears was had recourse to, but, being of no avail, I up anchor and round the corner."

In the afternoon, after having again crossed a bit of desert to cut off an angle where we made a successful grouse drive, we came upon a ruined mill built out into the river. At first we could not make out what it was, as the wheels had long ago disappeared. It is probably of the Saracenic period, or even later, the upper part seeming to be the most modern. It must have been used for raising water to irrigate the valley, and as I see many mills marked on the map, this is probably the first of several. It is strange that one should find none in the upper part of the valley, where the soil seems so much more capable of being cultivated than here; but perhaps they depended there on rain for their crops. There is no cultivation anywhere about here now, or any inhabitants. We cannot make out many of the places marked by Colonel Chesney on his map. Either he put them down wrongly, or the names have changed within the last forty years.

February 1st.—A wearisome day. The desert now comes quite down to the river on both sides, without any intervening space of green. We were out of sight of it most of the day, stumbling along over a most disagreeably stony tract, both the mares tired. Mahmoud's colt has quite got over his disposition to romp, and has now to be led by the bridle, as have most of the zaptiehs' horses. It was a great relief at last to catch sight of a group of palm-trees—the first we have seen—peeping over the horizon, and growing, as presently appeared, out of the river-bed, which is here very narrow, and sharply cut through the rocky desert. These were the outposts of the oasis of Ána. Two hours more brought

us to the edge, whence we looked down upon the river, and there lay Ána, a comforting sight indeed to weary eyes. As the view was quite unlike anything we have hitherto seen on our journey, I must try and describe it.

The Euphrates, as I have said, is very narrow here, having cut itself a way through a low line of limestone hills which crosses its course at right angles, and so has formed a deep, winding gorge a good many miles in length. Along the bottom of this cleft the river runs in a series of rapids, and it is fringed on either side with palms. The town, which is a very ancient one, consists of a single long street of low mud houses with flat roofs, each having its little space of garden, but connected together by a continuous wall, with occasional side-alleys to the river. It is about six miles long, they say (longer than Brighton), but we have only come through part of it as yet. Opposite the point where we first came upon the town there is a fine reach of water sweeping round a bold promontory, on which a castle has in late years been built. Ána is in the Pashalik of Bagdad, and this they tell us is one of a series of castles made by Midhat Pasha's orders to protect the Euphrates road. Though modern, it is not in bad taste. It figures prominently in a sketch I made, but I found it impossible to represent fairly the depth of the gorge and the extreme beauty of the dark-green palm groves against the red face of the rocks. To those who have seen Egypt, the character of the scene will be familiar.

After a seemingly interminable ride along the main street of the town, where the inhabitants had assembled in groups to see us pass, politely returning our salutations, we came at last to an open space fronting the river, where we found a caravan already encamped. Here it was proposed that we should stop; and though we would rather have had the place to ourselves, we had nothing better to suggest, and so have pitched our tents under a group of palms.

The river is very fine here, and the buildings picturesque. Moreover, we are well sheltered from the wind, and though there is no grass for the mares, we have promise of straw and corn in

abundance. The Kaimakam, of course, came to pay his respects to us, and a number of other bores not easily got rid of; but, thank goodness, they are gone now, and we can eat our dinners peaceably; and, as there is no fear of our mares being stolen here, we shall get a good night's rest, of which we are sorely in need.

CHAPTER X.

A Bedouin Foray.—We converse with a Ghost.—Engagement of Zénil Aga.—We resolve to Depart.—The Kaimakam accompanies us.—Entertained by Sotámm.—A Bedouin Meal.—News from Home.

February 2d.—To-day has been one of blessed idleness. First there was a grand inspection of the mares' backs, and the saddles which have rubbed them. Hagar is looking rather wretched with a wrung wither, but I am in hopes that by shifting and stuffing of the saddle I may have made things right for her. It has, fortunately, been a fine day, and the sun has been almost hot, which the mares enjoy, rolling on the sand to their hearts' content. While I arranged the saddle, Wilfrid took a walk on the hill with a young zaptieh, a native of the place, who has been told off to us as guard while we are here. They came back at twelve with two brace of partridges, little birds of a pale dove-color, like that of the rocks among which they live. They have yellow legs and orange bills, and orange eyes with black pupils. The hills were quite bare and desolate. As he was coming back, he met a number of people running toward the top of an eminence, who informed him that a party of Ánazeh had come down and were carrying off some sheep. It is curious how little communication there seems to be between the Valley and the Desert. Except on the occasion of a foray of this sort, nothing seems to be known or heard of the Bedouins outside by those who live on the banks of the river. Perhaps at other times of the year this may be different, but now the *Berríye* seems to be a sort of Tom Tiddler's ground, where nobody goes without fear and trembling. The towns-people talk of the Desert, which is at their elbow, with all the expressions of awe and aversion which ignorant Europeans might have who had never heard of it except as a traveller's tale.

As we were sitting by the river this afternoon, watching the inhabitants coming down to perform their religious ablutions and say their prayers, we were accosted by an ancient mariner, a venerable-looking man, with a long white beard, and the remains of a green turban on his head. He greeted us gravely, but in a rather singular fashion, with the words, "Starboard, port, goddam," and went on to explain that he knew our language, having served in Colonel Chesney's expedition forty years before. He asked with much feeling after the various officers then employed on the survey, and appeared touched at the news that his commander was still alive. He then went down the bank to the river, as we thought, to wash like the others, so that our conversation with him was interrupted, and when we looked for him again he had disappeared. Whether he was the ghost of one of those drowned in the hurricane of 1836, or, as is more likely, had simply swam across the river without our noticing it, I cannot say, but his disappearance struck us as mysterious.

We are rid of Súliman at last, to our great comfort and relief. He came this morning to say he could go no farther with us, and to ask for the present which is usual in return for such services as he had rendered. Wilfrid gave him more than he had any right to expect; but he went away sulky and dissatisfied, and, as it seems, threw the money down in Hánna's tent, using what is called "abusive language." Hánna came in great glee to tell us this, and to ask if he might keep the pieces, but we told him to leave them there. We are to be off to-morrow morning; for, though the mares would perhaps be better for another day's rest, it had better be outside the town. We have been much pestered with visitors, who have come with the best intentions in the world, and the politest invitations to dinners and breakfasts; but we are really too tired to pay them all the attention they deserve. A new sergeant has come in Súliman's place, an Albanian, named Záynil, or Zénil Aga. I hope he may be a less disagreeable jailer.

Sunday, February 3d.—A heavy storm of rain in the night; but our tent is, I am glad to say, water-proof. The kátterjis, of course,

found it an excellent excuse for proposing another day's rest; and the caravan, which had arrived yesterday, sent an earnest protest, in the name of the ladies in the panniers, who were too much fatigued to go on. The roads, they declared, would be impassable, and the baggage was wet through, and too heavy for the mules. All just and sufficient reasons, but not ones we could admit. Lastly, Zénil, our new chief of the staff, in polite but decided terms, expressed his opinion that the journey should be delayed. To which we only replied by pulling the tents down and ordering the mules to be loaded. Fortune, thus encouraged, favored us, for the rain, which had been falling heavily till then, suddenly ceased, and in half an hour more everything was ready, and we started. I am bound to say that, from the moment the matter was settled, everybody was quite cheerful, and ready to do his work. Indeed, sulkiness is not common among the Arabs. A soft word with them, or, still better, a merry one, quickly turns away wrath; and the old saying of people not being made of sugar, which we translated into Arabic, had full effect as an original and appropriate witticism. They laughed, and opposition was at an end.

We had not yet started when the Kaimakam joined us, and most politely rode in our company till we were outside the town, the best part of a Sabbath-day's journey, as it took us nearly two hours. The long street was muddy from the rain, and the hog-backed bridges over the watercourses, which we had to cross continually, were slippery enough to justify the kátterjis in their assurance of danger. But, once outside, the ground was hard enough, and the caravan, which had started because we insisted on going, had nothing more to complain of. The Kaimakam left us at the last house in the town, after having sent to its owner for a breakfast of dates, bread, and milk, which we set down on a cloak and ate. Then, with strict injunctions that we should all keep together, for fear of the Ánazeh, who last night had driven off ten cows from this very place, he allowed us to proceed. Lastly, to complete our triumph, the sun came out, and we had a very pleasant ride, cantering on, and stopping alternately, as opportunity offered, to give

our mares a bite of grass here and there while the rest of the party came up.

Zénil has excellent manners, and seems anxious to be on good terms with us, giving us information about the tribes and places we are likely to pass, such as Súliman was too stupid or too sulky to offer. We were tired of the monotonous routine of travelling we have hitherto submitted to, and of depending for our society on the zaptiehs, and stopping each night in the neighborhood of their guard-houses. We wished to see something new; so when we came at about three o'clock within sight of some tents, we decided on going to them, and making acquaintance with their owners. We had been all day on the high ground, and were still some miles from the river, and this is the first camp we have come to fairly out in the desert. Zénil made no objection, and led the way. It has been an interesting evening, and we perceive that it was a great misfortune to us to have travelled so long with Súliman, who was brutal and overbearing with the Arabs, and prevented our ever making friends with them. Zénil, on the contrary, is pleasant in his manners to all alike.

Our new friends are of the Jerîfa, an old-fashioned pastoral tribe, one of those which have lived on here since the days of Job—peaceful, unpretending people, and tributary, of late years, to the Shammar. They usually live in Mesopotamia, and have only crossed the river for the sake of better pasture. I should think they must run considerable risk here of being plundered by the bands of Ánazeh we have heard of lately; but as they have no camels, and only sheep and cows and a few second-rate mares, perhaps the Ánazeh do not care to molest them.

Our host, Sotámm, the chief man of this section of the tribe, is a great uncouth creature, with no pretension whatever to distinction (indeed, the Jerîfa are evidently a very low tribe) in looks or in manners, but withal a transparently honest man. He received us so boorishly that at first we thought we were not welcome; but it soon turned out that this was mere shyness, and the effect of the overwhelming honor which he felt was being done him. I suppose

he has never entertained so much as a merchant from Bagdad in his life; and a small country squire in Sussex, receiving an unexpected visit from the Pope or the Empress of the French, could hardly display more sense of the solemnity of the occasion than this poor man did in being host to a couple of Franjis. For at least ten minutes he was unable to say a word except to his sons or others about him, to whom he gave orders, in a loud and angry-sounding voice, to have sheep slain and firewood brought; and to his women, who were behind a screen, to make bread for dinner, and to bring dates and butter instantly in a lordly dish. Then, without looking at us or answering any of our remarks, he sat down and began pounding coffee as if his life depended on the violence of the thumping with which he thumped it. In the mean while we had taken our seats without ceremony on a carpet, which had been hastily spread beyond the fire in the farthest corner of the tent, and were soon engaged in conversation with friends and neighbors, who had flocked in from all sides in anticipation of the feast, and who, having none of the responsibility of entertaining us, were communicative enough and even curious. One young man was so familiar in his remarks that he had to be silenced by the rest. Presently milk was brought, and dates, with fresh butter rather nastily plastered into the dish by the very evident thumbs of the women. Of this we partook, dipping the dates, as the custom is, into the butter. In the mean while the coffee-pounding was finished; and, the fire having been made up with a fagot of wild lavender smelling most sweetly, water was boiled in a huge coffee-pot, and the coffee finally made in another, all this with the greatest possible solemnity by Sotámm himself. The coffee turned out to be excellent, but too strong to drink more of than the few spoonfuls poured out to each guest in diminutive china cups. Every one present was treated to a portion, and then the pot was brought round to us again, and so on till the last drop was finished.

After this, Sotámm, feeling that he had done his duty, joined in the talk, which was principally kept up by Zénil; for with our stock of Arabic it is not easy to pursue the few topics of conversation far.

Our host, it presently appeared, had a mare he was proud of, or rather anxious to sell, so we all got up and went outside, before it was quite dark, to look at her. The honest man was very *naïf* in this, perhaps, his first attempt at horse-dealing, praising his mare beyond any possible merits she could possess, and in a loud whisper constituting Zénil his vakíl (agent) for the price. At last she came—a little clumsy chestnut, with an ugly head and defective hoofs, besides the disfigurement of an immense firing operation on her flank. We had, out of politeness, to admire, and were fortunate enough to be able to cover our retreat from a purchase with the excuse of her want of size. This is an unanswerable argument, and Sotámm accepted it good-humoredly, though he was evidently disappointed. He then sent for a mare of his neighbor's, a Hádbeh, but no better specimen. We were afraid at first that our refusals to buy might diminish the cordiality of our reception, but this was not at all the case; and, after allowing us to retire for awhile to our own tent, our host came to announce that dinner was ready.

This is the first really Bedouin meal we have made, and abominably bad it was. The sheep seemed to have been cut up with a hatchet quite independently of its anatomical construction, bones, meat, and all mangled and messed together, so that it was impossible to get at a clean-looking piece free from gristle or splinters. These had been thrown into a pot, and boiled without seasoning or other ceremony, and then turned out into a great round wooden dish a yard in diameter. Butter had next been plastered round the mass, and flat, half-baked loaves of dough set to garnish the edge of the plate, all damp and clammy, and half sopped in the broth. In the middle lay the great fat tail of the sheep, a huge lump of tallow, with bits of liver and other nastiness near it. Though very hungry, neither Wilfrid nor I were able to make much progress with such a meal, especially as, being eaten by the fitful light of the fire only, it was impossible to pick and choose our pieces. The darkness, however, was welcome in one way, for it concealed our failure from Sotámm, who stood by watching jeal-

ously lest we should prematurely cease eating. He could not guess that our hands dipped into the dish returned empty to our mouths—a "barmecide" meal, which did not last long, for two or three minutes seem to be the time allowed for each set of eaters. Then the dish was passed on to Zénil, Mahmoud, Hánna, and the kátterjis, who, as strangers, came next, and then, some pieces having been set aside for the host, the remainder was put down to be scrambled for by the rest of the company, Sotámm's friends and relations. A plateful of graves would not have disappeared sooner in a kennel of hounds than this did among the hungry Jerîfa. Meanwhile Sotámm, with his sleeves turned up, set to on his own portion, wiping his dripping fingers from time to time playfully on the heads of his children, among whom he occasionally distributed a morsel. The feast concluded with our all having some milk out of a wooden bowl, and the guests then separated without further ceremony.

We are now, I am glad to say, in our own tent, where Hánna is furtively preparing a more possible meal out of the odds and ends of yesterday's dinner. We are alone, but not by any means at peace, for the camp is just now like an English country town on market-days, sheep baaing, lambs bleating, and cows lowing, while unseen animals wander round, stumbling every instant over the tent-ropes. Our outlandish tent puzzles them. But they are so tame there is no driving them away, and every now and then a mare or colt, with iron shackles clanking on its legs, comes up to make our mares' acquaintance. There seems little prospect of sleep.

February 4th.—Long before sunrise the Arabs were up, and the sheep and cows driven off to pasture. The camp is restored to comparative quiet for our own packing up and departure. The Jerîfa here have some of the humped cattle found in India as well as the European sort, so that this part of the river seems to mark the line of demarcation between the two breeds. The sheep all have the heavy tails of the Syrian breed, and the goats are much what they are in Italy and Spain.

Sotámm brought us milk and butter for breakfast, and we were rather curious to see whether all this hospitality was to be genuine, or whether he would expect a return to be made for it out of our pockets. But such doubts did him wrong. His only request, as we went away, was that we should come again; and we, as we wished him good-bye, felt really touched by his kindness, not knowing how to acknowledge it except by inviting him, with his flocks and herds, to spend the summer with us in England, a form of compliment he appreciated at more than its worth. We promised, if ever we came that way again, we would not pass his tent without stopping, and, mounting our mares amidst a general shower of good wishes, we rode away. We have never met with more genuine hospitality on any of our travels than this. Hitherto our experience of this Arab virtue has been limited to our purchasing the sheep, and our entertainer's inviting himself to eat it with us. Here the feast was all his.

The river lately has been very much less interesting than it was higher up. There are now no tamarisk-woods, and very few of those pretty spots we used to find higher up for encamping. The road goes for the most part over desert, and a desert of a very disagreeable, stony sort, constantly intersected by ravines. The mares, however, are quite fresh again, and, after a canter we had in the morning, refused for all the rest of the day to settle down into a steady walk. We have halted opposite the village of Hadíseh, in a walled garden enclosing some fruit-trees, and plenty of grass for the horses. There are heavy clouds about, and a little rain has fallen. Hadíseh is built on an island, and is picturesque enough, with palm-groves and a minaret. There is no bridge to it, and people cross the river swimming on inflated skins, just like the figures on the bass-reliefs found at Nineveh.

Hánna has had a fall from his pony, and has bruised his face, and it makes him very doleful; but the accident has, I am glad to say, distracted his thoughts from a pain in the side, of which he has been complaining. I have been afraid more than once lately of his breaking down. What does him most good seems to be put-

ting on mustard plasters; but he is very careless of getting chilled afterward, and I fear there is something serious the matter with him. I wish the weather would get warm.

February 5th.—To-day we passed a large pool of warm water in a wady close to the river, and flowing into it. It was full of fish, and at the point where the warm water met the river we saw several very large ones, jumping like salmon. They may have been ten or twelve pound fish. Later we came to El Úz, an island and village very like Hadíseh, and remarkable as being the town where Job lived so many years ago. It was easy to imagine the place unchanged. Job must have been a town Arab, as his house is spoken of, but he probably kept flocks and herds over in the Jezíreh (Mesopotamia), and perhaps spent part of the spring with them in tents, as Arabs do; while the Sabeans who plundered him may very well have been a ghazú, such as we have just had news of. Zénil informs us that fifteen hundred sheep were driven off a few days since from the neighborhood of El Úz, and highly disapproves the camp we have chosen to-night, which is a mile or more from the village of Jebbeh. But we are becoming callous to tales of *harámi*, robbers, and even of ghazús. About an hour and a half before we stopped we crossed the Wady Hauran, said, according to Chesney, to come from the Hauran mountains near Damascus. Its bed was dry. There is a three-days'-old moon to-night.

There are some mills here in working order, and some in ruins. Hánna was in despair for wood to make a fire, when the zaptiehs made a raid on one of these, and brought back part of a wheel with them—a true zaptieh proceeding. It was soaking wet, but, with lavender sprigs and the roots of other desert plants, burned well enough for cooking purposes. They brought, too, some desert truffles* they had grubbed up; and Hánna, thus encouraged, has surpassed himself, giving us a dish worthy to be served by M. Henri himself, the fat head-waiter at Bignon's. These truffles are white, and much softer than the black sort. They look like pota-

* Kemeyeh.

toes, and, though not so well flavored, are much more practically useful than the others.

February 6th.—The weather has changed, but instead of growing warmer, it is only colder. Oh what a bitter wind! We left the baggage to follow as it could, and galloped on to warm ourselves, and have done a really long day's journey in a few hours. We met some people on foot, coming from Bagdad, who told us that the English and another Frankish nation had joined the Sultan in his war against the Muscóv, and that thirty ships full of soldiers had been sent to Constantinople. They could not tell us who the other nation was. For about two hours we kept by the river, then alternately along desert and river, till about two o'clock we got down from the stony desert on to a very arid plain, with tracts of black sand partly under water. We noticed, as we went across this, a strange smell, like that one perceives in London when a street is being laid down in asphalt; and Zénil, who was riding with us, explained that it came from some wells of black water in the neighborhood. Presently we came to a small stream of dingy water, the Wady Múrr, and a sort of black morass, altogether the most desolate bit of country I ever beheld, not excluding the bog of Allan. It is quite without vegetation, and the plain is only broken by strange volcanic-looking mounds, like heaps of refuse. One might almost fancy one's self in the back-yard of some huge gasometer. Across this we galloped, as it was capital ground for the horses, and were soon approaching a palm-grove with a small town beyond it, rising in a cone from the plain, and topped with a minaret. This is Hitt, the city, no doubt, of the Hittites, as Jebbeh, where we were yesterday, must have been the city of the Jebusites—a curious old place, and more interesting than any other of the inhabited towns we have seen on the Euphrates. The black water they talk of must come from the bituminous springs I see marked on the map, and seems to be very nearly, if not quite, the same as asphalt. We see splotches of it all about the streets, while the floor of the guard-house where we are is asphalted like a bit of modern pavement. Hitt, of course, stands on the river, and

from the window I can see several enormous barges coated with the same stuff. It is here, most likely, that Noah built his ark, and "pitched it within and without with pitch," for it is ready here at hand. This lower valley of the Euphrates is just the place where a great flood would have come, so that it is foolish, although it appears to be the fashion, to put down the account of it in the Book of Genesis as fabulous. Noah, by the light of these springs at Hitt, is quite an historic personage, and the beasts he saved with him in the ark were, of course, his domestic animals—camels, sheep, donkeys, and perhaps horses.

The extreme cold, and the fact that our baggage is far behind, has driven us into the guard-house, where we are now waiting. It is better than most of these buildings, having some pretension even to being called a khan. There are two little rooms with carpets and cushions, dirty enough, which we shall clear out as soon as we get our own things. We have made no ceremony with the Mudír, but have sent him away. The officials are all alike, and we are tired of them.

February 7th.—A terribly cold night, in the middle of which I got up and went down into the yard, as I heard the mares moving. I found that Tamarisk, who is the tiresomest animal I have ever had to do with, had managed to get her rug off, and was, of course, shivering in the icy wind. Horses are the least intelligent of all living creatures. For the sake of a moment's pleasure in rolling she had, without thinking, exposed herself to a whole night of discomfort, and yet people talk of the wonderful intelligence of the horse.

In the morning the violence of the wind somewhat abated, and there was a hard frost. We started the baggage early, and went round with Zénil to have a look at the bitumen springs. They were half a mile or so from the town, but you had only to follow your nose to find them. The smell is not entirely caused by the gases from the water, but more from the furnaces in which the pitch is boiled after it is collected. The springs are certainly curious. They rise in craters, and the water is perfectly clear at

first; but, as it runs off, a thick black scum collects upon the top, and this is the stuff they skim off and collect. The taste of the water is disgusting, but it is not hot. There seem to have been numbers of these crater-like fountains in the neighborhood formerly, but now most of them are extinct. We only saw one in active work. It bubbled up in a largish volume of water, the fountain being about twelve feet across by three or four deep. The furnaces are set close to it, and are fed partly with tamarisk fagots from up the river, partly with the bitumen itself. A littler farther on we came to a hot spring steaming thickly in the cold morning air. This was of no value, they said, but as medicine, being in taste like the water at Carlsbad, and producing no pitch. Near to it there were salt-pans, but not connected with the spring.

We were glad, after dawdling about looking at these things, to have the excuse of the caravan being in front of us to give our mares a gallop. This they were ready enough for, and we soon joined the rest of the party. We found them crossing a curious piece of rocky ground which seemed to be a sort of old deposit. It was almost as smooth as glass, and lay in a square pattern, like slices of cake stuffed with almonds. A couple of travellers have joined us from Hitt, one mounted on a fast-walking dromedary which moves our envy. After this the level of the plain was broken by a long gravelly ridge, or, as we found on examining it, a couple of ridges running exactly parallel, and certainly not a work of nature. Wilfrid thought they might be an ancient double wall.* There were bushes near them and some grass, and we sat down awhile sheltered from the wind, and ate our dates and bread, and let our mares feed. There is a good deal of cultivation about here; indeed, I suspect we have got down to the great alluvial plain of Irák, which is said to extend across the Tigris, and was once fertile enough. There are numerous small watercourses through the fields, connected with the river for irrigating purposes,

* These, though we did not know it, were the first of the great Babylonian canals whose remains cover Lower Mesopotamia.

and we had some fun taking a line across these. Tamarisk blundered a good deal, but Hagar is a wonderfully good jumper, taking all the dikes in her stride, and putting down a foot in difficult places, just like an old hunter in England. Next we crossed a low ridge of gravelly desert; but the desert now is very little higher than the alluvial valley, and we thence caught sight of Rumády, a largish town, with a minaret standing in the middle of a broad green plain. As we were descending toward this we saw a fox, which Wilfrid gave chase to and soon rode down; but he found, to his vexation, that his gun was not loaded, so the fox got off. The sky looks very threatening, and perhaps it is as well that we are to be in-doors again to-night. Zénil had sent on a man to announce our arrival, and consequently we were met by a guard of honor outside the village, and escorted at once to the serai; for Rumády is an important place, and actually in telegraphic communication with Bagdad and the rest of the world. There is a Kaimakam here, a very polite man, who puts himself "into four," to be agreeable to us. Rumády, unlike the other villages of late, has no palm-trees, but stands in a large tract of irrigated corn-land. It is a new place made important by Midhat Pasha, who built the serai and barrack. The former is a really handsome building, with an immense court-yard behind it a hundred yards square. Here we are lodged in a very tolerable room, hoping that the kátterjis may arrive before nightfall, as it is beginning to snow.

Friday, 8th.—Rumády. There is no chance of our getting away to-day, as the snow, which Wilfrid was laughed at for predicting so far south, has fallen. The whole country is white, and very bleak and desolate it looks. When we looked out this morning, we found the mares, which we had tied up in a corner of the yard so as to be out of the wind, standing in a pool of half-melted slush. Poor creatures, they looked miserable enough, but are really none the worse for it, and are now very happy walking about the yard, where there is some grass to eat, and where they can choose their own shelter, and stand or lie down where they like. If it comes

on snowing again we shall put them into an empty shed there is in the buildings, but the stables would only give them colds. Mahmoud, the zaptieh, has imitated our treatment in this, seeing it succeed so well, and now always leaves his colt out-of-doors.

The Kaimakam is superior to most officials we have met, and being, as I said, in telegraphic communication with the world, talks very knowingly about the affairs of Europe. He got a telegram this morning to say that peace had been made with Russia, and is in high delight about it, though he has not heard whether the terms of it are good or bad. "But then, you know," he said, "we have got the Broudogoul, and that shows it must be all right. The Broudogoul is the important thing. It was signed yesterday." When we left England people told us that the Mohammedans would be very angry with England because she had deserted Turkey in the war, but this was all nonsense. Nobody in the country seems to have the least idea of our being responsible in the matter, and we have been only once or twice asked why England did not help the Sultan this year as she did formerly. The fact is, in this part of Turkey, and very likely everywhere, it is an accepted fact in public opinion that the English king is vassal to the Sultan. We have no difficulty, therefore, in explaining how it is that the English have not "marched" (*rarh*) with the Turks. "The Sultan has wished this time to fight the Czar alone," we say; and they accept the account without demur. An attempt to explain the real reason of our not fighting, even if we could give one, would not be taken seriously, and might lead to discussions best avoided. Now, however, England, they tell us, *has* been called upon by the Sultan, and *has* come forward; the consequence of which seems to be this glorious peace. I suppose we shall know all about it when we get to Bagdad. The only person who declines to echo the general "inshalláh," when the peace is mentioned, is Zénil, who, being an Albanian and a fervent Mussulman, is still full of blood-thirsty ideas. He is a good fellow, though, and far superior to any of the zaptiehs we have had to do with. He will have to leave us here, and came to say good-bye this morning.

His gesture, in first declining and then accepting the present offered him, would have made the fortune of an actor at the Français in the character of D'Artagnan, or some such hero of the great school of manners. He would willingly go on with us, but each district is jealous to have its own men employed on escort duty, for the sake of the presents given by travellers; so we are to be handed over to a new officer to-morrow.

To-day has been a day of feasting, the Kaimakam hospitably stuffing us with really excellent food; dishes of stewed truffles, of a sort of celery called *beymeh*, and of a sort of potato, the name of which sounded like *sejjer*,* besides the *kulécheh* or Bagdad cakes (Bath bunns), and Bagdad pomegranates, the largest in the world. The mares, too, have had their fill of straw and barley; so, if no more snow falls, we propose going on to-morrow. The evening has cleared; and I can see against the western sky, and perched on a high pole in the yard, a large buzzard, who would hardly go there to roost if there was any prospect of wind or bad weather.

February 9th.—To-day has been the pleasantest of all our journey—the mares ready to jump out of their skins with freshness, after their day's rest and with the keen air of a frosty morning. At first the road across the plain was very slippery with ice, and then very slippery with mud as the sun thawed it; but later on we got to sounder ground, and enjoyed our ride immensely. We soon came to the Dibán or Wolf Hills, and, sure enough, the first thing we saw was a wolf. Wilfrid fired a long shot at him as he ran up the steep side of the hill, and then got off his mare and left her with me while he tried a stalk, for the wolf had stopped when he got to the top. Presently I heard four rifle shots, and Wilfrid returned to tell me that he had seen two wolves just over the crest of the hill, and that he had fired at them from about a hundred yards off, while they ran backward and forward trying to make out where the bullets and the noise came from. But every shot missed. The wolves, however, had not gone far, and Wilfrid proposed rid-

* Apparently the same word as that which means "a tree."

ing after them. This we presently did, and found them not a quarter of a mile from the place where they had been fired at, and less than that distance from us. The country on the top of the hills was a sort of table-land of fine gravel, and seemed inviting for a gallop. So we went after the wolves as fast as we could lay legs to the ground. They started off when they saw us, but not fast, and looking constantly round over their shoulders as they went. As we rushed up to them they separated, and the one we followed then galloped in earnest. Hagar was, of course, soon far in front, skimming over the uneven ground like a swallow, while Tamarisk labored with me in the rear. I thought the wolf *must* have been overtaken, as he was only twenty yards in front of Wilfrid, when suddenly, in crossing a ravine, Hagar was up to her knees in the soft ground, and almost on her head. The rain and snow had undermined the soil, and, after struggling a yard or two, Wilfrid pulled his mare up, firing a parting shot, however, at the wolf, who swerved as it struck him; but the charge, being only of No. 5 shot, did not seriously impede his progress. In another second he had disappeared over the brow. This chase, though unsuccessful, was great fun, and it was curious to get so near a view of a wild beast like this. I shall never forget the expression of the wolf's face as he looked round at us over his shoulder.

We saw several more wolves in the course of the day, one especially, which was so much occupied watching the proceedings of a flock of sheep that he allowed us to come within seventy yards of him, sitting down as we were approaching, and scratching his ear with his hind foot just like a dog. Then he got up leisurely and trotted off up a ravine, where we had no chance of following him.

About two o'clock we came to the river, here again fringed with tamarisks, and with a prickly brushwood called *sirr*. Some francolins, too, got up, the first we have seen since Ábu-Kamál, and while Wilfrid was looking for these he shot a jackal, which jumped up from under his feet. At the river we found the ferry-boat which was to convey us at last across the Euphrates; for we are

A WOLF COURSE NEAR RUMADY.

now in the latitude of Bagdad, and have only forty miles more to go, across the narrowest part of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris. While waiting for the boat, the caravan came up, reminding us of the Arabic proverb, "Late and early meet at the ferry." The ladies in the litter here got down for the first time, except at night, during the whole journey. They are very amiable and polite to me; but as they talk no Arabic, and I no Turkish, we don't get on far together. They seem, as far as I can gather, to have got used to their journey, and, I expect, will be rather sorry to go back to the stupid life of the harem in Bagdad. They may even some day regret the old mule and the panniers which helped them to see something at least of the world. Their dress is a sort of red-and-white calico sack, a black cotton veil, and European boots; and when set down on the river's bank to wait for the boat, they looked just like a pair of bags with something alive tied up in them. The crossing was, I thought, a rather dangerous proceeding, as we were closely crammed—horses, mules, donkeys, and all—the kátterjis insisting upon jumping beast after beast in, long after the boat looked as if it could not hold another creature. What with waiting and unloading the mules, and then getting the baggage stowed, we were quite two hours at the riverside. The crossing itself occupied twenty-five minutes, and, after all, some of the baggage was left behind, and did not reach us till late at night. Poor Saadún, the kátterji, had managed to fall into the river.

We have encamped in a delightful spot, a hollow, grown all round with *sirr*. We have seen a large herd of wild-boar close by, and Wilfrid is away getting francolins for dinner. It is a very cold night, but still, and there will be a hard frost before morning. The name of this place is Seglawíeh.

Sunday, February 10*th*.—Indeed it *was* cold. Here in latitude 34°, and no more than a couple of hundred feet above the sea level—only forty miles from Bagdad, the city of the simoom and the plague—a pail of water set inside our tent froze till it was hard as iron, and the tent itself hung stiff and rigid as a board.

Wilfrid's beard, too, was hanging in icicles. Where, then, shall chilly people go in search of climate?

This morning our new sergeant of police announced his intention of returning home. I think the hardships of a night's watching in the *chôl* (desert) had been too much for him; and perhaps he reasoned that a backshísh would equally be forthcoming, whether he went to Bagdad or turned back here. But in this he was mistaken, for we dismissed him empty-handed. By this time we are heartily sick of zaptiehs, soldiers, mudírs, and all the representatives of constituted government in this country, and are resolved to have no more to do with them. So, telling all who liked to go home, we started without more ceremony, and were soon rid of all our tormentors but one, who, I suppose, has come on to get the sealed paper which is necessary to prove that the escort has fulfilled its duty. Our day's ride was only the more pleasant. It lay over a series of low undulating downs of very fine gravel thickly interspersed with grass. On these we found several small herds of gazelles, and once we put up a hare. But we are too anxious now to get on to care for sport. We hoped to see the minarets of Bagdad before night. It was certainly an agreeable bit of country, in spite of the line of telegraph-posts which crosses it and tries to give it a cockney look. No special incident occurred, but we enjoyed the sunshine which came out and warmed us through, and we had more than one gallop over delightful riding ground.

It was still early in the afternoon when we came to a lake covered with a mass of water-birds—pelicans, ducks, storks—and presently afterward to a large camp of what I suppose were at last real Bedouins. At least they had camels round them as well as sheep, and each tent had its spear stuck in the ground before it. On inquiry we found them to be Zoba Arabs, either allies or tributaries of the Shammar, and come lately from the South. We would willingly have pitched our tents with them, but it was still early, and we were foolish enough to believe the tale of our sole remaining zaptieh, who assured us that the sheykh of the tribe was but an hour's journey farther on, and not far from the Tower of

Nimróud, which we could already see peeping over the horizon. So, instead of stopping, we went on, and of course fared worse. In the first place, we missed this our first opportunity of seeing something really Bedouin; and next, we have had, after all, to encamp by the tents of a very low tribe, which calls itself Amr or Ábu-Amr. But first we had a long ride of four hours instead of one, and then only accidentally hit upon our present hosts.

On leaving the lake, our course turned a little to the left, in order to avoid some swampy ground which has made the regular track impassable. In front of us was a long line of low hills, which, on reaching them, we discovered to be a double line of artificial mounds, just like those we saw three days ago, and we suspect that they have something to do with ancient Babylon. We passed through one great square space enclosed by these—it might be a couple of square miles—as if it had been a town. Who knows? Not the zaptieh, and there was nobody else to ask. Our patience was nearly exhausted when we again caught sight of the tower, and just before dark came upon some Arabs on donkeys, who told us the Amr camp was near at hand; so we cantered on, and at last have got to it. The place is called Húrnabat. It is a very dirty camp, and the people are rude and noisy. But of course the sheykh, a little old man in rags, and with a face like a ferret, has received us with such hospitality as he can show. Only he seems to have no sort of authority over his people, who come and go in his tent, and who asked Wilfrid rude questions as to the number of his wives, and Hánna and Mahmoud as rude ones about their religious tenets.

These Amr are evidently very low Arabs, far worse behaved than any we have come across on our road, and we wish we had stayed by the lake with the respectable-looking Zoba; but it is too late now to regret our mistake. Fortunately, when we had been half an hour in the old man's tent, whose name is Hassan, with a young bull tied up in one corner and a rough-looking mare in the other, a very respectably dressed Arab arrived and sat down beside us. He seemed to have some authority over the rest, and

at first we thought he was a stranger, especially when, after a little conversation, he told us he was an Ánazeh of the Amarát tribe. We were very much astonished at this; and he then explained that he was the head sheykh of all these Amr, and that his grandfather had left his own people and settled here as an independent sheykh. He certainly is quite different from all the other people, as, besides being well dressed, he has a well-bred look and excellent manners. But we cannot understand why he has fallen foul of Mahmoud about his religion. This Sheykh Mohammed, while we were talking, suddenly got up on to his knees and began saying his prayers, and, when he had finished, cross-questioned our Mahmoud on his reasons for not doing so too, and frightened him out of his wits. The people all seem religious here, old Hassan saying his prayers outside in a loud voice, interrupted now and then by shouting at a mare or donkey, or throwing his stick at a cow.*

With us the sheykh is very friendly. We asked to have our dinner in our own tent, so as to be out of the noise, and he came afterward and smoked a cigarette with us. Wilfrid gave him a tobacco-bag, which he fancied, but which he made a great difficulty about accepting, insisting that if he did so it was on the understanding that he was to be considered as a brother. His own tent, he tells us, is a few miles farther on, and he is on his way, "on business," to Rumády, and is to start very early to-morrow, as he does not wish to pass the Zoba tents by daylight. They are his enemies.

February 11th.—We did not bargain at all for such a day as this has been, when we started this morning from the Amr camp at Húrnabat. We had sent on our baggage, and intended, after visiting the Tower of Nimróud, which was close by, to gallop all the way to Bagdad without stopping, as our mares were still fresh.

* The half-reclaimed tribes about Bagdad are often fanatical Shías (the Mohammedan sect of Persia), while the towns-people are mostly Súnis, the true Bedouins being nothing at all. Turks, zaptiehs, and people from Aleppo would naturally be Súni. This sheykh was no doubt a Shía.

But the weather disposed of us differently. The Tower of Nimróud, as the Arabs call it, or Akha Kuf as it is written on the maps, is the traditional Tower of Babel, though modern writers have transferred its site elsewhere. As seen from the Amr camp, about a mile off, it was very like the top of Mount Cervin, and hardly seemed a building at all; but as we got nearer we could see it was built of bricks. It seems to be solid; and one cannot conceive any possible use it can have been of, except, as the Bible says, to reach to heaven. It only goes a short way on the road to heaven now, being four or five hundred feet high, including the mound of ruins on which it stands. It has nothing noble about it but its size, and serves only as a gigantic dove-cote for the blue rock-pigeons which are so common everywhere about. We walked round it, and picked up some bits of blue pottery, and then rode on. The weather looked threatening, and I did not stop to take a sketch; but no doubt it has been drawn and described before.

The rain began to fall as we left the tower, and we went at a good pace to catch up the caravan; but that was just all we could do before the ground became so slippery from the wet that our mares could scarcely any longer keep on their legs, even at a walk. This is the alluvial soil of Irák we have heard so much of —rich, perhaps, but very dirty travelling in wet weather. From the Tower of Nimróud we had already caught sight of the minarets of Kasmeyn, a faubourg of Bagdad, and of the palm-grove which borders the city, and we thought to get there in two or three hours at most; but first there was an overflowed lake to go round, and then this horrible mud to flounder through, so that more than once we were in despair of getting in at all. We could not leave the caravan, because there were places where bridges had broken down to be got over, and sloping banks as slippery as ice to climb along, and the mules were sliding about and tumbling down every minute. At last we came to a place that seemed quite hopeless, as there was a long sort of arrête, like the crest I have heard described of Monte Rosa, to creep along, with an apparently bottomless pool of stagnant water on either side. We dismounted, and

with great care got our mares across, and then slid them, with all four feet together, to the bottom of the bank; but the baggage-mules, heavily laden as they were, came to the most dreadful grief, and the kátterjis seemed inclined to give the matter up altogether. Wilfrid, however, managed at last, by wading through the mud, to rescue the animals, and then had the baggage carried across and reloaded on the other side. This took a long while, and as it was raining still in torrents, we soon had not a dry rag left on us. In the middle of it all arrived the unfortunate Turkish ladies in their panniers; and when they came to the "mal paso," the mule, which was an old and sagacious brute, refused to advance another yard. So the poor women, who had put on their best clothes to come smartly into Bagdad with, were bundled out into the mud, and had to trudge in their beautiful European boots across the slush, and then sit in the rain till the mule could be persuaded to follow. We had no time to wait to see how they got out of their difficulties, and I have a forlorn recollection of them huddled up under the mud bank—clumsy and absurd figures, a pitiful sight, with their wretched bedabbled silk gowns clinging to them.

In the mean time, although cheered somewhat by the misfortunes of our neighbors, we were suffering not a little ourselves, wet as we were, and chilled to the marrow of our bones. It was worse than even our entrance into Aleppo; the wind was more searching, and we thought bitterly of the tracts of burning sand in which Bagdad is popularly supposed to stand. At last the City of the Caliphs loomed through the driving rain, a grimy and squalid line of mud houses rising out of a sea of mud. Even the palm-groves looked draggled, and the Tigris had that hopeless look a river puts on in the rain.

Crouched on our mares' necks, a mere mass of mire from head to foot, and followed feebly on foot by our single zaptieh, whose horse had slipped up with him and fallen heavily on his rider's leg, we entered the historical city and inquired timidly for the British residency, the house of the consul-general. At first nobody moved or answered, but after much asking, we found a young soldier at a

coffee-shop, who engaged for a recompense to show us the way. First he took us to a khan, where we were to leave our mares—for we should have to cross the river, and the bridge was shut—a wretched yard, where we tied the poor creatures up in the still pouring rain. Then we followed our guide to the river, got into a *gúfa*, or circular boat, something like a washing-tub, and were ferried across, and at last, after what seemed an interminable trudge along a narrow cut-throat-looking lane, found ourselves at the door of the residency. Here all our troubles are over for the present, and we are sitting, clothed and in our right minds, close to a table spread with a table-cloth and decked with knives and forks. There are flowers on it and fruit, and on the sideboard I can see a ham. Servants of Indian type and clothed in white are running in and out. In a word, we are in Colonel Nixon's dining-room, and ready, I am quite sure, both of us, for all the good things he can possibly propose to set before us. There is food, too, for the mind, hungry for news from Europe: "The Russians are at the gates of Constantinople. An armistice is already signed, and nearly the whole of European Turkey has been ceded to Russia.—Mr. Gladstone's windows broken in London.—Victor Emmanuel and his Holiness dead at Rome."

CHAPTER XI.

"I had furnished myself with letters to a rich merchant of Bagdad."
ARABIAN NIGHTS.

Modern Bagdad a poor Place.—Causes of its Decay.—The Plague.—Midhat Pasha takes down its Walls and lets in a Deluge.—Dr. Colville's View of the Bedouins.—An Indian Prince.—Akif Pasha's Fortune.—His Stud.—We buy Asses and Camels, and plan an Evasion.

BAGDAD, in spite of its ancient name, and of its Caliphs and Calenders so familiar in our ears, is hardly now an interesting city. Compared with Damascus or Aleppo, it wants individual character, while Cairo twenty years ago must have been far more quaint and attractive. I suppose, if we had entered it from the north and by the river, we should have been differently impressed from now, coming as we have from the west, where there is nothing in the approach to give one the idea of a great city. The walls have been pulled down, and one enters by scrambling over the mounds of rubbish where they once stood, and then crossing an intermediate space of broken ground, given over to dogs and jackals, and gradually abandoned by the town as it has shrunk back from its old circuit, like a withered nut inside its shell. One sees at once that Bagdad is a city long past its prime, a lean and slippered pantaloon, its hose a world too wide for its shrunk shanks. Within, there is little to remind one of the days of its greatness. The houses are low and mean, and built of mud, and the streets narrow and unpaved as those of any Mesopotamian village. There are no open spaces, or fountains, or large mosques, or imposing buildings. The minarets are few and of inconsiderable height, and the bazaars without life or sign of prosperity. No caravans crowd the gates, and hardly a camel is to be met with in the streets. The rich

merchant, like the Caliph, the Calender, and all the rest, seems to have disappeared. I don't know how it is, but these signs of decay affect me disagreeably. Bagdad has no right to be anything but prosperous, and, stripped of its wealth, is uninteresting, a colorless Eastern town, and nothing more.

The feature of Bagdad is of course the river, the Tigris, on which it stands, and that is still beautiful. On either bank, above and below the town, there is a dense grove of palm-trees with gardens under them, making an agreeable approach for travellers who come by water, and setting off the yellow mud houses to their best advantage. Some of these are picturesquely built and cheerful enough, with bits of terrace and orange-trees in front of them, but they are pretty rather than imposing, and there is an entire absence of really large buildings, or even of important groups of houses, while the flatness of the banks and the want of streets leading down to the river prevent one's getting any idea of the depth of the city beyond. The Tigris itself is a noble river, flowing at this time of year in a rapid, turbid stream, and with a breadth of perhaps three hundred yards. The houses come close down to the water's edge, and there are boats and barges on it, giving it altogether a rather gay appearance; but there are no bridges but a single one of boats, which, most of the time we have been here, has been taken away in anticipation of a flood.

By far the pleasantest place in Bagdad is the British Residency, a beautiful old house built round two large court-yards, and having a long frontage to the river. There is a delightful terrace overlooking the water, with an alley of old orange-trees, and a kiosque or summer-house, and steps leading down to a little quay where the consular boats are moored. Inside, the house is decorated in the Persian taste of the last century, one of the most elaborate and charming styles ever invented, with deep-fretted ceilings, walls panelled in minute cabinet-work, sometimes inlaid with looking-glass, sometimes richly gilt. Only the dining-room is studiously English, in deference to Anglo-Indian prejudice—its decorations, apparently fresh from Maple's, forming a theme for admiration for the Bag-

dadis who come to pay their respects to Her Majesty's consul-general. Colonel Nixon is hospitality itself, and his doors seem always ajar to take in unfortunate strangers like ourselves, arriving, grimed and weather-worn, in an otherwise inhospitable city; for there is nothing as yet in Bagdad approaching in character to an inn, not even a house of entertainment on so poor a scale as the lokanda at Aleppo. As for the khans, they are mere empty barracks, providing nothing but a roof for the traveller and standing-room for his beast. Here, then, in the Residency we have been living for the better part of a fortnight in absolute repose, and enjoying the good things of civilization, as only those can who have been travelling many days in heathendom and sleeping many nights upon the ground.

Colonel Nixon has given us much valuable information about the population, history, and general affairs of the town, some of which, at the risk of being dull, I think I ought to put down. It appears that Bagdad is, in fact, a decrepit, even a dying place, and that its decline, which began long ago, has quite lately become alarmingly rapid. Its first misfortune was its taking by the Tartars in the 14th century,* the time when so many great cities in

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* Marco Polo describes the taking of "Baudac," as he writes it, by the "grand Sire des Tartares qui Alau avait nom." He gives a minute account of the death of the last Arabian caliph, which put into modern French runs as follows: "Quant il l'eut prise, il trouva une tour, appartenant au calife, toute pleine d'or et d'argent, et d'autres richesses, en si grande quantité que jamais on n'en vit tant rassemblé en un seul lieu. A la vue de ce trésor il fut tout émerveillé, et fit venir devant lui le calife, et lui dit: 'Calife, pourquoi as-tu amassé un si grand trésor? Que veux-tu en faire? Ne savais-tu pas que j'étais ton ennemi, et que je marchais contre toi pour te détruire? Et quand tu l'as appris, pourquoi ne t'es-tu pas servi de ce trésor et ne l'as-tu pas donné à des chevaliers et à des soldats pour te défendre, toi et la cité?' Le calife se taisait, ne sachant que dire. Alau reprit: 'Calife, puisque je vois que tu aimes tant ton trésor, je vais te donner le tien à manger.' Il fit donc prendre le calife et le fit mettre dans la tour du trésor en défendant de rien lui donner à manger ni à boire; puis il lui dit: 'Or çà, calife, mange de ton trésor tant que tu voudras, car jamais tu ne mangeras autre chose.' Et il le laissa dans cette tour, où il mourut au bout de quatre

this part of Asia perished; the next, its capture by the Turks a hundred years later, and then another siege a hundred years after that. This seems to have ended its political importance, and about the same time its commerce began to decline. Like Aleppo and Scanderoon, it was half ruined by the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, which took away its Indian trade, and now of late years the establishment of a line of steamers from Bombay to the Persian Gulf has deprived it of nearly all that remained. The great Asiatic caravans have finally disappeared from the gates and caravanserais of Bagdad, and are poorly represented by a home traffic of corn to Syria and of cotton goods from Manchester taken in exchange. How trifling that is, we can judge by the deserted state of the Euphrates road. Already the "rich merchants" have fled from a city which can no longer support them, and have set up shop at Bússora, which, as a seaport, is destined to be the capital some day of this part of the world. Even the Persian pilgrimage, which brought so much wealth to Bagdad in former days, has within the last few years, owing to the ill-feeling existing between the Sultan and the Shah, been diverted to another route; so that nothing more is wanted to kill her outright but the opening of the Euphrates Valley Railroad, so long talked of, when she would be left out of the track of trade to perish, like all the great cities which have preceded her.* It is melancholy to look down from the top of a minaret, as Wilfrid did, and count the empty spaces already existing inside her ancient walls. This minaret, the name

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jours. Il aurait donc mieux valu pour le calife donner son trésor à des hommes qui eussent défendu son royaume et sa personne que de se laisser prendre et mourir déshérité. Ce fut le dernier des califes." This was Mostasem Billah, the last of the Abasside caliphs. He reigned from 1242 to 1258. Marco Polo dictated his travels originally to Rustician, of Pisa, who wrote them in provincial French. (*See* Charton, "Voyageurs anciens et modernes.")

* The recent sanitary measure of forbidding the passage of Persian corpses through Bagdad on their way to burial at the tomb of Huseyn has been equally unfortunate for the income of the town. The Persians paid heavy transit fees for their dead.

of which I forget, is the one from which in former times criminals used to be thrown, and it is tall enough to command a good view. There are gaunt wildernesses in the heart of the city, where rubbish is shot, and where jackals slink about even by daylight, and marshes which are forming here and there, through neglect in keeping out the river. We put up a flight of teal, only two days ago, within fifty yards of the mosque of Ali. It requires little imagination to picture to one's self the day when all shall be desolate, a shapeless mass of barren mounds and heaps of crumbled brick.

Besides her loss of trade, Bagdad has been desperately treated by the plague. Dr. Colville, the resident physician here, has given me many particulars on this subject, which I think will be new to people in England. The first great visitation of this disease was in 1774, when, if we can believe the records preserved at the Residency, nearly the whole population of the city perished. Two millions are said to have died here and at Bússora, but that figure must, one would think, include the province as well as the towns. Anyhow, the population of Bagdad has never numbered more than one hundred and fifty thousand souls since. Thirty years later, in 1804, and again nearly thirty years after that, the plague returned. In 1831, one hundred thousand perished in the town, and the population is now stated at from eighty to a hundred thousand in all. Of these, eighteen thousand are Jews, two thousand Armenian Christians, seven thousand Turks, Persians, and Indians, and the rest Mussulman Arabs. The plague has existed more or less continually since 1867, much as small-pox exists in London. It is felt most severely by the Jews, whose houses are overcrowded and dirtily kept. Dr. Colville does not consider it a true epidemic—that is to say, a disease communicated by the air—nor yet is it infectious in the ordinary sense. He considers that it cannot be caught by passing or brushing against infected people in the streets, as is commonly supposed, but that it attaches itself to houses and districts. It would be very foolish to frequent a plague-stricken house, and dangerous to sleep in one. It creeps from house to house, being introduced into new ones by infected per-

sons coming to them. The dirtier the house the more liable it is to the disease. For which reason, as I have said, the Jewish quarter suffers generally more than the rest. A European, living in a well-ordered house, runs very little risk, unless the infection is brought home by his servants. The Bedouins are entirely free from it; and in this the plague is in striking contrast with the cholera, which makes no distinction between town and country. About fifty per cent. of those attacked die. The plague first shows itself by a little fever which continues for a couple of days, and then by a glandular swelling on the groin or armpit; later by high fever, delirium, and collapse. If the swelling suppurates, the patient recovers; if not, on the fifth or sixth day he dies. There is no known remedy; but, like many diseases, Dr. Colville is of opinion that it is dying out.

Of other maladies Bagdad seems, until quite recently, to have been singularly free.* Standing in the middle of the desert, it always enjoys pure air; and, although the summer temperature† is prodigiously high, is not subject to fevers or to any other epidemic than cholera, which make no distinction between healthy and unhealthy sites. Unfortunately, however, of late years the marshes which have been forming round the town have introduced ague along with other ill results; but this deserves a more particular account.

It would appear that, besides and beyond its other misfortunes, Bagdad had the ill-luck a few years since to pass through the hands of an improving Pasha, Midhat, author of the famous constitution of 1877, which is now regenerating Turkey.

That singularly unhappy statesman (unhappy, I mean, in his

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* The Jewish community, from its long isolation and the custom of premature marriages, is subject to heart disease and consumption, the latter of which the Jews hold to be contagious. They are also very short-lived, but their indolent habits may account for much of this.

† Dr. Colville, who has kept an accurate register for several years, informs me that he has seen the thermometer in the court-yard of his house, a well-protected position, marking 122½ degrees Fahr.

plans) was sent by the Sultan Abdul Aziz to try his 'prentice hand upon Bagdad, before being allowed his way with Constantinople and the Empire. He was an honest man, by all accounts, and sincerely anxious for his country's good, but half educated, and belonging to that school of Turkish politicians which thinks to Europeanize the Empire by adopting the dress and external forms of Europe. He seems to have been allowed almost unlimited credit for improvement, and full liberty in all his schemes, nor can it be denied that some of them were, in their design, excellent; only he was incapable of working out the detail of what he planned, or of at all counting the cost of each adventure. They have, consequently, one and all, led only to the most impotent if not the most disastrous conclusions. His first scheme was a good one. He wished to establish communication with Aleppo by the Euphrates, and in that view built the forts we saw at Ána, Rumády, and elsewhere, to protect the road, while he ordered steamers from England to navigate the river. The forts, though unnecessarily large, answered their purpose, and still exist; the boats, with one exception, have disappeared, either left to rot at Bússora or never fitted out with their engines. The sole representative of the Euphrates fleet draws too much water to ascend the river except at flood, and her regular trips were abandoned almost as soon as begun. Midhat also established, with some success, a tramway between Bagdad and its suburb, Kasmeyn, which still runs. So far so good. But his next venture was not equally reasonable; indeed, it shows the unreality of his claim to be considered a serious statesman. He had heard, or perhaps seen, that the fortifications of Vienna and other towns in Europe had been pulled down, to make room for the cities they enclosed, and which were outgrowing them; and, arguing from this fact that all walls were out of date, he proceeded to level those of Bagdad. I dare say he thought them unsightly, and feared lest they should remind strangers of the dark age of the world, before gunpowder and the Ottoman Empire were invented—the age of Haroun al Rashid. He seems, too, to have had a curious idea of occupying his soldiers

in this work, and of paying them their arrears in bricks—a rather unsalable article, one would think, in a country where little is built and nothing at all mended. Be that as it may, the walls of the Caliphate were "removed," and the city left open to all who chose to enter—thieves, wolves, and Bedouins—for it is but a few years since Bagdad was threatened with sack by the Shammar. The townsmen protested, but the thing was done. Bagdad is now as defenceless as any of the villages near it.*

Not content with this, Midhat conceived the unfortunate thought of benefiting the whole country by a huge canal, in imitation of the irrigating works once fertilizing Southern Mesopotamia. Engineers were engaged, labor impressed, a special tax for the cost levied, and Midhat himself, before his term of office came to an end, had the satisfaction of opening the new canal in person, after the fashion of dignitaries in Europe. But, oh cruel fate! at the first flooding of the river, instead of a beneficent stream to fertilize the thirsty earth, behold it was a deluge that entered! Midhat Pasha with his spade let in the flood and converted Bagdad into an island, standing in a pestilential marsh, and obliged at certain seasons to communicate with the outer world by means of boats. This was enough. The Porte saw the necessity of his recall, and intrusted him, instead, with the reorganization of the Empire. Yet, such is the power of virtue, Midhat has left behind him not altogether an evil name even in Bagdad. They narrate of him still that he went away without a shilling in his pocket, and left his watch in pawn for the sum necessary to hire his horses for the journey. An honest man, in a land of dishonesty; a fool, in fact, not a knave.

Of course our first thought, on arriving at Bagdad, was how to get out of it. We had no sooner changed our wet clothes and

* The old palace of Ctesiphon, one of the wonders of the world, had almost shared the fate of the city walls when the foreign consuls interfered. Midhat's soldiers were already at work. Yet this is the representative of progress in Turkey—a man of letters, who writes French and English well, and contributed his paper lately to the *Fortnightly Review*.

eaten our dinner, than we broached the subject of our farther progress to Colonel Nixon, explaining that we had come to Bagdad not to amuse ourselves or to see sights, but in order to get introductions to the Shammar, and be passed on to them with as little delay as possible. Our host readily agreed to all our plans, though he did not profess to know so much about the Bedouins as the difference between Shammar and Ánazeh; and he most kindly offered to take Wilfrid to call upon Akif Pasha, the valy, and promised to further our project in any way that we should suggest. In the mean while we could not do better than stay on in the Residency, and take full benefit of our rest, until all should be ready for a new start. To this we agreed, and it was settled that Wilfrid should himself open the subject of our future movements to the Pasha as soon as he should be received in audience. It was most fortunate, however, that for some reason or other this was put off till the third day after our arrival, and by that time Wilfrid had reconsidered matters, and made up his mind to dispense altogether with the Pasha's help. I am sure this is a wise resolution.

Dr. Colville has been of immense service to us in all our arrangements, and enters most cordially into our plans, only laughing a little at us for what he calls our romantic ideas about the Bedouins. If we are to believe him, there are no such things as Bedouins anywhere nearer than Central Arabia, the Ánazeh and Shammar having long ago given in their submission to the government, and settled down quietly as cultivators of the soil. He knows Ferhán, Sheykh of the Shammar, Nassr, Sheykh of the Montéfik, and Abd ul Mehsin, Sheykh of the Ibn Haddal, of whom the two first are Pashas, and all three are in league with the government of Bagdad. Of Jedáan he has heard nothing, nor of any independent Ánazeh, while Abd ul Kérim, the romantic Shammar hero, is only remembered here as a robber who was caught and hanged at Mósul some years ago. He had never heard of Faris till we mentioned him, and protests that we shall see nothing by going to him that we could not see ten times better with the

Montéfik. He took us, however, to call upon an Indian Nawáb residing here, Ahmet Aga, a friend of his, who, he believed, knew something of the people we were in search of. I will describe our visit as I wrote it down at the time:

"*February 13th.*—Ahmet Aga has a pretty house upon the river bank, nearly opposite the Residency, and we were taken there this morning by Dr. Colville in one of the *Comet's** boats. The Nawáb received us on the roof, which is used as a sort of anteroom, and to which one ascends by an outer staircase, and then conducted us with much ceremony to a drawing-room on the same level, which, with another room where the ladies of his establishment live, forms an upper story to part of the house. Here we found two little boys, his sons, who seemed to be eleven and twelve years old, though we have been told that they are really older, dressed in tight-waisted frock-coats, and wearing gold-embroidered caps on their heads, and polished boots on their feet. They looked very shy, but had good manners. These children, it presently appeared, were married about a month ago to two little girls still younger than themselves, cousins of their own and great heiresses. They presently came in, shyer, even, than their little husbands, and, one would have supposed, only old enough to be just out of the nursery, although really ten and thirteen years of age. The younger, especially, was very pretty. They were dressed alike, in long green dresses brocaded with gold, with gold belts, gold ear-rings, tiaras of moderately good diamonds, and new nose-rings. Their nostrils, poor things, had just been bored for the wedding, and still looked uncomfortable. These little girls invited me to come into the inner room, to pay their mother-in-law a visit. The Begum, it was explained, did not appear in the front-room when men were present. So, while Wilfrid and Dr. Colville stayed talking to Ahmet Aga, I had to make polite speeches to the lady in Arabic, which she did not understand, and listen to her Hindustani answers, still less understood by me. As a refuge from the awkward-

* The *Comet*, a government despatch-boat, attached to the Residency.

ness of this sort of conversation, a draught-board was produced, and I was set down to play a game with the Begum—a task which I hope I performed without betraying my weariness.

"Meanwhile, Wilfrid and Dr. Colville had been more agreeably occupied in seeing the Nawáb's stud, and he has some really good horses, the best we have seen at Bagdad. When I joined them they were looking at a chestnut mare, which had belonged to Abd ul Kérim, a Kehîleh Mesénneh, nearly fifteen hands high, and, they told us, twelve years old. I was interested in her on account of her former master, and began asking questions about her history and the way she had come into Ahmet Aga's possession. Suddenly Dr. Colville said, 'Here is a man who can tell you all about her,' and pointed to a grave-looking Arab who was standing by. He told me she was the mare Abd ul Kérim had been riding when he was betrayed by Nassr, Sheykh of the Montéfik; and it then turned out that this man was a Shammar, and a servant of Naïf ibn Faris, the very person, it would seem, we have been wanting. Here was a wonderful stroke of good fortune, and it was soon agreed that the Arab, Nôman, should come and speak to us privately in the afternoon, and perhaps he would himself take us to his master. Of course it would be easy to get passed on from Naïf to his father Faris.

"I liked the Shammar's face, and while we were looking at the chestnut mare, I could not help asking him whether he knew the story of Abd ul Kérim and the white mare he sent to Jedáan. 'Wallah,' he said, 'I remember that;' and I thought his eyes filled with tears, as well they might, considering what a hero Abd ul Kérim was with his people, and how tragical his ending. The Nawáb Ahmet Aga, too, is a friend of Naïf's, and will give us a letter to him. So Wilfrid has decided to say nothing about our journey to Akif Pasha, and to get ready to start with Naïf's servant as soon as ever the latter's business at Bagdad shall be finished. This sounds exceedingly simple, and we shall be independent then of soldiers, police, Pashas, and all. The first thing is to get camels; and here Dr. Colville promises to help us, although he

tells us it is not the custom to buy but to hire, and that just now there are no camels nearer than those we saw with the Zoba. But he has a friend, a Christian merchant, who employs the Agheyl largely in his commercial business, and who will get us what we want, as well as a couple of trusty men to go with us as camel-drivers. This merchant is under obligations to the doctor, who saved the life of his only son last year, so that he will do all in his power to get what we want. Things are thus suddenly arranging themselves delightfully for us, without any trouble."

On the day after this visit Wilfrid called, with Colonel Nixon, on the valy, and was, of course, graciously received. Akif Pasha, the same who armed the Mohammedans of Sofia at the outbreak of the Bulgarian massacres, is a Turk of the old school, and talks no language but his own. The conversation was therefore carried on through an interpreter, and went little further than the usual compliments; but Wilfrid describes the Pasha as a man of polite manners and apparent amiability. What little talking there was turned upon horses, of which Akif possesses the finest stud that has been got together in Bagdad for a great number of years. Neither he, nor, for the matter of that, any one else in Bagdad, seems to have the least knowledge of the science of horse-breeding as professed in the desert, and the mistakes they make when they talk about the breeds are, to us who know, exceedingly ludicrous. I heard the other day a mare talked of as a "Kehîleh Jedrán;" and the Pasha's favorite at present, it appears, is a "Kehîleh Simri!" Akif has the reputation of being the most corrupt Pasha that ever ruled in Bagdad, but this is saying a great deal. He has been only eight months in office, yet, according to common report, he has already amassed £50,000 in money, besides jewelry, horses, and much other wealth in kind. Let us hope that the sum is exaggerated. It is difficult all the same to believe that the sixty or seventy Arabians which compose his stud have been bought and paid for out of the income of the valy's office. Indeed, I doubt extremely whether, if he should by any accident hear that I have written this, Akif Pasha would not take what I am saying as a

compliment. The Turks do not connect any dishonorable idea with the acceptance of presents by men in office. They hold it to be part of their salary, just as our servants in England do the commissions they receive from tradesmen in return for patronage. The offer of a bribe, in Turkey, would hardly be resented as an insult, even by the most prudish official, while ninety-nine out of a hundred of the men in power look to such offerings as proper tokens of respect from inferiors to their superior. To come to a Pasha for justice with "nothing in your hand" would be to treat him cavalierly, and would imply that you thought but little of his power to help you; and it is difficult to decide whether morality is less outraged by the acceptance of these things, without corresponding return made, or by loyally according support, as modern etiquette prescribes, to whoever brings most. Still, there are certain limits to the amount of plunder allowed by public opinion, and Akif would seem to have passed these, for the people he is governing complain. It is said that the new treasurer of the mosque of Húseyn, at Meshid Ali, had to bring £10,000 to the Serai before being installed, and that every other official act or appointment requiring the valy's signature has been taxed on the same scale; but, after all, it is probably the government at Constantinople which has really contributed the bulk of His Excellency's income.

In return for Wilfrid's visit, Akif sent his secretary, Mr. Reubeniram, with a polite message, begging that we would do him the honor of inspecting his stud, and, this being reputed so fine a collection, we readily accepted the invitation. Mr. Reubeniram is an Armenian of most polite manners and a Parisian education. He speaks French rather better than we do, and is most amiable in his attentions and desire to please. He had got ready for us a kiosque, improvised for the Shah of Persia on one of his visits to Bagdad, in the garden of the Serai, and close to the valy's stables. There, sitting in state upon gilt arm-chairs, we spent a very agreeable morning, while the horses and mares were paraded before us. There were fifty or sixty of them in all, fat and beautifully groomed, each led by its attendant — a really charming sight. They

were brought out half a dozen at a time and marched past us in procession, each animal stopping to be shown off and to exhibit its merits. The valy's grooms were much more expert at this than the Bedouins and country people, who had hitherto brought us horses to look at; and I am bound to say that a better-looking collection could hardly have been imagined. We were asked to point out those which pleased us most, and for a moment we were afraid that Mr. Reubeniram was going to press them on our acceptance, according to Oriental custom, as a present; but before long it appeared that a more business-like transaction was in view, and that the valy, who had just been recalled to Constantinople, is anxious to dispose of them either separately or "en bloc," and at a "terrible sacrifice." We had been so imprudently enthusiastic in our comments that, although we knew very well that none or almost none of the animals we had seen were likely to be thorough-bred, and that at best we could have no sort of guarantee of their breeding, we felt obliged to go through the form of inquiring about a fine black mare standing nearly fifteen hands two inches, which seemed the handsomest of the lot. Mr. Reubeniram promised that we should have all particulars sent to us, as he himself was not up in the pedigrees of the stud, and the grooms contradicted each other in the statements they made—though "Segláwi Jedrán" seems to be the usual answer made to all inquiries at Bagdad about breed. The fact is, the Bagdadis affect to despise distinctions in breeding, their own stock having long ago been crossed with the Persian and Turcoman breeds, for the sake of increased size, required by the English market in India. The present Bagdad horse, or Iráki as he is called, is a tall, powerful animal, with a handsome crest and fine carriage, but, to eyes accustomed to the Ánazeh type, wants distinction. As a cavalry horse or for parade purposes, he is perhaps quite as useful as his better bred predecessor, but is far inferior to him in speed and quality. The best horses seen in Bagdad come generally from the Ibn Haddal, and pass there as thorough-bred Ánazehs, although it is well known in the desert that the Ibn Haddal, from their intercourse

with Bagdad, have adopted many of the tricks of the trade not tolerated by the rest of their brethren. A few, and these are probably of pure breeding, have been brought in by the Shammar, but the rest come from the Montéfik, the Delím, and other semi-felláhin tribes of the lower Euphrates, if not bred in Irák itself.

The valy's answer was characteristic, and relieved us from any further anxiety in the matter of our purchase. The mare, he informed us, was from Nassr, Sheykh of the Montéfik, and belonged to a celebrated breed known among the Bedouins as "Kehîlan el Ajuz es Simri;" which was much as if, in selling a flock of sheep, their owner should describe them as being of the "Rambouillet Leicester Southdown" breed. Her price was £300.

Two days later, Akif's stud was sent to the hammer, and fetched prices varying from £50 to £80, but I believe the greater part of the horses were bought in. There were hardly any bidders. A little Abeyeh Sheraák, of whose breeding there was some evidence, as she had been sent by Ferhán, Sheykh of the Shammar, to Akif's predecessor, we should probably have purchased but for her color, gray, which we do not like. A very handsome mottled gray, fourteen hands two inches, went for £50. He was the pick of the lot. Horses are very cheap in Bagdad just now, an ordinary animal, young and sound, fetching not more than £10. Mahmoud, the zaptieh who came with us from Deyr, took back with him a four-year-old of very respectable appearance, for which he only gave seven Turkish pounds. These, however, are of course *kadîshes*, though far better bred than their representatives at Aleppo and in the north, but it is useless to look for really thorough-bred horses at Bagdad.

I fear we have been very remiss in our sight-seeing, and now we are going away from Bagdad without having been inside a single mosque, or having visited the site of Babylon, or made any other of the picnic excursions in the neighborhood, except to Ctesiphon. But everybody has described that, so I forbear. The Tak-i-Kesra is the finest ruin I ever saw. No; all our time and thoughts have been employed on more practical matters—the details of our new

journey. We are going now into a quite unknown country, of which even Dr. Colville can tell us nothing, and where there are no village or guard-houses, or markets of any sort to supply our commissariat. Everything will have to be carried with us—bread, rice, coffee, sugar, and tobacco, the last two to give away. We have also been purchasing more *mashlahs*, or cloaks, the conventional robes of honor with which it is customary to invest the great men of the desert whom one wishes to propitiate, and red boots for their retainers. Nown and Shakouri, Dr. Colville's Christian friends, have been as good as their words in the matter of the camels, and Wilfrid has seen and approved the beasts they have had brought in from the country, four fine young camels, capitally matched, and said to be fast walkers, at £10 apiece, and a delúl, or she-dromedary, for occasional use in relieving Hagar of part of her duties. She is priced at sixteen shillings less than the camels, but Wilfrid thinks she will turn out as well as any of them.

Besides these, we have purchased a white ass for Hánna, who, as he will have to carry the cooking-pots and a certain amount of provisions with him, must be well mounted. She is four years old, and stands about twelve and a half hands, walks at a prodigious pace, and is warranted not to stumble. For a beast of this merit we are supposed to have bought her cheap at £16. Hánna is of course as proud as Punch at the thought of riding a white donkey, which at Aleppo is considered the *ne plus ultra* of fashion, being, indeed, the way of going abroad reserved for Pashas, Imams, and the richest of rich merchants. These donkeys are bred in el Hása, on the south-western shore of the Persian Gulf, and are brought to market at Queyt. They sometimes fetch as much as £40 apiece, their value depending on their size, pace, and, above all, sureness of foot, for many of them stumble. A she-donkey will fetch nearly a third more than her brother ass, because he is likely to prove a nuisance with his braying.

In all other respects we are starting, rather like babes in the wood, on an adventure whose importance we are unable to rate. It may be perfectly easy, as Wilfrid thinks, and it may be as dan-

gerous as others would have us believe. We have, after all, got nobody going with us who knows anything of the Shammar, or of the road more than a few miles out of Bagdad. Our Shammar friend, Nôman, Naïf's servant, has turned out to be a humbug, if not an actual rogue. When it came to really treating with him and settling matters in black and white, he backed out of it, asking the absurd price of £20 for his services, and, moreover, to be paid in advance. This was as much as admitting that he was not what he had represented himself to be. Either he is not Naïf's servant at all, or he could not guarantee our safety to his master. We cannot make out what Faris's position really is. At Deyr we heard of him as quite a young man, and on ill terms with his brother Ferhán; here they talk of his having a son of twenty-five, and will not admit that there are any dissensions among the Shammar. But we shall see. On the other hand, we have secured the services of a couple of Agheyl as camel men, at the very moderate rate of sixteen shillings a month, engaging to keep them two months, and to pay half in advance. This we have readily agreed to, as all Agheyl are honest men; at least such is the popular belief.

We have said nothing to anybody, except Colonel Nixon, Dr. Colville, and one other person, of where we were going; and Mr. Reubeniram is under the impression that a shooting excursion to Babylon is contemplated. The one other is a distinguished personage, and necessary to our plan. He is the good old Nawáb Ikbálet Dówlah, formerly King of Oude, and now living in exile at Bagdad. With him we have made great friends, and he is to aid in our plan of evasion by inviting us to his country-house at Kasmeyn, whence, without any ceremony or asking leave of Pasha, secretary, or chief of police, we shall slip away into the desert, and trust to Providence for the rest.

CHAPTER XII.

"Il finissait à peine de parler, que les principaux habitants du village, réunis chez lui pour nous voir, commencèrent à nous raconter des histoires effrayantes. L'un nous dit qu'un colporteur, venant d'Alep et allant au désert, avait été dépouillé par les Bédouins, et qu'on l'avait vu repasser tout nu. Un autre avait appris qu'un marchand, parti de Damas, avait été tué. Tous étaient d'accord sur l'impossibilité de pénétrer parmi les hordes de Bédouins, et cherchaient, par tous les moyens possibles, à nous détourner d'une aussi périlleuse entreprise. Je voyais M. Lascaris se troubler; il se tourna vers moi, et me dit en italien, pour n'être pas compris des autres personnes, 'Cosa dite di questa novità, che mi ha molto scoragito?"—'Je ne crois pas,' lui répondis-je, 'à toutes ces histoires; et, quand même elles seraient vraies, il faudrait encore persévérer dans notre projet.'"

Récit de Fatalla-Sayeghir, quoted by LAMARTINE, *Voyage en Orient.*

The King of Oude and his "Desert-house."—We are sent away with Gifts.—The Mesopotamian Desert.—Pleasures of Freedom.—How to Navigate the Desert.—Alarms and False Alarms.—Stalking a Wolf.—We reach the Shammar.

KASMEYN, *February 24th.*—Bagdad is an abode of political exiles from India—Mussulmans who dislike living under Christian rule, and who have settled here as the nearest place of refuge in Islam. Their position is a pleasant one, for they enjoy the double advantage of religious agreement with the Bagdadis and of foreign protection as British subjects. Many of them are very well off, living on the revenues of their lands in India, and a few are on excellent terms with the consul-general. Of these the most remarkable, by his birth, his wealth, and still more by the dignity of his private character, is the Nawáb Ikbálet Dówlah, the dispossessed and pensioned king of Oude. With him we are now staying at his "desert-house" near Kasmeyn, the first step on our journey northward. I hardly know how to speak of the Nawáb without seeming to say too much. He is an old man now and a philosopher, and he

would not care to have his good deeds paraded, and yet I cannot help recording what I feel about him, that, little as he affects the character of ex-king, he is the most truly dignified personage I ever met. In manner and way of living he is very simple, having something of the Bedouin contempt for appearances, along with the more real absence of pretension of a well-bred Englishman of fifty years ago. He has travelled much and seen much, and understands the European way of thinking as well as that of Eastern people, having besides considerable originality of his own independent of any school of ideas. In conversation he is most agreeable, constantly surprising one with unexpected turns of thought and new ways of saying things, and if we had been able to understand him better, I am sure we should have found him full of the best sort of wit. He is besides a kind and charitable man. His position in Bagdad is a great one—so great, from a moral point of view, that it may well console him for the loss of his former sovereignty and the splendors of his court at Lucknow. Here at Bagdad he has real power, the power of doing good, and real freedom to say what he thinks right to consuls, pashas, doctors of divinity, and all alike, down to the poor Bedouins who live at his gates. I fancy his advice is asked on most of the political difficulties of the Serai, where his knowledge of men and cities, so essential a part of wisdom in the East, and his wit in expressing his ideas, enable him to speak without offence more truth than is often heard in those high places. The consequence of this is that his name is a power in Bagdad, and that he has made himself friends in all classes of society. Among the rest, Ferhán, the Shammar chief, is his sworn ally; and, whenever the skeykh comes to town, it is to the house of his brother, the Malek el Hind, or King of India, as the Arabs call the Nawáb. This circumstance is most fortunate for our plans, as now we shall start for the desert with letters of recommendation which ought to give us the best possible reception there.

The "desert-house," where we are enjoying so pleasant and so unceremonious a hospitality, is one of the many owned by the

Nawáb in and about Bagdad. It stands quite alone, in the barren plain which surrounds the town, and is about half a mile distant from the mosque of Kasmeyn. The towns-people, who are very timorous about venturing outside the city at night, think the Nawáb foolhardy in the extreme to live in such a spot; but to him, as to us, the isolation of the house is its principal charm. He generally, however, lives in Bagdad, but comes here from time to time to make a retreat, partly philosophical, partly religious, among the *úlemas* and doctors of theology of Kasmeyn, for the mosque is a sanctuary and place of repute among pious Shías.

The house itself is as original as its situation, and was built from the Nawáb's own designs. It is constructed like a fortress, with high walls and a single entrance—a very necessary precaution against common robbers as well as marauders from the desert. Above, on the upper story, the rooms are placed, some with the windows facing outward, after the fashion of Turkish rather than of Arab buildings, others looking on to a terrace, over which there is yet a second story. The entrance is through a court-yard, with stables on either side, and dove-cotes inhabited by thousands of white pigeons. The ground-floor is merely a basement, and stone steps lead up from the court to the apartments. These consist mainly of small rooms, furnished with carpets only; but the drawing-room is large, and is so peculiar that I have made a plan of it. Its shape is that of a cross, each of the three shorter ends being occupied by a window, so that the upper half of the room is almost a lantern. The recesses are filled up with broad divans, on which it is pleasant to sit and look at the view. On one side is the mosque of Kasmeyn, with its golden cupola and four minarets, embowered in palms; on the other, the desert with its immense horizon, broken only by the far-away Tower of Nimróud. The sun is setting nearly behind this, and all the desert is painted a beautiful pink color, the dome of the mosque being quite ablaze. It is a most agreeable prospect, giving promise of fine weather for to-morrow's start.

We came to-day from Bagdad, riding quietly out at about two

o'clock, and leaving the camels to follow us with Hánna and a cavass, lent us by Colonel Nixon, so as not to provoke any inquiries as to our journey. We have not said a word to any one of where we are going, beyond Kasmeyn, and are starting without even a *buyuruldi*, the customary permission of travelling in the province; but to-morrow we hope to be out of the reach of questions, and to-night the Nawáb's house is a sanctuary no zaptieh would dare invade.

Nine o'clock.—There are a few families of a very low tribe of Arabs encamped quite close to the house, the Chakukh, a fraction of the Butta tribe, some of whom we have already made acquaintance with at Ctesiphon. They are living in temporary huts, built of tall reeds from the *khor* or lake, which encloses this side of Bagdad, and roofed with the ordinary tenting, so that their abodes pretty closely indicate the life they lead, half settled, half nomadic. They have a few sheep and goats, which they pasture by the khor. After dinner this evening the Nawáb sent for some of these Arabs to sing and dance before us—a performance which I could willingly have dispensed with. The music consisted of a drum and a double pipe, eight inches long, and sounding, in its best, the deepest notes, rather like a hautboy, the upper notes being out of tune and bad, while some double notes, fifths and sixths, were better. The voices were very bad indeed. As to the dancing, the less said about it the better, and we were very glad when it was at an end, and the Nawáb, who had sat through it all, absolutely unmoving except when he fingered his rosary, bade them be off. The Arabs around Bagdad are probably as low and degraded a set as can be found anywhere in Arabia, having been corrupted by the neighborhood of this old city of pleasure, or I am sure such an exhibition could not have been produced.

This over, the Nawáb made us an affecting speech of farewell, wrote with his own hand the letter he had promised us for Ferhán, and added a basket of oranges and pomegranates to give him with it. Then he had another huge basket brought, containing provisions for ourselves, and a third which he filled himself with cakes,

macaroons, preserves, and fruit from the dinner-table, and an earthen bottle to hold water, and then, before I could take breath from surprise, a beautiful Persian rug "to put on my dromedary," and a little silver bowl to drink out of whenever I should come to a fountain—pretty gifts in themselves, and doubly so from the way in which they were given. It was impossible to refuse, or to be otherwise than delighted to accept them. Now for a last sleep under a roof, and to-morrow by daylight for the desert.

Monday, February 25th.—We got away from the Nawáb's house only a little after sunrise, and at first followed the caravan road which goes to Hitt, our host and Dr. Colville riding a mile or so with us on our way, and giving us a few last words of encouragement and advice. It was a delicious morning, clear and bright, and the soil of the desert sparkled under our feet as if it had been strewn with salt, while a light wind from the north-west blew freshly in our faces. We were in high spirits, as was natural; for what can be more physically delightful than a ride on such a morning, or what more inspiriting than the thought of being fairly away upon an adventurous journey? and this time I think we may consider ours a serious one. To say nothing of the dangers, in which we only half believe, there are all sorts of uncertainties before us, from the fact that we are entering an unknown land. Mesopotamia, at least this part of it, has never, as far as I know, been crossed by a European in its whole breadth, or in modern times even by a townsman from Bagdad or Aleppo; and the desert south of the Sinjár hills is quite new ground. It is there that we shall have to go if we want to find Faris and the independent Shammar; and who knows what adventures may befall us on the road? At any rate, we shall be left entirely to our own resources now till we get to Deyr, a journey of nearly 400 miles; for we shall not meet with a village or even a house in the whole distance, except perhaps Tekrít, on the fourth or fifth day from this. Colonel Chesney's survey is our only guide; and, but for a ruin or two marked near the river, and such remarks as "horsemen seen on this hill," "large herds of gazelles," or "a newly-made grave," on

Lieutenant Fitzjames's route in 1836, and on that of the expedition returning in 1837, the whole of the map north of Bagdad is a blank space. Our plan of campaign is this: we are to take a straight line north-north-west, for fifty or sixty miles, till we hit a bend of the Tigris; then follow the right bank of the river for ninety or a hundred more, as far as Sherghát, the head-quarters of Ferhán, the Shammar chief. There we are to deliver the Nawáb's letter, and get him to send us on to Faris, wherever Faris may be. From Sherghát to Deyr it is about 165 miles as the crow flies; but if, as is probable, we have to go as far north as the Sinjár hills, our journey will be considerably longer. The chief difficulty seems to me to be in getting from Ferhán to Faris; for, in spite of what they say at Bagdad, it is impossible the two brothers can be on very good terms. However, the thing must be done, by hook or by crook, and we must be at Deyr to meet Mr. S—— on the 15th of March, for this is a positive engagement.

As to the danger of meeting ghazús—the only real risk we run—Wilfrid and I have had a serious conversation, for it is well to be prepared with a plan before the thing happens. We ourselves are so well armed that, though the rest of the party cannot be expected to help us much, we ought not to be afraid of less than fifteen or twenty men. The Bedouins are only armed with the lance, and their pistols, by all accounts, never go off; so that Wilfrid's double-barrelled gun and the Winchester rifle, which fires fourteen shots without reloading, ought to make us far stronger than any small party of Arabs. We are, therefore, to hold our ground, and trust to their being too prudent to push us to extremities. If, however, we meet a large party—such as, it seems, sometimes goes about—of fifty or a hundred horsemen, it will be no use fighting; and then, if they refuse to listen to terms of capitulation, we shall have to abandon the camels and baggage to their fate, and trust to our mares to carry us out of the difficulty. We are well mounted, and ought not to be overtaken easily. At the worst, according to every account, there is no fear of being personally ill-treated; for the Arabs only care about plunder, and the utmost misfortune that

could happen to us, if captured, would be to be stripped of some of our clothes, and left to find our way on foot to the nearest inhabited place—not a cheerful prospect, certainly, but still not altogether desperate.

I do not think, though sometimes I feel nervous about it, that we really run much risk of meeting anybody evilly inclined. In the first place, we have the Nawáb's letter, which, though they could not read it, the Shammar would probably respect; and in the next, we know how Jedáan and the Ánazeh are engaged at present, and how little time they can have to spare for expeditions of this sort in Eastern Mesopotamia. Hánna and the rest of the people with us are, of course, timorous, and talk incessantly of these ghazús; but fortunately they have no property of their own with them except the clothes they stand up in, and they know that if they lost these we should give them new ones instead. Hánna, I am bound to say, puts an excellent face on the matter, and has full faith in the Beg and in Divine Providence. Ali, the cavass, is a fat Bagdadi, who has to be helped up on to his horse, and does not impress us favorably as a practical traveller, but he seems good-humored and willing to do his duty. The other two members of our party, the Agheyl, are honest, hard-plodding fellows, who work cheerfully and take great care of the camels; but we can hardly judge correctly about any one of them as yet. The camels are capital walkers, doing their three miles in the hour, a very unusual pace, and Wilfrid is especially pleased with his delúl. He mounted it to-day for the first time, and intends to keep Hagar as fresh as may be for the accidents of sport or war.

A couple of hours after leaving Kasmeyn, we stopped at an inlet of the khor, to let our beasts drink, and to fill the water-skins. Then, leaving the caravan road, which here takes a turn westward, we struck out across the plain, going in a straight line north-northwest, with only the sun to give us our direction. In this way we travelled on all the morning, watching our horses' shadows as they crept round from the near to the off side, and not stopping even for a minute. We were still on the alluvial soil of Babylonia,

which at this time of year is more bare than the desert itself, the only vegetation being a dry prickly shrub called *aghúl*, which the camels snatched at greedily as they went along. The ground was full of deep cracks, which made it rather dangerous going for horses; and, relying on this, perhaps, gazelles are to be found here very plentifully. We saw a good many during the morning, but did not give chase. Every two or three miles we came to long double lines of mounds, the remains of former canals. These have all the appearance of natural hills, and rise to a height of twenty or thirty feet above the level of the plain. We put up numerous flocks of larks, and Wilfrid shot a Norfolk plover, but otherwise there was not much life on the plain. Once or twice we came across small parties of Simmím Arabs, with donkeys, bringing in firewood. This they told us was *shôk;* the word merely means "thorn;" I believe it was camel-thorn. It grows in large bushes, and burns, like all desert shrubs, as well green as dry.

About mid-day we came to gravelly soil and more undulating ground, the edge of the real desert. The camels were very hungry, not having had a proper meal yesterday, for they will not eat corn, and the country round the Nawáb's house is as bare of all pasture as a turnpike-road. We accordingly ordered a slower pace, and allowed them to feed as they went; and at three o'clock, coming to a place where there is some grass and a pool of rain-water, we have stopped. There are some tents about a mile from us, belonging to the Mesháabe, a half-pastoral, half-felláh tribe, harmless, good people, who have brought us milk, not as a matter of hospitality, but "minshan flús" (for money). We have only come about sixteen miles to-day; but I am tired, I suppose from the change of life to our travelling rations, after the four full daily meals of the Residency. Wilfred is perfectly happy, being once more "in his own tent," and having, besides, his own camels now, and his own servants, and no guards or policemen to vex him. Those who have lived all their lives in Europe don't know what a luxury it is to feel one's self "free from the police."

February 26th.—Wilfrid has had to speak seriously to Ali, who

seems inclined to require more waiting upon than we can spare him. He is very fat, and really has some difficulty in climbing into his saddle; but it is necessary he should understand that the Agheyl cannot be called away from their business of driving the camels every time he wants to get off or on his horse, nor made to tap the water-skin for him every time he feels thirsty. The fact is, every one of us has quite enough work to do, and we cannot afford to have idle hands in the caravan. This little matter settled, all has gone on well, and we have made a good march to-day of twenty-seven miles, according to Wilfrid's dead-reckoning. At starting, we passed through the Mesháabe camp, and stopped at the principal tent to ask a few questions and drink some fresh goat's milk. A building three or four miles off to the east, they say, is the Khán Suadíyeh, on the old caravan road to Tekrít. The Mesháabe, like all the other small tribes, have no camels, only sheep and goats, and some of them cultivate land near the Tigris. They are reckoned at a thousand tents, according to our Agheyl Nejrán, who puts the Butta at half that number.

We kept the same course to-day as yesterday, north-north-west, crossing tracts of fine gravel in some places, and in others of alluvial soil, with numerous Babylonian mounds and canals. The whole district is, in fact, cut into regular squares by them, so that one travels with the feeling of being in an enclosed country. It is all desolate enough now, inhabited only by gazelles, of which we saw great numbers, and by birds of prey. We passed close to a pair of fine golden eagles sitting on one of the mounds. In one place, where there was a little pasture and shôk-bushes, we found a pit dug as a hiding-place for gazelle-hunters, but except this there was no trace of inhabitants.

We had seen nobody all the morning, when about noon we suddenly became aware of some horsemen bearing down upon us. We could see the points of their spears glittering in the sun, and as they were evidently coming up at a gallop, Wilfrid ordered a halt. There were four of them, and when they came within half a mile of us they stopped and dismounted, waiting, I suppose, for

others to come up. Two or three more straggled in, and then they cantered up together toward us. Wilfrid, who had been riding the delúl, now mounted his mare, and went to meet them with Ali and Nejrán, while I stayed with the camels. I soon saw that it was all right; for the men dismounted, and the whole party came on together talking and laughing. It was a false alarm. They were not Bedouins at all, but a party of government people, who had been out collecting taxes from the shepherds of the district, levying, they told us, half a beshlík (five-pence) on each sheep or goat. They had with them a man on a mule, who was making his way to Samára, a village beyond the Tigris, and who, hearing we were going more or less in that direction, tacked himself on to our party when the rest went away, as they presently did, after the usual amount of talking. Talking is a pleasure no Arab, whether from town or country, ever neglects an occasion to indulge in. We did not want the man's company, but there was no getting rid of him, as it seems to be a sacred privilege in the East to join company with anybody you may meet on the road. "The more the merrier," is a proverb all accept. So he followed us.

A little farther on, on some higher ground, we came to several people wandering about on foot, apparently with no object but that of examining the ground and stopping, now and then, as if to pick up a stone. We found, on inquiry, that they were hunting for the white truffles (kemeyeh) which I have already mentioned, and which are very common here. These people belonged to Suméycheh, a small village the palm-trees of which they pointed out to us far away on the horizon to our right. It stands on a sort of side channel of the Tigris. The Agheyl were anxious to go toward these trees, though out of our course, for they do not at all approve of our way of going in a straight line and keeping in the open desert, and they have all along shown an inclination, if I may use a sea phrase, to "hug the shore."

Wilfrid, when he is on his delúl, is obliged to keep with the camels, and then I have to ride in front and give the direction. This requires a good deal of attention in a country where there are

so few landmarks, but it is not really difficult as long as there is sun or wind to go by. The shadow of one's horse's neck makes an excellent dial, and with a little practice it is easy to calculate the rate at which it ought to move round so that the course should be a straight one. The wind, too, in this country almost always blows north-west, and does not shift about in the plain, as it would among hills. Wilfrid has made so many journeys now without guides that he at least feels quite at home in the desert; and I, though my experience is more limited than his, have seen enough to know that one is far less likely to lose one's way there than elsewhere. The weald of Sussex is ten times more puzzling to get across.

Early in the afternoon we came to an immense double row of mounds, running in an absolutely straight line north-north-west. This is by far the largest Babylonian canal we have yet seen, and we are surprised to find no mention of it on our map, as it is a considerable feature in the landscape, and no doubt comes from the Tigris. The Agheyl and the man on the mule call it Cherrisáda. There are groups of mounds here and there in its neighborhood, showing where villages once stood, and in one place we came upon a perfect square which may have been a fortress. In deference to the entreaties of the Agheyl, backed up as they were by the man on the mule, we altered our course a little and followed the line of the canal. This led us to lower ground, on the edge of which we have encamped, not more than a mile from a *kubbr* or tomb, which Ferhán recognizes as a landmark he has seen before, and calls Abu el Mehásin. About two miles off to the east we can see some tents, and Ali has been despatched with the delúl to see if water can be got, or milk or eggs. The man on the mule, who, by-the-way, was kicked off and hurt this afternoon, says that Jisr Hárba is only three miles from the canal; this fixes our position, as "Harber Bridge" is marked on Chesney's map.

This is ideal camping-ground—a beautiful hollow, full of good grass and shôk-bushes, where the mares are feeding, while the camels find pasturage they like better on the upper ground. Our

tents are pitched on gravel, and we have no neighbors to bore us. One of the charms of tent life is the feeling of absolute ownership one has in each spot of ground one camps on—the right to do precisely all one likes with it—to cut down, dig up, or leave alone, without permission of any landlord, or liability to land-tax, tithe, rating, or other burden, such as limits every form of ownership in England. Here it is absolute and complete, even to the closing up of rights of way; for one is at liberty to treat all comers, if one likes, as enemies, and to bid them be off. Not that at present we have hostile feelings toward any one. Only it is nice to think that even the keeping of the peace depends on our good-will and pleasure, not on the law of the land. Liberty, in spite of the crimes of nonsensical talk which have been committed in its name, is the greatest of all blessings, and in its perfect form is not to be found in Europe.

Ali has come back with water and other good things, and has brought a couple of Arabs with him (Kasaréj they call themselves), who confirm the man on the mule about the position of Jisr Hárba. They talk of their tribe having twenty thousand tents; but that, of course, is nonsense. Nejrán says, however, that they are more numerous than the Butta or Mesháabe. All these tribes are alike—half shepherds, half ploughmen. The Kasaréj have some fields below us, irrigated from the "little Tigris," and I can hear a faint quacking of ducks, which proves that water is not far off. A square *tell* (mound) about two miles west of us is Abu Raséyn.

February 27th.—Another good day's march has brought us to the Tigris. We lost time, however, by listening to the man on the mule yesterday; for, in order to cross a branch of the Cherrisáda Canal called Ferhatýeh, about which there would have been no sort of difficulty where we first came upon it, we had this morning to go a considerable way round. The Kasaréj still make use of this canal for some miles of its course, and the ditch (it was no more) was just too wide for the camels, though of course our mares hopped over it without difficulty. After that, the piloting of the cara-

van was very troublesome, and reminded Wilfrid, he said, of riding a horse which bores toward one side. Every moment that our attention was taken off their movements, we found that the camels had been headed away to the right, and we had to go back and insist on their following us. The Agheyl and the man on the mule could not understand how we should know anything about the direction, and maintained that we were going away from the river "into the Jezíreh, into the Chôl," they said, and put an accent of terror into the words. It was, therefore, no little triumph when, about one o'clock, a speck appeared on the horizon exactly in front of us, which the man on the mule admitted was the tower of Samára. It seemed at first but a very few miles off, but turned out to be at least fifteen or sixteen, as it stands on high ground, and is a very lofty building. It is on the other side of the Tigris. Presently afterward we passed some tents, where there were a mare and foal, and, riding up to them, we found their owners were Delím. We were surprised to find any of this tribe so far from their head-quarters, the Euphrates, but they told us they came across the Jezíreh every year. With this exception, we met nobody all day, but saw numbers of gazelles and bustards, also two foxes almost white. Most of our journey was over the gravelly desert. About mid-day we crossed another long line of mounds, where we stopped to let the camels feed, as there was *éshubb* (camomile), which the Agheyl declare is "as barley" to camels.

As we came nearer the tower of Samára, we saw several other large buildings, apparently ruins, at different points to the right of it. In fact, the left bank of the Tigris, opposite where we now are, seems to be an immense cemetery of cities, extending for many miles. These would be most interesting to visit, but we cannot get the camels across the river, and we dare not leave them unprotected. We console ourselves with the conviction that these sites have all, no doubt, been thoroughly explored. The names given them by the Arabs here are Jadsíeh, Gáyim, Melwíeh, El Ashid, none of them inhabited, mere "beyút kadím," they say, contemptuously—"ruins." Only one old town is found on the right

bank of the river, Istabilát, which Wilfrid thinks must be Greek. We rode through it, as it lay in our way, and a very interesting place we thought it. It is laid out in squares, with a fine street fifty yards broad down the middle, and the houses, though all of them in ruins, are still standing. They are built of good brick, as is the city wall, in a fairly perfect state, flanked with round towers. In the evening light the place looked almost as if still inhabited, and it is much more attractive than the tiresome Babylonian mounds. A canal passes right through the town, and the buttresses of a bridge over it can still be seen. It is dry now, and half filled up.

A broad caravan road, apparently long disused, led from the gate of the town to the north-west. Following this, we came rather suddenly on the Tigris, which here makes a fine sweep close under a steep cliff. We were some time looking for a way down this, as we thought it would be pleasant to camp near the river; but at last we found a very nice place, about half-way from the top, for the tents, and a passage for the unladen camels down to the tamarisk-beds below. The Tigris is here an exact reproduction of the Euphrates, only that its valley is not on so imposing a scale. The volume of the two rivers, I should say, was about equal, but the Tigris strikes me as being the more rapid. It is called in Arabic *Díjleh*, the Euphrates *Fratt*.

The Arabs here belong to the Jemáa tribe. They have a story of about twenty of their sheep having been driven off, three days ago, by some men from the Delím—the same, I suppose, as those we passed this morning. They talk a good deal about ghazús from the Ánazeh, and I suppose it is for this reason that they are encamped in the tamarisk-woods. There are francolins again here, and pigeons and wild-boars and jackals; so that if one were to turn one's self three times round, as children say at blind-man's-buff, one might fancy one's self on the Euphrates. The place at which we have encamped is called Sheriét el Ghazál.

February 28th.—We were disturbed about midnight by a cry of thieves. Our own mares, who sleep with their noses in our tent,

were safe enough, and the camels were squatting composedly in a circle outside them, but Ali's horse was gone. This horse, I must say, has been the greatest possible nuisance to us from the day we left Bagdad, fidgeting, and neighing, and breaking loose night after night, so that our sympathy with his disappearance was not altogether unmixed; but there was not long cause for sorrow. Our position, on the ledge of the cliff, was one not over-favorable for a thief to get away from, with his prize, in the dark, and after stumbling about and creeping with our heads near the ground to get a sight of him against the sky, we found the horse at the edge, over which the thief, disturbed by our alarm, had no doubt just slipped. It was not far to fall, and we heard him scuttling away through the tamarisks below. This put all the camp on the alert, and most of the night was spent in talking and singing to show we were awake, Ferhán keeping it up long after the rest had dozed off again, by whistling a long plaintive note like a marmot's.

The sun rose red and threatening from behind a thick bank of clouds, and just as the camels were loaded a gust of wind from the south-east struck them, which nearly tumbled them over the cliff and sent the lighter luggage flying. The air became full of sand, and a few drops of rain fell, but nothing came of it: only the wind continued. Our route to-day was across part of the Tigris valley, where there was cultivation in patches. We marched slowly, letting the camels feed as they went, and making the castle of El Ashid our point, for we find that this is, after all, on the right bank of the river. Samára, on the opposite bank, about two miles from us, looked an interesting place, with a fine mosque, gilt like the mosque of Kasmeyn, and two minarets (they say it is a "holy place"), while the tower, which we had seen so long yesterday, is really grand. Its height must be very great, and its construction is most peculiar, reminding one only of pictures of the Tower of Babel, which, very likely, it originally suggested. It is round, and tapers gradually almost to a point, having a spiral staircase outside. It stands in an enclosure, with very high walls, which must be nearly half a mile square. If we had not been afraid of getting

into some difficulty with the authorities residing there, we should have tried to pay it a visit, as there must be a ferry, though we did not see one, our man on the mule having left us to go across.

Except this view of Samára, and a singular rock of conglomerate jutting out into the valley like a bit of masonry, we passed nothing of interest till we came to El Ashid, or, as it is marked on the map, Kạsr Bint el Khalifeh, the Castle of the Caliph's Daughter. This is a most picturesque and interesting ruin. It stands on a promontory of the cliff, and overlooks an immense length of river up and down. It is square, and, as we found, still sufficiently well preserved to make us rather doubtful how to ride our horses in over the crumbled walls. But a breach had been made on one side, and there we got in. It was a more difficult matter to stay, however, when we got there, for in such an exposed place the wind nearly blew us away. The castle is built of burned brick, and there are remains of rather elaborate architectural mouldings in this material. It is undoubtedly Saracenic. Wilfrid, while I tried to make a sketch, managed to get a brace of partridges and a pigeon, very much wanted for the pot.

Rain was now falling heavily—the first we have had since we left Bagdad, for the weather has hitherto been quite hot—and we agreed to stop as soon as we could find a sheltered place, although we had only marched some twelve miles. There is capital grass everywhere. We are accordingly encamped in a little side valley, where there is a convenient screen from the wind in the shape of a low cliff; and we have changed our wet clothes, and a fire is lit, and dinner getting ready. It threatens to be a wild night, but we hope the rain will keep robbers away. We have arranged a cord round the exposed side of the camp, to trip up intruders.

March 1st.—In the night the wind changed suddenly round to the north-west again, and nearly blew the tents down, bringing March in, indeed, like a lion. It is bitterly cold, but the rain has ceased. Wilfrid took some observations from the cliff, and finds that El Ashid, Samára, and the kubbr Imám Dúr, which is opposite us, are all marked wrong on the map. Indeed, it is difficult

to make out at all what Colonel Chesney can have been thinking about here, for on the Euphrates he was very accurate.

While we drank our coffee before starting, we saw a wolf come over the brow of the hill behind us and sit down very composedly to watch us. Wilfrid determined on a stalk, and did so most successfully, getting within twenty yards of him and shooting him through the heart. Only (I grieve to say it) the wolf turned out to be a jackal. In the morning light he had looked unnaturally large, and we had not been able to see his tail, which is the only difference in shape between the jackal and the wolf.

We have been much discomposed to-day by a report, we have heard repeated several times by Arabs we have met, of a ghazú of seventy horsemen, said to be Ánazeh, which passed along here yesterday. Very likely it is exaggerated; but there must be some foundation for it, as the people who told us were evidently alarmed, and it has made us very cautious in keeping a good look-out. Wilfrid and I ride on about a mile in front as advanced guard, while Ali, who has better eyes than most of the people here, guards the rear. It is curious how much nonsense is believed in Europe about Arab eyesight, the fact being that it is not particularly good. We always see things long before the others do. To-day, for instance, we caught sight of a wavering bit of light and shade, much distorted by mirage, which we could see very well was a distant range of hills, but which the Agheyl declared were clouds. They are no doubt the Hamrín hills, marked on the map as about fifty miles from where we first saw them, and interesting as becoming farther eastward the boundary between Turkey and Persia. We made them out quite distinctly by riding to the top of a tell.

We passed to-day through a camp of Suámra Arabs, and at a little distance farther on we put up an immense wild-boar out of a patch of tamarisk and *argál*. He trotted past quite close to me. Wilfrid shot some francolins and partridges and a hare, the first we have got on the whole of our journey. Hánna's delight may be imagined. "We shall eat to-night," he said, "what would cost half a mejidie at Aleppo"—and half a mejidie to Hánna's eco-

nomical mind is an enormous sum. The reports about the ghazú have been conflicting; one man telling us it had gone on to Tekrít, another that it had passed over the hills westward, while half a dozen villagers from Tekrít itself, which is not far off, say that they have met nothing on the road, and believe it was not a ghazú, but a band of robbers. These would perhaps be more disagreeable still to meet, but, please God, we may yet escape. Wilfrid has gone shooting in a wood of argál, a thorny bush with green fleshy leaves, which here takes the place of tamarisk. We are encamped under a very fine cliff, with plenty of natural barley and rye for the mares and camels, and on this account have stopped early, after only sixteen or seventeen miles' march. Wilfrid's bag to-day is: four francolins, five desert partridges, one large red-legged partridge, two teal, one hare, one jackal.

March 2d.—We left the valley, and, climbing by a rather steep track up the cliff, found ourselves at once, as it were, in another world—the world of the desert. This change was of course nothing new, but it affects me as strange every time it occurs, the difference which these few feet make being so absolute. It was not long before we caught sight of Tekrít, a miserable-looking hamlet something in the style of Deyr, but without even a minaret; and we made a detour to avoid it, as we are not in want of provisions, and wish to see nothing of mudírs, kaimakams, and zaptiehs. We then crossed a road leading, Ferhán informed us, to Ána, but not used now, as there is "*khóf*" (fear or danger). A little farther on, Nejrán, who happened to be some way in front, turned round and called out that there were Bedouins coming. The ground was undulating, and they were already close to us before we saw them; but there was nothing to fear. There were nine of them, mounted on delúls, but unarmed, and they informed us they were going to Tekrít on business from Ferhán; still, they were the first Shammar we had seen, and we looked at them with interest, almost with awe. They had a rollicking, devil-may-care way of looking and talking, very different from the manner of the felláhin Arabs we have hitherto had to do with, marking them as men of an almost different

race. They asked us a question or two in return for ours, and went on their way without any ceremony.

At two o'clock we came again to the valley, where we found a beautiful green plain, covered with buffaloes and other cattle, and a large camp, the men of which told us they were Ajuári. Across this plain we travelled for a couple of hours, and have now stopped in much such a situation as last night's camp, under a cliff and surrounded with the greenest grass. Our mares have fattened rapidly on the journey, as we have hitherto had corn to give them, as well as what they pick up, and that is not a little. There are still great herds of buffaloes near us, being driven home for the night to a camp not a mile away. The people (Jibúri) from it have come to us, and seem one of the best tribes we have yet met, good-natured, honest folks—as, we have remarked, all owners of buffaloes are—ready to fetch milk, butter, or anything else we want, but sufficiently commercial to expect payment for what they bring. They seem prosperous, peaceable, and happy felláhin, but of the best sort. They tell us they are tributary to the Shammar, that they are not a fighting tribe, and that the Ánazeh, when they come, as they do most years, to make their raids upon the Shammar, do not meddle with their buffaloes. The first Shammar camp, it appears, is only three hours' march from here; not Ferhán's, however, he is farther on at Sherghát, but Ferhán's people's, under a sheykh of the curious name of Múttony, pronounced as written. So, for good or for evil, we shall see a real Bedouin camp to-morrow: let us hope for good.

We have marched twenty-six miles to-day from point to point on Chesney's map, our position at present being about three miles north-north-west of Abu Reysh, a ruin which we can see very well, and we have done it in eight hours—pretty good going for loaded camels, or for any animals, for the matter of that. It is forty-eight miles on now to Sherghát, so that we may hope to get there the day after to-morrow. A traveller on foot has come to our camp, with two little bags slung over a stick on his shoulder. He is a peddler, selling tobacco to the Arabs. He has a rough pair of

wooden scales, and a pebble which he uses as a weight. A funny old man, good-humored, and asking for nothing. There are some other guests, too, in the shape of some little dishwashers, which are tame enough to come almost inside the tent.

Sunday, March 3d.—We were in no hurry to start this morning, having only three hours' march before us, and I had time to take a sketch from the top of a high mound, while Wilfrid made a discovery of refuse glass, showing that at some period of history there must have been a glass foundry here. The cliffs are of sandstone, and fifty to a hundred feet high. The view of Jebel Hamrín was very beautiful, its ravines and indentations furrowing its slopes with a net-work of blue shadows. We could see the cleft through which the Tigris issues, on its passage from the upper plain of Assyria into the lower one of Babylonia. Formerly the Hamrín hills must have been the boundary of the two kingdoms.

My mare, Tamarisk, has hurt her foot, and is so lame that I have been riding the delúl, a most comfortable way of travelling; but it is tiresome to have to keep with the camels, instead of riding to see what is happening. Besides, the motion is so smooth that I get very sleepy. Wilfrid, in the mean time, was enjoying himself galloping after jackals and foxes, one of which he wounded, but it got away among the rocks of the cliff; and I felt very envious, and tired of seeing Hagar careering away on the horizon, "scarce so gross as a beetle."

After passing some large Jibúri camps, where they gave us milk and lebben, we came to a ruined khan of the Saracenic age, marked on the map as Kerninah, a beautiful building with horseshoe gates. At another Jibúri camp farther on we learned that Múttony and his Shammar were encamped under the hills five or six miles off to the east of north, while our course, if we wanted to go to Sherghát, should be north-west, for camels cannot get across the range of hills here, and have to go round to a place where there is a pass leading to the Wady Gehennem. This encouraged Nejrán to attempt inducing us to shirk the Shammar altogether, for, like all towns-people, he has a wholesome horror of Bedouins,

and he proposed that we should make, instead, for a camp of Zoba, said to be nearer to our line of march. None of our party know as yet where we are bound for after Sherghát, and the Agheyl are under the impression that we are going on to Mósul. Hánna knows, in a vague way, that we expect to meet Mr. S—— at Deyr, but his ideas of geography do not go far.

It is needless to say that we paid no sort of attention to Nejrán's suggestion, and that Wilfrid struck off in the direction pointed out by the Jibúri. Ali now for the first time came to the front, and, though apparently rather nervous, stuck close to Wilfrid as he galloped on to reconnoitre. Nothing, however, was visible but the desert and the hills for the best part of two hours, until at last a man was sighted peeping over the crest of a tell, and Wilfrid rode up to question him. "Who are you?" "An Arab." "Where from?" "From the Arabs out there," pointing in the direction we had come from. "Shammar?" "No." "Jibúri?" "No." "Zoba?" "No." "Then whose are those camels?" "The Shammar's." "Where are the Shammar?" "Out there, far away, far away," pointing to the hill. "Come and show us, there's a good man! We are friends of Ferhán's, on our way to Sherghát, and we want to speak to Múttony." "Very well; I am one of Múttony's men." "And a Shammar?" "Yes." "Mashalláh! come along."

This matter settled, it presently appeared that the Shammar camp was close by, hidden by some rising ground, to the top of which our new acquaintance took us, informing us the while that Múttony himself was not there, being away on a ghazú against the Ánazeh, but that we should find Hatmoud ibn Hîyet at home and very pleased to see us. These Shammar are of the Áslan tribe. We soon saw below us a scattered camp of about twenty-five tents, a great number of camels and a few mares, perhaps half a dozen. I got on my mare, so as to arrive with becoming dignity; and Wilfrid gave his gun to Hánna, and put on a sword which he has been keeping for state occasions. Mr. S—— had told us what to do, and how to behave among the Bedouins; but we both, I think, felt

rather shy at this our first visit, arriving as strangers and unannounced. Nobody came to meet us or seemed to pay the least attention to our party, and we rode on without looking to the right or to the left toward the largest tent we could see. There we dismounted slowly and walked into the tent.

The etiquette of an Arab reception is a rather chilling thing, when experienced for the first time, and we have never before been *en cérémonie* among the Bedouins; for in the French Sahara and the Egyptian desert European travellers are well known, and are treated after European fashion. Here we are probably the first Europeans ever seen. Nobody moved till we had come inside the tent, and Wilfrid had said in a loud voice "Saláam aleykoum," to which everybody—for there were perhaps a dozen men sitting there—answered also in a loud voice "Aleykoum saláam." Then they rose to their feet and politely made way for us to enter, the principal man bustling about to have a carpet spread and a camel saddle brought for us to lean our elbows on, for such is the custom. We sat down without ceremony, merely making the usual salute of raising the hand to the mouth and head, and looking solemn and unconcerned, for so Mr. S—— had recommended us to do; but the ice once broken, Hatmoud and his friends seemed willing enough to talk, and anxious to do everything they could to make us comfortable. Ali has come out in quite a new light, for he is very useful in keeping up conversation for us—always our difficulty—and very clever in making any little private arrangements as to the pitching of our tents, and the getting of corn for our mares, and other things which one wants done but does not like asking for. Of course, there is no question of paying for anything here. In this he has shown considerable tact.

Hatmoud's tent is a very poor one, and we are disappointed in finding no external signs of greatness among these Shammar, more than in the tents of their lower brethren, Jibúri, Delím, or Aghedáat. Except one carpet and the saddle, there is absolutely no furniture, and the coffee is made in pots no better than Sotámm's among the Jerifa. The men, however, are better behaved

than most of those in whose tents we have been, and have asked no impertinent questions. In a few minutes thirty or more of them had collected round Hatmoud's fire. They made no secret of their sheykh's proceedings. Múttony was away toward Ána on a ghazú, with a thousand horsemen from the Áslan, besides what he had mustered from other Shammar tribes, for it would seem he is Akìd, or military leader of the clan.* This expedition may account for the absence of mares in the camp, or of armed men, for very few of the tents were distinguished by the aristocratic spear. Múttony was to cross the Euphrates somewhere near Rowa, and was to attack the Mehéd, Jedáan's people. The name of the Áslan camp is Howshweysh—a difficult name to pronounce, and impossible to write. When we had conversed for half an hour, we retired to our own tent, pitched just behind Hatmoud's, and by Ali's arrangements had our dinner served there, which is a far better plan than eating with the Arabs, and which they made no objection to our proposing. There are a great many dogs about the camp, and a few greyhounds, called by the Arabs *tazeh*. Thus ends our first evening among the terrible Shammar, of whom we have heard so many tales, and who have figured as enemies in so many of Mr. S——'s adventures.

March 4th.—With regard to our plans, of which it has been necessary that we should say something in answer to the inquiries of our host and others, Wilfrid has thought it best to conceal the exact truth—at least, as far as Faris is concerned—until we have found out what his real position is with respect to Ferhán and the southern Shammar. We have accordingly talked a great deal today about visiting ruins and mounds, which they seem to understand well enough as an object of interest to Europeans. In this way we have hit upon a piece of information which may prove useful to us. We were asking about the "remains" at Sherghát, of which we had been told at Bagdad, as especially interesting, when the man to whom we were talking said, "Oh, that is nothing. If

* All this account was an exaggeration, as we heard later.

you want to see ruins, you should go to El Haddr, where there are stone pictures (*súra hájar*) and old houses more than you can count." We asked where this was, and he pointed north-west; which is exactly the direction we shall probably have to take; and Wilfrid asked him if there were any Arabs on the way. "Oh yes," he said; "you will find Smeyr, who is encamped just by the ruins." This made us open our ears, for Smeyr is a name which excites our curiosity on account of his late journey to Jebel Shammar; and we have determined, if possible, to see him—that is to say, if he is not too far out of our road—and get all the information we can from him on so interesting a subject.

Hatmoud proposed in the morning—the very thing we wanted of him—to go with us to Sherghát. It will be a sort of introduction for us to Ferhán, besides giving us protection on the way in case of an encounter with *khayál* (horsemen); so we readily agreed, and at eight o'clock we started. It was a white frost, and our tents were covered with rime, which, in spite of a bright sun all day, is still unmelted. At starting, our feet were so cold that we walked for the first mile or two, much to Hatmoud's amiable vexation, for he kept on telling us to "erkob! erkob!" ("mount! mount!") in a tone of command, as if it were his own mare he was offering us. But it is a way everybody has in this country, where the rule of minding one's own business is not accepted. This, however, is a small matter to complain of. In everything he seems most amiably disposed and anxious to oblige. He and his companion were fairly mounted; he on a bay mare he calls a Seglawíeh, and the other on a two-year-old colt, a Jilfán. They both of them admired Hagar, and when they heard her breed, Kehîlet Ajúz, put their hands to their heads in token of respect. They hurried us along, begging us not to let the camels graze, as there might be khayál about, and they kept a good look-out toward the plain. On our right lay the Makhúl hills, a continuation of Jebel Hamrín, bare and red, and intersected with ravines, which every now and then extended into the plain, cutting deep watercourses, and putting the camels to some trouble in crossing them. I again rode the delúl

most of the day, for Tamarisk limps vexatiously. Hatmoud recommends a wet bandage, in the evening, of salt and lebben.

A couple of camels appeared in sight, and the follower was sent to reconnoitre, returning presently with two more Áslan, who came on with us. One of these, an old man, saw me eating an apple (one of the Nawáb's), and asked what it was. I gave him a piece, which he ate, and remarked, "Hôsh hada, basal" ("This is capital, an onion"). A little later a large party appeared on the horizon, which we could not at first make out on account of the mirage. They seemed to be keeping a nearly parallel line with ours, and at first there was a suspicion of khayál, and the usual word "*khóf*" ("danger") was bandied about freely; but as our lines gradually converged, the cause of alarm proved to be nothing worse than some poor people with donkeys travelling from Bagdad to Mósul. They had been seven days on the road, and had come this way instead of taking the Derb es Sultan, or highway, round by the Persian frontier, because it is shorter, and they have nothing to lose. They were glad, however, of so good an escort as ours, and proposed to travel with us as far as we should go.

There was a woman in the party, and, as we were both walking, she came to me, and we had a little talk. She told me how tired she was; how she and her husband, Abdallah, and a boy of twelve, and a child of three, had but one very small donkey among them. I saw Abdallah on it, with the child in front of him. The elder boy was walking, and she begged me to let him ride one of our camels, and seemed very grateful when I consented. She, poor thing, seemed to find life a burden; her feet were hurt by the stones, and she expected to be confined in about two months. The donkey shook her too much, she said, and so she had walked all the way. The thought of going home to Mósul was her only comfort—Mósul, such a beautiful town, her own *bélled*, far better than that wretched Bagdad, Abdallah's birthplace. The anticipation of home buoyed her up with hope. Two others of the party were Fatma's brothers, with a second donkey between them. One

of the Áslan very good-naturedly dismounted to give the brother who was on foot a ride.

So the day passed—a long, weary march, perfectly straight, but across a singularly pretty bit of desert, which nobody but I, I am sure, thought so. Wilfrid had ridden on with Hatmoud, and about four o'clock I saw them gallop toward some tents, which appeared still a long way off under the hills. When we came up, the two Shammar had stuck their spears into the ground in a nice wady, where there was grass, a mile or so from the tents. This was the sign of our camp being chosen; so here we are pleasantly lodged enough, and alone, for the Mósul people have gone on to the Arab camp.

. . . I am afraid we have made a stupid mistake; and it only shows how careful one has to be, in dealing with Arabs, not to hurt their feelings. We were resting in our tent, rather tired, writing our journals, when Hánna came to say that a lamb had been sent from the neighboring camp. We had understood from Hatmoud that the people there were not Shammar, but Haddadín, whom we had heard of as a very respectable but commercial tribe, which makes its living by taking in sheep to graze from the townsmen of Aleppo and Mósul. We did not then suppose that the lamb came as a present, and, having our larder full, sent it away. But now several of the Haddadín have come, and with them their sheykh, the sender of the lamb, who is much distressed at having his hospitality slighted. The sheykh, a venerable old man, with a singularly dignified countenance, was standing unnoticed by us in front of our tent, when Hánna returned with this explanation, and we have had much ado to make him forget our rudeness. We made him sit down by us, showed him our maps, and asked him about his tribe. Still he remained grave, as Arabs do when they are offended, and then, after a certain amount of talk, in the course of which we were informed, though not by himself, that our visitor was Abdallah, Sheykh of all the Haddadín in Mesopotamia, we bade Hánna bring what was left us of the fruit the Nawáb had packed for us at Kasmeyn, and which we had hitherto found a

most acceptable present, when presents were required, for fruit is held in great estimation by the Bedouins. This we begged him to accept for "his house"—that is to say, his wives and family—the usual polite form of offering such a present; but the old man put them aside, not rudely, but reproachfully, and saying simply, "You would not take my lamb, why should I take these?"

We assured him, lamely enough, that we did not know the present came from a sheykh (of course we could not say that we thought it had been sent for sale); that we had no notion that the camp we had seen was that of Abdallah, the Sheykh of the Haddadín, or we should certainly have alighted there;* and that, in fine, the lamb should at once be killed. The by-standers, interested in the prospect of a feast, supported us in our explanation, and declared that it was satisfactory, and the good old man has gone away with his oranges and pomegranates. But I am vexed at our having made the mistake. The lamb has been slain and devoured. It is delightfully still to-night, after the Shammar camp of yesterday, with no sound in the desert round us but that of the camels quietly chewing their cud.

March 5th.—The Haddadín, according to Sheykh Abdallah, have five hundred tents—the number, I expect, of those under his direct rule, for Hatmoud assures us that they are a very numerous tribe—three or four thousand tents, he says. They have, at any rate, the appearance of great wealth; for, besides a hundred camels, which they keep for carrying their tents and other goods, they have a far greater number of sheep here than we have seen together during our whole journey, except those, perhaps, on the plain of Melakh. The flocks began to pass our camp before it was light, and some of them must have been already out of sight; yet, counting them as we started, I made out at least twenty separate flocks, which may be reckoned as containing quite five hundred sheep

* An excuse for want of politeness, on the ground of ignorance of the rank of the person offended, though an additional offence with us, is always accepted as valid in the East.

each. In one which I counted there were over seven hundred. This gives ten thousand, in round numbers, as the property of only twelve tents. Some of these were probably only held in part ownership with the townsmen of Mósul; but, even if half were not theirs, this still leaves over four hundred sheep each, a very tidy property.

An hour after this we turned to the right, and began to cross the hills by a well-worn pass in the limestone rocks, two hundred and fifty feet, according to my barometer, above the plain, and six hundred and fifty above the level of the Tigris at Howshweysh. We reached the highest point at half-past ten, and from it got a fine view northward over the plain of Nineveh and the hills beyond Mósul, still white with snow. The descent was not rapid, and, after one or two ups and downs, brought us to a smiling valley rejoicing in the quite inappropriate name of Wady Gehennem, or Valley of Gehenna. There we overtook a party of Agheyl, with thirty or forty camels, encamped with their luggage in a sheltered place. They were delighted to see their comrades Nejrán and Ferhán, and made us stop and drink water with them. They had no coffee, and Wilfrid was given a narghileh. They were from Bagdad, and had been thirty-one days on the road, taking it easy on account of their camels. They had followed the river all the way. This gave Nejrán, who has begun to complain about our going on every day, and for such a long distance, a text for a sermon on overdriving the camels. But they have shown no disposition yet to give in, and keep well in flesh, so that I suspect it is more on his own account than theirs that he is anxious. He does not do half so much work as Ferhán, and insists upon riding one or other of the camels a great part of the day. He is a very little man, but inclined to be domineering, and to give his advice on all occasions. The other servants don't like him, and Hánna complains of his prodigious appetite. But we cannot afford to quarrel with him here.

The approach to Sherghát is cheerless enough, as is that of every other place with settled habitations in this country. Not

that Sherghát has any houses, or anything more than a wretched little guard-house to boast of; but Ferhán Pasha, as he is styled, has made it his fixed head-quarters now for three years past, and of course every blade of grass has been eaten down, and every inch of ground trampled and bemired for miles round. A more dismal camp, not even excepting Aldershot, I never passed through —dirty and squalid and hideous: it makes one's eyes ache to look at it. The Pasha's tent is set on the side of a bare heap of refuse, one of the mounds of Sherghát, and looks uncomfortably askew. It is surrounded by smaller tents, perhaps fifty of them, to give it a countenance, but in such a place a whole army would look mean. Here we have now alighted, with the dreary prospect of a two days' sojourn before us, and I can afford to put off describing Sherghát and our reception at the Pasha's tent till to-morrow.

CHAPTER XIII.

"But what on earth brings you to Cub Castle?"

"They're fearless fules, the young Osbaldiston squires."

"The sons were, indeed, heavy unadorned blocks as the eye would desire to look upon."—ROB ROY.

Ferhán's Camp at Sherghát.—His Wives and Sons.—We diplomatize.—We start to cross Mesopotamia.—Ismaïl on Horseflesh.—We are received by Smeyr.—His Account of Nejd: its Rulers and its Horses.

IF I had been born a Sfúk, and called myself Ferhán, Sheykh of the Shammar, I would not give up life in the desert, even to be made a Pasha, and to have £3000 a year paid me quarterly. Neither would I condescend to handle a spade, even in make-believe, or go about with a tail of ragamuffins at my back, picked up from the offscourings of all the low tribes of the Tigris. I would not ride half-bred mares, or keep a rascally mollah from Mósul to instruct my sons in Turkish, and—oh, a thousand times!—I would not live at Sherghát.

Of all wretched places, this, I think, is the wretchedest; and it is just possible that Ferhán's residence here may be as much a make-believe as all the rest, for he is away on a visit, they tell us, to Naïf, that son of Faris to whom we have letters, and nobody knows when he will be back. This absence, although at first sight it seemed to us a calamity, is, after all, perhaps the best thing that could have happened to our plans; for now we shall have the excuse of going after him, to cover our farther journey into the heart of Mesopotamia, and once started, it will be hard if we don't go where we like.

We were received at the Pasha's tent with more than the usual frigidity of Bedouin etiquette, the absent sheykh being represented by his son, a boy of fifteen, who either had not the wit or had not

GAËT SHAMMAR MOVING THEIR CAMP.

the manners to behave himself politely. He remained sitting when we entered, even after the saláam had been given, and pretended to be unable to understand a word of what we said or to communicate with us except through an interpreter, an empty form, as we do not know a single word of Turkish, and the interpreter's Arabic is in no way different from his own. By preserving a very solemn silence, however, in return for his, and by talking to others instead of to him, we managed to assert our position as people of consequence, and of course, as guests, we had a right to certain honorable forms, which there was no idea of denying us. Indeed, I am pretty sure that the boorish manner of Abd ul Aziz (for such is the young gentleman's name) is due more to stupidity than to any intention to disoblige; for this morning, as we remained in our tent till rather late, he has sent a message to Wilfrid to say that he hopes he is not offended, and to invite him to coffee. There seems, too, to be every intention of complying with our wishes as to future proceedings, for the Nawáb's letter has been read, and it contains an especial request to Ferhán to forward us to any part of the Shammar country we may choose to visit. It is probable that the present of a cloak and a pair of boots at the beginning would have made all right; but it is rather late now, and Wilfrid considers it would be doing the young cub too much honor to invest him with a robe. Ali advises us to let the matter be; so we have limited our gifts to some sugar-plums, sent to Ferhán's favorite wife, the person really in authority here, and who, with her children, is the only one, besides the mollah, actually living in the sheykh's tent, Abd ul Aziz and his brother, Abd ul Mékhsin, another cub, being already married and settled in tents of their own.

Ferhán Pasha, because he is a Pasha, has been many times married, and he still has six wives residing at Sherghát. These ladies have separate tents and establishments, and see no more of each other than relations are bound to do. Fasál, the youngest and the favorite, alone lives with him. She is the daughter of Sheykh Saadóun, a Kurdish chief from Upper Mesopotamia, and has two sons, Hámid and Beddr, three and two years old. As Ferhán

himself is the son of a Bagdadíeh, these little boys are consequently of very mixed origin, and only to the degree of one-quarter Arab in blood.

I went, on the afternoon of our arrival, with the vakíl, or representative of the Pasha, Mollah Abdalláh, to pay the Hatóun Fasál a visit. I found her in the half of the big tent that is divided by an awning from the public part. She is pretty, with brown, sleepy eyes and well-shaped, though rather large hands, very much tattooed. Her little boy Hámid, aged three, was playing about with first one, then another, of the crowd of people, men, women, boys, and girls, who sat round a fire in a hole in the ground, on which stood a huge copper pot full of rice and meat stewing. Fasál rose and kissed me, and we sat together on a mattress. Behind her was a cradle, out of which a girl handed her a very small baby wrapped in very dirty rags; she nursed it for a short time, and gave it back to the girl. Then somebody uncovered the big pot and pulled out some lumps of boiled meat, which were given to the little boy Hámid to munch. All this time the conversation did not proceed: the Hatóun seemed stupid, and I could not make much out of the vakíl, who sat on my left. A little girl, Fasál's eldest child, named Shems, about five or six years old, had a nice face. A stir in the crowd opposite was occasioned by another lady coming into the circle; the secretary said she was Ferhán's sister Ariffa. All the rest of the company seemed to be servants, nurses and inferiors. I was delighted when the moment came for leaving the harem, for the scene was one of squalor and discomfort. The men, uncouth as they are here, have generally something to say, but the women are without ideas—good-natured, but quite uninteresting.

I found Wilfrid sitting talking with a man from Hormuz, a suburb of Mósul, who is here on business, selling tobacco, and who knows all the tribes of this part of the country. From him and the mollah, and two or three others of the Pasha's retainers, he has been making out a list of the Shammar tribes, with an approximate table of their numbers. From this it would appear that

the Shammar do not, in all, number more than eleven or twelve thousand tents, and their fighting allies and tributaries eight or nine thousand more. Perhaps they could bring twenty thousand spears into the field, if all could be got together.

Our dinner was served in our own tent, and was both plentiful and good—búrghul, ragouts, lebben, butter, and well-baked bread. Two lambs were killed for us, Hánna says. After this, except for the incessant barking of dogs, we were left in peace.

So much for yesterday. To-day has been a weary one of idleness. We were taken to see the ruins, or rather mounds, for there is nothing above ground in Sherghát. These, they say, are just the same as those at Nineveh. Indeed Sherghát, according to Dr. Colville, is one of the Ninevite cities. To us they were quite uninteresting, though Wilfrid considered it his duty to rummage about in the tunnels dug by antiquarians on the chance of finding something new. These cannot have been made more than thirty years, yet already the history of them is forgotten, and they are held by the Arabs to be as ancient as the mounds themselves. We viewed a wolf away from one of them, but the ground was too broken for coursing him. The two young Osbaldistons rode with us—"Dickon the jockey, and Wilfrid the fool." They could not have been better represented—the one trying to sell us the mare he was riding, the other saying nothing at all. I will say this, however, for Abd ul Aziz, that when Wilfrid questioned him about the breed of his mare, he admitted at once that she was only Kehíleh, and, though the Mósulawi who was riding at his elbow suggested the addition of "Ajúz," the boy said, "No, she is not *asíl*—she came from Bagdad."

In the afternoon Fasál returned my visit, while Wilfrid was out for a walk, with her sister-in-law and children, and followed by attendants, who all crowded into the small tent. The vakíl came too. Fasál evidently wished to be amiable, but I found it difficult to talk with her. She only once brightened up, when I spoke of her father, Sheykh Saadóun, who lives near Diarbekr. I offered them some of Mrs. Nixon's diamond-shaped white Bagdad sweets.

They seemed to hesitate about taking any, when Hánna, who stood outside, said something about the sweetmeats being fit to eat, and the Vakíl Mollah Abdalláh put in "*shoghl Islam.*"* The children then, especially Shems, pounced upon the box and carried it off. Wilfrid wanted me to give a kefíyeh, and so I offered it, and, by way of talking, said to the Hatóun, "Please take it for the boy;" then it was explained to me that children's heads are always dressed in black;† however, the kefíye was taken. The tent becoming too crowded after half an hour, I said I should be very pleased if the Hatóun would stay longer, but that, being tired, I must now sleep, and then they all went away.

Wilfrid, during his walk, had come upon the Agheyl we had made the acquaintance with in the Wady Gehennem, and had sat down with them and eaten some lentil broth they had ready for their dinner, much to the disgust of a negro slave of the Pasha's who was with him, and who thought himself degraded by such company. The people here are a mongrel set, very few indeed of them real Shammar. We see no sign of the cultivation supposed at Bagdad to be flourishing here; but Abd ul Fettakh, the man from Hormuz, says there is plenty between this and Mósul.

All is, I believe, arranged for our journey to-morrow. The mollah is evidently the man in authority here, and we have succeeded in making friends with him, at least to the extent of getting him to help us in our plans. We have not said much about Faris, except in the way of inquiring his whereabouts. Nobody seems to know clearly about this, and, although they will not admit that he and Ferhán are otherwise than friends, there is certainly some mystery connected with him. Besides, it now appears that there are at least three Farises, and that the father of Naïf is Ferhán's uncle, not his brother, and consequently not the one we want. We wish, however, to get away from Sherghát without delay, and have worked the ruins of El Haddr as a first stage on the road. These we declare we must and will see, and have appealed to the Na-

* Literally, "Mussulman business."

† For fear of the evil eye.

wáb's letter for assistance in doing so. Ferhán, too, is somewhere in that direction, and we talk of going on to him when we have seen the ruins. So it is settled that a man of the name of Ismaïl is to go with us, and see us safely to the Pasha, passing through El Haddr on our way. There has been the usual talk about *khôf* (danger), and *harámi* (robbers), and *ghazús* (war parties); and if one were to take this literally, one would suppose the Shammar here, at their head-quarters on the Tigris, lived in daily terror of the Ánazeh. But we have long left off believing anything that we hear on this score.

March 7th.—It was raining hard this morning when we got up, but we would not be balked of starting, and then Tamarisk was discovered to have something the matter with her. Every two minutes she lay down and rolled, and then got up again. The Arabs said she was "*mamósa*," and that it came from eating too much barley after too much grass. It was probably a colic. They prescribed many remedies, and tried two or three; first a rope was tied tight round the loins, then she was walked and run about, and then her tail was tied up with string, and lastly Ismaïl whispered a verse of the Koran into her ear. This seemed to do her good, and we started.

The people of Sherghát are fond of saying their prayers, a habit they have learned from their sheykh, whose half-Turkish education seems to have affected the whole of the people about him. Our Agheyl, Nejrán, on the strength of this has become very obnoxiously pious, saying his prayers in and out of season, and giving us quite uncalled-for advice. He is also an idle fellow, leaving everything to Ferhán, who loves hard work, insists upon riding instead of walking, eats till he is ill, and, what we most dislike, is always hanging about listening to what is going on in our tent. Ali, on the contrary, is growing more and more in our estimation, though less and less in flesh. He keeps strictly to his place, does what he is told, and is clever in the little bits of diplomacy we trust him to manage. Hánna shows no sign of giving in, and has lost all his fear of the Bedouins, if not quite of the desert.

Ill as we had been received, great difficulty was made about our going away, now that there was the excuse of the rain; but Wilfrid was firm, and Abd ul Aźiz had his mare saddled and brought round to accompany us. I think, after all, they are not a bad sort of boys, only ill-educated and a little spoiled by their father's position. They don't like the Turkish language they have to learn, or the half-bred horses they have to ride, and would be glad to join their elder brothers, Eyssa and Mijuel, who scorn such things, and live in the desert like gentlemen. So there is hope for them yet. Abd ul Aziz managed even to get out a complimentary speech at leaving us, in answer to one made him by Wilfrid, and smiled and looked gracious as we rode away.

We have been travelling over a table-land, on beautiful undulating soil, thinly covered with grass and thickly with flowers, and intersected by deep ravines, at the bottom of which there is usually rich meadow pasture. Our course is due west, which answers exactly to the position of El Haddr on our maps, only that Chesney's general map of Arabia and Syria makes it fifty, and his particular survey* of the Tigris describes it as only twenty-eight miles from the river.

We have with us, besides Ismaïl, a black slave and a boy, and an old man in a turban on a donkey, all on their way to Ferhán, and taking advantage of our journey to get an escort. Ismaïl is very communicative. He tells us that it is perfectly true that Smeyr went to Jebel Shammar this winter, but he doesn't know what came of it. He says that the relationship of the Shammar in Mesopotamia and the Shammar in Nejd, of whom Ibn Rashid is one, is always kept up, and he seems to know all about the country, though he has not been there himself. He says that Ibn Rashid has thirty cannon and any number of guns, and is so rich that he sent three camel-loads of gold to Mecca as an offering. There is no water in Jebel Shammar except in wells, nor grass nor corn, nor anything but dates. The wells, he said, are as deep as from

* By James Claudius Rich, British resident at Bagdad.

"here to that camel," eighty yards off, or, stretching out his arms, "forty times that." He says, also, that certain ties of relationship exist between the Jerba Shammar, his own tribe, and the Roála, and that the late Feysul Ibn Shaalán's mother was a Jerba. This would account for the proposed alliance of Ibn Rashid, Ibn Shaalán, and the Mesopotamian Shammar.

Ismaïl is surprised at my knowing so much about the breeds of horses, and we had a long talk about them. I find he is quite as fanatical as every one else about blood, although he says the Pasha and some of his followers affect to despise it. This is because Ferhán is a Turk, and has spent eight years of his life at Constantinople, always talking Turkish in preference to Arabic, whenever he gets the chance. His sons were brought up in the same ideas, but the elder ones have broken loose, and live away with the Arabs down toward Ána. The Turks have no thorough-bred horses of their own, and know nothing about those of the Arabs. He told us, however, that the Abeyeh Sheraák we had seen at Bagdad had really come from Ferhán, and was really asíl. Formerly, Ferhán or his father had possessed a strain of Seglawi Jedrán blood, but it had died out. Ibn Shaalán of the Roála was now the only possessor of that strain,* and he appeared surprised and rather incredulous when I told him, what we have contsantly heard, that Ibn Nedderi of the Gomússa and Ibn Sbeni of the Mehed both retain it. I then told him the story of the valy's mare at Bagdad, at which he laughed so loud and so long that I thought he would tumble off his horse. He kept on repeating at intervals during the day "Kehîlet Ajúz es Simri," "Kehîlet Ajúz es Simri," and every time with new bursts of delight. I wish Mr. Reubeniram could have heard him.

Having brought Ismaïl in this way to a high pitch of good-humor, we began to open ground with him about Faris. Here he was more reticent, and only answered our question as to whether Faris and Ferhán were friends by saying, "They are brothers.

* This is incorrect. Ibn Shaalán's breed is Seglawi el Abd.

Ferhán is Sheykh of *all* the Shammar—all, all!" One thing, however, we have ascertained, and that is, that our Faris is not at all the same as Mohammed el Faris, Naïf's father, or Faris Ibn Mohammed, Naïf's brother; so that we have been at cross purposes all along about him, and, even if Nôman had come with us from Bagdad, he could have been of no use to us. Faris too, it appears, is on the Khábur, not near the Sinjár hills; but we did not press the matter, as we must see how the land lies a little farther yet.

The rain stopped soon after we started, but there has been a violent wind all day. Now we are snug enough in a deep wady, where there is grass and water, and where Wilfrid has got us some ducks and teal and snipe for dinner. There is no sign of inhabitants, and we are happy. Talking of Naïf, we mentioned Ahmet Aga and the letter we had from him; but Ismaïl begged us to say nothing about it to the Pasha, as Ahmet Aga and he were "dushman" (enemies), linking his little fingers, which is the Arabic sign for enmity, as putting the forefingers side by side is that of friendship. "Enemies?" we asked; "and how?" He then told us that Ahmet Aga (a thoughtless young man) had, in attempting to cure Ferhán of short-sightedness (a common complaint among the Arabs), put the eye out altogether. He had poured sulphate of zinc, or something of the sort, into the eye, without adding any water, and the eye was gone. I remember having heard the story at Bagdad. Now for a quiet night's rest.

March 8th.—I suppose we did not manage more than twelve miles yesterday, but to-day we have marched nearly twenty. Wilfrid began the morning by pulling the tent down over the servants' heads; for, with the black man and boy, and the man from Mósul, and a shepherd impressed on the road yesterday as guide, there are rather more than he can manage quietly. This set them all in a bustle, and we got off at seven o'clock—the earliest start we have made yet.

We were no sooner out of the wady and on the table-land again, than we found ourselves in a thick fog, which would have obliged us to stop if we had been without a compass. By the compass we

determined the direction, and then kept to it by the wind, which blew from behind upon our right ears. It is curious how little faculty the Arabs have of finding their way. Their course seems to be directed entirely by what, I believe, sailors call "rule of thumb." Once out of their own district, they are incapable of pursuing a straight line by the sun, or the wind, or any natural instinct. They travel from landmark to landmark, and almost always in a zigzag, which costs them many a mile. Here they had to depend entirely upon us for the direction of El Haddr, a place we had never seen or heard of till two days ago; and our knowledge of its position, though simple enough to us, seemed very marvellous to them. When the fog cleared, as it did in the course of the morning, they saw, to their surprise, El Haddr straight in front of them. It was still many miles off, but our course had been correct. I think this fog has been a fortunate circumstance, as it has raised us in the eyes of all our following, who now profess full faith and confidence in the Beg.

Soon after this we descended to lower ground, and came upon a spring of rather bitter water and some Haddadín tents, where they gave us milk, and told us Smyer was straight before us, in the valley of the Sersár or Tharthar. These Haddadín are certainly one of the best-mannered tribes we have met, and are always hospitable and friendly: you are sure of a pleasant reception in their tents. All the country between the Sersár and the Tigris is intersected with ravines and deep wadys, well watered and rich in grass. It surprises one very much to find it so thinly inhabited; but the population of the desert is, no doubt, fixed not by what it can maintain in good years like the present one, but in seasons of drought or blight. The Sersár, however, is a perennial stream, and quite unlike any other we have seen in Asia. It flows down a well-defined valley, meandering through rich pasture, and its banks are fringed with pollard willows, just as one may see many a stream in England, where it would have an evil reputation among sportsmen as a "stopper" in the hunting-field. Sluggish and deep, and with rotten banks, the Sersár is twenty-five to thirty feet wide, and,

at the ford where we crossed it, about five feet deep. There are very few places where camels can get across. Hagar went boldly in without making any fuss, and my mare followed, and was off her legs and swimming for a moment or two. Hánna with his white donkey and Ali long stood shivering on the bank, and I have not yet heard how they managed to get over. We did not wait for them, but pushed on with Ismaïl to Smeyr's camp, which lay just beyond.

We stopped at the principal tent, where a little spare man of fifty, with grizzled beard, pale cheeks, and an anxious expression of face, received us. At first we doubted, from his manner, whether we were altogether welcome; but he made us sit down, and had carpets and cushions brought, and presently, after a few words in his ear from Ismaïl, among which I distinguished something about "bint el malek" (daughter of the king), his features relaxed, and his manner became more amiable. This was Smeyr, of whom we had heard so much as Ferhán's envoy to Ibn Rashid. We then began to talk, first making the usual compliments of asking after our host's health and hoping that all was going well with him, and then inquiring about the ruins of El Haddr, which we professed a great curiosity to see. He said that he understood them to be interesting, and had heard that they contained sculptures and inscriptions, but he had never looked at them himself, except from a distance. He should be delighted to show them to us, and added that we were the first Europeans who had come to El Haddr. He had known Mr. Rassam formerly, the English consul at Mósul, and he inquired after him and the hatóun, Mrs. Rassam. They had never come to El Haddr.* A European had been sent, two years ago, to Ferhán, at Sherghát, on purpose to see the ruins, but had not been allowed to proceed, as he was suspected of being a Muscóv. Europeans, he knew, were curious about such things. He then said rather abruptly to Wilfrid, and pointing to

* In this Smeyr was mistaken. Mr. Ainsworth visited El Haddr in 1840, and Mr. Layard the year following, with Mr. and Mrs. Rassam.

me, "Is it true that the hatóun is 'ahsan' (better) than you?" We did not understand what he meant, but Wilfrid answered, I suppose as a compliment to me, "Oh yes; far better!" Whereupon he went on to say that he had heard as much, and that he was very pleased to have the opportunity of making my acquaintance. We saw that there was a mystification somewhere, and we remembered certain hints to the same effect which Ismaïl had let drop in conversation to-day as we came along, and as soon as we returned to our tent we asked Ismaïl what it all meant. He then told us that he had heard from Nejrán that I was the daughter of a king,* and that, now the Beg had admitted the truth of it, there was no longer any reason for concealment. He had told Smeyr all about it, and implied that there was nothing to be ashamed of in the matter. In vain we assured him that it was all nonsense. He refused to believe us, having heard the Beg say it with his own ears. It was not worth while disputing, so a king's daughter, I suppose, I must remain. Where Nejrán picked up his information I cannot think, but it may perhaps be accounted for by the presents given me by the Nawáb; for to receive gifts is always a high proof of merit in the East.

Wilfrid is so much pleased with Smeyr's reception of us, that he has decided on giving him a mashlah—the one, indeed, he had intended for the Pasha; and he thinks that, by making friends with him, we may very likely be able to dispense with Ferhán's permission to go on to Faris. This would save us time and trouble, and we have no great curiosity to see this half-Turkish Pasha; besides which, if it is true that he is on bad terms with his brother, a visit to him might defeat our object altogether. In any case, we don't know where Ferhán is, and a friend like Smeyr in the hand would be well worth two like Ferhán in the bush. With this view, Ali has been despatched on a diplomatic mission to the sheykh's

* The word "malek," though translated king, hardly conveys to Arab ears what it does to ours. Any great independent sheykh, like Ibn Rashid of Jebel Shammar, might take the title, without adding much to his dignity.

tent, carrying with him a gold embroidered cloak, a pair of red boots, about three pounds of tobacco in leaf, and a box of sugar-plums for the harem.

I was interrupted by Ali's return. He has managed things capitally, having not only sounded the ground with Smeyr, but got him to agree to our wishes. There has been luck as well as skill in this; but I will not go into the details of his negotiation separately, but give the result as it now stands, after a conversation we have ourselves had with the sheykh. It turns out, then, that when he first saw us arriving at his camp Smeyr was considerably alarmed, fancying that we were a party of soldiers sent to arrest him; for some years ago, at the time, I believe, of Abd ul Kérim's death, he or his people killed some soldiers sent by the government against them, and Smeyr has since then been "wanted" at Bagdad.

The Turkish Government have several times sent orders to their Pasha, Ferhán, to deliver up his cousin to them, but Ferhán has hitherto put them off by saying that he does not know where to find Smeyr. Smeyr, however, evidently mistrusts his chief, and is anxious to come to terms with those in power, fearing some act of treachery which should lead him to the gallows. Now it is a very common thing among the Bedouins, when they wish to make their peace with the government, to get one of the foreign consuls to intercede in their favor, and Smeyr had already written to Colonel Nixon on the subject. He had, however, not yet had an answer, and he now fancies that our journey to El Haddr must in some way be connected with his own affairs. Ali, seeing its advantage to our plans, has done his best to encourage the idea. Without going so far as this, we have expressed our readiness to do anything we can for him in the way of interceding in his behalf with Colonel Nixon, or of carrying letters or treating with Húseyn Pasha for him when we get to Deyr. He sees very plainly that we have nothing to do with the government, as we have no soldiers or zaptiehs, or any representative of authority with us, and

that we wish him well, and may perhaps be able to help him. He was delighted, too, we hear, with the cloak, the like of which has not been seen in this part of Mesopotamia within the memory of man, and Hánna's description of the way it was handed round in the tent, and felt and tried on and admired, is very satisfactory. Finding him in such excellent disposition, we have told Smeyr frankly what it is we want, and he has answered, I fully believe, as frankly—certainly very sensibly.

In the first place, we are to see El Haddr—which it would be a pity to miss, as we are so near it—and then we are to make our way, without turning to the right or to the left, for the Khábur, a small river which runs into the Euphrates below Deyr, and somewhere on the banks of which Faris is known to be encamped. This is about a hundred and thirty miles as the crow flies, and of course desert all the way; but he will send a trusty man with us—the same that he took with him to Jebel Shammar this year. With regard to Ferhán, Smeyr insists that we must go to him, if we hear that he is anywhere near our line of march, and this of course we should feel bound in any case to do, after having enjoyed his hospitality at Sherghát. We must also keep on Ismaïl, the Pasha's man, as Smeyr is afraid of giving offence by allowing us to send him back. As to his own man, he is to have ten mejidies (two pounds) as "akhrám" (reward, literally "honor," like the French "honoraires") for the job. To all this we have consented, and have thanked Smeyr most cordially for his help.

We are now on a more confidential footing with him than we have yet been with any of the Arabs, and we have made use of it to ask him for particulars of his visit to Jebel Shammar. With regard to his own adventures we cannot get him to say much, which looks as if he had not been too well received by Ibn Rashid; in fact we know his mission failed; but he talks freely enough about the country and the people in it, and, what we most wanted to know of—the horses. I will put down as nearly as I can recollect what he says: Jebel Shammar, he affirms most positively, in spite of what Dr. Colville told us of its being a single conical peak,

is a long range of hills higher than Jebel Hamrín—"like Jebel Sinjár, only higher still." Rain falls there in the winter, and sometimes snow. There are, however, no springs or water of any sort above-ground, but plenty of deep wells; and he makes use of the same mode of describing their depth as Ismaïl did—by a distance along the ground—which is curious.* The people of Hîyel and the other towns, and their sheykh, Ibn Rashid, live most of the year in houses, but during the winter and early spring go out to the mountain, and then they inhabit tents. There is plenty of grass at that time of year—that is to say, for three or four months—and the mares then live out as they do here; but for the rest of the year they have to be fed on barley, of which there is but little, or more commonly on dates. There are no trees, if we understand him rightly, but the palms, and no cultivation but the gardens round the towns.

About Ibn Rashid, he said that he was a Shammar, and he talked of him as the sheykh (not king). He was vakíl to Ibn Saoud of Riád—"as it were, his cavass"—but very rich; and he repeated the story about the three camel-loads of gold sent to Mecca. Ibn Saoud was king of all Arabia. We asked him for an introduction to Ibn Rashid, but he is evidently not on such terms with him as to give this. He added to Wilfrid, "If you were my brother, I would not advise you to go near Ibn Rashid. He does not like strangers. If you were to go to Hîyel to look about you (fúrraj), as you do here, he would think you had some evil purpose."

Wilfrid then inquired about the horses, or rather mares, in Jebel Shammar, and asked if the Arabs there had the same breeds as the Mesopotamian Shammar. "Just the same," he answered. "They have Kehîlehs, and Jilfehs, and Dakhmehs, and Meleyhas, just as with us. There are not many horses (kheyl) bred there.

* Arabs, when drawing water from a well, fix a tent-pole or other piece of wood across the mouth and then draw up the leather bucket by a rope over it, not gathering the rope in coils as we do, but running with the end of it as far as is necessary to bring the bucket to the top. They naturally, therefore, measure the depth of a well by the distance the rope is trailed along the ground.

Ibn Rashid buys all his from the Bedouins—the best from the Ánazeh. There are few horses in Hîyel, and they are dear. This is because there is no pasture for them the greater part of the year, as there is in the North." *Wilfrid:* "We have heard that in Nejd there are horses of a different breed from any you have here, or rather that the Arabs there make no account of breeds" (alluding to Palgrave's account of the Riád stables). *Smeyr:* "Whoever told you that told you 'kidb' (nonsense). There are no breeds in Nejd but the breeds of the Bedouins, Segláwi, Jilfán, and the rest. Ibn Saoud, if he has any horses, gets them all from the Bedouins. There are good horses in Nejd and asíl (thoroughbred), but the Ánazeh horses are the best." He had never heard of any Nejd breed. "All Bedouins have the same breeds of horses. There are none other asíl." He had brought a mare back with him from Jebel Shammar, a Jilfeh Stam el Boulád, for which he had paid, besides another mare he had had to get rid of, five camels and twenty sheep: but horses were dear at Hîyel. He had known mares from the Shammar fetch as much as twenty camels when sold there. He took us to look at this mare, which was standing just outside. She is a chestnut, with three white legs, not particularly handsome, or more than fourteen hands two inches in height.

On the whole, we are pleasantly impressed with Smeyr. He is a gentleman, though not of a very refined, still less of a very romantic type; but he has the politeness to perceive when we wish to talk and when we wish to be alone, a thing we have not met before. He has not been inside a town for many years, and seems more like a man of the world who has forgotten part of his manners than a rustic born and bred. He is quite without pretence—indeed, rather less dignified than he should be; but I fancy he is poor, and bullied by Ferhán and his sons, at least Ali says as much. I can't quite make out what his relations with Faris are. There is certainly a coolness, if not worse, between Ferhán and his brother. Smeyr is first-cousin to them both, his mother having been a sister of Sfúk. He has a younger brother, Ghathban,

living here in a separate tent, and several grown-up children, all by the same wife, for he has only one. The men here are very different from those in Ferhán's camp, being, I should say, quite pure Shammar. They are well-behaved, merry, good-natured people, and do not crowd about our tent or ask tiresome questions. They seem poor, much poorer than the Haddadín, and have but few mares. The only very talkative man in camp is a Mósulawi, a striking contrast to all around him. He is a young man, fat, smooth-faced, and red-haired, with a curious mincing accent, and great play of pudgy white hands in speaking. What he is doing here I can hardly make out; but Wilfrid has bought some tobacco from him, and I see him sometimes writing letters, and sometimes mending clothes for the Arabs. Perhaps he is a general trader. They seem to like him, and sit open-mouthed listening to his interminable stories and accounts of what is going on in the world—tales of the war, the Muscóv, and the Sultan. The Shammar are much more "Turkish" in their sympathies than the Arabs we met on the Euphrates, and this, I fancy, is because they are more pious. Smeyr and most of his people say their prayers regularly, and one of the first questions he asked was whether we were Muscóvs.

Smeyr's wife, Sukr (Sugar), is a middle-aged person of well-bred appearance, and possessed of an intelligent, pleasant face. She received me, when I called this evening, with all possible honors—cushions, pillows, dates, butter, and the rest of it. There were with her several sons and daughters, a son's wife, a grandchild, and a son-in-law, besides a brother, who came in while I was there and kissed her, and then sat with his arm round her neck. A huge caldron of camel's milk was simmering on the fire, and rice was being added to it every now and then from a basket. At other fires other caldrons were full of meat. Three large camel-saddles and some dirty mattresses were the only furniture. I like these people better than those of any harem I have seen. They are simple, merry, and kind.

But this is surely enough for to-day.

CHAPTER XIV.

I said to Time, "This venerable pile,
Its floor the earth, its roof the firmament,
Whose was it once?" He answered not, but fled
Fast as before. I turned to Fame, and asked,
"Names such as his, to thee they must be known.
Speak!" But she answered only with a sigh,
And, musing mournfully, looked on the ground.
Then to Oblivion I addressed myself,
A dismal phantom, sitting at the gate;
And with a voice as from the grave, he cried,
"Whose it was once I care not; now 'tis mine."—ROGERS.

The City and Palace of El Haddr.—We are mobbed in the Ruins.—Smeyr sends us on our Way.—We put our House in Order, and march Westward.—Quarrel with Ismaïl.—He leaves us.—We discover Salt Lakes.—A Wade through the Mud.—A silly Old Man.—Faris at last.

March 9th.—We have been spending the day at El Haddr, and have been far more interested than we thought to be. It had been agreed overnight that Smeyr should move his camp, and we ours, to the ruin to-day; so, as soon as we had had coffee and made arrangements with Hánna for the day's march, we started. It was but three miles, and we galloped all the way, leaving Smeyr and a couple of his men, who were riding with us, far behind. Their mares had lately foaled, and they did not care to press them.

As we came near the ruins, we were surprised to find a really large city in tolerable preservation, with great part of the walls and towers and even some of the houses still standing. Its situation is a charming one—in the desert, it is true, but in a desert which might easily be mistaken for one of those great rolling downs one sees in Wiltshire, only that here a multitude of flowers are mixed up with the grass; scarlet tulips, the counterpart of our garden ones, purple stocks, marigolds, and a pretty blue flower

called by the Arabs bohátteyr. In all the hollows there is now thick grass—pasture sufficient for twenty times the number of flocks there are to eat it; and the ruins rise out of a bed of green, like ruins preserved for ornamental purposes in England. The town is nearly square, and covers perhaps an area of two miles. The walls and fortifications are of massive hewn stones. They seem to have been overthrown, in part at least, by earthquakes, for in many places there are deep cracks in the masonry indicating a "settlement" of the ground beneath them. The houses, such as still remain standing, are merely square blocks, without internal divisions, or more than a single door-way, and a hole or two high up to admit light. Their roofs are arched, and remind one a little of the more modern houses of Syria. They belong, however, certainly to classic times, and there is little or no appearance of the city having been reconstructed, as so many were, by the Caliphs.

In the centre stands the palace, a really noble building. The outer wall enclosing it, like everything else in El Haddr, is rectangular, and each face of the square is perhaps a quarter of a mile in length, and as solidly built as the walls of the city itself. The court-yard thus formed is perfectly level, and appears to have been paved throughout. Within stand several buildings, temples, arches, and single columns, and, towering over all, the palace itself. This, as I have said, is really imposing, and has a façade toward the east, which in the day of its glory must have been the principal wonder of this part of the world. In idea it is not unlike Ctesiphon, except that, instead of a single open court of gigantic dimension, there are here four smaller ones; but the arrangement is similar, and each hall leads by a low door to a suite of smaller apartments beyond. The principal of these halls of audience, for such they undoubtedly were, is ornamented with pilasters, bearing on each of them a group of three human faces carved in stone. Above runs a cornice of the common egg-and-tongue pattern, and then there are the remains of a vaulted roof springing from a second cornice. The faces are not in the purest style of art, but

RUINS OF PALACE OF EL HADDR.

are sufficiently well cut for decorative purposes, while the mouldings and architraves of the door-ways are more carefully executed, and are very beautiful. I have taken drawings of some of these. They would make beautiful chimney-pieces, if one could get them to England. Three of the faces have been carefully cut away with a chisel and are gone.

To me the most interesting part of the palace is the suite of inner rooms, lying behind the halls of audience, for some of these are quite perfect, and in such "habitable repair" that, with a little sweeping out and clearing away of rubbish, one might go in at once and take possession. One room in particular would pass without much comment in London as a dining-room, with its coved ceiling, Corinthian cornice, and handsome architraves. One can see that the walls were intended for tapestry, for below a certain height the stones have been left rough, while above it the surfaces are nicely polished. The whole palace is built of a handsome red sandstone,* which is so well preserved, especially in these inner rooms, that the masons' marks are still perfectly distinct. They look like the letters of an alphabet—but what alphabet? On one of the walls there is an inscription in Arabic, and another in a character similar to the masons' marks. The building is admirably finished—each stone beautifully fitted to its neighbors, without flaws or spaces, or any "scamping" of the work. Here we have wandered about all day drawing and taking measurements; but it is impossible to give a correct idea on paper of the beauty of all that we have seen. Nobody here knows anything of the history of El Haddr, neither do we.†

We were driven from our meditations in the palace by an in-

* Brought from the Sinjár hills. The natural rock of El Haddr is a friable limestone.

† El Haddr is no doubt a Greek city of nearly the same date as Palmyra. It is mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela as still existing on the road to Bagdad. It was possibly destroyed finally by the Tartars. Palmyra was as uninhabited as El Haddr a hundred years ago.

vasion of the youth and fashion of Smeyr's camp. They had finished their work for the day—the work of pitching tents and unpacking household furniture, and were now at liberty to spend an idle afternoon in the noisy fun which Bedouins love. At first they left us unmolested, and merely ran about the ruins laughing and shouting; but by degrees they gathered round us, and, as it is not the custom to refuse one's company to any who wish to share it, we soon found ourselves in the midst of a rather uproarious mob.

The men were civil enough, and perhaps the women meant to be so; but they and the children pressed so closely round me that I had to give up my drawing and escape as I best could to the top of a pile of broken columns under a wall. Even there they followed me. Some of the girls were really very pretty, with bright, laughing faces, and teeth like pearls. But the old women would insist upon handling and pulling at my clothes to feel what they were made of, and the children would not be repressed from sitting almost in my lap. Meanwhile, the older boys had begun to throw stones at the carved faces on the wall—great fun, no doubt, for them, but distressing for us to look on it. Fortunately the natural stone of El Haddr is softer than that of the buildings, and no serious damage was done while we were there. Only the stones began to fall in a rather reckless way, and as the elder people, who might have maintained order, were away, Wilfred thought it best we should retire before an accident happened; so, putting the best countenance we could on our retreat, we said good-bye to the ruined palace. I confess I was glad when we got back without mishap to the camp. Smeyr excused his people's behavior, when he heard of it, by remarking, if I may translate it into Scotch, that "it was only the laddies."

He has been asking us for medicine to cure his eyes, which have little the matter with them except shortsightedness, and we have been at some pains to explain that we have nothing which will cure them. He asked us for "sugar of Egypt," meaning, we supposed, sulphate of zinc, which we happen to have; and at

first we thought of letting him have some, till it appeared that he intended taking it internally. The word "poison," however, has nearly frightened him out of his wits, and he begs for something else. He complains, too, as many do in this country, of indigestion; and no wonder, when one thinks how the lives of Bedouins are spent between starvation and feasting, and of the mass of indigestible curds and ill-baked bread they devour. We have compromised matters, and made him happy with half a dozen blue pills. To-morrow we are to bid him good-bye.

Sunday, March 10th.—I am afraid we were not altogether as sorry as we should have been when we took leave of our host this morning. Smeyr has been very kind to us, and has fallen in with our plans in a way we had no right to expect of him, and which may yet cost him some trouble with his sheykh, and all without any clear prospect of return at our hands. Nevertheless, we could not manage to feel regret at going. The fact is, life in an Arab camp is terribly irksome, and the thought of exchanging the forms and ceremonies of Bedouin society for the freedom of the uninhabited wilderness was too much for us. We could hardly conceal our joy. Fortunately, gratitude is not an Oriental virtue, and to eat and drink with a stranger, and then to go away without wishing him good-bye, is quite in accordance with the best manners; so a little demonstration in our farewell went a long way. Smeyr's last words, too, relieved us in part of our sense of obligation, for it was a request that we would send him a pistol from Deyr, "to protect him," he said, "from the soldiers—a revolver with five chambers, like the Beg's." This we made him a conditional promise to do—conditional, that is, on our having a pistol to send and a chance of sending it. At the Pasha's tent we had given liberal tips to the servants, as if we had been staying at a house in Bagdad; but here nothing was expected beyond the conventional crown-piece to the coffee-maker and a shilling to the man who held our stirrups. So amidst benedictions we departed.

At first our way lay through the ruins, which I find more extensive westward than I had imagined yesterday, and we may have

been half an hour before getting clear away. Our course to the Khábur we knew should be west-north-west or west by north, and toward the latter point we steered, Daëssan, Smeyr's confidential guide, a little old man, nearly blind, leading the way. The first thing, however, to be seen to was to put our camp in order; for we are now on a serious if not a dangerous journey, and cannot afford to hamper ourselves in any way, and Wilfrid at once proceeded to weed our party of its useless components. The Kurd, the black man, the boy, and the shepherd still dogged our steps, and showed no sign of an intention to leave us; and leave us we were determined they should. However, on the principle of dividing a bundle of sticks, Wilfrid deemed it best to get rid of them in detail; so, riding up to the four, who were together, he asked them what they wanted and where they proposed going.

"We are the Pasha's servants," they said, "and will travel with you till we get to his camp."

"And this 'felláh'" (pointing to the Kurd), "is he the Pasha's servant too?"

"Oh no," said the others; "he is only a Kurdish *tájer*—a merchant going to sell tobacco."

"A Kurd, indeed!—a merchant!—a felláh! I cannot have such people with me: it is a disgrace to the camp. Let him be off!"

This suited the prejudices of the other three, who, according to Bedouin custom, naturally despised their fellow-traveller for his city origin, and they made no more ado, but abandoned him to his fate. With as terrible a voice as he could command, Wilfrid bade him begone, and the man, after appealing a little and lingering a little, obeyed. As he went he called on the shepherd to follow him, for I fancy the two had come to an arrangement beforehand, and so we got rid of them both. The shepherd, whom Wilfrid had made friends with, and who had been useful to us in naming plants, and occasionally lending a hand in loading and unloading the camels, came very civilly to say good-bye, and Wilfrid made him a trifling present, which he evidently did not expect, for he looked up in astonishment at the piece of silver, and then, invok-

ing blessings on us and ours, kissed our feet and ran after the Kurd. We could see them for nearly an hour afterward travelling —the one on his donkey, the other on foot—toward the south-west.

The negroes, now left alone, assumed a very humble tone, and for the first time made a show of being of use; and, as the elder is really a servant of Ferhán's, we have let them follow us for "one night only," being pretty sure that they will leave us when they find out where we are going. The negro slaves give themselves immense airs among the Bedouins, affecting—what is quite opposed to their character elsewhere—a grave and solemn demeanor. This comes in part from their having always lived in the tents of sheykhs and great people, and having been generally brought up as companions to the boys of the house, and partly from their being stricter Mussulmans than their masters. They are treated by these on a footing almost of equality. At any rate, they have considerable influence, and come and go and sit down with the rest just as it suits them, so that, unless we are to quarrel with Ferhán, it will be as well to conciliate his blacks. Still, we are travelling in a barren land, where water has to be carried as well as food, and extra mouths are a burden. In any other countries but these, parasites of this kind would endeavor to propitiate those they live on by making themselves useful, but here nothing of the sort can be expected. Neither the black slave nor the Kurd have ever deigned to put their hands to a rope, or so much as minded a camel; while the boy squats in the tent as soon as it is pitched, and laughs impertinently if told to move, and on the march complains loudly if he may not ride one of our camels. Yet this little negro is a mere outcast, left behind by a caravan some months ago, and living on charity ever since. He is now on his way, he says, to his friends at Deyr.

This matter of camp followers settled, our next anxiety was to come to a clear understanding with Daëssan, as it had not yet been formally announced to Ismaïl that the Pasha's camp is but a secondary object in our journey, and that Faris and the Khábur are really our destination. To manage this it was neces-

sary to get Daëssan alone, so I was deputed to engage Ismaïl in conversation and linger behind, while Wilfrid rode on and settled matters with our guide. It is just as well that we did this, for it turned out that Ismaïl had already been at Daëssan on the subject of our route, and the old man had been half persuaded to give in to him. But, now that he clearly understands what is expected of him and what he has to expect of us, I think we may depend upon his loyalty. He seems, however, to be afraid of Ismaïl, who is a great big bullying sort of a fellow; and he requires the constant support of our presence to keep straight upon his course, instead of following Ismaïl, who is always edging away to the south. It is lucky that we are accustomed to desert travelling, or we should be entirely in their hands; but, by dint of perseverance and constant attention to the position of the sun, we have managed to make a capital march of it to-day—nearly thirty miles, and all in the right direction.

Objects of interest there were few on the road, an old track leading from Mósul to Ána, and another from Mósul to a súbkha or salt lake called Ashgar, being the only interruptions to our pathless course across the plain. A caravan, we are informed, travels once a year along the former of these two roads, accompanied by a mixed escort of Shammar and Ánazeh to protect it, on toll paid, from ghazús; and the latter is an occasional route for parties sent by government to get salt. Ashgar is three days' journey from Mósul, but long days, as from the point where we crossed the track it was seventy miles as the crow flies. About the middle of the day we sighted some camels on the horizon, and there was the usual alarm of a ghazú; but the caravan, if it was one, went its way without exchanging signals with us; and shortly afterward we came to the edge of a large brackish lake, on which immense flocks of flamingo (*naaj*) were feeding. This, Daëssan informed us, was the Súbkha Ommuthsiábeh. It is three miles long by one broad, the greater length being from north to south, and we skirted its southern shore. It and another lake, still larger, called Ubuára (twelve miles long, Daëssan said), are fed from small

streams issuing from the Sinjár hills, and have, except in the driest seasons, water fit for camels, though not for other animals. Not far off we came upon a small camp of Haddadín, where the women gave us milk, their husbands being away. It was the hour of afternoon milking, and the fresh sheep's milk was very refreshing, for we had had nothing all day. The women were gossiping, good-natured creatures, and very pleased to get an opportunity to talk.

Still we went on, Ismaïl becoming very restless, and looking out constantly over his left shoulder, and declaring that we were going the wrong way, in spite of all our attempts to engage him in conversation; but fortunately he is mounted on a wretched kadísh and cannot get on ahead of us, so he has to be content with complaining. It very nearly, however, came to a crisis when, from some rising ground, he caught sight of tents far away to the south-west, which he declared must be the Pasha's. "Ya beg! ya beg!" he cried, "they are there, the Jerba, the tents of Naïf and Ferhán!" But we would not listen, saying there were only fourteen tents, for we had counted them, and maintaining that such a camp could not possibly be the Pasha's. "At least," he pleaded, "we shall have a lamb to eat there and bread and lebben, while farther on there is nothing but chôl—nothing but chôl"—giving the doleful accent to the word which townsmen use when talking of the desert. Still we paid no attention to his remonstrances and went steadily on, the camels doing their work bravely at the rate of three miles an hour.

The best way to manage camels is to keep them going at a steady pace all the morning, for they do not care to eat during the forenoon, and then, when the sun begins to decline, to let them feed as they go. This of course delays them a little, yet our camels will march feeding at the rate of two and a half miles in the hour. At least two hours before sunset they should be allowed to stop, and turned loose to get all they can before it is dark. If there is a moon they will go on grazing half the night, otherwise they must be collected round the tents during the last minutes of twilight, when they will sit quietly chewing the cud all night. They

require no water during the winter (ours have not touched a drop since they left Bagdad), or as long as they get grass during the spring; but if fed on beans, as they are in Egypt, they must drink at least every four days in warm weather. Here they get no food at any time but what they can pick up.

To-day we have done much more than a usual march, and it was five o'clock before the tents were pitched. We had some difficulty in choosing a proper spot for camping, as the latter half of our day's journey had been across a barren tract of land; but, just as we were beginning to despair of finding better, Wilfrid espied a tell some way off the road, which he thought looked green, and galloped off to it, and sure enough, it was covered with bohátteyr, a green plant with a blue flower, like nemophila, which horses and camels alike appreciate. Here we are now, and a delightful spot it is: a single mound in the middle of the plain, rich in this herbage to the top. Half way up there is a fox's earth, and below, a colony of jerboas, which, this warm evening, are sitting at the mouths of their burrows looking at us in astonishment.

March 11*th*.—To-day matters came to a crisis with Ismaïl, and he is gone. The two blacks also have left us. All last night and this morning Ismaïl was working the old tales of danger and ghazús, expatiating on the terrible nature of the desert north of us, contrasted with the delightfully inhabited regions of the south —want of water, want of grass, want of "Arabs," of all except plundering bands of Ánazeh, who, by his account, perpetually scour these inhospitable regions, robbing and slaying those who venture there. Ali and Hánna and the two Agheyl were much impressed by these sad stories, and even Daëssan occasionally chimed in, "He did not know the road; he did not know whom we might meet; he did not know where we should find Faris. Perhaps it would be better first to go to Ferhán, or at least to Naïf, who would send people with us. It was not all quite right between Ferhán and his brother; the Khábur was clean out of our road to Deyr," etc., etc. The weight of public opinion in the caravan was against us; and all we could say in support of our views was, that the

camels were ours, and that those who liked might leave us. Of this, of course, there was no question among our own people, and Ismaïl was evidently loath to part with us—not, I fear, from affection, but from love of the backshísh he had so nearly earned.

We had no sooner started than it became evident that Daëssan had been "got at" during the night, for he no longer kept his course fairly, but suffered Ismaïl to lead him astray whenever our attention was directed elsewhere. Excuses were easy to give for this: "There was a súbkha in our way which would have to be turned by a circuit to the south-west; we had come too far to the north yesterday; he must go a little to the left to get his bearings." The contest between Wilfrid and Ismaïl soon almost became a physical one for the possession of the little man, one riding on one side and the other on the other, and each trying to edge him off to right or left, like the spirits of good and evil tempting a human soul. At last the crisis came. Ismaïl having stopped behind for a few minutes to say his prayers, Wilfrid profited by this to get a good point northward, so that when Ismaïl succeeded in overtaking them he was so much out of temper that he declared he would go no farther. The black man and the boy were already gone and out of sight, having made away nearly due south; so a halt was called, and we all sat down on the ground to discuss matters. The strong point of our case was, that physically we could do as we liked, and were free to turn the camels' heads to any point of the compass we chose; the weak one, that we could hardly go without introduction of any kind to Faris, and it was necessary that one or other of the Shammar should remain with us. Ismaïl's strong point was the desire we had expressed of paying Ferhán a visit, and the shame (*aïb*) it would be to pass so near his tent without stopping. The conversation, then, was something of this sort. *Ismaïl:* "You do not wish, then, to see the sheykh? Ferhán will not be pleased." *Wilfrid:* "We wish to see him, but where is he?" *Ismaïl:* "Out there with Naïf," pointing semicircularly round half the southern horizon. *Wilfrid:* "And Faris, where is he?" "Away on the Khábur, close to Deyr," pointing in

almost the same direction. *Wilfrid:* "Nonsense, that is the road to Ána. I have an engagement to meet a friend at Deyr in five days, and I want to see Faris." *Ismaïl:* "Five days! it is quite close. The Pasha will send you there to-morrow." "But where is the Pasha?" "You see that hill on the horizon: come with me there, and I will show you his house." "Let us go; but mind, if I don't see it, good-bye."

There was not much danger in making this promise; and, although the hill (or rather the little indentation on the horizon) was some five miles out of our way, we thought it prudent to go so far with Ismaïl that we might not seem unwilling to see his master, whom we have no wish to offend (and passing close to a great man's camp without stopping is a serious matter); so we altered our course, and now held on nearly straight to the south. Ismaïl, seeing he had gained his point, had become good-humored; and we, wishing to part friends with him, explained the difficulties of our position as to Faris and his master, both of whom we had not time to visit. If the whole truth must be known, one of our principal objections to meeting the great man was that we had only one gold-embroidered cloak left, the one destined for Ferhán having been given to Smeyr, and we did not like to appear empty-handed at his tent. Daëssan followed in silence, for he is not much addicted to words, and Ali and the rest of our followers were of course in high delight. "In another moment we shall see the tents!" exclaimed the enthusiastic Hánna, "a lamb will be killed—perhaps a young camel; and we shall, at any rate, sleep among the Arabs to-night!" "Inshalláh!" they all chorused, and so we rode on.

The little hill, on nearer approach, turned out to be nothing but a mound transfigured by the mirage, and made to look great only from the surrounding level of the plain. Beyond it, however, the ground sloped away rapidly; and, in truth, it commanded a very considerable view. Here we halted, straining our eyes in every direction for the vision of black dots which should represent an Arab encampment, but nothing was visible for miles and miles.

Ismaïl, however, was not so easily abashed. On the far horizon, perhaps fifteen miles away, rose a flat-topped hill, easily recognizable, and very likely really recognized by him. To this he pointed triumphantly. "There," he said, "is the house of Naïf, and there the Pasha abides." "A day's journey," we replied; "*you* will get there to-morrow, but *we* must go on our way." "At least," he pleaded, "go a little way toward it—as far as the tent you see down there." We knew there was no tent, but the object he pointed to was not far off, and we agreed to satisfy him; so, bidding the caravan wait, we galloped down the sloping plain. The object, on nearer inspection, proved to be a pile of bushes marking the spot where a tent had been, but long ago.

Just as we made this out, a string of camels hove in sight, a mile or two away. Ismaïl seemed alarmed, declaring there were horsemen with them; but we could see well enough this was not the case, and galloped on toward them, wishing to set the matter at rest as to the whereabouts of the Shammar, for the party seemed to be travelling from the south. We were determined, too, to get our information unadulterated by Ismaïl's coloring, and so let our mares out, and left him on his old kadísh well in the rear. As we rushed up to them at full gallop, with guns in our hands, it is not strange that the people with the camels should have been a little alarmed. They halted and formed square, as I may say, to receive our charge. They were ten men on dromedaries, armed with lances, but they had no fire-arms with them. We pulled up a few yards in front of them, and asked them whence they were, and whither going; to which they replied that they came from Ferhán, and were on their way to Tell Áfar, a town of the Sinjár, to buy corn. The camels were not laden. They informed us that Naïf's camp was, in truth, a little way beyond the flat-topped hill, the name of which was El Melífeh; but that Farhán had left it, and was, with his son Mijuel, a day's journey farther still. Ismaïl came up just as they told us this, and saw that the game was up; so, when the men had ridden away with their camels, he came to us and said, with a rather ghastly smile, that he must wish us good-

bye here. He had to be at Naïf's tent before night; and if we would not come with him, why, he must leave us to our fate; he couldn't go with us farther north—he and Faris's people were not friends. We replied, "So be it," gave him a polite message to his master, and, to his great joy and surprise, a present for himself. We had gained our point, and could afford to be generous. So he wished us good-bye, and various blessings, between his teeth. Then, putting his kadísh into a feeble canter, he departed.

Circumstances had favored us, for Daëssan was behind, and the rest of our caravan out of sight, so that no discussion with any of our people had been possible, and when we returned we had only to announce Ismaïl's departure as a *fait accompli*. Daëssan, finding himself relieved from the burden of Ismaïl's presence, now made no objection to giving us the true direction, and the camels' heads were turned north-west, while our followers, after a few expressions of disappointment, lapsed into silence. We travelled on thus for two hours, regaining most of our lost ground. Wilfrid was then fortunate enough to discover a pool of rain-water, the first fresh water we had met with since leaving El Haddr, and there we filled our goat-skins. We should have liked to encamp beside the precious element; but Daëssan, saying that seriously there was danger in the country we were entering, begged us to go a little farther on. We are now encamped in a wady, far away from all living creatures, and nicely hidden from the surrounding plain. Ali, Hánna, and the rest are very serious and quiet this evening, and we hope to have an undisturbed night, having had troubles enough during the day.

We are now in the heart of Mesopotamia (just at the top of the second O in our map). The tents have not yet been pitched, for fear of distant eyes—for this is Tom Tiddler's ground, between Ferhán's people and Faris's, where nobody comes for any good.

March 12th.—Ali, who had hitherto supported us loyally in all our plans, came last night to our tent, and, sitting down, explained that he considered it his duty to warn us against persisting in our journey any farther in the direction we were taking. He was

convinced that we were going into an uninhabited region, from which we should find no exit, and quite in an opposite direction to that which we intended. He remarked, as was perfectly true, that Daëssan was blind, and could not be expected to make a very efficient guide, and that we had only a couple of goat-skins with us, and seven people to supply with water, to say nothing of the four horses and the donkey. We had great difficulty in pacifying him, for, in truth, we were a little anxious ourselves; but we got out the map and showed him our position on it, and that of the Khábur, which could not now be more than eighty miles off, as, in spite of our loss of ground yesterday, we have been making long marches. He was not convinced, but did not insist with his objections, and I am sure we can depend upon him.

Daëssan, too, was rather gloomy this morning, for the twisting and turning about yesterday had put him out of his reckoning, and he is so blind that he had not been able to see the Tell Melífeh, and had lost his bearings. He was nervous, too, about enemies, and constantly begged us to keep a good lookout for khayál. However, we saw nothing but some bustards and a fox. Wilfrid and I rode in front, giving the direction, and he followed a little behind, so that the camel division might not lose sight of us. The country now was no longer flat, but rose rapidly before us, and after an hour or two we came to a high position, from which, to our great delight, we could see hills to the north, which we knew must be Jebel Sinjár; while below us, to our left, an immense lake appeared, with some high cliffs beyond it. Here we dismounted, and waited for the rest to come up. Daëssan, though he could not see these things, recognized our description of them, confirmed us in our recognition of the Jebel Sinjár, and gave the lake a name, Snéyseleh. He told us we should have to go some way farther in order to get round the head of it, and asked us anxiously if we could see no tents.

After a careful examination of the ground beyond the lake, Wilfrid, who is long-sighted, made out some black specks on a sort of plateau, with some lighter specks around them, which by careful

watching were seen to move, and he pronounced them to be tents and camels. The encampment appeared to be about six miles off, and we agreed at once to go toward it. It lay to the west. First, however, there was the súbkha to be circumvented, and we were obliged to alter our course northward and skirt its shore, looking for a place where we could cross; for the upper part of the lake was evidently quite shallow, though about three miles in width. At last we came to the track of a camel leading across the wet mud, which we could trace for a long distance till it disappeared in the mirage, and Wilfrid, impatient to go straight to the tents, determined to follow it, while Daëssan and the rest of the party should go round the head of the lake. I foolishly went with him, and, doubting the soundness of the bottom, did so on foot; but I had not got more than a few hundred yards before I was quite exhausted, and my boots and skirts were so clogged with mud that I was unable to get any farther. I confess that I was rather frightened, for already there was such a dense mirage that we could not see anything round us but the uniform expanse of mud, and we had left the camel track, which meandered about, and I thought we were going to end our days in this miserable place. But Wilfrid would not turn back, and at last I managed to scramble on to my mare, and then found matters less hopeless, for the mud was not really much over her fetlocks, and did not get any worse; also, from the higher position I could see better, and make out the form of the opposite hills wavering through the mirage. So we struggled on for an hour and a half, and at last landed safely on the other side.

As we got to higher ground, we looked back across the súbkha for the camels, but they were nowhere visible, being far away, rounding the head of the lake; but about half a mile in front we saw a man standing, and rode up to him. He had been watching, no doubt, for a long time, and asked us why we had come across the lake instead of going round. He told us, too, after the usual evasive answers Bedouins always begin with, that the tents of his people were those that we had seen from the other side, and ex-

dressed surprise that we had been able to count them from so great a distance. As soon as he heard that we were not marauders, but travellers on our way to Faris, he became very amiable, and we all three sat down, while our mares grazed, waiting for the camels to appear. This they soon afterward did, to our no small relief. The man told us he was a Gáët (one of the Shammar tribes), and that his sheykh, Beddr, was five or six hours farther on; that Beddr was a friend of Faris, and that Faris himself was at a place called Sheddádi, on the Khábur, only a day's journey beyond Beddr's camp. This was indeed good news; and great was the rejoicing in our party when they at last came up and heard it.

The man, who was a good-humored, honest fellow, now put us on our road, pointing to a line of hills, from which he declared we should see Beddr's camp. The ground rose rapidly from the lake, and we travelled up an irregular incline for another two hours, passing a nice pool of rain-water covered with ducks, where we watered our mares. The whole ascent above the súbkha must be two hundred and fifty or three hundred feet; and the line of hills, as generally happens, turned out to be the edge of an upper tableland, from which a really magnificent view southward is obtained, with the súbkha like a sheet of gold in the middle of the lower plain. Beyond we could still see the Melífeh hill, with its flat top, a very prominent landmark. Northward and westward the upper plain also sloped away, an even expanse of down, and about twenty miles off ran the line of the Sinjár hills, and of Jebel Abdul Aziz, which is a continuation of them westward. We looked in vain, however, for any tents. For ourselves we should have been quite content to stop where we were, having water with us and grass; but Daëssan and the others were in a feverish state of anxiety to get on and sleep at a camp to-night, and again the talk turned on ghazús and other "moving accidents," so that we consented to continue, though it was growing late. We made for a little tell about two miles off, and from it we at last saw tents, but far away to the north. There the camels waited with me while Wilfrid gal-

loped on to a yet farther tell, from which he was to signal us by moving to the right or left, or standing still or coming back toward us. He stood still, and we knew by that that he had seen something, and that we were to come on. A camp had been discovered, and not more than two miles off.

We are now enjoying the hospitality (if enjoyment it can be called) of one Sayah, sheykh of a fraction of the Sabit Shammar, a silly old man, with an enormous family of rather ill-bred children, who bores us to extinction. However, he has killed a lamb for us, and brought dates and butter, and promises to take us to Sheddádi no later than to-morrow, and our dangers and difficulties at last are over. Yet I regret the calm of the desert in this noisy, dog-ridden camp.

March 13th.—Sayah's hospitality was, after all, not of the purest kind, for it turns out that he made Hánna give him a mejidie for the lamb last night, and then ate up nearly all of it himself. Our own share consisted of the liver, the heart, and the great fat tail, none of which we could eat. Moreover, his wife borrowed our cooking-pots for the feast, and troubled us with her company after it. But these are things one has to put up with without remark.

In the night there was a hard frost, and some water I poured into a tin cup at six o'clock this morning had ice on it at seven—a difference of climate since yesterday which may in part be accounted for by the extra three hundred feet we have climbed. We left Wady Adíg—for such is the name of the little valley where we found the Sabit camp—at half-past seven, and expected to reach Faris's tents this evening; but Sayah, who volunteered to be our guide, has led us such a roundabout dance all the morning, that now, after nine hours and a half of hard marching, we have been obliged to stop.

Of all weariful old geese, I think I never met Sayah's equal. When we asked him the direction at starting, he answered, in the tone of one putting off the foolish questions of a child, "Never mind (my dears); if you have a *little* patience, you will *soon* see. I, *Sayah*, you understand, *I*" (pointing to his chest) "will show

you the road, and, please God, we shall be with Faris before noon." So off he started due north, and then half an hour afterward took a turn due west, and then north-west, and then stopped a little to consult with Daëssan, and then appealed to us (for he too is short-sighted) to say whether we could see no tents.

"Whose tents?" we asked.

"Oh, any tents would do. Our object was to go to Faris; and we must find out where Faris was."

The sun had begun to warm the ground, and there was a strong mirage, so that for a long time we could see nothing farther than a few hundred yards any way, and we began to suggest that a straight line might be the shortest way of arriving somewhere, if not at Sheddádi. But Sayah explained sententiously that we were now travelling "in the desert, which was not at all the same thing as travelling in a town, and that we could not be expected to know the way about as he did. He was a Bedouin, and was used to the desert from youth upward. We should soon find some tents, please God, where we should learn the road." We wandered on in zigzags all the morning, and at last, coming to some higher ground, where there were graves, discovered a large encampment of forty or fifty tents far away to our right under the Sinjár hills. This range is very beautiful, and not farther off now than twelve or fifteen miles, so that we can see, or fancy we see, patches of green trees and gardens at the foot of the slopes. Sayah tells us there are fifteen villages in different parts of the range, inhabited by a Kurdish race called Zedíehs,* worshippers of Satan, who cultivate gardens of figs, grapes, and pomegranates, and wear black turbans on their heads.

Sayah wanted, of course, to go to these tents, but we knew they must be far out of our way, if Faris was on the Khábur, and insisted on waiting till something more nearly in our proper direction should be sighted. Presently we came across a large party of Bedouins in marching order, moving camp. It was a pretty sight.

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* Yezidis; described by Layard and others.

First of all came a dozen horsemen with lances; then, in a straggling line, some sixty baggage camels, some carrying tents and pots and pans, others great *howdahs* full of women and children; then boys and young men on foot driving donkeys and surrounded by camp-dogs, with here and there a greyhound; and, lastly, herds of milch-camels and flocks of sheep. They were marching from north-east to south-west, and so crossed our line at right angles. They informed us that Faris had left Sheddádi and was gone down the Khábur. The tents we had seen to the north were Beddr's. They said there were some Taï* nearly west of us, and to them we resolved to go, Daëssan informing us that Faris's mother was from these people, and that their sheykh's name is Abd er Ráhman, and that they number a thousand tents. At half-past twelve we crossed a track said to go from Nìsibin to Melkh Ubuára, where the salt is, Nìsibin being three days' journey from here.

Soon after one o'clock Wilfrid and Sayah galloped on to get information at the Taï tents, which we perceived a long way off. Sayah is well mounted on a Seglawíd Arjébi, a powerful bay with a good head, but I and my mare were tired, and we lagged behind sadly. When they got within three miles of the Taï camp, Wilfrid stopped for me, and sent on Sayah alone for information; but considering, on reflection, that the old man, if left to his own devices, would be unlikely to appear again to-day, he galloped on again, after giving me instructions what to do with the camels when they should come up. It was beautiful to see Hagar, after all these days of hard travelling, doing these three miles at almost racing speed, for, in her anxiety to rejoin Sayah's mare, she went off like an arrow. The ground sloped gradually down toward the Taï camp, and I could watch her progress all the way. After I had watched alone for nearly an hour, the camels came up, and we went on to a little hill in our line, which we had agreed should be our rendezvous. He joined us there soon afterward, and said that he had had great difficulty in getting away from the hospitality of

* A "noble" tribe tributary to the Shammar.

the Sheykh Hamid, a venerable old man who appeared to be very rich. His tent was the largest and best furnished Wilfrid had yet seen, not excepting Ferhán's at Sherghát. The news learned there was that Faris, who is this Hamid's nephew, moved down the Khábur in the direction of Deyr this very morning, and is not far off; but we have lost so much ground to-day, that we have stopped at the first good camping-place we could find after leaving the Taï. It is, to my mind, a perfect camp, a hollow in a rather high down commanding a splendid view of the Sinjár hills. We have been cutting bundles of green stuff for our mares to eat at night, for the corn has been finished some days. It is a beautiful evening, the moon just entering her second quarter, so that the camels will be able to feed half the night—an evening which well repays the hours of weariness during the day, and even the miseries of last night's camp among the Sabit dogs and the Sabit women, who so pestered us by peeping into our tent.

CHAPTER XV.

"Now therefore swear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear."—GENESIS xxi., 23, 24.

A Gentleman of the Desert and his Mother, the Hatóun Amsheh.—Well-behaved Boys.—Tellál.—Faris goes out Shooting.—He Swims the River.—Swearing Brotherhood.—Rashid ibn Ali and the Sheykh of Samúga.—The Yezidis.—A Raft on the Khábur.—Camels Swimming.—Farewell to Faris.—A Gallop in to Deyr.

March 14th.—We are with Faris. I write it with some pride, when I think how many "impossibilities" once stood in our way, and how doubtful success seemed even so lately as three days ago; yet, in point of fact, there has been neither difficulty nor danger to encounter. Only a little obstinacy was wanted; and here we are.

At early dawn on the day of our arrival we sent out Sayah, like the raven from the ark, to see what tidings he could bring of the Shammar chief's camp. He came back sooner than we expected—in less than three hours—and announced success from a distance at the top of his voice as he approached us. "Faris was close at hand; he had seen him; he had spoken to him." "Shil, shil" (load up, load up); "we shall be there in an hour." Such was the joyful news; and though, like most Bedouin statements, this one hardly bore out its first promise, for Sayah had not really either seen or spoken to the sheykh, having only met a shepherd belonging to his establishment, yet it was little past noon when we rode into the camp we had looked for so long. The first tent, indeed, would have been visible from the top of the down, not half an hour's ride from where we stopped, if we had gone to look for it last night.

TELLAL STARTS ON A GHAZÚ.

The tents of Faris's people are scattered down a long, meandering wady, perhaps a mile in length, and at noon, the time of our arrival, had not a very animated appearance. The sheep and most of the camels were away at pasture, and only the mares remained near the tents. The wady was white as snow with camomile in full flower, the favorite food of camels; and on this account, no doubt, the spot had been chosen. The mares we passed were not particularly attractive—raw-boned, half-starved creatures, with their winter coats still on them. But the Shammar have, I fancy, but few fine horses, in spite of Sayah's tales of Faris's stud, "each beast worth a thousand pounds." More attractive were the new-born camels which every here and there peeped out of the herbage—creatures all legs and neck, which, when squatting close, may well be taken for gigantic birds, so little heads they have, and such immense eyes.

At a bend of the wady we came suddenly on a great tent, with seven peaks, which we knew, by its size, must be the sheykh's. It was standing, with a dozen others, just where the valley broadened out into the plain; and, as we rode up to it unannounced, we began for the first time to feel a little anxious about the reception we might meet with at the hands of the man we had come so far to see. But we need not have doubted. As soon as we were perceived, servants came out to meet us and hold our horses, while all those present in the tent stood up and answered our salutation in a friendly voice. Faris himself, a young man of most attractive countenance, appeared from the inner tent, and greeted us with a smile that had so much honesty in it and good-will that we felt at once that we were safe in his hands. He bade us sit down, and made us comfortable with rugs and cushions, and sat himself beside us and listened to our compliments, and returned them gracefully and with the ease of perfect good-breeding. He inquired most amiably about our adventures since we left Deyr, for he had heard of our arrival there, and even of our attempt to pay him a visit, last month. He said he had been long expecting us, and now we must stay with him—his tent was our tent, his

people our people; and, though these and other phrases are more or less conventional in the East, he put a tone of so much sincerity into the words that they really touched us. His manner is quite different to that of any one we have hitherto met in the desert, for it is frank and cordial, as if its owner was sure enough of his own position to be able to do without the stiffness and false dignity most of the Bedouins affect when they are with strangers. Indeed, a better-bred man it would be difficult to find. Such are our first impressions, and I write them down while they are fresh. I think we have at last found that thing we have been looking for, but hardly hoped to get a sight of, a *gentleman* of the desert.

But I am tired, and must put off further description till to-morrow, for we are to stay here now some days.

March 16th.—(I must condense what I have written during the last two days; for my journal has become a mere mass of notes, for the most part taken from conversations we have had with various interesting people here, and requires rewriting.)

By far the most important personage in Faris's camp, the young sheykh himself not excepted, is his mother, the Hatóun Amsheh,* better known in the tribe as the "Mother of Abd ul Kérim." I think it pretty and touching that they should retain this title for her, instead of calling her the Mother of Faris, the rising sun among them, and that they should thus do honor to the dead brother instead of to him. But the fact is, Abd ul Kérim was a hero whose name will linger for many generations yet among the Shammar as that of their greatest man. During his lifetime the tribe was rich and powerful, and enjoyed a prestige in the desert such as it is hardly likely ever to have again; for the unity of the Shammar is broken, and, divided, they never can contend on equal terms with their great enemies, the Ánazeh. That he was a real hero of romance it is not difficult to see; for his memory pervades the whole life of the family and tribe he has left behind

* Compare Layard's account of her as a young woman in 1843.

him, and is the motive of three parts of the loyalty with which the present sheykh is honored. The mother of Abd ul Kérim is a sort of holy personage, and object of veneration with all the tribes of Northern Mesopotamia. She was, as I have already mentioned, a Taï by birth, and sister of the Sheykh Hámid whom Wilfrid made acquaintance with the day before our arrival; and she must have been formerly very beautiful. The Taï have the reputation of being the handsomest women in the desert. She is now old and fat (fat, alas! is the tomb of beauty); but in spite of infirmities she is a most dignified personage, and her will is law in all the camp. To-day Faris, like the spoiled boy that he sometimes is, amused himself with firing off Wilfrid's rifle close to the tent, and at last took aim at some goats belonging to a neighbor. The old lady very properly thought this undignified behavior in the sheykh, and sent to tell him so, and he put down the rifle at once without a word. In Faris's tent she reigns supreme, allowing no other woman to share her power over him. Even his present wife, a slave from the Taï, lives in another tent. His first wife was a woman of good birth, but she is dead; and there is one son by her, a pretty boy of nine, named Salfij, who is brought up by the Hatóun, along with Abd ul Kérim's son, Mohammed, and his daughter, Menífeh, ten and thirteen years old; and a charming boy of twelve, Tellál, the son of another brother, Abd ur Raják, also dead.* Both these boys are made more account of in the tent than Faris's own sons, because they are orphans. They are all exceedingly well brought up, and have charming manners, besides being as straightforward, courageous boys as you could possibly find in any part of the world.

I never saw a prettier sight than Tellál on his chestnut mare, the day after our arrival, armed with a lance three times his own length, doing the fantasia with his uncle and a score of devoted retainers, who, while they admired the boy's courage, seemed ter-

* He was shot by the Turks at the same time that his brother, Abd ul Kérim, was captured.

ribly afraid he should get hurt; and all the time the boy himself thought nothing, I am sure, of danger, either to himself or to any one else, in the sport of pursuing and of being pursued, with the steel point of a lance within six inches of his back. He would gallop up to his uncle, as he was riding beside us (for we were all marching in line, moving camp), and challenge him, according to Bedouin practice, by pretending to attack us, and then shoot away like an arrow, with Faris, who is a magnificent horseman, thundering close behind, and making his lance quiver over his head, and then twist and turn and double till he managed, thanks to his feather weight, to escape. He often comes to our tent to look at the guns and knives and strange European knick-knacks we have with us, and talks as sensibly as an English school-boy about his amusements and what he is going to do when he grows up, and in just the same frank, outspoken way. He was looking to-day at Wilfrid's dress-sword, a merely ornamental piece of goods, given him by Mr. S—— to wear on state occasions, and which Tellál was at first inclined to admire from its being covered with gilding and having a handsome belt; but, having drawn it, and very cautiously felt its edge, and found it as blunt as a sword could be, his face put on an expression of unutterable disgust, and he threw it down. "It isn't fit for the Beg to wear!" he said; "feel mine;" and he showed us an old blade as sharp as a razor, in a very shabby sheath, which had belonged to his father. Wilfrid has taken a great fancy to him.

Mohammed, too, is a nice boy, but shy, which Tellál is not; and, being some years younger, only rides a pony; while Salfij is still in the nursery. All three boys are, of course, the delight of every Arab in the camp; for the men here are good-natured to children, and these are the children of their sheykhs.

Among the Shammar there is a strong feeling of loyalty toward what may be called the royal family. It was Faris's ancestor, Faris, who led the Shammar from Nejd at the time of the Conquest, two hundred years ago; and no pretender from any other family has dared to claim the position of sheykh, to the prejudice

of his descendants, since.* These children, therefore, have a double title to the people's regard, as sons of their heroes, and as sole representatives, with the present sheykh, of the family of their chiefs. Ferhán is not reckoned as legitimate by the independent Shammar, and is despised even by his own followers in the south, because he is the son of a Bagdad woman, "Not a Bedouin at all—a mere *felláh*, a ráyah." Faris's accent of disgust while using these words of his half-brother is very amusing. And Ferhán's sons are worse, tainted over and above with Kurdish blood—"real Kadíshes." That Abd ul Kérim, the cion of such a family, and their sheykh and their hero, should have been seized by the Turks and hanged as a common robber on the bridge of Mósul, makes every Shammar's blood boil.

Faris himself has justified all our first impressions in his favor.

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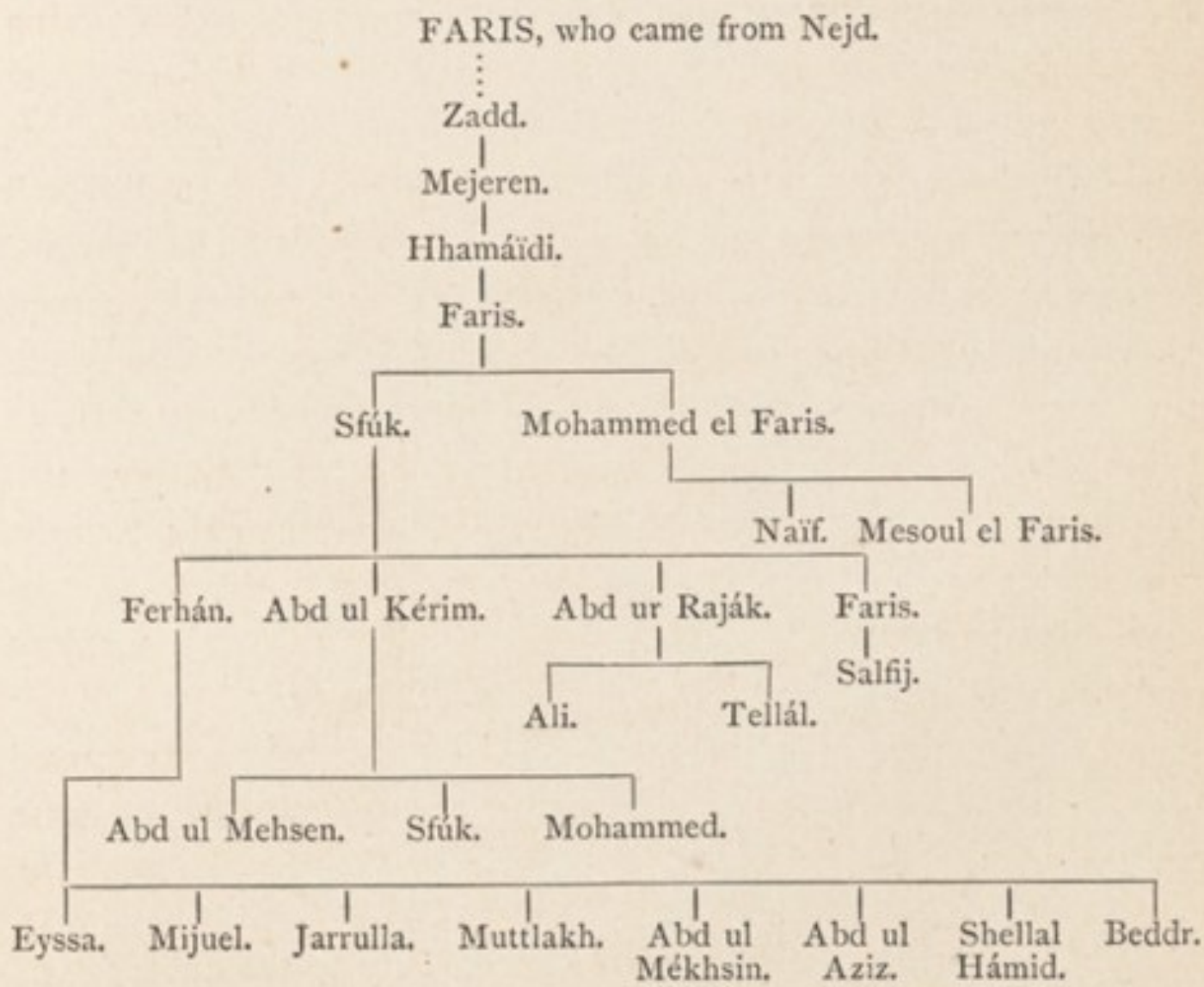
* The following is Faris's genealogy, which he gave us to-day, correcting it now and then by an appeal to the elder men about him:



He is frank, good-natured, and agreeable; and he and Wilfrid have become the greatest possible friends. From the very outset he took us into his confidence, explaining his relations with Ferhán and with the Turkish government, and treating us as if convinced of our loyalty and good-will. His account of the desert politics, in which he is beginning to play a conspicuous part, has especially interested us. I have already mentioned the tragical death of his two brothers, Abd ul Kérim and Abd ur Raják, and his mother's flight to Nejd, and their sojourn there. On his return, three years ago, he found Ferhán acknowledged by the Shammar as their sheykh, and the whole tribe in danger of becoming perverted from their ancient way of nomadic life by this "Bagdadi," who had accepted the rank of Pasha from those very Turks who had hanged his brother, and who, in consideration of a yearly allowance, had agreed to make his people cultivators of the soil, "mere ráyah and felláhin." This the more high-spirited of the Shammar have deeply resented; and Faris no sooner appeared among them, recalling, by his presence, the memory of the chief they had lost, than he was joined by nearly half the tribe, and by all those discontented with the new order of things. Ferhán, who cares more for his position at Bagdad than for his real influence in the desert, and conscious, perhaps, of his own inferiority in birth to his young half-brother, has not hitherto made any vigorous attempt to control him; but Faris complains bitterly of the machinations of the Pasha's sons, Eyssa and Mijuel, who are constantly attempting to involve him with the Turkish authorities by making raids on the felláhin tribes of the Euphrates, and throwing the blame upon Faris's people. Though not exactly at war, he and these sons of Ferhán have once or twice come to blows, and on one occasion Mijuel was wounded by his uncle's lance. Their people are not on speaking terms, and the uninhabited region we have just crossed is left by both sides as a neutral zone between the northern and southern camps.

The very day of our arrival, Faris informed us that he should be obliged to sacrifice the pleasure of our society to the necessity of

heading an expedition against his nephews, for they had attacked a merchant of Mósul, travelling under his safe-conduct, and had taken sheep and camels from him. There was a great bustle in the camp; horsemen arriving from all points of the compass to have their mares shod, in anticipation of the ghazú, for the only blacksmith among them lives in the sheykh's tent. But in the morning a messenger arrived to say that all the stolen beasts had been recovered, and Mijuel driven back to his own country; so Faris has remained with us.

As to his relations with the Turkish Government, he has been equally communicative. From the time of his brother's death he had not entered a town or trusted himself in the power of any Turk until a month ago, when our old friend, Húseyn Pasha, acting, I suppose, upon the advice we had given him, sent him a polite invitation to come to Deyr, offering him at the same time government pay and support if he would help the Turkish authorities to keep order in Mesopotamia. Faris, being a young man, and perhaps a little dazzled at this token of consideration on the part of the government (for influence "in the town" has a wonderful attraction to the Bedouin mind), went to Deyr, and was received there with all possible honor by the Pasha, who, to do him justice, is a man of great tact and discernment, and, being of Syrian, not Turkish, birth, has a certain sympathy with the people of his district. There it was agreed between them that Faris should keep order in the desert, in consideration of a certain sum of money, to be paid monthly—a not uncommon arrangement—and that he should receive Húseyn's support and countenance in his quarrel with Ferhán's sons.

We are rather sorry to hear of this; for, though in theory it would no doubt be an excellent plan for keeping the peace, yet in practice we know that little good ever comes of such arrangements to the Bedouins, and that the less they have to do with pashas and governors, the more easy it is for them to retain their independence. Faris, besides, is too straightforward and simple-minded to engage in diplomacy with Húseyn, and he ought never to put him-

self into the hands of the official enemy of his house. Húseyn, though with the best private intentions, may find himself any day ordered to arrest the brother of Abd ul Kérim, and Faris's position as a guest at the Serai will be no protection to him then. We are glad to see that the elder men of the tribe, who look upon him with as much affection as if he were their own son, are quite of this opinion; and they were delighted when we explained to Faris how dangerous it was for him to go to Deyr. "Has he not his house here," they say, "and his people and his friends, that he must look for them in the town? He should remember the fate of Ibn Mershid." And, after all Húseyn's protestations, it appears that the promised money has not been paid, insignificant as the sum is, and that Faris's work as zaptieh has been done *balásh*, gratis. But the Bedouins are like children in their love of silver pieces, and will pursue the prospect of touching a few mejidies like an *ignis fatuus*, far beyond what its worth really is to them. I am sure if Húseyn had offered him a thousand sheep, Faris would not have gone out of his way for them; but the hundred Turkish pounds is quite a different thing, and has just such a magical effect as the fourpenny-piece which children claim for having a tooth out. He would not keep the money, probably, if he got it, for a single day, but would distribute it to those about him as he distributed our cloaks and boots; but it would be a vast pleasure to him to think that he had had such a sum in his hands. Wilfrid has given him a deal of good advice on these matters, all of which he takes in the best possible spirit. "You are my father," he says, "and know better than I." It is impossible not to be fond of so charming a character.

In person Faris is small, as a true Bedouin should be; but he is a model of grace and strength and activity. On horseback there is no one in the tribe who can come near him; and it is a fine sight to see him put his mare to her full speed, and make his lance quiver over his head till it almost bends double; and it is easy then to understand, what his people say of him, that his presence on a ghazú is worth thirty horsemen. He is, besides, very good-

looking, with features typically Arabian, a clear olive complexion not darker than that of a Spaniard, an aquiline nose, black eyebrows meeting almost across his forehead, and eyes fringed all round with long black lashes. His smile is one of the most attractive one can see; and, if there is a fault in his face, it is a slight want of resolution in the shape of his underjaw, which makes one fear for him some tragical ending like his brothers', brought on by his own waywardness. He is twenty-seven years old, but looks younger, and every now and then seems subject to fits of boyishness which appear unsuitable to his position, though he can assume the greatest possible dignity on occasion. In his manner toward his people he is especially happy—respectful to the old men, who spoil him, and unpretending with his equals, among whom his personal qualities give him so much ascendency that he can afford to be familiar without losing any dignity. His people are evidently devoted to him, soul and body, and proud of him as the handsomest man and the best rider in Mesopotamia.

On the 15th, the day after our arrival, the ghazú having been abandoned, we all marched together to fresh camping-ground on the banks of the Khábur, where just now there is abundance of grass and camomile for sheep and mares and camels. It was on this occasion that the fantasia I have mentioned was executed in our honor, and that Tellál made so capital a figure on his chestnut mare. Faris's own mare is a tall bay, Shuéymeh Sbáh, with a powerful shoulder, great girth, legs like iron, but a rather coarse hind-quarter. She is not good-looking. Indeed, we have not seen above three good-looking mares in the whole of our journey through Mesopotamia, the only really handsome one being a gray Saadeh belonging to one of Faris's men, four years old, and standing about fifteen hands. I do not, however, see any trace of mixed blood in the Shammar horses, as some people maintain there is. The mares look thorough-bred enough, if the head be an index, but they are defective in shape and beauty. The *great* strains of blood are among the Shammar.

In the afternoon Wilfrid took the sheykh out alone shooting, as

he wished to see how birds were killed flying; and he showed a childish pleasure in the firing of gun and rifle, aiming sometimes with the greatest precision at a crow a hundred yards off with snipe-shot, and at others playfully letting off a ball at a wagtail perched on a twig of tamarisk close before him. It was dangerous work, but fortunately no accident happened. Wilfrid shot a francolin, which fell in the river, and Faris in an instant had stripped and jumped in. The Khábur is deep and strong, and has steep, muddy banks, so that Wilfrid had some difficulty in getting his friend out again, especially as the water was very cold; but Faris was delighted, and came back in triumph with the bird. It was amusing to see this powerful sheykh, whose word is law in half Mesopotamia, excited like a child with the adventure. But I like him all the better for it.

This little episode, and the help Wilfrid had afforded in getting him out of the river, has made them such fast friends, that this evening, while we were sitting talking in our tent about his early troubles, and his hopes and prospects, and the pleasure our visit is giving him, he said that now he and Wilfrid must be as brothers, "to-day and to-morrow and hereafter," to which Wilfrid willingly responded, for we both of us feel a real affection for him, and his friendship for us has been quite of spontaneous growth; and so without more ado it was agreed that they should take the oath of brotherhood. Wilfrid told him how he was alone in the world without brothers living, just as Faris was, and with few relations that were much more good comfort to him than Ferhán and his sons were to Faris, and he declared that now, inshalláh, he and Faris should be brothers for the rest of their lives. Then they took hold of each other by the girdle with their left hands, and, holding their right hands up, as appealing to Heaven, they repeated the prescribed form of words very seriously, for this is a pledge no Bedouin ever takes lightly. Faris began: "Walláh! wallahí!" (O God! O, my God!), and Wilfrid repeated after him, "Walláh! wallahí! walláh! walláh!" each perhaps twenty times; then "Billáh! billahí!" (by God, by my God); "Tilláh! tillahí!"

(through God, through my God); "akhwan, akhwan, el yom u bokra o baadén, akhwan" (brothers to-day, to-morrow, and hereafter)—an oath as impressive as those of our marriage-service, and considered quite as binding by those who take it. This pledge of brotherhood, once taken, cannot be dissolved. It binds the swearers to be henceforth brothers, as though born of the same mother, in all things, except that it is no bar to marriage of the one with the near relations of the other. Personal combat is henceforth not allowed, even if the tribes of the two brothers should afterward be at war; nor can the property of a brother be seized by a brother or by any of his people. The swearers have, on the contrary, a right to aid and assistance in case of need; and a brother, if called upon, is bound to avenge his brother's quarrel.

There was something so impressive in the ceremony that, for some minutes after it was over, we all three sat without speaking, till Faris, seeming to recollect that something more was necessary, got up, and, calling to his mollah, or secretary, who was in the other tent, to come, made him attest the validity of the act by stating to him what had happened. Two witnesses, he informs us, are necessary to make the oath binding; but it is considered sufficient that the second witness should be informed of the fact on the day on which it takes place. The mollah put his hand to his head, and said gravely: "The Beg is now one of our people; let him come into our tent." He went on to tell the news to the rest of the sheykh's household, and when Wilfrid entered they all stood up, and the eldest made him a little speech, to the effect that this tent and all the Shammar tents were his, and their camels and sheep, and all that they had; and Faris said, "You must stay with us. Our people shall make you tents like their own, and I will give you camels, and you shall live with us instead of going away to your own country." Wilfrid tells me, and I can well believe it, that he was much affected by all this, and that, come what may, he shall always hold Faris truly as his brother, though he may never be able, or be called upon, to prove it.

March 17th.—Our relations with the Shammar are now on a

quite different footing from heretofore. Before it they were polite and friendly, but now we are shown what is very like affection. The Hatóun Amsheh sent for me and kissed me, and said that she was now my mother, and that if we were ever in any difficulty, inshalláh, her son should help us. I am sure these are not mere empty words. Faris, too, who has up to this refused all our invitations to eat or drink with us in our own tent, we being his guests, and who has always sat at the door instead of coming inside, has now sent a message through Hánna to "his brother," to say that he will dine with us. So we have produced our best curry, and búrghul, and sweetmeats, and made him sit between us, and poured a whole tin of sugar into his coffee, the thing of all others which he likes best; for the Bedouins, who have none of their own, have a craving for sugar. The dinner has been so successful, that now he says he will take his meals nowhere else, and I am afraid will find it difficult, when we are gone, to go back to the coarse Arab fare of his own tent. I hope Faris will remember his brother and sister as long as we intend to remember him.

Besides the sheykh's household, there are two most interesting persons, guests of the Shammar. The first is Rashid ibn Ali (mentioned by Palgrave as the only member of the old reigning family of the Sheykhs of Jebel Shammar which escaped the general massacre of the "Beyt Alec," on the conquest of that country by Ibn Saoud). He is a man of fifty-five or sixty, of rather dark complexion, and much muffled up about the face, but of an ordinary Arab type of countenance, and undistinguishable in dress or manner from the other Bedouins here. On better acquaintance, one perceives that he is a well-bred man. He was pointed out to us originally as a man of distinction by our little old guide Daëssan, who knew what an interest we take in Nejd and in Jebel Shammar, and who informed us that Ibn Rashid had killed fourteen of his relations. We have accordingly made his acquaintance, and have got from him a deal of interesting information. Wilfrid has cross-questioned him narrowly on the subject of Nejd horses, and he confirms everything that has already been told us by Smeyr

and Daëssan, stating most positively that there is no Nejd breed of horses ever heard of at Hîyel, nor any horses at all in Central Arabia but the horses of the Bedouins, whose breeds are well-known and everywhere the same. He says that no horses are bred in the neighborhood of Riád, which is a country without pasture, and that in other parts of Nejd the specimens are smaller, and in no way better than the Ánazeh horses. He repeats that Ibn Rashid gets all his mares from the Bedouins, mostly from the Ánazeh, and adds that Ibn Saoud gets what horses he has from Ibn Rashid; but the present Imam is not as rich as his father Féysul was, and has not, in fact, many horses, while nobody else at Riád has any at all. The best horses in Arabia are the horses of the Ánazeh—especially the Sebáa and the Fedáan.

With regard to Jebel Shammar, Rashid says that the hills there are higher than the Sinjár; but he does not talk of snow on them. Hîyel has a thousand houses, walled houses, *beyut haggar* (he pronounces his g's hard, as in Egypt); but outside in the *Gebel* there are twenty thousand tents, a few of them only Shammar. Ibn Rashid himself is a Shammar. One or two Franks have been to Hîyel, one last year; but Ibn Rashid had not received them. He assures us that there would be no danger to any one going to Jebel Shammar, but that Ibn Rashid dislikes foreigners, and will have nothing to say to them. If we wish to go there, he will go with us. He is returning in a month's time, and we should stay with him at Hîyel as long as we liked. He is going the way he came, and that is by Húseyn (Meshid Ali). This is an itinerary of the route he has given us, which may be worth transcribing:

Húseyn to Gerîmne - - - - - - - - - - - -	one day.
Gerímne to Héssib - - - - - - - - - - - -	one day.
Héssib to Shébitshi - - - - - - - - - - -	one day.
Shébitshi to Shébrum - - - - - - - - - -	one day.
Shébrum to Berája - - - - - - - - - - - -	one day.
Berája to Khádra - - - - - - - - - - - - -	one and a half day.
Khádra to Tróba - - - - - - - - - - - - -	two days.
Tróba to Bága - - - - - - - - - - - - -	one day.
Bága to Hîyel - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	one day.

The three principal Bedouin tribes of Jebel Shammar are the Duébi, the Ibn Heyt, and the Firrme; west of it are the Sherarát.

I should like to be able to accept Rashid Ibn Ali's invitation to Hîyel, but we are not professional travellers, and a summer in Central Arabia cannot be thought of.

The other person of interest staying here is Mátu, Sheykh of Samúga, the principal village of the Jebel Sinjár, and, of course, a Zedíyeh. He is here on business with Faris, connected with a quarrel he has with the village of Sekinîeh, and I fancy he wants Faris to help him. He is a Kurd, and is quite different in features from the Arabs, and has, besides, certain peculiarities of dress, the chief being the black head-dress of which we had heard. He also makes us take notice that his shirt is cut square at the neck instead of being round; and this, too, we had heard of as a remarkable point of distinction between the Zedíyehs and the Arabs, made almost as much of by the latter as the belief that the Zedíyeh worship the devil instead of God—for fashions in dress are more unalterable than those in religion. He has told us a good deal about his religion—more, I am sorry to say, than we are quite able to understand. He denies, of course, the worship of Shaictán. According to his account, the Zedíyehs believe in one God and one great prophet, with several lesser ones. They all acknowledge Húseyn Beg,* chief of one of their tribes north of the Sinjár, as the supreme head of their religion. Mátu's words were, "Melek ed Taous, our prophet, is to us as Eyssa is to you, and Húseyn Beg is to us as your Pope is to you." He says that they have two religious books, that of Zabú, or Daoud, and that of Enjír, or Eyssa, the former accepted by all Zedíyehs, the latter only by a few, who have it in addition to the first. He adds that they do homage to or worship the sun, "like the Parsees." They have no restriction as to the number of their wives, but usually take four. A rich man, "yakhud ketír amra," takes many wives. The Zedíyehs eat the wild ass (wáhash), which is common in their hills, but not the tame ass nor the pig.

* Compare Layard.

There are fourteen villages or places in the Jebel, containing two thousand houses, some of stone, some only tents. His own people live principally in tents. He has given me the names of eight springs in the hills—Bárah, Sekinfeh, which flows to the Súbkha Snéyzele, Jiddála, Gabára, Belád, Shingal, Sulahh, which is the Wady Thathar, and Khersi. There are many sorts of fruit-trees grown in the villages—figs, pomegranates, and others—but no palms.

This morning Mátu came to us, he said, to wish us good-bye: he had had news from home, and must be off. "Good news?" we asked. "Yes, good news." His brother had been attacked by the Sheykh of Sekinfeh, but had beaten him off and killed two of his men, and taken their guns and mares. Faris has promised to send some khayál with him, and he hoped to carry on the war vigorously with the Sekinfns. He wished the Beg to go with him too, and bring his gun. The offer was very tempting, as Samúga is not more than sixty miles from here, and we don't know how much or how little is known of these Zedíyehs, and their religion makes them interesting; and we should certainly accept it but for our engagement with Mr. S——.

Mátu started later, with fifty of Faris's men under, whom should you think, but our little friend Tellál, as proud as a midshipman in command of his first cutter, and quite unable, in his excitement, to listen to anything we had to say in the way of farewells. Wilfrid had a clasp-knife he had been intending for Tellál for some time past, and which the boy had coveted. It was now produced, but the young commander was intent on far more important matters, and had already put away from him childish things. He was looking to his spear-point to see if it was sharp, and to his saddle to see that it was girthed, and could not be distracted. He gave the knife to an old servant to keep till he came back; and, without bidding us good-bye, jumped on his mare, the old retainers hanging about giving him good advice to the last. And so he rode away. He is to collect a tribute which is due from some tribe or village in the Sinjár, and, if it is refused, take it by force

with his fifty men. He is only twelve years old, but, I will answer for it, he comes back with the booty.

We are now (March 18th) becoming anxious for news of Mr. S——. It has been arranged between us all along that we are to meet on the 15th at Deyr; and he was to arrive there, if possible, a day or two earlier, so as to communicate with us, in case he found an opportunity, at Faris's camp. We are already two days behind our time, and still two days' journey from the town; but we know he will make allowance for our want of punctuality, considering how very difficult a march we have had to accomplish. We cannot, without appearing unkind to our host, who is now our friend and brother, propose to leave him without excuse. To-day, however, news came from Deyr, through some wandering musicians, that a great personage was expected there from Aleppo; and we have no longer hesitated to mention our wish to depart. Faris, though sorry that we should leave him so soon, has listened to all we had to say in the kindest and most reasonable way; and, seeing that we really were obliged to go, has done all he could to expedite our journey. In spite of his recent interview with Húseyn, and its friendly termination, none of Faris's people can show themselves at Deyr without danger, except the mollah, whose clerical character gives him a safe-conduct. This person, then, has been appointed to accompany us, and, at the same time, to do a little piece of business for his master in the town.

The mollah is an important functionary here; not that he has any religious duties to perform, for public prayers are unknown among the Bedouins, but, being the only man of liberal education in the camp, he is made use of to read and write all the letters, and to carry on all the diplomatic negotiations which pass between the sheykh and his neighbors, and this is no small matter, for a great sheykh's life is one of constant business. The present negotiation Faris has shortly explained to us (for since the oath of brotherhood he has no secrets from us). It is that of getting Húseyn to pay up the money due to him for services rendered, and the mollah is to go to Deyr in the character of dun, and do all he

can to squeeze the Pasha. It appears that the whole sum promised was only the sixty pounds; but money is very scarce in the Shammar camp, and the people are clamoring for their share of the mejidies. Not that any one here would call Faris to account for this, only they consider it an insult to their sheykh that he should be kept waiting for his money, and an injury to themselves to have been made to do the Pasha's business for nothing. "Here we have been," they say, "for a whole month doing the work of zaptiehs, and keeping the peace into the bargain, and all *balásh*."

Faris asked us what we thought he ought to do, and we advised him, if he really wanted the money very badly, to march down with all his men and encamp just opposite Deyr, and then send in the mollah; but he said he did not wish to quarrel with Húseyn, if he could help it, and would use friendly means first, and thought that we might be able to persuade Húseyn for him to do this act of justice. "You see," he said, "the state of our camp here; the women have no clothes to their backs, and the coffee and sugar are all done. My people are angry, and will not put up with this forever; and, although I shall do my best to keep them quiet, they will be down on some of the Pasha's felláhin before long, just to do themselves justice. And whose fault will it be then?" He requested us also to explain to the Pasha that some recent raids, of which complaint had been made, were no doing of his or his people's, but of his nephews, Mijuel and Eyssa. We asked him if he could affirm on oath to us that this was true, and he did so, lifting up his hand and repeating "Walláh! walláh!" after the Arab form of oath. We know that the Pasha would not believe him, if he had simply stated the thing to us without swearing.

It seems a pity that so much trouble should be taken for so small a sum, and Wilfrid asked him whether he could not wait for it, or do without it; but he said there was a *tájer*, or merchant, now in the camp, to whom he owed ten pounds, and who had come to be paid. We have seen the man about the camp, in appearance something like the Kurd who followed us from Smeyr's,

and whom we sent about his business. We had a few more mejidies with us than were necessary for our journey, for travelling here costs almost nothing, and were glad of an opportunity of returning something of the sheykh's kindness, so we offered to let him have the sum necessary to pay off his Jew; and this, after the hesitation most people make before accepting help of this kind, Faris agreed to. Ten pounds was not a large sum, but he was very grateful, promising to pay it back whenever he should be in funds, and wishing to give Wilfrid a writing for the money. But this Wilfrid, of course, refused, saying that he was a brother, not a *tájer*. Indeed, the sheykh's word is far better than his bond, and it will interest us afterward to see whether he remembers this little debt. At present, the mollah has orders to repay it out of any money he may get from the Pasha, but we have told Faris not to put himself out about it, and that it will do just as well next year, when, inshalláh, we will return to Mesopotamia. He then began to lament that he had no *mokhra*, filly, or even a colt to give us as a remembrance of him, but that too, he says, shall be ready for us next year. He would not take the rifle or the pistol, which we tried to make him accept, and which he had amused himself so much with. "No," he said, "I am better, as my fathers were, without fire-arms, and besides I have no *mokhra*. All I can do for you is this: my people shall make you the raft you will require for crossing the Khábur. They would not do it for the Pasha, or even for the Sultan, for it is felláhin work, fit only for the Jibúri; but they will do it for you, because, you see, you are one of us." It is agreed, then, that this shall be done next day, and that the mollah shall ride with us into Deyr.

March 19th.—We left the Shammar camp at nine o'clock, Faris and a number of his people riding with us to the river bank; those who remained behind wishing us good-bye, and repeating such phrases as, "Our tribe is your tribe, our tents your tents. Come back to us soon, and we will make you tents, and give you camels and mares. You shall live with us every winter, and in the summer, when it is hot, you shall have a stone house to retire

to at Deyr." The "old man of the mountain," too, as Wilfrid calls Rashid ibn Ali, took an affectionate leave of us, renewing his invitation to Hîyel.

The river Khábur, which is the only tributary the Euphrates receives during the whole of its course through the desert, is a considerable stream, and a difficult one to cross. It is about sixty yards wide, has a strong current, and is very deep; not an interesting river—at least where we saw it directly opposite a mound called Tell Fúddrumi—as it flows between deep banks of alluvial soil, and has only a thin fringe of brushwood to clothe its nakedness on either side, with here and there a willow struggling to look like a tree. To one of these a cord had been tied and made fast to a tamarisk-root on the opposite bank; and, floating on the water, we saw the most rickety-looking thing ever people trusted themselves to on deep water. It was a square raft, made of eight goats'-skins blown out to serve as bladders, and tied together with a slight framework of tamarisk boughs. It was at most four feet six inches square, and lay nearly level with the water's edge. On this we were expected to embark, and I confess that I had no pleasant anticipations of the voyage. But first there was the baggage to be ferried, and the camels and mares to be swam across.

A camel forced to swim is a very ridiculous object. He hates the water sincerely, and roars and moans piteously when he is obliged to face it. Ours were, of course, unloaded, and then brought one by one to the river bank. A man on the back, and half a dozen others to push behind, were needed to get them down the bank, a steep slide of mud, down which the camels went, with all their legs together, souse into the water. The men, who were stripped, then jumped in after them, and, shouting and splashing water in their faces, forced them on, till at last they were out of their depth, and everything had disappeared except the camels' noses. Then they seemed to resign themselves, and swam steadily but slowly to the opposite shore, where, fortunately, there was a better landing-place. One of the camels, however, obstinately refused to approach the bank, and, when other means had failed,

was thrown down and dragged by the legs into the water, when it at last made up its mind and followed the rest. Once on shore, they all set off, scampering and kicking up their ungainly heels, at full speed, and were with some difficulty got back again by a couple of horsemen. The mares managed it with much less difficulty.

And now our turn was come. Hánna, inspired by the martial company he has been keeping of late with the Shammar, with whom he has become a great favorite from his good-humor and his good cooking, insisted upon being the first to cross, and got over without accident. His vehement thanks to Heaven on landing were greeted with shouts of laughter from both sides of the river—for a number of Jibúri, who are encamped beyond it, had come down to help and to see the fun. Faris was in high spirits, keeping up a fire of small chaff at every stage of the proceedings. The Agheyls went next, prudently taking off most of their clothes for fear of accidents; and then it was our turn. There was an old man who acted as ferryman, and with ourselves and a pile of luggage I thought it more than a load, when, just as we started, in jumped Faris too; and, before we could stop, we were off, our feet dangling through the framework of the raft, and clinging to each other to keep ourselves balanced. As we got to the middle the strain became too great for the old man, who let go the rope; and in an instant we were swept away down the river, without any means of stopping or guiding ourselves, and expecting every moment to upset. But there was no real danger. As soon as they saw what had happened, every Shammar on the bank jumped straight into the water, and we had hardly gone fifty yards before they were around us and guiding us to shore. There we found Hánna, wringing his hands and shedding floods of tears, after his custom, at our loss—a new source of amusement to Faris, who had never seen a grown man weep before. The mirth, indeed, was so infectious that everybody was agog for fun, and poor fat Ali was made a speedy victim of, and upset in mid-stream amidst roars of laughter. Fatness is a never-ending subject of joke with the

Bedouins, who are lean as whipping-posts themselves, and look upon any other condition as a deformity.

And now the time had come when we were to take leave of Faris, for he could go no farther with us, as the country between the Khábur and the Euphrates is not his district, and the government lays claim to it for their tame tribes—the Jibúri, Buggára, and others. The moment was almost affecting; for, though we have known him for so few days, he has become our friend and our relation; and who knows if we may ever see him again? He recapitulated to us what we were to say to the Pasha about his affairs; and he again recommended the mollah to take good care of us. Wilfrid pressed him a second time to keep the rifle; but, though he evidently would have liked it, he persisted in refusing, because he had nothing to give us in its stead. So we promised to send him one from England. Wilfrid's last words to him were a recommendation to keep clear of the towns. "Húseyn," he said, "may be an honorable man and a friend; but he is the servant of the Turks, who killed your father and your brothers, and who some day may find it to their interest to kill you. Stay at home. You have all you want in the Jezíreh, and you are safe there; and, if you *must* see the Pashas, let them come out to you in the desert." The mollah, who stood by, heartily joined in this advice, and Faris promised to be wise. Then they—Wilfrid and Faris—kissed each other, such being the custom between Bedouin relations, and we went on our way.*

We have camped to-night under the Méze, or "Goat Hills," listening to the cry of the owls in a ruined town close by us, and meditating a rush for Deyr to-morrow morning. Mr. S—— must have arrived, for Hánna has heard from the Jibúri, or some one, of a great personage with a white beard having arrived at Deyr.

March 20th.—Leaving Hánna and Ali and the rest to follow,

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* We learned afterward that he was nearly drowned going back across the Khábur, for the raft upset with him, and somehow got over his head, but he was pulled out by his people.

we have galloped with the mollah to Deyr. From the foot of the hills to the banks of the Euphrates it is an uninterrupted level plain, without a stone and thinly turfed with grass—the perfection of galloping ground—and we did the distance, forty-two miles, in something under six hours. The sun was scorchingly hot all day, as it has been for a week past, and the mares were pretty well exhausted at the end of their gallop, for they still have their winter coats on, and are only grass fed. Our supply of corn has been long exhausted. Still we held on, stopping every four or five miles for the mollah to overtake us—for his beast was slow, and could not keep ours in sight—and letting our mares feed a few minutes, and then going on again. We passed several camps on our way belonging to the Buggára, where we got milk and lebben; but we ate nothing all day, so as not to suffer from the heat of the sun.

Once we passed through an immense herd of gazelles, many thousands of them, all moving in the same direction—northward; and we drove one lot before us for a mile or two, coming so near them that if Wilfrid had had his gun (he had left it with the baggage) he could have certaintly got several, for they were packed together. Then we came upon truffle-hunters, who told us the town was *jeríb, jeríb*—near, just before us. There are three low, isolated hills which mark the direction from Méze to Deyr, called respectively Hejéf-el-Zorát, Hejéf-el-Wustáne, and Hejéf-esh-Shamíye, the last being beyond the river.

We were beginning to get wild for news of Europe, and for the letters which we knew Mr. S—— would bring us, for we have had none now for three months; and for the delight of telling, to one who would appreciate them, our adventures, our difficulties, and our successes. The consul's arrival, too, has become very necessary to us for the restoration of our credit with the authorities—a credit rather compromised, we fear, by our flight from Bagdad. Then nobody knows, who has not experienced it, the delight of talking again in a European language, after having been stumbling on for weeks in Arabic. This thought carried us on without flagging to the end of our ride; though the last five miles, which were

across the lower valley of the Euphrates, in part cultivated, were very severe upon the mares. I doubt if Tamarisk could have gone another mile, and I rode her straight down into the river and let her drink her fill. Poor beasts! they had carried us well.

The mollah was out of the race, and far behind; and though we waited two hours on the bank for the ferryman, who would not hear our shouts, he did not appear.

This was the hardest part of our day's work, this sitting on the river bank from one to three o'clock in the sun; and all the time with the knowledge that there was a cool room waiting for us, and perhaps a table spread, in the Serai, not half a mile away. Why did not Mr. S—— look out of the window and see us there, and move the lubberly ferrymen out of their mid-day sleep to release us? But it was not to be.

At last we got across, and hurried on to the Serai. The door stood wide open, and the rooms were as we had left them. The Pasha's servants, too, received us with a smile; but it was evident we were not expected. "Where was the Beg, the Consul Beg?" "The Beg returned to Aleppo the day your Excellencies left this house, two months ago, and has not since been seen or heard of." "And the great personage who has arrived in the town?" "The great personage is Kadderly Pasha, the new Valy of Bagdad, going to join his post."

We have had our long ride for nothing. Mr. S—— is not at Deyr!

CHAPTER XVI.

"I must say the man in black clothes seemed to be as fine a man as ever lived in the world."—ARTEMUS WARD.

Difficulties arise with the Mutesherif.—We are suspected of being Spies.—Kadderly Pasha.—His excellent Principles.—Turkey the Land of Freedom.—We engage a Bedouin from the Mehéd to take us to Jedáan.

IN leaving Bagdad, as we had done, without paying a farewell visit to the valy, we had committed a breach of etiquette; and, in travelling without a buyuruldi, a breach of the law, which might bring us into trouble with the Turkish authorities whenever we came again under their jurisdiction. So we were rather anxious about the reception our old friend Húseyn might be disposed to give us, now that we were back at Deyr. We had learned from the mollah, in the course of our ride, some details of the little comedy which had been played us there two months before, and were prepared for finding ourselves in the Pasha's bad books.

The mollah, it appeared, had been at Deyr at the time of our arrival, had seen us and known of our wish to visit his chief, and on one occasion had actually been waiting in the court-yard of the Serai to speak to us, when Húseyn, happening to pass by, had sent him about his business, with the threat of extreme displeasure if he ventured to show himself there again during our stay. We knew then that our successful visit to Faris would not be a very agreeable piece of news to our old host; and the Serai, without the consul to support us there, seemed suddenly changed, in our eyes, from the harbor of refuge it had been to something not unlike a prison. We had counted throughout on his presence to set us right with the authorities, and now he was not there.

It was necessary, however, to put a bold face on it; so when,

shortly after our arrival, Húseyn appeared, Wilfrid in a cheerful voice appealed to him for congratulations on the success of our enterprise. We had seen everything and everybody in Mesopotamia, and everybody and everything had been delightful. Ferhán's sons, Smeyr and Faris, were the most agreeable people in the world, the desert had been a Garden of Eden, the ghazú stories all nonsense, and the country as safe for travellers as any part of the Empire, or of Europe itself, for that matter. It was only to be regretted that his Excellency had not been able to make the journey with us, he would have enjoyed it so immensely.

Thus attacked, the Pasha could only repeat his usual exclamation, "Wah! wah! wah!" and appear delighted; though, to our guilty consciences, there seemed a curious expression not quite of pleasure in his eyes. "All was well that ended well. He was glad we had met with no accident; but the desert was a dangerous place, and the Bedouins were not always to be trusted. However, we had returned, which was the principal thing; and he would do his best to console us for our fatigues. Our old rooms, unfortunately, were occupied, or on the point of being occupied, by the new Valy of Bagdad, who was passing through Deyr; but we could lodge at the house of a Christian tradesman, one Z—— Effendi, where we should still be the Pasha's guests, and, he hoped, more comfortably than was possible in his own poor house. For himself he had had a miserable time of it, ever since we went away—perpetual work and perpetual solitude. He was beginning to pine for home and the society of his friends at Aleppo; and Deyr was bringing him to an early grave."

Poor man! we were ready enough to believe that the latter part at least of this little speech was sincere, for he looked, in the short time since we had seen him last, considerably aged. His hair was several shades whiter, and he had grown thin. So we expressed our sympathy heartily enough, and said as little as was necessary about our relations with the official world of Bagdad. It was only our future plans that gave us anxiety, for it was easy to see that we should find no help from the Serai in what we were now bent

on—a visit to the Ánazeh. We resolved simply to say nothing at all about them.

Of Mr. S—— the Pasha knew nothing, except that he had heard of him as being at Aleppo a month before, and expressed great surprise at our expecting to find him again at Deyr. Kadderly Pasha, the new valy, would, however, arrive in a few hours, and we should get the latest news. His own son, Zakki Bey, was travelling with the valy, and he was a friend of Mr. S——'s. So we were fain to be content with the hope that perhaps the consul also would be of the party, as, in a few lines that had been waiting some time for us at Deyr from him, he had spoken of his journey as a settled plan. But why had he failed us? This we could not understand.

The next day Húseyn was busy with the valy, and left us pretty much to ourselves; and, when we met again, there certainly was a *gêne* in his manner. Considering the circumstances of the case, the unfortunate issue of the war with Russia, the denuded state of the garrisons on the Turkish frontier, and the intrigues and disputes which were agitating the desert round him, I think it is not surprising that our persistence in visiting the Bedouin tribes, in spite of all warnings and all hinderances, should have aroused suspicions of us in Húseyn's official mind; and I suspect that the good man had taken counsel of his fellow-governor about the course to be pursued with us; for on the evening following that of the valy's arrival, we received a polite message from the latter, begging that we would do him the favor of calling at the Serai.

Now, if this valy had happened to be a man of the old school, like Akif Pasha and others whom one could name, I think it might have fared ill with us at this conjuncture; for suspicion of us, as I have said, was not unreasonable, and the two Orientals together, taking counsel of each other's fears, might in the end have plucked up courage to put a forcible term to our adventures by sending us back under escort to Aleppo. We could hardly have complained had they done so. But, fortunately for us, the valy was a man of a very different type from any we had hitherto met in Turkey—in-

deed, it would be doing him an injustice to talk of him as in any way an Oriental; and he at once understood the situation, and recognized us for what we were, mere tourists and sight-seers. His discrimination saved us.

Kadderly Pasha is a Turk, and a Europeanized Turk; yet he impressed me very favorably. He speaks excellent French; and we not only had no difficulty in explaining our position to him and satisfying any curiosity he may have had as to our movements, but we also were able to have a very interesting conversation with him about the general politics of Europe and the Empire. His history, I believe, is this. As a young man he was taken up by Vefyk Effendi, who, with Midhat Pasha, was anxious to form a school of politicians in Turkey with modern views and modern principles. These loudly professed the doctrine, new to Ottoman ears, that honesty was the best policy, and carried out, I believe, their principle fairly. Unfortunately the band of followers was never numerous, and Kadderly seems to have been the only one who distinguished himself in the world. He had educated himself when past twenty, and, after filling various minor offices, had now been promoted by his first patron to the rank of valy.

Kadderly Pasha was straight from Stamboul, having left the capital not three weeks before, and had all the contempt which a European, fresh from witnessing the great events of history (for he had left the Russians at the gates of Constantinople), could not help feeling for the petty politics of Arabia. He did not, in fact, so much as ask what was going on among the Bedouins, but ignored the whole matter, affecting only an interest in the ruins of El Haddr and the prospects of a Euphrates valley railway. This European line of thought suited us admirably; and we discoursed as learnedly as we could on archæology and civil engineering, and a little on the attempted improvements of his former predecessor and patron Midhat at Bagdad.

On these the valy spoke as sensibly as a first commissioner of works. "Three things," he said, "are necessary in a governor who would effect real good in the department he administers—

'*vouloir, savoir, et pouvoir!*' Midhat had the first and last qualifications, but not the second. He was a half-educated man." With regard to another important matter, he remarked that the first reform wanted in Turkey was the establishment of real religious equality. Toleration already existed; but something more was required. The law should make no distinction in dealing with men of different creeds, any more than with men of different races. Many races and many creeds were comprised in the Ottoman Empire.

Wilfrid: "Yet the Mussulman religion invented toleration many centuries before it was accepted by the Christian governments of Europe." *Kadderly:* "Say, rather, *reinvented* it, for toleration was always the law of ancient Rome. This was in its day a great step in advance, but Islam has now fallen behind Christendom. It is time that religious bitterness should cease in Asia as it has in Europe."

We did not venture to touch upon the more delicate point of official honesty. We felt that we might be treading on dangerous ground; for, although it was difficult to imagine a gentleman with such excellent principles as the valy's putting his hand into the public purse, the chances of our having hit upon an immaculate governor were so small in Turkey, that it was mere common prudence to say nothing which might offend.

We turned the conversation, instead, on the practical liberty which undoubtedly exists in Turkey, and on which we could with sincerity be eloquent. Wilfrid told the story of a conversation we had once had with a zaptieh in Asia Minor, which, as it contains a moral, may be worth relating here. This zaptieh had been complaining to us of certain official malpractices which, although he was himself an agent of the law, had struck him as needing reform in his own country, and mentioned the report current among his fellows that England was the land of liberty. "Every one there," he said, "we know is free and happy, and honest men may do all they like, without interference from any one." "It is true," we answered, "that things with us are not as they are with you. You,

Mohammed, for instance, would not be allowed to take this ploughshare, which you have found in the field, to make your fire with, or turn your horse into this standing corn to graze; but all countries are not equally favored, and there is liberty and liberty. What should you say, for instance, of a land where a poor man, travelling along the high-road, might not collect a few dry sticks to make a fire at all, or let his donkey graze on so much as the grass by the wayside, or even lie down himself to sleep under a hedge, without being seized by the zaptiehs, dragged before the cadi, and left to spend the night in prison?" "No, no," said the man, "you are laughing at me. There is no such country as that, or people would have gone to live elsewhere long ago."

Kadderly Pasha was much tickled by this little story, and agreed with us that the Sultan's subjects were not altogether so unhappy, only happiness was one thing and progress was another. Of the politics of Europe he really showed great knowledge, and even understood something of the state of parties in England, appreciating accurately enough the causes of the agitation got up last year by the Liberals on the Eastern question. He was polite enough not to dwell on the vacillating policy of our government, thinking only that England was making a mistake in allowing Turkey to be devoured. On the whole, we felt that we had been talking to an agreeable and superior man, and one who would be inexcusable, on any plea of ignorance, if he failed to do his duty at Bagdad.

An important consequence to us of this conversation was that it reinstated us in public estimation, and especially in that of Húseyn. He, as a mere *mutesherif* and an Aleppine, was treated with very scant courtesy by the valy, and in his own house only sat down by request, and on the edge of his chair, in the great man's presence. We, on the contrary, were given the best places on the divan, and conversed familiarly, and as long as we liked, in a foreign tongue which nobody understood, and which therefore made the more impression. For what Turkish is to Arabic, in public estimation, that French is to Turkish—the language of the superior race. Al-

though the valy took his departure next morning, the prestige of our reception remained, and Húseyn was again all that we could wish.

We had not, hitherto, ventured to breathe a word of the negotiation intrusted to us by Faris, although the mollah, who was constantly in and out of the house, had hinted more than once that it was time to begin. But we had felt that, until our own character was cleared up, we should only be prejudicing our friend's interests by advocating them. Now, however, there was no such reason to deter us, and we took advantage of the first opportunity to open the subject. Zakki Bey, the Pasha's eldest son, had arrived with the valy; and we found him a nice boy of eighteen or twenty, with a good ingenuous countenance, pretty manners, and a fair education. He was a *Kátib*, or clerk in the "Chamber of Writing," a public office at Aleppo; and with him we speedily made friends. It was no difficult matter to interest him in the cause of the Bedouins, for these to a youth of any imagination must always have a certain attraction; and he knew of his father's recent overtures to Faris, and of the official friendship which had been begun between them.

"My father," he said, quite simply, "is as a father to all these people. The Bedouins are his children, and I know that Faris is his especial favorite. If he would allow me, I would go myself to see your friends the Shammar and set things right, but he is afraid of accidents happening to me on the road."

We told him, then, to explain to his father that there was great danger of the friendly footing on which they stood being disturbed by a misunderstanding. Faris had done work for the Pasha and had not been paid for it, and his people were in a state bordering on revolt. Zakki was concerned to learn this, and promised that his father should hear of it. The Pasha, accordingly, when he came the next morning, as was his custom, to pay us a visit, began himself upon the subject. He admitted, with great frankness, that the sum demanded was really owing; but declared most solemnly that the treasury of the Serai was empty. Not a sixpence could

be got from Aleppo, and everybody's pay, his own included, had long been in arrear. This, I dare say, was true enough.

"Faris," he said, "must not suppose that he is the only man who has been doing work gratis for the Sultan this year. We are all on the same footing." He, the Pasha, had offered him paper-money; but the Bedouins, stupid fellows, understand nothing but silver pieces, and he must take patience till the money (he expected it daily) should come from Aleppo. He was quite ready to believe that Faris had the best intentions in the world, and that the complaints of the Buggára were, as he had assured us, unfounded; but the sheykh was responsible for his men's conduct, and could keep them in order if he liked. Everybody, in fact, must have patience. With this we were obliged to content ourselves; reporting the result of our negotiation to the mollah, and making him a little present to console him for the want of better success.

We had now our own plans to attend to, for we had been four days at Deyr, and still there was no sign or word from Mr. S——. This is how we set about it. First of all, the spy Nejrán had to be dismissed; and this was done without ceremony on either side, Wilfrid merely bidding him be off, and he replying "*keyfac*" (as you please). Then it was necessary to get news of the Ánazeh without exciting the Pasha's suspicions.

Now, Faris, when we left him, had given us, as a parting gift, a boy who had been in his service, and who he thought would be useful to us as camel-driver, in the place of Nejrán; and this boy seemed suited for our purpose. Ghánim, for such was his name, was a strange, wild-looking youth, with a merry smile, white teeth, and a peculiar glitter in his eyes, which were half green, half hazel, like a cat's, while long wisps and plaits of hair hung all about his face in picturesque confusion. There was something singularly attractive in his manner; and his voice had a caressing, supplicating tone which won our attention at once. He told us he was a Jeláas, one of Ibn Shaalán's people, but that he had left his tribe when very young to take service with Abd ul Kérim, as groom or

rough-rider, for he was a capital horseman, and had lived with the Shammar till Abd ul Kérim's death. He had shared in the flight of Amsheh to Nejd, but had returned and gone to Suliman ibn Mershid's tent, and lived with the Gomússa till his new master too fell a victim to the Turks, and then Faris had taken him back. He now desired to return to his own people; but would follow us, meanwhile, whithersoever we would.

Our caravan, with the tents and mares, had remained outside the town, for we had taken this precaution to preserve our liberty of action in case of difficulties arising; and every day we went out to spend some hours with our camels, and see that all was going on well with them, and learn the news from outside. On these occasions Ghánim would bring out a curious little fiddle he had with him, made of parchment, and a bow strung with horse-hair, and on this very unpretending instrument would play to us and sing impromptu songs, some of which were pretty, and all exceedingly interesting. There was one, especially our favorite, which began, "When Abd ul Kérim was dead, and all his tribe were scattered," and another whose tune might have passed in Spain as a Malagueña. At these times Ghánim's face had a look almost of inspiration, as, with knitted brows and trembling lips, he produced an alternation of chords and discords worthy of Wagner himself, and sang the glories of the departed heroes he had served. With all this, he was an intelligent lad, and could turn his hand to anything; and to him we intrusted the mission of finding out some agent or friend of the Ánazeh, for such there always are in the towns, and bringing him to us.

He was not long executing the commission, and on the evening of the 22d came to us with two men, one apparently a citizen of Deyr, but who refused to give us his name; and the other a thin, dark-visaged Bedouin, whom Ghánim said he knew as Ali of the Mehéd, a follower and distant relation of Jedáan himself. These people informed us in a confidential whisper, for fear of eavesdroppers, that the Ánazeh were on their march northward, and already within not many days' march of Deyr, somewhere down in the Ha-

mád, the great plain which stretches southward from the Bíshari hills as far as Jebel Shammar.

This was great news indeed; and Ali agreed, for a small sum—two mejidies—to take us to Jedáan, but cautioned us to say nothing of where we were going to Húsyen, or to mention that we had seen him; "For," he explained, "the Pasha is a rogue, and prevented you from seeing Jedáan before, when he was close by, and will prevent you again, if he can. Jedáan knows you were here with the Consul Beg last month, and is angry with the Pasha for having interfered with your visit." It was therefore settled that we were to start, as it were for Tudmor (Palmyra), and that Ali was to be on the lookout to join us as soon as we were well out of sight, when we could alter our course and strike down into the Hamád, straight for Jedáan. The exact position of the Ánazeh tents Ali either could not or would not describe, but we thought we should run no risk in trusting ourselves to his guidance; and we were determined at all hazards to see the Ánazeh and get away from Deyr.

As it had been settled, so it was done. The next morning we informed Húseyn that we were tired of waiting for Mr. S——, and must start without him. It was getting late in the season, and hot weather might be expected to set in: we had affairs at home which would not wait, and we must make the best of our way westward. He suggested that Aleppo would be our nearest road, but this we would not hear of. The Ánazeh, as he himself had told us, were far away to the south, fighting the Roála, and there could be no danger in going to Damascus by way of Tudmor, and perhaps the consul might yet join us there. If we *did* meet Jedáan on our way, why so much the better. We had always wished to see him; but, in any case, we must be off. We suggested that it would be a great pleasure to us if Zakki, his son, were to join our party. He did not affect to be pleased at this idea; said he had no soldiers to send with us, and that the Tudmor road was quite unsafe. He could not possibly allow his son to go that way; and he advised us most strongly not to think of it. But we in-

sisted so pertinaciously that he said he would see what could be done.

There were some Tudmoris at Deyr, who might be willing to go with us, and he would send for them. A little negotiation at the same time was entered into about a certain mare of the Pasha's, which there had been question, ever since our first visit, of our buying. Still, Húseyn was evidently far from pleased; and, though we affected an extreme unconcern about the arrangements made, it was evident that difficulties, perhaps troubles, were in store for us before we could be clear away from Deyr. It was most fortunate, during all these negotiations, that we were no longer in the Pasha's house, for otherwise we should no doubt have had much greater trouble in communicating with the Mehéd. As it was, a servant of the house was very fond of hanging about listening, whenever conversation was going on; and our Christian landlord himself, with his fat mother, dropped in from time to time. I have little doubt that any information they picked up went straight to the Serai.

These Christians had the impertinence, on the night of our arrival at their house, to sit down with us at table, on chairs, and even to make conversation before us; but this was too much, and we speedily set them in their proper place, which was on the floor, according to the custom of the country. We were not *their* guests, but the Pasha's. The only trustworthy person in the establishment was old Mariam, the cook's wife, with whom we left a letter explaining our plans to the consul, in case he might yet by accident arrive at Deyr. But of this there now seemed little chance.

CHAPTER XVII.

"With stout iron shoes be my Pegasus shod,
For my road is a rough one—flint, rubble, and clod."

OWEN MEREDITH.

Once more in the Desert.—Our Guide fails us.—Mohammed el Taleb.—We gather Manna.—Arrested.—The Tudmor Road.—Fox-hunting.—A Visit to the Amúr Robbers.—We Arrive at Palmyra.

Sunday, March 24th.—We have left Deyr, and are once more in the desert—*our own* desert, I had nearly said, for indeed we are more at home in it than in the towns; and yet I feel out of spirits. This new venture has not begun auspiciously; and but for Wilfrid, who suffers from the confinement of in-door life, I would willingly have put off starting for a few days more, to give the consul a last chance of arriving. It is almost necessary to have an introduction to the people we are in search of; and now we are without one, for Ali the Mehéd has failed us, and it seems very like looking for a needle in a bundle of hay, to be starting off into the Hamád alone after the Ánazeh. Their whereabouts, even on the map, we do not know. Still, after waiting till this morning for the post to come in, and then receiving no news from Aleppo, it seemed foolish to waste more time. The caravan road down the river is open, or the post would not have arrived; for, though the river has risen nine or ten feet in the last three days, it has not yet cut the track, and the cause of Mr. S——'s delay must be looked for elsewhere.

Wilfrid, to insure a start to-day, had the camels brought into the town overnight, and loaded the first thing in the morning, and sent them on, with orders to wait for us just out of sight of Deyr, over the brow of the hill. He then went to the Serai and an-

nounced our departure. The Pasha affected at first extreme surprise to hear that we were leaving him, although we had told him of our intention yesterday, and asked in which direction we were going. "We are starting," Wilfrid said, "on the Tudmor road; and if we do not come across the Ánazeh, whom of course we should like to see, we shall go on as far as that town, and so to Damascus. We think that perhaps the Consul Beg has been delayed at Aleppo, and may have gone straight to Tudmor to save time, and that we may find him there." *Húseyn:* "But the road is not safe; it is impossible you should go alone. You would not find your way; there is no water, and the country is inhabited only by robbers." *Wilfrid:* "Yet we came through the Jezíreh alone, and no harm happened to us. We are well armed and well mounted; and you have told us that the Ánazeh are far away, fighting the Roála in the south. Common robbers would not venture to attack us." *Húseyn:* "You must wait at least for the caravan which is going to-morrow. I will send for the chief men in it, and they shall be answerable for your safety." *Wilfrid:* "Unfortunately our camels have already marched, and if we do not set out soon we shall not overtake them." *Húseyn* (to his servants): "Send for the Tudmori, and tell them to come to me at once."

The Tudmori appeared. There were two of them—respectable, well-to-do people, if one could judge by their clothes—the elder a man of fifty, with a handsome, but, as I thought, foxy face; the other a very fine-looking young fellow, with an out-spoken manner which impressed us favorably. They said it was quite impossible their caravan could be ready to-day, but to-morrow they would be at the Pasha's orders. Wilfrid, however, insisted that at least we must join our camels; and, after a long argument and a private conversation between Húseyn and the Tudmori, the younger man was sent to fetch his mare and told to accompany us, as soon as we had had breakfast. This was perhaps not quite what we wanted; but as we were really in the Pasha's hands about going at all, Wilfrid did not think it prudent to make any further objections;

so, after a last meal and the usual farewells and good wishes exchanged, we rode away for the second time from Deyr, with a strange mixture of gratitude to Húseyn for his kindness, and of resentment at his interference with our plans. It was a great thing, however, to be gone; and, in spite of the proverb which forbids one saying, "Fountain, I will never drink of thy waters again," I think we both made a mental resolution to sit at the Pasha's table no more.

Time, however, precious time, had been wasted, and when we joined our camels at the appointed place there was no Mehéd with them. What has become of him we do not know; but we think he must have been scared away by the sight of two soldiers, whom Húseyn has, after all, thought fit to send after us. This has interfered sadly with Wilfrid's peace of mind, and made him very bitter against Turkish ways and Turkish authority—indeed, against authority of any kind, for in the desert, if anywhere, one feels that freedom is a right. So, although the sky overhead was blue, and the sun shone, we marched on in dogged silence, making ourselves as disagreeable as we possibly could to the poor soldiers, who, I dare say, are quite as unhappy at having to do their duty as we are to be the cause of it.

Hánna, too, is in the dumps at having lost sight of the Euphrates, and at this new wilfulness of ours in going out he knows not whither. Ferhán, honest man that he is, is stolidly indifferent where he goes, so long as his camels are fed and he is allowed to do his duty by them. Ali, the cavass, is no longer with us; he could not resist the glory of going back to Bagdad in the valy's suite, and bade us good-bye some days ago. The Jeláas boy is the only merry one of the party, for he is going home. As to Mohammed, the Tudmori, we hardly yet know what to make of him, except that he seems anxious to oblige and to be of use. He is certainly an ornamental addition to our party, as he is well mounted on a gray Shuéymeh Sbáh, and carries a lance fifteen feet long. He seems more of a Bedouin than a townsman, and Wilfrid thinks he may be won over to our plans; but first we must get rid

of the soldiers, and it is agreed that we are to starve them out by making things as uncomfortable for them as we can. So they have been told that they must expect no rations from us, and must keep watch all night. We think that in this way they may be induced to go home.

We are encamped in a snug wady, about ten miles south-west of Deyr; and Mohammed has been teaching Wilfrid how to find truffles, of which there are great numbers now. They are found by digging with a stick, wherever a crack is seen in the ground or an appearance observed of a heaving of the soil, just as one sees over tulip bulbs in the spring. There, with a little practice, the kemeyehs are discovered, only a few inches from the surface. They are white and soft, like potatoes, but much lighter; and some we found this evening were as big as both Mohammed's fists. They occur in light soil, where there are no stones, and prefer rather high ground. Wilfrid, though a novice in the art, picked up a dozen or so after we encamped—enough to make a meal. They can be eaten raw, but are much better boiled. It has been suggested that this is the manna which was eaten in the wilderness.

March 25th.—Fortune has favored us in our plan of getting rid of the soldiers. A wolf came last night and prowled about our camp, paying such a disagreeable amount of attention to a mare and foal belonging to one of them, that this morning he begged to be allowed to go back to Deyr. His companion, too, followed suit, explaining that he had only the day before come back from the war in Armenia, and that it was very hard on him to be sent out on such an expedition without even a single night at home. We sympathized most heartily with both of them, of course, and readily agreed to let them go. It was necessary, however, to give them a paper of dismissal, so Wilfrid wrote a line in French to Zakki Beg, who understands a few words of that language, explaining that we really did not want an escort, and had nothing to feed the men with, while we had full confidence in Mohammed as a protector. With this document and a shilling apiece for backshísh, they departed homeward in high delight.

Still, Ali the Mehéd did not make his appearance, as we quite expected he would as soon as the soldiers were gone, and the only thing to be done has been to make friends with Mohammed the Tudmori, really a very excellent fellow. This Wilfrid proceeded to do, engaging him in conversation, and leading it to the subject of the Ánazeh, some of whom, it turns out, he knows, or at any rate has seen, for he talks about Suliman ibn Mershid and his death at Deyr. He was also, he tells us, acquainted wilh Akhmet Beg, the Moáli sheykh, whom he describes as the finest man ever seen in the desert, as tall as himself (Mohammed is fully six feet high). Jedáan, he says, is nothing much to look at, but a wonderful horseman. He knows nothing, or at any rate will tell nothing, of the present whereabouts of any of the Bedouins, but says they are sure to pass by Tudmor in the course of the spring. They do so every year, on their way north. He himself is the son of the Sheykh of Tudmor; and his family is descended from a certain prophet, called the Nebbi Taleb, who converted the villages of Tudmor and Arak to Mohammedanism, but he does not know how long ago. His family came originally from the Beni Láam, in Nejd, and established itself first in the Jôf. He has relations still there, and is going next year to get a wife from his own people. About going to see the Ánazeh now, he should have no objection to go with us, but he does not know where they are. We had better, he says, go on to Tudmor. His uncle and the caravan will overtake us to-night.

We had not gone far when a large caravan of some two hundred camels came in sight, travelling from the west toward us, and we galloped up to get news. We found they were from Sokhne, a village between us and Tudmor, and bound for Deyr to buy corn. Mohammed knew some of the people, who, by the way, were all armed with guns, and who got them out for use when they saw us galloping up; and an animated conversation ensued about the price of cereals on the Euphrates. To each in turn as he came up we put the question, "Have you seen anything of the Ánazeh?"

and each in turn answered, "Hamdullah* (praise be to God), we have seen no Bedouins." The last man in the caravan hailed us from a distance, and asked Wilfrid if he could give him any news of Faris. The question was curiously *à propos*, and we stopped and had some conversation with him. He told us he was the Sheykh of Sokhne, and that Faris Jerba was his brother. A month ago some of the Jerba had taken camels belonging to him, in a raid they made upon the villagers of Sokhne, and he was going to Faris to get them back, in right of his brotherhood. We told him, much to his surprise, that Wilfrid also was Faris's brother, and that he would find him on the Khábur. He then informed us that, though nothing had yet been seen of the Ánazeh this spring, it was reported that they were on their way north, not more than three or four days' journey from Bir, a well and guard-house we should come to this evening. Wilfrid scribbled a note to the consul, telling of the break-down of our plan through the non-appearance of our accomplice the Mehéd, and proposing a rendezvous at Sokhne on our way to Tudmor. This he gave to the man, who promised, if Mr. S—— should arrive while he was at Deyr, to let him have it. We then rode on.

After this we passed no one until about noon, when we came in sight of some tents rather out of our road, and to these we went also to ask for news. They belonged to a party of Abu Serai, one of the Euphrates tribes, and, I believe, a section of the Aghedáat; but the men were away, gone with kemeyehs to Damascus, and women only were at home. These received us very hospitably, bringing milk and lebben, but could give us no information. They had come out so far from the river, it seemed, to gather truffles; for besides those that the men had taken away to sell, there were plenty of others sliced up and drying in the sun on the roofs of their tents. The women were very merry and good-humored, and I think I never saw such swarms of children. It shows how little

* Spelled as pronounced both by the Bedouins and by the inhabitants of the desert towns.

real danger there is in the desert, that these people should be left all alone with their flocks of sheep, and with only a few old men and boys to protect them, while their husbands were away for perhaps a month: yet they showed no sign of anxiety.

In the course of the morning we had come across a number of large bustards, but they were too wild to stalk, and now at about one o'clock we entered a wady (Wady Mefass), cut pretty deeply in the plain, and found there rock-pigeons and partridges, showing that there must be water close at hand. Wilfrid shot three partridges, and in climbing to the edge of the ravine caught sight of the guard-house of Bir, lying in the wady about a mile ahead of us. We would willingly have avoided the place, for Mohammed informed us it was occupied, and we have now a perfect horror of soldiers and the police; but it was absolutely necessary we should fill our water-skins, and the only well for many miles was there. We are rather afraid still of the Pasha's suddenly sending after us or coming himself, like Pharaoh, who repented that he had let the children of Israel go, and would have liked to hide our encampment; but this necessity of water compelled us, and luckily, as it turned out, for we have obtained authentic news.

The well of Bir (as you say the "harbor of Oporto") is an important feature in this part of the world, for it is the only watering-place between Deyr and Sokhne, and it has been occupied for some years as a strategical point by the government. There is a square guard-house on the usual Euphrates model, and we found it occupied by a sergeant and three men. The building was in rather a dilapidated state, as Jedáan burned all that could be burned in it last winter on his way from the Bíshari hills, which, by the way, we saw pretty plainly this morning. The well is a very ancient one, cased with solid stone, and about sixty feet deep. The water is not particularly good, but, they tell us, never fails. It is drawn by means of a leathern bucket; but one of the zaptiehs, having accidentally dropped his *aghál* (head rope) into the well, climbed down to fetch it by some steps there are in the masonry. The men were, of course, very polite, and very anxious

that we should stop the night in their barracks; but this we would not do, as Wilfrid had found a nice grassy spot about a mile off down the wady, and there we now are.

As we were pitching our tents, a string of camels came by from the south, and we learned that they were a party of Abu Kamís Arábs come to fetch water for their camp, which is a day's march from Bir, and that only a day's march beyond them are the tents of the Ajájera, the advanced guard of the Ánazeh, while Jedáan himself with all the Sebáa are just beyond these. This is indeed good news, and now we are sorry at having sent the note about Sokhne to Mr. S——; but we cannot miss the opportunity, and it is settled we are to go back with the Abu-Kamís to-morrow morning, stay a night with them, and then on next day to the Ánazeh. Our only anxiety is lest the caravan should arrive before we manage to get away, as there may be soldiers with it, and they may have orders to keep us on the Tudmor road. Mohammed, however, seems disposed to go with us, so let us hope that all is well. In the mean time this is a delightful spot—a hollow full of deep pasture, where the mares and the white donkey are feeding. Ferhán is sitting on a point of rock above, calling every now and then to the camels, "*Ha-ó! ha-ó! ha-ó!*" whereat they stop and turn their heads round to listen. Hánna has got the three partridges in a pot, and is very merry, while Ghánim has brought up his *rebáb*, and is tuning it for one of his chants. There are a pair of kestrels wheeling about, and I think they have a nest somewhere close by. The evening is calm, and we are all in good spirits again.

March 26th.—Alas! alas! I suppose I must have forgotten to say "inshalláh" when I wrote my journal last night, for dinner was hardly over, and the mares tied up and our beds laid, when a sound of shouting in the direction of Bir announced that some people were coming our way. For a moment we deluded ourselves with the vain hope that it might be robbers, or merely some of the Abu-Kamís going home, but our hearts misgave us already that something worse had happened. In a few minutes four zaptiehs appeared at the door of the servants' tent, piled their arms in front

of the fire, and sat down. Neither Wilfrid nor I had the heart to inquire what the meaning of this was, but Mohammed shortly afterward came to our tent with the message, which we guessed before it was out of his lips. The Pasha had sent an express with orders that we were to proceed no farther, but to wait for the caravan, which would arrive to-morrow, and then we should receive further instructions. The news sounded very ominously, and Wilfrid said to me in English, "I suppose we may consider ourselves under arrest." But to Mohammed and the others it was necessary to affect a cheerful willingness to do anything that Húseyn might think best for our safety; so Wilfrid went to the zaptiehs and bade them make themselves at home; which, indeed, they had every intention of doing already, for they had orders to keep guard over us all night. He learned, in talking to them, that Ali the Mehéd had passed through Bir that morning, and had stopped, as Arabs always do, for a talk, and that he had told them of the two mejidies we had given him, and I dare say a great deal more; which all proves that he must be a chatterbox, even if he has not betrayed us to the Pasha. We were far too miserable to sleep, but spent the night in vain regrets at our folly in sending back the two soldiers so soon to Deyr. They, of course, had gone back post-haste to get home, and had put Húseyn on the alert; and he, acting with more promptitude than we could have expected of him, had sent off this disgusting messenger to stop us. The annoying part of it is, that if we had only waited till we got to Bir and then sent them away, all would have gone right. But at the time we did not know the existence of this guard-house, and we expected Ali the Mehéd to meet us, and we had caught at the first chance of being rid of our tormentors. Full of gloomy forebodings, the least of which was an immediate return under escort to Deyr, and the worst a summary execution as Russian spies, we passed a miserable night, sometimes dreaming wildly of flight on our mares, sometimes of bribing the zaptiehs, and sometimes of resistance by force of arms. But in the morning more prudent counsels prevailed, and we agreed to wait for the caravan and learn the worst.

The worst has proved to be better than we expected. The order was nothing more than that we were to keep close to the caravan till we got to Tudmor, Mohammed and his uncle Hassan being held responsible to the Pasha for our safe arrival there. We agreed, then, to go on for the present in the direction required of us, trusting to have another opportunity of eluding our guardians and getting away; but for the moment our hopes are frustrated. We cannot accompany the Abu Kamís. Mohammed, who is really a good fellow, makes very light of the Pasha's order, and, as soon as ever the caravan appeared in sight, said we might as well go on. It didn't matter so long as we kept on the Tudmor road; and it was no use waiting for the others, if we had sooner be alone. So on we went, the zaptiehs making no opposition. Wilfrid now spoke seriously to Mohammed, told him exactly what it was we wanted, and asked him to help us. He promised him, at the same time, a handsome present on the day we should reach Jedáan's camp; and the Tudmori, without more ado, promised to do his best. He only insisted that at present we must go on at least as far as Sokhne, where we should be certain to get information, and probably some one who could take us to Jedáan. He himself could not do this without assistance, as he knew no more than we did where the Ánazeh might be, and had never gone down far into the Hamád. It was not a place to go to alone, as there was no water, at least none that could be found by merely looking about for it. It was very hot, and we had only two water-skins with us, so we were fain to be content and wait for better times. This settled, Mohammed became very confidential, and told us, with much humor, how he had received special injunctions from the Pasha not to let us out of his sight. Húseyn's last words to Mohammed, holding him familiarly by the ear, after the manner of the great Napoleon, had been, "Mind, whatever happens, they are not to go near the Bedouins. Take them straight to Tudmor, and see them on, without any more nonsense, to Damascus—and mind, no Bedouins, no Bedouins!" Mohammed laughed long and loud at the recollection of this scene, and

of the Pasha holding him by the ear. "They are all pigs," he added, "these Turks."

About two miles from Bir we came upon the remains of a subterranean aqueduct, leading from the well, and a large tank, probably of Roman construction, by which the plain was anciently irrigated, for in winter there is no want of water underground in the wady, and here it had been stored. Mohammed called it El Khabra. This was, no doubt, in ancient times, a high-road from Palmyra, and, likely enough, the very one along which Zenobia fled when defeated by the Romans. There is now a fairly well-defined camel track, as some of the corn traffic between Bagdad and Damascus passes this way. The soil was light and sandy, and full of kemeyehs, which every here and there cropped up above-ground. Mohammed tells us that they sell for one piaster and a half the oke, or twopence half-penny the pound, in Damascus, and two and a half piasters at Aleppo. This year they were so plentiful that while we were pitching our tents last night Mohammed picked up a large basketful in little over a quarter of an hour. I counted them. There were a hundred and two, about the size of potatoes, but a few were very large, and one measured twelve inches round. He reckoned them to weigh six okes. So that a man might get a camel-load, two hundred okes, worth thirty-five or forty shillings, in the day; but for this he would have to travel a couple of hundred miles, and fast, too, for the kemeyehs will not keep more than a few days, unless sliced up and dried, when they last practically forever. Mohammed only recollects one season as good as the present one, and that was when he was a boy, twenty years ago. The heavy rains and snows this winter are probably the cause of the present plenty, at which all the country is rejoicing. The tribes are now independent of corn for the year.

We made a rather long, dull march to-day, and the sun was very oppressive, so much so that Wilfrid, who rode his delúl all the morning, was constantly dropping off to sleep, and almost off the camel. The only amusement was a fox-hunt, which Wilfrid and Mohammed enjoyed in the afternoon without me. They had a

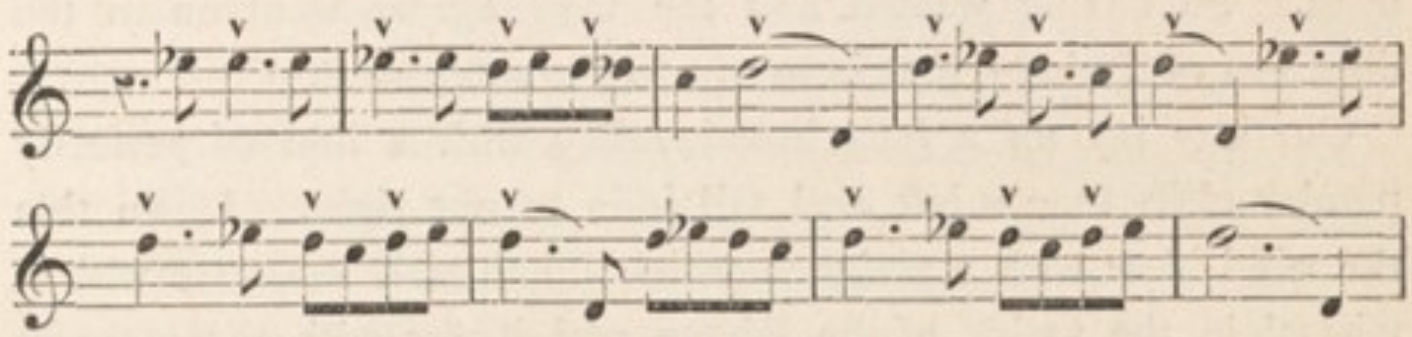
breakneck gallop over rotten ground for a couple of miles, and came back in triumph with the skin. It is nearly white. We are encamped this evening in a great open plain, the outskirts of the Hamád, having the Bíshari hills to the north-west of us, a long ridge, the continuation in fact of the Sinjár, which under different names stretches all the way from Mósul to Damascus.

March 27th.—Passed another caravan from Damascus, fourteen days on the road. They report that a certain truffle-hunter of Tudmor, being down in the Hamád, met a party of Sebáa Ánazeh some days ago, with two hundred camels they had taken from the Roála. Jedáan was said to be coming north, having, they assured us, "ruined" his enemies. We are pretty sure, then, to get news of our friends at Tudmor, if not before. These camel-men are not by any means so anxious to meet the Ánazeh as we are, for they are making their journey now on the strength of the Bedouins being away south. I suppose we are nearly the first travellers along this road who have watched for spears on the horizon with any feelings but anxiety. As it is, I think even a ghazú would be welcome to Wilfrid.

Another fox-hunt; but this time an unsuccessful one, for he had too much start, and after three miles at a racing pace, we got among some low hills, where he escaped, though only a few yards in front of us. The mares do their work in a marvellous manner, considering that they have to travel every day, and are only grass fed; but Hagar, directly she sees a fox, goes off, and nothing will stop her. I follow as I can on Tamarisk, who, though slow, is a stayer. We also saw three gazelles, and tried to get some *houbáras*, or frilled bustards, by riding round them in a circle, as we have done in the Sahara; but here they refuse to hide their heads in the bushes, and take flight always just too soon. At eleven o'clock we came to a broad, flat wady with white chalk cliffs, in the middle of which was a small pool of rain-water, rapidly drying up, but still sufficient for our purpose of filling the skins. Several false snipes were running along the edge of it, and water wagtails.

After this we left the track, I hardly know where, and took a

point more to the south, so as to avoid a low ridge of hills, which is a sort of spur from the main ridge toward which we have gradually been converging. We can see the white chalk cliffs under which Mohammed tells us the village of Sokhne (hot) lies, so called, not because it is, as it must be, a little furnace in summer, but because there are hot springs. We do not care to go into the village, but intend to send Ghánim in to-morrow as we pass south of it to get news. We have found a splendid plain of rich grass, where we have stopped—enough to feed all the Ánazeh camp, if they come this way, for a week. Mohammed calls it Wadi Er Ghôtha, and says there must have been an immense downpour of rain some time this year, as he has never seen such grass before so far from the hills. Ghánim has been singing all to-day to a tune which runs thus:



March 28th.—A wild blustering morning, and we half decided on stopping where we were, but the rain held off, though it blew a hurricane all day from the west. We sent Mohammed for news to Sokhne, which was not more than five miles away, and engaged to meet him again later at a certain pool of water he said we should find in a certain wady. This led to our missing each other; for though we found a pool, it was not the right pool, and we saw no more of Mohammed all day. When we found he did not join us, we were in no hurry to go on, so we climbed up to the top of a tallish cliff from which there was a capital view, and where we got a little shelter under an old wall from the wind. In front of us, and apparently about three miles off, we could see the village of Sokhne, a wretched hamlet, set on the face of a white slope of chalk, which ended in the cliffs called Uthâhek. To the left of it stood eleven olive-trees in a row, showing very blackly against the

white ground. It then occurred to us that we might perhaps find some one in the village who could take us to Jedáan without going farther, and we sent Ghánim in on the white donkey. We timed his start and his arrival, for we could see him all the way; and, though we had both calculated the distance at three miles, he did it in sixteen minutes, for the donkey is extraordinarily fast, going at a sort of run. Ghánim was not long away, and brought no news that was of any good to us. Mohammed had been there and was gone, and nobody could tell anything clear about the Ánazeh. Nearly all the men of the village were away after kemeyehs; and though one person had spoken of Jedáan's being three days' journey to the south, he either did not know where, or was afraid to go with us. A band of robbers had attacked the village the night before, and carried off horses, camels, and sheep belonging to a caravan. So, having wasted half the morning, we went on in the direction of Tudmor, that is to say, to the south-west.

Our way lay up a long, broad valley, with a line of perfectly regular cliffs to our left and tall hills to our right. Down this the wind blew with a violence which I can only compare with a mistral in the valley of the Rhone, and it was with the greatest difficulty that the camels could make head against it. It was bitterly cold, in spite of all our cloaks and wraps, and we were chilled to the bone. Thus we struggled on for about ten miles, when we came to the head of the valley, where there stood the ruins of a tower; and here we again hit upon the caravan road, and, immediately afterward, on Mohammed, who had been all over the country looking for us, and, by his account, must have ridden something like forty miles. His white mare looked as if what he said was true. He told us that the hills to our right were the Jebel Amúr, noted for robbers, and wished us to push on to Arak, another village some way in front of us; but we have had enough of struggling against the wind for to-day, and having come to a place where there is sufficient shelter, we have stopped. It is horribly cold, and the poor beasts will have a sad night of it.

March 29th.—A good watch was kept all night by Mohammed

and Ghánim, who never seems to sleep except sometimes on one of the camels in the daytime, and we made an early start, the wind less violent than yesterday, and no longer in our faces. At twelve we got to Arak. Like Sokhne, it is a wretched little place, containing perhaps fifty houses, and surrounded by a mud wall, which looks as if a man determined to get in might easily push it down. Arak's *raison d'être* appears in a spring of indifferent water, sufficiently abundant to irrigate some dozen acres of land, now green with barley. It would seem, according to Mohammed, that there is a chain of such little villages at irregular intervals all along the foot of the hills from Damascus to the Euphrates—*oases*, one may call them. Of these, Tudmor is the most important. Their existence must have begun in ancient times as halting-places on the Palmyra road, and they were very likely of importance then, but now they represent only just the value of the land their springs can irrigate. Like all the villages bordering on the desert, they are dreary to the last degree, every blade of grass and every stick of brushwood having been devoured for miles round them. It is at or near Arak, however, that Mohammed tells us his ancestor the prophet is buried, and he will not admit that it is not an important place. Mohammed ibn Hanafiyeh ibn Ali ibn Abu-Taleb—such is the holy man's name who converted Arak, then a Kafir town, to Islam, and from whom our Mohammed Abdallah claims descent.

The only interest these little desert villages have is, that they give one a good idea of what the towns in Central Arabia must be like. I fancy there is no difference between them and the villages of the Jôf, or indeed of any part of Arabia. The population, though not quite pure, is mainly composed of real Arabs, and has little in common with that of the Syrian towns beyond the language. Mohammed tells us that several of the best families here and at Tudmor came from the Beni Láam, one branch of which is settled beyond Bagdad, and another in the Jôf. He took us in to drink coffee with the sheykh of the village, a very worthy old man, whom we found surrounded by his friends, and among them

a party of the Amúr robbers, whom Mohammed chaffed considerably about their profession, asking them why they had not paid us a visit last night, and saying that the Beg had been waiting to receive them, and would have made them a present of all his spare bullets. The men laughed, and said they wished they had known. As it was, they had stolen a donkey and a gun from some passers-by. The Amúr are a tribe, and not a mere band of robbers, nor are they all at war with society; but they have no sheykh, and each man sets up his tent where he likes and behaves as he likes. They are sometimes joined by deserters and escaped felons, but not in any great numbers; and the villages of Tudmor, Arak, and Sokhne send their camels and sheep to graze with the more respectable of them in the spring, and eat and drink with them when they meet. They are, all the same, a very low tribe indeed, and neglect even the virtue of hospitality to strangers. If you dismount at their tents, Mohammed says, they strip and rob you.

Wilfrid was anxious to visit a camp of these Amúr, of which, the robbers we had made acquaintance with said, one was close by; so Mohammed, who seems to be on good terms with everybody in the country, offered to go with him. He had a reason, too, of his own for this, as he wanted to see after a filly he has with the Amúr at grass, and to order some sheep for our entertainment at Tudmor. The two set off then together, while I, not caring to go so far out of the road, for I was tired, went on alone to overtake the camels. I found them in the plain of Tudmor, across which we marched steadily all the afternoon. About three o'clock I saw a horseman galloping from the hills to our right, but not quite in our direction, and guessing, by the stride of the animal, that it might be Hagar, I hastened on and found Wilfrid. He had had a most successful expedition. He and Mohammed had found the Amúr camp, and drank coffee with the robbers. He says they are just like any other Arabs, only that their tents are the smallest he has seen. All of them had seemed on perfectly good terms with Mohammed, who had kissed the men whose tent they stopped at, as if he had been their sheykh; and such, indeed, they had called

him, either out of compliment, or, as Mohammed would make out, because of his prophetic descent. The filly was found to be well, and Salah, the Amúr in charge of her, had been ordered to bring her and three sheep to Tudmor the next day. Then they had galloped on to join us, Mohammed having long ago been left behind by Hagar, who did the six miles—for such we calculated the distance at—in a little over twenty minutes. She is a wonderful mare.

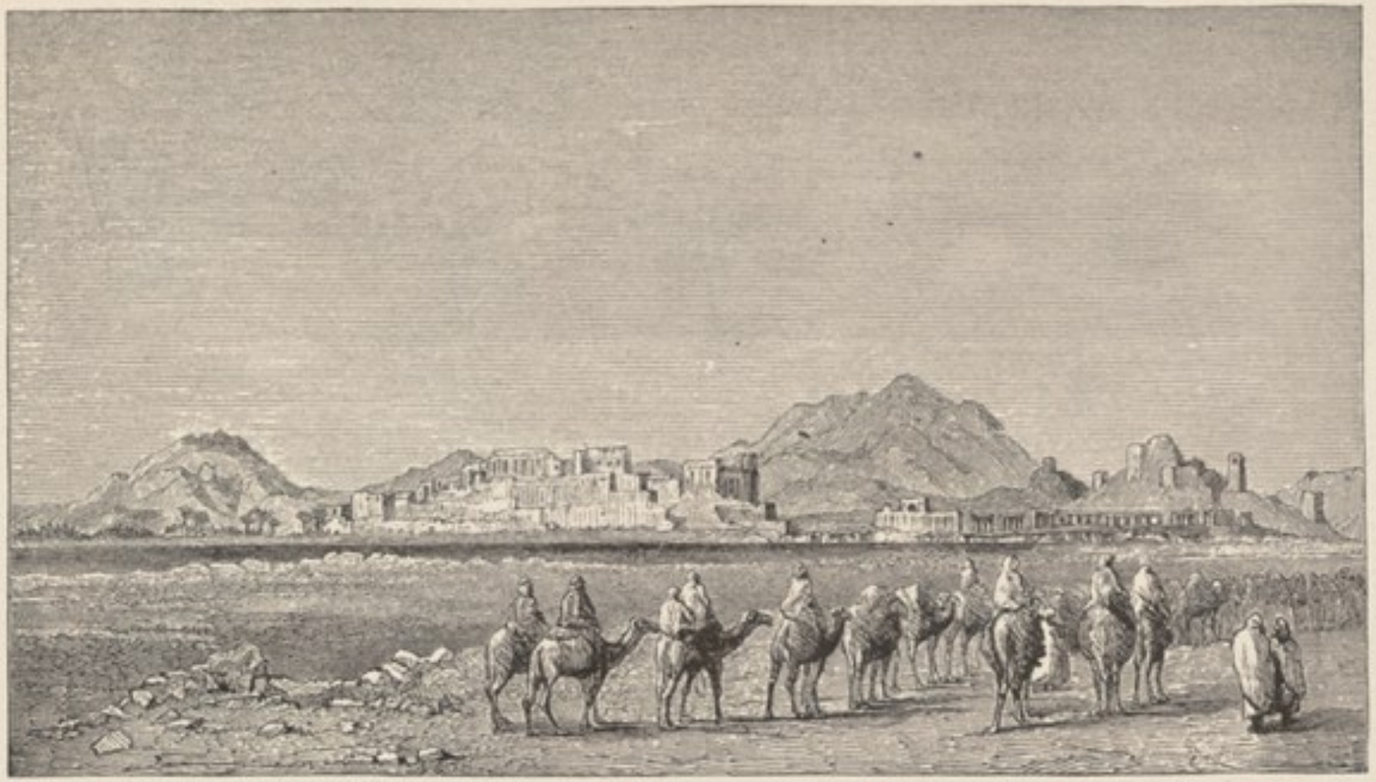
The ruins of Palmyra now began to show very conspicuously under the hills in front of us. They are evidently of the same date as those at El Haddr, and the modern town occupies the palace, just as it no doubt would at El Haddr, if El Haddr should be again inhabited. There are a few palm-trees and some gardens beyond it, and, still farther on to the south, what seems to be a lake. But I leave descriptions for to-morrow. It was quite late before we arrived, and we have had great difficulty in persuading Mohammed to allow us to camp outside the village, instead of enjoying the hospitality of his father's house. But, by promising an early visit to-morrow, we have succeeded, I hope, in assuaging his wrath. We saw a cuckoo to-day sitting on the ground in the middle of the plain, and several swallows have come almost into our tent. Wilfrid, too, has heard a bird sing, he says, and begins to talk of England in a way I have not heard him do all the winter. This makes us more than ever anxious to get on with our mission —for as such we now look upon it—to the Ánazeh, and then turn our steps homeward.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves."—BOOK OF JOB.

Politics in Tudmor.—A Blood-feud.—Ali Bey the Circassian.—Intrigues and Counter-intrigues.—A Meeting in Camp.—The Mudír lectured on his Duties.—News of the Ánazeh.

March 30th.—Mohammed's family consists, first of all, of his father Abdallah, sheykh of the village of Tudmor, an old man of seventy, who, as is usual among the Arabs when they get infirm, gives in to his son in all things, and leaves him practically at the head of the house. Then there are Mohammed's two wives, who of course occupy a separate apartment, and his mother and some sisters. He has only one child, a little girl of three, and is very downhearted at having no son; for it is a disgrace to be what they call childless in these countries, that is, without male offspring. He talks of going next year, in consequence, to the Jôf and getting a third wife of his own people, the Beni Láam. He complains that there are very few "noble" families in Tudmor, and hardly any choice for him of a bride among them; for, though common wives are to be had in plenty, and at the price of only ten pounds apiece as compared with the forty pounds payable for one of noble birth, he scorns to ally himself basely, and would not take a bourgeoise "even as a present." His mother was a Moáli, though not of the family of the sheykhs, and he considers himself at least half a Bedouin. The "noble families" of Tudmor are those which trace their origin from the Nejd, having come in, as we say in England, "with the Conquest," while the rest are mere Syrians, or, at best, Arabs from the Euphrates. Of the former Abdallah is sheykh, and there is a second king in this Brentford, a sheykh of



PALMYRA.

the base-born. In old times—that is to say, twenty years ago—before the Turks got possession of the town, the two classes were at constant feud, and often at war. One of Mohammed's uncles was killed in a fray of this sort, and most of his ancestors seem to have met with violent deaths.*

Abdallah's house, to which we were taken early this morning, is just inside the gate of Tudmor, forming, in fact, almost a part of it; for several of the rooms, used as stables and for stowing away goods, are built into the masonry of the old tower. It commands a fine view of the inner town, which is to me all the more interesting from being filled with modern houses, as these, from their meanness, set off the ancient walls and temples to advantage. This inner town was in old times, no doubt, a fortified palace, after the fashion of the building we found at El Haddr, and both must be nearly of the same date. It is square, and the walls have at some more recent time been built up again and patched out of the older Roman materials, for the gate-way is Saracenic. The effect of this medley, though architecturally a barbarism, is very picturesque, and serves to mark the history of the place. Some of the blocks of stone are prodigious enough to move to admiration even the Tudmori, who will have it that they were put there by Súliman ibn Dáoud. Others, on the contrary, affirm that the English once had possession of the country, long before the days of Solomon, and were the real builders of the city. We have constantly been asked about this latter point of history, both here and in Mesopotamia, but are quite unable to account for the belief, which is certainly prevalent, of England's claim to all this part of Arabia. The belief would be strong enough to prepare the way for any new occupation or annexation, if such were ever projected.

While we were waiting for breakfast, which Mohammed was very busy preparing for us with his wives, his foxy-faced uncle Hassan appeared, having come in with the caravan from Deyr yes-

* Compare the state of things mentioned by Mr. Palgrave as existing in the Jôf, before its conquest by Ibn Rashid.

terday morning. We had seen nothing of him since leaving Bir; but somehow or another, probably while we were waiting in the neighborhood of Sokhne, he had passed us on the road, and had pushed on night and day to get home, for fear of accidents. He was accompanied by the Mudír, whom we recognized as our old acquaintance Ali Bey, the Circassian brother-in-law of the Pasha of Aleppo. The Mudír seemed delighted to see us, as well he might be, for he is the only foreigner resident in Tudmor, and cannot speak more than a few words of Arabic. He poured out at once to us, in a strange mixture of Arabic and Turkish, and in the ridiculously plaintive voice Circassians affect, his grief at having to reside in such a place, relating aloud in the most *näive* way, before a mixed audience of Tudmori, that there was not a soul fit for him to associate with in the town. As for occupation or employment, there was nothing, nothing that a gentleman could concern himself with. His duties were a degradation—trying to collect taxes from people who would not pay, and attending to robbery cases, without soldiers or police to support his authority. He was afraid of the people in the town, and of the people out of it. On one occasion he had been attacked by some Amúr in the desert, and got his knuckles hurt in the tussle, but he was well mounted and had got away. If he had known what a forlorn place he was coming to, he would never have left Aleppo. He had written to his sister, the valy's wife, to complain of being treated thus, and to say that he would not stay another month in Tudmor for all the gold of Stamboul. The good-natured Tudmori listened to this with rather contemptuous faces, but besought him to have patience and trust in God. He did not, however, seem to see things in this light. His only companion and confidant was the mejlis, or tax-gatherer, a Turk from Erzeroum, long settled at Deyr, who wore Constantinople clothes and a fez, and looked very dirty. With him he every now and then relieved his mind in Turkish, or made him his interpreter and go-between with the Tudmori. We do not like this man on account of his villanous face, though Mohammed assures us that he is a good fellow, and a friend of his own.

When we had all sat talking thus in a friendly way for some little while, and finished our breakfast, Mohammed, inspired by some evil spirit, suddenly bethought him of a letter which Húseyn Pasha had intrusted him with for the Mudír, and, without consulting us on the prudence of delivering it, handed it to Ali Bey.* We saw that a mistake was being committed, but it was too late to interfere, and we could only watch the functionary's face as he read it, and try to guess its contents. That they were not altogether to our advantage we were soon aware, for Ali Bey's manner suddenly became diplomatic, and he began to talk about the dangers of the desert, the disturbed state of the Bedouin tribes, ghazús, harámi, and the rest, according to the official formula; and to suggest that, instead of staying encamped outside the town, we should come, with all our property, to reside in Abdallah's house. In this proposal Mohammed was, of course, as our host, bound to join; and then the foxy-faced Hassan chimed in with a suggestion that we should put ourselves entirely into his hands—he would show us everything we wanted to see, and make every arrangement for us we wished made, and see us safely on to Damascus. Our hearts sank at this new turn things seemed to be taking, and we dared say nothing about the Ánazeh. We have refused, however, to move from where we are, saying that it will be quite time enough to do that when arrangements have been made for our farther journey. At present we have the ruins to see, and also we expect a friend to join us from Aleppo, for we still cling to the hope that the consul may yet come to our rescue.

Wilfrid, however, is very desponding about it, and nearly had a serious quarrel this afternoon with Mohammed. He was in an irritable mood, because Mohammed had joined with the Mudír in bothering us with this proposal of moving our camp; and it came to a crisis when a townsman, recommended by Mohammed as an intelligent blacksmith, drove a long nail into Hagar's foot, for her

* The Arabs pronounce "Bey" as if it were written with a *g*. I have therefore spelled it with a *y* only when it occurs as the title of a Turkish official.

shoes wanted replacing. This made the cup of bitterness run over, and we left Abdallah's house in anger. Perhaps it was fortunate that the explosion occurred, for it led to an explanation, the result of which is that Mohammed is to say distinctly to-morrow whether or not he will help us to go to Jedáan. At present he maintains that there is no news of the Ánazeh at Tudmor, and thinks we had better go on to Damascus, unless we are prepared to wait on indefinitely here. We cannot make out whether this is a fact, or only the roundabout way Arabs employ in refusing to do a thing. The Arabs are always like the son in the parable, who said he would go to the vineyard, and went not. They never refuse point-blank to perform a service.

As we were leaving the town, the Mudír and his attendant joined us and politely offered to show us over the ruins. We went with them, as in duty bound, but we were far too preoccupied to be greatly interested, though we made pretence of counting the columns and reading the inscriptions, *pour nous donner une contenance.* It was very hot, and the Mudír soon got tired of walking about in the sun; so at last we have got rid of him, and are enjoying a few hours of quiet, with the tent looped up, in full hot-weather rig, and the comfortable sight of our camels and mares, making the most of their day's rest, in front of us.

March 31st.—We had a gloomy consultation this morning, Wilfrid and I, about what was next to be done. We have come so far, and achieved so much of what we originally put before ourselves as the object of our journey, that it seems impossible now we should abandon its completion. Yet luck has turned against us, and a barrier of small difficulties, every day accumulating, bars the way to the last and most interesting scene of our adventures. It would be too hard if, after getting up with so much care and so much success all the minor characters of our play, Hamlet himself should have to be left out. Yet we are threatened with the prospect of finishing our tour among the Bedouins without seeing Jedáan—indeed, a lame and impotent conclusion.

The great plain, which stretches southward before us to the ho-

rizon, contains the object of our hopes, but how are we to reach it? We could, indeed, start alone, with sufficient water to last us for two or even three days, but we might be weeks wandering about before lighting upon the Ánazeh camp. If only we could get information of the direction it would be enough, and we would not stay a day longer here; but who is to tell us? It was agreed at last that Wilfrid should make a final effort with Mohammed, and then, if that failed, that I should remain here with the camp while he and Ghánim rode in on the two mares to Hóms, the nearest town, about a hundred miles off, to get information about Mr. S——, for Hóms is a station of the Syrian telegraph, and perhaps find some agent of the Ánazeh, such as there are in all the great towns, who would assist us. They might be back in five days, and by that time who knows but the Ánazeh or Mr. S—— might have arrived? With this plan he went in to breakfast at Abdallah's, while I stayed, intending to have a morning's rest. But Wilfrid was no sooner gone than the inhabitants of Tudmor, women as well as men, began to arrive at the camp, and made themselves so very disagreeable by their impertinence that I have made up my mind on no account to be left here alone if Wilfrid goes to Hóms, as he proposes. Fortunately, Mohammed's mother and one of his wives happened to come out to pay me a visit, just as the whole party of my tormentors were beginning to swarm like bees into the tent, in spite of all Hánna could do to prevent them; and, thus re-enforced, we managed to hold our own. The women told me that the people of this town are very ill-behaved, real "men of Belial," and that they themselves dare not go about alone. They brought me a present of lebben, and *helláwi*, a sort of sweetmeat of which I am particularly fond.

At two o'clock Wilfrid came back with the delightful news that everything is once more arranged. But how many times we have already been deceived! I count on nothing. By way of making better friends with Mohammed, Wilfrid yesterday sent him by Hánna a cloak and a pair of boots, just as he would have done to a Bedouin sheykh; and it appears that, though the gifts are of

small value, the compliment has been much appreciated. On arriving at Abdallah's house, Wilfrid found a sort of family council going on, and a letter being read which had just arrived by a messenger from Deyr. They did not tell him at once what it was about, but by a little manœuvring—for it is always a difficult thing to manage a *tête-à-tête* among these sociable people—he got Mohammed alone, under pretext of going to see the Temple of the Sun. This stands inside the present town, and is used as a stable; and by good luck he and Mohammed were allowed to go away to look at it, unattended by any of the busybodies who generally dog one's steps. When they had climbed to the top of the building, and were out of all ear-shot, Wilfrid spoke seriously to Mohammed, and told him that we were resolved at all hazards to go to Jedáan; that we had left Deyr with no other purpose than to do so; and that if he, Mohammed, would not go with us there, we must look out for somebody else that would. He added, which was true, that we had taken a fancy to himself, and that if he would do us this service we should consider him as our brother. Lastly, he clinched the argument with the promise of an immense present, twenty mejidies (nearly four pounds), on the day that we should set foot in Jedáan's tent. I don't know which part of the argument convinced him, but Mohammed's manner, Wilfrid says, changed at once, and he promised that henceforth he was our servant, to do what we should tell him; and, as a proof of his sincerity, informed Wilfrid that the Mudír's letter had contained instructions from Húseyn to send us on forthwith to Damascus. "But," he added, "Deyr is a long way off, and we need not pay any attention now to the Pasha; while as for Ali Bey, he is a mere ass. All the Tudmori laugh at him."

On their way back to Abdallah's house, Mohammed went on to explain that a letter had arrived this morning from Deyr, which relieved him of all anxiety to please Húseyn. Wilfrid naturally supposed that it had contained some disagreeable news, but the contrary is the case. It appears that there has been a long-standing rivalry between Mohammed's family and that of the bourgeois

sheykh, which of them should be acknowledged as Sheykh of Tudmor by the government. Húseyn, in whose district Tudmor lies, had been appealed to by both, and a decision had just been given, not, as one would have supposed from Mohammed's readiness to act against the Pasha, against Abdallah, but in his favor. Mohammed seemed to think that, now the point was gained and nothing more could be expected, his obligation ceased; but this is the common rule among the Arabs, with whom gratitude is unknown, even as the expectation of future favors.

Abdallah was at once made confidant of the arrangement, and became very cordial with Wilfrid, whom he assured was as a son to him; and then one visitor after another, until I believe that the whole town knows of it, except Ali Bey. But Mohammed has undertaken that the thing shall be done, and says it does not matter who knows of it. The most important bit of news, however, is that a man Mohammed sent some time ago to gather truffles in the Hamád has come back with the news of the Sebáa being within three days' march (sixty or seventy miles) of Tudmor, coming slowly north. The man states that he saw young Meshúr ibn Mershid, the Gomússa sheykh, the same who is said to have killed Ibn Shaalán, and who sent us the message of invitation when we were at Aleppo. It seems he is a friend of Mohammed's, who now is quite as eager as we are to be off; for Mohammed piques himself on his Bedouin connection, and his friendship with the Ánazeh sheykhs, though I believe he does not know Jedáan. We have only the Mudír now to settle with; and, now that we have the support of Mohammed's family, we need no longer hesitate to speak plainly of our intentions. This Wilfrid intends doing to-morrow.

It is tremendously hot, and the desert to the south looks like a simmering furnace; but the truffle-hunter, who came from it with the news, and who was here just now, has pointed us out a little tell on the far horizon, from which he says that you can see another, and that from that one you can see Ibn Mershid's camp; so that it no longer looks to us the absolutely trackless waste it did this morning.

April 1st.—This morning Hánna came to me in tears, and announced his intention of leaving us. He has been ailing for some days with homesickness, eats nothing, and, I think, feels the heat of the sun. Moreover, yesterday after dinner he heard Wilfrid say, by way of accounting for Mr. S——'s non-appearance, that he thought the consul must be dead, whereupon he rushed out of the tent howling, and then sat down on the ground, drew his cloak over his head, and refused to move or speak for the rest of the evening. Now, he has had terrible dreams about his children, whom he has made up his mind he shall never see again, and insists that he must go home at once. It is no use arguing with him, poor man, and we cannot be angry, for he has served us three months without a grumble, and put up with all sorts of hardships, and shown an amount of courage which could hardly have been expected of him, mere Christian of Aleppo that he is. He thinks, too, that we have been deluding him all along with false hopes of meeting the consul, to whom he is attached, and now he says, "You tell me the consul is dead! Boo-hoo! boo-hoo!"

What is really provoking is that Ferhán, the faithful Agheyl, who hitherto has done his duty, and more than his duty, without a word of complaint, has followed Hánna's suit, and now complains of being overworked, and of having been deceived into undertaking a journey he never bargained for. Neither he nor Hánna will go to the Hamád with us. They have had enough of the desert, and propose joining a caravan which is starting for Hóms in a few days, and getting home as fast as they can. We hardly know what to do or say to all this, beyond hoping that they will think it over, and suggesting how many valuable articles there will be for division among the servants when the journey is over and the camp broken up. Money they protest they do not care about. What good will it be to them, if they are taken out to die in the wilderness? But I am sure the thought of the pots and pans he may inherit by persevering to the end will go far with Hánna, and Ferhán is too good a creature to desert us if Hánna stays. So I have given them till this evening to make up their minds.

Everything else is arranged. We went this morning in state to the Mudír's, and he received us with many apologies in the wretched hovel he inhabits. It is a ground-floor, without flooring, windows, furniture, or anything to make it comfortable, and looks more like an empty stable than an official residence. However, Ali Bey is a well-bred man, and did the honors of his "serai" with the utmost politeness. A little comedy then began, the details of which had been arranged beforehand with Mohammed; and, after the usual compliments and the usual cups of coffee, Wilfrid informed the Mudír that we were come to say good-bye; that we had just heard of the arrival of the Ánazeh in the neighborhood, and were starting for their camp in the morning. Ali Bey in his broken Arabic began to expostulate, but Mohammed and the rest of the audience, who had been packed for the occasion, would not allow him to go on, and overwhelmed him with a torrent of words. He had been unlucky enough to remark that the Bedouins were robbers, and this was the signal for loud expostulations from the crowd. "No, no," they called out, "the Ánazeh are quite another thing from the Amúr and the people you, Ali Bey, are accustomed to in the desert. The English Beg knows better than that." "But," argued the Mudír, "what does the Beg want with the Ánazeh, that he must go off to them to-morrow. Why cannot he wait till they come here?" *Wilfrid:* "We are obliged to be back in our own country, and cannot afford to wait, and we cannot go without seeing the Ánazeh. In our own country it is the custom to travel for sight-seeing, just as in yours for trade. He who sees most gets most honor (akhrám); and if I were to return to my friends and to tell them, 'I have seen Bagdad, and seen Aleppo, and seen the Shammar in Mesopotamia, and Deyr and Palmyra, but I did not see the Ánazeh,' they would laugh at me, and my journey would be a shame (aïb) to me." Now the word *aïb* is in constant use, and I may say abuse, among the Arabs, both in its literal sense and metaphorically; as we say in English, "It will be a shame if you don't give me sixpence;" and on this occasion it

exactly suited the understandings of the audience, and they applauded the sentiment loudly. "You see," they echoed to Ali Bey, "it will bring shame on the Beg if he does not see Jedáan." Still the Mudír made a feeble attempt at opposition, on the score of his having no soldiers to send with us as escort. But it was unanimously voted that soldiers would be quite out of place on an expedition of this sort. To arrive with an escort would in its turn bring "shame" on Jedáan, and that could not be thought of, for Jedáan is a power in Tudmor. As a last resort, the good man proposed to go himself with us, and we of course had to express great delight at the idea. But Hassan, who has been taken into confidence about the twenty mejidies, took the Mudír aside, and told him in a whisper that he really thought a man in his position had other business to attend to than that of running about after Frank travellers among the Bedouins, and Ali Bey was quite nonplussed; so, like other functionaries overpowered by popular clamor, he has washed his hands of anything that may happen, and has let us have our own way. Indeed, I do not see exactly how he could prevent us, if he would, and we are to start to-morrow morning.*

The rest of the day we have been spending in looking at the ruins, which we are now better able to appreciate than we were yesterday, and in paying Abdallah a farewell visit, and in making a few purchases. Mohammed has made Wilfrid a present of a stone head he dug up here last year—a relic of no great value, but authentic. It has probably served to decorate an arch, after the fashion of the sculptures at El Haddr. Indeed, the architecture of both places is singularly alike. Abdallah tells me that no Franks have been to Tudmor for the last two years. Formerly some came every spring, but lately, for some reason he cannot explain, they have not appeared here. Still, Palmyra must be too

* We have since heard that Ali Bey did not hold out at his post more than ten days longer. He was seized with a panic, and fled to Deyr.

well known for any description of the ruins to be necessary. I asked him whether he regretted the old state of things before the Turkish occupation, and he told me, "No, it was better now, for the taxes were levied more regularly. When the town was tributary to the Bedouins, one never knew when they would be satisfied. The feuds, too, in old times made life insecure." So even Turkish government seems to be better than none at all. The Mesrab, a section of the Resallin tribe of Sebáa Ánazeh, used to levy tax on Tudmor, and exercise the right of escorting travellers there; but now all is changed, and the route from Damascus through Karieteyn is quite safe. The old man has been very kind to us all the time we have been here, and we have taken leave of him with regret.

A last attempt at delaying our journey has been made. We were riding out of the gate of Tudmor when Hassan met us, and with an air of importance laid his hand upon my mare's bridle. He begged me to listen to what he had to say, and then informed me in a whisper that bad news had arrived from the desert. A young Tudmori had just returned from a truffle-hunting expedition, and had been robbed and stripped by a party of Roála whom he had been unlucky enough to meet. Ibn Shaalán, the Roála sheykh, was marching in force against the Sebáa, and it would be most dangerous for us to go out at this moment. I did not know what to make of this story, for Hassan is by way of being in our interests, and has even talked of going with us, but Wilfrid, as soon as he heard it, pronounced it to be nonsense, and told Hassan to bring the young man that we might question him.

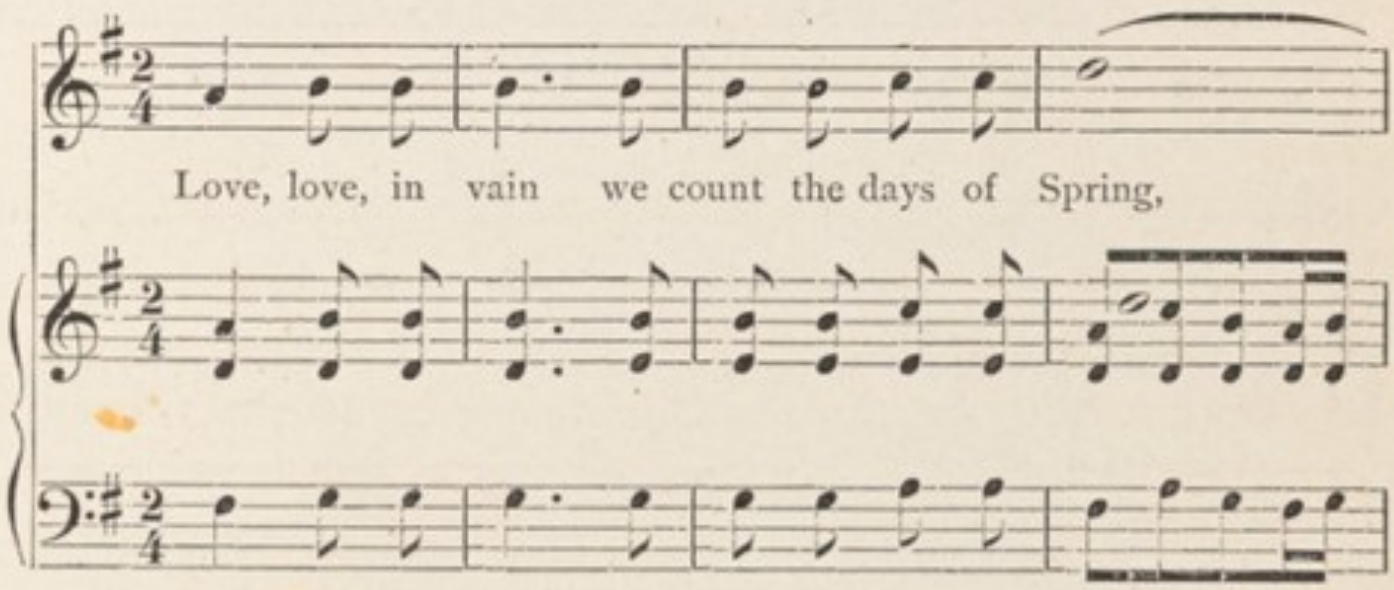
We had not long to wait before Hassan made his appearance, followed by a rather stupid-looking youth. A very few questions sufficed to show that the tale had been got up for the occasion, and the answers were so absurd, that Mohammed from the very first lost control of himself, and burst into a loud peal of laughter. The laughter was catching, and soon the whole circle of listeners

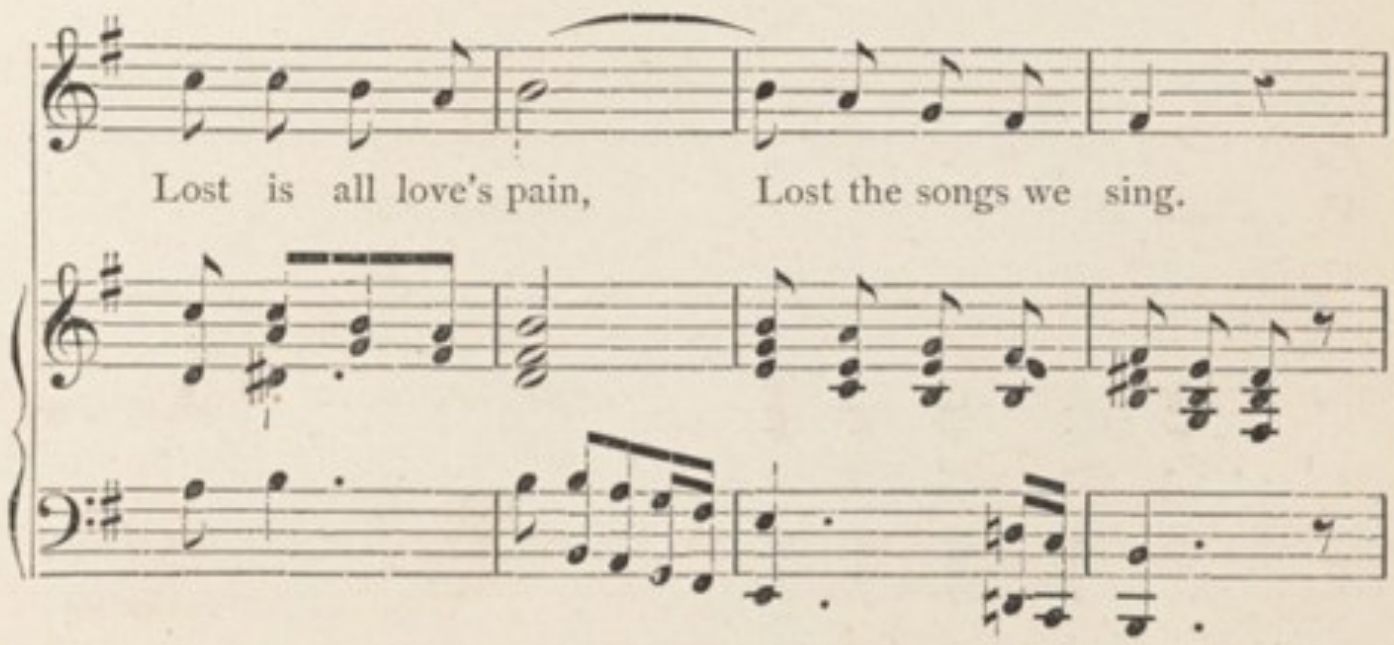
had joined in it, including the youth himself, who, when somebody took hold of his very respectable *mashlakh* (cloak), asking if that was the cloak the Roála had robbed him of, no longer attempted to deny that the whole story was a romance. What Hassan's object was we could not discover, but he evidently wished to prevent our starting to-morrow.

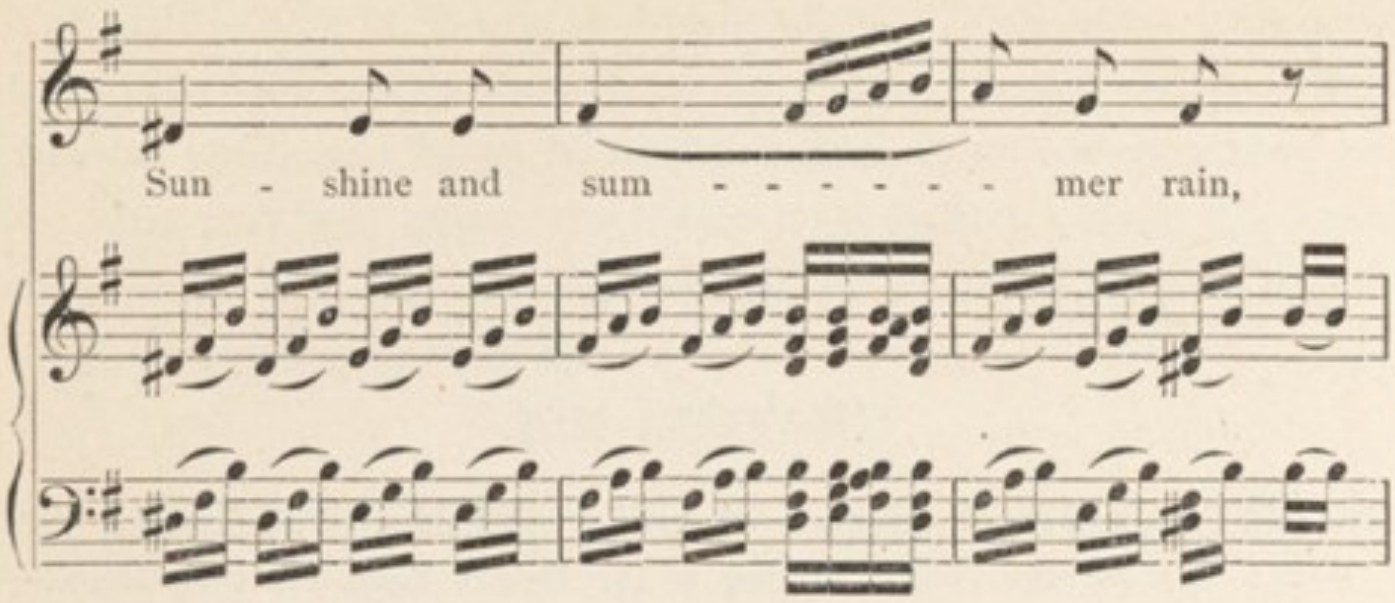
CHAPTER XIX.

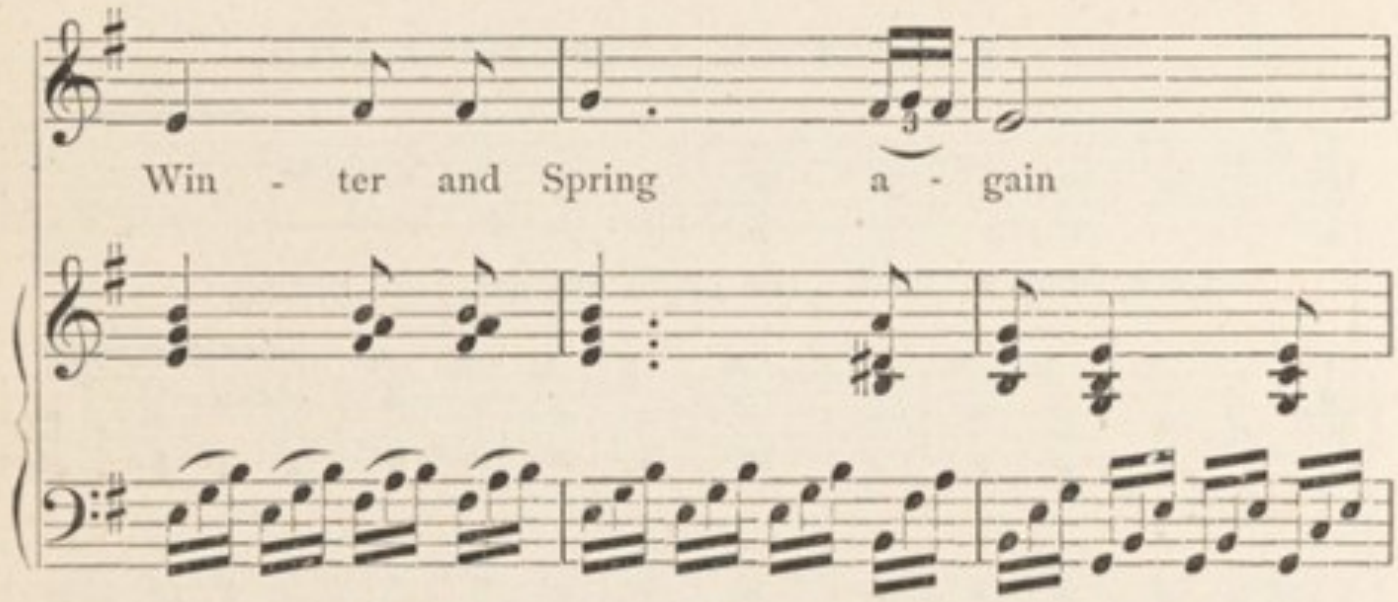
The odd Trick and four by Honors.—A fast Forty Minutes.—The Consul at last.—We start for the Hamád.—Song of the Desert Lark.—A real Ghazú.—Looking for the Ánazeh.—Jebel Ghoráb.—We discover Tents.—Jedáan.—Married for the fifteenth Time, and yet not happy.—Blue Blood in the Desert.—A Discourse on Horse-breeding.—We are intrusted with a Diplomatic Mission to the Roála.

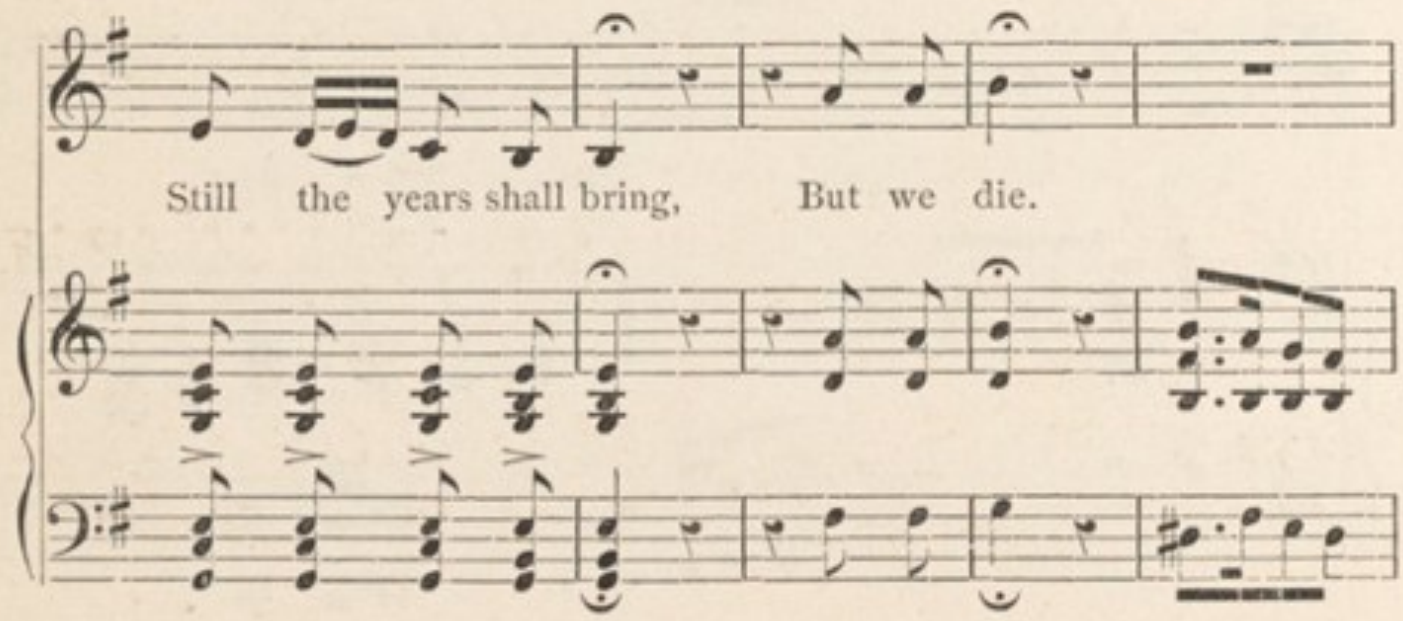
SONG OF THE DESERT LARK.






Sun - shine and sum - - - - - - mer rain,

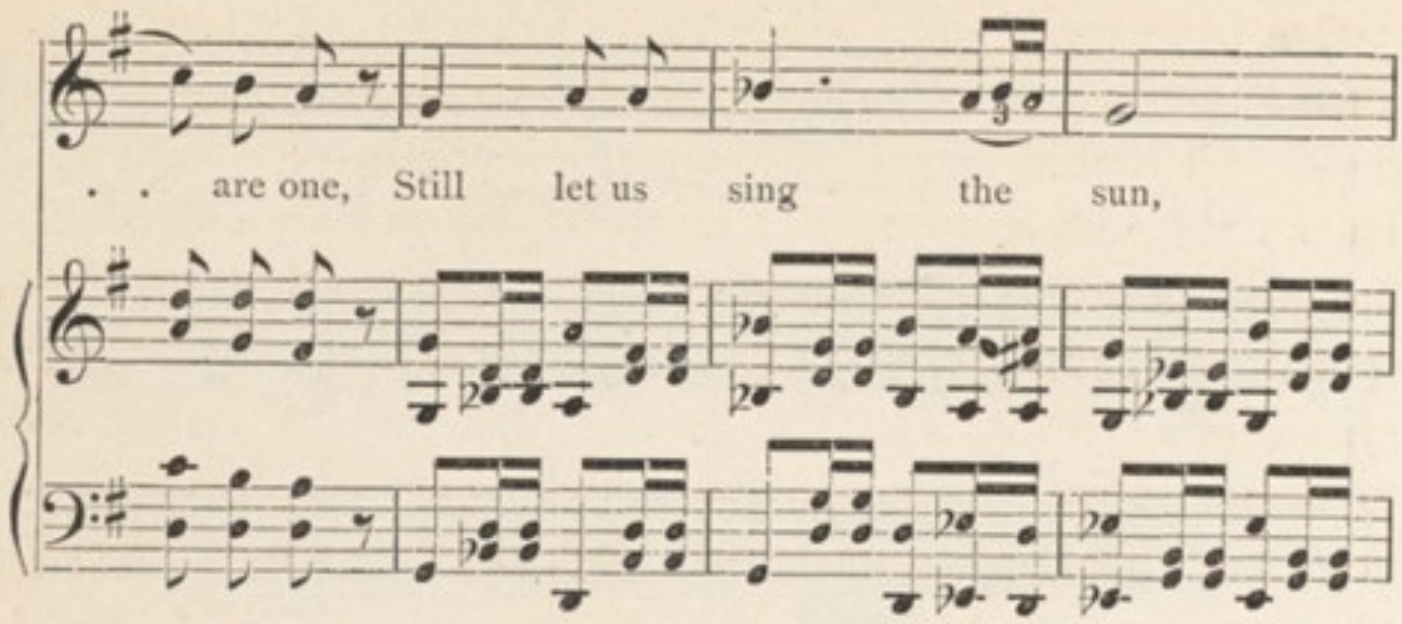

Win - ter and Spring a - gain

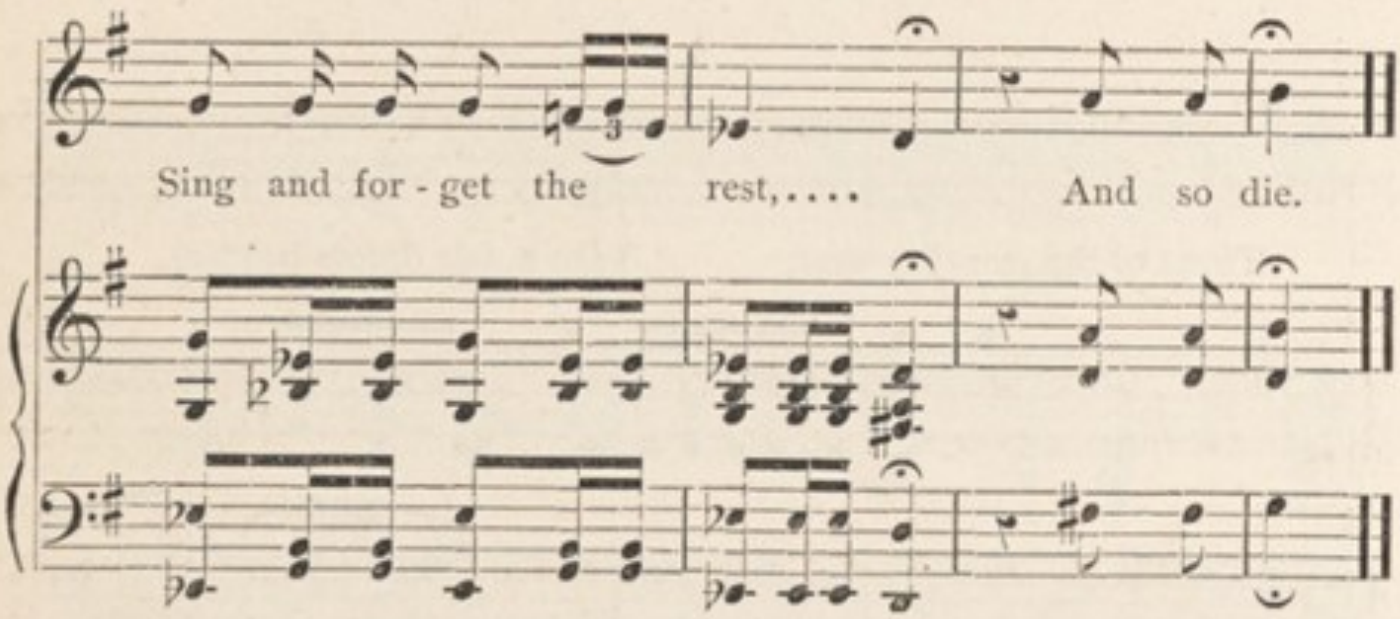

Still the years shall bring, But we die.

His torch, love, the sun,

Turns to the stor - my west, Like a fair dream be-gun,

Chan - ging to jest ; Love, while our souls . . . . .





April 2d.—We neither of us slept much last night, for we were too much excited at the thought of starting, and too anxious lest, at the last moment, some accident should again delay us. About two o'clock in the morning, Wilfrid, who was roaming about, heard a sound of voices coming through the dark toward us from the town; and, presently afterward, Ferhán challenged the talkers. Our hearts sank as we heard a reply in Turkish, and knew that they must be a party of soldiers, the very thing we most of all feared. Their arrival, too, reminded us disagreeably of what had happened at Bir; and it was in anything but a pleasant voice that Wilfrid, gun in hand, asked them who they were and what they wanted. "*Yavash, yavash*" ("Gently, gently"), was the answer. "We are soldiers from the Beg, and we have a message for you."

"What Beg—the Mudír?" "No, no, the Beg—the Consul Beg. He arrived last night at Arak, and has sent us on with a letter." Mr. S—— was indeed come, and the joy in camp may be imagined, Hánna in his usual floods of tears embracing Ferhán, and informing all the world that he had never been able to believe that the consul was really dead. We, too, were relieved from a great anxiety; only, as Wilfrid remarked, it was a little like winning the odd trick after a desperate fight, and then finding four by honors in one's partner's hand. Mr. S——, it appears, had not left Aleppo till eight days ago, and then had travelled day and night on the chance of catching us up, and had at last broken down within fifteen miles of us at Arak. There we at once decided to go as fast as our mares would carry us, and, much to the disappointment of our followers, who were already calculating on another day's rest, we ordered the tents to be struck, and a march back to Arak at the first streak of dawn.

It was still nearly dark when we mounted, but we would not wait longer than for the rise of the morning-star, and started at a gallop as soon as we had it for a guide. The zaptiehs on their tired horses made a show of accompanying us, declaring it was impossible they should allow us to go alone. But Hagar had quite other ideas, and after the first two miles they dropped behind and were lost to sight. And now began the longest gallop I ever took in my life. It was fifteen miles to Arak, and we never drew rein till we got to the foot of the hill behind which the village stands. Wilfrid was resolved to try what Tamarisk could do, and rode her himself, leaving Hagar to me. For the first few miles my mare behaved very well, going on at her easy stride without any unnecessary hurry, and allowing Tamarisk to keep up more or less beside her; but after this, although she was not in the least excited, she would not be kept at any reasonable pace. She does not mind uneven ground full of jerboa holes, and went faster and faster, till soon Tamarisk and Wilfrid were as much out of the race as the soldiers were, and yet she would not be steadied. It was only when we came to the hills and very broken stony ground, fully

twelve miles from where we had started, that I got a pull at her, and at last stopped her. It was by this time daylight, and I got off and waited till Tamarisk appeared, toiling along gamely behind. She had been what is called "ridden" every inch of the way, and yet she was not really tired, only Hagar's speed had been altogether too much for her. We were just forty-five minutes doing these twelve miles, and Wilfrid and I are in such excellent condition that we did not in the least feel our gallop. The last two miles we travelled at a more sober pace, and the sun appeared as we rode in through the stone gate-way of Arak.

We found Mr. S—— in the act of mounting to join us; and for a moment, seeing two figures in white cloaks and yellow turbans riding up to him, he was quite mystified, for our costume is indeed a mongrel one, partly European, partly Bedouin, and partly felláh —the result of accident rather than of choice. It is not wise for Europeans to adopt a purely Bedouin dress in the desert, as by doing so they lose all the prestige of their nationality, while, on the other hand, hats and riding-habits, at all times unpractical, are impossible in hot weather. A Bedouin mashlakh worn over a light suit of European clothes is convenient, and has the advantage of being the usual dress of travellers in the desert; but the keffye, or handkerchief, generally added by them as a protection to the face, is not nearly so comfortable, and we have adopted the turban instead. Of all head-dresses, this is the most practical in campaigning. It is equally good in hot and in cold weather, in wind and in rain. It protects the head from a blow as effectually as a helmet. It can be torn up to stanch wounds. It can be used as a rope or a girdle. And, above all, it is a pillow, the most necessary thing for a campaigner to carry with him. The turban, however, is the badge of the felláh in these regions, and does not command respect. Turkish officials wear the fez only, while the Bedouins fasten their keffyes with an aghál, or camel-hair rope. However, such is our costume, and it puzzled the consul not a little.

I don't think I ever really enjoyed talking for talking's sake till this morning, but we have been so long without it. We had so

much to tell and to hear, that for a couple of hours at least our tongues never stopped an instant. Mr. S—— had been detained by the arrival of his successor at Aleppo, and so had failed us, but to make up had travelled day and night since, hoping to find us still at Deyr. At Treyf he had learned from some zaptiehs that we had started from Tudmor, and, leaving the valley, had struck across the desert straight for this place. It had been a hard ride, without food or water for the beasts for many hours. At Arak the horse he rode could go no farther, and the two mares he was bringing for us began to suffer from sore backs, so he had stopped short at this last stage of his journey, almost despairing of getting up with us after all. It is fortunate that his messenger arrived when he did, as three hours later we should have been off to the Hamád and out of all reckoning. Then there was political news to hear, the collapse of the Turks before Constantinople, an armistice, changes of ministry, and a thousand other things, to say nothing of a huge bundle of letters from England, the first we have received for nearly four months. These, although hungry for news, we have decided not to open now, nor till we are fairly started homeward with our faces toward the west. Good news is not necessary to make us happy here, and bad would only make the rest of our journey a torment. I think it is wiser so.

The new mares are the chestnut Saadeh Togán we bought at Deyr, a really splendid creature, who, except for a wrung wither, does not seem to have felt the severe journey she has just made in the least, and a white Hamdaniyeh Simri purchased for us by Mr. S—— at Aleppo. This last mare was bred in the Nejd, and was given by Ibn Saoud five years ago to the Turkish governor of Mecca. He brought her to Aleppo, and gave her in turn to the chief Úlema there, who has since used her only as a brood mare, and to carry him once a day to and from the mosque in a saddle of blue and gold. With the exception of this very moderate exercise, she had done no work for three years till eight days ago; and as she is also in foal, it is not surprising if she is a little stiff. I am very pleased with her, however. She stands fourteen hands

two inches, and has the most extraordinarily beautiful head ever seen, with the sweetest of tempers. I am delighted to have got such an exchange for Tamarisk, whose rough paces have been wearing me out.

At mid-day our camels, servants, and Mohammed arrived—Hánna running on before to kiss his patron's hand, and, I need hardly say, to water it with his tears. The tents have been pitched in a wady below the village, and we have spent a delightful day showing to understanding eyes our property in camels, asses, and camp furniture, and feasting our eyes on the two lovely mares which are now to relieve the hard-worked Hagar and Tamarisk. A new donkey has been bought for Mr. S——, for five pounds, and the zaptiehs have been dismissed. Mohammed has brought a long-legged Ánazeh with him, who turned up this morning at Tudmor, and who is to take us to Jedáan to-morrow. Fortunately, Arak is not much out of our road to him. The man, whose name is Jazzer, is as black as a negro, but his features are purely Semitic, and, according to Mohammed, his color is only due to the sun; as to blood, he is "asíl." Ghánim has been delighting us all with his music; but he and an Armenian Mr. S—— has brought with him have been fighting already over the new mares. Each, of course, wants to have the custody of them. There are three Christians now in our camp, for the consul, besides the Armenian groom Simón, has brought a Christian servant with him; and these, with Hánna, have laid their heads together—as people of the same race or religion always do in the East when they find themselves in a majority—to bully Ghánim. They came this evening with a tale against Ghánim of tobacco stolen by him out of Wilfrid's bag; but we have taken his part, and reminded them that he is not our servant, but Faris's, and begged them to treat him as in some measure our guest, and in any case to keep the peace. Poor Ghánim! I dare say his morals as to property are not quite pure; but he is a cheerful, willing boy, and a genius in his way. His rebáb is our chief pleasure in the evenings after dinner, and theirs too, for that matter.

April 3d.—Hánna has been entertaining the consul's servant Jurji with a hospitality he must have learned from the Bedouins. Looking into the servants' tent last night, I found Hánna lying on the bare ground without a rug to cover him, and Jurji snugly wrapped up in Hánna's mashlakh, and occupying the cotton quilt on which he usually sleeps. I asked Hánna what it meant, and whether Jurji was ill, but he answered simply, "Do not ask me to disturb him; he is my guest."

We started at half-past six, a merry party, for the Hamád, Jazzer, the long-legged Ánazeh, leading the way at a tremendous pace on foot. Our course lay south-east-by-south, with a saddle-backed tell on the horizon before us to mark the way. The morning was beautiful. A fresh breeze had sprung up in the night and cleared the weather, which had been sultry for the last few days, and we had the pleasure of riding our new mares. As we crossed the barren plain, some gazelles were seen, and then some bustards. This morning, too, for the first time, we heard the sweet but melancholy whistle of the desert lark, a bird with such a curious song that I am surprised no fanciful traveller has ever thought it worth while to romance about it. It is a little brown bird with a speckled breast, which sits generally on the top of a bush, and every now and then makes a short flight, showing some light feathers in its wings, and then suddenly closes them and dives down to its perch. While it does this it sings a touching melody.

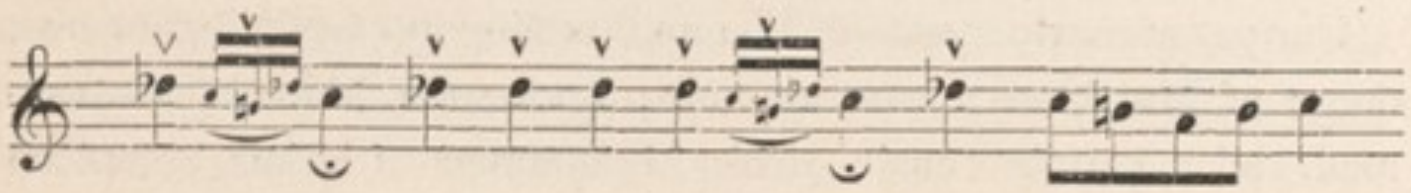
When we first heard it, four years ago, in the Sahara, we were quite taken in, supposing it to be one of the Arabs with us whistling to amuse himself. The quality of the tone is so like that of the human voice, that we had some trouble in tracing the song to its right owner. The birds generally sit in pairs, and it is only one of them which sings. The song at the head of this chapter was suggested by it, and by a certain air one of our camel-men was singing the same day.

Our party now consists of Hánna, Ferhán, and Ghánim, our own men; of Mr. S——'s two servants; Jazzer, the Mehéd; Mohammed, and a certain cousin of his, Mohammed of Hóms, bound on

business to the Ánazeh. It is of him that we bought the donkey yesterday, and now he has laid out two pounds of its price in the purchase of another donkey, no larger than a Newfoundland dog, on which he sometimes straddles, with his feet on the ground—it is difficult to call it riding. We had stayed behind to eat our luncheon of bread and dates, and let the camels go on, led by Jazzer; and now, when we had finished our meal, they were some mile or so ahead. It was just about noon, and the mirage in the middle of the day quickly swallows up even a caravan of camels on the horizon, or they get hidden in a dip of the plain, and ours were now out of sight. Wilfrid and I galloped on to keep up the line of communication, which it is very dangerous to lose in travelling in the desert; and it was well we did so, for by the time we sighted them the rest of our straggling party was, in its turn, lost to view. Wilfrid then sent me on alone to the caravan, with instructions to stop it, while he galloped back to collect the stragglers. He found them, with the consul at their head, following each other quite unconsciously in a line at right angles to that of our route; and where they would have got to, Heaven only knows. It was all that he could do to induce them to alter their course, which they still declared was that which the camels had taken. This little incident has made us cautious of keeping together, and has shown us the advantage of having at least one person well mounted with a caravan; as, had we all been riding donkeys and beasts of heavy burden, we should infallibly have now been scattered hopelessly over the plain.

After this, we went steadily on till sunset, when we stopped in a broad wady, within sight of certain hills, from which, Jazzer assures us, we shall see the Ánazeh tents to-morrow. We have come about thirty miles.

GHANIM'S SONG.



April 4th.—Jazzer, for some reason unexplained, altered his course this morning, and started off south-east; and, after passing the tell we had seen yesterday, a line of low hills came in sight, or, as they turned out afterward, of cliffs, the edge of an upper tableland. Toward this we advanced obliquely, keeping a good look-out for tents, which we expected to find in every hollow—for a party of Sleb were known to be in the neighborhood. About nine o'clock Wilfrid thought he saw two men peeping over a bit of broken ground about a mile off to our right, and galloped up to them for news, leaving me with Mr. S——, who made me anxious by saying that it was very imprudent to ride up in this way to unknown people by one's self; but by this time Wilfrid was far away, and unconscious of criticism. Besides, I knew he was well armed and mounted, and would run no unnecessary risk. Mohammed too had started off to support him as soon as he saw what was going on.

As it turned out, it was very lucky Wilfrid went to them, for in about half an hour he returned at full speed to tell us we were going the wrong way, that the Ánazeh had moved away from the camps where Jazzer had left them, and that we must strike due south. On riding up, he had found himself suddenly in the presence of ten men hidden in a small wady, with three dromedaries kneeling down so as to be out of sight, and armed with spears, while one of them had a matchlock and another a pistol. Four of the party had come forward, holding their spears in front of them in rather a menacing attitude; but without dismounting, and keeping well out of reach, he had asked them who they were, and what they were doing. They turned out to be a party out on a ghazú, but whether from the Fedáan or the Roála is still very doubtful. They said they were from the former, and that they were going to steal camels from the latter, but the contrary is just as likely. They seemed good-humored fellows, and conversed in the usual off-hand Bedouin way, informing Wilfrid that Jedáan was close by, just over the brow of the hills I spoke of, and saying we were in the wrong road. Then Mohammed had come up and

cross-questioned them, and they had all sat down very amicably, Wilfrid even giving them his rifle to look at. This, which is a Winchester with fourteen cartridges, is a never-failing source of delight to the Bedouins. So, wishing them good-luck on their expedition, and a happy return, Wilfrid and Mohammed had departed. The men's last words were, that Jedáan and Mohammed Duki and Ibn Mershid and Ibn Haddal were all together just beyond the hill, "*jeríb, jeríb*" (close by, close by). With this comfortable news, we accordingly put our camels' heads toward the south.

The plain now began to ascend, and, by following the line of a long, winding wady, we reached the crest of the hills, and found them, as I said, to be only the broken edge of an upper plateau. There, far and wide before us, the level plain stretched out, unbroken except by one three-peaked hill, higher than any we had yet seen, and recognized by Jazzer as Jebel Ghoráb, or "Raven's Hill," about ten miles away to the south. Of tents or camels nothing at all was to be seen.

The situation required some speediness of decision, as the information given us by the ghazú party might be false, and we were advancing into a thirsty land with a very limited supply of water. Jazzer seemed in doubt whether to continue in the new direction or to revert to the old one; and the rest of the party were, of course, without knowledge of the country, or ability to form an opinion. Wilfrid, however, decided that the hill was our best chance. It would serve, at least, as a lookout from which we might hope to spy out something, and toward it we steered. He and Mohammed rode on in front, the rest of the party keeping them just in sight. As we came near the hill, which is of limestone and capped with three peaks, I could see Wilfrid and Mohammed like specks upon the top of it. They seemed to be waving their cloaks, but I could not see more—it was too far away. They came down at last with melancholy faces, put on for the occasion, for they had good news to tell. They had gone to all three peaks in succession; and from the top of the last, the farthest south, they had made out tents, many miles away, indeed, yet certainly tents,

and certainly the Ánazeh, for the black spots seen covered an immense space from east to west, the nearest lying due south of us. So, in spite of the heat, which was very great, and of the blank look of the land we were entering, we went on in high spirits.

In a couple of hours we came upon camels grazing, and learned from the men with them that they were the property of the Mehéd, Jedáan's own tribe, and that we should soon come to their tents. We were the first people from the outside world, I suppose, that they had seen this spring; yet they expressed no curiosity or interest in our proceedings, and seemed to take our arrival as the most ordinary thing in the world. Of interference with us or our affairs there was no sign; and when we asked the way to Jedáan's tent, they answered as simply and as civilly as any laborers would in England in pointing out the road to the squire's house. We passed thus through immense herds of camels for another hour, and then came upon tents; and so went on and on, till, at the extreme end of the camp, we found the sheykh's tent, set in the middle of a patch of purple stock, with several mares and colts grazing round it. The first person who came out to meet us was our old acquaintance, Ali the Mehéd, whom we had plotted with at Deyr, and whose failure to meet us at the trysting-place outside had been the cause of all our difficulties. He apologized very handsomely for having left us in the lurch, and explained that the Pasha had got wind of our arrangement, and had threatened to hang him if he did not go about his business at once.

He told us Jedáan was in the tent, and was expecting us; and presently a middle-aged man, rather shabbily dressed, and rather ill mounted on an iron-gray mare, rode up to us and bade us welcome. There was nothing in his manner, features, or appearance to proclaim him a man of note. His face was plain and undistinguished, his address neither very dignified nor very engaging, his smile a singularly cold one; only his eyes were remarkable by a certain glitter they had, and the projection of the eyebrows over them. He returned our greeting gravely, and rode almost in silence with us to the tent. This was Jedáan, the great captain of

the Ánazeh, honored by them with the title of Emir el Arab. The first words he uttered, after the usual compliments had been exchanged, were a question as to the breeding of my mare, Sherífa, whose extraordinarily beautiful head seems to attract all eyes to her. This struck us as rather rude; and I had expected, considering their old alliance and brotherhood, a far greater demonstration of pleasure by him toward the consul. On the whole, we are not favorably impressed by this great man, and suspect that the position he has achieved in the desert has turned his head.

Jedáan is a parvenu, and owes all his position to his own merit as a man of action and a politician. He began life as a poor man of no very distinguished family in the Mehéd tribe, itself not one of the most powerful tribes among the Ánazeh. Abd ul Kérim, his friend as a boy, and afterward his enemy, helped him on at the outset; and then his great courage and brilliant horsemanship brought him into the notice of his own people, who, being great warriors, elected him their sheykh. Still, for many years he was only Sheykh of the Fedáan; and it was not till Suliman ibn Mershid's death left the Sebáa like sheep without a shepherd that he was recognized as military leader of the united tribes. The Sebáa elected him as their akíd, and he has since had it all his own way with this section of the Ánazeh. In appearance, I have said, he is not prepossessing; his features are coarse, and his manner wants that well-bred finish which distinguishes the members of families really "asíl." There is still a trace of the old submissive manner of the poor man, under the dignity of the sheykh. His smile seems forced, and his manner hesitating and abrupt, as if he was not quite sure of his position. If it was not for his eyes he would be unrecognizable as a great man; but these are like a hawk's, piercing, fierce, and cold.

We have sent him his mashlakh and boots; and Hánna tells us that when he brought them to the tent Jedáan bade him hide them, lest the others should see what we had given, and he be obliged to part with some of them. How different to Faris, who gave all away with a perfectly open hand! When he came to see us after-

ward in our own tent, he said little, and went away suddenly. Either he is preoccupied, or he has had his head turned by his fortune; one has known people in Europe quite unbearable for some months, after succeeding to a fortune, or a title, or simply after marriage. Dinner was given us in our own tent—lamb and kemeyehs, lebben and dates. The water is very muddy, but quite sweet. It comes from some pools of rain-water in the neighborhood, and rain-water is always good.

In the evening we received visits from Turki, Jedáan's only son, a loutish fellow, unworthy of his father's reputation; and from a certain Faris ibn Meziad, Sheykh of the Mesénneh, whose blood, Mohammed tells us, is the bluest in all Arabia. Then, before going to bed, we handed Mohammed the twenty mejidies we had promised should be his the day we saw Jedáan. "He is not worth it," we said, "after all; but never mind."

April 5th.—The Ánazeh are on their way north, or rather northwest, and never stay more than a couple of nights in the same place; so this morning the tents were struck, Jedáan waiting, out of compliment to us, to do so till ours were down. By a couple of hours after sunrise everybody was on the march, and a fine sight it was. The Mehéd camp covers several miles of ground, and the tents are scattered about, in groups of ten or a dozen, at intervals of at least a quarter of a mile, so that it is impossible to make even a guess at the whole number; but the line of camels extended as far as we could see on either side of us, and the tribe is said to reckon a thousand tents. Jedáan, of course, rode with us; and, as it was the first day of our visit, a fantasia was performed in our honor, much in the same fashion as that to which Faris had treated us, but done with less spirit. There seems to be none of that personal affection for Jedáan among his followers that we found among the Shammar for their sheykh, and Jedáan himself is moody and preoccupied. He went through his own part of the performance more as a duty than a pleasure, and it was soon over. I am glad, however, to have seen him ride in it, as he is the most celebrated horseman of the desert; and, mounted as he was to-

day on his big horse, he certainly gives one a fine idea of Bedouin prowess. His seat on horseback is admirable—a more natural one, to European eyes, than that of most Arabs, who generally sit crouched on the very shoulders of their mares. Jedáan, on the contrary, sits well back, and his legs hang easily from the knee, while his hand seems to be very perfect. He was riding a horse celebrated in the tribe, a powerful four-year-old, of at least fifteen hands, of which we had already heard, and showed it off admirably, but I was disappointed in the animal. He is a bay Kehîlan Akhrás, with three white feet (*muttlakh esh shimál*), and a great splotch of white down the nose. He has a fine sloping shoulder and powerful quarters, but the neck is heavy and the hocks set too high—a charger, in fact, more than a racer.

Jedáan's son Turki joined clumsily in the manœuvres, but it is evident he is no horseman, and, from some hints thrown out by the people about him, I fancy he is half-witted. A boor he certainly is. Jedáan's secretary, Mehemet Aázil, a native of Orfa, also rode with us, and a little, pale-faced, gray-eyed man whom the consul recognized as an old acquaintance. He is the úlema Abd er Ráhman Attar, a doctor of divinity from Aleppo, and a man of considerable influence among the Ánazeh, not on account of his clerical profession, but from the fact that his father was a horse-dealer, and had had commercial relations with them. He seems to be here on some sort of diplomatic mission connected with the quarrels of the tribes. The consul tells us that this Abd er Ráhman is really a learned man both in divinity and law, and an honorable man to boot; so that, although he talks Turkish, which somehow grates upon my ears, and has a wretched town complexion, we are making friends with him. He seems a mine of information about desert history and politics.

The fantasia over, Jedáan got down from his horse, and mounted the same scrubby filly he met us on yesterday, and, saying that he had business to transact elsewhere, put us under his son's escort and rode away to the left. There is evidently something brewing, but whether peace or war we cannot quite make out. I thought

the retainers seemed more at their ease when the sheykh was gone. A little attempt at sport was made—a bustard hawked and a fox coursed; but the Bedouins here seem to care little about such things, being in this strangely different from their relations in the Sahara. The hawk was a very large one, larger than the peregrine, and well under command; for, having missed his quarry, he came back at once to his master's call. It is very pretty to see these hawks, perched two together on the croup of their master's mare, or on his wife's hówdah, and keeping their balance with wings stretched out. The greyhounds, while on the march, seemed perpetually at work coursing something or other—fox, hare, or gazelle; for the long line of camels acting as beaters puts up everything before it for miles. The dogs are small, but show great breeding, most of them being of the so-called Persian variety, with long silky ears and tails. The march was irregularly conducted. A group of horsemen rode first, but followed no particular line, going first in one direction and then in another, either from the inability we have noticed in the Bedouins to keep a straight line, or possibly looking for pasturage and camping-ground. Every mile or so they dismounted to talk and wait for the camels, which came slowly but surely on behind, feeding as they went. Every time we thought they intended to encamp, but they still went on; and it was not till about one o'clock that Turki finally stuck his spear in the ground and told us the tents were to be pitched there. The place chosen is a likely spot enough, a deep wady—Wady el Helbe—some forty feet below the level of the plain, and one vast bed of grass and flowers. We have been turning round Jebel Ghoráb all day, and it is still in sight five or six miles off to the north-north-east. It is very hot, and we are sitting in the sun waiting for the camels to come up with the tents; but my mare is kind enough to let me make use of her shadow, to a certain extent, while I write. She is too gentle to move away.

Evening.—Jedáan's preoccupied manner is explained. He was married two days ago, and for the fifteenth time! He has confided his woes to Mr. S——, the most prominent of them being the fool-

ishness of his son, who really is, it seems, half-witted. Turki is now twenty-four years old, and is of no use either in peace or war, being an idle, stupid lout, who cannot even ride. This is Jedáan's secret misery and the cause of all his marriages, for it is in the hope of a more worthy heir that he has married over and over again, and now, at the age of fifty-five, has just taken to himself a fifteenth wife. He came to the consul this evening with an apology—"*Amán, Amán*" ("Peace, peace—forgive me"), he said, and told his troubles. He is also worried and anxious about the Roála war, which, as Akíd of the Sebáa, he is obliged to carry on, against his private wishes and his better judgment, and which it seems is not going on so satisfactorily as might be wished. He married his daughter Turkýa last year to Ibn Shaalán, the Roála sheykh; and although she has quarrelled with her husband, he seems to consider Sotámm as a relation. He has no blood feud or private quarrel with any of the Roála. The cause of his leaving us to-day was the marriage-feast, which it is customary for the bride's father to give to the bridegroom on the third day after the wedding. A young camel is then killed, and all the relations are invited. Jedáan's new father-in-law belongs to the Sirhán, a small Ánazeh tribe, and is staying with Ibn Heshish's family, Sheykh of the Khryssa. The bride is said to be pretty, though thirty years of age, and quite an old maid for an Arab girl. The reason of her being so long unmarried is singular. It appears that according to desert law a girl may be claimed in marriage by her first cousin, and even kept waiting year after year until he chooses to marry her or set her free; and so it has happened in this case. But, Jedáan being a powerful personage, the girl's father has been persuaded to set aside the cousin's right. Jedáan's mother is also a Sirhán, and it was she who really made the match; she is very anxious her son should have a worthy heir, and she left him no peace until she got his consent to her plan. Still, there seems to be some doubt as to whether the marriage is a legal one.

As soon as our camels had arrived at the new halting-place, and the tents had been pitched, we went off in search of water for our

mares, leaving the lout Turki sprawling in our tent. The mares had had none yesterday, and were suffering from want of it in the hot sun. Jedáan's people were equally without water, but they were either too lazy to fetch it, or indifferent about their beasts' comfort; and, though they talked vaguely of water being close by, they made no move toward it. So we went away by ourselves with Mohammed in the direction pointed out to us, and about three miles off found a large pool of rain-water, beyond which another Bedouin camp was established. The mares, poor things, were very glad to get their noses into the muddy water, and we thought would never stop drinking. My Nejdean mare, however, is a very curious drinker. She only puts the tips of her lips to the water, and takes several minutes sipping the amount of a bucketful, while Hagar thrusts her whole muzzle in and drinks voraciously.

The tents proved to belong to the Moáyaja, one of the Sebáa tribes, and, when the mares were satisfied, we went on to pay a visit to their sheykh. They were only just arrived, and the sheykh's tent was not yet pitched, but he received us in that of his uncle Ali. Ferhán ibn Hedéb is a young man of two or three and twenty, and has the most distinguished manners of any of the Bedouins we have met, Faris only excepted. He is short in stature, but very slight and graceful, with exceedingly small hands and feet, and a refined, almost melancholy, countenance of dark olive hue. He was very poorly dressed, but there was something in his air which pointed him out to us at once as a man of rank and birth. His manner to ourselves was a type of good-breeding—quiet, frank, and unobtrusive, and full of kind attentions. He apologized simply, but with dignity, for the poor reception he was able to give us. His tribe was the one which had suffered most from the Roála war, for at the very outset, and before hostilities had actually been declared, they had been plundered by the Turkish soldiers whom Ibn Shaalán had got to help him. These had left the Moáyaja without so much as a tent over their heads, and the wretched awnings under which they are now camped have

been given them in charity by the other Sebáa tribes. All their cooking pots and pans, things hereditary in a sheykh's tent, were gone, and it was all they could do to muster a copper jug to make us coffee in. They had no bread, only dates and truffles; but, as Ferhán said, "the kemeyehs are our bread just now, and better than the bread of towns."

Of the war he naturally spoke with some bitterness, and of the treacherous attack made upon his people by Ibn Shaalán and the Turkish troops. Their camp had been surrounded while stopping in the neighborhood of Háma, and they had only just managed to escape with most of their mares and camels. The war must now go on till they had got back what had thus been lost. "And Jedáan," we asked, "what does he wish in the matter?" "War, of course," answered Ferhán. "But in his heart?" "Ah, I have not seen his heart." The fact is, they all know that Jedáan is only half-hearted in carrying on the war. We like these Moáyaja particularly. They are very different from Jedáan's people, who are rough and uncivil. These are exceedingly well-mannered. Ferhán himself reminds us of the very best type of Spaniard, a *grande cubierto.* His blood, indeed, is considered the best among the Sebáa; and Mohammed tells us that, with Ibn Mershid's, it ranks next to that of the five great families of absolute nobility—the Ibn Meziad of the Hesénneh, the Ibn el Hemásdi of the Ibn Haddal, the Ibn Jendal and the Tayár of the Roála, and the Ibn Smeyr of the Welled Ali. He told us this as we were riding to-day, and I asked Ferhán if it was correct, and in what this absolute nobility consisted. He told us it was so, and that the five families thus distinguished had at *all* times killed a lamb for their guests. "The rest of us have only *learned* to do so."*

Ali's tent was partly occupied by a filly and a bay foal, the latter not a week old, and very engaging. It was tied up, as the custom is, by a rope round the neck, while its mother was away grazing,

* Ibn Shaalán's is only a "noblesse d'épée" of some half-dozen generations, while Jedáan is a parvenu.

and neighed continually. It was very tame, however, and let me stroke it, and sniffed at my pockets, as if it knew that there might be some sugar there. Ali showed us his mare (not the foal's mother), a dark chestnut, Abeyeh Sherrak, a strong but rather plain animal, which would pass as a "handsome cob" in England. Ferhán's horse pleased us better — a three-year-old — Hadban Mshétib, which I preferred infinitely to Jedáan's Kehîlan Akhrás.

The Ibn Hedéb were very anxious to retain us with them, but we could not risk offending Jedáan by leaving him without saying good-bye; so we have promised to come again, and rode home to the Wady el Helbe in a storm of hail and rain.

April 6th.—Lightning in the night, and a threatening of rain. Jedáan came to our tent the first thing this morning, and talked more openly than he has yet done; but I do not like him. He seems a selfish man, entirely occupied with his own schemes and ambitions, and lets one see many a little meanness, which better breeding would have concealed. The Sebáa, I fancy, do not *like* him either, but they *need* him; for since Suliman ibn Mershid's death they are without a leader, while Jedáan has military genius. His heart, all the same, is not in the war; and it is a curious trait of manners that last winter, while the war was at its height, Jedáan, the leader of the Sebáa, should have married his daughter to Ibn Shaalán, the leader of the Roála. Whether he did this with a political motive I cannot make out, nor do I quite understand his present feelings about the marriage. It turned out badly, and Jedáan's daughter came back two or three months ago from her husband, saying that she could not get on with him; and yet Jedáan talks of Ibn Shaalán as having claims on him as his son-in-law. Of the origin of the war he gave us some account. It appears that from time immemorial the Sebáa have occupied the plains of Hóms and Háma as their summer pasturage, paying a sort of rent to the Turkish Government for this and the right of trading, amounting to six hundred camels yearly. Last May, however, the Roála, who have increased and multiplied greatly of late years, came forward with an offer of fifteen hundred camels, and

backed it with a present of fifty mares, to be distributed among the government officials of Damascus, Hóms, and Háma; and, thus secure of support, marched in before the Sebáa's arrival, and took possession. The Sebáa, however, came, and a battle ensued, in which the Roála were worsted; whereupon Sotámm ibn Shaalán applied to the Turks for help, and, by subsidizing the Pasha, obtained from him a body of Turkish infantry to support his people. These came suddenly upon the Gomússa and Moáyaja, whom they found isolated, and surrounded them. The Sebáa do not seem to have behaved very heroically, for they made no resistance to the soldiers, and allowed themselves to be pillaged. The troops sacked all the Moáyaja camp, captured fifty mares, and drove off a hundred and eighty camels, besides three thousand sheep. Since then a war of reprisals has been carried on, but Jedáan assures us that not more than fifty men have been killed on either side.

Jedáan's face improves when he is excited, for then his eyes, which are really fine, light up surprisingly. I proposed to take his portrait, and he was much flattered at the idea, and sat with extraordinary patience for nearly an hour, and then called for his secretary, who wrote Jedáan's name for us underneath the drawing, adding "*Emir el Arab*," his new title in the desert, with which he is as pleased as people are with theirs in England. The portrait hardly did him justice, for it gave the ruggedness of his features, without their occasional fire. I was more successful in a sketch I made of his daughter Turkýa, a pretty and interesting woman, whom I presently afterward made acquaintance with.

As soon as Jedáan went away, I paid a visit to the harem, and found there in the place of honor Jedáan's first wife, Hazzna, the mother of his three children. The new wife has a tent of her own. Hazzna was very gracious, doing the honors of her household, and, of course, making me sit in her place. She has greater remains of good looks than is usual in a Bedouin mother of grown-up children; so that when, pointing to Turki, who sat in the tent fondling a baby, she informed me that he was her son, I could truly

say I was surprised. Her countenance is agreeable; her manner, though amiable, was rather embarrassed, perhaps because she wore a gorgeous Bagdad *abba* of purple and gold interwoven, a piece of finery to which she seemed unaccustomed, and the only instance I have seen among Bedouin ladies of any attempt at smart clothes. I asked her about the wife of Ibn Shaalán, on which she turned to a young girl sitting on her left with a child in her arms, and said, "This is Turkýa." I looked, and saw a graceful creature, with a most attractive face, though curiously like Jedáan. Turkýa has the same strangely brilliant eyes, but without her father's hawk-like expression; and her face, though the features resemble his, and are far from regular, is really pretty. I made friends with her at once, and asked her to sit for her portrait. While she sat, one of Turki's wives (he has three, and several small children) squatted by her, giggling and trying to make her laugh, but she behaved very well. Mohammed Aázil, the secretary, was rather tiresome, with his incessant flow of conversation; and, indeed, so were the assembled company, who took a great interest in my drawing, continually interrupting me with their observations. Their remarks, however, were all of encouragement and approval; and it always strikes me as showing a natural superiority of intelligence in Arabs over Europeans that the former at once understand the merest indication of a sketch or map, which would be meaningless to the uneducated among the latter.

I found that Turkýa's child, a daughter nearly four years old, was by a former marriage; her first husband, a brother of her father's, died mad about three years ago. It seems that she was so much attached to him that she even now laments his death, and that she always disliked her second marriage, and seized the first pretext for escaping from it. She now says she cannot go back to Sotámm ibn Shaalán, and wants to remain with her own family. Jedáan has another daughter, still prettier than Turkýa, a lovely little girl of eleven, named Ariffa. We saw her yesterday, when Faris ibn Meziad, Sheykh of the Hesénneh, who is here on a visit, brought her to our tent to "*furraj*" (gaze) at us.

The half-witted Turki sat silent all the while I was drawing, but when I had finished and was going away he brought out three or four revolvers of English and American make to show me. He seemed to have a particular fancy for handling these fire-arms, pointing them recklessly all round, to the terror of men, women, and children in the tent, until the secretary took them away from him. He then made me a little set speech, from which it appeared that he was not such a fool, after all; for he had evidently shown me these revolvers only in order to lead up to the request that I would give him my own. He wanted it for his mother, he said; but she sat by without joining in his entreaties, and I only replied that I could not spare it, and, taking leave of Hazzna and Turkya, returned to our tent. When I got back I found that Wilfrid had decided on going on to Ferhán's camp this afternoon. Hánna has been complaining of the rudeness of the people here, whom he can no longer keep out of the servants' tent, and who make his life a burden to him. Yesterday, he declares, Turki, with half a dozen of his friends, lay sprawling all day long on our carpets and cushions, and when spoken to by Hánna, called him a "pig" and an "infidel." This, very likely, is an exaggeration; but Wilfrid thinks we shall be more comfortable with the Sebáa, who are well-bred people. Jedáan's men have a bad reputation in the desert for everything except fighting. We have consequently come back to the pool where we were yesterday, and where we find our friend Ferhán delighted to see us again. It is certainly a great pleasure to be among such polite, pleasant people as these Moáyaja are.

Jedáan was very tiresome at parting, with an unreasonable request for a revolver, which we could not spare him, and he showed, we thought, a great want of dignity in the matter. On the whole, we were anything but sorry to bid him good-bye. We were hardly, however, out of sight of the Fedáan camp before Abd er Rahman, the learned man from Aleppo, overtook us, and requested permission to travel with us. He then explained to Mr. S——, in Turkish, that he had a matter of great importance to communicate to

us, and proceeded to disclose a negotiation with which he had been intrusted by Jedáan. I cannot understand why Jedáan should have chosen this roundabout way of letting us know what he wanted, especially when he must have known we should be delighted to grant his request. It appears, then, that Jedáan was struck by some remarks I made this morning on the folly of letting a petty quarrel for pasturage divide the strength of the Ánazeh, when the Bedouins had in face of them so powerful an enemy as the Turks, and that it had occurred to him I might be willing to undertake a diplomatic mission to the Roála camp, which lies on our way to Damascus, and endeavor to bring about peace between the tribes. A council is to be called of all the sheykhs of the Sebáa and of their allies, and the terms of peace discussed, with which I am to go to the Roála. Jedáan thinks that most of them really desire to see the war finished, and that if some arrangement can be come at with Ibn Shaalán about the pasturage of Háma, by-gone quarrels may be forgotten. Of course I am delighted to think that I can possibly be of use in such a negotiation, which really it would be worth while to succeed in. Abd er Rahman will go with us as second plenipotentiary, to explain things better than I can, and we all intend to do our best to make the mission successful.

As a first step we have sounded Ferhán about his feelings in the matter, and he has explained that, although it is impossible for him to speak openly with his people of making peace, yet he feels sure that they are tired of the war, and he himself is quite willing to forget his losses in it. We like Ferhán immensely. He is so straightforward and sensible, and shows high-minded ideas on every subject we have discussed. We have given him a cloak and boots, both of which articles, poor fellow, he is much in want of, and, unlike the rest who have received these presents from us, he has put them on himself, understanding that this pleases us. The tribe is quite ruined, and the sheykh's mother has had to borrow a cooking-pot of Hánna to boil the lamb in for our dinner. Ferhán is not married, but lives with his mother and another

widow of his father's, a pretty, quiet woman, who has a child two years old, Ferhán's half-brother. His father Majún died two years ago.

Several Arabs of the Gomássa have been here, talking principally about horses, for they are the great breeders of horses in the desert. Among others, they spoke of a wonderful mare, a Meleyha, which they said a certain European had once offered £600 for, when they were in their summer-quarters near Aleppo; but the manner of his dealing seems to have impressed them with the idea that he was out of his mind, and they would not sell the mare. They made very merry over this. We asked them the usual question about the horses of Nejd, and the existence of separate breeds there, and they gave the usual answers. We also asked whether they had ever heard of a mixture of blood having been effected with English or other horses, as some people pretend has been the case with the Ánazeh stock. At first they could not understand our question, but when they did they were rather indignant. "All that is a lie," they said, "and absurd. Our horses are the same as those of our forefathers, before they came from Nejd, and the same as those of the tribes which have remained there." None of them have ever seen or heard of an English horse, which would of course be a *kadísh* (mongrel). All horses but their own were *kadíshes*, not worth talking about. Abd er Rahman, too, whose father was a horse-dealer, laughed at the notion of a Bedouin ever allowing his mares to look at a European horse, and said he had never heard of any tradition of the kind we mentioned. The thing would be an impossibility. So I should think. The only European horses ever brought to the desert were some of Mr. S——'s, about twenty years ago, and they proved an entire failure. Though of the best blood in England, the Arabs would have nothing to say to them.

While we were eating our dinner—a very good one of fried mutton, cakes, and fresh butter—a beautiful little gazelle was brought for us to look at. It was a fawn of only a few days old, and had been caught yesterday while the tribe was on the march. It is the

prettiest little thing imaginable, no bigger than a hare, all legs and ears, and great black, wistful eyes. Some children had it, tied by the legs so that it could not run fast, and were wearing its life away by their rough play. I took it on to my lap, and it went at once to sleep. Poor thing! they have given it to a goat to bring up; but I am sure it can never live. I wish I could take it with me.

CHAPTER XX.

"Alarums, excursions, then a retreat."—SHAKSPEARE.

Ferhán ibn Hedéb.—The Gomússa and their Mares.—Mohammed Dukhi.—A Lawsuit in the Desert.—A Tribe of Gazelle-hunters.—Beteyen's Mare.—The Sebáa are attacked by the Roála.—A Panic and a Retreat.—Our new Brother, Meshúr ibn Mershid.—Scarcity of Water.—We leave the Ánazeh Camp and make a forced March to Bir Sukr.

Sunday, April 7th.—The name of the pool by which we are encamped—or rather of the pools, for there is a succession of them—is Khábra el Mashkúk. It lies within sight of the Tell el Ghoráb, ten miles perhaps due south of it, and about sixty south-east of Tudmor. It covers some few acres, but is very shallow, being dependent for its existence as a pool solely on the winter rains. According to all accounts, however, there is a series of them running east and west, and forming a convenient line of encampments in the direction of Damascus. It will be along these that we hope to go on now to the Roála, who are not more than a hundred miles away, if report speaks true. They tell us we shall find encampments of the Sleb on our road, and learn from them exactly where the Roála are.

Ferhán spent the morning with us talking, and answering the many questions we bored him with, most agreeably. It was pleasant, too, to see the way in which he exerted his authority over his people in keeping them from boring us. Not that they did anything which was impolite, but the right of gazing is one which is liable at all times to abuse in a Bedouin camp; and, when the youths and boys edged in too closely round our tent, he would send them about their business with a good-humored word or two which they did not venture to disregard. His manner to them was exactly that of an elder brother keeping order in an unruly

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household. We should have liked to stay longer with Ferhán than this one night, but, now that our diplomatic mission is seriously decided on, we shall have to visit one or two more of the principal sheykhs, and so about ten o'clock we struck our tents, intending to go on to the Gomússa, who were close by. Ferhán, as we wished him good-bye, seemed really sorry to part with us, and made us promise, not unwillingly, that if ever we come again into his neighborhood we will make his tent our home. I hardly know whether it is their misfortunes and present poverty which make them so, but these Moáyaja and their sheykh are certainly the nicest people we have met this side of the Euphrates. A touch of misfortune is doubtless an excellent thing for us all.

As we moved away, we came across a mass of men, women, and camels moving more or less in our own direction, and found, on inquiry, that they were the Welled Ali, an Ánazeh tribe, usually friends of the Roála, but who have sided with the Sebáa in their present quarrel. Their sheykh, Mohammed Dukhi ibn Smeyr, is a man of considerable importance, and enjoyed, I believe, the protection of the British Consulate at Damascus some years ago, in an intrigue he set on foot to get the monopoly of conducting the Mecca pilgrims as far as Maan; so we had hardly appeared among his people before we received a polite message from him hoping that we would go no farther than to his tents, which he was about to pitch not three miles from our late encampment. Presently afterward the sheykh himself rode up and repeated the invitation; and, although we had already sent word to Ibn Mershid of the Gomússa to announce a visit, we could not well refuse this new invitation. Besides, we were anxious to make Mohammed Dukhi's acquaintance. So our tents have been pitched with his.

Mohammed Dukhi ibn Smeyr is a man of about fifty. He is short and thick-set, wears a grizzled beard, and has little dark, twinkling eyes, expressive of some humor. His face, though not a disagreeable one, hardly inspires one with full confidence, and he is said to have committed acts of cruelty and treachery in his day. To us, however, he is charming, but in the elaborate Turkish

fashion rather than as a Bedouin, making us long speeches full of compliments, and protesting his desire to serve us. We were in some difficulty about a cloak for him, for, when we left Deyr, we did not expect to make acquaintance with any of the great sheykhs but Jedáan, and the only one we had left we were reserving for Beteyen ibn Mershid, Sheykh of the Gomússa. Mr. S——, however, who knows the Ibn Mershids well, offered to explain matters with them if we would send the cloak we had with us to Mohammed Dukhi; for he was a stranger to us all. It was a handsome cloak of Karieteyn make, dark blue and white, but without gold embroidery, and we sent it, as usual, by Hánna; but, to our surprise, Mohammed Dukhi sent it back again, coming himself immediately after to our tent to explain that it was quite unnecessary for travellers so far down in the Hamád to send presents to any one; that we might want it for others or for ourselves, and a good deal more, which came so very *à propos* that we guessed it must have been suggested to him by Hánna. How this was, I do not know, but we have had considerable trouble in persuading our host to keep the gift. He has been sitting with us most of the afternoon, relating tales of the different Europeans he has seen, for the Welled Ali have their summer-quarters near Damascus, and are in constant communication with the town. It is to this, I suppose, that he owes his fine manners. As a young man, he enjoyed a considerable reputation as a warrior, but he lost one of his arms in the wars, and now is satisfied with giving advice on military matters. We sounded him about the prospects of peace with the Roála, and he expressed himself, for his own part, indifferent in the affair. If, however, there is any more fighting, his people shall help the Sebáa. He has promised to see them through it, and considers they have been badly used by the Roála; but he has no personal quarrel with Ibn Shaalán, and should be glad if matters could be arranged. He would like to see the mutesherif of Háma punished, for it was he who was to blame for all the troubles which he had got up in order to fill his own pockets. The conduct of the Turks toward the tribes was "abominable."

All day long people have been bringing horses and mares for us to look at, for we have given out that we wish to exchange Tamarisk for something better, and a very interesting sight it has been. The Welled Ali themselves are not remarkable for their horses; but we saw one very pretty gray horse, Seglawi Jedrán of Ibn Nedéri's breed, which had no defect but that of size; it was only fourteen hands. A Gomússa, however, came in later with a magnificent three-year-old, a Samhan el Gomeáa, a bay with black points. This is the most powerful animal we have yet seen. He stands fifteen hands, and has tremendous forearms and quarters, though still coltish. His action was less good, though it is difficult to judge from the extremely bad riding of the man who brought him. Horses, in the desert, are always ill-broken compared to the mares, for they are seldom used for riding purposes. But our chief delight was to follow, when Beteyen ibn Mershid, Sheykh of the Gomússa, rode up to Mohammed Dukhi's tent to pay a visit. He had just purchased from one of his people the "bridle-half" of a three-year-old mare, an Abeyeh Sherrak, and was riding her home when he heard that we were at Mohammed Dukhi's tent. The mare is so much more remarkable than the man, that I must describe her first. She is a dark bay, standing fifteen hands or over. Her head, the first point an Arab looks to, is a good one, though I have seen finer, but it is perfectly set on, and the *mitbakh*, or join of the head and neck, would give distinction to any profile. Her neck is light and well arched, the wither high, the shoulder well sloped, and the quarter so fine and powerful that it is impossible she should be otherwise than a very fast mare. Her length of limb above the hock is remarkable, as is that of the pastern. She carries her tail high, as all well-bred Arabians do, and there is a neatness and finish about every movement which remind one of a fawn or a gazelle. We are all agreed that she is incomparably superior to anything we have seen here or elsewhere, and would be worth a king's ransom, if kings were still worth ransoming. Beteyen has paid fourteen camels for his share in the mare, which, at the rate of £5 a camel, gives £70, besides £20 in money, mak-

ing a total of £90; but this sum represents in reality two-thirds of the whole value, because the "holder of the bridle," as the partner is called who keeps and rides the mare, has the right, if he wishes, of buying up the remaining interest in her for half the sum he has already paid. The mare, then, may be reckoned as having cost Beteyen no more than £135, and the sheykh has every reason to be pleased with his bargain.

Beteyen ibn Mershid himself is less interesting. He is a worthy, elderly man, well bred, as an Ibn Mershid can hardly help being, but not in any way distinguished. His face is weak and colorless, and answers well to the reputation he bears among the tribes, that of a man quite unfit to command the Sebáa in troubled times like the present. We can easily understand that, with such a sheykh at their head, the Gomússa have been willing to accept Jedáan as their real leader, parvenu as he is. It is the misfortune of the Sebáa that just now they are without a capable head, the older sheykhs, with the exception of Beteyen, being dead, and the young generation not having yet had time to distinguish itself and gain the influence necessary to command the tribe in war. The office of Akíd, or military leader, is an elective one, and dependent wholly upon personal merit and influence. Ferhán ibn Hedéb, charming and sensible as he is, wants the dash necessary for such a position, while Meshúr ibn Mershid, Suliman's nephew, who is talked of as likely some day to do great things, is still a boy. Beteyen, then, is nominally in command of the tribe, but Jedáan is their real leader by necessity rather than choice.

The reason of Beteyen's visit was that he might be present at the decision of an important suit which is being tried, and which has been referred to Mohammed Dukhi as arbiter. It is nothing less than an action brought against Jedáan by his new wife's cousin, a young man of the Sirhán, for her recovery, on the plea of his not having consented to the marriage. The case is a very curious one, and we are much interested in the decision, because if given against Jedáan it will be a remarkable instance of the power of law among the tribes. Jedáan is, at the present moment,

omnipotent here, while the cousin is a person of no influence, and is talked of by everybody as a wrong-headed youth, who has behaved ill to the girl and deserves no countenance. Yet it is thought that he will gain his suit. The girl, as I have said, is nearly thirty, and the cousin only twenty-three; so that his claim to her cannot be considered as anything but one of interest. He has refused to marry her himself, or rather put it off from year to year, till the girl's father was tired of waiting. Jedáan seems not to have known of the existence of this cousin till after the marriage was arranged, and then to have thought that it would be merely a case of "damages" at worst. But the cousin has demanded the girl herself of the father, or four other daughters in her stead; a preposterous claim, but one which it seems can legally be made. As a compromise, the father is willing to give his only remaining daughter in place of the one just married; but the cousin will not hear of this, and, by way of asserting his right, ran one of the old man's camels through with his spear. The whole matter has been referred to Mohammed Dukhi for decision, and the sheykh's tent is crowded to hear the verdict.

Abd er Ráhman, as a learned jurist of Aleppo, is especially interested in this lawsuit, and has explained it to us, most fortunately, for we could not understand it without him. What is now being discussed is the preliminary argument whether the case is to be tried by Bedouin or Mohammedan law; and, though nobody supposes but what the Bedouin law must prevail, an attempt is being made to substitute the other in Jedáan's interests. Abd er Ráhman, who knows the Mussulman law, has been consulted, and has very likely suggested this line of action to Jedáan; for according to it the father's offer of a second daughter would be held sufficient reparation, on the principle that "an injured man, if replaced in the position held before injury, ceases to be injured." The cousin, however, appeals to Bedouin law, which would either annul the marriage, or at least give him the girl's dowry (two thousand piasters, in this instance).

Reports have come in of a ghazú from the Roála, so we have been recommended to keep on the alert to-night.

April 8th.—A heavy shower has fallen, and refreshed us all. No news of the Roála, but everybody seems a little anxious.

Mohammed Dukhi, after all, shirked deciding the lawsuit himself, and has referred it to three arbitrators, chosen, as in England, by the parties to the suit. One of these has been objected to on either side; and the third, afraid of the responsibility, has declared himself unable to decide without reference to the Sheykh of the Sirhán, who is somewhere down in the Jôf, hundreds of miles away. So the case stands over till he can be summoned.*

We have all marched together to-day some eight or nine miles, old Mohammed Dukhi with his youngest child, a boy of six years old, riding a delúl. While on the march, we overtook the Gomússa, and joined a party of them. Among them was a young man mounted on a rather showy colt, which he told us was a Jilfan Stam el Boulád, and he introduced himself as a son of Mijuel the Mesrab, who is well known at Damascus as the husband of an English lady. He was extremely polite, invited us to his tent, and begged us, if we went to Damascus, to go to his father's house. His tribe, the Mesrab, is a very small one, and moves about with the Gomússa, having hardly a separate existence, if it is not, indeed, part of the Gomússa or Resallin. The sheykh, Mijuel's elder brother, a funny little old man of anything but distinguished appearance, we met later in Beteyen's tent. The young man himself goes every winter with the tribe to the Hamád, but spends the summer at Damascus or Hóms, in either of which towns his father

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* The sequel, we have ascertained, was as follows: It was finally agreed that the case should wait the arrival of the bride's tribe. The betrothed cousin then brought forward his complaint for judgment by the sheykh; who decided that, the bride having taken no step to oblige her cousin to keep his promise and marry her, his right remained valid. This was signified to Jedáan, who at once put the bride on a camel, and sent her to the Sheykh of the Sirhán. A great wedding was solemnized, Jedáan being one of the guests; and no ill-will on either side marred the cordial enjoyment of festivities for three whole days.

has a house. As regards his step-mother, we have constantly heard her spoken of in the desert, and always in terms of respect. She is a charitable person, and a providence to her husband's people, supplying them with money, arms, and everything they require. Mijuel himself is talked of as a supremely fortunate man, the possessor of boundless wealth, though some think his marriage a *mésalliance*, as the lady is not of Arab blood, consequently not *asíl* (noble).

Presently after this we came upon Beteyen, whose tent was being pitched in a wady, the entrance to some broken hilly ground lying north of our line of march. Here we alighted. There is water somewhere close by, in another of the series of pools I have mentioned, and we have sent all our animals to drink and the skins to be filled.

We have been much interested this afternoon in a family of Sleb who are staying in the Gomússa camp. The head of the family, Huéran ibn Malek, is considered the principal sheykh of the Sleb, and, as such, is allowed to sit in Beteyen's tent, but the others remain outside. He is a man of thirty or thereabouts, with a dark, not very prepossessing countenance, and a rather sensual look. He is dressed as an Arab, and might be taken for one at first sight. Two younger men, however, his relations, are exceedingly good-looking, with delicately-cut features, and the whitest possible teeth. There is a boy, too, who is perfectly beautiful, with almond-shaped eyes, and a complexion like stained ivory. A little old woman, not more than four feet high, and two girls of fourteen or fifteen, the most lovely little creatures I ever saw, complete the family. They are all very short, but in perfect proportion; their hands and feet exaggeratedly small; and all have a strange, half-frightened smile, and an astonished look in the eyes, which remind one rather of wild creatures than of men and women. Indeed, they go about the camp as if expecting every minute to have to run for their lives, and I am sure they would do it like gazelles. Their dress is made entirely of gazelle-skins, and consists of a long garment reaching to the ankles, something in the style of the

Arab mashlakh, but with sleeves reaching to the wrists, and sometimes drawn over the hands; a capote attached to it covers the head and part of the face, so that, muffled up, they look like the pictures one sees of Greenlanders—only the covering here is for a protection from the sun rather than the cold.

The Sleb have no horses or camels, only a few goats and donkeys. On the latter they ride, not astride, but sideways, with a delúl saddle and double crutch, men and women alike. The women have none of the Arab modesty, and make no pretence of covering their faces, but go about the camp with their male relations on begging tours, all together, as gypsies do in England. It is impossible to believe that these people can be Arabs, though the Bedouins here declare them to be such, and Abd er Ráhman calls them Mussulmans; but all admit that they are something quite different from themselves; that they have customs and practices of their own which no Bedouin would tolerate; that they eat hedgehogs (*gumfit*), and tell fortunes; and are of such base blood that no Bedouin, however poor, would marry one of their women—a remarkable thing when one considers how very beautiful they are. That it is so, we ascertained from Huéran himself, who said, simply enough, "We would give our daughters to the Arabs if they would take them."

The Sleb are the true children of the Hamád, never leaving it summer or winter, but following the herds of gazelles as they migrate north and south. On these they live, making their food, their clothing, and their tents out of the creatures they catch or kill. We are anxious to see more of them, and find out, if possible, who and what they are. That they are not mere gypsies is as certain as that they are not mere Arabs; but we suspect them of having the same origin with the gypsies—that is to say, that they came originally from India. The extreme smallness of their hands and feet, their low stature, and the clearness of their dark complexions, favor this notion. It is quite possible that one of the tribes which left India, and are now known as Bohemians or Gypsies in Europe, may have stopped on the way, and settled—if their

wandering life can be called settling—in the desert. We have agreed with Huéran that he shall show us the way to the Roála camp. His people are camped somewhere on the line of pools toward Damascus, and he will be naturally going that way. The Sleb take no part in the Bedouin quarrels, and are molested by neither party, so that we can travel safely with them. To-morrow, if all goes well, we shall start.

To-day, like yesterday, has been spent looking at mares and horses. Several very fine ones have been brought for us to look at, for, though there is no idea of our purchasing, we have expressed a wish to see all we can. The finest are a Dakhmeh em Amr and a Risheh Sherabi, both belonging to outside breeds, but very perfect specimens. The Risheh is a bay with four white legs, three years old, and fully fifteen hands high—a great, powerful mare; the Dakhmeh a picture of beauty, but smaller. Mr. S—— has been trying to persuade Beteyen to transfer his new purchase, Abeyeh Sherrak, to us, but I fear it will be without success. He at first said he would, but afterward recalled his assent, on the plea that just now, with the Roála war on his hands, it would not look well for him to part with a useful mare. It is probably a matter of money, and we have too little with us to be able to offer a really overpowering price. Some Englishmen, who visited the Gomússa near Aleppo a few years ago, seem to have impressed them all with the idea that it is as easy to get £500 as £50 from a European.

We were sitting in our tent, looking at the horses which were brought us from time to time, when a young man of a most agreeable countenance came and sat down in front of it, after saluting Mr. S——. At first we did not know who he was, but presently he explained that he was Meshúr ibn Mershid; and Mr. S—— recognized him as the son of one of his oldest friends, Mitbakh, Suliman ibn Mershid's elder brother, and we made him come and sit by us. This is the young man who was said to have murdered Ibn Shaalán in his own tent, and who had sent us the invitation we received at Aleppo quite at the beginning of our travels. The

circumstance interested us, and we asked him what his feeling was about the war, and whether he wished it to go on. "*Ouf*" ("certainly"), he answered, "it must." "But you and your people have suffered from it already. Have you not lost enough tents, and mares, and camels?" "We must get them back," he said. "And your lives? was not Ibn Shaalán killed in the war?" "Yes, Jedáan ibn Shaalán." "He was killed, and by whom?" "Oh, by one of the Ánazeh." "Which?" Meshúr would not answer. "We know it was you who killed him." "Well, it was done in battle, and with a spear. Look—it went in at his back and came out here," pointing to his right side. "He was dead directly. When he fell I took his mare, but I would not keep her. I let her go, and she followed her companions. I took another mare the same day, but I let them both go."* Meshúr told us all this with the most good-humored, boyish face, contrasting strangely with the deeds he described. "Jedáan," he said, "was just my age ("el mesqúin," poor fellow), and was a fine horseman, but it was fated. He was Sotámm's nephew, and he makes the fifth of the family we have killed in compensation for my father's death." Mitbatkh ibn Mershid was killed by five men of the Roála tribe, and this is why Meshúr claimed five lives of the latter. But if the price of blood had been paid, it would have been for only one life.

I took Meshúr's portrait, and while doing so a middle-aged man rode up and saluted Mr. S——, who recognized him as a certain Seyd ibn Barghash, who had done him a good turn some years ago. The incident was as follows: The King of Italy had sent an agent to Aleppo to buy horses, and the Italian consul there had begged Mr. S——'s advice and assistance in the matter. Abd er Ráhman was employed by them to negotiate for a particular horse they had seen and approved. He set out with the money, about £100, to pay for it, and was attacked near Tudmor by a party of thirty-six Gomússa out on a ghazú. Abd er Ráhman in vain begged to be

* It is considered a chivalrous thing for a sheykh to let go the mare of an enemy he has killed.

allowed to pass, saying, "I am sent by the English consul for a horse," but they, not knowing him, would have robbed him had not Seyd ibn Barghash, who was of the party, and was a friend of Mr. S——'s, insisted on their letting him go unmolested.

Beteyen and Meshúr have both been to Hiyel in the Jebel Shammar, and give exactly the same account of the horses of Nejd as every one else has given. I need not repeat it. Ibn Rashid, they say, buys his horses from them. As to the winter migration of the Ánazeh, it is not true that they ever get as far south as Jebel Shammar. They stop north of the Nefúds, perhaps three or four days' journey from the hills, but they sometimes go there on ghazús, or on business to the towns. Ibn Rashid, however, is not friendly with them, being by birth a Shammar.

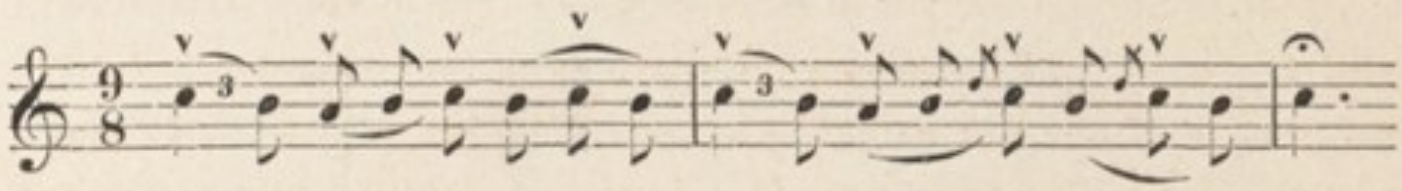
We were talking over the purchase of his mare with Beteyen, when a messenger from his tent arrived, begging him to return there at once, as a ghazú from the Roála had been seen, and an attack might be expected. At first we thought it might be one of those little dramatic incidents arranged beforehand when negotiations are going on, either to enforce an argument, or to interrupt it at a convenient moment; the more so as Beteyen did not at once take notice of the summons. It was not till several men had ridden up hurriedly to his tent, and, dismounting, stuck their spears in the ground, and shouted impatiently to him to come, that he rose with a sigh, as if unwillingly, to face the necessity of action. He is, in fact, a poor creature, and it is easy to see that his people have no great respect for him. They spoke to him now in a peremptory tone one would not expect to hear used toward a sheykh, and still he dawdled, while Meshár, at the first word of fighting, had jumped to his feet and was gone. We did not follow Beteyen, not wishing to be in the way while important matters were being discussed, but we could see a great coming and going about the sheykh's tent, and presently Mohammed Dukhi came to wish us good-bye, before going to look after his own people. The little speech he made was a model of Oriental politeness. He begged us not to forget him, and asked Wilfrid to be his vakil, *wassi*, or

representative, with me to remind me of him; but that, if I required any service of him at any time, then I should require no wassi, but had only to give my orders. Mohammed Dukhi, though too artificial in his manners to please me, is evidently a man of character. The way he treats and is treated by his people is quite a different thing from Beteyen's. The Welled Ali are kept by him in capital order, and no one dares sit down in the sheykh's tent unless he be of a certain rank. Mohammed Dukhi's peremptory "gám, gám" ("get up, get up") is heard the moment an unauthorized person takes that liberty. With Beteyen they all do just as they like, and he is too mild and timid to make a remark.

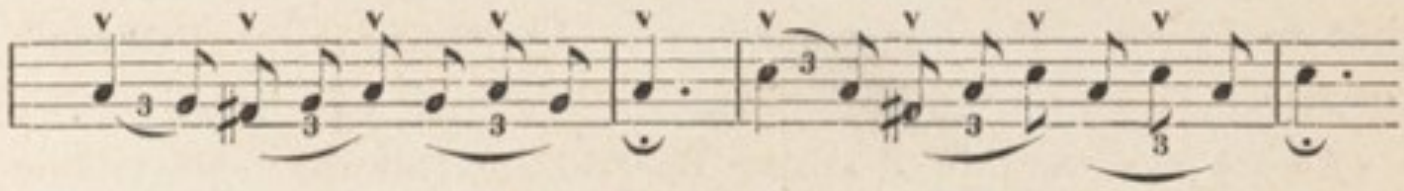
Beteyen's harem, to which I paid a visit, interested me on account of the history of the principal personage in it. The hatóun Feydeh was the wife of Súliman ibn Mershid, after whose death she married his cousin, Beteyen. She is a daughter of Mohammed el Faris, brother to Sfúk, and uncle to Ferhán Pasha, Abd ul Kérim, and Faris. She seemed delighted to talk to me about her own people, the Shammar, and spoke of Faris as "a sweet boy." I liked her; but the pleasure of my visit was spoiled by her second child, Hazáh, a boy of two, beginning to cry for a coffee-cup, and refusing to be comforted or silenced. He made such a noise that we could hardly hear ourselves speak. Besides the spoiled baby, Feydeh has a boy of five, named Aduán, a nice little fellow; both these are Súliman's children. There were so many tiresome people sitting round in the tent, that even without the noise I could not have got much talk out of Feydeh; and, indeed, I was extremely glad when I saw Hánna coming to say that the Beg wanted to speak to me at our own tent.

The ghazú story is not a sham this time. Scouts have come in announcing the approach of a large body of horsemen, a thousand they say, with advanced parties of men on dromedaries, armed with muskets. One party of fifty are reported to be quite close. They were seen in a wady, just over the brow of a hill not two miles off; yet, such seems to be the helplessness of the Gomússa for want of a chief, that no attempt is being made to cut off this small party,

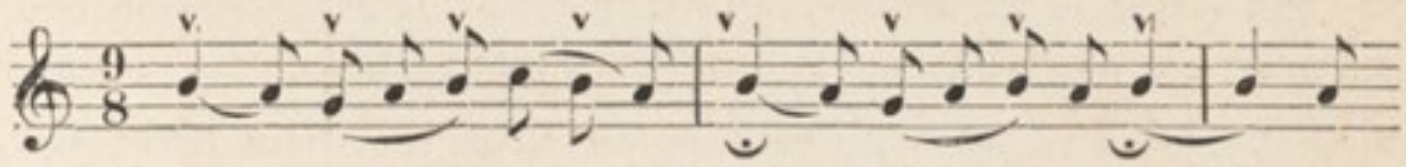
nor any preparation for meeting the enemy till Jedáan shall arrive. Messengers have been sent off post-haste for him, and other messengers to call in outlying sections of the tribe, and warn them to keep with the main body. Meshúr is the leading spirit in this, young as he is, and Beteyen is quite put aside. For our own part, we have contented ourselves with tethering our mares at the tent door, and having everything ready for a sudden march. We are rather in an exposed position, being at the extreme edge of the Ánazeh camp, with no tents between us and the threatened danger; but Ghánim, who is a Roála, assures us that the ghazú will not meddle with us, and we are anxious only for our mares. Wilfrid is hoping to see something of the battle, which seems imminent for to-morrow morning. Beteyen's camp is thronged with people coming and going, and from every tent we can hear the war song chanted in unison. The Gomússa chant is as follows:



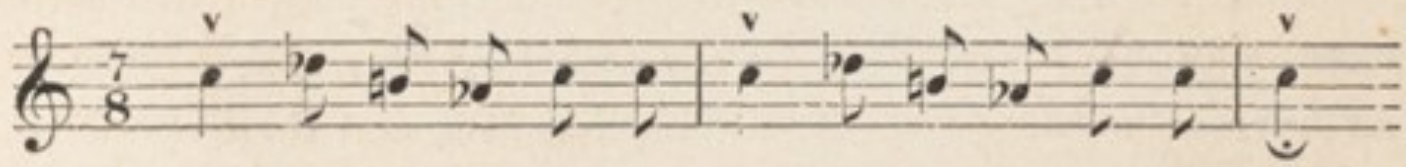
or sometimes a third lower:



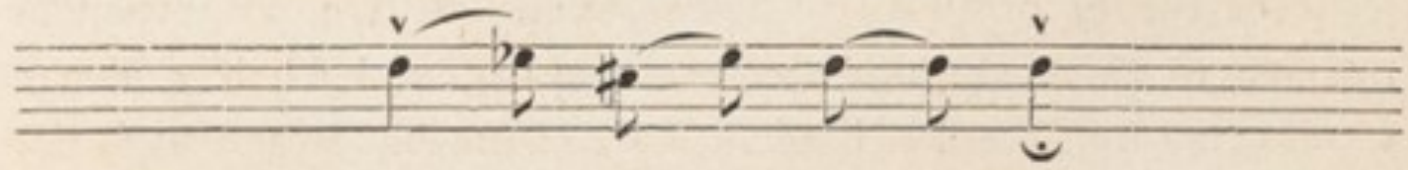
that of the Moáyaja, major instead of minor:



and that of the Welled Ali, less melodious:



or thus:



The rhythm of the two first chants, the Gomússa and Moáyaja, is extremely fine; that of the third, which I cannot write otherwise than by seven quavers in the bar, produces an odd effect, and sounds incomplete.

April 9th.—Something very like a panic has seized the Gomússa camp. The day had hardly begun to dawn when every tent was struck, and a precipitate retreat commenced across the hills. We sent Mohammed to the sheykh's tent to ask what was going to be done, and all the answer was that he must join Jedáan, who was somewhere "out there" to the north. The Gomússa were in such a hurry that we soon found ourselves left alone; but Wilfrid, who had ridden to some rising ground in the direction of the reported enemy, coming back without having seen anything, we determined to have our coffee comfortably, and made Hánna light his fire while the camels were loading. He was rather flurried, but did as he was told. To the north, guarding the line of retreat, we could still see parties of horsemen occupying the heights, and there was no danger of our not catching up our friends. We were very unwilling to go after them, for their march is quite out of our way, but the Sleb have disappeared with the rest, and we had no choice but to follow. Besides, we are still hankering after Beteyen's mare, which we should be sorry altogether to give up hopes of.

As we were sitting drinking our coffee, with the camels just loaded, a horseman appeared from the south, and for a moment we thought it one of the enemy, but it proved to be Meshúr, who had ventured out alone to reconnoitre. He had seen nothing, but advised us not to stay any longer so far from the main body, and then rode away to join the men on the hills. So we mounted and followed the wady along which Beteyen and his people had travelled. An Arab march is slow, even when at its quickest; and in an hour or so we came upon the stragglers, and then upon the main body. We rode up a height, and from it saw the wonderful sight of twenty or thirty thousand camels, with a proportionate number of horsemen and footmen, converging by half a dozen winding wadys toward a central plain, commanded by a high tell

on which the horsemen were gathering. It was difficult to understand why so vast a host should have been scared by the report of even a thousand horsemen. The plan of campaign, if plan there was, seems to have been to concentrate the forces in an open place, for when first threatened with attack the tribes were scattered in a number of wadys out of sight of each other, and were in danger of being beaten in detail. Still, we cannot yet understand why a body of horsemen equal or superior to that of the Roála was not sent out against them. Every tribe and every section, on the contrary, retreated with its own escort, and no attempt was made to-day at taking the offensive. This has disappointed us, for we expected better things of Jedáan. Our camels are such good walkers that from being last we soon joined the head of the column, at which we found Beteyen, mounted, not on his mare, as a sheykh should have been at such a moment, but snugly on his delúl, with his favorite child in a pannier beside him, and a black slave squatting behind. We thought he seemed rather ashamed of himself, but it is evident he is not a man of war. A little farther on we overtook Mohammed Dukhi in a similar position, keeping guard over his sheep; for the Welled Ali have their sheep with them, and these are always sent to the front on a march. Mohammed Dukhi has the excuse of his lost arm, and at least he shows energy in council. The thing, however, struck us as unworthy of a man of his reputation.

About a mile beyond the tell, and in sight of the Tudmor hills, Beteyen stopped, and the Gomússa tents soon made a brave show on the level plain they have chosen, with the Welled Ali in front of them, and other tribes arriving from the east and south-east. It was terribly hot, and we had a disagreeable hour's waiting in the sun before the tents were pitched; and then we discovered that there was no water, nor had we brought any with us, in the hurry of the retreat. This is most annoying, as it hampers our movements in every way, and will oblige us, probably, to make a forced march to-morrow. If it was not for Beteyen's mare, which we still hope to get, we would not stay here now, but go back to

the pools we have left. We have not come more than twelve miles to-day.

While waiting in this way, young Meshúr came in from the rear with information that the Roála had retreated, at least from our part of the line, and everybody was delighted at the news. Still, no attempt was made at following them, even with a small party of horsemen, who might have done so without any danger, the Gomússa being so much better mounted than the Roála. All this is from want of a trusted leader. As Meshúr said: "We are like sheep here without a shepherd." The great tent, however, was at last pitched, and our own close by, and toward it horsemen came riding in from all points of the compass. It was a grand opportunity for looking over the Gomússa mares, and one we did not neglect. It is not worth while mentioning all we saw to-day, but among others was brought the dam of our coveted Abeyeh, a fine old brood mare, though less handsome than her daughter. Many of the best-shaped animals were fearfully disfigured with firing, while others had hopeless backs, and others again feet ruined by long standing in the iron fetters used by the Arabs to prevent stealing. With all the real merit, however, of these mares, there were hardly a dozen which could be called first-class, and not one equal to the Abeyeh, or more beautiful than our own Saadeh.

At last a body of thirty horsemen arrived, headed by Jedáan on his Kehîlan Akhrás. His face wore a curious expression, partly of satisfaction, partly of disgust, and we read it to mean the contempt he felt for his allies, and the pleasure at finding himself so necessary to them. Satisfaction at the result of the day's manœuvres he can scarcely have, for it now turns out that, although the Roála have retreated, it has not been empty-handed. The demonstration made against the Gomússa was, in all probability, a feint, for the main body of the enemy fell upon an outlying section of the Welled Ali, who had disregarded Mohammed Dukhi's orders to close in. From these they have taken a thousand camels, losing, however, some mares, and a man killed. Mohammed Dukhi is very angry; but why was he not at the head of his

men? A council of war has been going on all the afternoon in Beteyen's tent, but nothing is likely to come of it. We are getting rather ashamed of our friends.

The only *man* among the Gomússa is young Meshúr, and we look upon him as the future leader of the tribe. As we were sitting with him and Beteyen in our tent this evening, Wilfrid began admiring some silver-hilted pistols he was wearing at his girdle, and which he told us had belonged to Súliman ibn Mershid, his uncle; and without more ado he unbuckled them and handed them to Wilfrid, insisting that he should keep them. Wilfrid was pleased at the manner in which he did this, but answered that he could not accept them, unless Meshúr would in turn accept his revolver, and, moreover, become his brother. Both proposals were very joyfully accepted, and the oath was exchanged in presence of Beteyen, who looked on the while rather crestfallen at the honor done to his nephew. Meshúr has since this been exceedingly nice and affectionate to us, and has shown us all sorts of attentions, besides coming to dine with us in our tent this evening. I fear, however, that the incident will not have improved our prospects with Beteyen of getting his mare. But no matter. Before giving Meshúr the revolver, Wilfrid made him promise that he would never use it against Faris. This Meshúr readily did, for, he said, Faris and he were already friends, though they had never met.

Ghánim has been round all the camps with the mares to beg for water, and got a little here and a little there; but the Ánazeh seemed to give themselves very little trouble about carrying water with them. The only person who had any quantity to spare was Ibn Kardúsh, Sheykh of the Mesékha. Others had given milk or lebben, which the mares drank, but they like water better. The Sleb have disappeared from our camp, so our plan of going with them has fallen through. It is very tiresome. We shall now have to make a long march nearly due north, to a well called Boharra, not ten miles south of Tudmor, and all out of our way: but water we must have to-morrow.

April 10th.—We have had a long, thirsty march to-day, though not altogether a dull one.

I am sorry to say that we did not part friends with Beteyen. He was jealous, I suppose, of the favor Meshúr has found in our eyes, and of the presents we have given him, and at parting this morning he made a sort of begging speech to Mr. S——, who told him he ought to be ashamed of himself for making it. We had already promised him the cloak, due to his position as sheykh, as soon as we should be able to buy him one, but he was not satisfied. I am sorry all the same that Mr. S—— should have spoken to him as he did, for he told him his request was only worthy of a felláh. Meshúr, who was present, very properly took his uncle's part, but Beteyen would not be appeased. Of course all negotiations for the mare are now at an end; but I care more for the disagreeable thought that we have made an enemy—our only one—in the desert.

We marched a little earlier than the rest of our neighbors, and soon got clear of the Gomússa, and travelled on during the day with an advanced party of Welled Ali, who were hurrying on to the wells with their sheep, now two days without being watered. These Welled Ali shepherds are a rougher set than the Sebáa, and were not over-polite. I think, with a little encouragement in the way of timidity on our part, they might even have become aggressive; but we were too well mounted and too well armed to be afraid of them. The plain to-day was covered with hares, which jumped up before us as the great line of camels, sheep, and horsemen swept it like an army of beaters. These were pursued by greyhounds, and by Wilfrid on horseback, who coursed and shot two alone on Hagar. She is quite fresh again, in spite of the heat and the scarcity of water, and enjoyed the galloping amazingly. We were travelling all day toward the hills, at the foot of which the well was said to be, and our impatience and the fast pace of our camels carried us in front of the whole Ánazeh army. Their march was, indeed, like that of a flight of locusts, as it covered perhaps ten miles in breadth, eating up every green thing before it.

Green things just here were scarce enough, though every now and then we crossed a wady with some good grass. We had been told that we should see a ruined tower, and that the wells would be found near it, so we pushed on till we were quite alone, and our day's march must have been close on forty miles.

It was half-past three when we at last reached the delightful shade of the ruin, the first building we have seen since leaving Arak. It seems to have been a convent once, in the days when Palmyra was a city, for there is a cross cut on the stone lintel of the gate-way, and we have discovered cells and the foundations of a church. It must even then have been a solitary place, though perhaps the lower Damascus road may have passed near it. There are several wells, with a good supply of water, and one can make out the traces of ancient fields or gardens in the wady, watered from these. Now all is desolate enough. A pair of rock-pigeons and some kestrels are the only inhabitants. The tower is square and of good cut stone, in the same style as the old buildings of Palmyra, which is not more than twelve or fifteen miles off. Mohammed, of course, knows the place, and calls the tower Kasr Hazim; the wells, Sakr. These are deep; and it was tantalizing to be unable to get at the water before the camels arrived, for we had left them some way behind, in our anxiety to get a drink.

While waiting under the ruined tower, and half asleep, we suddenly heard the Arab war chant, and, looking up, saw a horseman cantering over the hill behind us, lance in hand. For a moment we were mystified into thinking he might be an enemy, but he was alone, and, as he drew near, I thought I knew his voice. Presently we recognized Meshúr on his gray mare, come to wish his brother a last good-bye. We were very much pleased to see him, for it showed a good feeling on his part to have left his people to pay us a visit, as the tribes have halted several miles short of the wells. We asked about his mare, and he told us she was a Hádbeh, and very fast, which we can well believe, for she is extremely handsome, and has a fine way of moving.

She is twelve years old, though she does not look it; and, as he

says, they grew up together and have never been parted, and it was mounted on her back that he killed Jedáan ibn Shaalán last year. He entreated Wilfrid to take her as a present—she was all he had worth giving; but this, of course, could not be.

Meanwhile the camels arrived, and, while the tents were pitching, a frightful wrangling arose among the servants. The chief disputants were Ghánim and Ferhán, who, before we could interfere, had come to blows. Meshúr rushed in and separated them, pushing Ghánim back, who had already drawn his knife and was looking "ugly." On inquiring into the cause, it appeared that Ferhán was tired of having the whole work of the camel-driving thrown on his shoulders, and had been exasperated at last by Ghánim's riding the chestnut mare, when we were out of sight, after a gazelle, in spite of the sore back she has lately had. The Christian servants, of course, took part against Ghánim; but of that we took no notice. Wilfrid, however, made Ferhán affirm on oath all that he had said, and then Ghánim admitted that it was true, and Wilfrid told him to leave the camp. He went away in dudgeon, and sat for an hour or so on the top of the tower, but then came down and begged me to intercede for him. Meshúr, too, spoke in his favor, and, as we really like the boy, Wilfrid consented to forgive him if Ferhán would declare himself satisfied, and Ghánim would promise there should be no more trouble. Ferhán, who is the kindest-hearted creature in the world, readily agreed to this, and Ghánim gave the promise in the usual form, "*ala rási*" ("on my head be it"); so the matter has ended. I am glad of it, as it is the only quarrel we have had on the journey.

We have been entertaining Meshúr with all the hospitality we can command, and he has dined with us, but would not stay the night. There would be danger for him, he said, to stay away so far from his people, on account of the blood-feud he has with the Ibn Shaalán. I have given him a silver-handled knife as a keepsake, telling him that it belonged to my grandfather and great-grandfather, which has made him value it the more, and now he has mounted his mare and cantered back the way he came. He

is a brave, warm-hearted boy, and, unless he is overtaken by fate in his wars and blood-feuds, will be a great man some day.

The water here, when first drawn, tastes of rotten eggs and sulphur, but improves on standing in the air. It seems to be quite wholesome.

We have now bade good-bye to the Sebáa, and having our heads set, as the Arabs say, toward home, Wilfrid has agreed that the moment is come for reading our letters; so I leave off in fear and trembling, to do so, for we have had no news from home since the 20th of November, nearly five months ago.

CHAPTER XXI.

How the earth burns! each pebble underfoot
Is as a living thing with power to wound.
The white sand quivers; and the footfall mute
Of the slow camels strikes but gives no sound,
As if they trod the air, not solid ground.
'Tis noon; and the beasts' shadows even are fled
Back to their feet; and there is fire around,
And fire beneath, and overhead the sun.

March under a burning Sun.—The Welled Ali and their Sheep.—We come to the Roála Camp.—One hundred and fifty thousand Camels.—Sotámm ibn Shaalán receives us.—Diplomatic Checks.—Sotámm's Wife.—The Uttfa.—Mohammed's choice.—Good-bye to the Desert.

April 11th.—Thank God! our news is all good news, and we can go on light-hearted now to the end of our journey, enjoying the prospect thoroughly of the delights of home.

We left the Bir Sakr this morning, just as the flocks of the Welled Ali were beginning to arrive. Poor creatures! they have had no water these three days, and have been driven, in their thick winter fleeces, at least fifty miles under a burning sun. We did not stop to talk long with the shepherds, but made away southwest in the direction of Damascus. Every one assures us that we shall meet the Roála on the road, or at least a party of Sleb, who will tell us where the Roála are. Then Mohammed has a vague knowledge of the country for some miles farther yet, and a black slave from Beteyen's tent is with us, recommended by Meshúr to our protection. He, too, knows something of the road. Our way lay up a wady between two well-marked ridges, and at nine we passed a ruined khan on the old Palmyra road, called, according to Mohammed, Halbe. The country is covered with scarlet pop-

OUR OWN TENT, WITH A VIEW OF MOUNT HERMON.

pies, camomiles white and yellow, irises, and a sort of pink aster, all in the greatest profusion, as if in a flower-garden.

We have stopped for the night in a dry water-course thick with grass, in which quails are calling, and I can hear a cuckoo not far off, sitting, probably, in a solitary betún-tree, the first of the sort we have seen in the desert. The betún is a kind of ash, and common enough along the dry river-beds of the Sahara. Here they call it *button*. The evening is oppressively hot. Ghánim has begun singing to his rebáb something about the "*harb Ibn Shaalán*," the Roála war. Our march to-day was eighteen miles.

Mohammed has climbed to the top of the ridge to our left, and has come back with the news that he has seen camp fires in the plain beyond.*

April 12th.—Another terribly hot morning, but about noon a strong wind sprang up from the north-west, tempering the power of the sun, and it was fortunate, for we had to wait two hours without shade at a well. We had been overtaken in the course of the morning by a couple of men mounted on a dromedary, who had been sent after us by Meshúr to show us the way. They were Roála who had gone to the Sebáa in the suite of their sheykh's wife, when she had chosen to return to her father Jedáan; and it shows how liberal the Bedouins are, in their toleration of individuals while at war, that these men had been living for some weeks in Jedáan's tent, at the very moment that their master, Ibn Shaalán, was advancing against him. Now they were being sent back without so much, I believe, as a pledge not to reveal secrets. The truth is, in Bedouin strategy as in Bedouin politics, there is no possibility of secrecy. Every member of the tribe has a right to know everything that happens, and, from the very publicity of what goes on, there is no fear of spies. It is useless to try and conceal the truth, so no attempt to do so is made. The black slave was very ill to-day, and lay in a half-torpid state on his camel, with his head hanging down over its shoulder, and exposed to the full glare of

* This must have been Ibn Shaalán returning from his ghazú.

the sun. But this is all the comfort Arabs expect to get when they are ill. They somehow manage to sleep in this position without falling off.

At the well we were overtaken also by a small party of Welled Ali, driving a hundred or so of sheep and lambs before them for the Easter sales at Damascus. I cannot think many of them will arrive there alive, for the weather is prodigiously hot, and they are making forced marches. A good many lambs are already dead, and they have given us one, which, as we are short of provisions, we are glad enough to take. When the shepherds see that a lamb can go no farther, they cut its throat, and then the meat is lawful eating, though it would not be so if the animal had died of its own accord.

We should hardly have found the well if it had not been for the Roála, as it lay in a very unlikely place, and, not having been used this year, had no tracks leading to it. It is very deep—sixty feet, as we measured by the rope used—but the water is sweet and good. Its name is Buséyri. All the beasts, camels as well as mares, drank copiously—my mare, the most abstemious, not being content with less than four bucketsful. The Welled Ali shepherds have insisted on keeping company with us, in the hope of getting through the Roála country under our protection; but their attempt to go through at all is to me inexplicable. They have with them, besides the sheep, fifteen camels and a nice-looking mare and foal, all lawful prize of war.

April 13th.—No abatement of the heat. The sheep go with their tongues hanging out, poor things, and their owners have shorn some of them, in the hopes of saving them. Soon after we started, we passed between two high hills—Keukle to the right, and Rummákh to the left. The Roála told us this story of them: There was a great warrior, who, from his skill with the spear, *rúmmh*, was called Rummákh. He lived on this hill, and kept a wife on the opposite hill; and another on a third, still farther on. The name of the first was Kokhle, because she blackened her eyes with kohl; but the name of the second was Áda. Áda was the

favorite wife, and I quite expected the story to have gone on to say that one day, vexed with their perpetual quarrelling, Rummákh had run them both through the body with his spear, when the Roála stupidly stopped, and said they had forgotten the rest of it.

We have made a brisk march all day, doing quite three and a half miles in the hour, and beguiled by the assurances of the Roála that their friends were close at hand. About two o'clock Wilfrid found a small hole in the limestone rock, holding a few bucketsful of rain-water, which we gave to our mares, and then we came suddenly on some people filling their goat-skins from a larger hole of the same sort a mile farther on. We have been eight hours on the march, and must have got over thirty miles of ground; and now, although the Roála are really close by, we have stopped just short of them in a beautiful wady full of grass, sending on Ghánim and the two men on the delúl to announce our arrival at Ibn Shaalán's tent. Mr. S—— recommends this on the score of our dignity, and I am glad of it for the mares' and camels' sake, who are now sure of a good evening's meal. The site of a Bedouin camp, if by any chance they have happened to occupy the same ground more than two nights, is generally eaten as bare as a board, and unexpected guests suffer in consequence. We have killed a centipede in the tent quite six inches long. Ghánim calls it "*Om Arba o arbaïn*" (the "mother of forty-four"), alluding to its legs. A dozen or so of the Roála have come to our camp from their own, which they tell us is close by, just over the brow of a low hill. They are in high delight at the success of their ghazú; for Ibn Shaalán came back yesterday, and to-day they have been dividing the spoils.

While we were entertaining them with coffee, who should come up but the Welled Ali shepherds. The chief man of our new guests, one Abu Ghíddeli,* asked who they were, and whether the sheep were ours. "They have followed us," we said, "but they are not ours; we do not interfere." We expected an instant raid

* Abu Ghíddeli is the owner of the best strain of Maneghi blood known—better even than Ibn Sbeyel's.

to follow, for indeed the Roála had every right to the prize; but Abu Ghíddeli only laughed. "*Ma ikhálif*," he said, "*nakhna shebáat*" ("Never mind, we have all had enough"). So here they are still unmolested.

Ghánim has returned. The first words Sotámm said to him, when he heard who we were and whence we had come, were, "Have they brought my wife back to me?" He sent word, however, to say we were welcome, and to excuse himself from coming to meet us, on the score of fatigue. His tent is fully eight miles away.

Sunday, April 14th.—To-day we have seen the most wonderful spectacle the desert has to show—the Roála camp. We came upon it quite suddenly, as, crossing a low ridge of rising ground, we looked down over the plain of Saíghal, and saw it covered, as far as the eye could reach, with a countless multitude of tents and men, and mares and camels. In the extreme distance, at least ten miles away, lay the lake of Saíghal, glittering white in the sun; and the whole space between it and where we stood seemed occupied, while east and west there was at least an equal depth of camp. We have estimated the whole number of tents at twenty thousand, and of camels at a hundred and fifty thousand; and at the sight I felt an emotion of almost awe, as when one first sees the sea. Nothing that we have seen hitherto in the way of multitude approaches to this. The Sebáa, with their allies, may be as numerous, but they have not a fourth part of the Roála camels, nor have we on any occasion seen them all collected thus in one place. It gave us, too, an immense idea of the real size of the tribe thus congregated, to find that, travelling at our usual pace, it was more than two hours before we arrived at Sotámm's tent, which stood, they told us, in the centre of the camp, and that during all our route we were never a hundred yards away from a tent. Sheep there were none, however, except high up on the slopes of the surrounding hills; and we were struck by the comparatively small number of the mares. Camels seemed everything, and of these herd after herd we passed through, of a hundred, and five hundred, and a thousand strong. The tents themselves are small-

er than those of the Sebáa, and only the sheykh's is an imposing one. It is set on nine poles, and is perhaps a hundred feet from end to end. Of creature comfort, however, it is as destitute as the rest of them. A bit of carpet and a few camel-saddles are all its furniture, with two tall coffee-pots and a coffee-ladle, two yards long, set upon wheels. Perhaps a hundred people were seated in the tent. A little, dark-faced man of about thirty, much pitted with small-pox, and wearing a pink cotton kefíye, received us as we dismounted, and with some difficulty we recognized in him Sotámm ibn Shaalán, the Sheykh of the Roála.

The family of Ibn Shaalán, though not accounted of the oldest nobility, has nevertheless the greatest hereditary position of any in the desert. Sotámm can boast that by right of birth he rules over a population of at least twenty thousand souls, and can bring five thousand men into the field. How the family first acquired its position I have not been able to find out, but they have held it now for so respectable a number of generations that the sheykhdom is hereditary with them, the Ibn Jendals and Tayárs notwithstanding.* Among the Sebáa and the other Ánazeh there is nothing of the sort, for each section there of the tribes has its own independent sheykh, and Jedáan's position with them is merely a personal one. Only the Jerba family in Mesopotamia can at all compare with the Ibn Shaaláns in importance, while in wealth and power the Roála stand far above the Shammar. With all this, Sotámm himself does not appear to have much influence with his people. It is easy to see that he is weak and irresolute, a mere puppet in their hands. He is not even their akíd, or military leader, which he could not fail to be if he had any of the qualities necessary for the position. The Akíd of the Roála is a little old man named Hámid, Sheykh of the Majil, a section of the tribe. It was he that led the ghazú the other day, not Sotámm, though Sotámm was of the party.

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* Compare the account of the Drayhy ibn Chaláan, in the Récit de Fatalla Sayeghir, as given by Lamartine.

Our reception here has been polite and amiable, but not particularly cordial. Sotámm complains of being tired and knocked-up with his campaign, and has left us alone most of the day. In the afternoon, however, he came, with Sheykh Hámid, the akíd, to pay us a visit, and we took the opportunity to open negotiations with him on the subject which most interests us—our diplomatic mission from Jedáan. Before leaving the Sebáa, Abd er Ráhman, the Aleppine Doctor of Divinity, who is my fellow-plenipotentiary in this matter, got special instructions from Jedáan as to terms, and we are authorized now to propose an arrangement on the following basis:

1. Peace shall be made.

2. All claims for losses by either side shall be considered settled.

3. Ibn Shaalán shall withdraw his claim to the pastures of Hóms and Háma.

4. The Sebáa will receive the Roála as *guests* in the Upper Desert, where there is room for all.

These very fair terms we have proposed this afternoon to Sotámm and the akíd, supporting them with all the arguments we could command. I told Sotámm that a man in a great position, such as his, should give an example of wisdom to his people, and not be led away by the mere lust of glory, which makes fools of the common sort of men; that he must know that an aimless war like this, between two Ánazeh tribes, was ruinous to both of them; that the camels he seized to-day would be taken from him to-morrow, for the fortune of war was always turning; that the only people who really profited by such fighting were the Turks, the enemies of them all, and that he should know better than to play into the hands of pashas and mutesherifs. Sotámm assented to all this, admitted that the Turkish Government were primarily to blame in the quarrel, but maintained that the war must now go on. His people wished it, and he could not control them. The akíd was much more favorably disposed for peace. He is an old man and has seen many wars, and knows how little good and how little

glory comes of them; but his business was not to decide such questions for the tribe, only to lead them when they chose to fight. As to the pashas, it was impossible to do anything with them without presents, and the tribe wanted commercial advantages with the towns, which could only be procured by paying handsomely.

I. "And yet, if the Ánazeh were united, it would not be the sheykhs who would bring gifts to the pashas. Then, Sotámm, instead of sending mares to Háma, would himself receive pensions and robes of honor. It was by the quarrels among themselves that the Ánazeh lost their hold over the towns which used to pay them tribute, and now the Turks have it all their own way. They have not even to fight, for the Roála do that business for them."

Sotámm. "My people do not understand these things. They find it more profitable to be friends with the government, and do what the Pasha tells them."

I. "And that is, to make war with their brethren. You will be sorry for it some day, when the Turks drive you all back to Nejd, the way you came."

Sotámm. "I can only do what my people wish. They want the plains of Háma for their camels, which have increased, thank God, and multiplied these last four years, so that the Hamád cannot any longer contain them."

I. "The Sebáa consent to receive you as guests in the Upper Desert. There is room there for all of you."

Sotámm. "Yes; but the Turks do not wish us to make peace."

This was the burden of his tale, and it is evident that he is too weak to lead or govern his people. The akíd, however, has consented to argue the case with the principal sheykhs of the tribe, and they are now sitting in a circle on the ground about a hundred yards off, in council on the proposals.

Besides Sotámm and the akíd, we have had a considerable circle of visitors, off and on, at our tent. Their principal talk was of the ghazú, which they consider a very successful one. They were only five days away altogether, and had eighty miles to march each way, the return journey being, of course, impeded by the capt-

ured camels they had to drive. It was certainly their camp fires Mohammed saw from the hill above Buséyri. We were surprised to hear that the Roála, powerful as they are, can only muster a thousand horsemen on an expedition of this sort. But they explained the matter by telling us that now they managed their fighting in another way, which they found more effective. Instead of mares, most of them now ride delúls and take fire-arms with them, sitting two on each camel, and back to back. This mounted infantry goes by the name of *seyman*, and of them four or five thousand can be mustered. Only a few, however, accompanied this late ghazú, and these only in the capacity of scouts. The ten men with their delúls, crouched in the wady, whom Wilfrid came across the day we arrived at Jedáan's camp, were undoubtedly a party of them, sent on before to get news, and spy out the weak points of the Sebáa line. All the Jeláas are here together now in the plain, a thing that does not happen once in twenty years—all with the exception of five hundred tents under Tellál, a cousin of Sotámm's, who has quarrelled with the sheykh, and stays behind, near Jebel Shammar, this year. The quarrel is, I believe, a domestic one, in which their wives are principally concerned. It is very difficult to get at the true number of the Roála tents, some saying five thousand, and others twenty thousand. The Bedouins seem to have no idea of counting, and generally exaggerate; yet Wilfrid is of opinion that twenty thousand is nearer the mark. A hundred and fifty thousand seems to be a fair guess at the number of their camels. The thousand camels captured this week have been divided among those who took part in the ghazú, and may be distinguished by the fetters which they have on their forelegs to prevent their straying homeward. There are also in camp a great many black camels from the Nejd. These are smaller, scraggier, and give less milk than the common sort. They are held in less estimation.

Among others, Sotámm's little boy came, brought by his nurse, a very pretty child of four years old, named Mansúr (victorious), with plump, rosy cheeks and a friendly disposition, not at all shy,

as the children here generally are. He walked across the tent all alone to give me a kiss. Hámid, the akíd, has come back with Abd er Ráhman to give us news of the council of war, for I fear it can hardly be hoped to be one of peace, though nothing has yet been settled. It appears that Sotámm has received a letter from Jevdet Pasha, the new Valy of Damascus, which he has got Abd er Rahman to read for him. It is a very curt epistle, forbidding the Roála to go any farther north this year than where they are. But it concludes with these words: "If you have anything to say to me on this score, I will see you at Damascus and listen patiently." This, Sotámm, and every one else, take to be on the Pasha's part, "*sa manière de tirer une carotte.*" The new valy, it is said, is "hungry," and must have his share. So Sotámm is making ready to go off to Damascus to-morrow with presents in his hand, and is more than ever determined to follow up his game with the Turks. I fear it is useless arguing further, even on the ground of personal danger to an Ibn Shaalán in Damascus, for Sotámm knows, or should know, that he runs no sort of risk there. It is only sheykhs of individual eminence who are in any danger. Later, Sotámm himself joined us, and we tried our last counsels. He listened very politely, and appealed almost pathetically to us to excuse him, if he could not do all we wished. He had no quarrel with Jedáan, though his wife had left him, and the Sebáa have suffered more than his own people in the war; but he must wait and see which way the Roála wished to go. At present they wished him to make this journey to Damascus. They could not stay where they were, for the grass was all eaten up, and they must cross the hills to-morrow toward Jerúd, while he would go with us straight to the town. He was really pathetic in his lamentation about the manner in which he is obliged to sacrifice his own interests to the wishes of his people. *He* must become poor, that they may grow rich; *he* must find mares and camels, to satisfy the hunger of the Osmanlis, that the Roála may trade freely with the towns-people and felláhin, and soon he will be ruined. I have not much respect for Sotámm, but I cannot help liking and pitying him. He is only weak.

We have had a most sumptuous dinner this evening, and there is singing and dancing going on in our neighborhood, in honor of some feast of circumcision.

April 15*th.*—While the tents were being pulled down and the camels loaded, I had half an hour's conversation with Ghiówseh, Sotámm's first wife, the one with whom Jedáan's daughter has quarrelled. Fortunately, everybody but we two was busy, so we could talk without being interrupted by the busybodies which generally surround one in the women's tent. Ghiówseh is pretty, slight and small-featured, and though very nice to me, looked as if she might have a temper of her own. She has more wits than most Arab women have, and can carry on a conversation farther than is usual with them—for they generally come to a dead stop when they have asked how far away my home is, and how many children I have had. Ghiówseh, on the contrary, showed an interest in hearing what I had to say about our travels, and the people we had made acquaintance with in the desert. She was especially curious about the Shammar women, asking whether they were as pretty as people said, and whether they were well dressed and neat and clean. Sotámm is her first cousin, and she rules him with a rod of iron, not suffering any other woman to stay long in his tent. She has got rid of two that I know of, and seems determined to hold her ground, in which she will probably succeed, as she is Mansúr's mother. The child was with her, and made himself very agreeable, begging his mother not to let me go away, but to keep me with her. I gave him a little whistle, and plaited a bit of string for him to hang it by round his neck, and he was much delighted when I showed him how to blow it. He was not like most Arab children, who are always clawing at everything they can reach, and asking for sugar, but was quite well-behaved and well-mannered. Of course, however, he was very dirty, all the children being kept so by their mothers for fear of the evil eye. The tent at last came down almost over our heads, and we had to get up; so I said good-bye, and Ghiówseh promised the child should not forget me.

The last thing loaded by Ibn Shaalán's people was the *uttfa*, a gigantic camel-howdah, used by the Roála whenever they expect a pitched battle, and then only. It is a huge cage of bamboo covered with ostrich feathers, and probably as old as the date of their first coming from Nejd, for ostriches are not found, I believe, north of Jebel Shammar. A delúl carries the *uttfa*, in which a girl is placed, whose business it is to sing during the fight, and encourage the combatants by her words.* She needs to be stout-hearted as well as stout-lunged, for the battle generally groups itself round her, in attack and defence. The Roála have a superstitious feeling about her defence, and the enemy a corresponding desire to capture her, for it is a belief that with the loss of the *uttfa* the Roála tribe would perish. Formerly, each large Bedouin tribe had one of these; but now, perhaps from a scarcity of ostrich feathers and the difficulty of renewing them, the *uttfa* and the custom attached to it have disappeared, except among the Roála and, I believe, the Ibn Haddal.† To-day it was carried empty on the back of a fine she-camel.

We have sent our mares and donkeys for water to the hills which rise north of the plain, here called "Jebel Ruak," where there is a spring of excellent water, Bir Shédeh, and they have not yet returned, though all the Roála tents are down and the march begun. Sotámm, out of politeness, kept his own tent standing to the last, but now he cannot wait any longer, and has come to wish us good-bye. We are to meet him again to-night or to-morrow, but he has to see his tribe across the hills first, and will then join us on the road, and go with us to Damascus. I watched him riding away, with a few followers, and four mares, and a delúl with her foal, which he is taking as gifts to the Pasha. The mares were nothing very remarkable. Now they are all gone.

It is a very curious feeling to perceive the plain gradually emp-

* This Uttfa figures in the fantastic description of the forty days' battle given by Fatalla Sayeghir, and justly ridiculed by Mr. Palgrave.

† Mr. Palgrave mentions its existence among the Ajman, a tribe east of Jebel Shammar.

tied of its inhabitants (we can still watch them streaming by half a dozen different passes up the hills), and to find all this tumultuous camp suddenly fallen into silence, and ourselves alone in the desert. Except the trampled pasture, there is not a trace of the people who are gone, for the Arabs leave nothing behind them, not even the scraps of paper one finds in Europe after a picnic. Only two camels, probably of those lately captured and too lame to go farther, remain for the next person who likes to appropriate. One of them Ghánim is very anxious to drive off and sell at Damascus, but this Wilfrid will not allow.

Evening.—We did not get away till nearly ten, and have only travelled five hours, half of them, at least, through what was the Roála camp last night, so that the whole space occupied by the tribe cannot have been less than twelve miles across. It was not till we got clear of this that the camels found any grass to eat, and we then let them feed as they went, for they have had little the last twenty-four hours. As we followed along the foot of the Ruak hills, a white cloud gradually appeared over the horizon in front of us, and, as it took shape, became transformed into a mountain. It was the snow-covered head of Mount Hermon, our first sight of the Promised Land. Then we knew that Damascus must be straight before us, and not far off.

We have stopped under shelter of a ruined khan, the first sign of approaching civilization; and there, in a bed of thick, rich grass, we are spending a happy afternoon, having seen our last of the Bedouins. This will be our last night in the desert, and we must make the most of it. There are some curious volcanic mounds close by, differing from any we have hitherto seen—outlying specimens, perhaps, of the tells of the Leja. On one of them Wilfrid has shot a hare, and we are to have a feast to-night to celebrate Mohammed's promotion to the rank of brotherhood, with which it has been determined to reward him for his tried fidelity and loyal service. We have long debated whether he was worthy of the honor; for the brotherhood is not a thing to be lightly undertaken, or undertaken at all except with men of a certain distinc-

tion, and Mohammed's position as a Tudmori seemed at first to put him altogether out of the category of eligible persons. It is, however, a time-honored practice, even with the greatest desert sheykhs, to take the oath with the sheykhs of towns; and Mohammed's birth as eldest son and heir-apparent to the sheykhdom of Tudmor has to be considered, while his descent from the Beni Láam and the prophet Taleb raise him altogether above the common herd of village felláhin. As a final test, and to prove whether he was wholly worthy, Mr. S—— had been deputed to-day to tempt him with money—a crucial test, indeed, with Bedouin and citizen alike in Arabia—and he had come out of it unscathed. The choice was given him whether, in reward of his services, he should be sent home to Tudmor with a handsome sum in mejidies, or as the friend and brother of the Beg. Mohammed did not hesitate, but emphatically exclaimed, "If the Beg were to fill my kefíye with white pieces, yet I would hold it as nothing to the honor of being his brother." So, then, it has been settled, and the oath taken in our presence, and to-night Mohammed, for the first time, will sit down and eat with us in our tent. In taking the oath, he added to the usual phrases one new to us—"*lel akhir min yómi*" ("to the last of my days"). He seems duly impressed with the solemnity of the occasion.

Sotámm has not made his appearance, and we do not expect now to meet him till we get to Damascus.

April 16th.—The weather has broken up, but no matter. We are just at the end of our journey. In the night I saw a fine lunar rainbow, the moon shining against a heavy shower. The whole bow was visible, but the colors were indistinct.

Soon after starting, we passed a small outlying Roála camp, but without alighting. Two of the horsemen belonging to it joined our party and rode a mile or two with us, but we could get no information from them, as the younger was shy, and the elder had an impediment in his speech which made him impossible to understand. Then we parted company, they passing over hills to the right to join the main body of Roála at Jerúd, we keeping straight

toward Mount Hermon, or Jebel esh Sheykh, as it is called. At ten o'clock we reached the first cultivated fields and some fine Greek ruins; and, a little farther on, a plentiful spring of living water, such as we had not seen for weeks. It seemed unnatural, if not impossible, to find so much water starting out of the ground. Immediately afterward the village of Duméyr was reached, the farthest outpost of civilization toward the desert. It is a flourishing place, surrounded with gardens and fields of corn. Countrymen, with pale faces and wearing turbans, appeared, riding donkeys instead of camels, and answering our salutations, in what sounded to our ears an affected lisp, with the Syrian "*marahúbba.*" We were once more within the pale of Ottoman law, that half-way house between desert freedom and the chains of Europe. Lastly, we met a man in Frankish clothes, with rings on his fingers and speaking French, who told us he was dragoman to a foreign consulate. We hardly knew with what face to look at him, so bare and bald and skimpily clothed he seemed.

The next morning we rode into Damascus.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Their shape was very singular and deformed, which a little discomposed me, so that I lay down behind a thicket to observe them better."—*A Voyage to the Houyhnhnms.*—SWIFT.

Last Words.—The Camel defended.—Sotámm in Town.—Farewells.—A Party of Yahoos.

A FEW words now will complete my story. We were a week at Damascus, waiting for money to carry us home, for we had spent nearly all we had, and depended on the sale of our camels to make up the sum required. Ferhán and Mohammed between them arranged this admirably, and we found ourselves, in a few days, with a clear profit of fifteen shillings on each beast that we had purchased at Bagdad. Tamarisk, too, was disposed of with but trifling loss, and the other three mares were left with Mr. S—— for embarkation later on for England. The white donkey realized precisely the sum she had cost us, £16, at starting, and well worth the money she was to her new purchaser. It was not till quite at the end of the journey that she had shown signs of fatigue, and then only under the aggravation of eighteen stone on her back. During the whole march she had not tripped once or stumbled.

We shed a tear or two at parting with our camels, such tears as people shed who dismiss good servants on reducing their establishment. These honest animals had done everything required of them without complaining; I had almost said, without a word. It makes me angry, remembering the docile, affectionate beasts they were, to read such rubbish as travellers write about the evil disposition of their race. A certain writer, for instance, who ought to know better, devotes a page or two of his book on Arabia to an essay on the wickedness of the camel's heart, which to one who

has had experience of the real creature, unbrutalized by "hard blows" and "downright kicks," is strange to understand. The camel, whatever his faults, is certainly not ill-tempered, and his roaring is as little terrible to any but cockney ears as the lowing of a cow. Roaring is his manner of speech, and need frighten no one. The fact is, the camel alarmed, or overloaded, or overworked, appeals in this way for mercy to his owner; and, if the traveller, annoyed by the noise, will look under the saddle before mounting, he will generally find there just cause for the loud complaints his poor beast makes. A young, unbroken camel roars from terror, so does one wounded by the saddle. Many a time I have been made aware by my camel's voice, or by the mute appeal of his face turned to me and nudging my elbow, that the saddle required re-stuffing, and more than once that it was time to dismount if I did not wish to risk a fall. Was there ill-temper or want of sense in this? Much as I love horses, I hold them on both these points below the camel.

Let any one who doubts this take camels and horses on a journey, and see how each will act. The horse, if not restrained by his rider, will begin the day with a frolic, heels in air, and end it in a shambling jog, stumbling and wearied out. If carefully ridden, however, he will last through the day, and come in hungry at night, and hunger is what the traveller loves best to see in his beast; so he turns him loose to feed. Not at all! Bucephalus has seen a rival, and with a snort and a scream he is at him hoof and tooth. The grass may be sweet, but fighting is sweeter; and, unless his master intervene, there is little chance of his being fit for another day's journey. At some risk he is seized and bound, tethered, we will say, to a stout peg, and before morning, if he have not broken loose, he will be found inextricably entangled in his halter, starving because he cannot get at the grass, and with the rug, given him by his master to keep him warm, dislodged by his attempts to roll, and hanging from the surcingle. His master comes to feed him, and spreads his cloak upon the ground, and heaps up corn before him. The horse takes a mouthful, turning

round the while to bite his flank, and scattering half upon the ground. Then in another instant he has pawed the heap into mire beneath his hoofs.

Meanwhile, the "stupid, ill-tempered" camel, husbanding his power, has marched all day, keeping at a uniform pace like a trained pedestrian, mile after mile, hour after hour; and, the journey ended, he walks off to feed. He knows time's value, and loses not an instant, careful only to keep his fellows in sight, and listening for his master's call. At dusk he stops and, turning his head at a sudden flash, sees the camp fire lighted, and knows that it is time for bed. He slowly makes his way to camp, kneels down of his own accord to receive his portion of beans, or his ball of cotton-seed, and chews the cud without moving till morning. Which of these two creatures has shown the greater sense during the day? Which the most temper? But enough. I have lost my own.

After these mute partings, farewells more solemn had to be made. Hánna, Ferhán, Ghánim, Mohammed, and Mr. S——, each in his turn and in his degree, cost us a pang. Ghánim was the first to go. At Damascus he was evidently out of place, and the very first day got into trouble there, and was disarmed by the police of a certain iron mace it had been his pride to carry. This disgusted the boy, and he took the opportunity to leave us, ingratiating himself with his legitimate chieftain by singing songs to him in honor of the Roála war. There, under the name of Bender (for he thought it becoming, like Abram, on so great an occasion to change his name), and clothed in a fine abba and keffye, the proceeds of our backshish, he strutted about the town —the vain, unstable, interesting creature he had always been—and disappeared at last with his new master. Hánna was made happy with cooking-pots and pans to his heart's content, besides receiving double pay for all the months he had been in our service. He wept copiously for the last few days preceding our departure, and in a perfect torrent of tears when the day itself came. Ferhán was less demonstrative, yet every bit as sincere. He was the only one of our servants who asked for nothing but his wages, and who

took all that was given him over and above, as a gift from Heaven. He did not count his money, but affirmed that he would follow us to the world's end, and I believe him.

Mohammed, as agreed, received no pay, but was rewarded with the rifle, and with sundry small articles he had not the strength of mind to help asking for. To the last he remained the same good-humored, intelligent fellow we had always found him, and, now he has become "the Beg's brother," I believe he would follow our fortunes to the end of the world. He has promised to go with us next winter to the Jôf, where we are to help him in the choice of a new wife from his own people, the Beni Láam—a girl of noble blood, and one worthy to marry a descendant of the prophet Taleb. Abd er Ráhman, who, though not our servant, had served us in divers ways during the last fortnight, received a servant's reward. Money, he had learned by long experience, was a more substantial blessing than glory, and he had laughed, in his quiet way, not a little at Mohammed's romantic choice. But we remembered that he was but a Úlema of Aleppo, and the son of a horse-dealer, and we do not withdraw our esteem from him on that account.

Sotámm came more than once to visit us in the garden, where we were encamped at Damascus, and seemed pleased, poor man, to sit down at the door even of our European tent. He felt that we were in some sense Bedouins like himself. Each time we found him paler and more dejected, for the Bedouins languish quickly in town air, and at last he suddenly went back to the desert. At the time, we could learn nothing of his interview with the valy; for he was always accompanied and closely watched by an official, and therefore reserved with us, and we, having done our duty in the cause of peace, pressed him no further. But we know now that he went back without his mares to the tribe, and that the difficulty as to the march of the Roála northward was satisfactorily removed. Quite lately news has reached us that Sotámm is once more in the old quarters of the Sebáa, the pastures of Hóms and Háma, and that he is supported there by the government. So I fear we must consider that our diplomatic mission failed. Whether

the Sebáa will sit down under their loss of territory, or whether new raids and fights will follow, we do not yet know; but I intend, perhaps, to add a postscript to my last chapter, with the "latest news" of the desert.

Of our journey home it will be unnecessary to say anything, for, from the day of our arrival at Damascus, we felt that its interest for us had ceased, and that the rest was only an annoying delay. We got over our first meeting with our countrymen with as good a face as we could command, but we own it shocked us. We were not prepared for the vast change a winter spent among the Arabs would make in our tastes, our prejudices, and our opinions. It was at Beyrout that we met the first wave of European life. We had found the inn there deserted, and had dined in peace, sitting, it is true, at a table instead of on the floor, drinking our water out of glasses, and eating with knives and forks instead of with our fingers; but hitherto there had been nothing to excite our surprise or shock our feelings. As we were sitting, however, on a divan at the end of the dining-room, drinking our coffee in all the solemnity of Asiatic repose, a sudden noise of voices and loud laughter resounded through the house, and presently the door burst open, and a tumultuous throng of men and women clad in trousers and coats, or in scanty skirts and jackets, according to their sex, but all with heads uncovered, and looking strangely naked, rushed across the floor. There may have been a dozen of them in all. Their faces were flushed and excited, as if they had been drinking wine; and they passed in front of us, without pause or salute, to the upper end of the room, and there, with no further ceremony, flung themselves each into his chair. The dresses, voices, gestures, and attitudes of these men and women struck us as not only the most grotesque, but the most indecorous we had ever seen. The women were decked out in the most tawdry and unseemly manner, and one girl among them had a quantity of golden hair hanging quite loosely down her back. Some of the men were close shaven on the chin, and others wore spectacles. They threw themselves, as I have said, in the grotesquest attitudes into their chairs, and at

once began chaffering with a scoundrel crew of Jew peddlers who had followed them in, and who, while exhibiting their trumpery wares, cast evident eyes of contempt, even they, on the undignified strangers. The conversation, which I am ashamed to repeat, was conducted partly in English, partly in *lingua Franca*, and consisted principally of insults addressed to the peddlers, varied with cajoleries yet baser and more odious. The objects chaffered for were sham Oriental weapons, sham turquoise ornaments, and fir-cones from the Lebanon. Wilfrid beckoned a servant, and inquired of him what manner of people these were that had been admitted to the house. "Cook's tourists," we thought. "Their manners are proverbial, and perhaps they have been dining out." "Oh no," replied the man; "these travellers are English milords of distinction. They arrived last night in a yacht from Malta." Yes, these were the "asíl" of our own countrymen. I am glad Mohammed did not see them.

Our journey is over, and we are once more in England, with no more tangible record of our winter's adventures, and of the friends we made in the desert, than Meshúr's pistols hung up over the chimney-piece of the hall, and half a dozen Arabian mares grazing in the park outside. Sherífa is one of them, with a pretty bay colt at her heels, while Hagar seems to enjoy galloping and jumping hurdles on English ground. Mohammed's *súra hajar*—the stone head from Palmyra—lies on a table among whips and umbrellas, the nucleus of a collection of antiques; and letters have arrived from Aleppo announcing the great news of the day—the alliance of Jedáan and Faris.

All is finished but the last few serious chapters, with which Wilfrid proposes to end this book for me. In them the information we picked up during our travels will be embodied; and though he says they will probably be dull, I trust they may not be without practical value.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"A greater part of the earth hath ever been peopled than hath been known or described by geographers."—SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

Geography of Northern Arabia.—Physical Features of the Desert.—Migrations of its Tribes.—The Euphrates Valley.—Desert Villages.—Some Hints for Map-makers.

ARABIA is usually represented on our maps as being bounded to the north by a curved line, starting from the head of the Persian Gulf and ending at the Gulf of Akaba. Its vertex is placed by most geographers in latitude 34°, or a few miles south of the ancient city of Palmyra. This, in the days of the Roman Empire, no doubt represented pretty accurately the limits of fixed authority southward toward the Peninsula. The line of the Euphrates was at that time guarded, and a military high-road connected the river with the hills above Damascus, shutting out the Bedouin tribes of Arabia from the pastures of Mesopotamia and of the upper "Syrian Desert." Within the limits thus traced, settled life was secure against marauders, and the common law of the empire prevailed. But it is many centuries now since the Euphrates ceased to be the real boundary of Arabia, or the high-road passing through Palmyra a barrier to its tribes. It is time, therefore, that the imaginary line traced by ancient geographers should disappear from our maps.

Northern Arabia at the present day embraces the whole district between Syria and Persia, and extends northward as far as latitude 37°, the latitude of Orfa and Mardin. Mesopotamia, Irák, and the plains north of Palmyra, are now in every respect part of Arabia, forming, with the Hamád, a singularly homogeneous whole, uniform in its physical features and in the race which inhabits it. The Shammar, the Ánazeh, and the Montéfik tribes are as purely Ara-

bian as their kinsmen of Nejd, and the villagers of the Euphrates and the Jôf as those of the Hejaz and Yemen. It is probable, indeed, that the great camel-owning tribes of the Northern deserts represent the ancient civilization of Arabia far more closely than do the Mussulman population of the south, and are more nearly connected in thought and manners with the patriarchs of primeval history, from whom both claim to descend. Be this as it may, Arabia has no other limits now than those of the desert.

The physical features of the desert are those of a vast plain, or succession of plains and plateaux, so poor in soil and so scantily watered, that no cultivation is possible within its limits except by irrigation.

Its surface has at one time been, in all likelihood, the bed of an inland sea, for the surface soil is still composed in part of a layer of shingle, in part of a sandy loam covering the substratum of chalk or conglomerate.

Roughly speaking, the district is without mountains, streams, or fresh-water lakes, for the two great rivers which cross its north-eastern angle neither affect nor are affected by the country they traverse. They cut through the plain, as it were, like strangers, and have nothing in common with the desert above them. The only considerable chain of hills is that which connects Damascus with Mósul, and which, under the successive names of Jebel Ruák, Jebel Amúr, Jebel Abd ul Aziz, and Jebel Sinjár, forms a continuous line at right angles to the Euphrates. This line marks the difference of level in the plains north and south of it, with a corresponding diversity of vegetation. Above the hills, permanent sheep pasture is found; below them, camel pasture only.

It is strange that modern map-makers, and especially the German, should, in their anxiety to improve on ancient models, have abandoned so marked a natural feature as this range of hills, which the older geographers were careful to give; and it is a poor exchange to find, in its stead, the old blank spaces of the desert filled up with new landmarks, either wholly imaginary or out of all proportion to their real value. There is nothing more irritating to

the traveller, endeavoring to make his way across the desert by the help of one of these German maps, than to find a number of insignificant tells and wadys figuring on it as hills and watercourses, and this for no better purpose than that the map should look more map-like to the eyes of the engraver.

I have traced one or two of these *improvements* to their source. Thus, in 1872, a Prussian lieutenant, named Thielman, crosses the Hamád from Bagdad to Damascus, and, being a conscientious officer, notes down all that he sees on his way. He observes, among other things, a certain range of hills (the broken edge, most probably, of a plateau or table-land), and he asks his guide, "What is that?" "El berríye" ("the desert"), answers the Agheyl, meaning thereby that he sees nothing he recognizes; and in the next edition of Kiepert's Hand Atlas, *Jebel el Berrie* appears as a mountain chain. In another map, Jebel Ruák figures as a single peak; and in a third, Tudmor stands in a valley. The fact is, that, with the exception of the Euphrates, which was surveyed by Colonel Chesney forty years ago, no part of Northern Arabia has yet been professionally examined. Map-makers, then, would do well to imitate Mr. Stanford, who, in default of reliable information from modern travellers, sticks courageously by the old traditions. His map looks bare, but is accurate, and is the only one we have found of any use.

But to resume: The physical features of the desert are those of a plain clothed with aromatic shrubs, stunted but woody, of which wild lavender is a good type. The varieties of these are numerous, but their value as pasture is very unequal, some being excellent for camels, others for sheep, and not a few being absolutely worthless. On the better soils, too, after rain many kinds of grasses and flowering plants are found; while in the northern parts of Mesopotamia and the Upper "Syrian" Desert the country is not very different to look at, in spring-time, from the great rolling downs of Wiltshire, where these have not been ploughed up. Only, the resemblance is superficial, for there is no permanent turf in any part of the desert. It is in these upper plains that the

Bedouins congregate in the spring, shear their flocks, and hold commercial intercourse with the towns; for here, even during the extreme heats of summer, sufficient pasture of one sort or other is found for their cattle. When, in June, the grass "turns white" and is withered, new leaves appear on the wild lavender and its kindred shrubs; and the first autumn rains bring back a fresh growth of greener food. Nor is water ever wanting. In seasons of great drought the Euphrates and Tigris valleys are always open, and then receive the whole population, whose camels find pasture in the great tamarisk-beds fringing the rivers.

With the first frosts the Ánazeh move southward, and by December not a camel is to be found north of the hill range. The reason of this is not entirely nor directly due to the cold. Camels will stand a vast amount of hard weather, but as soon as the shrubs lose their leaves, not being close feeders like the sheep, they find no pasture suited to them, and wander southward to latitudes where the shrubs are evergreen. The tribes residing all the year round north of the hills keep only sheep. The camel-owning Bedouins are perpetually on the move, the Ánazeh wandering as far south in winter as to within a few days' march of Jebel Shammar, which geographers generally place in latitude 28°. They have, then, an extreme range of some ten degrees, and in exceptional years may travel two thousand miles between November and May.

The calving-time for camels is in February and early March, when the Ánazeh are at the extreme southern limit of their wanderings, so that the milk animals have the advantage of feeding on certain succulent bushes, of which the *ghúrkudd*, or, as Mr. Palgrave writes it, the *ghada*, is the most esteemed. It is a thorny tree, growing perhaps five feet high, with a reddish stem and green fleshy leaves, reminding one, by its way of growing, a little of dogwood. Immediately, however, after the calving has begun, the tribes move again toward the north, travelling from eight to ten miles daily, and keeping pace pretty closely with the growth of the grass, camomile, and other plants their camels love. Their rate

of marching never exceeds two miles in the hour, the pace of the youngest camel.

At this time of year, if the season is a favorable one, the Hamád is one of the most beautiful sights in the world—a vast undulating plain of grass and flowers. The purple stock which predominates on the better soils gives its color to the whole country, and on it the camels feed, preferring it to all other food. The hollows are filled with the richest meadow grass, wild barley, wild oats, and wild rye, the haunts of quails; while here and there deep beds of blue geranium (bohâttery) take their place, or tracts white with camomiles. On the poorer soils the flowers are not less gay—tulips, marigolds, asters, irises, and certain pink wallflowers, the most beautiful of all, cousins each of them to our garden plants; for it was from the desert, doubtless, that the Crusaders brought us many of those we now consider essentially English flowers. Through this, as through a garden, the vast herds of camels with their attendant Bedouins move slowly all the spring; and the mares, starved during eight months of the year, foal and grow fat upon a certain crisp grass which grows among the purple stock, fine and dry, and sweet as sugar. No sheep accompany these southern journeys. Those that belong to the Ánazeh are left behind in the upper plains with the Weldi Aghedáat and other tributary tribes, who keep them till their owners return. Sheep require constant watering, and in the Hamád wells are scarce. As soon as calving has commenced, milk is plentiful in the camps, and water is little thought of, even for the mares, who will go many days with nothing but this to drink. There are, however, wells in certain places, and in others pools of rain-water, more or less abundant, according to the season. Their position is well known to the tribes. By the middle of April the sun begins to show its power, the pools are exhausted, the grass has grown yellow and shed its seed, and all this wealth of pasture disappears. Then the tribes cross the hills, rejoin their flocks, and enter into treaties with the towns. Shearing begins in May, and the three-year-old colts and camels find purchasers, and the year goes round again.

Such is the physical aspect of the desert. There remains to be described that of the two great rivers which traverse it, and which introduce two new features strange to Arabia—running water and trees.* The valleys are so nearly similar that a description of one, the Euphrates, will suffice for both. The Euphrates, when it appears at the edge of the desert, is already a full-grown river, as large as the Danube at Belgrade, and flowing at the rate of four and a half miles an hour. Its waters are turbid, but sweet and pure as the water of the Nile. Like the Nile, too, they have a certain fertilizing quality in irrigation, superior to that of most rivers, and leave a deposit of good mould where they have passed. In early times, and till within the last five hundred years, the Upper Euphrates Valley was a rich agricultural district, supporting its rural population, as well as the commercial inhabitants of its numerous wealthy towns. For two centuries, however, no plough, it may almost be said, has turned a furrow on its shores. The fields have lain fallow, and have been pastured by the Bedouins, and the lower lands within reach of the annual inundation have become one large jungle of tamarisk.

Farther down, the river changes its aspect, the valley grows narrow, and groves of palm-trees take the place of tamarisk-beds, while the desert comes down to the very water's edge. Here villages are found, reduced, no doubt, from their ancient importance, but still occupying the sites they held in Biblical days: Uz, the city where Job dwelt; Hitt and Jebbeh, the home of the Hittites and Jebusites; and others perhaps less easy to recognize, but of as great antiquity. Hitherto, the river has cut its way as if by violence through the surrounding country, flowing through a valley which it has scooped out for itself two hundred or three hundred

* To say that trees are strange to Arabia is not, perhaps, quite accurate, for the acacia and the "betún" are found there in the wild state; and the date-palm, of course, is numerous wherever there is or has been a village. But they are sufficiently rare for the generic word séjjereh to be almost always understood of fruit-trees. A tree, in common parlance, unless further explained, means a palm-tree, or a fig, an apricot, or a pomegranate tree.

feet below the level of the plain, and having as little natural connection with it as a railway traversing an agricultural district in England. It receives nothing from the neighboring lands in the way of tributaries, nor does it give anything out of its own valley in irrigation. Its way of life is not that of the desert. It carries with it its own vegetation, its own birds, and its own beasts. If the gazelle creeps down to drink at its waters in summer, it is by night, and she soon leaves the valley. The sand-grouse fly over it, but hardly stop, and only the little desert partridge seems common to both sides of the cliff. On the other hand, its lions and wolves and jackals rarely leave the valley, and its wild-boars keep close within the tamarisk-beds. Its birds are those of Europe or of Asia Minor — the partridge, the francolin, the magpie, ducks, geese, snipes, woodcocks. All these abound by the river, but are never found even a mile beyond its precincts.

Lastly, there is more than the usual differences which varied occupation gives, between the men of the valley and the men of the desert. These last rarely descend to the river except in the seasons of great drought, or when bent on crossing it to make a foray on the opposite shore. The pasturage of the upper plain is better suited to their camels than is that of the richer valley, and during great part of the year, though they are encamped within easy reach of it, the river is to them as if it was not there. There are hundreds of the Ánazeh who have never seen the Euphrates. On the other hand, the felláh tribes, with their horned cattle and their attempts at cultivation, stick closely to the valley, while the citizens even of such purely desert towns as Deyr and Ána speak with terror and almost under their breath of the *Chôl.*

The Euphrates was so accurately surveyed by Colonel Chesney, that nothing is wanted by the modern traveller beyond a revision of the names of places. These, if they were ever correctly given, have now nearly all been altered; and since the Turkish occupation of the valley new places of importance, military or otherwise, have sprung up requiring notice on the map. The Tigris survey is far less accurate; but for that Colonel Chesney was not responsible,

while his map of the desert is entirely useless. He places Tudmor fifty miles south, and El Haddr thirty miles west, of their real positions.

Except on the line of the two rivers, Northern Arabia possesses nothing which can be called a town, and only a few villages, which are in fact oases. In the south these are surrounded by palm-groves; in the north by gardens or open fields of corn, whose acreage is dependent exactly on the amount of water applicable to irrigation. Those described by Mr. Palgrave as existing in the Jôf seem to be fairly flourishing, but farther north there is nothing till we come to the line of hills dividing the upper from the lower plains. Along the foot of these a few miserable villages are scattered, occupying the site each one of a scanty spring, and owning from fifty to a hundred acres of irrigable land. These are usually surrounded by a mud-wall, pierced with a single gate-way, and the houses inside, built equally of mud, are low and flat roofed. They may contain populations of from two hundred to five hundred persons each, and are the most wretched places that can well be conceived. The neighborhood of a desert village is always bare and pastureless, having been trodden down and grazed over mercilessly for generations. The principal of these are Karieteyn and Tudmor, west of the Euphrates, and the Sinjár villages east of it. I have marked their positions on my map as Stanford gives them, for his geography is fairly accurate. The Upper Desert with the hills contains, in all, about a dozen of these small places, and the Sinjár country as many more.

On the rivers there is the same diversity of appearance between the villages of the north and those of the south. The latter, surrounded with date palms, have a prosperous, the former drag on a miserable existence. The reason of this may be found in the fact that the Bedouin seldom or never interferes with date cultivation. The land occupied by palm-groves is unsuitable for pasturage, and he does not grudge it to its owners, whereas the open fields of wheat and barley are a continual temptation for his flocks. Thus it is that while Ána and the palm villages have only suffered from

loss of trade, the towns of the Upper Euphrates have been utterly ruined. North of latitude 34° the rich valley of the Euphrates can boast no more than half a dozen villages,* maintaining a sort of death in life, and it is only within the last few years that a little cultivation has been once more attempted under Turkish protection. Deyr, the only remaining village at the date of the Turkish occupation in 1862, owed its existence to the position of its cornfields on an island protected by the river. Of Bussra and the riverine villages below Bagdad I will say nothing, as I have not visited them. They are, besides, well known. The holy cities of Kerbela and Meshid Ali are fairly flourishing places, and the right bank of the Shatt el Arab, occupied by the Montéfik tribe, has been described to me as the best cultivated region of the whole valley. There are also a few small oases west of the Euphrates, the chief of which, Kubéza and Sheddádi, are markets much frequented by the Bedouins.

As regards our own travels, I fear we have been able to add little to the general stock of knowledge on geographical matters. The ancient Greek city of El Haddr, although little known to Europeans, has already been described by Mr. Ainsworth, who saw it about 1840, and it has since been visited more than once by Mr. Layard, and by at least one other English traveller. Our route across Mesopotamia I believe to be a new one, and the Snéyzele and Ommuthsiábeh lakes will now be marked for the first time on any map. We have ascertained, too, that there is no branch of the Khábur called the Sinjár, nor indeed any such branch at all: so that should disappear from the maps. The southern waters from the Sinjár hills terminate all in the Súbkhas or salt lakes. In the Hamád, beyond fixing the position of the Jebel Ghoráb, which I see on Kiepert's map seventy miles south-west of its actual position, and ascertaining the existence of a line of fresh-water pools supplied by rain each winter between the Ghóta,

* I do not, of course, mean here to include in the term "Upper Euphrates" any part of the river beyond the limits of the desert.

near Damascus, and the Euphrates, we have done nothing of any value. The routes between Palmyra and Damascus are too well known to need other remark than that the Jebel Ruák is no separate peak, as some make out, but a name given to the southernmost ridge of the main chain of hills, and that the plain of Saíghal contains a large fresh-water lake. I have marked, however, the position of certain springs and wells for the use of future travellers. I fear none of this will allow us to claim a R. G. S.'s medal.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Desert History.—The Shammar and Ánazeh Invasions.—Destruction of Civilization in the Euphrates Valley.—Reconquest by the Turks.—Their present Position in Arabia.—List of the Bedouin Tribes.—An Account of the Sabæans.

THE modern history of Northern Arabia may be considered as commencing with the conquest of that country by the Shammar Bedouins of Nejd, under their leader Faris, about two hundred years ago.

Until that time the Ottoman Empire, inheriting the traditions of its predecessors, Roman, Greek, Saracen, and Tartar, had maintained its southern frontier at the line of the Euphrates and the military high-road connecting Bagdad with Damascus. Within this limit the inhabitants of the desert were the Sultan's subjects, and the common law of the empire prevailed. Mesopotamia and the Upper Syrian Desert were at that time inhabited by various shepherd tribes; some of them Arabs of the first invasion under the Caliph Omar; others of Kurdish origin, pushed forward by the counter invasions from the north in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and one of mixed race, the Moáli, which owes its existence, according to tradition, to the following curious accident:

In the days of the Damascus Caliphate, a certain son of the Caliph was sent on an embassy to the court of Justinian the Second at Constantinople, and attracted there the notice of the Empress Theodora, who honored him with her affection to the extent that, when he left her court, she determined to give him an independent position in his own country. She sent him away, therefore, with substantial presents and a large number of male and female slaves, enabling him to found the tribe which has been

ever since known as the Moáli or *property* tribe. As evidence of the truth of this story, it is certain that the Bedouins of pure race look down on the rank and file of the Moáli, while they hold in high honor the family of its sheykhs, giving them the title of Beg, otherwise unknown in the desert.*

These Moáli occupied the right bank of the Euphrates, and the Taï, a pure Arab race, the upper plains of Mesopotamia; while, subject to them, were the Weldi, the Aghedáat, the Jibúri, and the Haddadín, whose descendants still exist in reduced circumstances along the valleys of the Euphrates and Tigris. The valleys themselves, though already partially ruined by the Tartar and Ottoman conquests, were still agricultural districts, and through them the trade with India passed. Benjamin of Tudela, our only authority as to their condition in the Middle Ages, describes them as containing numerous flourishing towns, of which Jáber and Ráhaba, on the Euphrates, alone had in his day a population, besides their other inhabitants, of four thousand Jews; while Tudmor had two thousand, El Haddr fifteen thousand, and Okbera, on the Tigris, ten thousand. Most of these cities have now entirely disappeared. What their exact condition may have been five centuries later we have no record to inform us, but it seems certain that their final overthrow dates only from the Shammar conquest. This occurred in the middle of the seventeenth century.

Almost exactly two hundred years ago, Sultan Mohammed IV. being then engaged with the siege of Vienna, the southern frontier of his empire was overrun by these Bedouins, who had already marched up from the Nejd and occupied the Hamád. They found the frontier unguarded, took and destroyed the city of Tudmor, and broke up the line of its desert communications with Bagdad and Damascus. They then crossed the hills, defeated the Moáli, the most warlike of the tribes of the Upper Desert, and reduced the lesser ones to submission. The valley of the Euphrates was next swept clear by them, and the towns made tributary to them-

* Niebuhr gives El Bushír as the family name of the Moáli sheykhs.

selves instead of to the Sultan. The last vestiges of cultivation disappeared from the right bank of the river, and Bedouin law became supreme as far north as Bir esh Sheykh. During twenty years, however, so the Arabs say, the Moáli carried on the war for their pasturage, and, though ultimately ruined, managed at one time to gain considerable advantages. On the pretext of a conference they inveigled the Shammar chiefs to their tents, and, while they were eating, slew them there. This great crime is still remembered throughout the desert in the saying, "*Beyt el Moáli beyt el aïb*" ("The tent of the Moáli is the tent of shame").

Nevertheless, at the end of twenty years the Shammar conquest was complete, and the Moáli were reduced to the last extremity; but then a new invader appeared upon the scene, and at once turned the fortune of the war. This was the Ánazeh, another tribe of the Nejd, who, hearing the report of the rich pastures acquired by their predecessors, had come to share in the spoils. The Moáli sided at once with the new-comers, and together they drove the Shammar across the Euphrates. These, finding in Mesopotamia a still richer land before them than what they had lost, abandoned the "Syrian" desert to the Ánazeh, subdued the Taï, and eventually crossing the Tigris, carried their raids to Mósul and the Persian frontier. The towns on the Tigris were treated as those on the Euphrates had been, and even Bagdad itself was threatened.

It is strange that during the progress of these startling events the Ottoman Government seems to have looked on in apathy, and made no effort to control the invaders. The Pashas of Mósul and Bagdad contented themselves with mending the walls of their cities and waiting patiently for events. The commerce of the desert ceased entirely; and caravans, abandoning the old direct routes, now followed the long road which passes outside the desert through Mardin and Orfa, and did so in fear and trembling. Meanwhile the Montéfik and the Beni Láam had occupied Irák; and the whole country between Syria and Persia, a few isolated towns excepted, became a portion of independent Arabia. This state of things continued unchanged down to our own day.

The fortunes of the Bedouin tribes are continually changing in the desert. A succession of lucky breeding seasons for their camels brings wealth, and the courage or wisdom of a sheykh importance, to a tribe, so that one year it may be this, and another that tribe which appears in the ascendant; but the general superiority of the Shammar and Ánazeh over the minor tribes has never been called in question since they first appeared in Northern Arabia. The Ánazeh have it all their own way in the Hamád, and as far north as Aleppo, and the Shammar are supreme in Mesopotamia. The war which began between them so long ago has gone on ever since, not always actively, for there have been seasons of truce; but peace has never been made between them, and raids of Ánazeh into the Shammar country, and of Shammar into the Ánazeh, may be counted on with as much certainty every summer as the appearance of swallows in May. Both tribes, as far as one can guess their history, have had their ups and downs. The Shammar have been strong enough within the memory of people yet living to threaten Bagdad with sack; and if any credence can be placed in "Fatalla's" recital, Ibn Shaalán of the Roála Ánazeh invaded Persia not seventy years ago. It is, of course, impossible to give anything like an account of their fortunes and downfalls. The Ánazeh have long ceased to be a united tribe, if they ever were one, and this has saved the Shammar, who are far less numerous, from destruction. Still, on the whole, fortune seems to have been against the latter, as may be guessed from the inferiority of the horses they now possess, nothing in desert life so clearly proving good fortune in war as the presence of a large number of fine mares in the camp of a tribe.

With regard to the Ánazeh conquest, it is certain that only a portion of the tribes now found in the Upper Desert accompanied the first invasion. As far as I can learn, the earliest invaders were the Fedáan and the Hesénneh, then, and till quite recently, the most important, if not the most numerous, of the tribes. The Ibn Haddal, Sebáa, and Welled Ali came next. Then at a long interval the Roála, who appeared for the first time in the latitude of

Damascus about the end of last century, while the Towí and Erfuddi only left Nejd so lately as twenty years ago.

Such, according to tradition, has been the history of Northern Arabia for nearly two hundred years. A new era, however, has now quite recently been begun; and within the last sixteen years the Turkish Government has recovered a part, at least, of the territory lost so long to the Empire. In 1862, the heyday of reform and activity in Turkey, when—after the Crimean war, ended some time before, the Porte found itself in possession of a large army and plenty of money—Omar Pasha, then Governor of Aleppo, at the head of a considerable number of troops, marched down the valley of the Euphrates and took military possession of Jáber and Deyr, the only two inhabited villages then existing on the Upper Euphrates. Deyr was at that time inhabited by certain felláhin Arabs, partly descended from the original founders of the town in the days of the caliphate,* partly recruited from Mósul and Orfa, who, having long enjoyed a semi-independence under Ánazeh protection, resented the interference of the Turks, and defended their town stoutly. But Omar Pasha had brought artillery with him, and took the place by storm, and this was all the resistance he met with. A garrison was placed in Deyr, and guard-houses were built at intervals between it and Aleppo. Deyr became a Pashalic under the Valy of Aleppo, and the Upper Valley of the Euphrates was declared to be once more part of the Empire. The Ánazeh seem to have contented themselves with plundering the caravans which now began to pass down the valley, and without an effort abandoned their claims on the towns. The policy so successfully begun was completed a few years later by Midhat Pasha while governor of Bagdad. It was he who continued the line of guard-houses as far as Rumády, and made of Ána for Bagdad what Deyr has become for Aleppo—the head-quarters of a detached military force in possession of the Euphrates route. Caravans have since

* Deyr must be older than the Mussulman era, for its name, signifying "convent," points to a Christian origin.

that time passed in more or less security down the valley. At the same time possession was taken of the few towns existing on the Tigris.

Great efforts have been made since then to encourage the small tribes to cultivate the soil, and south of Bagdad with a certain amount of success. Protection is now given to the Delím, Shammartóga, and Albu Mohammed to irrigate the river banks and grow wheat; and I have heard, though I cannot vouch for it as an eyewitness, that the Montéfik, a large and powerful Bedouin tribe occupying Irak, have recently become industrious felláhin. Ferhán, too, Sheykh of the Shammar, has been honored with the title of Pasha by the government, and for a yearly stipend of £3000 has engaged to transform his own Bedouins in like manner into honest peasants. At Bagdad we heard flourishing reports of the success of this arrangement, but on examination found them to be based on the meagrest of facts. Ferhán, it is true, had collected a few hundred Arabs at Sherghát—some of them Shammar, but the great majority outcasts from the Jibúri, and other low tribes of the Tigris —and with them had for some two years past made pretence of cultivating the valley. But pretence it merely was, for during the whole of our journey among the Shammar we saw nothing like cultivation, even in the neighborhood of Ferhán's camp.

A still less successful scheme has been that of inducing the Ánazeh themselves to become peaceful subjects of the Porte. With this view Aslan Pasha, during his term of office at Deyr, marched a large body of troops against a section of the Sebáa, whom he found encamped in the valley of the Euphrates, and, having surrounded them, announced that it was the will of the Sultan that they should give up their nomadic life and pursue a more loyal mode of existence, as cultivators of the soil. The Bedouins, to whom nothing could be more distasteful, or indeed insulting, than such a proposal, at first demurred; but finding themselves threatened with the loss of their camels, and having no option given them by the Pasha, at last consented, and, under the soldiers' superintendence, constructed long rows of mud-houses in various

parts of the valley. In these, to their unutterable disgust, they had to make a pretence of living, and did so as long as the soldiers kept guard over them, a matter of three months; when, finding his men wanted elsewhere, the Pasha at last withdrew them, and the Bedouins without delay returned to the desert. Several of these mud villages may still be seen in the valley, roofless and tenantless, the only result of Aslan Pasha's experiment.

There are many, however, who are of opinion that in time the Porte will succeed in its efforts, and without doubt it would be a great advantage for the security of the country if some hold could be gained over the Ánazeh and Shammar which should bring them within the power of the law; for, as long as they have no fixed abodes, the government, even supported by the most powerful army, can neither levy tribute on them nor enforce its decrees against them. It is only now and then that the Bedouins allow themselves to be surprised, as the Sebáa were by Aslan Pasha. They are usually well informed of all that happens or is going to happen in the towns, and, on news of any expedition moving in their direction, hastily decamp. Once in the desert, no troops in the world could control them. Scattering into small groups, their track becomes speedily lost in the waterless, inhospitable plains.

With the small tribes it is easy to deal. They are nomadic only to the extent of moving about with their tents and their sheep a few miles farther up or farther down the valleys, but they never go far from the rivers. They are already aware of some of the advantages of living under settled authority, Turkish though it be, and, now that they are secured against systematic molestation from the desert, they are beginning to plough, and sow corn. They cling, however, all of them, to their flocks and herds, and as long as this is the case it is better to leave them in their tents than to try and make them live in houses. Nothing is more wretched than a pastoral life in fixed dwellings.

The most prosperous of the tribes are those which, while remaining purely nomadic, have either never been or have ceased to be troublesome to their neighbors. I have generally remarked

that wherever cattle and buffaloes are found, there the tribes are peaceable and flourishing. The Jibúri on the Tigris, and the Súbkha on the Euphrates, are good types of an honest, industrious, but purely pastoral race, living with their cattle all the year round in the same district, and making as good subjects as a sultan need have. The Haddadín, too, are an excellent example of what pure nomads may be. These keep only sheep, with the exception of a few camels for transport duty, and have a just reputation in the desert for honesty and good manners. The citizens of Aleppo and Mósul intrust their sheep every winter to them, and seem contented with the arrangement. The Haddadín are the most prosperous tribe we visited. The Weldi, farther west, have a similar reputation for honesty; but, owing to some bad years lately, and the extreme exactions of the Aleppo government, they have been much impoverished.

With proper encouragement and light taxation, the northern desert might maintain a large and wealthy pastoral population. It was never intended for any other. Indeed, I doubt if it would not be an economical mistake to encourage the cultivation of *all* the lands which could possibly produce a crop. For full use to be made of the desert all the year round, some reliable pastures should be reserved for seasons of drought and for the extreme heat of summer. I believe the occupation of these in Algeria by European farmers has not been, on the whole, an advantage to the colonial revenue. What should be the aim of a wise government in Northern Arabia is, not to force its nomads to settle down as villagers, but to encourage the warlike tribes to give up their wars. This can only be done by showing them the advantages of peace, and giving security to all who do not wish to fight. Rich people, Bedouins or others, have little temptation to highway robbery.*

At the present moment, then, the Turkish Government again holds the Euphrates and the greater part of the Tigris valleys, with

* The French have succeeded as admirably by such a policy in the Sahara as they have failed lamentably in their agricultural schemes for Algeria.

the plain of Irák southward from Bagdad. It also has got possession of certain isolated points in the desert itself. Tudmor has been occupied and is now administered by a Turkish Mudír, and tribute is levied on all the small towns and villages of the Jebel Amúr and Sinjár. Caravans under escort can now pass with tolerable safety from Aleppo to Bagdad by the Euphrates road, and from Damascus to Deyr. But, except along these lines, the Bedouins still hold their own; and, although our safe passage through their territory has proved that travelling in Mesopotamia, even without escort, is not so impossible as many suppose, yet a party of Bagdad merchants so journeying would hardly have been permitted to pass unmolested. The vast majority of travellers still prefer the roundabout but securer route through Diarbekr and Mósul.*

As to the comparative numbers of the Shammar and the Ánazeh, I have always heard the same proportion given—three to seven; I therefore take it to be correct, though the actual figures mentioned by my informants have ranged from thousands to tens of thousands. With the numbers themselves it is more difficult to deal; but, keeping the proportion above given, and allowing for all exaggerations, I think twelve thousand or twelve thousand five hundred Shammar to thirty thousand Ánazeh tents will not be very far from the truth. This, at four persons to a tent, would give fifty thousand to one hundred and twenty thousand souls in all.

The following is a table of the Shammar tribes as given me by a committee of Arabs, Bedouin and Felláhin, at Sherghát, and revised by Faris himself:

Shammar Tribes of Mesopotamia, all pure Bedouins, owning camels and mares, and carrying the lance. They acknowledge the authority of one supreme sheykh, who is also Sheykh of the Jerba, and is descended from their chieftain, Faris,

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* While I write, the following news reaches me: "Aleppo, July 30th. Both banks of the Euphrates are unsafe. A caravan was robbed of £3000 the other day near Miéddin."

who led them from the Nejd in the seventeenth century. Their present chief is Ferhán ibn Sfúk; but a portion of the tribe, perhaps one-fourth, has seceded from Ferhán, and lives under the rule of his brother Faris. The Shammar of Mesopotamia are a branch of the Shammar of Jebel Shammar, and still preserve relations of consanguinity with these. They migrate north and south according to the season, but do not go farther south in winter than the latitude of Ána. They exact tribute from the smaller tribes of Mesopotamia, and are independent of Turkish authority:

		TENTS.
Jerba	Ferhán ibn Sfúk	2,000
Hathba	Mohammed ibn Niglédand	500
Áslan	Múttony	400
Sáëkh	Mézer	500
Aleyán	Ersan ibn Daïs	300
Abde	Ferdi ibn Sheréyn	1,000
Chedáda	Bédday	300
Gháët	Beddr	500
Drérat	Hezá ibn Hezmi	500
Feddára	Gaï abou Jeyt	700
Amut	Sotann ibn Arnút	1,100
Affarít	Múrrthy ibn Shehéni	500
Meních	Ibn Rashám	800
Sábit	Jezzár el Ahhdeb	1,000
Lahébi	Hássan el Droúsh	400
Sdçyt	Mézer	400
Hammára	Gálla ed Dúaba	400
Besides smaller sections		700
	In all about	12,000

Allies and Tributaries of the Shammar, independent, for the most part, of Turkish authority:

	TENTS.
1. *Zoba*, a Bedouin tribe, owning camels and mares, and carrying the lance. They occupy Southern Mesopotamia as far as the junction of the rivers. Their present sheykh is Záhir el Hamoud	5,000
2. *Haddadín*, a pastoral tribe; rich, peaceable, and honest, owning few camels or mares. They are intrusted by the felláhin of Mósul, Orfa, and Aleppo with sheep to pasture during the winter. They occupy Upper Mesopotamia, north of the Sinjár hills. Their sheykh is of the family of Ibn Wurshán	2,000

	TENTS.
3. *Taï*, a pure Bedouin tribe, formerly very powerful in Upper Mesopotamia, and allied to the Taï of Central Arabia. They own camels and mares, and carry the lance, but are peaceable and rich. They have numerous flocks of sheep. Their present sheykh, Abd er Ráhman, is considered of very noble family - - - - - - - -	1,000
4. *Ghess*, or *Jess*, a warlike tribe, but not of pure Arab blood. They own camels and mares, and carry the lance; occupying the extreme north-west of Mesopotamia. Their sheykh's name, Abdullah -	1,000
5. *Albu Hámid*, a small semi-Bedouin tribe, occupying the country between Jebel Hamrín and Jebel Sinjár. Their sheykh, Ferhán -	1,000
6. *Jibúri*, a rich felláhin tribe, owning no camels or mares, and for the most part unarmed. They occupy the Tigris above Tekrít, and the Khábur, where they pasture large herds of buffaloes and cattle. They are hospitable to strangers, but take money for what they give -	4,000
7. *Ajuári*, a smaller tribe, resembling the Jibúri - - - - - - - - - -	1,000
8. *Jerîfa*, a pastoral tribe on the Euphrates, near Rowa, in part felláhin -	500
9. *Buggára*, like the Jerîfa, but farther north - - - - - - - - - - -	800

The following is a list of the Ánazeh tribes, in the geographical order of their summer-quarters from north to south:

Ánazeh Tribes of Northern Arabia, all of them pure Bedouins, owning camels and mares, and carrying the lance. They exact tribute from the small tribes west of the Euphrates, and are independent of Turkish authority. They own no supreme sheykh, and are often at war with each other. Their range is from Aleppo in the north, to Jebel Shammar in the south.

1. *Fedáan*, the most warlike tribe of the desert; a rough, uncivilized people, owning few camels and few breeding-mares, and depending for these mainly upon plunder. They are divided into the following sections, each under its own sheykh:

	TENTS.
Mehéd. Sheykh, Jedáan - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	1,000
Shmeylát -	1,000
Ajájera -	1,000
Khryssa. Naïf ibn Keshish - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	1,000

N. B.—There are two families of the Fedáan, Ibn Sbeni and Abu Snun, who are rich, and possess many mares. They take no part in the wars of their tribe, paying instead a tax to the tribe.

2. *Sebáa.* Wealthy in camels and mares, of which last they possess by far the best in Arabia. They are a well-bred, courteous people; hospitable and honest. They fight only in self-defence. They are divided into the following sections, each under command of its own sheykh:

		TENTS.
Gomússa.	Beteyen ibn Mershid	1,000
Resallin		500
Abadát		500
Duám		500
Mesékha.	Ibn Kardúsh	500
Moáyaja.	Ferhán ibn Hedeb	500
Amarát		500

N. B.—The *Mesrab*, Sheykh Mohammed, is a section of the Resallin.

3. *Ibn Haddal*, a numerous and powerful tribe, whose sheykh, Abd ul Mékhsin ibn Hemasdi, is considered the noblest, in point of blood, of any in the desert (Ibn Meziád of the Hesénneh only excepted).* They are rich and powerful, and possess numerous mares - - - 4,000

4. *Hesénneh.* Once the leading tribe of the Ánazeh, but destroyed by a combination against them, about sixty years ago, of the Sebáa and the Roála. The family of their sheykh, Fáris ibn Meziád, is accounted the noblest, in point of blood, of any in the desert. The tribe now lives under Turkish protection near Damascus, and number perhaps - 500

5. *Roála*, or *Jeláas.* The most numerous, wealthiest, and most powerful tribe of the Ánazeh. Though the whole tribe is generally known as the *Roála*, this name only properly applies to a single section. The family of their sheykh, Sotámm ibn Shaalán, is the most important, though not the most ancient, in the desert. In it the sheykhdom of the Jeláas is hereditary. The Jeláas at the present time possess but few mares, as they have partly abandoned the use of the lance for that of fire-arms. They own 150,000 camels. The Jeláas came from Nejd about seventy years ago,† and still preserve close relations with Jebel Shammar, where they still occasionally return in winter. They are now at war with the rest of the Ánazeh - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 12,000

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* The Ibn Haddal and the Sebáa, according to Burckhardt, were originally part of one same tribe called the Bíshar, whence probably the name Jebel Bíshari below Deyr.

† Compare Burckhardt, Fatalla, etc.

TENTS.

6. *Welled Ali.* An ancient tribe allied with others of the same name in Central Arabia, and with the Ouled Ali of Western Egypt. They have many camels and mares; and until lately had charge of the pilgrim caravans starting for Mecca. Their sheykh, Mohammed Dukhi ibn Smeyr, holds a high position in the desert - - 3,000

7. *Sirhán*, a tribe of the Lower Hamád, which rarely comes north. They have, I believe, few mares, and are little known - - - - ?

8 and 9. *Erfuddi*, Sheykh Reja, and *Towf*, only seen in the Northern Desert within the last twelve years; little known - - - - - - ?

Allies and Tributaries of the Ánazeh.

Modli, formerly a powerful and warlike tribe, not of pure Arab blood, though the family of the sheykhs, descended from one of the caliphs, is held in high repute. Predatory and unreliable; but ancient allies of the Fedáan and Sebáa - - - - - - - - - - 1,000

Weldi; honest shepherds, like the Haddadín; have a few good mares, no camels; defend themselves if attacked; a respectable tribe - - 1,000

Afuddli, or *Erfuddli*, a cattle-breeding tribe, like the Jibúri, but inhabiting the jungles of the Euphrates, where they make to themselves huts of tamarisk boughs. They are honest, peaceable people, and are armed with short spears and matchlocks against the lions which frequent the river; perhaps - - - - - - - - - - - - 400

Abu Seraï, Abu Kamís, Delím, some felláh, and others, tributaries to the Ánazeh, but also under Turkish protection; peaceful shepherd tribes, inhabiting the right bank of the Euphrates. The Delím have sometimes good horses - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ?

Independent Tribes of the Upper Desert and Hamád.

Lehép, a predatory tribe between Aleppo and Háma; hard riders; robbers - ?

Amúr, a small tribe of shepherds and robbers in the Jebel Amúr - - ?

Beni Sakkhr. Called by some an Ánazeh tribe; but I do not believe this. They live south of the Hauran, and do not migrate. It has been suggested that they are Jews, the tribe of Issachar - - - - ?

Aduan, a predatory tribe east of the Jordan. They have a bad character in the desert. Sheykh, Goblan - - - - - - - - - - - ?

Sherarát, a numerous tribe, purely Bedouin, and inhabiting the Wady Sirhán, and thence southward as far as Nejd. They have no mares, breed dromedaries, and have a bad reputation - - - - ?

Aluín, Sheykh Mohammed Abunjád. A small tribe allied to the Sherarát. They inhabit the Wady Arabá, and the neighborhood of Petra - TENTS. ?

Sleb, a tribe of Indian origin, inhabiting the Hamád, and going far south into Nejd. They come as far north in the summer as Tudmor, following the gazelle, on which they live. No camels, and but few sheep. They breed asses, and sell them in all the frontier towns from Queyt to Aleppo. Are accounted ignoble by the pure Arabs, and have a bad reputation, on account of a certain caravan they misled in the desert twenty years ago and plundered;* but are in general a harmless, wild people, who take no part in the desert wars.

Tribes under the partial control of the Pashalik of Bagdad.

Montéfik, a numerous and powerful tribe, partly Bedouin, partly felláh, inhabiting Irák and the right bank of the Euphrates below Hillah. Their sheykh is generally appointed by the Pasha of Bagdad. This tribe, though formerly purely Bedouin, now cultivates the plains of the Lower Euphrates, and has become rich and prosperous. Present sheykh, Nassr - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 8,000

Beni Láam, another pure Bedouin tribe, lately turned felláh, but not to the extent of the Montéfik. They inhabit the left bank of the Tigris, and across the frontier as far as into Persia - - - - - 4,000

Maadán, a large half-Bedouin tribe, inhabiting Irák and the southern Tigris valley - ?

Albu Mohammed, the same - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ?

Shammartóga, the same - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - ?

Butta, the same - ?

There are also numerous small tribes and sections of tribes about Bagdad, but none of them deserve notice except the *Sabæans*, now found only in the neighborhood of Souk esh Shiokh, a village on the Shatt el Arab below Hillah, and numbering in all about three thousand souls.

According to the Sabæan traditions, which date from the creation of the world, their history has been as follows: Before the time of Noah, they say, all the world was Sabæan, believing in one

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* See Palgrave.

same unseen God, and speaking the same language. Noah had four sons—Shem, Ham, Yaman, and Japheth—who some time after the flood began to speak each a separate language, Shem only preserving that of his father (they know nothing of the Tower of Babel). The Sabæans are the true descendants of Shem, and to the present day have preserved the ancient tongue unchanged. In it their *book* is written, and it is described as a sort of Syriac. The Sabæans first settled in Egypt, being the same Egyptians over whom Pharaoh ruled when he oppressed the children of Israel. The present tribe claims descent from Ardewán, a brother of the Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea. They subsequently founded a kingdom at Damascus, which lasted till two hundred years after the death of their prophet, John the Baptist (three hundred and sixty-eight before the Hegira). Then they removed to Bagdad, where they flourished until the Caliphate was overthrown by the Tartars. At that time they possessed four hundred churches, but these were then destroyed, Tamerlane carrying away all their books to Ispahan, where it is believed they still exist. They themselves were dispersed over Irák and probably el Hasa, and are now reduced to the three thousand souls mentioned.

As regards their religion, which, in fact, is the only interesting, or for that matter, authentic part of the story, they say that they worship the Almighty God, the maker of light and darkness, whom no one has seen at any time. Their principal religious observance is baptism, which they say was instituted by God in the garden of Eden, Adam being himself baptized "in the name of the first life, the second life, and the third life," all three names of the Almighty; but this baptism fell into disuse, and was restored by the preaching of their prophet, John the Baptist. They acknowledge no other prophet, and take no account of the Old or New Testament histories, except to the extent of believing that Christ was the Holy Ghost made visible to the world, but not God. They believe in a resurrection of the body, a day of judgment, and the reunion of every man to his wives. If unmarried, the men will receive new wives, the number allowed in this world being four.

They have a sacrament of unleavened bread and wine, of which their priests alone partake in private, and according to certain secret rites. This they believe to have been also instituted in the garden of Eden. As to their rite of baptism, they say it must be performed in running water, when it will wash away sin and insure salvation. They baptize the children when thirty days old, but the rite is constantly renewed, the priests baptizing themselves once a week. They fast thirty-six days in the year, abstaining from meat, and have four festivals—New-year's Day; the feast of St. John; the fifth day after the anniversary of their baptism; and one called Déhmeh Dîmas, of which they do not profess to know the meaning.

I got these details from Dr. Colvill at Bagdad, who knows their sheykh. He considers their religion a bastard form of Christianity, and interesting mainly as an instance of the survival of the Christian tradition in Arabia.*

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* Compare Niebuhr's list made in 1768, and Burckhardt's at the beginning of the present century.

CHAPTER XXV.

Children of Shem! First-born of Noah's race,
And still forever children; at the door
Of Eden found, unconscious of disgrace,
And loitering on while all are gone before;
Too proud to dig, too careless to be poor,
Taking the gifts of God in thanklessness,
Not rendering aught, nor supplicating more,
Nor arguing with him if he hide his face.
Yours is the rain and sunshine, and the way
Of an old wisdom, by our world forgot,
The courage of a day which knew not death;
Well may we sons of Japhet, in dismay,
Pause in our vain, mad fight for life and breath,
Beholding you.—I bow and reason not.

Physical Characteristics of the Bedouin Arabs.—They are Short-lived.—On certain Fallacies regarding them.—Their Humanity.—Their Respect for Law.—They are Defective in Truth and in Gratitude.—Their childish Love of Money.—Their Hospitality.—Bedouin Women.

THE Bedouin Arab of pure blood is seldom more than five feet six inches high; but he is long-limbed for his size; and the drapery in which he clothes himself gives him full advantage of his height. In figure he is generally light and graceful. Indeed, I cannot recall an instance to the contrary, unless it be in Mohammed Dukhi, Sheykh of the Welled Ali, who is rather thick-set. Actual fatness is unknown among the pure Bedouins; and when they see it in others, they look upon it with contemptuous pity as a deformity.

As young men, the Bedouins are often good-looking, with bright eyes, a pleasant smile, and very white teeth; but after the age of thirty the habit of constantly frowning, to protect the eyes from the glare of the sun, gives their faces a fierce expression, often quite

at variance with their real character. Hard training, too, and insufficient food, have generally by that time pinched and withered their cheeks, and the sun has turned their skin to an almost Indian blackness. At forty their beards turn gray, and at fifty they are old men. I doubt if more than a very few of them reach the age of sixty.

The reason for this premature decay must be looked for in their way of life. From childhood up they have been in hard training, eating but once a day, and then sparingly, and sleeping on the ground. This insures them high health and a full enjoyment of all their faculties at the time, but uses the body rapidly; and a certain "staleness" follows, which the Bedouins acknowledge by withdrawing early from all unnecessary exertion. There is little work in the desert for men which needs to be done; and, once the love of enterprise and excitement over, there is no reason for any but the poorest to go far from his tent.* Political intrigue, or a love of hoarding, takes the place of physical action. The ghazús and marauding expeditions are left to the conduct of younger men, and the rest of the Bedouin's days are spent in idleness. The reaction is quickly felt. Men of forty, especially those in a high position, complain of indigestion, of rheumatism, or other maladies caused by inactive life. Of the first positive disease they die.

A man who falls seriously ill has as little chance of recovering as the wild animal has, in these open plains. Doctors do not exist, nor is there any knowledge among the Bedouins of herbs. The sick man is obliged, whatever his condition, to move with the tribe as it moves. He is set upon a camel, and clings to it as best he can, in sun or rain or wind, often with his head hanging down lower than his heels, and only prevented from falling by the occasional help of his sons, or the women who walk beside him. In the tent he lies surrounded by his friends, who, very Job's comforters, talk to him till he dies. Wounds, too, in spite of the healthy

* Sport is seldom a sufficient inducement. None but the children seem interested in it, though hawks and greyhounds are kept in all the principal tents.

condition of body which a spare habit gives, are often fatal from want of knowledge, or merely from want of quiet. The Bedouin prefers to die thus, and meets his end without fear. In certain families it is considered a point of honor not to die, as we should say, "in bed." In youth, however, ill-health or defective powers are unknown; and, for enjoyment of living, a Bedouin in all probability gets as much out of his few years as we do out of our many.

Much has been talked of the wonderful faculties of sight and hearing possessed by the Bedouins, but I have not remarked that they excel in either. On the contrary, short sight is common among them; and the ordinary Bedouin sees and hears no better than the ordinary Italian, Greek, or Spaniard. We were ourselves constantly appealed to by them when trying to distinguish objects at a distance. In the same way their faculty of finding their way across the deserts has been much exaggerated. Bedouins, of course, know their own district well, and that district is often a large one; but once take them out of it, and they are very nearly helpless. An Ánazeh cannot, as a South American gaucho does, make out his course by sun and wind, and keep it day after day till he arrives at the point intended. He travels, on the contrary, from landmark to landmark; and where these fail, he depends entirely on the information he may gather from shepherds or at tents. If the country be uninhabited, he is frightened. Living always in the desert, the Bedouins yet speak of the Chôl or Berríye in terms of awe. They could never understand how it was that we ventured without guides into unknown lands. Of keeping a straight course for a whole day they seem incapable, for they are unable to calculate the gradual motion of the sun round them. The only man we met who could do this was the little old Shammar who accompanied us across Mesopotamia, and he was almost blind. When a tribe is on the march it goes hither and thither, to left and right, but never straight to its destination. There is some mental obliquity in this.

The Bedouins have no great appearance of muscular strength, but they are singularly active and enduring. They are fast walk-

ers and fast runners, and on horseback are untiring. As horsemen, however, according to the ordinary rules and as compared with some other races, they are not pre-eminent. Only a few of them have really good seats; while of their hands it is difficult to judge, as they ride only with the halter. They display little skill in showing off a horse to advantage, and none whatever in husbanding his powers. Their only notion of galloping a horse is to *ride* him, with arms and legs, from start to finish; but they are dexterous in turning him sharply, and in taking advantage of the ground in pursuit or flight. Their great merit, as horse-breakers, is unwearied patience. Loss of temper with a beast is not in their nature, and I have never seen them strike or ill-use their mares in any way. Patience is indeed one of the most characteristic qualities of the Bedouin.

Courage, though held in high estimation, is not considered essential with the Bedouins, even in a sheykh. "God has not given me courage," they will sometimes say, "and I do not fight," just as an English hunting man will admit having "lost his nerve." Their fellows pity rather than laugh at such people. The young men, however, are usually fond of enterprise, and will start on marauding expeditions for glory quite as readily as for gain. Hard blows are often exchanged, and most Bedouins have wounds to show; but no idea of shame is connected with the act of running away, even if the fugitives are in superior force.

The Bedouin is essentially humane, and never takes life needlessly. If he has killed a man in war, he rather conceals the fact than proclaims it aloud; while murder, or even homicide, is almost unknown among the tribes. He feels no delight, like men of other races, in shedding blood.

Truth, in ordinary matters, is not regarded as a virtue by the Bedouins, nor is lying held shameful. Every man, they say, has a right to conceal his own thought. In matters of importance, the simple affirmation is confirmed by an oath, and then the fact stated may be relied on. There is only one exception to the general rule of lying among them. The Bedouin, if questioned on the breed

of his mare, will not give a false answer. He may refuse to say, or he may answer that he does not know; but he will not name another breed than that to which she really belongs. The original reason of this is, perhaps, that among themselves there is no deception possible, for secrets do not exist in a Bedouin camp, and each man knows his neighbor's mare as well as he knows his own. But the rule, however occasioned, is now universally admitted; and I have noticed repeated instances in which truth on this point had been scrupulously told, when there were no witnesses present, and to the disadvantage of the teller. "What is the breed of your mare?" I have said, to a poor man who has brought his beast expecting me to buy it. "Shuéymeh," he has answered.—"Not Shuéymeh Sbáh, then?"—"No, Shuéymeh;" and this, although knowing that the money value of the former would be three times that of the latter. The rule, however, does not hold good on any other point of horse-dealing. The age, the qualities, and the ownership of the horse may be falsely stated.

With regard to honesty, the pure Bedouin stands in marked contrast to his half-bred brethren. Among these thieving is the rule, nor is the term *harámi* (thieves) ill-taken when applied to them. The Kurdish and semi-Kurdish tribes of Upper Mesopotamia make it almost a point of honor to steal, but the pure Arab accounts it disgraceful. Acts of petty larceny are unknown among the Ánazeh and Shammar. During the whole of our travels we never lost in this way so much as the value of a shilling. Highway robbery, on the other hand, is not only permitted, but held to be a right; and travellers, passing without proper escort from or introduction to the tribes, may expect to lose their beasts, goods, clothes, and all they possess. There is no kind of shame attached to such acts of rapine, more than in ancient times was attached to the plunder and enslaving of aliens within the Roman frontier. By desert law, the act of passing through the desert entails forfeiture of goods to whoever can seize them.*

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* "According to Roman law, in its *more improved state*, an alien with whose

A respect for law is, indeed, one of the leading features of the Bedouin character; but it must be understood of *their own* law only, not of Turkish or European law. These they despise. Justice, indeed, substantial justice independent of persons, is nowhere more often appealed to nor more certain of attainment than in the desert. The poor man there never suffers wrong, *as a poor man;* and all cases are decided according to the strict meaning of the law—it is impossible to say the *letter*, for it is unwritten. Petty cases are disposed of daily by the sheykh of the section or tribe, much as a country magistrate deals with questions of vagrancy or affiliation, while more important matters are reserved for the special decision of a superior or stranger sheykh, or else for arbitration by three, seven, or twelve jurors. I know of a case thus decided by jury, which will serve as an excellent illustration of the kind of disputes raised, and the way of deciding them. The case was as follows:

In one of the Sebáa tribes, all mares of the Maneghi breed taken in war are, by immemorial custom, the right of a certain family, of which the sheykh is usually a member. Now it happened that a fine Maneghieh mare had thus been taken in a skirmish by a poor man of the tribe, who at the same time had lost his own mare; and the sheykh had seized her by virtue of his privilege. The poor man protested, and the case was brought for decision before twelve elders, chosen for the purpose. The poor man argued that the mare taken was, in fact, his own mare, for in taking this one he had lost her. The sheykh pleaded immemorial custom. After much consultation, the jury, admitting the sheykh's general right, nevertheless gave judgment in favor of the plaintiff, and ordered the mare to be given to the poor man. Another curious case was the one we witnessed among the Welled Ali, where the right to Jedáan's wife was in dispute.

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country the relations of friendship and hospitality did not exist was not technically considered an enemy, *hostis*, yet his person might lawfully be enslaved and his property confiscated if found on Roman territory."—WHEATON'S *Law of Nations.*

What is strange in these courts is that there is no officer of any kind to enforce the decisions. Public opinion alone compels obedience to the law. In extreme cases, and as the utmost penalty of the law, the offender is turned out of the tribe. In cases of homicide, the law leaves it to the family of the deceased to do itself justice, for revenge is a duty with all his relations within the second degree. The slayer himself may be slain, or, what is considered even more satisfactory, the chief man among his relations, also within the second degree, on the principle of "You have killed my cousin; I will kill yours." A death purges a death, and the blood-feud ends. But sometimes it happens that, instead of the slayer or his cousin, a second member of the injured family is slain. Then two deaths will be required, and the feud may continue for years before the balance is reached. The obligation of vengeance is so sacred that men will travel great distances to find out the enemies of a murdered relation. Mohammed ibn Taleb told us that when his uncle was killed by one of the hostile faction of Tudmor, a man of the Beni Láam came all the way from the Jôf to avenge him. The feud, however, may at any time be extinguished by the payment of fifty camels, or £250, for each death. These blood-feuds are the only cases of deliberate bloodshed known in the desert, and they are rare. They have an excellent effect on public morals, as they make men chary of shedding blood. A homicide not only has to fear the vengeance of his enemies, but the anger of his relations involved by him in the quarrel; and it is probably due to this apparently barbarous law that even robbers and outlaws seldom take human life. As an instance of the extreme moderation of Bedouin practice, I would cite the following. It happened not many years since.

A young Frenchman, M. Dubois d'Anger, was travelling with his servant, who had been a Zouave, from Aleppo to Tudmor, and fell in with a large party of the Mesékha tribe. He and his servant were well armed, and, as the Arabs rode up to them, the Frenchmen dismounted, and, without question, opened fire. The sheykh's mare was killed by a ball, but the Arabs were not touched. These

charged down on the two Frenchmen, who made a gallant resistance; but the Zouave being killed in the scuffle, his master surrendered. The Arabs, though much incensed at the death of the mare, which was a valuable one, contented themselves with stripping their captive and letting him go. The assault on his part had been unprovoked; and there are few countries where the penalty would not have been a severer one.

The weakest point of the Bedouin character is undoubtedly his love of money. This is not merely the careful gathering together of wealth, but a love of the actual coin, the "white silver pieces," which he prefers to gold. The love of money, as money, seems to be natural to the human race, and strong in inverse proportion to its practical value. Thus all children have a passion for money, as soon as they can grasp the idea of ownership, preferring it to any plaything that can be offered them. Yet it is practically valueless to them. In the same way, the Bedouin, living in the desert all the year round, and having no need of things that money can give, or the opportunity even of spending it, will travel great distances, and give himself infinite toil and trouble, to acquire a few pieces, the value of which in camels or sheep he would not be at the pains to collect. In like manner, a sheykh, who would not suffer himself to be tempted by more practical offers of advantage, will often forget his dignity at the sight of coin. It is by trading on this weakness that the Turks have gained many of their "diplomatic triumphs" in the desert.

In spite, however, of their love of money, the Bedouins are not clever commercially. The offer of buying their property is always a little distasteful to them, in some cases insulting; and they have no better principle of dealing than to increase the price demanded in strict proportion to the supposed willingness of the purchaser to buy. It often happens, for this reason, that a horse or a camel, which they begin by refusing to one purchaser, will afterward be sold to another at a third of the original price. The commercial spirit, however, differs considerably in the different tribes. The Beni Sakkhr, for instance, though accounted pure Bedouins, are

said to be as thorough traders as the Jews themselves; and, among the Ánazeh even, there are well-known commercial tribes. These, however, are not the most esteemed.

Public opinion, though acknowledging the delights of wealth, always respects a man who is indifferent to them. The great sheykhs are usually liberal of their property, distributing largely among their adherents the prizes made in war, or the presents they receive from strangers. The young are more remarkable in this way than the older men; and Faris, the Shammar chief, who represents the highest traditions of the past, keeps nothing for himself, either in the way of presents or prizes. All goes to his retainers. Much, too, as the Bedouins love money, they will not accept it, except under special circumstances, from strangers living under their tents; and this brings us to their great virtue—their hospitality.

Hospitality, to the European mind, does not recommend itself, like justice or mercy, as a natural virtue. It is rather regarded as what theologians call a *supernatural* one; that is to say, it would seem to require something more than the instinct of ordinary good feeling to throw open the doors of one's house to a stranger, to kill one's lamb for his benefit, and to share one's last loaf with him. Yet the Bedouins do not so regard it. They look upon hospitality not merely as a duty imposed by divine ordinance, but as the primary instinct of a well-constituted mind. To refuse shelter or food to a stranger is held to be not merely a wicked action, an offence against divine or human law, but the very essence of depravity. A man thus acting could not again win the respect or toleration of his neighbors. This, in principle, is the same in all Arab tribes, Bedouin or not; but the particular laws and obligations of hospitality among them differ widely. Thus, the Jibúri, the Aghedáat, and other felláhin tribes, give hospitality, but they accept payment for it; while the lowest tribe of all, the Amúr, will rob the stranger who comes to their tents, and count their hospitality as beginning only from the moment of his eating with them. Among pure Bedouins this virtue has a far wider meaning.

A stranger once within an Ánazeh or Shammar camp, unless he be a declared enemy, the member of a hostile tribe, is secure from all molestation; and even an enemy, if he have once dismounted and touched the rope of a single tent, is safe. The ordinary stranger is at perfect liberty to go where he will and dismount where he pleases. He usually selects the largest tent, for its size signifies the wealth of the owner. There he may remain, housed and fed, as long as he will, the limit of such hospitality in respect of time being quite indefinite. I have not been able to get any one to fix its duration. Nevertheless, I suspect that, in the tent of a sheykh or great man, there must be some rule as to this. I never heard of such a case; but I imagine that, after a few days, some friend or dependent of the host gives a hint to the intruder that it is time to move on; or, among the poor, that the host himself comes forward with the tale of an empty larder as an excuse for urging departure. But this is merely a surmise. In ordinary cases the guest stays but one night, and then departs, no greeting or form of adieu or thanks being considered necessary on leaving.* In no tent, however poor, could money be offered in payment for lodging or for common food; but we have sometimes been asked to purchase the lamb or kid with which we were to be feasted. In such cases the fiction is preserved of the animal being procured from another tent.

After a lengthened stay with a sheykh, it is customary to give a crown-piece to the coffee-maker, and perhaps another to the cook, if cook there be, both usually negro slaves, with a smaller silver coin to whoever holds your horse's stirrup at mounting. To the great man himself presents may be offered, but only at arrival, so as not to bear the appearance of being a payment. A cloak, a pair of boots, and a bag of sugar for the women, is the usual gift; but coffee-beans and tobacco are always acceptable. A pistol, too,

* Gratitude for hospitality is not expected, and never shown. Indeed, the French proverb is very applicable to Bedouin morals, which says, "La nécessité ayant fini, l'ingratitude rentre dans ses droits."

is a welcome present; but it would not be accepted by a great man, unless he had an equivalent to give in return. In all these matters it is necessary to calculate carefully the rank of the host and that of the guest, to avoid giving offence. A poor man is received in the same way as a rich one; but the latter is expected to bring a cloak, if the visit be paid to the chief sheykh of a tribe. These presents are always of honor, not of emolument; and are generally passed on at once to friends and dependents, that there may be no doubt as to the purity of the sheykh's motive. Poor travellers often stay for weeks at a single camp, passing from tent to tent, and being always well received.

The Bedouins are hot-tempered, but they seldom allow their passions to pass wholly beyond control. It is not often that a quarrel leads to more than words, or that a knife is drawn in anger. One excellent reason for this is their sobriety. No drink stronger than *lebben*,* or sour milk, is known among them, and they look upon the use of all fermented liquors as disgraceful. A Frank even, who should take wine or spirits with him to the desert, would forfeit all their respect. Brutal crimes have no place in the catalogue of Bedouin sins.

So far, I have spoken only of the men. Of the Bedouin women a shorter description will be enough. In person they are proportionately taller than the men, and it is not unusual to see the older of them fat and unwieldy. As girls they are pretty, in a wild picturesque way, and almost always have cheerful, good-natured faces. They are hard-working and hard-worked, doing all the labor of the camp: fetching wood and drawing water, setting and pulling down the tents, milking the ewes and she-camels, preparing the lebben (a rather toilsome work), and cooking the dinners. They live apart from the men, but are in no way shut up or placed under restraint. In the morning they all go out to gather wood for the day,

* Although no European doctor will admit that sour milk can be in the least intoxicating, the Bedouins look upon it as at least a stimulant; and we, who travelled without any other, came at last to regard it as such.

taking a camel or a donkey with them, and whenever we have met them so employed they have seemed in the highest possible spirits. They enjoy a good deal of society among themselves, going about together to each other's tents, and taking their children with them. They have, besides, the society of their male relations in the nearest degrees, and their position is by no means one to be pitied. They do not seem to think of complaining of it.

No people are so kind to children as the Bedouins are. The son of a sheykh is nursed and played with and petted by the men in the sheykh's tent all day long; and children are never scolded or ill-used. Among the better-bred Bedouins the boys are carefully brought up, and have very pretty manners. When quite young, and till they are three years old, however, they are kept dirty and ill-dressed, which gives them a slovenly appearance; but this is done purposely, to preserve them from the evil eye. Later on they are as clean as most of their elders, which is not, perhaps, saying much.

In mental qualities the women of the desert are far below the men, their range of ideas being extremely limited. Some few of them, however, get real influence over their husbands, and even, through them, over their tribes. In more than one sheykh's tent it is in the woman's half of it that the politics of the tribe are settled.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. * * * But man dieth, and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"—JOB.

Religion of the Bedouins confined to a Belief in God.—They have no Ceremonial Observances.—Their Oaths.—They are without Belief in a Future Life.—Their Superstitions are few.—Their Morality an Absolute Code.—Their Marriages.

WITH the single exception of a belief in God, inherited from the earliest times, the Bedouins profess no religious creed whatever; neither have they, it may almost be said, any superstitions. No people in the world take less account of the supernatural than they do, nor trouble themselves so little with metaphysics.

Their belief in God is of the simplest kind. It hardly extends beyond the axiom that God exists; and if, as some have affirmed, they connect the idea of him with the sun or with the heavens, no trace of such an opinion has come under my notice. "God is God," they say, and it very simply expresses all that they know of him. Who and what and where he is, has not, I should think, ever been so much as discussed among them. Of a divine revelation they seem to have no traditions, nor of any law divinely instituted. God is the fate to which all must bow; the cause of the good and of the evil in life, of the rain and of the sunshine, of the fertility of their flocks, and of the murrains which sometimes afflict them. But they do not seek to propitiate him with prayer, nor complain of his severity when they suffer. They neither bless nor curse him, nor do they regard him with love or fear. If he have any personal relation with themselves, it is as the silent witness of their oaths, the name to which they appeal in their disputes. But even thus they expect nothing at his hands, neither protection from wrong nor punishment if they are forsworn.

Prayer, as an outward act of religion, is not practised by the pure Bedouins; and, even in those tribes which have become tainted with the Mohammedanism of the towns, it is reserved chiefly for the eyes and ears of strangers. The Shammar, alone of all the *noble* tribes we visited, possessed a mollah; and his duties with them were in no way of a priestly character. The reason of his presence at all must be looked for in the semi-Turkish character of their late sheykh, Sfúk—whose son, Faris, though a man of the noblest birth and the highest character, still recites his prayers daily. With this almost single exception, the practice of religion may be taken as the sure index of low morality in a tribe. The degraded felláhin of Irák are fanatically Shía, and conform to most of the Mohammedan rules. Among the Ánazeh I do not remember having noticed an instance of prayer.

Though in no sense religious, the Bedouins, like all Arabs, make frequent use of the name of God, generally as a mere form of speech, but occasionally to emphasize a declaration. "Hamdullah," "Inshalláh," and the like expressions, are in their mouths all the day long, but these certainly have less of serious meaning in them than the corresponding "thank God," and "please God," with us. "Mashalláh"—"as it pleases God"—has, perhaps, a slight tinge of superstition mixed with its meaning. It is used to correct expressions of admiration, for fear of ill-luck. Thus it would be considered impolite, and a little dangerous, to remark upon the beauty of a mare without adding "mashalláh;" and we have more than once been corrected for this by the owner of the animal.

The only solemn use made of the Divine name is when an affirmation is to be strengthened by an oath. Then the right hand is raised, and Alláh is invoked. A statement thus emphasized may in all instances be relied on from a pure Bedouin; but I have not been able to discover that their fidelity is enforced by any fear of consequences. Among the low Felláhin tribes, who profess Mohammedanism, false oaths are of common occurrence. The Bedouin's oath is, in fact, an appeal to honor, at least as much as to religion; and this may be further seen in the corresponding

form of affirming a promise, "Aala rasi" ("on my head be it"), where no name of God is used.

There is, however, one solemn act to which God is really called as witness, and which has a true religious character with those who make it—the oath of brotherhood. This is essentially the covenant which Abraham made with Abimelech at Beersheba, and binds those who take it in all respects to act as brothers. Aid and assistance must be given in case of private quarrels, and, if contracted between sheykhs, in case of war. Neither the sheykh nor his people can commit any act of hostility against the people of a brother sheykh, nor can cattle be retained if robbed from a brother. It often happens that, in a raid, camels or sheep belonging to a brother are taken with the spoil of the enemy. In this case, on appeal made, they are at once restored. Moreover, if brothers, belonging to hostile tribes, happen to meet in battle, they may not engage or take part directly against each other, and must choose other combatants.

The oath of brotherhood is never lightly taken, or with other than a serious intention. The form of words is repeated in a grave voice, and no allusion to it of a trivial nature would be tolerated, either before or after the act. Two witnesses must attest it, though it is only necessary for one to be actually present. The other may be informed of it immediately afterward. I have never heard of an instance where the oath has been broken.

Though usually contracted in consequence of some real sympathy between the swearers, an alliance of this sort is sometimes made between the sheykhs of tribes for political motives, or even for motives of advantage. The sheykhs will thus swear brotherhood as the preliminary to a peace; and, on the other hand, most Bedouin sheykhs have brothers among the sheykhs of the desert towns, who are often of pure Arab blood, and who recognize the rules of desert honor. In this latter case the oath is of great service to both parties—to the Bedouin in the town, and to the townsman in the desert.

The oath binds those who have taken it in every respect as

brothers, except in the matter of marriage, for there is no prohibition of marriage between a brother and his brother's sister.

A belief, then, in God certainly exists among the Bedouins, though the only active form of it is a submission to the Divine will. It stands in singular correspondence with the religion of the ancient patriarchs. At the present day, no doubt, it is but a vague reflection of the ancient faith, and depends as much upon custom as every other belief or prejudice of the Bedouin mind. We were pointed out in the Shammar tents certain men, the Zedíyeh, who, the Arabs explained to us, were distinguished from themselves for two reasons. The first was that they prayed to the devil, and the second, that they wore their shirts cut square at the neck. Those who told us this made no distinction in importance between the two peculiarities.

With the belief in God, religion in the desert ends. The kindred faith, so essential to our own happiness—that in a future life—seems to have no place in the Bedouin mind. Like Job, the Bedouin looks upon the grave as a "land of darkness which is darkness itself," and it enters not into the scope of his wishes to hope for anything beyond. It is difficult for a European to put himself into the position of one who is content to die thus—who neither believes, nor despairs because he does not believe. The Bedouin knows that he shall die, but he does not fear death. He believes that he shall perish utterly, yet he does not shudder at the grave. He thinks no more of complaining than we do because we have not wings. In his scheme of the universe there has never been room for a heaven or a hell.

The words I have quoted at the head of this chapter are precisely the expression of the Bedouin's thought, if he thinks of death. But, in fact, he thinks little or nothing about it. His way of life prevents this. In Europe we suffer from the malady of thought quite as much in consequence of our idle habits as from an excess of intelligence. The Bedouin, in his youth, has no time for idleness; he is constantly employed. A life spent in the open air, a thoroughly healthy condition of body, a spare diet, and hard

exercise, are not conducive to serious thought, or to that melancholy which leads to reflection upon things unseen. We ourselves had ample proof of this during our travels. Our minds were busy all day long with the things before us. Of the past and of the future we thought little, but of our immediate prospects of dinner much. As we sat hour after hour in our saddles, watching the horizon turn slowly round us, or marking the sun's progress by the shadows of our camels' necks, we acknowledged that we could not think. Our hopes were bounded by the well which we might reach at evening, our fears by the low line of hills which might conceal an enemy. The interest of the moment and the bare pleasure of living absorbed all our fancy. A vivid present shut out past and future, and even in moments of danger we had not time for the thought of death.

Thus it is with the Bedouins in youth; but in old age, even when health fails them and their strength, they are no better circumstanced. A Bedouin may perfectly well pass all his days from the cradle to the grave, and never have spent a single one of them alone. His life is a life of society. In the outer tent, if he be a rich man, no hour of the day, nor any day in the year, will he find less than half a dozen friends or dependents; while in the inner tent, women and children, slaves and relations, are constantly present. If he is a poor man, he will sit all day in the tents of others. No Bedouin rides, even for a few miles, alone; and, like his mare, if he finds himself without his fellows, the bravest is frightened.

Another reason, too, why in Europe we so greatly appreciate and fear death, is that all of us have at some time or other of our lives stood face to face with it. In the desert no one comes back from such an interview, for the first serious illness kills. The Bedouins know that they will die because they have seen others die; but they have never known what it is to be in the jaws of the lion. Thus, with the terror of death the *necessity* of another life ceases. It does not present itself to their imagination, and their fancy has never taken wing beyond the grave.

Of superstitions I have noticed singularly few in the desert, and none that will stand the test of a sacrifice of real advantage. The Bedouins have, indeed, certain prejudices as to color and markings in their mares, and account this lucky and that unlucky; but none would reject a good animal for a mere fanciful reason. They have no lucky days or lucky months. They attach no omen to the path of birds in the air, or of beasts on the plain. They dream no dreams, and see no apparitions. They dress, indeed, their children in black and keep them unwashed, for fear, they say, of the evil eye; but I would as soon account for it by the common reason—custom. Their ejaculations, too, are mildly superstitious, but no one would quarrel with another for using or not using them. The fact is, they care exceedingly little about these things, and a great deal for material advantage.*

In morality the Bedouins differ from ourselves as widely as in religion. With us morality is deduced from certain divinely-instituted laws, but with them it is accepted as a natural order of things. They make no appeal to conscience or the will of God in their distinctions between right and wrong, but appeal only to custom. This is right, because it has always been accounted right; that wrong, for a similar reason. "We keep our oaths," they say, "because we are Bedouins. It would be a shame to us if we did otherwise. The Turks break their oaths, because they are Turks. To them it is no shame." The Bedouin rules, with respect to wine and forbidden meats, are accounted for in the same way. "The Sleb," they say, "eat the hedgehog; we do not." It is hardly more than a matter of statistics.

That they have, however, very strong principles of right and wrong, is evident on the face of it, as is the support given to morality by public opinion. No man in the desert admires or approves the evil-doer, even if he be successful. The shame clings

* The boy Ghánim who travelled with us wore an amulet on his arm, which he had brought from Jebel Shammar, as a protection from bullets, but he was ashamed to have it seen.

to him still, in spite of his power or of his wealth. Courage, hospitality, generosity, justice—these are virtues which always command respect in the desert; and although lying and thieving, under certain restrictions, carry with them no penalty in public reprobation, other crimes which we in our laxity tolerate are not forgiven so easily. Breach of trust and dishonesty, so universal in modern Europe, and so little condemned there, are considered by the Bedouins pre-eminently shameful. I do not think, incredible as it may sound to English ears, that the Bedouin exists who, if trusted with money by a friend, would misemploy it. The Weldi and Haddadín are intrusted every winter by the citizens of Aleppo and Mósul with thousands of sheep, for which they account satisfactorily in the spring to their owners. The Bedouin system of joint ownership in a mare would be impossible in a country where honesty between man and man was not a general rule. In all the tribes it constantly happens that widows and orphans succeed to considerable properties in camels and sheep, but nobody supposes them to be in any particular danger of suffering wrong at the hands of their relations. The Agheyl are proverbial for their unimpeachable honesty, and there is no man among them who might not be trusted with large sums of money. That there are rogues in the desert is probable; but dishonesty is not, as in modern Europe, the rule—it is the very rare exception. The thieves, for the most part, hang together, and form small tribes apart from the rest; these are composed of men who have been turned out by their fellows, and of whom nothing good can be expected. In the large tribes persons of known dishonesty are not tolerated.

In the same way injustice on the part of those in power is almost impossible. Public opinion at once asserts itself; and the sheykh who should attempt to override the law would speedily find himself deserted.

Although great latitude is allowed by Bedouin law in the point of marriage and divorce, immorality, in the technical sense of an offence against those laws, appears to be far less common than with European nations. It is, of course, difficult for a mere pass-

ing stranger to get information on these points; but I should say, from all that I have heard, that conjugal infidelity is most uncommon in the desert. There are several reasons for this. In the first place, every one in a Bedouin tent, women as well as men, must live constantly *en évidence*, and it is difficult to conceive how an intrigue could be commenced or carried on. The women have no right to speak to any man but their nearest relations, and could not do so without twenty witnesses to repeat what had happened. The connivance of sisters, mothers-in-law, and servants would be necessary for any woman who designed a violation of the marriage law. Then divorce is so easy and simple a process, that punishment would at once follow, the slightest suspicion of a real cause for complaint being more than sufficient reason. A woman may be sent back to her parents without other form than that of the husband's saying to her before witnesses, "You are divorced," or even without any form at all; and she has an equal right to leave him, with or without reason. The ill-assorted marriages, then, generally end within a few months of their being contracted; and there is no excuse left for intrigue on the ground of domestic unhappiness. The men, too, affect an extreme indifference to the charms of female society, possibly more than they feel; but the fact proves that no credit is attached, even among the young and thoughtless, to what are called "successes." Indeed, extreme attention to women is always looked down upon by the Arabs as effeminate and "Turkish." Mohammed ibn Taleb, who had been away from his house for a month, when I asked him if he was not anxious to get back to his wife and children, replied, as if mortified at a charge of weakness, "Why should I wish it? I have hardly yet left home." Open licentiousness is unknown in the desert.

The poorer Bedouins seldom have more than one wife at a time, though there is no restriction in their law on that head; nor do the rich often contract a second marriage as long as the first remains a happy one. A woman who pleases her husband and has borne him sons is pretty safe against the introduction of new women into his tent. The common cause of disagreement is when the

wife fails to give a son to her husband, for the lack of male heirs is considered not only a misfortune but a disgrace among the Bedouins. Then, after two or three years, the husband is pretty sure to contract a new marriage, sometimes sending back the first wife to her parents, or more commonly retaining both. Where this is the case, and especially after repeated failures to obtain male issue, quarrels and disagreements will arise between rival wives. In such cases it is not unusual to see a woman leave her husband for the reason that she cannot agree with the elder wife; for the first married generally retains her position as mistress of the household, and often abuses it. It is, however, remarkable how little jealousy is generally shown, even where several wives have to live together. To European ideas all this is, of course, very distasteful; but custom sanctions their position to Arab women, and there is nothing in the least degrading to them in the fact that they are not alone in the tent; while their quarrels seem to have no deeper foundation than those which divide the members of an ordinary English household.

Women in the desert have their rights, which are respected; and they do not complain that they are ill-treated. It has not yet occurred to them that they should be placed on an equal footing with their husbands or their brothers. They are hard-worked and happy.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Political Constitution of the Bedouins.—Their Liberty.—Their Equality.—Their Intolerance of Authority.—Their Rules of Warfare.—Their Blood-feuds.

THE political organization of the Bedouins is extremely interesting, for it gives us the purest example of democracy to be found in the world—perhaps the only one in which the watchwords of liberty, equality, and fraternity are more than a name.

Liberty, indeed, is the basis of the whole system, and not national alone, but individual liberty, unfettered by any restrictions of allegiance either to king or state. The individual Bedouin owes no duties, even to his tribe, of which he cannot rid himself by a simple act of will; nor does he submit to any limitation of the sovereign right he possesses over his own person, except by his own free act and in his own interests. If dissatisfied, he can at any time retire from the society he belongs to, without question asked or fear of penalty. His position reminds one rather of that of the member of a political club than of a subject or citizen. As long as he is with his tribe, he must conform to certain rules, and he takes part in all its deliberations; but he can at any time withdraw from its authority, if he finds his opinions in a minority or his independence hampered. No one, therefore, in the desert has the least cause to complain of tyranny, for the remedy is always at hand. Thus it constantly happens that, when party feeling has run high in a tribe, the minority, instead of submitting their opinion to that of the majority, retires from the main body and lives apart, without the secession being treated by these as an act of treason or hostility to the State. Even a single individual may retire unquestioned, to pitch his tents where he will; and in time of

peace it is rare to find more than fifty or a hundred families living together in daily intercourse. Even when there is war, it is rather the fear of being attacked in detail than any duty toward the tribe which keeps its members together. The Roála, while we were with them, were assembled to the number of twelve thousand tents on the plain of Saíghal, for war was going on; but they told us that five hundred tents had remained in Nejd when the main body marched north, owing to a disagreement between a certain sheykh and the supreme sheykh of the tribe, Ibn Shaalán. They spoke, however, with no bitterness of the secession, though it had weakened them in an hour of danger, nor did they question the right of the minority to do as it pleased.

The individual, then, is the basis from which one should start, in a review of the political system of the desert. Each man's tent, to paraphrase the English boast, is his castle, where he is free to do as he likes, without let or hinderance from his neighbors, while he has the additional advantage over the Englishman that he can remove his house and set it up again wheresoever he pleases. In it he is free of all control, whether from tax-gatherer or policeman, and he is obliged to contribute nothing, not even his services in time of war, to his neighbors. It is, however, immensely to his advantage to yield a little of this absolute independence, for the sake of protection; for he cannot practically live alone, or he would be pillaged by the men of other tribes, who have a natural right to despoil him.

He lives, then, except in rare instances, with his tribe, and takes part with them in the common defence, bringing his spear, when required, to swell the ranks of the defenders. He takes part, too, with his fellows in acts of war and robbery, which he could not do alone, and submits to the general laws and regulations which are necessary to every society. He has not, however, though a poor man, the feeling that he is amenable to laws made by others, not for his own but for their interests.

The system of government is a simple one. Each tribe or section of a tribe is under the nominal rule of a sheykh, chosen by

vote; and there is no qualification required either in the electors or the elected. Common prejudice, nevertheless, is in favor of the supreme power being intrusted to members of certain families; and the sheykh is usually chosen out of these. A certain amount of wealth is necessary, too, in a sheykh, for on him the principal burden of hospitality falls; and the qualities for governing, which seem to be hereditary everywhere, are fully recognized as such in the desert. The son, the brother, or the uncle of their late sheykh is the man usually chosen to succeed him; and nothing but extraordinary aptitude for command can raise a new man to this position. Real power there is but little in the hands of the sheykh, though many thousand men nominally obey him. The truth is, he represents only the united will of the tribe; and in political matters he has to follow rather than lead public opinion. A very bold or a very clever sheykh may for a time become vested with real power, but this is in virtue not of his position but of his character. A weaker man is merely the representative of his tribe, and such a one seems generally preferred.

The sheykh has many duties, and few advantages. On him falls the trouble of deciding small cases of dispute, quarrels between wife and husband, disputes as to ownership in a camel or a sheep. He has to transact the political business of the tribe, to sign the letters that are sometimes written by the public scribe, who is often a townsman, to receive strangers, and, above all, to keep open house at all hours for his people. He it is who is called in to stop quarrels, by the authority of his presence, and to rebuke disturbers of the peace. His main privilege is to lead the tribe from camp to camp, fixing by the position of his own tent the ever-changing site of the rest. He has, too, certain extra shares in booty taken, and of course the place of honor at all meetings, and the presidency in councils of war. He cannot, however, levy the smallest tax on his own authority, or decide on any matter of important interest, nor has he anything in the way of body-guard or police to enforce his authority. His orders in small matters are obeyed, because public opinion is on his side. Where it is otherwise, they

are made no account of. In most tribes, however, considerable outward respect is shown to the chief whom they have chosen. The men rise when he enters their tents, and show him the kind of familiar deference paid by well-brought-up people to their fathers. It is seldom that he abuses this position. Airs of authority and command are not tolerated by the Bedouins, and are seldom assumed by their sheykhs. It is not considered well-bred either to affect distinction of dress, or magnificence even in arms; the only man we saw with any such pretension was Jedáan's half-witted son, Turki, who wore a shirt of chain-armor. The sheykhs, however, may be usually distinguished by the possession of a sword, an old Damascus weapon in a shabby scabbard, inherited from remote ancestors, but the only real superiority shown by them is one of manner. Good breeding and good birth are nearly always found together in the desert. Jedáan, powerful chieftain as he is, shows his rough heels in his want of manner.

For certain families the tribes show an almost fanatical respect; and, when a member of one of them happens to be also a great man, his influence is nearly unbounded. In these cases he has real power. Abd ul Kérim, Suliman ibn Mershid, and Féysul ibn Shaalán were of this class; but there is no one at the present moment who can be named with them.

In principle, all the members of a tribe are equal, and the poorest shepherd will speak to his sheykh as to a relation, and by his *Christian name*, but this equality is tempered by the prejudices of birth. Wealth of itself has little power to win respect, but high birth, descent from certain well-known heroes or families of traditional good-breeding, is immensely thought of. As the Ánazeh or Shammar is superior to the Jibúri or the Haddadín, so is the Ibn Jéndal or the Ibn Hemásdi superior to the ordinary Ánazeh. Ibn Meziád of the Hesénneh, though a poor man, has the choice of all the skeykhs of the desert for his son-in-law, and can command a dowry of fifty camels. I will give a list of the families most esteemed, in the order of rank generally assigned to them:

The Ibn Meziád of the Hesénneh,
The Ibn Jéndal of the Roála,
The Ibn Tayár of the Roála,
The Ibn Hemásdi of the Ibn Haddal,
The Ibn Smeyr of the Welled Ali.

These five, they say, have *from all time* killed a lamb for their guests. Next to these come:

The Ibn Sfúk of the Jerba Shammar,
The Sheykhs of the Taï,*
The Ibn Hedéb of the Moáyaja,
The Roos of the Mehéd,
The Ibn Mershid of the Gomússa,
The Sheykhs of the Moáli,

and others which I cannot enumerate.

The Ibn Shaalán of the Roála have but a *noblesse d'épée;* and Jedáan is a *parvenu.*

These, however, are but social distinctions. Politically and before the law all members of a tribe are equal, whether high or low born, rich or poor; the only exceptions to this rule being perhaps certain families, who are allowed some small privileges in the distribution of spoils of war.

To ascend, next, from the individuals composing the tribe to the tribe itself, it may be stated generally that the same sovereignty which these possess is possessed also by the tribe. Each tribe, in fact, is a separate nation, with its own rights of peace and war, and its own political independence. Some of them, such as the Roála or the Shammar, are strong enough to stand alone, but most remain grouped together by ties of ancient consanguinity or for mutual protection. Thus the Sebáa consists of seven independent tribes, each owning its separate sheykh, and bound together by ties of blood. Each is accounted the equal of its neighbor, and they recognize no common civil authority. They have,

* The family of the Taï sheykhs and that of the Jerba Shammar are probably equal to the five first mentioned. But I have given them in the order I heard them named among the Ánazeh.

however, from time immemorial marched together, and in war time fight under a common leader. The same may be said of the four tribes of the Fedáan, while a still wider consanguinity embraces these and other tribes, including the Roála itself, in the great clan of Ánazeh. It is many years, however, since the Ánazeh fought together under one common leader. The Shammar, though divided into twenty different sections, each owning a sheykh, acknowledge one supreme chieftain common to them all—Ibn Sfúk, of the Jerba tribe. The Jeláas tribes, in like manner, acknowledge Ibn Shaalán.

In time of war, the authority of the sheykh, except in civil matters, is superseded by that of a military commander, chosen entirely for his personal merits by the tribe, who becomes at once their leader, and commands the obedience of all, even of the sheykh himself. This officer is called the Akíd or Agíd (whence the English "guide"), literally, the leader; and he is intrusted with all military operations and plans, ghazús, excursions, and retreats. He is often the sheykh himself, but not by any means always so. Sotámm ibn Shaalán, who is certainly sheykh of the most powerful tribe in the desert, is not their akíd; and the seven tribes of the Sebáa are at this moment so destitute of military talent among themselves that they have been obliged to take Jedáan, a mere outsider, as their commander. War is so habitual a state of things among the tribes, that the akíd is a person of the highest importance. On him depend the riches and prosperity of all, and he is treated with the greatest deference.

It will be necéssary now to explain something of the causes and conduct of military operations in the desert.

The wars of the Bedouins are neither bloody nor obstinate, though peace may not be formally made for many years. The Ánazeh and Shammar hold themselves, however, to be natural enemies; and no peace is supposed possible between them. There may, indeed, be periods of truce, but these last only so long as the adventurous spirits on either side choose to remain quiet, and do not hinder ghazús and marauding parties being sent across the

border. Occasionally individual sheykhs may come to terms; and it is reported only this summer that Faris, Sheykh of the Northern Shammar, being pressed by superior forces under his brother's command, has made an alliance with Jedáan, Akíd of the Sebáa; but if true, this is an unexampled event.

The wars which break out between different sections of the Ánazeh are more transitory. These are usually commenced at the instigation of the Turks, whose motto, "Divide and rule," leads them to interfere in desert politics. A quarrel is not difficult to make. A certain tribe has prospered and grown rich in flocks and herds, so that it begins to feel itself cramped for want of space. The Pasha of Damascus or Hóms has heard of this, and sends a polite message to the sheykh, inviting his attendance at the Serai. There he is received with a robe of honor and amiable attentions, and is dazzled, as all Bedouins are, with the power and wealth of settled life. The Pasha asks after the welfare of his tribe, and condoles with him on the lack of pasture, suggesting that there are rich plains farther on, occupied, indeed, by another tribe, but sufficient for both. The sheykh is flattered and pleased at the idea of government protection, which the Pasha speedily promises. He returns with presents in his hand to his tents, and tells his people that he is the friend and protégé of the valy. They readily accept the idea of the new pastures, and send him again to the town, this time with a mare for the Pasha's use, and a few dromedaries for his servants. Terms are soon made between the Turk and the Bedouin; and, on a certain sum paid, the pastures are declared by the Pasha to belong to the sheykh. These are invaded, and war is the result. A few men are killed on either side, and a few mares taken. Then the Turk retires, and leaves his friend the sheykh to fight it out alone.

Such has been the history of half the Bedouin wars of this century, and will be of many more, for history repeats itself in the desert with surprising rapidity. War, however, is not there the terrible scourge it is among civilized nations. The idea of civilized war is to kill, burn, and utterly destroy your enemy till he submits,

but a milder rule is observed in the desert. There the property of the enemy, and not his person, is the object of the fighting. It is not wished that he should be destroyed, only ruined, the extreme penalty of defeat being the loss of flocks and herds, of tents, tent-furniture, and mares. Beyond this Bedouin warfare does not go. The person of the enemy is sacred when disarmed or dismounted, and prisoners are neither enslaved nor held to other ransom than their mares. It is very seldom that personal animosity is shown on either side, and no blood is needlessly shed. In the shock of battle a few spear-wounds are exchanged by the more ardent youth, but no man is killed except by accident. Indeed, it is held to be a clumsy act to kill outright; for the object of the fighting is sufficiently obtained by merely dismounting or wounding the enemy. The battle consists, as in heroic times, of a series of single combats, in which the weaker usually flies and is pursued by the stronger. Then it becomes a question of speed with the mares, and of doubling and dodging with their riders. The chase has led the two combatants, it may be, far from the battle, and the pursued begins to fail. He throws himself on the ground and calls "*Dahíl!*" ("I yield!") Then the pursuer, taking the camel-hair rope, called the *aghál*, which is a part of his head-dress, and which in fighting he has hung over his shoulders (for the Bedouins fight bare-headed), he throws it round the neck of the suppliant, and by this act proclaims him captive. His arms and mare then become the property of the captor; and, even if rescued later, the prisoner can take no further part in the fight. If, with his surrender, his mare is captured, he is then let go, to find the best of his way back to his own people on foot; but, if the mare escape or be rescued, then the prisoner must accompany his captor to the tent of the latter, where he is hospitably entertained, but held to ransom until such time as the mare can be delivered. Afterward he is free to depart.*

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* Sometimes the prisoner, on taking oath before two witnesses that he will send his mare, and always if he have no mare, is at once released.

The reason why life is seldom taken in war must be looked for, partly in the fact that fire-arms are not in general use, partly in the custom of claiming, on the conclusion of peace, damages for each death. A tribe which has a balance of fifty lives to account for may have a heavy ransom to pay at the end of the war. The mares taken are also sometimes restored by the articles of the peace, but this is not usual. The captors of them are generally anxious to sell or exchange them with tribes not concerned in the war, so as to avoid the possibility of such restoration. When accounts are settled, the blood-money (*fak el dam*) is paid in camels—fifty, I believe, for each death, as in the case of homicide; but the individual slayer is not personally liable for the amount, which is levied on the whole tribe. Death in war does not entail a blood-feud with the family of the deceased; but if a man is killed in war by one with whom he is at feud, his death is held to count in the quarrel.

Though this is the usual humane rule in war, yet it appears that the life of the sheykh of a tribe may occasionally be taken without his "dahíl" being accepted. Thus Meshúr's father, Mitbakh ibn Mershid, was slain by a party of Roála, who met him in superior force while the Sebáa and the Roála were at war. Mitbakh fled, and, being well mounted, would no doubt have escaped, but that his mare tripped in a jerboa-hole and fell with him. Then, though disarmed and dismounted, several of the Roála fell upon him and cut him down. This, however, is a very unusual instance, and so is what followed; for the Sebáa were so enraged at their chief's death that they hamstrung the mare which had caused his fall, and which had followed them in their flight. In this case a blood-feud has been the result between the Ibn Mershids and the Ibn Shaaláns, a fact which seems to show that the death of Mitbakh was considered irregular. Five lives of the Ibn Shaaláns have been taken in return for it, the last by our young friend Meshúr only a few months ago. A sheykh's life counts for no more than that of any ordinary person; but on this

occasion five lives were claimed, because five men of the Roála had taken part in killing Mitbakh.

The tales of throat-cutting told by Mr. Palgrave and others may be true of the tribes he visited, but are not true of the Ánazeh or Shammar. The report of prisoners having been thus murdered by the Roála, which reached us at Aleppo, turned out, on investigation, to be entirely unfounded, and the event justified the disbelief in them at the time by all who knew the Bedouins.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ON HORSES.

"A neighing quadruped, used in war, and draught and carriage."—JOHNSON.

Arab Horse-breeding.—Obscurity respecting it.—There is no Nejdean Breed.—Picture of the Ánazeh Horse.—He is a bold Jumper.—Is a fast Horse for his Size.—His Nerve excellent, and his Temper.—Causes of Deterioration.—How the Bedouins judge a Horse.—Their System of Breeding and Training.—Their Horsemanship indifferent.—Their Prejudices.—Pedigree of the thorough-bred Arabian Horse.

CONSIDERING the obscurity in which the whole subject of Arab horse-breeding is hidden in England, I trust that I shall be excused for venturing to give a slight sketch of this interesting subject. It was one that engaged our attention more than any other on our late journey, and which we took especial pains to understand in principle as well as in detail.

It is singular that former travellers should not have attempted this. Niebuhr and Burckhardt, exhaustive as they generally are, are silent here, or tell us little that is correct, while later travellers, either from lack of interest or lack of knowledge, ignore the subject altogether. Mr. Palgrave, in his contempt of all things Bedouin, disposes of the Ánazeh horses in a few sentences, which reveal his little acquaintance with his subject, and repeats a fantastic account of the royal stables at Riád, and the tale of a distinct Nejdean breed existing there—a tale which, so far as I could learn, no Bedouin north of Jebel Shammar believes a word of. Mr. Palgrave must have been deceived on this point by the townsmen of Riád, for the northern Bedouins know Ibn Saoud perfectly by name, and know of his mares. But they all assert that the Riád stud is quite a modern collection, got together by Féysul,

and acquired principally from themselves. Abdallah ibn Féysul ibn Saoud still sends to the Ánazeh for additions to it from time to time; and I know of one instance in which he sent four mares from Riád as far as Aleppo to a celebrated horse standing there.

General Daumas's book on the horses of the Sahara does not do more than touch on those of Arabia; and, with the exception of an Italian work which I have heard of, but which is out of print, I know of nothing on the subject better than Captain Upton's pamphlet called "Newmarket and Arabia." This, with some really interesting facts and generally correct notions, is but a sketch taken from information gained at second-hand. The pamphlet, as far as it relates to Arabia, consists mainly of a discussion as to what sort of horse it was Noah took with him into the ark, and where the horse went after he was let out of it.*

Not to go back so far as that, I think we may be content with accepting the usual belief that Arabia was one of the countries where the horse was originally found in his wild state, and where he was first caught and tamed. By Arabia, however, I would not imply the peninsula, which, according to every account we have of it, is not at all a country suited to the horse in his natural condition. There is no water above-ground in Nejd, nor any pasture fit for horses except during the winter months; and the mares kept by the Bedouins there are fed, during part of the year at least, on dates and camel's milk. Every authority agrees on this point. The Nejd horses are of pure blood, because of the isolation of the peninsula, but Nejd is not a country naturally fitted for horses, and the want of proper food has stunted the breed. Nejd bred horses are neither so tall nor so fast as those of the Hamád, although the blood is the same. Dr. Colvill, who went to Riád in 1854, assures me that he saw but one single mare during

* Since writing the above, I have been shown an article in *Fraser's Magazine* of September, 1876, in which Captain Upton corrects his original impressions about Arabian horse-breeding, in consequence of a visit paid by him to the Sebáa, Moáli, and other tribes in the neighborhood of Aleppo. The account thus corrected is exceedingly good, though it still contains not a few mistakes.

the whole of his journey there and back, and that that was a small, insignificant animal. He has seen, however, ponies of thirteen hands in El Hása, which he describes as "little lions," of great power and beauty—the "tattoes" of the Indian market.

It is not, then, in the peninsula of Arabia, where water is only to be had from wells, that the original stock can have been found, but rather in Mesopotamia and the great pastoral districts bordering the Euphrates, where water is abundant and pasture perennial. I was constantly struck, when crossing the plains of Mesopotamia, with its resemblance to Entrerios, and the other great horse-producing regions of the River Platte. Here the wild horse must have been originally captured (just as in the present day the *wáhash*, or wild ass, is captured), and taken thence by man to people the peninsula.

Later on, invasions from the north seem to have brought other breeds of horses to these very plains—members, perhaps, of other original stocks, those of the Russian steppes or of Central Asia. These we find represented on the Chaldean bass-reliefs, and still existing in the shape of stout ponies all along the northern edge of the desert—animals disowned by the Bedouins as being horses at all, yet serviceable for pack work, and useful in their way. This Chaldean type, from whatever source it springs, stands in direct contrast with that of the true Arabian. It is large-headed, heavy-necked, straight-shouldered, and high on the leg—a lumbering, clumsy beast, fit rather for draught, if it were large enough, than for riding; and in this way the ancient Chaldeans seem to have chiefly employed it. The desert, however, has always preserved its own breed intact; and wherever the Bedouin is found, whether in Nejd or in the Hamád or Mesopotamia, the same animal, with the same traditions and the same prejudices concerning him, is to be found. It is of this animal only that I propose to speak.

The pure-bred Bedouin horse stands from fourteen to fifteen hands in height, the difference depending mainly on the country in which he is bred, and the amount of good food he is given as a

colt. In shape he is like our English thorough-bred, his bastard cousin, but with certain differences. The principal of these is, as might be expected, in the head; for where there is a mixture of blood, the head almost always follows the least beautiful type of the ancestors. Thus, every horse with a cross of Spanish blood will retain the heavy head of that breed, though he have but one-sixteenth part of it to fifteen of a better strain. The head of the Arabian is larger in proportion than that of the English thorough-bred, the chief difference lying in the depth of the jowl. This is very marked, as is also the width between the cheek-bones, where the English horse is often defective, to the cost of his windpipe. The ears are fine and beautifully shaped, but not very small. The eye is large and mild, the forehead prominent, as in horses of the Touchstone blood with us, and the muzzle fine, sometimes almost pinched. Compared with the Arabian, the English thorough-bred is Roman-nosed. The head, too—and this is, perhaps, the most distinguishing feature—is set on at a different angle. When I returned to England, the thorough-breds seemed to me to hold their heads as if tied in with a bearing-rein, and to have no throat whatever—the cause, perhaps, of that tendency to rearing so common with them.

The neck of the Arabian horse is light, and I have never seen among them anything approaching to the crest given, by his pictures, to the Godolphin Arabian. The shoulder is good, as good as in our own horses, and the wither is often as high, although, from the greater height of the hind-quarter, this is not so apparent. The forearm in the best specimens is of great strength, the muscle standing out with extraordinary prominence. The back is shorter than it is in our thorough-breds, and the barrel rounder. The Arabian is well ribbed up. He stands higher at the croup than at the wither. The tail is set on higher, but not, as I have heard some people say, on a level with the croup. Indeed, the jumping-bone, to use an Irish phrase, is often very prominent. The tail is carried high, both walking and galloping, and this point is much looked to as a sign of breeding. I have seen mares gallop with

their tails as straight as a colt's, and fit, as the Arabs say, to hang your cloak on.

The hind-quarter in the Arabian is much narrower than in our horses, another point of breeding, which indicates speed rather than strength. The line of the hind-quarter is finer, the action freer, and the upper limb longer in proportion than in the English race-horse. The hocks are larger, better let down, and not so straight. The cannon bone is shorter. The legs are strong, but with less bone in proportion than back sinew. This last is, perhaps, the finest point of the Arabian, in whom a "breakdown" seldom or never occurs. The bones of the pastern joints are fine, sometimes too fine for strength, and the pastern itself is long even to weakness. Its length is a point much regarded by the Arabs as a sign of speed. The hoofs are round and large, and very hard; though, from the barbarous method of shoeing and paring of the foot practised by the desert blacksmiths, a stranger might doubt this. The toe is often cut ludicrously short, out of economy, to save frequent shoeing.

The only defect of the Arabian as a race-horse, compared with our own, is his small size. Inch for inch, there can be no question which is the faster horse.

It is commonly said in England that the Arabian has but one pace, the gallop; and in a certain sense this is true. Trotting is discouraged by the Bedouin colt-breakers, who, riding on an almost impossible pad, and without stirrups, find that pace inconvenient; but with a little patience the deficiency can easily be remedied, and good shoulder action given. No pure-bred Arabian, however, is a high stepper. His style of galloping is long and low, the counterpart of our English thorough-bred's. He is a careless, but by no means a bad or dangerous walker. It is considered a great point of breeding that a horse should look about him to right and left as he walks; and this, combined with the great length of his pasterns, makes him liable to trip on even ground, if there are slight inequalities in his road. I have never, however, seen him even in danger of falling. The horse is too sure of his footing to

be careful, except on rough ground, and then he never makes a false step. The broken knees one comes across are almost always the result of galloping colts before they are strong enough over rocky ground, and, though a fearful disfigurement in our eyes, are thought nothing of by the Bedouins. The reputation, so often given to the Arabian, of being a slow walker, is the reverse of true. Though less fast than the Barb, he walks well beyond the average pace of our own horses. His gallop, as I have said, is long and low, and faster, *in proportion to his height*, than that of any other breed. If one could conceive an Arabian seventeen hands high, he could not fail to leave the best horse in England behind him. As it is, he is too small to keep stride with our race-horses.

The Arabian is a bold jumper; indeed, the boldest in the world. Though in their own country they had had absolutely no knowledge of fences, not one of the mares we brought home with us has made any difficulty about going at the fences we tried them at. One of them, the evening of her arrival in England, on being let loose in the park, cleared the fence, which is five feet six inches high. We pulled down the lower rails after this, and walked her back under the top one, a thick oak rail which was several inches higher than her wither. Another, though only fourteen hands two inches, clears seven yards in her stride over a hurdle. The mare I rode on the journey carried me over the raised watercourses by the Euphrates in the cleverest way in the world, off and on without the least hanging or hesitation, and always with a foot ready to bring down in case of need. As hunters, however, in England, they would all be too small for any but children to ride, and their want of comparative height at the wither would be a serious defect.

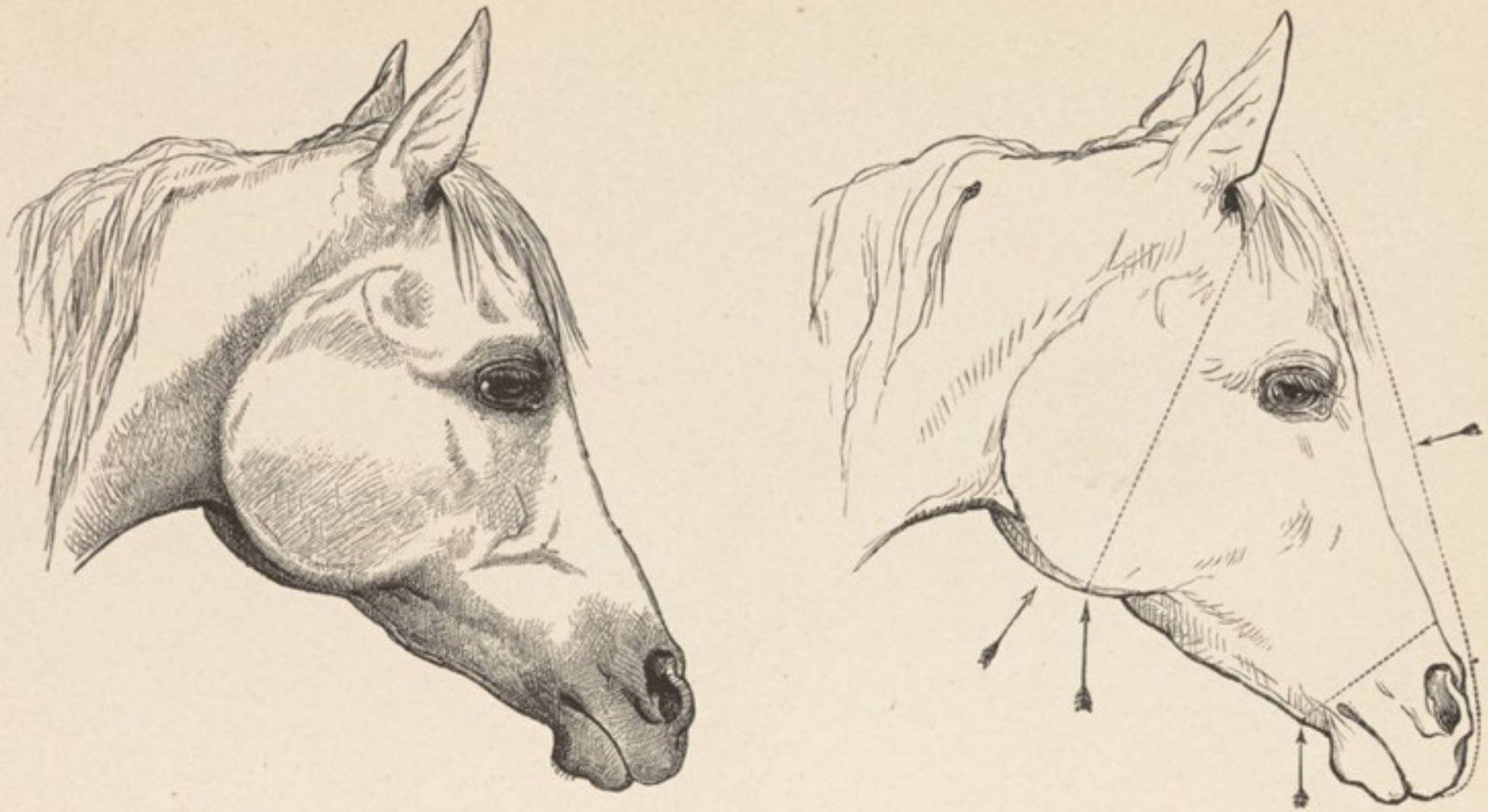
Of their galloping powers, as compared with those of English thorough-breds, I cannot speak from experience. I do not, however, suppose that over three miles, the longest English race, an Arabian would have much chance against any but quite inferior animals. Over five miles it might be different, but over twenty I am convinced that none but very exceptional English horses

would be able to go with them. The Arabians seem capable of going on for surprising distances, under heavy weights, without tiring; and they have the advantage of being able to stand almost any amount of training without going "stale." The thorough-bred Ánazeh horse will train as fine as any English racehorse. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that the pure-bred Arabian possesses extraordinary powers of endurance. On a journey he may be ridden day after day, and fed only upon grass; yet he does not lose heart or condition, and is always ready to gallop at the end of the longest march—a thing we have never ventured to propose to our horses on any previous journey.

In disposition the Arabians are gentle and affectionate; familiar, indeed, almost to the extent of being troublesome. They have no fear of man whatsoever, and will allow any one to come up to them when grazing, and take them by the head. If they happen to be lying down, they will not move, though you come close to them. They are not to be intimidated by any lifting up of hands or sticks, for they do not understand that you can hurt them. It often amuses us in the desert to see the mares come up to their masters and use them, as they would one of themselves, for a rubbing-post. This extreme gentleness and courage, though partly the effect of education, is also inherited, for a colt born and brought up in the stable is just as tame. It never thinks, as English colts do, of running round behind its dam for protection, but comes at once to any one who enters the box.

I have never seen an Arabian vicious, shy, or showing signs of fear. They do not wince at fire-arms, though they are not at all accustomed to them; and in England no railway train or sudden noise gives them the least alarm. In this they are very different from Barbs, Turks, and all other foreign horses I have had to do with.

There is among English people a general idea that gray, especially flea-bitten gray, is the commonest Arabian color. But this is not so among the Ánazeh. Bay is still more common, and white horses, though fashionable in the desert, are rare. Our



SHERIFA.

Measurements of Sherifa's Head: 1. *Length*, from between the ears to the point of the muzzle, 24 inches; 2. *Circumference*, round the forehead and jowl, 36 inches; 3. *Circumference* of muzzle, 14½ inches; 4. *Width*, between cheek-bones, 5½ inches.

white Hamdaniyeh mare, Sherífa, which came from Nejd, was immensely admired among the Gomússa, for the sake of her color almost as much as for her head, which is, indeed, of extraordinary beauty. The drawing opposite is her very faithful portrait. Perhaps out of a hundred mares among the Ánazeh one would see thirty-five bay, thirty gray, fifteen chestnut, and the rest brown or black. Roans, pie-balds, duns, and yellows are not found among the pure-bred Arabians, though the last two occasionally are among Barbs. The bays often have black points, and generally a white foot, or two or three white feet, and a snip or blaze down the face. The chestnuts vary from the brightest to the dullest shades, and I once saw a mottled brown. The tallest and perhaps handsomest horse we saw was a Samhan el Gomeáa, a three-year-old bay with black points, standing about fifteen hands one inch. He was a little clumsy, however, in his action, though that may have been the fault of his breaking. He had bone enough to satisfy all requirements, even those of a Yorkshire man, but showed no sign of lacking quality. With very few exceptions, all the handsomest mares we saw were bay, which is without doubt by far the best color in Arabia, as it is in England. The chestnuts, as with us, are hot-tempered, even violent. Black is a rare color, and I never saw in the desert a black mare which I fancied. In choosing Arabians, I should take none but bays, and, if possible, bays with black points.

It must not be supposed that there are many first-class mares among the Bedouins. During all our travels we saw but one which answered to the ideal we had formed, an Abeyeh Sherrak of the Gomússa; nor were there many which approached her. Among the Shammar we saw only two first-class mares; among the Fedáan, perhaps half a dozen; and among the Roála, once the leading tribe in horse-breeding, none. The Gomússa alone, of all the Ánazeh, have any large number of really fine mares. We had an excellent opportunity of judging, for we were with the Gomússa when fighting was going on, and when every man among them was mounted on his mare. I do not consider that we saw more

than twenty "*fók et aali*," or, to translate it literally, "tip-top" mares, nor more than fifty which we should have cared to possess. I doubt if there are two hundred really first-class mares in the whole of Northern Arabia. By this I, of course, do not mean first-class in point of blood, for animals of the purest strains are still fairly numerous, but first-class in quality and appearance as well as blood.

I cannot help suspecting that a certain amount of deterioration has taken place within the last fifty, perhaps the last twenty years. There is no doubt that in the early years of the present century the Roála were possessed of immense numbers of mares, and had the reputation of having the monopoly of some of the best strains of blood. It was to their sheykh, Ibn Shaalán, whom he called the "Prince of the Desert," that Abbas Pasha sent his son to be educated, and from them that he bought most of the mares, of which he made such a wonderful collection. Yet, from one cause and another, the Roála, though still rich and powerful, have now no mares to speak of. They have within the last few years abandoned the old Bedouin warfare with the lance, and taken to firearms. Horses are no longer indispensable to them, and have been recklessly sold. The Shammar of Mesopotamia have suffered for the last two generations by the semi-Turkism of their sheykhs, Sfúk and Ferhán, and have been divided by internal dissensions to such an extent that their enemies, the Ánazeh, have greatly reduced them. Abbas Pasha also bought up many fine mares from among them at extravagant prices; and they now have not a single specimen among them of the Seglawi Jedrán breed, for which they were formerly famous. The Montéfik in the south, once celebrated for their horses, have allowed the purity of their breed to be tampered with, for the sake of increased size, so necessary for the Indian market which they supplied. It was found that a cross-bred animal of mixed Persian and Arabian blood would pass muster among the English in India as pure Arabian, and would command a better price from his extra height. The Persian or Turcoman horse stands fifteen hands two inches,

or even, I am told, sixteen hands; and these the Montéfik have used to cross their mares with. The produce is known in India as the Gulf Arab, but his inferior quality is now recognized. Lastly, among the Sebáa themselves, who have maintained the ancient breeds in all their integrity, various accidents have concurred in diminishing the number of their mares. Several seasons of drought and famine, within the last fifteen years, have reduced the prosperity of the tribes, and forced them to part with some of their best breeding stock. Many a valuable mare was thus sold, because her owner had no choice but to do so or to let her starve; while others, left "on halves" with inhabitants of the small towns, never returned to the desert. Mijuel, of the Mesrab, told me of a mare of his which he had been obliged to leave in this way with a townsman, and which, from having been left standing a whole year in a filthy stable, had become foundered in all four feet, and could not be removed. Finally, the continual wars, which for years past have devastated the tribes, have caused an immense consumption of horses. When a mare is taken in war she is usually galloped into the nearest town, and sold hurriedly by her captor for what she will fetch, for fear of her being reclaimed when peace is made. While we were at Aleppo, mares were thus every day brought for us to look at, terribly knocked about, and often with fresh spear-wounds gaping on flank or shoulder.

Besides all these reasons, the Bedouin system of breeding, as at present practised among the Ánazeh and Shammar, *must* have had a degenerating effect upon their blood stock, which is only now beginning to show its results. That this system has in most of its features been the same from time immemorial in Arabia, is no doubt true, but there is one point on which it is more likely the practice has been modified by recent circumstances. In former times, when the tribes were rich and prosperous, it cannot be doubted but they kept a larger proportion of horses as compared with mares than is now seen. At the present time there can hardly be more than one full-grown horse kept for stud purposes

to every two hundred mares. Indeed, the proportion is probably far smaller, and this fact alone is sufficient to account for much of the barrenness, and much of the inferiority of the produce, complained of in the desert. In England such a proportion would not be tolerated. Then, if there be any truth in the doctrine that in-and-in breeding is wrong, this too may be looked upon as an increasing evil in the desert. The Shammar have long been separated from the rest of Arabia, and, though occasionally recruiting their breeding stock by capture from the Ánazeh, they have been for a couple of hundred years practically cut off from all communication with other horse-breeders. They have despised the horses of their Kurdish and Persian neighbors too thoroughly to allow any infusion of blood from them, and thus have been forced to breed in-and-in during all these generations. The Ánazeh, too, though not so absolutely severed from Central Arabia, have, since the reduction of Jebel Shammar by the Wahabis, been precluded from free communication with the peninsula, and have become more and more isolated; and the evil has been exaggerated by the extraordinary fanaticism shown by both Ánazeh and Shammar in favor of certain special strains of blood which monopolize their attention. At the present moment all the blood stock of the Ánazeh tribes must be related in the closest degrees of consanguinity. That this fanaticism operates most injuriously, there can hardly be a doubt. The horses bred from are not chosen for their size or their shape, or for any quality of speed or stoutness, only for their blood. We saw a horse with a considerable reputation as a sire, among the Aghedáat, for no other reason than that he was a Maneghi Hedruj of Ibn Sbeyel's strain. The animal himself was a mere pony, without a single good point to recommend him, but his blood was unexceptionable, and he was looked upon with awe by the tribe.

These two points then—the insufficiency of stud horses and in-and-in breeding—may be looked upon as exceptional yet adequate causes of degeneracy among the rank and file of the Bedouin horses north of Jebel Shammar.

It is difficult to understand how it happens that the pure Arabian race should have, in fact, retained as much of its good quality as it has. In all ages and in all parts of Arabia, to say nothing of the points I have already mentioned, an unpractical system of breeding has prevailed, due in part to prejudice, and in part to peculiarities of climate and soil. To begin with, there has been the extraordinary prejudice of blood I have spoken of, and which, though doubtless an excellent one as between pure Arabians and "*kadishes*," is hardly valid as between the different strains of pure blood. An inferior specimen of a favorite strain is probably preferred all over Arabia to a fine specimen of a lower strain, or rather of a less fashionable one. Thus the Bedouin's judgment of the individual horse itself, when he does judge it, is rather a guess at his pedigree than a consideration of his qualities. In examining a horse, the Bedouin looks first at his head. There, if anywhere, the signs of his parentage will be visible. Then, maybe, he looks at his color to see if he have any special marks for recognition, and last of all at his shape.

Of the speed of the animal, though much is talked of it, it is seldom that anything accurate is known. The Bedouins have no set races by which they can judge of this, and the relative merits of their mares can hardly be guessed at in the fantasias where they figure. Even in war, it is rather a question of endurance than of speed, which is the better animal; and where a real flight and a real pursuit takes place, the course is so seldom a straight one, that it is as often that the best trained or the best ridden mare gets the advantage, as the one which really has the speed. A mare celebrated for speed in the desert is as often as not merely a very well-broken charger. The Bedouins have, moreover, no idea, even if they had the intention, of riding their horses so as to give them full advantage of their stride. They must be very hard pressed indeed if they keep on at a steady gallop for more than a mile or two together. Their parties and expeditions, even where haste is necessary, are constantly interrupted by halts and dismountings; and a steady pace all day long is a thing not to be

thought of. They go, however, immense distances in this way, cantering and stopping, and cantering again, and are out sometimes for a whole month together, during which time their mares are very insufficiently fed, and often kept for days at a time without water. They are also exposed to every hardship in the way of climate—heat, and cold, and pitiless wind. The mares, then, depend rather on stoutness and long endurance of privations, than on speed, for finding favor with their masters.

The education they receive no doubt prepares them for this, but at the same time it interferes with their growth, and prevents them from developing the full powers of strength and speed they might otherwise acquire. The colt, as soon as it is born, and this may be at any time of the year (for the Bedouins have no prejudice in favor of early foaling), is fastened by a cord tied, either round the neck or round the hind leg above the hock, to a tent-rope, and kept thus close to the tent all day, its dam going out the while to pasture. The little creature by this early treatment becomes extraordinarily tame, suffering itself to be handled at once and played with by the children. It is fed, as soon as it can be made to drink, on camel's milk, which the Bedouins pretend will give it the endurance of that beast; and, at any rate, by the end of the month it is weaned altogether from the mare. The real reason of this can hardly be the good of the foal, but the necessity of making use of the mare for riding. The Bedouins allow at most a month before and a month after foaling, for rest. The colt then has not the advantage, we think, so essential to proper growth, of running with its mother during its first season. It continues, however, quite tame, and, as soon as it is a year old, is mounted a little by the children, and later on by any boy who is a light weight. The Bedouins declare that unless a colt has done really hard work before he is three years old, he will never be fit to do it afterward; so, in the course of his third year he is taken on expeditions, not perhaps serious ghazús, where he would run some risk of breaking down or being captured, but on minor journeys; and he is taught to gallop in the figure of eight, and change his legs so as to grow

supple. This treatment is indeed a kill or cure one, and if the colt gets through it there is little fear of his breaking down afterward. It is seldom that one sees a three-year-old without splints, though curbs and spavins are not common. I have seen several animals with the shank-bone permanently bent, through hard work when very young. I agree, however, with the Bedouins, in believing that to their general health and powers of endurance this early training is necessary. The fillies go through the same course of treatment, and themselves become mothers before they are four years old. The colts are sold off, when opportunity offers, to the townsmen of Deyr, Aleppo, or Mósul, as the case may be, or to dealers who come round to the tents of the tribes, during their summer stay in the extreme north. The best are usually taken by the townsmen, as the dealers, especially those who supply the Indian market, seldom or never purchase *hadúd* colts. These cost about three times as much as the others, and it is easy to forge a pedigree. The townsmen, particularly those of Deyr, who are almost Bedouins themselves, know the difference well, and care for nothing but the best. Others are sold to the low tribes, who take them into the towns for further sale, as soon as they have broken them. The fillies are generally kept in the tribe.

Of diseases there are few among the Bedouin horses. I have never heard of an instance of roaring, and only once of broken wind. An accident known as "twisted gut" is, however, rather common, and some other diseases of an inflammatory nature which prove suddenly fatal. Horses, mares, colts, and all alike are starved during great part of the year, no corn being ever given, and only camel's milk when other food fails. They are often without water for several days together, and in the most piercing nights of winter they stand uncovered, and with no more shelter than can be got on the lee side of the tents. Their coats become long and shaggy, and they are left uncombed and unbrushed till the new coat comes in spring. At these times they are ragged-looking scarecrows, half starved, and as rough as ponies. In the summer, however, their coats are as fine as satin, and they show

all the appearance of breeding one has a right to expect of their blood.

The Bedouin never uses a bit or bridle of any sort, but, instead, a halter with a fine chain passing round the nose. With this he controls his mare easily and effectually. He rides on a pad of cotton, fastened on the mare's back by a surcingle, and uses no stirrups. This pad is the most uncomfortable and insecure seat imaginable, but, fortunately, the animals are nearly always gentle and without vice. I have never seen either violent plunging, rearing, or, indeed, any serious attempt made to throw the rider. Whether a Bedouin would be able to sit a bare-backed unbroken four-year-old colt, as the Gauchos of South America do, is exceedingly doubtful.

The Bedouin has none of the arts of the horse-dealer. He knows little of showing off a horse, or even of making him stand to advantage; but, however anxious he may be to sell him, brings him just as he is, dirty and ragged, tired, and perhaps broken-kneed. He has a supreme contempt himself for everything except blood in his beast, and he expects everybody else to have the same. He knows nothing of the simple art of telling a horse's age by the teeth, and still less of any dealer's trick in the way of false marking. This comes from the fact that in the tribe each colt's age is a matter of public notoriety. We avoided as much as possible having direct commercial dealings with our friends in the desert, but, from all we heard and the little we saw of such transactions, it is evidently very difficult to strike a satisfactory bargain. As soon as one price is fixed, another is substituted; and unless the intending purchaser rides resolutely away there is no chance of the bargain being really concluded. Once done, however, and the money counted and recounted by half a dozen disinterested friends, the horse or mare may be led away. I do not think the Bedouins have in general much personal love for their mares, only a great deal of pride in them, and a full sense of their value.

As I have already said, they will not tell a falsehood in respect

of the breeding of their animals, a habit partly due to the honor in which all things connected with horse-flesh are held; partly, too, no doubt, to the public notoriety of the breed or breeds in each family, which would at once expose the falsehood; and public opinion is severe on this head.

Having premised thus much of the general characteristics of the thorough-bred Arabian, I will now explain what I have been able to discover of his pedigree.

PEDIGREE OF THE ARABIAN HORSE.

Tradition states that the first horse-tamer was Ismaïl ibn Ibrahim, or Ishmael, who, after he was turned out of his father's tents, captured a mare from among a herd which he found running wild, "*mittl wáhash*" (like the wild ass). The Emir Abd el Kader, in confirming this story, told me that the children of Ishmael had a mare from this principal stock which grew up crooked, for she had been foaled on a journey, and, being unable to travel, had been sewn into a *khourj*, or goat's-hair sack, and placed upon a camel. From her descended a special strain of blood, known as the *Benat el Ahwaj*, or "daughters of the crooked," and this was the first distinction made by the Bedouins among their horses.

The *Benat el Ahwaj*, or *Ahwaj*, as it is more commonly called, may therefore be considered the oldest breed known. I have never heard of it in the Arabian deserts, but the Emir assures me that it exists under that name in the Sahara; and that the breeds now recognized in Arabia are but ramifications of this original stock.

It is difficult to give more than a guess as to the antiquity of the names now in use. The five breeds known as the *Khamsa* are not possessed by the tribes of Northern Africa; and it is therefore probable that at the time of the first Arabian conquests (in the seventh and eighth centuries of our era) they had not yet become distinguished from the general stock. The Emir, however, does not doubt of their extreme antiquity, and I think it is certain that the Kehîlans must have been contemporary with Mo-

hammed; for a breed called Koklani exists in Persia, and we may fairly suppose it to have been brought there by the early Arabian invaders. It has not, however, been kept pure in Persia.

The Kehîlans, then, we may presume, were an early sub-breed of the Ahwaj, receiving their name from the black marks certain Arabian horses have round their eyes; marks which give them the appearance of being painted with kohl, after the fashion of the Arab women. Or, indeed, "Kehîlan" may be merely a new name for the Ahwaj, used first as an epithet, but afterward superseding the older name in Arabia. This supposition is favored by Niebuhr, who evidently treats the Kochlani, as he calls them, as the generic name of the pure Bedouin race, as contrasted with the Kadíshes or town horses of the peninsula.

"The Kochlani," he says, "are reserved for riding solely. They are said to derive their origin from King Solomon's studs. However this may be, they are fit to bear the greatest fatigues. * * * The Kochlani are neither large nor handsome"—(it must be remembered that Niebuhr was a Dane, and took his ideas of beauty, in all probability, from the great Flanders horses ridden by our ancestors. The Eastern breed in his day—more than a hundred years ago—was hardly yet quite established even in England)—"but amazingly swift; it is not for their figure, but for their velocity and other good qualities, that the Arabians esteem them. These Kochlani are chiefly bred by the Bedouins settled between Basra, Merdin, and Syria, in which countries the nobility never choose to ride horses of any other race. The whole race is divided into several families, each of which has its proper name: that of Dsjulfa seems to be the most numerous. Some of these families have a higher reputation than others, on account of their more ancient and uncontaminated nobility. Although it is known by experience that the Kochlani are often inferior to the Kadischi, yet the mares at least of the former are always preferred, in the hopes of a fine progeny.

"The Arabians have indeed no tables of genealogy to prove the descent of their Kochlani; yet they are sure of the legitimacy of

the progeny; for a mare of this race is never covered unless in the presence of witnesses, who must be Arabians. This people do not, indeed, always stickle at perjury, but in a case of such serious importance they are careful to deal conscientiously. There is no instance of false testimony given in respect to the descent of a horse. Every Arabian is persuaded that himself and his whole family would be ruined, if he should prevaricate in giving his oath in an affair of such consequence.

"The Arabians make no scruple of selling their Kochlani stallions like other horses; but they are unwilling to part with their mares for money. When not in a condition to support them, they dispose of them to others, on the terms of having a share in the foals, or of being at liberty to recover them after a certain time.

"These Kochlani are much like the old Arabian nobility, the dignity of whose birth is held in no estimation unless in their own country. These horses are little valued by the Turks. Their country being more fertile, better watered, and less level, swift horses are less necessary to them than to the Arabians. They prefer large horses, who have a stately appearance when sumptuously harnessed. It should seem that there are also Kochlani in Hedsjas and in the country of Dsjof; but I doubt if they be in estimation in the domains of the Imam, where the horses of men of rank appear to me too handsome to be Kochlani. The English, however, sometimes purchase these horses at the price of 800 or 1000 crowns each. An English merchant was offered, at Bengal, twice the purchase-money for one of these horses; but he sent him to England, where he hoped that he would draw four times the original price."

I have given this extract almost *in extenso*, as it is interesting in spite of some blunders, which are easily explained by the fact that Niebuhr never visited the great horse-breeding tribes. It shows, at any rate, that the names of the breeds were at that time as clearly established as now, and that these are in nowise a mere modern invention, as some assert, got up by horse-dealers for the benefit of Englishmen in India. The notion of such an imposture

is not to be entertained by any one who has conversed, even for half an hour, on horse-flesh with a Bedouin. The fanatics about breeding are not the English, but the Bedouins themselves; and it is inconceivable these can have been converted by any conspiracy of horse-dealers. An equally absurd idea, also current in India, is that the Ánazeh breed has within the last sixty or seventy years received an infusion of English blood. Some talk of English thorough-bred horses, left by the French under Napoleon in Egypt, others of horses introduced into Syria forty years ago; but nobody who knows anything of the Ánazeh can for an instant conceive that the existence of any number of English thorough-breds at Damascus or Cairo would have the slightest influence on their own breeding stock. By the Ánazeh the finest horse that ever ran at Newmarket would be accounted a mere *kadish*, and would not even be looked at for stud purposes.*

But to resume. The Kehîlans, whenever first so called, have been without doubt a recognized breed in Arabia for many centuries, and were in all probability the parent stock which produced the other four great strains of blood, which with the Kehîlan make up the Khamsa. These also have existed as distinct breeds in Arabia from "time immemorial;" but whether that means one hundred, or five hundred, or a thousand years, it is quite impossible to say. The common belief of their descent from the five mares of Solomon is of course a fable,† and is not much talked of in the desert itself.

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* Some thorough-breds brought by Mr. Skene to Aleppo, eighteen or twenty years ago, were laughed at by the Arabs even of the towns, and no one dreamed of sending his mares to them. Prejudice was too strong. We took great pains, while travelling with the Ánazeh, to ascertain what they knew of our English thorough-bred stock, but with the exception of Mr. Skene's they had never heard of any, and laughed heartily at the idea of any mixture with them or other kadíshes having been permitted.

† Abd el Kader told me that these five mares were *Benat el Ahwaj*, purchased by Solomon of the Ishmaelites, and that one of them, the most celebrated, was given by him to the sheykh of the Uzd, in which tribe her descendants are still

The names of the Khamsa, or five great strains of blood (originally Ahwaj, and possibly all Kehîlan), are as follows:

1. KEHÎLAN, *fem. Kehîleh* (or *Kehîlet* before a vowel).

This strain is the most numerous, and, taken generally, the most esteemed. It contains a greater proportion, I think, of bays than any other strain. The Kehîlans are the fastest, though not perhaps the hardiest horses, and bear a closer resemblance than the rest to English thorough-breds, to whom indeed they are more nearly related. The Darley Arabian, perhaps the only *thorough-bred* Ánazeh horse in our stud book, was a Kehîlan. The Kehîlan is not by any means the most beautiful of the strains. Its subdivisions are very numerous, and will be given in the list at the end of this chapter. The favorite substrains are the Kehîlan Ajúz, the Kehîlan Nowag, the Kehîlan Abu Argúb, Abu Jenúb, and Ras el Fedawi.

2. SEGLAWI, *fem. Seglawieh.*

One strain of this blood, the Seglawi Jedrán, is considered the best of all in the desert; and the Seglawis generally are held in high repute. They are, however, comparatively rare, and exist only in a few families of the Ánazeh. Among the Shammar there are Seglawis, but no Seglawi Jedráns, the last mares of this breed having been bought up at fabulous prices by Abbas Pasha. The four strains, Jedrán, Obeyrán, Arjébi, and El Abd, are identical in origin, being descended from four Seglawi mares, sisters—but only the first has been kept absolutely pure. Even the Seglawi Jedrán is to be found pure in the families of Ibn Nedéri and Ibn Sbeni only. The Seglawi Obeyrán has been crossed with the Kehîlans and other strains; and the El Abd, though purer than the Obeyrán, is yet not absolutely so even in the family of Ibn Shaalán, where it is at its best. The Seglawi Jedrán of Ibn Nedéri is powerful and fast, but not particularly handsome. Ibn Sbeni's strain is more perfect in appearance, and of equal purity.

3. ABÉYAN, *fem. Abeyeh.*

The Abéyan is generally the handsomest breed, but is small, and has less resemblance to the English thorough-bred than either of the preceding. The Abéyan Sherrák is the substrain most appreciated, and an Abéyan Sherrak we saw at Aleppo, bred by the Gomússa, could not have been surpassed in good looks; he was not, however, of a racing type. Again, an Abéyeh Sherrak mare belonging to Beteyen ibn Mershid was the most perfect mare we saw; but her sire was a Kehîlan Ajúz. The pure Abéyan Sherrak strain is only found in the family of Abu Jeréys of the Mesékha, and in a single family of the Jeláas.

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found. She was called *Zad el Muséfir* (food for the traveller), on account of her being fast enough to run down the gazelle.

4. HAMDÁNI, *fem. Hamdanieh*,

is not a common breed either among the Ánazeh or Shammar. Most of the animals of this breed I have seen have been gray, but a very handsome brown horse was shown us by the Gomússa. This was a Hamdáni Simri, which is the only substrain recognized as *hadúd*. The very beautiful white mare, Sherífa, which we had with us on the latter part of our journey, was a Hamdaniyeh Simri. She was bred in Nejd, and had been in the possession of Ibn Saoud. Her head is the most perfect of any I have seen. She stands fourteen hands two inches, and is pure white in color, with the kohl patches round the eyes, and nose very strongly and blackly marked. Her ears are long like a hind's, and her eyes as full and soft. She was admired all over the desert. In shape, head apart, she is more like an English hunter than a race-horse.

5. HÁDBAN, *fem. Hádbbeh*,

also uncommon among the Ánazeh, the best having formerly been possessed by the Roála. Hádban Enzekhi is the best substrain, and to it belonged a remarkable mare owned by Mohammed Jirro at Deyr. She stood about fourteen hands two and a half inches, was a bay with black points, carried her tail very high, and was full of fire. She looked like a race-horse, though not an English one. The two other substrains, Mshétib and El Furrd, are not so much esteemed as the Enzekhi.

Besides these five great breeds, which are called the Khamsa, there are sixteen other breeds, all more or less esteemed, and most of them with one or more strains of blood, accounted equal to the Khamsa. These are:

1. MANEGHI, *fem. Maneghieh* (the long-necked).

Said by some (but without sufficient authority) to be an offshoot of the Kehilan Ajúz. The characteristics of this breed are marked. They are plain and without distinction, have coarse heads, long ewe necks, powerful shoulders, much length, and strong but coarse hind-quarters. They have also much bone, and are held in high repute for the qualities of endurance and staying power. Niebuhr's description of the Kochlanis seems to have been written expressly for them. Of the two substrains, the most esteemed is the Maneghi Hédruj, of which the family of Ibn Sbéyel of the Gomússa possesses the finest mares. These are generally known as Maneghi Ibn Sbéyel, but there is no distinct strain of that name. The other substrain, *Maneghi es Sláji* (greyhound), is described as being "the original" Maneghi breed.

2. SÁADAN, *fem. Sáadeh.*

The substrain *Sáadan Togán* is in high repute. The handsomest and strongest mare we have is of this breed. She is a chestnut, fourteen hands two inches, of perfect beauty and immense power, but she cannot gallop with the Kehîlans. She bears a strong resemblance to one of the portraits of Eclipse—that published in the "Book of the Horse." She was bred by the Towf Ánazeh, who never come north of the Hamád. She was known far and wide among the Ánazeh tribes as "*the* Sáadeh."

3. DÁKHMAN, *fem. Dákhmeh.*

The substrain *Em Amr.* We saw a very beautiful Dákhmeh filly at the Gomússa. All the horses of this breed we saw or heard of were dark bay or brown.

4. SHUÉYMAN, *fem. Shuéymeh.*

Of this the only substrain is the *Shuéyman Sbáh.* Faris, Sheykh of the Northern Shammar, has a mare of this breed. She is coarse, but of immense strength and courage, and when moving becomes handsome. She is a dark bay of fourteen hands three inches, or thereabouts.

5. JILFÁN, *fem. Jilfeh.*

Substrain *Jilfan Stam el Boulád* (sinews of steel). A——, son of Mijuel of the Mesrab, rode a fine bay three-year-old colt, a *Jilfan Stam el Boulád.*

6. TÖÉSSAN, *fem. Töesseh.*

Substrain *Töessan Algami.* The only horse we saw of this breed was a bay, handsome but very small.

7. SAMHAN, *fem. Samheh.*

Substrain *Samhan el Goméaa.* The tallest and strongest colt we saw among the Gomússa was of this breed. He has already been described in the journal.

8. WÁDNAN, *fem. Wadneh.*

Substrain *Wadnan Hursán.*

9. RÎSHAN, *fem. Risheh.*

Substrain *Rîshan Sherábi.*

10. KEBÉYSHAN, *fem. Kebéysheh.*

Substrain *Kebéyshan el Omeyr.*

11. MELÉKHAN, *fem. Melékha.*
12. JERÉYBAN, *fem. Jeréybeh.*
13. JEYTÁNI, *fem. Jeytanieh.*
14. FERÉJAN, *fem. Ferejéh.*
15. TRÉYFI, *fem. Treyfieh.*
16. RÁBDAN, *fem. Rábdeh.*

It will be observed that, in the foregoing list, all the breeds except the last six have at least one substrain, whose name is added to that of the breed, and these substrains only are used in choosing sires. A Kehîlan without an affix to his name is not *hadúd*, that is, not "worthy;" and of the disqualified class mares only are used for breeding—their produce, however, inherit their disabilities, and the Arabs do not consider that a stain in the blood can be extinguished by lapse of time. On the other hand, a Ríshan, with the affix of Sherábi, or a Sámhan, with that of El Gomeáa, are perfectly qualified, although a Kehilan Ajúz or a Segláwi Jedrán would be preferred. Of the minor breeds, none are kept absolutely pure, except the Máneghi Hédruj of Ibn Sbéyel. In all cases, the breed of the colt is that of his dam, not of his sire.

There is no such distinction in the desert as that made in India, of high caste and low caste, first class and second class. An animal about whose breeding there is any doubt is disqualified altogether, and is not bred from.

I add a table, showing the whole of the strains and substrains, premising that one and all of them are reputed to have descended from the same original stock.

POSTSCRIPT.

Scheme of a Euphrates Valley Railway.—Of River Communication.—The Turkish System of Government.—Its partial Success.—Its Failings.—A Guess at the Future.

It has been suggested to me that I ought to say a few words as to the possible future of the countries described in this book, more especially in relation to their supposed destiny of giving us an overland route to India—and first as to the scheme of a railway between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf.

In these days of engineering triumphs, all things are of course possible, and a railway could doubtless be constructed over any part of the desert. To lay eyes, however, certain difficulties present themselves, if not in the construction, at least in the working of such a road, while the prospect of its ever proving a financial success looks like the most chimerical of fancies. A railway following the line of the Euphrates must pass either along the actual valley, or the table-land above it. In the first case, the flooding of the river and its frequent changes of bed will have to be considered; while in the second an immense amount of cutting and bridging will be required, for the whole of the desert immediately bordering the valley is a net-work of wadys and ravines. The plain, too, lies at an average height of some hundred feet above the river, and is possessed of no water at its own level. Lastly, several intricate lines of hills must be cut through. The latter remarks apply with double force to any more direct route across the desert. In winter, indeed, there is a line of fresh-water pools, running between Damascus and Ána; but these are dependent for their existence entirely on the autumn rains, and the rain does not always fall. In summer they are dry.

A much more serious objection to a desert railway would be the impossibility of making practical use of it, except in the temperate months. I cannot think that many passengers would choose a railway journey of a thousand miles under such a sun as the Hamád boasts between May and October. The average maximum daily temperature in the coolest house in Bagdad during June and July is 107°, while the thermometer there sometimes goes up to 120°, and even 122°. The heat of the desert would be far greater; and, unless stations of refuge were established, in which to pass the heat of the day, summer travelling would be impossible for Europeans. These and the road would have to be well guarded, as it is unlikely the Ánazeh would respect them.

As a commercial scheme, it must be considered that, though *through* traffic for goods might be abundant, and *through* passenger traffic in the winter months, no *local* traffic could be counted on. The villagers of the Euphrates are too poor to afford the lowest price at which railway fares could be offered, while their existing caravan trade with camels is cheap, and time is of no value. The population of the river is extremely scanty. If there are fifty thousand inhabitants between Bagdad and Aleppo, it is more than I should suppose exists, and of these, four-fifths at least must belong to the lower villages south of Ána. Between Ána and Aleppo, three hundred miles, there is but one village of any importance, and probably not ten thousand inhabitants, all counted.

A more possible railway route, commercially speaking, lies along the track of the old caravan road by Orfa and Mósul; for this passes through a cultivated district, and would serve a series of large towns. I cannot, however, conceive that even this could be a financial success. For many years to come the existence of a railway would be powerless to repeople Assyria; and, with such large tracts of excellent soil lying uncultivated and close at hand between Aleppo and the sea, immigrants would hardly choose the tamarisk jungles of the Euphrates and Tigris as the scene of a new colony. It must be recollected that the area of alluvial land in either valley is very small. A principal feature of all these

schemes seems to be the restoration of fertility to the Babylonian plain south of Bagdad. This, rich as the plain formerly was, could not now be effected without a prodigious outlay in the form of water-works. To reconstruct entirely the Babylonian system of canals is financially impossible, even for the richest country in the world, at the present day; and without irrigation not a blade can grow.

The only practical scheme for improving the communications between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf is, in my opinion, the establishment of a line of steamers on the Euphrates. This, if properly managed, might do effectual good, and even be made to pay its expenses. The river is navigable for boats drawing eighteen inches of water nearly all the year round; and Midhat's boats failed only because they were too large. A line of steamers would sufficiently supply the wants of local traffic, and could afford to do so at a far cheaper rate than any railroad. Steam navigation would be free of danger from Bedouin interference; and the tamarisk scrub would long afford an excellent supply of fuel. Such a scheme, however, would be of little use to India.

Water communication established, and Turkish abuses reformed, the present system of government might well be left to work out the natural development of the country, though this could not be rapid. I have no sympathy with the Turks in Arabia, and still less with their administration. It is utterly corrupt; but I do not think their theory of government there is a bad one. The protection of the peaceable tribes and the repression of the warlike ones; encouragement to all who will cultivate the soil; security for the high-roads and military occupation of the villages; alliances entered into with the Bedouin chiefs, and inducements offered them to act as the police of the desert—nothing, in idea, could be better or more European. It is only in practice that the Turks fail, and that, I fear, from incurable causes. Yet have they not wholly failed. From a military point of view, the Pashas can boast with some truth that, compared with twenty years ago, no

country has made more rapid steps towards civilization. The power of the Bedouin tribes has within that period been seriously checked, if not broken; and it is quite conceivable that in another twenty years, at the same rate of progress, the Ánazeh will have disappeared from the Upper Syrian Desert, and the Shammar have been reclaimed to settled life in Mesopotamia. On the day when the alluvial valley of the Euphrates shall be completely cultivated, and their access to the river cut off in summer, the true Bedouins must retire to the Nejd, whence they came, or abandon their independent life. Turkish optimists are excusable if they count on this. But, for my part, I do not believe in the regeneration of Turkey, or even in the maintenance of its military power for any length of time.

The chief vice of the Turkish system, as now seen in the desert, is one which affects the whole Empire—ruthless taxation. The goose with the golden eggs is every day being killed in Turkey, or at any rate mercilessly robbed, and to its last *nest-egg*. In this way, the peaceful shepherd tribes, though protected from the Ánazeh and Shammar, are plundered by the government, and hardly appreciate the change of masters. The Weldi, a rich tribe twenty years ago when they were tributary to the Ánazeh, are now reduced to poverty by the exactions of the Pashalik of Aleppo; and the Jibúri, on the Tigris, industrious herdsmen, seem strangely altered in circumstances since Layard lived among them in 1845. The only really prosperous nomads, at present under Turkish rule, are the Haddádin; and they, from their connection with the townsmen, may possibly have been respected in the general plunder. It is hardly to be wondered at, then, that, in view of that which has befallen their poorer neighbors, the great camel-owning tribes, who, being always on the move, are out of government reach, should have hitherto refused all proposals made them of abandoning their wild life.

Their power of offence, indeed, has been much restricted of late years by the garrisoning of the lines of river, and the introduction of "arms of precision" among the Turkish soldiery; and their old

source of wealth, the tribute paid them by the desert towns, has been cut off. But, beyond this, nothing has been effected. The Ánazeh and Shammar are still as thoroughly independent of the Sultan as the day they first appeared within his borders, while their ancient character and way of life remains unchanged. In my mind's eye I see a day not very far distant when, the treasury at Constantinople being exhausted, these outlying military posts of the Euphrates, with its schemes of railroads and steamers, will be abandoned, and the Bedouins, having changed their lances for more modern weapons, shall reign again supreme in the valley. The shepherd tribes, and even the villagers, will not much regret their return; and all will be as it was a hundred years ago. My sympathy is with them, and not with progress; and in their interest I cry, "Long live the Sultan."

But will no other power appear in the desert?

THE END.

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