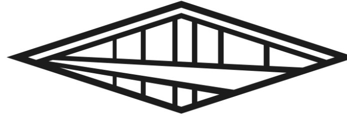

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الجزيرة العربية الخاضعة للحكم العثماني: بيان مفصل للرحلة الرسمية في بابل وأشور وبلاد الرافدين، في ١٨٨٦ــ ١٨٨٧ مناطق شبه

المؤسسة المالكة	المكتبة البريطانية: أوراق خاصة وسجلات من مكتب الهند
المرجع	Mss Eur F112/384
التاريخ/ التواريخ	١٨٨٨ (ميلادي)
لغة الكتابة	الإنجليزية و الفارسية في اللاتينية بالأحرف والعربية
الحجم والشكل	مجلد واحد (٣٥ ورقة)
حق النشر	رخصة حكومة مفتوحة

حول هذا السجلّ

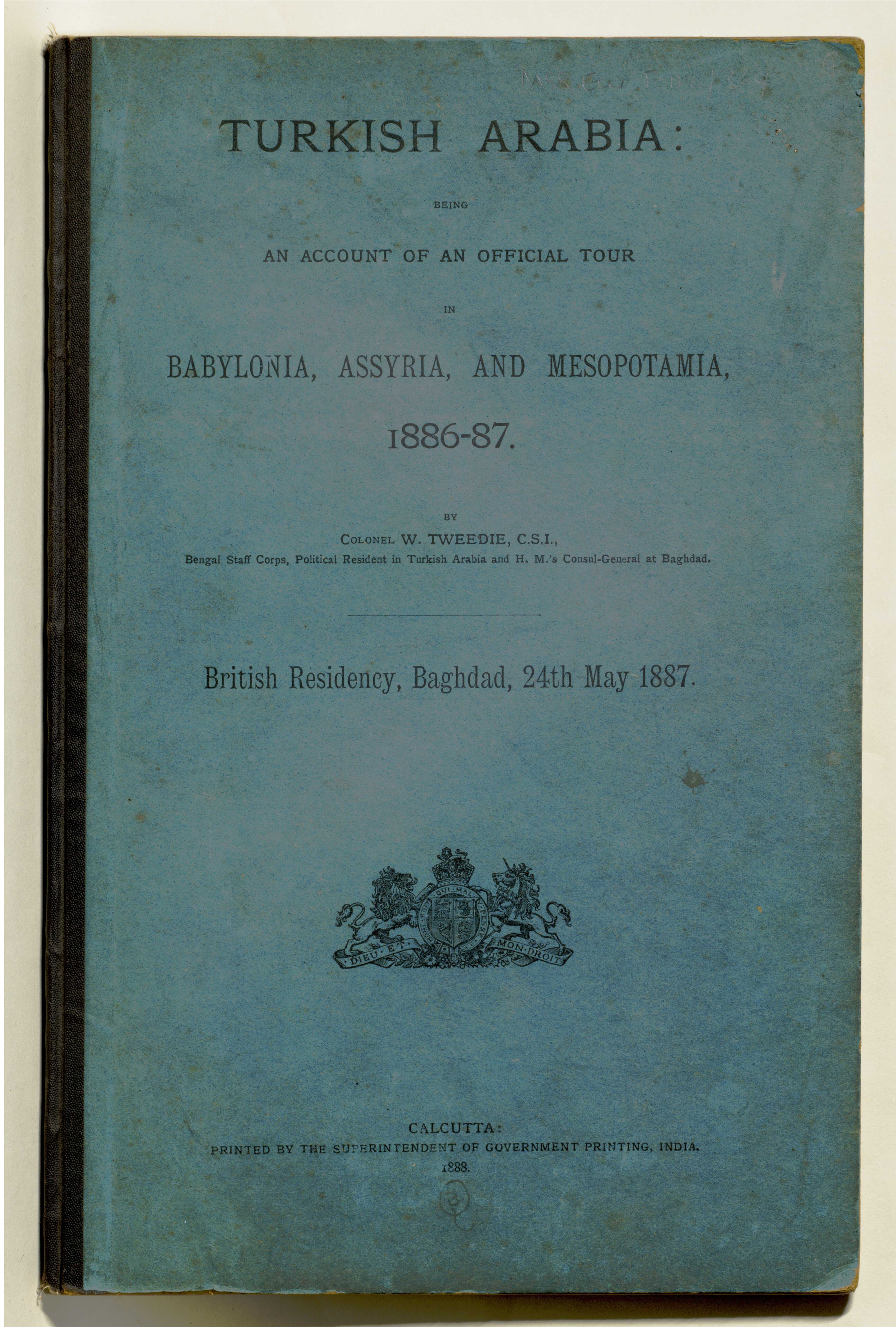
يعتبر هذا المجلد تقريرًا مطبوعًا عن الرحلة الرسمية الشتوية في (١٨٨٦-١٨٨٧) في بابل وآشور وبلاد الرافدين (أو ما يسمى حاليًا بالعراق)، والتي قام بها العقيد ويليام تويدى، قائد فيلق أركان حرب البنغال، والمقيم السياسي في مناطق شبه الجزيرة العربية الخاضعة للحكم العثماني (العراق)، هو والقنصل العام في بغداد. وكان هدف الزيارة أن يزور نائب قنصلية الموصل في الجزيرة الفراتية (شمال بلاد الرافدين)، وقنصل البصرة، بالإضافة إلى بعض الرعايا من الهنود المقيمين في مدينتي النجف وكربلاء، وهما مركزين يحج إليهما الشيعة. فضلاً عن هذا فإن الكاتب يعرفها بأنها فرصة لدراسة سكان وخصائص مناطق شبه الجزيرة العربية الخاضعة للحكم العثماني بصورة أكثر عمومية (ورقة ٧). نشرت الجالية البريطانية في بغداد هذا التقرير في الرابع والعشرين من شهر مايو سنة ١٨٨٧، كما نشرته مكتب ملاحظ المطبعة الحكومية في كلكتا في ١٨٨٨.

وقدم المؤلف هذه النسخة إلى جورج كرزون (انظر التذييل في الورقة ٢ظ)

ويحتوى المجلد على جدول بالمحتويات (ورقة ٥)، وقائمة بالخرائط والرسومات التوضيحية (ورقة ٦)، وملاحظة عن الترجمة الحرفية للأسماء بالعربية والفارسية (ورقة ٦ظ) يحتوى المجلد على الأقسام التالية : (القسم الأول I) – السير في مناطق شبه الجزيرة العربية الخاضعة للحكم العثماني، (القسم II) – المواصلات، (القسم III) – المعدات، (القسم IV) – من دجلة إلى الفرات، (القسم V) – عبر الجزيرة، (القسم VI) – موضع البدو في شرق نهر دجلة، (القسم VII) – من الحويجة إلى كركوك، (القسم VIII) – من كركوك إلى السليمانية، (القسم IX) – من السليمانية إلى الموصل، (X) – من الموصل إلى تلال سنجار، ويحتوى على تفاصيل عن اليزيديين، (القسم XI) – من سنجار إلى دير الزور على ضفاف الفرات، (القسم XII) – الضفة اليمنى لنهر الفرات من دير الزور إلى الرمادى، (القسم XIII) – الشامية الجنوبية، (القسم XIV) – كربلاء والنجف، (القسم XV) – من بغداد إلى البصرة ذهابًا وإيابًا بالباخرة، ويحتوى على مجموعة تفاصيل عن ساحل الخليج العربي والمحمرة.

وتتضمن الرسومات التوضيحية ما يلي: "معسكر الإقامة في مناطق شبه الجزيرة العربية الخاضعة للحكم العثماني ١٨٨٦" (الورقة ٧ظ)؛ "عُدة البغال العاملة في مهام النقل والجر" (الورقة ٨)؛ " [بالان،سرج بالصرّة]" والبالان الفارسي" (الورقة ٩)؛ "راكب الجمل العربي: والسرج" "وحدوة الحصان عند العرب والفرس والتركمان والأفغان وآخرين" (الورقة ٩ظ)؛ ربط الحصان بوتد وحبل (الصادرة)" البايواند [حزمة]العربي والفارسي" (الورقة ١٠)؛ " الرشمةالعربية: بما في ذلك (١) الرشمة المناسبة، أو كيس العلف: (٢) إزار [إظار] ،أو اللجام أو رباط رأس الحصان: و (٣) رسن [حرفيًا حبل) أو مكبح الحصان (الورقة ١٠ظ)؛ "والمخيم الطائر: سنجار إلى كربلاء) [(جميع الخيم الثلاث مصنوعة في بغداد)" (الورقة ٢٤).

تشمل الخرائط ما يلي: "خريطة مصاحبة لوصف المقيم البريطاني في رحلته الشتوية في مناطق شبه الجزيرة العربية الخاضعة للحكم العثماني ١٨٨٦-١٨٨٧" (ورقة ٤ظ)؛ "خريطة مبدئية للطريق من هت إلى تكريت مارًا بالجزء الأدنى من الجزيرة (ورقة ١٤ظ)؛ "إيالة الموصل العثمانية، ١٨٨٧"، "خريطة لمدينة الموصل (بعد الرائد ف. جونز) ١٨٥٢" (ورقة ١٨ظ)؛ "الطريق الأكثر استقامة (عبر الصحراء السورية) لراكبي الإبل فقط، بين بغداد والبحر المتوسط، كما سارت فيه الجمال العربية التابعة للقنصل الراحل" (الورقة ٢٧).



TURKISH ARABIA:

BEING

AN ACCOUNT OF AN OFFICIAL TOUR

IN

BABYLONIA, ASSYRIA, AND MESOPOTAMIA,

1886-87.

BY

COLONEL W. TWEEDIE, C.S.I.,

Bengal Staff Corps, Political Resident in Turkish Arabia and H. M.'s Consul-General at Baghdad.

British Residency, Baghdad, 24th May 1887.

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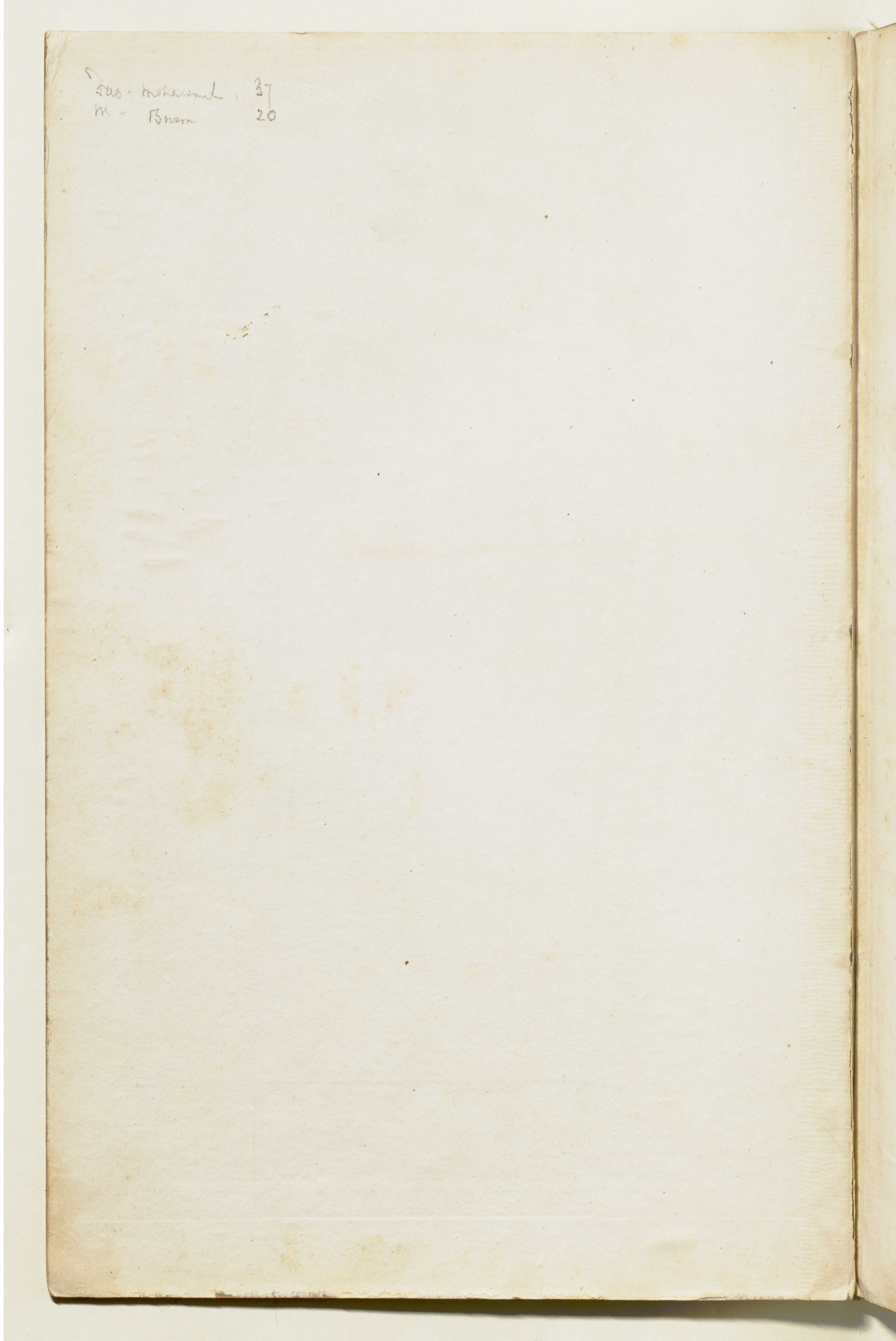
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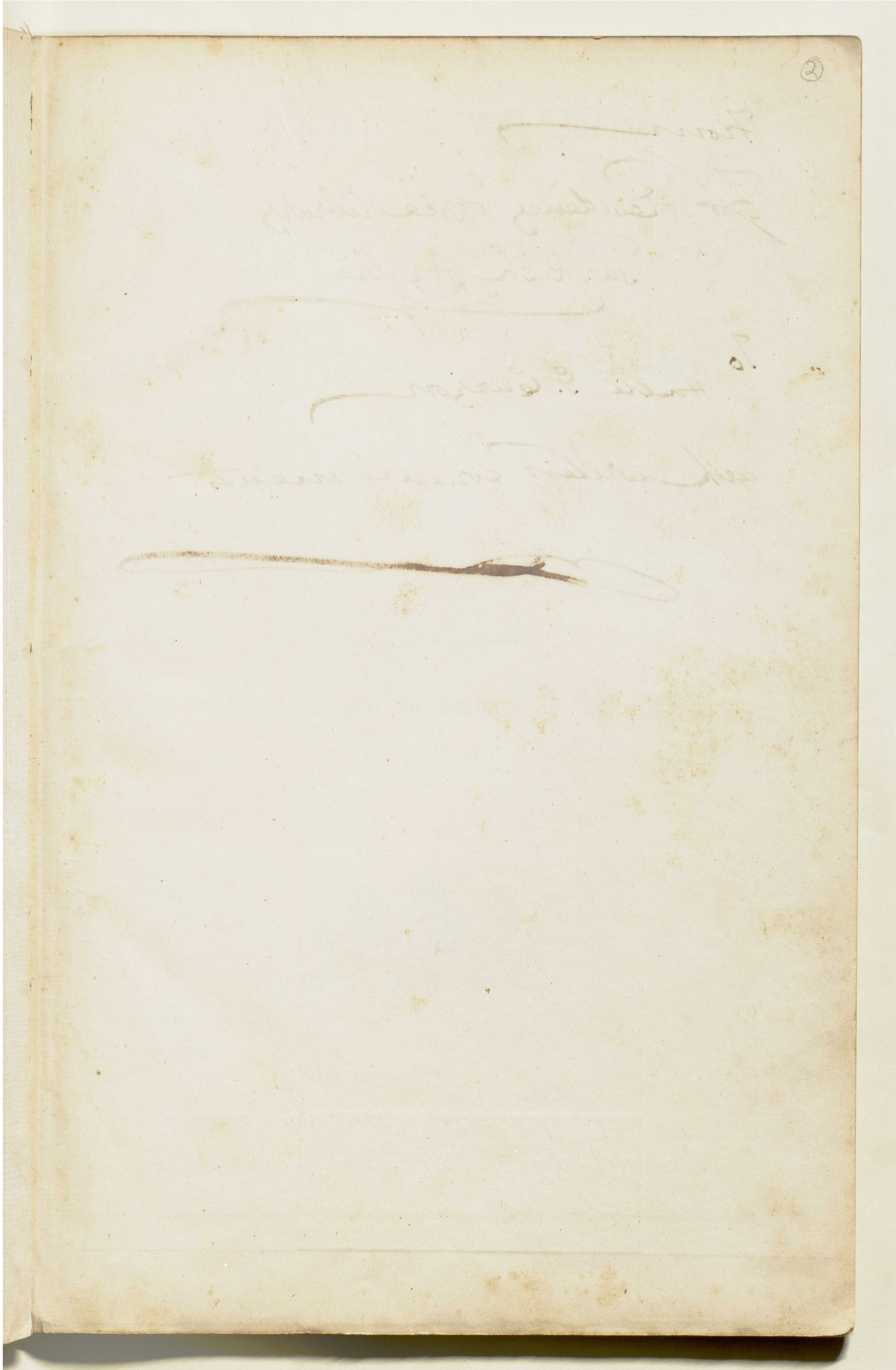

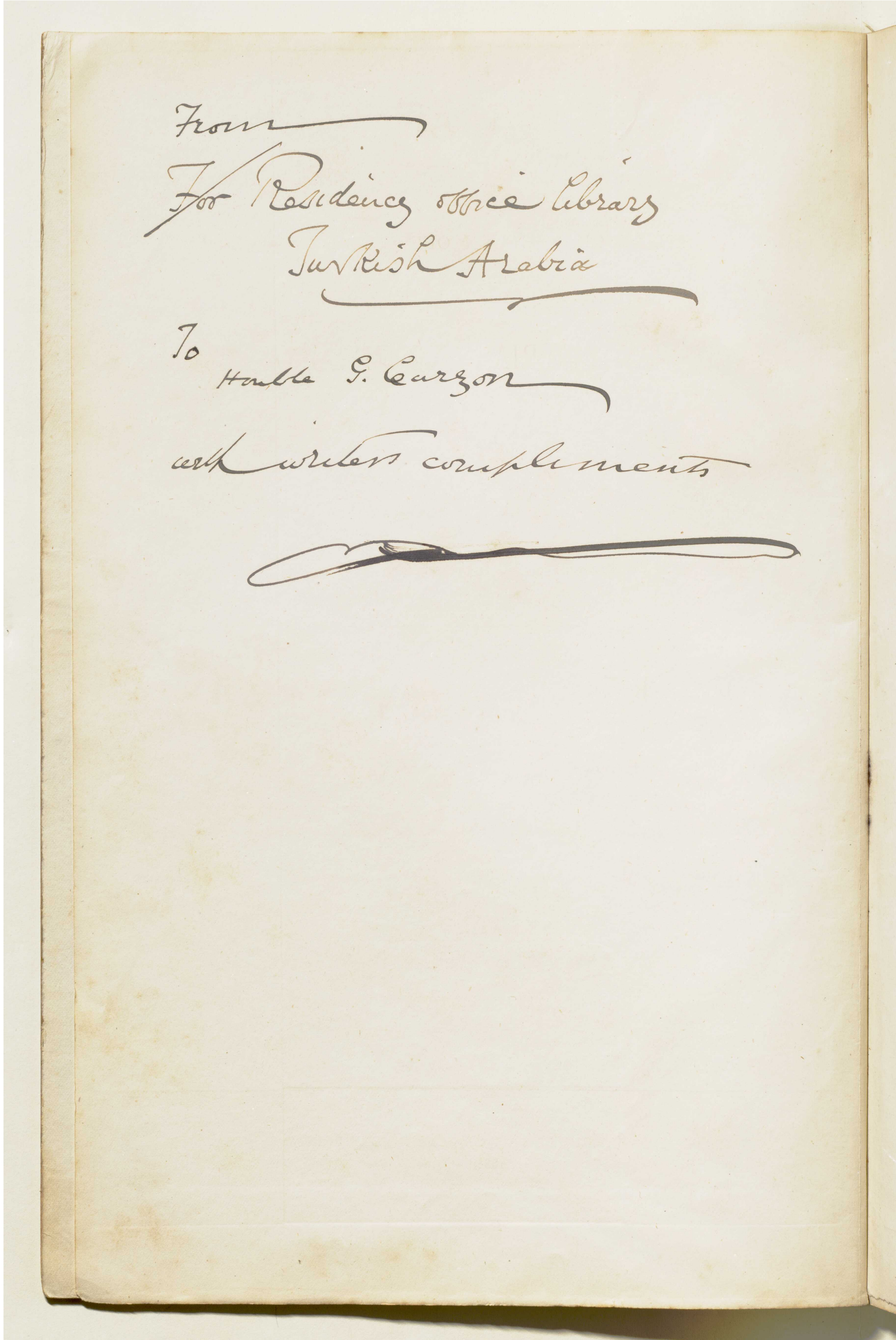

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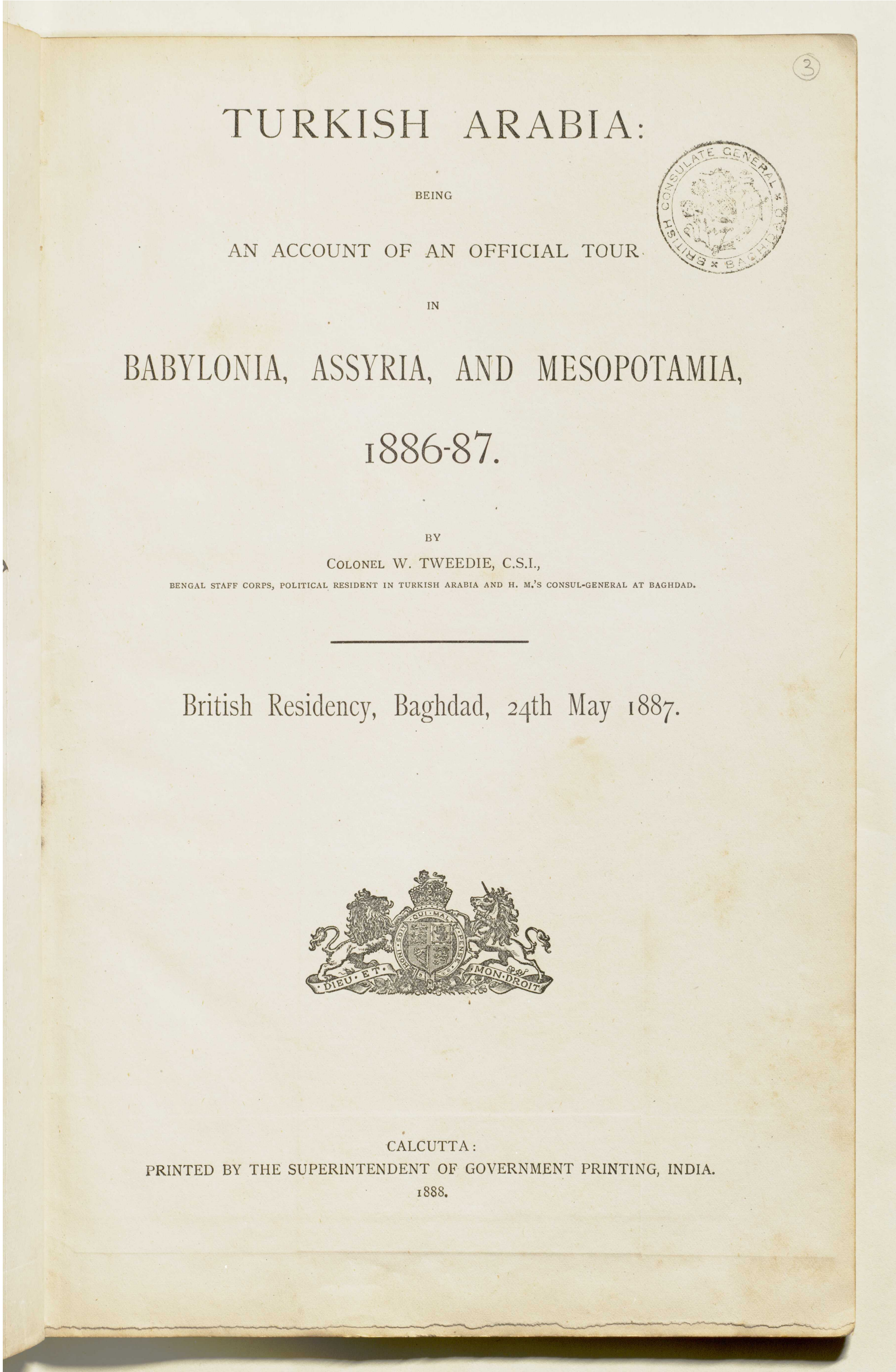

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TURKISH ARABIA:

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BABYLONIA, ASSYRIA, AND MESOPOTAMIA,

1886-87.

CONSULATE GENERAL · BRITISH · BAGHDAD

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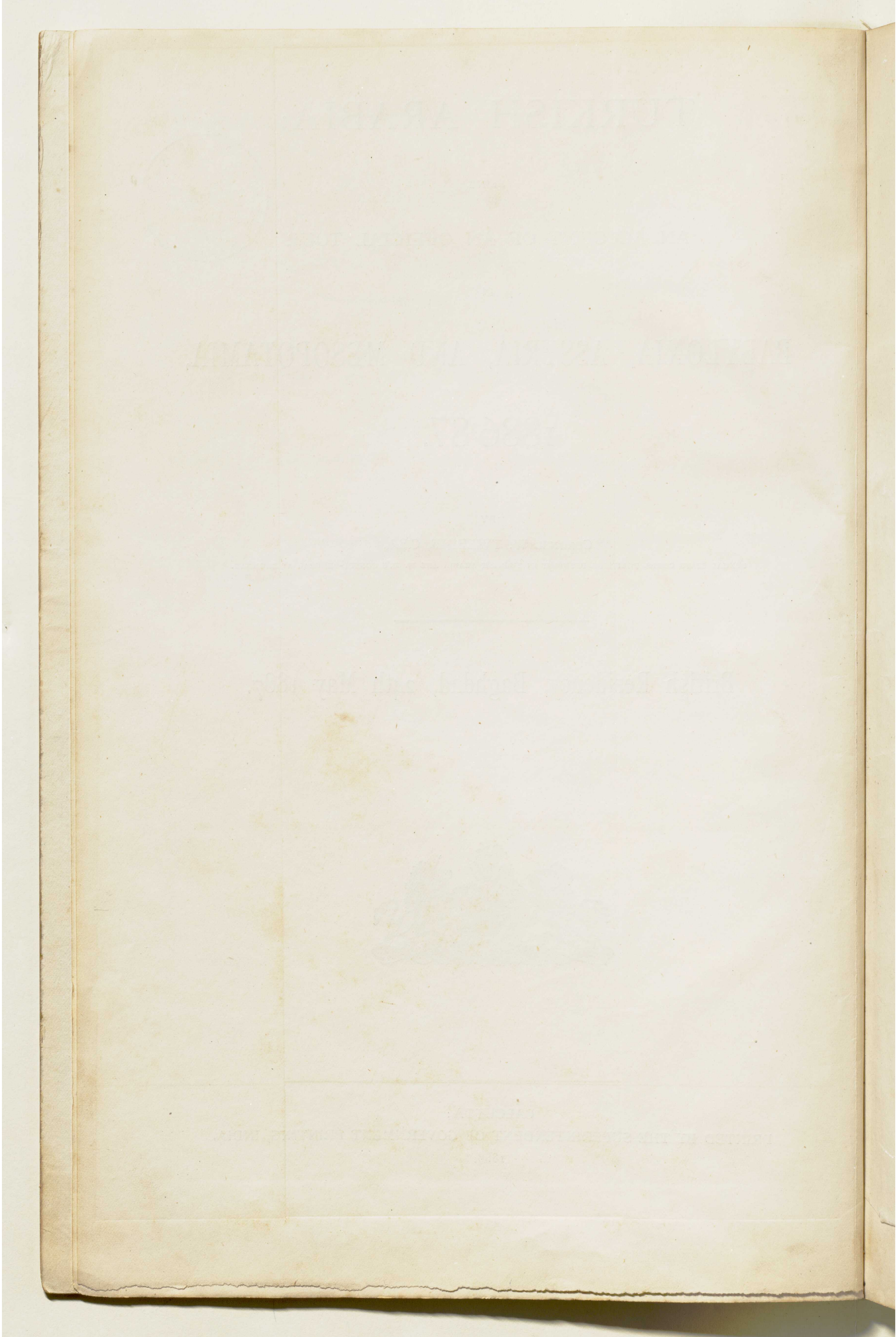

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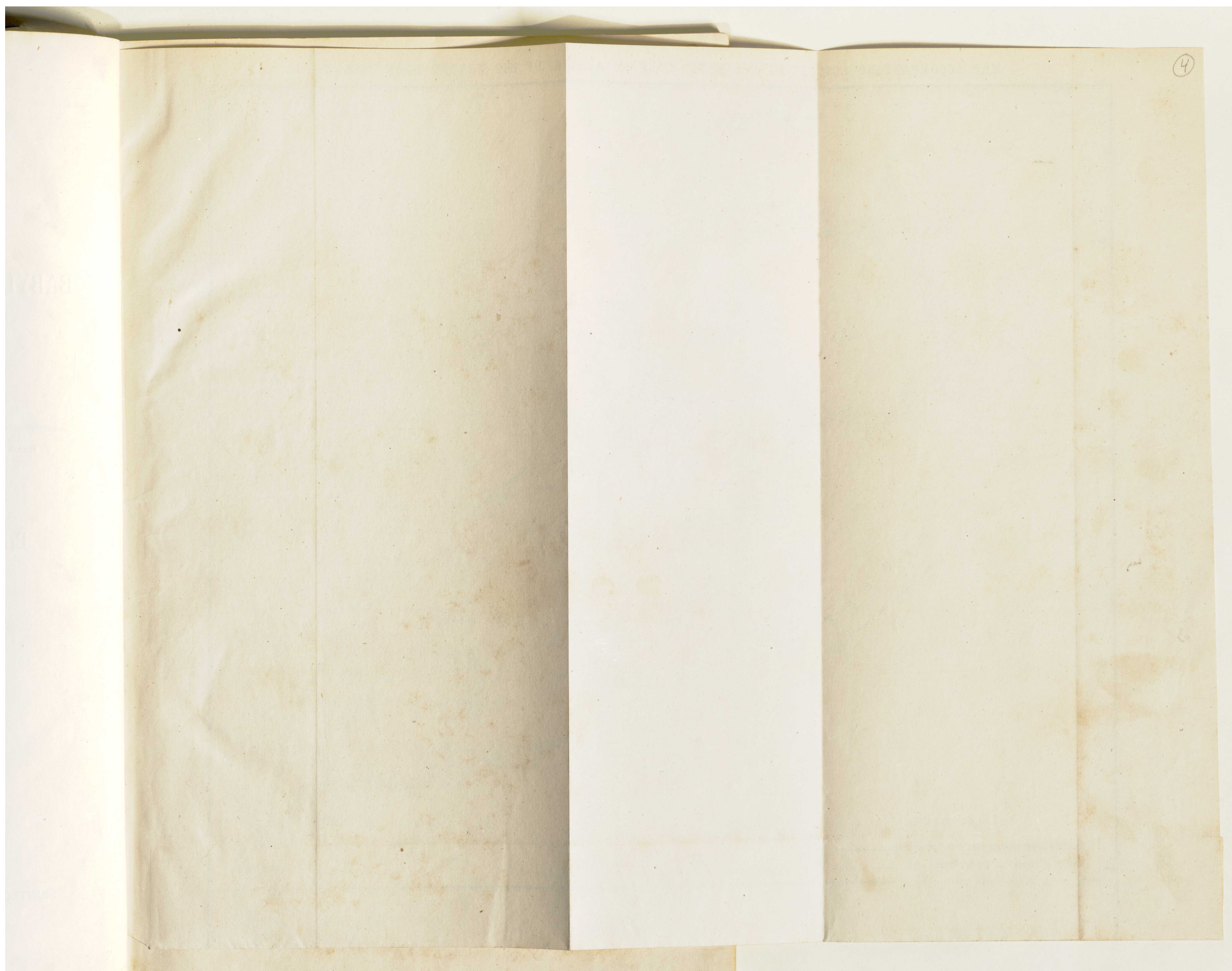

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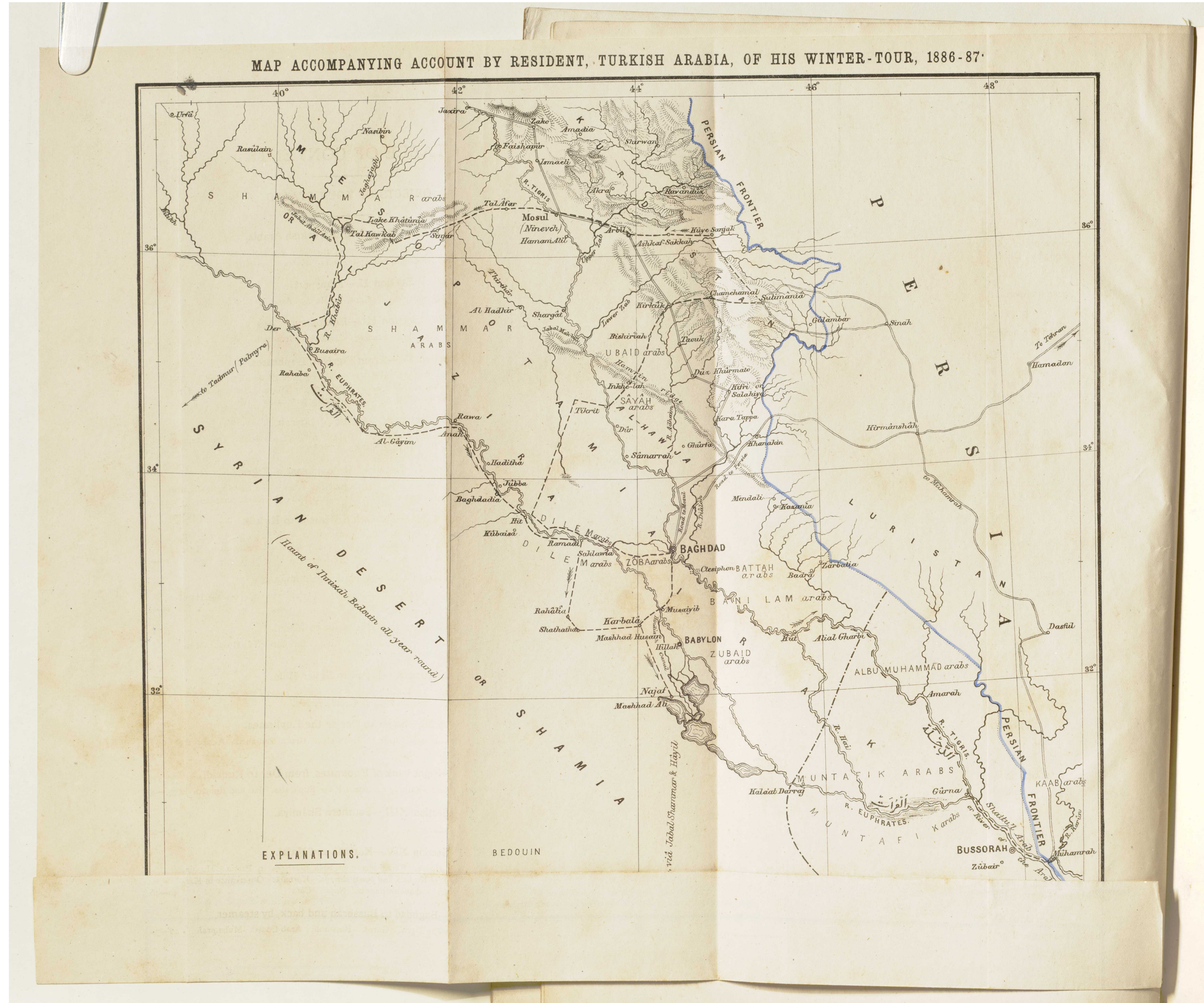

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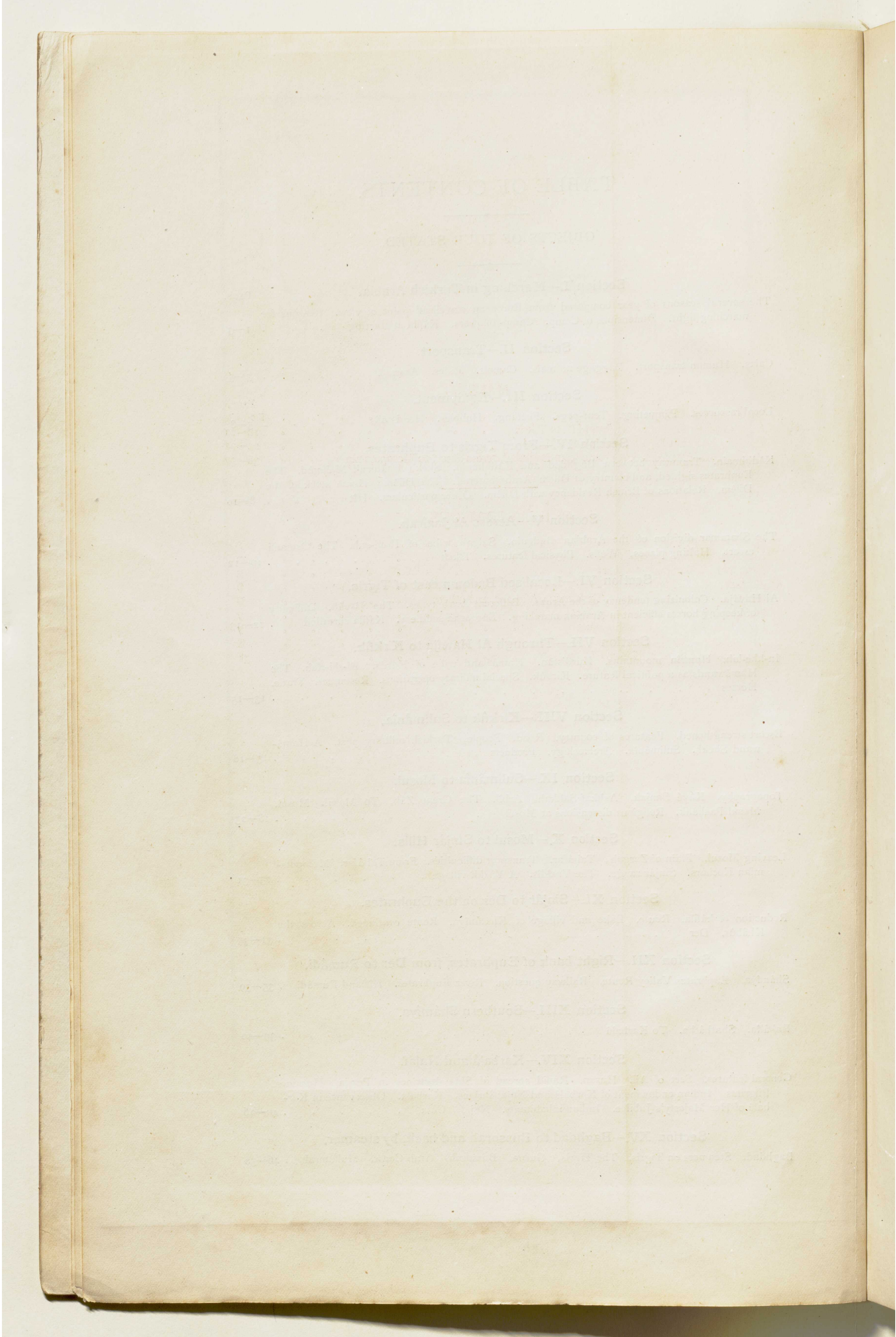

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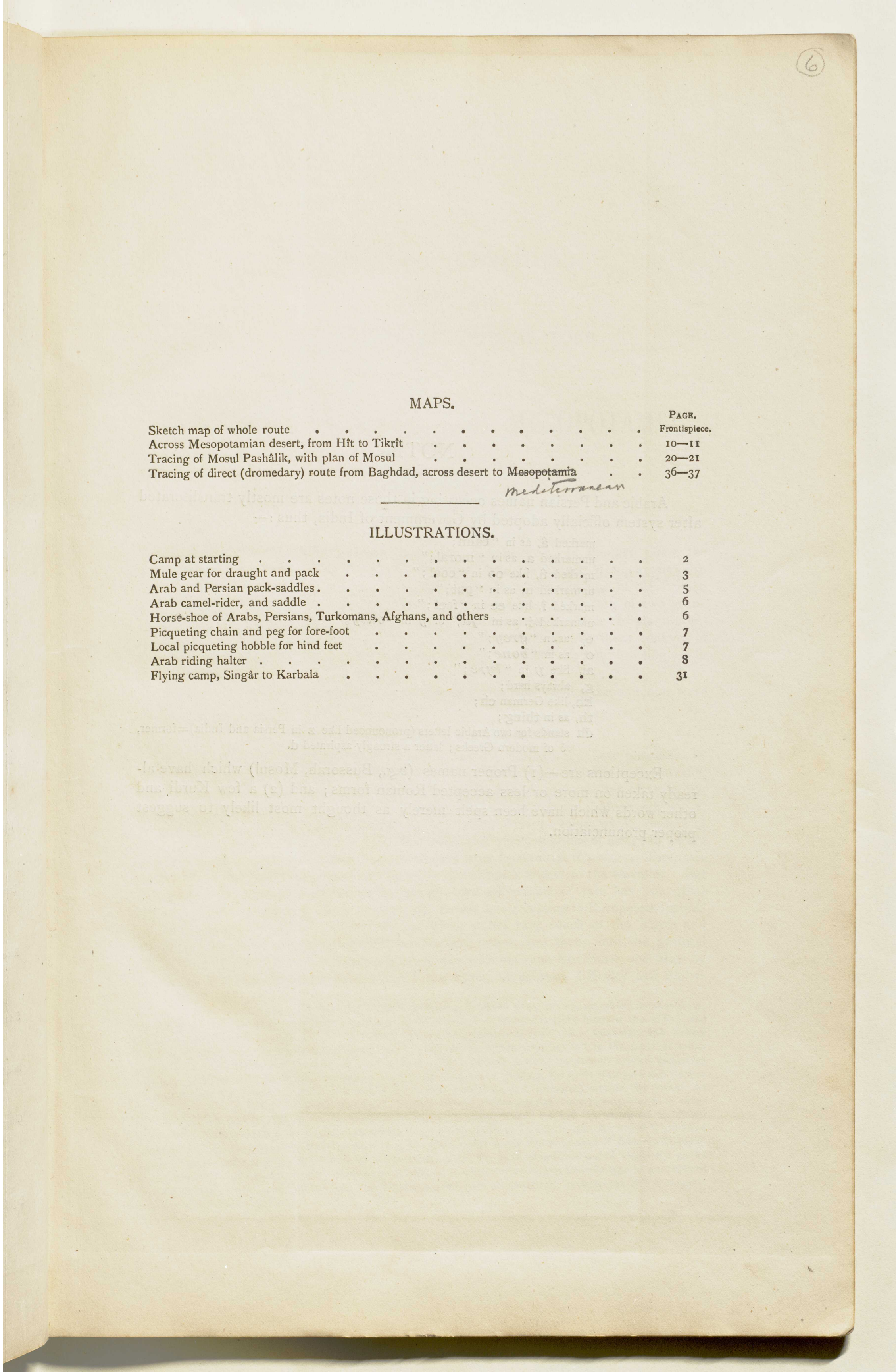

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NOTE.

Arabic and Persian names occurring in these notes are mostly transliterated after system officially adopted by Government of India, thus :—

marked **â**, as in "**calm**;"
unmarked **a**, as in "**moral**;"
marked **û**, like **oo** in "**cool**;"
unmarked **u**, as in "**put**;"
marked **î**, like **ee** in "**feet**;"
unmarked **i**, as in "***fit***," or ***y*** in "***only***;"
e, as in "***grey***;"
o, as in "***bone***;"
ai, like ***y*** in "***lyre***;"
g, always hard;
kh, like German **ch**;
th, as in **thing**;
dh stands for two Arabic letters (pronounced like **z** in Persia and India)=former, δ of modern Greeks; latter a strongly aspirated **d**.

Exceptions are—(1) Proper names (*e.g.*, Bussorah, Mosul) which have already taken on more or less accepted Roman forms; and (2) a few Kurdi and other words which have been spelt merely as thought most likely to suggest proper pronunciation.

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TURKISH ARABIA:

BEING

AN ACCOUNT OF AN OFFICIAL TOUR

IN

BABYLONIA, ASSYRIA, AND MESOPOTAMIA,

1886-87.

THE objects of the extensive tour now to be traced were these: In the first place, the Vice-Consulate of Mosul, in Upper Mesopotamia, also the Consulate of Bussorah, near the head of the Persian Gulf, required to be visited; the former after an interval of five, the latter, of two years. So also did Her Majesty's Indian subjects located at the two great centres of Shîa pilgrimage, Karbalâ and Najaf, lying about fifty miles apart towards the southern confines of the Baghdad Pashâlik. And, moreover, an opportunity was much desired of seeing something of the inhabitants and features of Turkish Arabia * generally.

Objects of Tour.

The following notes are meant to show how, and with what results, these objects were carried out:—

Section I.—Marching in Turkish Arabia.

The time of starting (middle of October) was not perhaps the best possible. In Irâk, up to well on in November, the sun is still powerful, while the heat by day makes adequate shelter of some importance for unacclimatised Europeans. Moreover, winter was at hand; and winter in these latitudes means short days, piercing winds, courses of rain lasting sometimes for a week, bare plains nay even scanty supplies of forage in village markets, snow-covered mountains, and often hard frost from sunset to sunrise. From one point of view, no doubt, this abundance of water recommends winter to the traveller. But the general diffusion of water in wells, springs, and collections of rain has one great drawback. For all through winter the nomadic hordes so interesting to Europeans, instead of being encamped, as in the summer droughts, within easy reach of the Tigris and Euphrates, for the most part retire with their camels, mares, and sheep into the pastoral solitudes of the interior. Thus they are rarely met with between November and May by the casual, still less, official traveller. And it is a matter of extreme difficulty and uncer-

The several seasons of year compared from European travellers' point of view.

* "Turkish Arabia," like "British India," is a term belonging to official rather than geographical nomenclature. In one sense it might even be stretched so as to take in all provinces or territories lying between the Indian and Mediterranean Oceans, peopled, in the main, by Arabic-speaking subjects of the Sultân. In another and stricter sense some would even consider it wrong to call any country Arabia which does not fall to the south of a line drawn from about Suez to the top of the Persian Gulf. But "Turkish Arabia," as actually applied, means the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates, comprising, among other and minor divisions, the great Mesopotamian steppes towards the north and the alluvial plains of Irâk Arabi (capital, Baghdad; port, Bussorah) towards the south. As for Arabia proper, or peninsular Arabia, though the Sultân asserts a shadowy claim to sovereignty over it, in virtue of an alleged inheritance from the Arabian Caliphs, and was able lately, chiefly through the enterprise of Midhat Pasha when Governor-General of Baghdad, somewhat to extend the limits of his actual authority within it, yet large portions of it are as a matter of fact independent of him. Not to refer to our own settlement of Aden, in its south-western, and the coast kingdom of Oman in its south-eastern, angle, the great central plateau of Najd—the cradle of the Arab race—is the seat of native Arabian principalities, in which the ancient or Bedouin type of government here blends itself, there maintains a struggle, with Wahâbyism and other comparatively modern, yet still thoroughly indigenous, features or elements.

A

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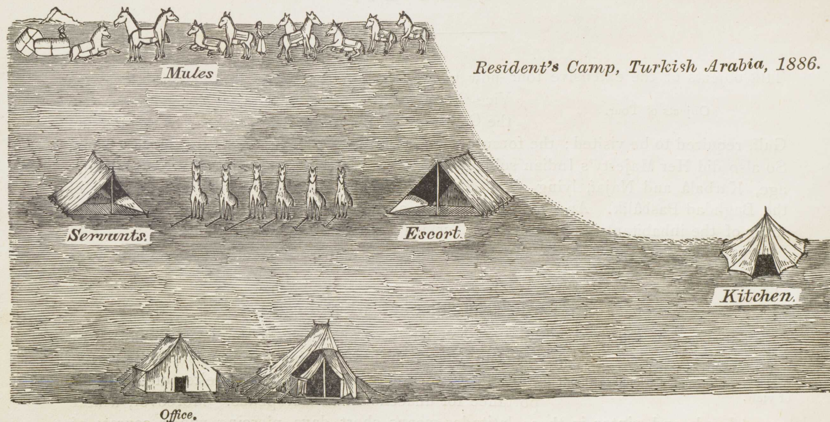
tainty to follow them up at a season when there is water for them everywhere. On the present occasion there was no room for the balancing of such considerations. The question of the necessity of any tour being undertaken at all had not been left unraised by the Sublime Porte. On 6th September 1886, final orders on the subject reached Baghdad from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople. And opportunity being nowhere more apt than here to slip away, time was taken by the forelock. Here it may be worth noting (1) between May and November, European troops could not easily move over Turkish Arabia; (2) in the other months, if properly equipped, they could march in every direction, with the lightest of tents, and with the prospect of improving, instead of suffering in physique.

Reasons for marching light.

Unlike that of India, the population is here exceedingly sparse, and even near a town or village the people, however friendly, are too apathetic, or perhaps too afraid of the exactions of officials, to come forward with their labour or supplies. So unskilled at tent pitching are the local servants that a couple of men, with any casual assistance available, will take two hours or more to set up an ordinary Indian hill-tent. This renders it highly necessary to cut down the impedimenta. And the difficulty not so much of obtaining as of keeping right one's transport, makes it of hardly secondary importance to reduce the number of camp-followers.

Dimensions of camp.

That the former point was fully considered will appear from the subjoined sketch of camp pitched the first march out of Baghdad.



Resident's Camp, Turkish Arabia, 1886.

If the above modest scale (subsequently reduced by more than half) be compared with that described in the following extract from the (published) "Narrative" of an official visit to the same parts in 1820, by Mr. Claudius James Rich, Bombay Civil Service, the H. E. I. Co.'s Resident at Baghdad when the Indian empire was young, the change in the times generally will be well illustrated :—

"I feel it to be my duty on this occasion to travel in my official character; and therefore Mrs. Rich is obliged to submit to the disagreeable restraint of * * * attended by women-servants, and all the state of a *haram*. On account of public business I am likewise compelled to take with me many of the officers and servants of the Residency, and others have requested permission to accompany us, so that we shall form a very numerous party; and instead of incurring the expense of native troops for our protection on the road, I take the guard of twenty-five sepoys and their Subehdar allowed the Resident as a body-guard by the Government of Bombay. They are a very respectable, brave set of men and seem delighted at the prospect of marching.

"In the afternoon I went round the camp to see that all our party were assembled, and were comfortable. * * * I had been obliged to take tents and we were accompanied by a body of Arab tent-pitchers to pitch and raise the camp every night and morning. It consisted of fourteen or fifteen tents, as small a number as we could possibly do with, for a party of between fifty and sixty people, composed of Christians, Jews, Turks, Armenians, Persians, and Indians."*

* Describing his following on another and shorter tour (1813), Mr. Rich says :—

"Our escort consisted of my own troop of Hussars (*sic*): with a galloper gun, a havildar and twelve sepoys, about seventy baggage mules," &c., &c.

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Camp-followers.

On the present occasion the public servants consisted (at first starting) of one Arabic writer, four horsemen of the Residency escort, one groom, one water-carrier, and two tent-pitchers. By degrees three horsemen and several servants were sent back for the sake of lightening what Persians call the "*kár-wán*," and Arabs, the "*káfila*."

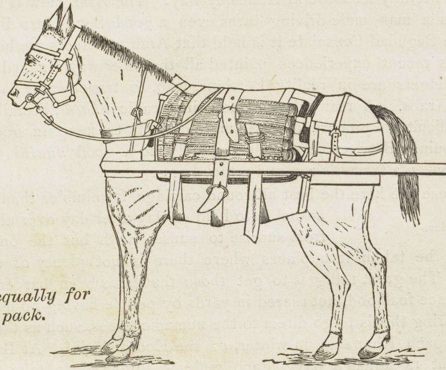
Káfila at starting.

For the public and private baggage and followers sixteen mules had to be taken. Two of these were laden with skins of drinking water, and at least as many more with forage. In these regions not the humblest camp-follower is expected to walk.

Section II.—Transport.

Carts.

In Turkish Arabia wheeled carriage is seldom seen as yet outside the larger towns, though sometimes an old mulla, or infirm official, will take either an ancient carriage of European extraction or a very primitive local ark into unlikely places. The late Commander-in-Chief of the Baghdad Corps d'Armée, besides starting public conveyances drawn by ponies between the town and suburbs, introduced a number of ponderous mule-waggons for delivering soldiers' rations. The rumbling of these in the narrow streets sounds like thunder, and they are blamed for the fall lately of several old houses. They are too unwieldy for outside use; but considering (1) how flat on the whole this country is, and (2) that a mule can draw four times the weight he can carry, there is no doubt any number of properly made baggage-carts, Bombay *tongas*, and even Bengal *ekkas*, could here be utilized with the best results. If ever this have to be tried, one good mode of doing so would be this—



Mule gear equally for draught and pack.

so that the animal might be worked equally in harness and under a pack. The above is after a design put forward by Captain G. Gaisford, in a paper contributed to the "Journal of the United Service Institute of India" a few years ago.

Human transport.

In towns this is in great request. Large classes of Arabs make a profession of carrying burdens on their backs; and a Kurd in particular will take it as a compliment to be told he is as good as a mule! Peasants also, both men and women, are accustomed to carry loads of produce to market towns. Thus there would probably be no difficulty in organising in Turkish Arabia trains of carriers on a large scale. The Indian *duli*, or litter, is here represented by the Persian *takht-i-rawán*, the poles of which rest on mules; but if human "bearers" were wanted there would be plenty of them. The Arab having no notion of caste will do almost anything for money, without bestowing a thought on whether his fathers and grandfathers did it before him.

Baggage animals.

As the case stands it is on the backs of camels, mules, ponies, and asses that the traffic of the country mostly proceeds. These are to be hired or bought largely at centres like Baghdad and Mosul; but by no means everywhere. The advantages and disadvantages of hiring, as against buying, are pretty evenly balanced. On the one hand, animals do infinitely better with their owners than with servants; on the other, it is impossible to prevent the owners of hired transport from having a voice as to what routes are practicable. On the whole, recent experiences have been all in favour of hiring, provided it is done

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completely at starting, and too much dependence is not placed on fresh animals being met with by the way. Transport officers might learn something from observing how Persians and Arabs deal with loads. Out of materials lying ready to hand, such as blankets stitched together, they will make cradles as big as boats which, when placed athwart an animal's back, will take twice the quantity of chopped straw, earth, or even bricks, that it would be possible to carry pannier fashion, half on one side, half the other. With all this no carrier ever hopes to keep his animal's backs whole. The kinds of saddle in common use may not produce such deep wounds as are to be seen in our own transport lines, but the raws and rubs are bad enough, though it is surprising how indifferent to them both quadruped and master are. An Arabian poet wishing to describe a perfectly disciplined man could find no apter simile than "patient as a camel under whose saddle many a sore has healed of its own accord."

Camels.

These have the advantage of requiring neither barley nor chopped straw, and in winter hardly any water, but then they are unsuitable in mountainous regions, as towards the Turko-Persian frontier, or where no herbage for them grows. Many of them even refuse to eat barley. When moving through any of their favourite herbs, if allowed to slacken their pace after midday, and browse as they go, they will still make between 2 and 2½ miles an hour. If unloaded a couple of hours before sunset, allowed to graze till the last minutes of twilight, and then collected round the tent, they will sit chewing the cud or sleeping all night. Moreover, the camel-owner is usually more easy to manage than the muleteer. The latter is not a favourite, and the transport officers of the Abyssinian expedition probably still remember their experiences when shipload after shipload of Baghdad mules, with their attendants, were literally let loose in Annesley Bay. The Arab view is that, while camel-keeping elevates a man, mule-driving turns even a good Sunni into little better than a Persian! In the Baghdad Consulate it is held that Arab muleteers are better than Persian ones. But one's recent experiences pointed all the other way; indeed many of the supposed Arab muleteers are in reality Persians, who, to travel safer in Sunni countries, pretend to be Arabs. A real riding-camel (in Arabic *dhalúl*, literally "*subjected*," or "*patient*,") is difficult to procure, and still more difficult to keep in good health, except among the Bedouin. Between a common camel and a good *dhalúl* there is as much difference as between a farmer's cob and a race-horse.

Mules.

Probably these are here the best all-round carriage, far nimbler than camels or ponies, and able to hold on day after day over all sorts of ground, from sunrise to sunset, with but the one drawback that they cannot well be taken into places where there is not plenty of water, barley, and chopped straw. The great thing is to get those that have been hardened by labour and exposure ever since foalhood, not reared in yards by people having no use for them. The best way of securing this is to go direct to the nomadic tribes, such as the Sinjâweeyah of Persia, who approach Khanakîn in winter, or the Koordish Jâf. At Baghdad, mule-hire just now is about 14 annas a day. Each mule is supposed to take 4 cwt., or 448 lb avoirdupois, though this may refer only to those used inside the town, for carrying bales between the customs house and the merchants' stores. One of the loads actually carried throughout the recent journey, when weighed at the end of it, scaled 2 cwt. 2 qrs. and 1 lb, or 281 lb, exclusive of the saddle. Towards the end of the Abyssinian expedition, His Excellency Sir R. Napier had to restrict each load to 100 lb only. In this country a mule is seldom thought too heavily loaded to have no room for a man atop. No covering is given but the pack-saddle, which is kept on day and night, except for a few minutes on halt-days, while the animal is curried over. Two muleteers, including owner, look after seven or eight mules. No Arab or Persian ever thinks of working his animals tied each to the other's tail. The love of fixing everything in "grades," or groves, which besets the official mind, has led to the adoption of this plan in the Osmanli military service, as in our own transport trains. But otherwise the eastern muleteer takes particular care to let his strongest and fastest animals press to the front. With this object he makes his whole string consist of female mules, with one entire pony as common leader. This pony, when the object is to mark time, and earn easily a day's hire, he loads up with barley or chopped straw, and causes to lag behind. No amount of driving will then make the mules in front of him step out. When, on the contrary, the man really means going, he mounts his pony himself, and pushes on ahead. Then the *káfila* will stream over the desert almost like a Bedouin *ghazú*,* making perhaps five miles an hour, or even more, for a whole day, including stoppages.

* *Ghazú* or *ghazwu*, a party of mounted Bedouin out on foray.

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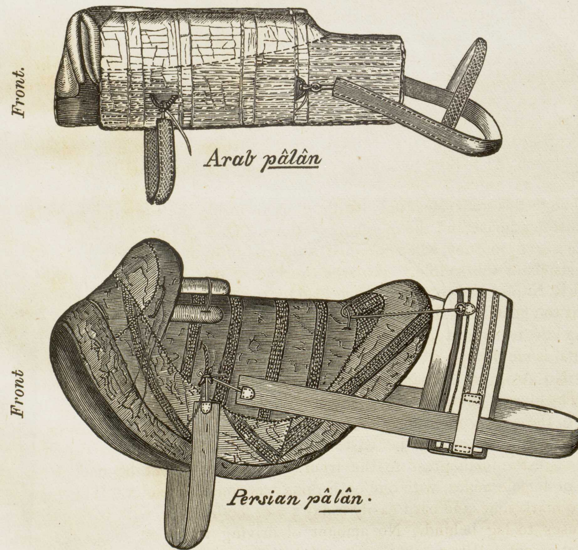
Droves of these, freighted with merchandise, are to be seen on every road. Teams of mules are thought incomplete without a few small donkies, ostensibly to carry the muleteer's bundles, really perhaps to serve as drags; though when it suits their masters, these soon show they are not to be left behind. The white asses of *Al Hasa*, between the Persian Gulf and Najd, the aristocracy of the race, carriers of Muftis and Pâshas, are too valuable and high-mettled to be in general use for packs. The asinine drudge of the country is perhaps the smallest and humblest of all his species, sometimes not much bigger than a goat, and yet a great deal better than he looks. About £ 2 is his price, when he is to be bought at all, which is not every day, except in the large towns. The mountainous parts of Persian Koordistân produce a very large slate-coloured donkey, not unlike the English variety, but of a singularly stolid and immoveable disposition. Two have lately been sent to India for mule-breeding, but it is not known how they are answering. For this purpose, the Arabs, who are all for *blood*, think there is nothing like the Hasâ breed; and the further south one goes the greater the infusion of it. One thing that makes Arab carriers so fond of donkies is that the Bedouin holds this brave little animal in too great contempt to carry off *kâfilas* composed of him.

Asses.

Section III.—Equipment.

If ever India have to put a force of, say, 100,000 men between her Afghan frontier and the Caspian, it will certainly have to bring with it, not only its own equipments, but the material and workmen to keep everything in repair, as well as turn out on short notice fresh supplies. Otherwise there would be little use in buying horses or mules with no suitable gear for them obtainable. To a certain limited extent towns like Baghdad, Mosul, and Der would serve as bases in this respect, especially if the Osmanli military factories were available, and canvas or cotton tents and warm clothing might there be obtained. Under all circumstances could be collected supplies of the black woollen blanketing used by the nomadic populations as tents, and not to be despised for the same purpose even for European soldiers. Pack-saddles could also be bought or made up in large numbers, both of the Arab and Persian patterns, thus:—

Local resources.



These are simplicity itself, not too heavy, adapted to the country, and easily mended. Foreign pack-saddles, such as the Otago, Asiatic muleteers cordially hate; though, perhaps, if introduced to the Punjâb or Bombay Commissariat pads, they might take kindly to

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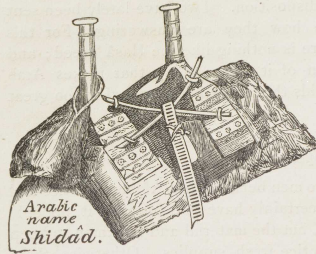
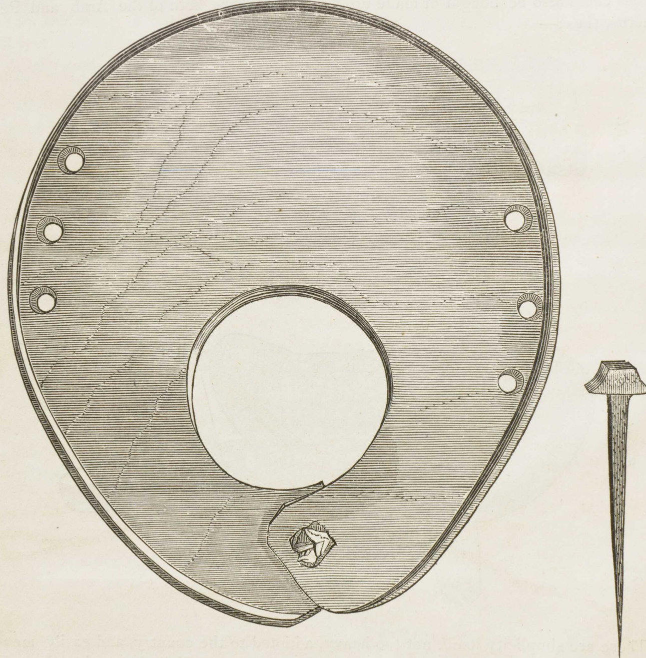
them. The Arab camel-saddle, for loads, is a thing any one can put together. The riding camel's saddle is also simple, though often richly ornamented. Its peculiarity is that the rider, instead of bestriding it, sits like this :—

Arab Camel-rider: and Saddle.



It is hard work getting used to the above. Falling off comes more natural than staying on, and it is very trying on the thigh muscles. Riding-saddles of Indian pattern could be made in Baghdad or Mosul. Ample supplies of horseshoes also can generally be depended on. The kind everywhere used is like this :—



Horseshoe of Arabs, Persians, Turkomans, Afghans, and others.

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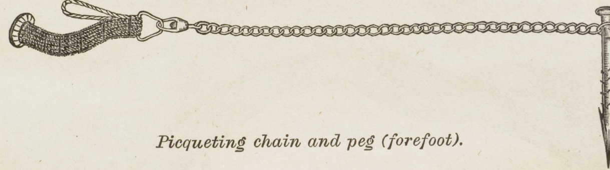
These do excellently. But a desideratum is a better-tempered nail, the points of which, when driven through the crust, might be split before being clinched, instead of as now left in a very clumsy state to cause "brushing." Much beyond this the local resources do not go. Thus, a march out of Mosul, the ridge-pole of a small Baghdad-made tent snapped. A village wright then turned out another, which broke directly. No attempt was made to get a new one till the considerable town of Ana, on the Euphrates, was reached, and the one made there proved just as brittle as its predecessor. Then, as to leather, even Baghdad saddlers import chiefly the flimsier kinds, well enough inside towns, but useless for the field. The rope-makers have lately been turning out hemp and cotton rope, like what comes from India. But the common rope of the country is made of goats' hair. Under mere strain nothing could be stronger. When it gets hitched round a horse's leg it will cut to the bone rather than break. But it is always in a frayed state, and soon goes to pieces in wet weather. When it comes to bits and bridles, and picqueting gear, for mules and horses, it is even worse. Newly bought horses are often made over with nothing on them whatever, and the only bits procurable are of the kind called by us the "Mameluke," from having first come under our notice long ago in Egypt. This is less meant to guide a horse with than to punish him with when unruly. In addition to a cruelly high port it has an iron ring passing, in lieu of a curb chain, right round the lower jaw. The chances are this ring soon cuts into the flesh. Mules are seldom bitted at all; but pulled about by means of a halter, with an iron nose-band, the edges cutting into the skin. To this is attached the picqueting rope or chain. All these instruments have to be got rid of when the animal passes into European hands; and unless one come provided, there is nothing available to supply their place.

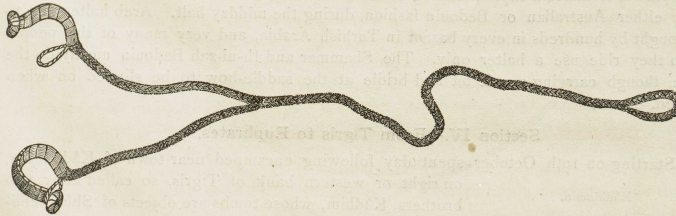
Picqueting.

Many sorts of picqueting gear for mules and horses have come in for trial during this march. For mares and geldings nothing has done better than the forefoot hobble like this:—



Picqueting chain and peg (forefoot).

Five and twenty years ago the above was adopted in cavalry regiments on the Madras establishment. Many then said shoulder-strains and other accidents would be caused by it, but it has not proved so. Every rider can carry it with him, so as to be able to picquet his horse and put his hand to something else directly on halting. It also lets the animal amuse himself by nibbling at the ground, or in rough weather turn his head away from the blast. Even in Baghdad there are no blacksmiths who can make chains having the links of equal strength; and all such gear would have to be provided elsewhere. For entire horses a second anchor was generally found requisite, especially when a little above themselves and the following modified form of the Indian heel-rope being available on the spot answered well:—



Arab and Persian paiwand.

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Tent pegs.

Iron pegs both for tents and heel-ropes are thoroughly distrusted in these parts, and the old-fashioned wooden ones preferred, partly perhaps for the sake of now and then cooking a meal with one of them; but this was not given in to, and in the end no one could say the iron ones did not answer. In the sandy soils of Najd it might be different.

Feeding.

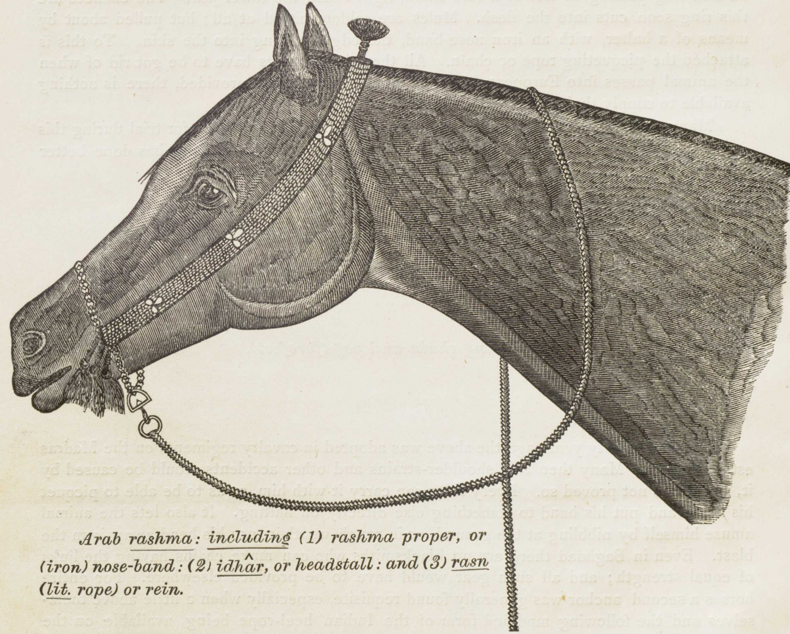
A nose-bag for chopped straw proved as indispensable as the smaller one for barley. Even a town like Baghdad yields no satisfactory material for these. Leather ones are not portable enough; and good canvas ones, such as can be easily rolled up, altogether preferable.

Hobbles.

In most parts of Arabia horse-stealing is so prevalent that a pair of locked iron fetters has to be put round every horse's forepasterns at nightfall.

Headstalls.

For animals picqueted by the forefoot headstalls can be done without; and as every horse in Arabia expects to be unbitted to drink, the place of the cumbrous leather halter is well supplied by the Arab one, of which the following is a sketch :—



Arab rashma: including (1) rashma proper, or (iron) nose-band: (2) idhâr, or headstall: and (3) rasn (lit. rope) or rein.

The above having no bit can be slipped under a plain English Pelham or snaffle. The rope part of it makes a capital leading rein, besides being useful for hobbling the horse with, either Australian or Bedouin fashion, during the midday halt. Arab halters are to be bought by hundreds in every bazar in Turkish Arabia, and very many of the people when they ride use a halter only. The Shammar and Ih-ni-zah Bedouin mostly do the same, though carrying a rude bit and bridle at the saddle-bow to be slipped on when wanted.

Section IV.—From Tigris to Euphrates.

Kâdhimain.

Starting on 19th October, spent day following encamped near town of Kâdhimain, on right or western bank of Tigris, so called after two brothers Kâdhim, whose tombs are objects of Shîa veneration. Kâdhimain is almost a suburb of Baghdad, of which it may be said to form the Shîa quarter. Especially is it favoured by Indian residents and pilgrims.

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The most interesting feature about it perhaps is the tramway connecting it with Baghdad. Of the many works begun by the public-spirited, but unfortunate, Midhat Pasha, when Wâli of Baghdad, this was one of the few that saw completion. Hundreds every day still reap the benefit of it, and its contribution to the revenue must be considerable. The wonder is that, with this to encourage them, neither the capitalists of Baghdad nor its government have as yet laid down a tramway over the flats between Baghdad, Karbalâ, and Najaf.

Tramway between Baghdad and Kâdhimain.

On 21st October left the companionship of the Tigris, and held nearly due west, over Irâk—the ancient "land of Chaldea"—escorted by an officer of the Osmanli mounted police with a party of four under him, all on mules. Country traversed merest desert. That is, not by any means sandy or sterile, but *deserta* in the sense of unpeopled; uncultivated; unreclaimed. After marching from sunrise to near sunset, encamped at a spot called Abu Ghurêb. Here is located, under awnings of black blankets, after the manner of his ancestors, an antique Arab Shekh of the name of Dhâhiru'l Mahmûd, head of a small sept called Zoba, said to have branched off, at a remote period, from the Shammar Bedouin. The relations between this patriarch and the British Residency have chiefly consisted, so far, in his frequently asking, and occasional receiving, presents both in money and other forms. His visible property consists of sheep and a few mares. He and his numerous progeny also cultivate as much as they can with water brought through an artificial cutting from the Tigris. Over against this half-peasant half-Bedouin settlement civilization in the form of a white-washed revenue post or collectorate rears its head ominously. Round this a chronic struggle with the tax-assessor goes on. Periodically the scene shifts to Baghdad, where the old man will spend a week in trying to convince the officials that the locusts or something else have stripped him to the skin. Occasionally also members of the Baghdad Revenue Board go out to Abu Ghurêb in person to see what is to be got. But at head-quarters or on the spot "hold fast" on Dhâhir's part is steadily pitted against "pay out" on the Treasury's. The very reason that the Bedouin cling to the nomadic, and shun the settled, life is that, as their saying goes, in the latter "there is subjection," *i.e.*, *par excellence* to the tax-collector! A scenite horde squatted thus so near Baghdad may almost be thought to resemble those foreign villages set up last year in London. And yet it is not so. For these are the children of the soil; and like the old Hindu land-holders in India, are powers in the country still. More unlikely things have happened than that they should outlast later comers.

Shekh Dhâhiru'l Mahmûd.

The day following west by north was the direction. Vast expanses of wild liquorice (*sûs*), an article of export to Europe, tamarisk (*tarfah*), and other herbs dear to camels were crossed. Then the bright blue waters of the Euphrates showed themselves, and the country of the Dilêm was entered.

The Euphrates sighted; and country of Dilêm Arabs entered.

Originally Bedouins, that is nomadic and strictly pastoral, these afford at the present time an interesting example of a population passing, or newly passed, from that phase to the settled and agricultural. While retaining the tribal form, with much of desert manners, the Dilêm are fast exchanging the spear for the plough; and the black blankets under which their swarms still take shelter are gradually being covered in with reeds, and made more and more like homesteads.

The Dilêm.

Their studs are now largely made up of rough little mares, the commonest kinds of which, locally called *kadîsh*, are used, like bullocks in India, for drawing up water from the Euphrates to irrigate wheat and barley. Even these when put to a better stamp of stallion often produce colts such as will pass muster in Bombay. But likely colts are snapped up so quickly by professional caterers for the Indian horse-market, that in the whole Dilêm country not one was seen such as remount officers look for. In Irâk, as elsewhere, the difficulty of collecting horses for military purposes partly turns on the breeders' wishing to dispose of their young stock as yearlings, while most Governments object to take them till three years old. This gives other buyers plenty of time to pick them up one by one, and disperse them in all directions. The Dilêm say that owing to the Government embargo on the export of horses they now prefer to breed mules. Of these they certainly produce large numbers to meet the demand in every direction. But that they are giving up horse-breeding is not so clear.

Horse stock of the Dilêm.

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In the event of supplies having to be collected, the good-will of the Dilêm would be of much importance. A quarter of a century ago a good deal of friendly intercourse went on between their Shekhs and the British Residency. On the recent occasion they recollected this with pleasure, evincing the greatest regard for the British name and power, seeking for no favours or presents, and vieing with one another in the display of courtesy and hospitality. Of three things, his camel, his mare, and a guest, it is hard to say which comes first in the Bedouin mind. The camel and the mare may be passing away from the Dilêm; but in respect of hospitality to strangers they are Bedouin still.

Relations of British Residency with Dilêm.

Data for an estimate of the numbers of the Dilêm are wanting; nor would it be useful here to insert anything so variable as a list of their Shekhs. Their settlements run along both banks of the Euphrates. The Baghdad Government has them tolerably well in hand, maintaining in their country two revenue-posts which are gradually taking on the form of towns. One of these, Saklâwîa, is on the Mesopotamian or Eastern bank of the Euphrates, and the other, Rumâdi, a military post, on the western, that is, just within the great desert territory called Shâmîa, connecting peninsular Arabia with Syria, within which the warlike Ih-ni-zah roam. Though paying revenue to Baghdad the Dilêm probably think the tribute or blackmail yielded by them to their formidable Ih-ni-zah neighbours a better guarantee for the safety of their flocks and herds. Not very long ago their desert blood came out, and they allowed themselves to be drawn into a desperate raid upon the Shammar. Unlike the generality of such affairs, this proved sanguinary. Besides suffering severe defeat, the Dilêm, as living under the law, were called heavily to account by Government: and have given little trouble subsequently. 22nd to 27th October was spent among them: now halting, now moving, now on one side the Euphrates, now the other—thanks to the ferry boat at Rumâdi.

Other particulars.

On 28th October the tents were pitched on the Euphrates, opposite Hît—the ancient Is—having a population of about three thousand. According to Herodotus, Hît yielded the bitumen in which the bricks used in the building of Babylon were laid. And to this day such prosperity as it enjoys depends on its fountain of the same material. A worse supplied place than Hît, from an equipment point of view, could scarcely be: not a mule or donkey could be procured in it, and it seemed to have neither workmen nor material. Its inhabitants made many applications for European medicines, especially for the eyes.

Hît.

Not so much as a charitable dispensary seems ever to be thought of, by the Government at least, in all Asiatic Turkey.

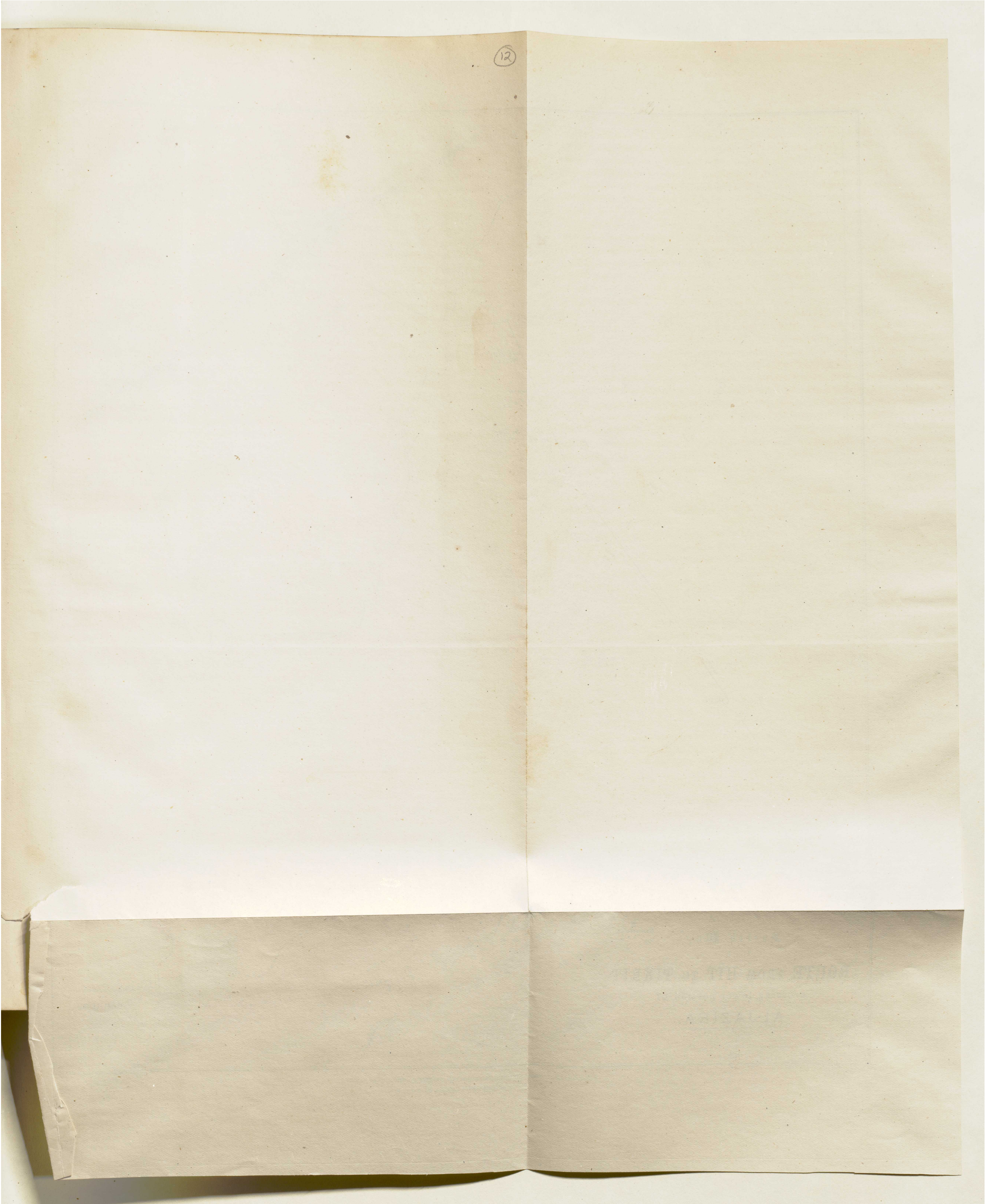
Section V.—Across Al Jazîrah.

Jazîrah means in Arabic anything "cut off." The great triangular space thus described by the Arabs, covering some 55,000 square miles, corresponds generally with what the Greeks were the first to call Mesopotamia—the country between the Tigris and Euphrates.* In striking across its southern or steppe portion from Hît to Tikrît, October 30th to November 2nd were spent. Direction north-east. As one did not keep with the *kâfila*, but went off exploring, the pace depended too much on the muleteers for the distance traversed to be measured by the time test. The first three marches lasted from about an hour before sunrise to near sunset, while the fourth was only a half march. The weather was perfect, though showery. A column of cavalry or mounted infantry carrying water and other supplies could get over the same ground in three days. No trace of human occupation presented itself, except the tents here and there of pastoral hordes, mostly of the Shammar.

Swarming out, less than a century ago from that *officina gentium* Central Arabia these Shammar soon spread over Mesopotamia. They have more to do with Osmanli officialdom than their kinsmen, and natural enemies, the Ih-ni-zah; and it is to this more than anything else perhaps that the split now dividing them into two great parties is due. One section comprising the tribes that roam between Mosul and Baghdad follows Farhân, the elder of the sons of Sufûk, who has accepted the title of Pasha, and identified himself more or less with the Osmanli. But his younger brother Fâris still clings to the life and traditions of his race; and round him assemble, to the east of the Khâbûr river in winter, and the north of it in

The Shammar division of the Arabian Bedouin.

* Known to the Jews as "Aram-Naharain," or "Syria of the two rivers."



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Sketch Map
of
ROUTE FROM HÎT TO TIKRÎT
crossing lower portion of
AL-JAZÎRA.
MESOPOTAMIA
OR
AL-JAZÎRA
AL-HAWÎJA
Thirthar-water course
Abu adhair Wells
Tikrit
Il Hayadhia Wells
Imrair Wells
Abu sabi itqd Wells
Thirthar Wells
Wells
Abû shabbût Wells
Abû sweyjar Wells
Salt marsh
Izâtar Wells
Dûr
R. TIGRIS
Samarrah
Hit
Naffata
Zawia
Dilem-arabs
Dilem-arabs
Rumadi
R. EUPHRATES
Saglawiyah Canal
Falûja
Abu Gharaib
Agargûf
Swamp
Kadhimain
Mûadhdham
BAGHDAD
43°
44°
34°
LITHOGRAPHED FROM AN ORIGINAL SUPPLIED BY THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT,
at the Survey of India Offices, Calcutta, November 1887.

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summer, all of the Shammar who love to stand on the old ways. No opportunity of meeting Farhân or Fâris occurred at this time. The former, a letter of introduction to whom His Excellency the Wâli of Baghdad had been good enough to supply, was away playing the courtier at Baghdad, while the latter and his free lances were tending their camels or waiting for a prey, in remote solitudes. The few Shammar camps fallen in with between Hît and Tikrît were of the ordinary type.

Salgah tribe of Ih-ni-zah.

More noteworthy a body of Ih-ni-zah of the Salgah tribe, who, doubtless for some sufficient reason, had left their own people, and become what is called "*Gasîr*," or refugees with the Shammar. These were remarkable for their poverty-stricken look. Half-naked, blear-eyed, and pinched with cold, the contrast between them and the mares hobbled outside their tents realised the Gulliverian conception of the Yahoo.

The Osmanli escort.

There was no getting near people like the above without the Commander of the Osmanli escort sticking close. Riding a mule for which no pace proved too fast, this excellent officer (a Chachân or Caucasian) was not to be escaped from, at any rate on marching days. Between him and this Salgah there was mutual antipathy; he looking on them as of the nature of *Feræ Naturæ*; and they on him as a kind of executioner and tax-gatherer in one. This made them but surlily civil, and indeed they looked truculent enough to cut one's throat for the sake of the gilt buttons on his cloak, which they, no doubt, thought were gold. Their information was at zero point. The Sultan they knew something about; but the English they seemed to think a branch or variety of the great tribe of "Muskao" or Russian! That a British officer should be going about attended by an Osmanli soldier was a thing past their comprehension.

Halting places.

The nightly halts were made near wells (*abyâr*) yet not too near, for fear of *ghazû*; the Ih-ni-zah to the west of the Euphrates being as apt to raid upon the Shammar as the latter are to swim their mares across the river and harry the Ih-ni-zah in the so-called country of Shâmîa.

Wells

Even in the best wells the water tasted like epsom salts. Still, as any water is better than none, their names and sites are shown in accompanying special sketch map. Several wells proved choked and others dried up. In more than one were carcases of gazelles, which, in their haste to drink, had fallen in and been drowned. The Arabic word (*Irád*) for watering mules or horses, meaning literally the causing, or helping, them to reach it, deserves a thought from those who hold Arabia to have been the original *habitat* of the *equidæ*.

Physical features.

Between Hît and Tikrît there are not many landmarks, and a guide is requisite. One of the few physical features traceable is the *wádi*, or valley, of Thirthâr (the ancient *Thirtha*), a great natural water-course more or less bisecting Mesopotamia from towards the Sinjâr range on the north to the vast salt marsh below Tikrît on the south. Winter as it was, a fine growth of the saffron-coloured *himri* clothed the desert. Than this grass there is no better forage; and if only an expedition were provided with the means of reaping it, and compressing it into bales, chopped straw would not be necessary. Mares and geldings can be turned loose in it to eat their fill. But stallions get so excited by the desert air, or perhaps by the presence of strange mares, that animals noted for their sobriety after the longest march think only of attacking some rival. Not a day passed without exemplifying the numerous inconveniences, and even risks to life and limb, of taking stallions out among the Arabs. The Bedouin have neither grooms nor stables; and any one visiting them on an entire horse finds him a troublesome charge all the time he stays with them. Besides *himri* the Mesopotamian soil yields a great variety of aromatic shrubs, on which horses and camels feed greedily.

Tikrît.

Early in the fourth march Tikrît was sighted. Here was born Sâlihu'd-din of the Crusades, better known as Saladin, whose father, a Kurdi Chief, was Governor of its ancient castle, under the Seljukian Kings of Persia. Strategically it deserves note as about the furthest inhabited point on the Tigris to which steamers can with certainty ascend. But in itself it is a poor place, peopled mostly by Arabs engaged in the traffic by boats and rafts between Mosul and Baghdad. As in Hit and Rumâdi, the Osmanli element in it is represented by a revenue officer from Baghdad, a scribe or two, and a few *gens d'armes*, or *dhâbitîa*. One's further course lying on the opposite or eastern side of the Tigris, it was thought as well to cross the river at once so as to get clear of the town. This proved a long business. First, the mules

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had to be unloaded. Then, as no muleteer will make his animals swim, they had all to be got into boats, while their burdens were taken over on *kalaks*, or rafts. These are of the pattern met with on the Kabul river, between Jalâlâbâd and Attock; platforms made of branches laid over rows of inflated goat skins. They are not thought safe for mules or horses. The consequence is that while the animals are taken across in boats, their loads, committed on rafts to the current, are landed in the wilds, perhaps a couple of miles lower down. The fact of Tikrît, though about the only important settlement between Mosul and Baghdad, being left unequipped either with post or telegraph is but one of other signs of the slackness of the central government. Communications with head-quarters are, however, kept up in a desultory way by messengers; and for the first time since leaving Baghdad letters were received.

Section VI.—Localised Bedouin east of Tigris.

Al Hawîja.

Eastward of Tikrît the Tigris washes another vast pastoral steppe, known as *Al Hawîja*. Arabia contains as many *hâwîs* and *hawîjas* as India does *doábs*, or England *holms*. Both are geographical terms, descriptive, like *jazîra*, of certain dispositions of land relatively to rivers bounding or passing through them. Their etymologies being rather obscure, it is difficult strictly to define them. But with regard to the *hawîja* now before us a glance at the map will show that, while divided into a northern and a southern portion by the Hamrîn range of mountains, it is nearly altogether inclosed by rivers.

Colonizing tendency of the Arabs.

If we except the Anglo-Saxons, none have shown a stronger tendency than the Arabs to push over the world. From east to west, from the Senegal to the Indus, their colonies have been planted; and between north and south, they are scattered from Euphrates to Madagascar. Between them and us there is this difference that while we mostly point towards regions where cities can be founded, and wealth accumulated, they make for wildernesses favourable only to the Bedouin life. Whatever European savants may hold, the Arabs themselves regard Najd as at once the birthplace and stronghold of their race. Every family whose roots are there is Arab, no matter if settled in a Syrian or Levantine city. But if the ancestors are not Najdian, then neither are the offshoots Arabs.

Different Arab types.

Yet all Arabs are not the same. Those who have set up their Lares and Penates in towns, and so become mere units in mixed populations, may be left out of view. On them the Bedouin looks very much as the MacGregors did on their Glasgow cousin, Bailie Nicol Jarvie. Passing from the true Najdian, *i.e.*, wholly nomadic or shepherd type, the view has to be carried through a series of gradations to tribes of whom it is hard to say whether they should be called Bedouin or Fallâhîn. A community passing at the present time from the one condition to the other has been seen above in the Dilêm. And the dominant population of Al Hawîjah —the Ubaid—form another, though less advanced, exemplification of the same process. These trace their origin to the ancient Arab tribe of Zubaid, renowned in early Caliphate annals. The name of their leading Shekh is Ali As Sâdûn. Tents still suffice them; and they are often on the move from pasturage to pasturage with their flocks and herds. But their connections with Najd are loosening; they never leave their own limits; they by no means despise the plough, and, least Bedouin trait of all, they collect for the Mosul Government its dues on herds and crops. And yet in all their confines it is doubtful if even the smallest hamlet occurs. Different tracts of ground have received various names from peculiarities of configuration or other geographical features. Such are *Al Iysâm*, *Al Amlah*, *Al Khir*, *Al Aith*, and others. But a mistake would be made if any one from seeing such places marked on maps were to infer that they were permanent settlements.

The foregoing notes were made while the *kâfila* stood fast for a few days opposite Tikrit. Miserable as the town was, its attractions well diverted the attention of the Baghdad Wâli's guard or escort.

The Sâ-yâh.

Towards dusk the day the tents were pitched, when standing on the river's brink, a moving object midstream was noticed. Gradually this was seen to be a swimmer, in whose hand was his mare's halter, and on his head her saddle; with his own clothes (a very trifling matter) a top of it! Presently there came out of the water, shivering with cold, and mare in hand, a Bedouin. Though startled at the sight of, as he thought, an Osmanli officer, desert self-possession soon asserted itself, and as he hurriedly dressed, without however showing any more

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consciousness of being naked than Adam did in Eden, the new comer introduced himself as a young chief of the Sâ-yâh whose name was If-lye-yah, the son of Hassân. Of course he was made a guest of on the spot. Unfortunately, while he was led in one direction, his wiry mare was taken to where the barley was kept. This nearly made him start off on her back, Bedouin fashion. It all seemed to him a trick to separate him from his mare, and then make a prisoner of him! Not till she was set to her corn at the tent door, with the halter rope in his own hand, did her owner really take to his pipe. The Sâ-yâh are a small but warlike sept, or clan, of the Shammar, mustering about a thousand spears. Their principal Shekh is Meyzar-As-Sudeyd. For a long time he and all his people have been living as refugees among the Ubaid, without, however, like them turning cultivators.

If-lye-yah was then on his way back from trying to arrange with his Shammar connections for the return of the Sâ-yâh to their own side of the river. After eating bread, and learning more in a night of the world's condition than during all his previous life, the young Shekh very gladly undertook to play the host or guide in his turn, and bring one into communication with the Sâ-yâh Shekhs. It was for the sake of this that the *kâfila* was halted at Tikrît. It seems most desirable that the British Resident in Turkish Arabia should have at his command all the information he can gather, and all the personal knowledge he can acquire, in directions like this. But these desert politics are too local, and too variable, to be worth dilating on in a general report.

Difficulty of keeping horses efficient in Arabian marching.

By this time one thing was plain: and that was the difficulty of moving freely over countries like Al Hawîja and Al Jazîra with horses only; especially civilised horses, so to call them, corn-fed, and accustomed to be regularly watered. A horse cannot be loaded like a dromedary with one's food and blankets. Very little extra weight, if it do not even bring the saddle down on the spine, will make it gall some other part. In districts like these it would take very vigilant and experienced officers, and very carefully taught riders, to keep a cavalry regiment moving rapidly for more than a few days at a time. With mounted followers who had never learned to ride, except in the sense of sticking on, and who, instead of getting off and walking when a little tired, would take up all sorts of positions on their saddles, there were several sore backs the first march out of Baghdad.

European saddlery.

Moreover, to keep leather saddlery of European patterns serviceable in a dry and dusty country required more care than is possible, with the whole day, and every day, spent on the move. English saddles, too, unless removed directly the animal is picqueted, and before his back has had time to cool, run a daily risk of being destroyed, owing to the invincible tendency of every eastern horse, after the nature of the pachyderms, to throw himself on the ground and roll the first thing when the march is over.

Kâfila curtailed.

Tikrît being only four days by road from Baghdad, the worst cases of sore back were what is called "evacuated" before the *kâfila* started again.

Section VII.—Through Al Hawîja to Kir-kûk.

In-khe-lah.

The first march from Tikrît was one of about eight hours, north by east, across an undulating tract of uninhabited prairie. Being on the mail route between Constantinople and Persia *viâ* Mosul, a well marked track, converted here and there even into a tolerable military road, offered itself, in place of the ocean-like surface of Al Jazîra. The halting place for the night was In-khe-lah, where a spring of barely drinkable water makes for itself an oasis, thickly carpeted with verdure, and half hidden by bulrushes.

Hamrîn mountains.

At no great distance off, the Tigris bursts through the Hamrîn range, which consists of several great ridges of sand-stone rock, with a maximum height of some five hundred feet.

Kurdistân.

Here for the first time is felt a new element—the Kurds—in the congeries of nationalities spreading itself over Asiatic Turkey. Kurdistân indeed, a word formed on a Persian mould, is a convenient rather than scientific geographical term. For not alone is but a very small portion of the so-called Kurdistân peopled exclusively by Kurds, but for several centuries past, while about a million and a half of this high spirited race have owned a wavering allegiance to the Sultân, at least three quarters of a million more have called the Shâh their master. The natural result is that both Governments alike find it most difficult to prevent them from asserting by frequent relapses into turbulence, or even brigandage, their hereditary

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love of independence. Vast numbers of the Kurds, it is true, live in villages, absorbed in agriculture. But these, not less than their nomadic brethren, are still distinctly tribal, with the very same tendency to look up to some patriarchal chief; and no one who knows them is likely to imagine that in seasons of trouble they will ever remain passive under mere provincial governors or officials whether Ottoman or Persian.

Hamâwand tribe of Kurds.

At the time of writing, indeed, as periodically during many years past, the frontier of the Baghdad and Mosul Pashaliks is dangerous from the raids of the Hamâwand, or Ahmedâwand Kurds. Within the present year, this great postal line has once or twice been closed because of them, to other than the largest *kâfilas*; and Her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Mosul, when passing over it lately, reported that his "escort ranged from one hundred and thirty mounted infantry to twenties and fifteens; besides Dhâbitias (*gens d'armes*) according to the state of the road." "The Hamâwands," he added, "have created a regular scare all along the line; and although there are large numbers of troops moving about, they never seem to come up with them." And yet, this thorn in the side of two great Governments is represented by a horde of barely five hundred fighting men. Armed with Martinis, and mounted on mares "lifted" from the Shammar, they are as ubiquitous, as mischievous, and as difficult to touch as swarms of wasps. Only the other day an officer was wounded, and a soldier killed, by them near Sulimânîah.

Bi-shi-rîah.

The day the Hamrîn range was crossed the Hamâwands luckily were somewhere else, and nothing was seen of them, although no additional escort had been provided. After a twelve hours' march the tents were set up at dusk, in an open and cultivated country, full of feature, and inclosed in a setting of mountains, some of them white with recent snow. Close by was the Kurdi hamlet of Bi-shi-rîah, consisting of about a hundred hovels. There was plenty of good water. On a man in uniform going aforaging it was stoutly asserted at every door that not even had an egg been laid in that village since their grandfathers' days! But bye and bye, when a Baghdad domestic went, money in hand, on the same errand, not only eggs, but the roosters themselves, with milk and firewood, were produced! Some little way off, as it turned out, an Ottoman guard or picquet kept watch over certain salt pits, as well as for the Hamâwands. Hearing strangers arrive in the dark, these worthy fellows lay close till the sun was well up the following morning, when, after ascertaining that it was not the Hamâwands, and that countrymen of their own formed the escort, they came galloping one by one after the party, shaggy men, on shaggier horses, much like the "Tatar couriers" of old picture-books, warranted to keep and go for long periods without pay or food, and never better marksmen than when apparently in the very act of tumbling out of their saddles.

The Hamâwands as a political feature.

The vitality of the Hamâwands is not without its significance politically. Especially so when it is remembered that the warlike population of whom they form at the present time the head and front numbers, as has been seen, more than a couple of millions. It does not appear that any new or actual grievance is now exciting them. The Ottoman Government, it is not to be doubted, is, for its own sake, most anxious to deal decisively with them, indeed, a high functionary is just now on his way from Constantinople specially charged with this duty. As the case stands, they are the leaven which may so easily leaven the whole Kurdi mass, and the importance of Persia's relations with other powers seems greater than ever when viewed in connection with the influence she can command in these western provinces of Asiatic Turkey. With the enervating effects of ultra-civilisation so generally on the increase, the Sublime Porte is as remarkable for the great mines of raw material of armies lying ready to her hand, as for the fatality which seems to prevent her from utilizing them very fully.

Kirkûk.

On 8th November a march through open and cultivated but rugged country brought the *kâfila* to Kirkûk—once a capital; but now containing less than 20,000 inhabitants. A bridged stream, known as the Tshai, separates the citadel mound or hill—130 feet high, with the more squalid parts of the town clinging to its base—from a suburb covered with official buildings. The population is chiefly of Muslim (Sunni) Kurds. There is also a Jewish quarter, and a number of "old Nestorians," now adherents of the Church of Rome. To feed the latter flock, a "*Matrân*," or bishop, is maintained. The government is exercised by a "Mutasarrif," or Commissioner, subordinate to the Wâli of Mosul. There is also a Municipality, the functions performed by which certainly do not include

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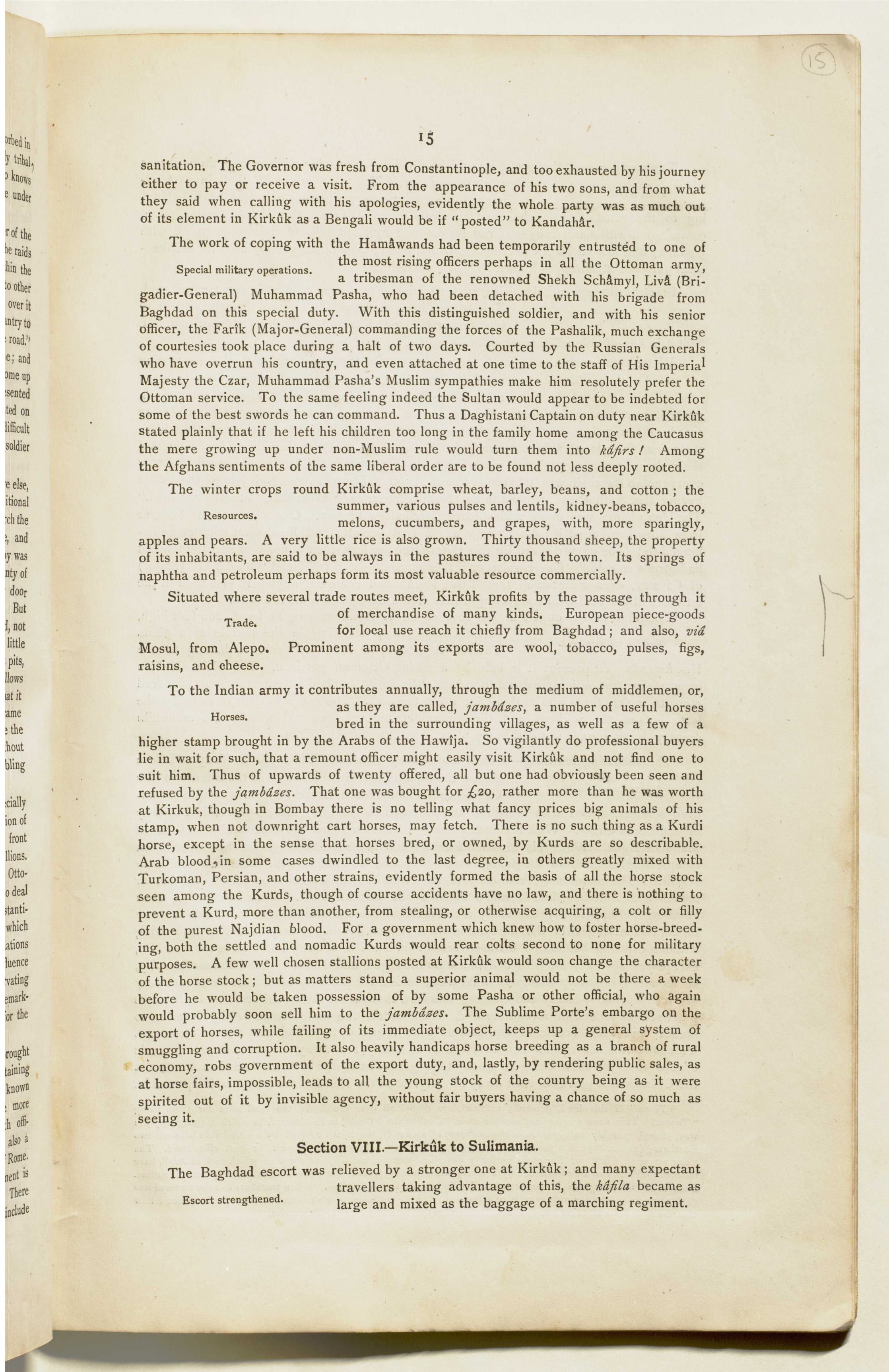

sanitation. The Governor was fresh from Constantinople, and too exhausted by his journey either to pay or receive a visit. From the appearance of his two sons, and from what they said when calling with his apologies, evidently the whole party was as much out of its element in Kirkûk as a Bengali would be if "posted" to Kandahâr.

Special military operations.

The work of coping with the Hamâwands had been temporarily entrusted to one of the most rising officers perhaps in all the Ottoman army, a tribesman of the renowned Shekh Schâmyl, Livâ (Brigadier-General) Muhammad Pasha, who had been detached with his brigade from Baghdad on this special duty. With this distinguished soldier, and with his senior officer, the Farîk (Major-General) commanding the forces of the Pashalik, much exchange of courtesies took place during a halt of two days. Courted by the Russian Generals who have overrun his country, and even attached at one time to the staff of His Imperial Majesty the Czar, Muhammad Pasha's Muslim sympathies make him resolutely prefer the Ottoman service. To the same feeling indeed the Sultan would appear to be indebted for some of the best swords he can command. Thus a Daghistani Captain on duty near Kirkûk stated plainly that if he left his children too long in the family home among the Caucasus the mere growing up under non-Muslim rule would turn them into *kâfirs!* Among the Afghans sentiments of the same liberal order are to be found not less deeply rooted.

Resources.

The winter crops round Kirkûk comprise wheat, barley, beans, and cotton; the summer, various pulses and lentils, kidney-beans, tobacco, melons, cucumbers, and grapes, with, more sparingly, apples and pears. A very little rice is also grown. Thirty thousand sheep, the property of its inhabitants, are said to be always in the pastures round the town. Its springs of naphtha and petroleum perhaps form its most valuable resource commercially.

Trade.

Situated where several trade routes meet, Kirkûk profits by the passage through it of merchandise of many kinds. European piece-goods for local use reach it chiefly from Baghdad; and also, *viâ* Mosul, from Alepo. Prominent among its exports are wool, tobacco, pulses, figs, raisins, and cheese.

Horses.

To the Indian army it contributes annually, through the medium of middlemen, or, as they are called, *jambâzes*, a number of useful horses bred in the surrounding villages, as well as a few of a higher stamp brought in by the Arabs of the Hawîja. So vigilantly do professional buyers lie in wait for such, that a remount officer might easily visit Kirkûk and not find one to suit him. Thus of upwards of twenty offered, all but one had obviously been seen and refused by the *jambâzes*. That one was bought for £20, rather more than he was worth at Kirkuk, though in Bombay there is no telling what fancy prices big animals of his stamp, when not downright cart horses, may fetch. There is no such thing as a Kurdi horse, except in the sense that horses bred, or owned, by Kurds are so describable. Arab blood, in some cases dwindled to the last degree, in others greatly mixed with Turkoman, Persian, and other strains, evidently formed the basis of all the horse stock seen among the Kurds, though of course accidents have no law, and there is nothing to prevent a Kurd, more than another, from stealing, or otherwise acquiring, a colt or filly of the purest Najdian blood. For a government which knew how to foster horse-breeding, both the settled and nomadic Kurds would rear colts second to none for military purposes. A few well chosen stallions posted at Kirkûk would soon change the character of the horse stock; but as matters stand a superior animal would not be there a week before he would be taken possession of by some Pasha or other official, who again would probably soon sell him to the *jambâzes*. The Sublime Porte's embargo on the export of horses, while failing of its immediate object, keeps up a general system of smuggling and corruption. It also heavily handicaps horse breeding as a branch of rural economy, robs government of the export duty, and, lastly, by rendering public sales, as at horse fairs, impossible, leads to all the young stock of the country being as it were spirited out of it by invisible agency, without fair buyers having a chance of so much as seeing it.

Section VIII.—Kirkûk to Sulimania.

Escort strengthened.

The Baghdad escort was relieved by a stronger one at Kirkûk; and many expectant travellers taking advantage of this, the *kâfila* became as large and mixed as the baggage of a marching regiment.

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The stoniness of the ground could hardly be surpassed, and here and there it was most precipitous. The view generally took in vast expanses. Snowy peaks, perhaps 5,000 feet high, belonging to the great Zagros chain which shuts in on the east the Mesopotamian plain, commingled with sunlit ranges of red sandstone; rounded hills of limestone, green with pasture; and low strata of calcareous gypsum, which, from being greatly used for architectural purposes at Mosul, is known as "Mosul marble."

Treasures of country.

Straight through all, despising curves or deviations, runs a recently constructed road. This having been made chiefly by the throwing down of big stones is used, if at all, only by Ottoman officials. Still it is a creditable military work in its way.

Road.

Water was everywhere; and, for a country in the main pastoral, the population scarcely seemed over-sparse. Kurdi villages, consisting of a few oven-shaped mud hovels hidden against some rising ground, were not unfrequent. Here a couple of armed peasants, draped from head to foot in the seamless, and singularly ungraceful, white felt cloak of the country, drove their primitive plough alike over valley and acclivity. There a family of herdsmen fed their sheep and shaggy black cattle high up a mountain. The first thing asked for by everyone on the road was tobacco. People from a distance who had joined the *kâfila* having that with them, seemed to be thinking more of "mashrûbât," literally "drinks." The idea plainly was one's mules carried unlimited brandy. One man, a cattle-dealer from Mosul, enquired if John Exshaw was a real person; and, if so, what country he belonged to! The excuse given for this thirst after the forbidden liquor was that the "world had grown so cold." One casuist, or rather physiologist, a red-faced "Bimbâshi" (Major) of Cavalry, even maintained that if the Kurân had come out anywhere else than in the latitudes of the Red Sea, comforting drinks would have been included in it!

People.

The first march ended at the foot of an artificial mount, at least 200 feet high, called Chămchămâl,* standing in the middle of a plain. This is topped by a rude fort said to belong to the Hamâwands. At present it is held by a strong Ottoman garrison. The Kaim Makâm commanding not only came down to welcome the *kâfila*, but had an entertainment prepared atop, to which there was nothing for it but to climb. The mules in their lines below the leafy huts of the soldiers, and the general attitude of preparation, with the mountain scenery lying round, recalled some of our own posts in Abyssinia.

Turkish military post.

The following morning—a dark and wintry one—saw the *kâfila* as deep as before among the mountains. In the course of the afternoon, the Chămchămâl commandant, at the head of a couple of hundred soldiers, armed with Martinis, and mounted on galloping mules, overtook it by way of additional escort. With him came, riding a Bedouin mare, a Hamâwand Chief called Mahmûd Agha. While his kinsman Fakka Kâdir takes the field against the Government troops, this member of the family stops at home, and plays with them, almost like an Afghan. The commoner Kurdi dialects, as is well known, are more or less based on, or mixed with, Persian; but Mahmûd Agha spoke Persian itself. More interesting than anything he had to say, especially with his friend the Kaim Makâm so near, was the way he kept skimming over the mountains at speed on his bay mare. Loading and firing without drawing bridle, no civilised soldier in such a country could have touched him, except perhaps on foot, with a double-barrelled gun and slugs. The Ottoman cavalry, or mounted infantry, was good in its way; mules, the property of Government, and very fit; men's arms, saddlery and clothing efficient, though far from uniform; and all ranks practised in mountain formations. At close order, the mules were hardly inferior to horses; but when scouts or skirmishers were required, their stubborn nature came out. Troops of this description can at all events hardly run away, unless a common panic chance to seize their chargers also. One glance at Mahmûd Agha, and then another at the Chămchămâl garrison, took away all surprise at the Hamâwands being so irrepressible.

A Hamâwand Shekh.

* *Tumuli* of this kind, generally artificial, are dotted all over Kurdistân, the local term for them being "Tappa." This, when a compound name ends in it, is like the "*Garh*" in Hindustani, in which language, by the way, though possibly only *par coincidence*, "*tappa*" means (1) the space covered by a round shot between two ricochets; (2) one stage in a postal line; and (3) especially in Southern India, the post, or post office itself. The "city set upon a hill" of Scripture perfectly describes these Kurdi Tappas, some of which such as Arbîl, have fortified summits, and are surrounded by a ditch, while others present but a smooth conical or cylindrical outline. Such occur all over Asia Minor, from the Mediterranean to the Caspian. When travellers ask the name of one of these mounds, whether with or without ruins on it, and the peasants merely answer "tappa," it does not follow that the spot bears no other name, which, if traced, might lead to historical discoveries.

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In the afternoon the rain came down, the Kâim Makâm and his following started off back again, and towards dark the tents were pitched in black cotton soil, beside a Kurdi hamlet.

Next day (November 13th) a short march over an open and cultivated but singularly uphill and downdale country led to Sulimânîa, where, as at Kirkûk, the *kâfila* was met outside the town first by a civil, and then a military escort. In acknowledgment of this, rode straight to townhall, where was received in politest manner by His Excellency the Governor, Muhammad Raûf Pasha. Then to the barracks, and made the acquaintance of Kâim Makâm Ali Jazzâr, commanding the five or six hundred soldiers in garrison. More distinctly than at Baghdad, official society in Sulimânîa seemed abreast, through Constantinople, with passing events in Europe and even India. Thus the situation in Ireland often came up, as did the recent passages in Burmese history. There is no question as to the prestige which a masterful policy commands in every corner of the East, provided always it is a visible success. It was amusing to hear the late Afghan war criticised purely from a soldier's view point, and the smallness of the force employed made answerable for the non-accomplishment of what no one for a moment doubted had formed the object, the annexation of the country! During a four days' halt daily opportunities of conversing with the civil and military officials occurred. The small Kabul tent (much admired by the military) was seldom clear of visitors; and His Excellency the Governor was good enough one evening to give a dinner-party, at which many officials, including the Persian Chargé d'Affaires, were present. More important than the Osmanli stratum on the surface is the indigenous, that is Kurdi population, of which Sulimânîa, though in itself less than a hundred years old, forms a centre. The origin of the Kurds is as obscure as that of the ancient Britons, but our knowledge of them goes much further back. At the very dawn of history we find them located among the mountains overhanging the great Assyrian empire on the Tigris. *Gutu* (meaning warrior), *Gardu*, *Kardu*, were among the names then borne by them, and they were one of the tribes which Cyrus, the Persian, had to subdue before descending upon Babylon. Successive waves of Macedonian, Parthian, Sassanian, early Muslim, and lastly Turkish, or Persian domination have only partially succeeded in destroying their autonomy, or obliterating their tribal organisation. Not to go back to the earlier days of their power, when several of the Chiefships founded by them rose almost to the rank of dynasties, "up to a recent period," in the graphic words of Sir H. Rawlinson, "there was no more picturesque or interesting scene to be witnessed in the East than the court of one of these great Kurdish Chiefs, where, like another Saladin, the Bey ruled in patriarchal state, surrounded by an hereditary nobility, regarded by his clansmen with reverence and affection, and attended by a body-guard of young Kurdish warriors, clad in chain armour, with flaunting silken scarfs, and bearing javelin lance and sword as in the time of the Crusades." The affinity already noticed between Kurdi and Persian shows itself more in some than in others of the many dialects into which the former runs. But it is in Arabic grammar and Islamitic lore, rather than native literature, that the Kurdi *Ulima* of the day excel. Though not containing more than three thousand houses, if so many, Sulimânîa is a perfect hive of Sunni Mullahs and schoolmasters. The most remarkable is a certain Kâka Ahmad, a very old man, head of an order of Darweshes, and the spiritual father of innumerable disciples. If ever a non-Muslim power set foot in Kurdistân it may depend on finding this old man, or others on whom his mantle has fallen, ready to re-enact the part of Mushk-i-Alam of Kabul. An ancestral endowment of ten villages enables him and his five grandsons to devote their days and nights to religious exercises and studies. His abode, as may be supposed, forms a kind of academy and place of resort for devotees from every quarter. Thus is kept up among the Kurds that primitive type of Islamism under which six words of the Kurân, passing like a fiery cross from man to man, will efface the most elaborate treaties, and outweigh mule-loads of treasure, after of course the latter have been carried off. And yet the break with Paganism has been even more incomplete among them than among mankind generally, and an account of their crude ceremonies and esoteric doctrines would form a useful contribution to the science of religion.

Sulimânîa.

The whole district of Sûrchinâr, of which Sulimânîa now forms the capital, is a perfect mine of antiquities. This is true indeed of all Kurdistân, taking the word at its widest, from the Turkish Pashâlik of Diârbakr towards the north to the Persian provinces of Ardelân and Kirmânshâh on the south. If ever the Porte should revise its present policy in the matter of excavation, a party with head-quarters at Sulimânîa, working, for example, among the tumuli overhanging

Archæology.

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the Diâlah, the great river of Southern Kurdistân, or at Yassin-Tappa, the site of the ancient city of Shahr-i-zûr, would find itself really in virgin soil, where the most important results might be anticipated.

Products.

Standing rather in a hollow about two miles from the foot of a range of low hills, with the snow-capped Gudroon in the distance, Sulimânîa has enough of plain and garden land round it to grow its own supplies. Many trade routes also pass through it, and its quaint old-world market place must be one of the compactest and most densely crowded in all the East. Saddle-making is perhaps its most flourishing craft. Its saddles are known wherever horsemen go—large roomy structures containing but little wood, even less leather, and unlimited felt. A good one weighs about a couple of stone. Even more than the English dragoon saddle, this kind stretches the rider out, like a peg on a clothes' line; dividing his weight between the smallest possible surface in the middle of the horse's back and a pair of shovel stirrups. So far this is very good, short stirrups and what is called a "hunting seat" being almost sure, in a long day, to wring a horse's loins.* All the English hunting saddles, except one ridden in by a very light Arab groom, were here exchanged for Sulimânîa ones. The result showed a decided gain so far as saving the horses' backs went, though from the biped's view point it was less satisfactory. Perhaps the Sulimânîa saddle, as that of horsemen who when on a journey ride every day and all day, and never think of a led horse, might, yield a hint or two towards the perfecting of our own cavalry pattern. Besides keeping the rider straight, it (1) seldom takes harm from being rolled over on; and (2) being an affair of felt, requires no cleaning beyond now and then a good beating or brushing. The two last advantages belonged to the native saddles, or *khogîrs* of Indian Irregular Cavalry: but these have been discarded; and the saddle on which the 3rd Cavalry, Hyderabad Contingent, has lately been doing such remarkable service in Upper Burma—90 lancers keeping on the move on one occasion for nearly three months, and covering about 1,000 miles of country, "without a single sore back, and only one or two slight girth-galls"—is the new pattern one known as "Pattern, 1884," supplied by Ross & Co., Grange Mills, Bermondsay. This saddle was the outcome of the Committee that sat for six whole years on saddlery, with General Sir Frederick Fitzwygram as President. It is made in three sizes (*seat* of same size in all) smallest size answering best for Eastern horses. It so far resembles the Arab saddle as to be wholly without "stuffing," a matter of wood, leather, and pads or rather "*namda*." Of this felt or *namda* every trooper carries two extra strips; which he inserts, or takes out, as necessary, thus being his own saddler and stuffer. No saddle not somehow thus providing for the almost daily changes in shape and outline of horse's back and withers, due to changes in his condition, can ever stand the test of long marches every day: and after all, the riding has almost as much to do with it as the saddle. Then there are clever blacksmiths in Sulimânîa who dabble in the forbidden manufacture of arms of precision, and what is even harder to procure, cartridges. A foreign subject, even if a Consul, is unable just at present to get a pass at the Bussorah Customs House for a common sporting gun, lest somehow such things should spread among the subjects of the Porte. And yet, under the very shadow almost of the Pasha's palace, Sulimânîa workmen, if rumour may be trusted, turn out fair imitations even of the Martini-Henry. Thus demand creates supply. The mountaineer loves his gun as the Bedouin does his mare; and the heaviest punishments can hardly prevent the Turkish soldier, at places like Sulimânîa, from running off with rifles and selling them to the tribes. Another Sulimânîa product is wine, the pure juice of a small purple grape. To the European this is a mere curiosity. Only they who have acquired a taste for it are likely to prefer it to the clear and sparkling water which runs over the pebbly beds of Kurdi brooks and rivers. But *kâfilas* seldom leave Sulimânîa without a supply of it, in black naphtha flasks, for sale to all who like it.

Section IX.—Sulimânîa to Mosul.

Topography.

In August 1881, Mr. T. C. Plowden, in returning from Kirmânshâh, capital of the so-called Persian Kurdistân, striking at Sulimânîa the route now being traced, pursued it, through Kûye Sanjak † and Arbîl to Mosul, where falling ill he went down the Tigris on a raft to Baghdad. His

* During the last few years, several travellers belonging to the mounted branches of the army in India have reached Baghdad from Persia or the Mediterranean, all using hunting saddles, their horses in every instance having indurated galls on one or both sides of the loin, turning into sloughing wounds which took weeks to heal.

† Meaning *Flag-town*, *i.e.*, seat of a superior Government official: *Kooyè*, a town (Persian and Turkish) being a distinct word from *Kûh* (in Arabic *Jabal*) a mountain.

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course from Sulimânîa to Mosul varied but slightly from that now taken, and as his report was printed the less need here be said. From Sulimânîa to Kûye Sanjak took three days; intermediate stages, hamlets of (1) Surtâsh, (2) Khâlakân. Troops would find this whole district most difficult. In some places, if the track—it cannot be called a road—had been but slightly more precipitous, it would have been impassable for laden mules, or even horse-men; in others, a small force of mountaineers could have turned an army. Here was entered the central of the three great segments into which the country of the Kurds is divided by geographers; extending from Sulimânîa on the south to Lake Van on the north—a region of mountain ranges intercrossing one another, and dominated by stupendous summits, one of which recent authorities have pronounced to represent "almost certainly" the Ararat of the Bible. Isolated hamlets deserted by their inhabitants, owing, it was said, to the Hamâwands, were observed during the first march, a ten hours' one. Of the second, the most marked feature was a stream, about 50 yards broad, which crossed the route. The *Caprus* of antiquity, the name of Lesser Zâb, by which the Arabian geographer Abu'l Fida distinguished it, is given to this river still by map-makers; also, sometimes, by a curious error, that of Altun Keupri,* the name really of a bridge which spans it, and of a village naturally attaching itself to the bridge. The truth seems to be that the idea of a river, as a whole, comes only with civilization; and each successive bend, or reach, receives from the people occupying its banks the name of some local landmark. At all events none of the natives spoke of the Zâb. Some called it the *Soo*, merely the Turkish equivalent for the Arabic *mâe* and Persian *âb* or *aw*=water. Others spoke of the stretch containing the ford as the Dukân—in Persian a store or workshop—probably from the raft depôts near it. Coming, with many other snow-fed affluents, from the Zagros mountains, the lower Zâb pours its waters into the Tigris some way below Kala Sharghât. After it had been crossed, the vegetation of southern began to be exchanged for that of central Kurdistân. Nature grew more liberal of her draperies; belts of fruit and poplar trees were more frequent; and instead of low scrub or "bush", dwarf oak and elm, hollies and gum-bearing trees gave shade and a certain degree of softness to the landscape. The nuts on the trees were more plentiful than supplies in the hamlets. "The horseman's wallets are his pantry" is an Arab proverb. Here the foot soldier is supposed to carry on his person his commissariat and "medical conforts" all complete—not to mention his "warm clothing" and ammunition—so one who is mounted should think himself well off.

Kûye Sanjak.

About eighteen hours for *kâfilas* separates the Kâim Makâmate of Kûye Sanjak from the Zâb. The town contains only a few thousand people not as yet very fully weaned from their ancient independence, or reconciled to centralised rule. About two hundred infantry, ill-armed and worse-equipped, served as garrison.

Ashkaf Sakkah.

Next march—nine or ten hours—over a country more "undulating" than ever, was to the village of Ashkak-Sakkah.† On the way was passed a hamlet consisting of little more than a half subterranean corn-mill (*rahâ*) turned by a brook. On trying to fraternise with the inmates all went well, considering the want of a common language, till the time of leaving. A rupee was then presented, in return for the hospitality of a few minutes' shelter from the scorching afternoon sun. This caused a panic, being supposed, as a soldier afterwards explained, to be the purchase-money of the whole community, male and female, old and young. A rush towards the mountain happened, and the innocent coin had to be deposited like an offering to an idol on the mill hopper. Thus with the best intention does the European sometimes frighten the Asiatic! At Ashkaf-Sakkah, for once the principal figure was, not an Ottoman official, but a masterful Kurdi chief of the olden time callled Kâka Muhammad, rather like a Pathan, but speaking only Kurdi, type of the class which may any day once more come to the top.

Arbîl.

An easy march the following day saw the *kâfila* once more on level and cultivated ground, containing another dwindled representative of the Assyrian cities of antiquity, Arbîl; the battle fought near which several hundred years before the Christian era transferred the empire of Asia from

* *Altun* means, in Turkish, *gold* or *money*; and *keupri*, a *bridge*. If the *river* be called golden, it would be from its colour; if the bridge, from what it cost. In Arabic a bridge is *jisr*; also *kantara*, commonly pronounced *gantra*.

† *Ashkaf* is said to mean in Kurdi a cave, and *Sakkah* to be the name of a tribe; but this may or may not be the derivation.

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Darius to Alexander.* The remains of a town at least as large as the modern Baghdad may here be traced; but an artificial mount, some 150 feet high, now gives room to nearly all of it that is left. Up this hill one had to climb, for the Kâim Makâm, or governor, with the Mîr Alâe, or Colonel Commandant, had come out to do the honours. In the house of the former quite a reception took place followed by a repast introducing one to an infinity of new and superfluous dishes. Proficiency in Arabic and other old world accomplishments have advanced a number of Kurds to high office, both secular and religious, in Baghdad, and many of those had Arbîl relatives anxious to hear about them.

The Great Zâb.

Next day's march—7½ hours over tolerably easy country—brought the *kâfila* to a broad and rapid river, the "greater Zâb" of maps, and *Lycus* of antiquity, the most important of all the tributaries of the Tigris. The hamlet over against the ferry was called *kalak*, which merely is the name for a raft. The mules had to be unloaded, and taken over in a boat. End of November as it was, the heat on the water was tropical, and the sun's power proved the value of the veil-like Arab head-dress. On the further bank was a hill, the face of it full of natural caverns, and shaded with trees like dwarf banians. To-day this was given up to a herd of shaggy black cattle, fattening for the Mosul, or even Egyptian markets. Yesterday one of its caves had been tenanted by a migratory Afghan *darwesh*.

To Mosul.

On 24th November, a march of 9½ hours ended at Mosul, more correctly *Mawsil*, or junction,† but in Europe often miscalled Mŏsool. At day-break the winding Khâzir or Khosr, a considerable affluent of the Zâb, was forded The country then became level as the sea, and studded over with villages. At one of these, Bartalla, inhabited by Yakûbîa, or Jacobite,‡ and distinctly non-Papal Christians, a strong mounted escort sent out from Mosul was paraded. During an hour's halt the local clergy were conversed with. Osmanli taxation, and differences among themselves, were the topics they brought forward. But the fine physique and ponderous silver ornaments of the matrons carrying skins of muddy water from a kind of horse pond into the town showed that, if they would only clean their village, and club to pay a school-master, the people of Bartalla might, as things go, be prosperous enough.

With Layard's books inevery library it would be idle here to indulge in references to Nineveh and Mosul from the historical, or archæological, view point. Ancient history apart, the modern Mosul is an important place. Strategically, not less than politically, it forms one of the capitals of Asiatic Turkey. No power not holding it could be considered fully master of the country, nor would any civilised commander try to defend it against a force in possession of the surrounding plains. In one direction, as has been seen, it dominates the Kurds, besides numerous other mountain races; on the other, as will presently appear, elements not less turbulent. Caravan routes from all parts of Asia meet in it. Its foreign Consulates are our own, under the Consulate-General of Baghdad, and a French Consulate connected directly with Paris and Constantinople. The latter is as ably filled as its action is evidently vigorous and sustained. The former, since Mr. Russell made over charge of it in 1883, has four times changed hands. At the time of this tour, as for a continuous period of seven months, merely the Mosuli dragoman gave such attention to British interests as his qualifications enabled, and his commercial occu-pations allowed, him to do. There is no British Consulate house. The Vice-Consul, whose salary is £400 a year, receives an additional sum as house allowance, and flies his flag over any house that may be selected by him. As a rule, he forms the only subject of Her Majesty, eastern or western, resident in Mosul. Naturally the Osmanli here put on the largest appearance possible. A Governor with the rank of Pâsha, whose corre-spondence is with Constantinople, occupies a huge building outside the town. Close to that the barracks, and the chateau of a *Liva* or Brigadier-General. Soldiers in uniform

* Once again (A.D. 749) the banks of the Zâb, or Diâb, near Arbîla, witnessed a decisive battle, when the last prince of the Damascus dynasty received his quietus from the soldier of fortune Abu Muslim, and Shâm, or Syria, was overrun by Persian hordes.

† *i.e.*, *inter* Jazîra and Irâk, as latter understood by certain Arabic geographers.

‡ Thus named after Jacobus Baradeus, a sixth century monk, who having been episcopally consecrated at Constantinople devoted his life to the establishment all over the East of an ecclesiastical organization having as its distinctive doctrinal principle the thesis (technically called "Monophysite") first propounded by Eutyches, affirm-ing that, after the union of Christs two natures, only one nature remained, and that therefore his human body essentially differed from other human bodies. This subtlety having been adopted by the Coptic, Abyssinian, and Armenian Churches, these also, though with less than strict accuracy, are often called "Jacobite." The head of the Jacobite Churches is the "patriarch of Antioch," who however resides chiefly at Diârbakr, about twelve caravan stages north-west of Mosul.

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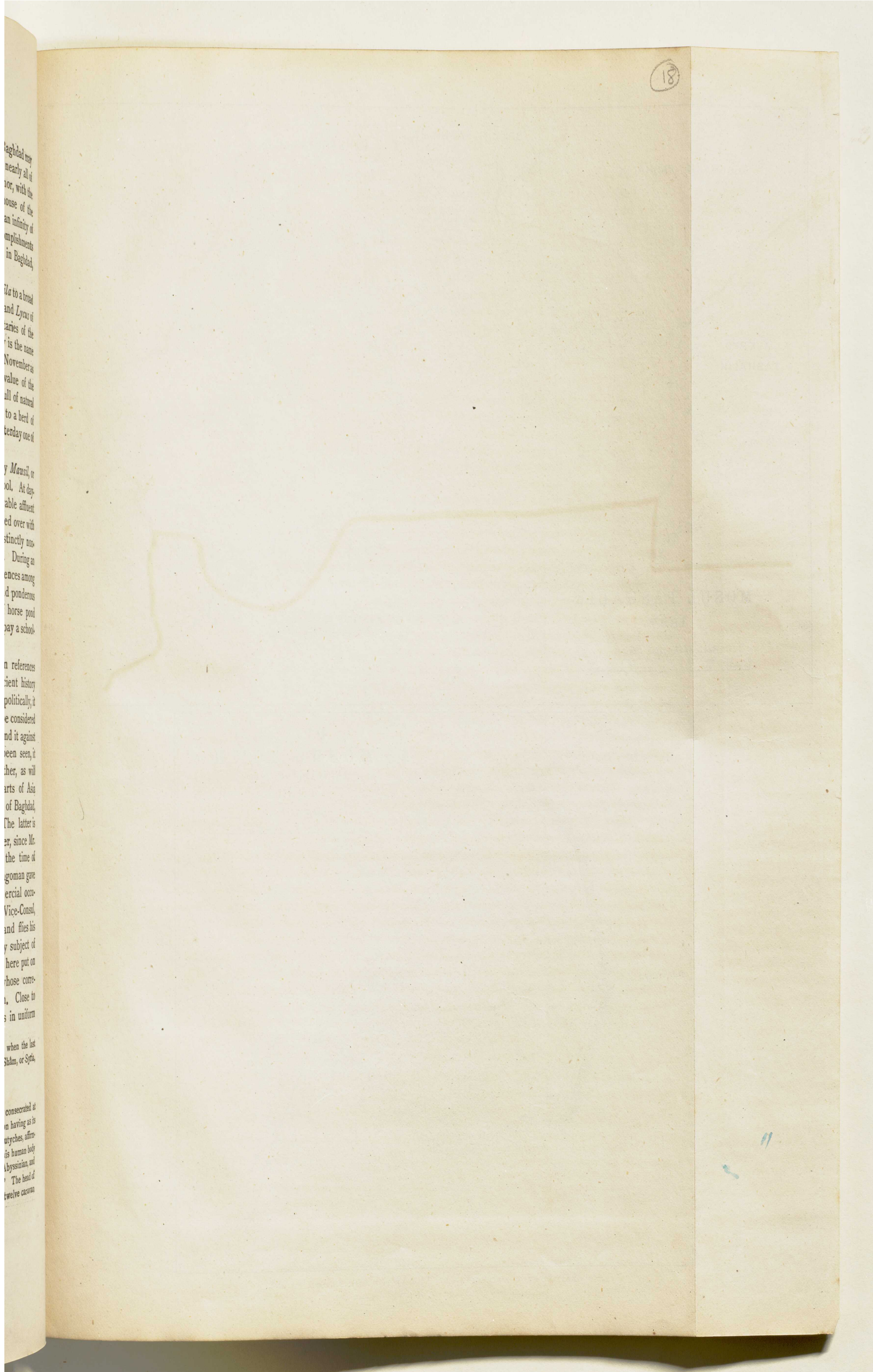

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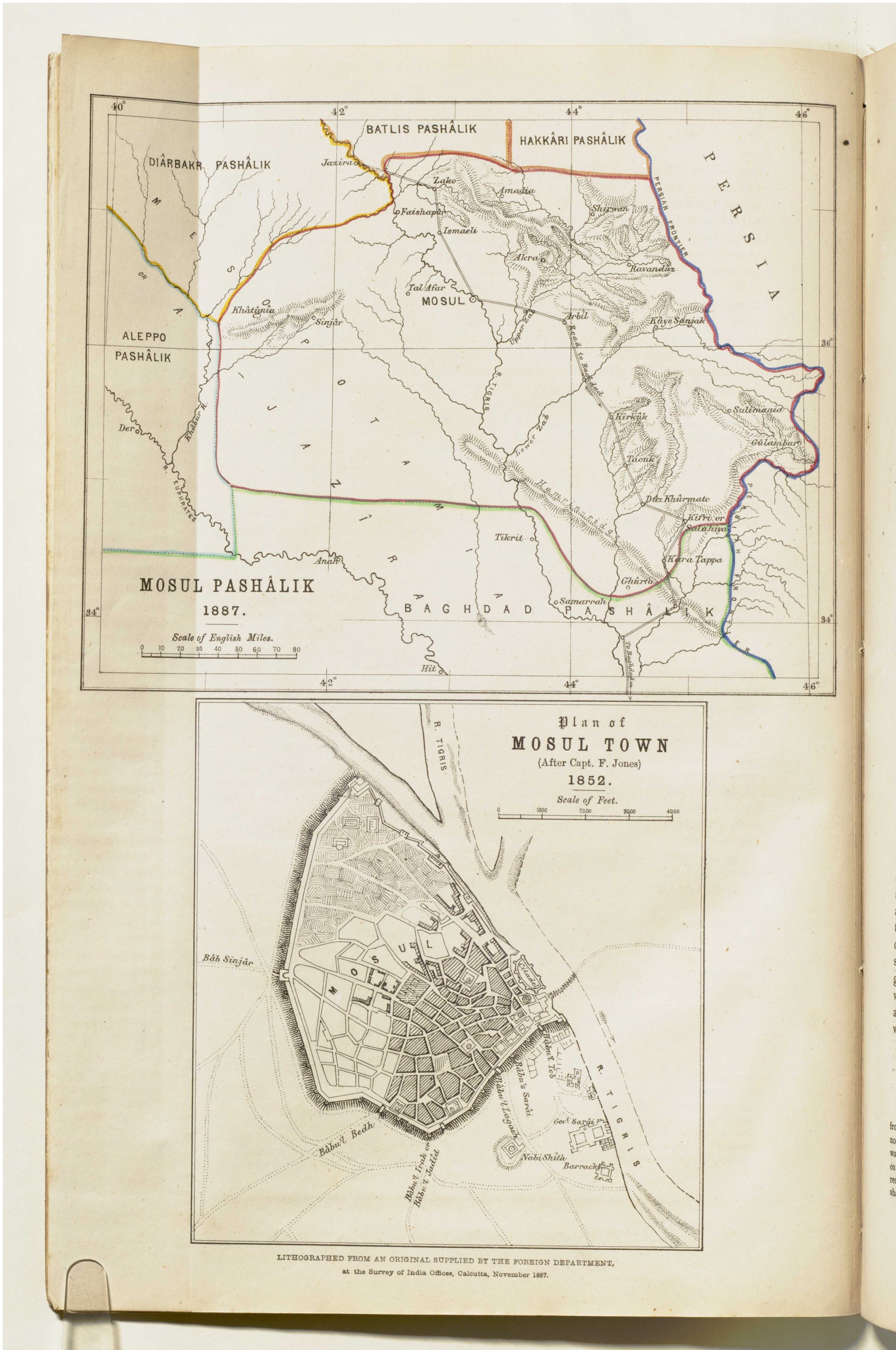

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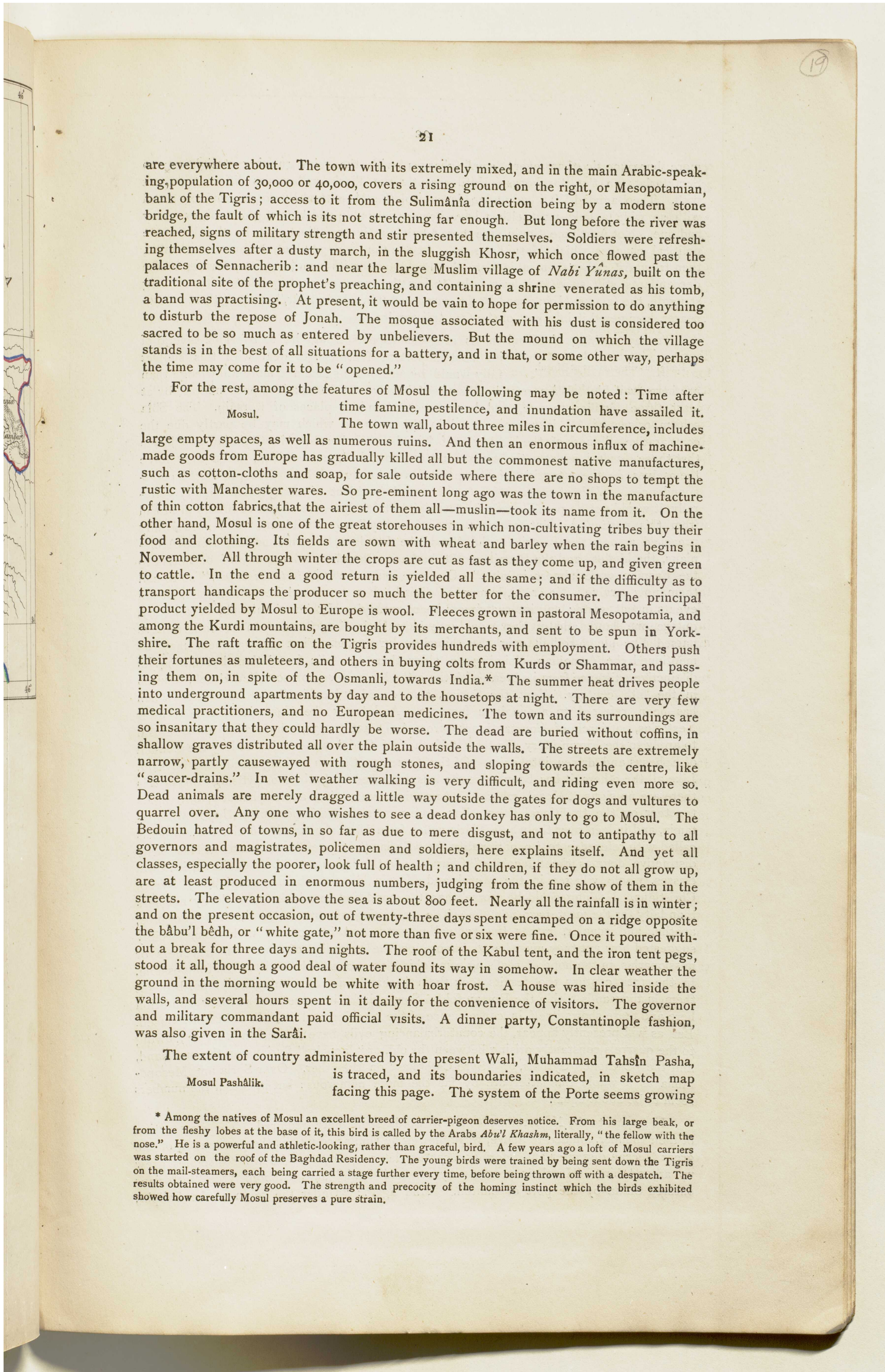

are everywhere about. The town with its extremely mixed, and in the main Arabic-speaking population of 30,000 or 40,000, covers a rising ground on the right, or Mesopotamian, bank of the Tigris; access to it from the Sulimânîa direction being by a modern stone bridge, the fault of which is its not stretching far enough. But long before the river was reached, signs of military strength and stir presented themselves. Soldiers were refreshing themselves after a dusty march, in the sluggish Khosr, which once flowed past the palaces of Sennacherib: and near the large Muslim village of *Nabi Yûnas,* built on the traditional site of the prophet's preaching, and containing a shrine venerated as his tomb, a band was practising. At present, it would be vain to hope for permission to do anything to disturb the repose of Jonah. The mosque associated with his dust is considered too sacred to be so much as entered by unbelievers. But the mound on which the village stands is in the best of all situations for a battery, and in that, or some other way, perhaps the time may come for it to be "opened."

Mosul.

For the rest, among the features of Mosul the following may be noted: Time after time famine, pestilence, and inundation have assailed it. The town wall, about three miles in circumference, includes large empty spaces, as well as numerous ruins. And then an enormous influx of machine-made goods from Europe has gradually killed all but the commonest native manufactures, such as cotton-cloths and soap, for sale outside where there are no shops to tempt the rustic with Manchester wares. So pre-eminent long ago was the town in the manufacture of thin cotton fabrics,that the airiest of them all—muslin—took its name from it. On the other hand, Mosul is one of the great storehouses in which non-cultivating tribes buy their food and clothing. Its fields are sown with wheat and barley when the rain begins in November. All through winter the crops are cut as fast as they come up, and given green to cattle. In the end a good return is yielded all the same; and if the difficulty as to transport handicaps the producer so much the better for the consumer. The principal product yielded by Mosul to Europe is wool. Fleeces grown in pastoral Mesopotamia, and among the Kurdi mountains, are bought by its merchants, and sent to be spun in Yorkshire. The raft traffic on the Tigris provides hundreds with employment. Others push their fortunes as muleteers, and others in buying colts from Kurds or Shammar, and passing them on, in spite of the Osmanli, towards India.* The summer heat drives people into underground apartments by day and to the housetops at night. There are very few medical practitioners, and no European medicines. The town and its surroundings are so insanitary that they could hardly be worse. The dead are buried without coffins, in shallow graves distributed all over the plain outside the walls. The streets are extremely narrow, partly causewayed with rough stones, and sloping towards the centre, like "saucer-drains." In wet weather walking is very difficult, and riding even more so. Dead animals are merely dragged a little way outside the gates for dogs and vultures to quarrel over. Any one who wishes to see a dead donkey has only to go to Mosul. The Bedouin hatred of towns, in so far as due to mere disgust, and not to antipathy to all governors and magistrates, policemen and soldiers, here explains itself. And yet all classes, especially the poorer, look full of health; and children, if they do not all grow up, are at least produced in enormous numbers, judging from the fine show of them in the streets. The elevation above the sea is about 800 feet. Nearly all the rainfall is in winter; and on the present occasion, out of twenty-three days spent encamped on a ridge opposite the bâbu'l bêdh, or "white gate," not more than five or six were fine. Once it poured without a break for three days and nights. The roof of the Kabul tent, and the iron tent pegs, stood it all, though a good deal of water found its way in somehow. In clear weather the ground in the morning would be white with hoar frost. A house was hired inside the walls, and several hours spent in it daily for the convenience of visitors. The governor and military commandant paid official visits. A dinner party, Constantinople fashion, was also given in the Sarâi.

Mosul Pashâlik.

The extent of country administered by the present Wali, Muhammad Tahsîn Pasha, is traced, and its boundaries indicated, in sketch map facing this page. The system of the Porte seems growing

* Among the natives of Mosul an excellent breed of carrier-pigeon deserves notice. From his large beak, or from the fleshy lobes at the base of it, this bird is called by the Arabs *Abu'l Khashm,* literally, "the fellow with the nose." He is a powerful and athletic-looking, rather than graceful, bird. A few years ago a loft of Mosul carriers was started on the roof of the Baghdad Residency. The young birds were trained by being sent down the Tigris on the mail-steamers, each being carried a stage further every time, before being thrown off with a despatch. The results obtained were very good. The strength and precocity of the homing instinct which the birds exhibited showed how carefully Mosul preserves a pure strain.

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more bureaucratic than ever: small charges, with the reins running straight up to Secretariats on the Bosphorus. Until recently the Tigris valley was differently dealt with. The Baghdad Wali had under his control the Mosul and Bussorah provinces; and with so wide a field must either have been a very able and honest governor, or a very bad one. Not worth mentioning are mere administrative re-adjustments by the side of the political changes which Mosul has seen. At one time independent, at another Persian, then tributary, rather than subject, to the Porte, under its own hereditary Pashas whose descendants still survive, it was only during the present century that, after a long struggle, the famous Muhammad Pasha, surnamed "Inje Bairakdâr," or the little standard-bearer, hammered it into part of the Osmanli empire.

Religious dissensions at Mosul.

To say nothing of Mosul in its religious aspects would be to overlook several of its most important features: to deal with this subject fully would require more space and more knowledge than are here available. Islâm may be dismissed briefly. Muhammadans preponderate by at least three families to one, and have several hundred places of worship. The Shîa schism, or sect of Ali, is unrepresented in the town, to which may be partly due the comparative mildness of the local type of Islamism. It is among its Christian population that those dissensions, sometimes resulting in bloodshed, exist which, when they force themselves on the attention of European Governments, lead to such prolonged correspondences. Without saying a few words on the subject of eastern Christianity generally, it would not be possible to refer intelligibly to the present aspect of affairs in Mosul from this particular point of view. "Christianity," says Gibbon, "was successfully preached among the Bactrians, the Huns, the Persians, the Indians, the Perso-Armenians, the Medes, and the Elamites; the barbaric Churches from the Gulf of Persia to the Caspian were almost infinite." Of these only the "*disjecta membra,*" so to call them, now survive. No creed, human or divine, ever yet could be stereotyped, at all events in this world; and internal forces apart, centuries of oriental misrule, or anarchy, on the one hand, and of European, especially Latin, interference on the other, have passed like steam-rollers over these ancient structures. First among them may be mentioned the Armenian, claiming an older than apostolic foundation, but dating its distinctive existence from its break with the orthodox eastern, or so-called Greek, Church in the fifth century. Next the Syrian, also called "Jacobite," the founder of which has been referred to above in a footnote. And lastly the Nestorians, named after Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople from A. D. 428 to 431, who, owing to his refusal to apply to the Virgin Mary the term "Mother of God," was condemned by the Council of Ephesus and driven into exile. Of the Armenian Church nothing need here be said. Like all the others, it has been more or less breached by Latin proselytism. But of this there are no signs at Mosul, where the Armenian community, a mere handful, still holds together on the traditional lines. Far more numerous and important in Upper Mesopotamia, and indeed over the whole Tigris valley from Diârbakr nearly to the sea, what is called with reference to its nationality the "Syrian," with reference to one at least of its distinctive dogmas the "Jacobite" Church. To this belongs the bulk of the agricultural classes, whole villages in the Mosul and Mardin districts being peopled by Syrian Christians. Nothing could be worse than the condition in which these, clergy not less than laity, for the most part now lie. The prevailing symptoms are heathen ignorance, apathy, and squalor, rather than actual poverty, and intercourse with them forcibly suggested how apt they must be to impose on the credulity of European travellers or missionaries, in the hope of realising some object at once selfish, sinister, and impossible. In the 17th century the Jesuits took them in hand: and beginning at Alepo, brought them in thousands within the Roman fold. Some slight improvement in their condition here and there shows itself in consequence of the teaching and discipline thus introduced. But, as will presently appear, the counterbalancing evils have been considerable; owing to the quarrels constantly arising between the old, or "Jacobite" Syrians on the one hand, and the "Catholic" Syrians, or "Syro-Catholics" on the other. Over Syria and Mesopotamia as a whole the latter are by far the more numerous: but in Mosul the numbers seem to be about equal.

In regard to the Nestorians also a few words seem here required. The persecution of their founder, alluded to above, was followed by similar results as the persecution of the great Meccan dissenter and reformer a century later. Wherever he went disciples grew up around him. "In their progress by sea and land," says Gibbon, "the Nestorians entered China by the port of Canton." And again: "Under the reign of the Caliphs,

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the Nestorian Church was diffused from China to Jerusalem and Cyprus; and their numbers, with those of the Jacobites, were computed to surpass the Greek and Latin communities. Twenty-five metropolitans or archbishops composed their hierarchy." Even so late as Marco Polo's time (thirteenth century) the Nestorian Church formed one of the most marked features of what, with the tendency to exaggeration to which he was a little prone, the famous Venetian traveller described as "the very great kingdom of Mawsul." How, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, dissensions among Nestorian Christians tempted rival patriarchs to intrigue with Italian pontiffs need not here be described. To the infinite credit of the Papal See, advances in which it was stipulated that conversion to the Latin faith was not to be made a condition of Latin support met with no very cordial reception. In the end perhaps it would have been better for all had a similar attitude been maintained by the Roman missionaries engaged about the same time in disseminating the doctrines of the Papacy in the country of the Nestorians themselves. These, as so commonly happens, were more zealous than their masters. A proselyte, once ticketed off, could be made, it seems to have been thought, into a convert afterwards. On these lines no difficulty was met with. And a new patriarchate, Nestorian only in name, that is based purely on a papal foundation, having been formed, in 1681, at Diârbakr, where most of the Nestorians had by that time been "converted," the point of the wedge was thus fairly driven into the body of the Nestorian Church. To the new sect the name "Chaldean Church" was given, in view probably of the large number of its adherents who are natives of Babylonia, the ancient land of Chaldea; now known as Irâk—the capital of which, Baghdad, contains large bodies of these so-called Chaldean Christians, many of them useful, honest, and even more or less educated.* Thus, in towns, have died out, in name at least, the old Nestorians, a remnant of whom, amounting perhaps to 50,000, is however still to be found in remoter parts. Side by side with their blood enemies, the Muslim Kurds, these have fixed their villages like swallows' nests to the Kurdi mountains, as well as planted them on Persian soil, among the fertile slopes west of Lake Urmia: herdsmen, stocking-workers, not to say brigands, in the one locality; in the other, gardeners and agriculturists. Their churches, said to be upwards of 200, are arranged in nine dioceses, for the care of which there are seven metropolitans, the same number of bishops, and nearly 200 priests. On paper this reads well. But the actual condition of priests and people reflects rather the depths of misery and depression which they have had to sound than the features of the religion which has come down to them. Their clergy, for whom however they cherish the highest reverence, are to be seen not alone holding the plough, but dragging it, in default of fourfooted labour. One of their "bishops" met with one day struggling across the Zâb on a mule carried in his girdle a large wooden spoon. The idea occurring was that this might have a symbolical meaning, like St. Peter's keys; but on inquiry it turned out that the making and selling of these humble articles was what the old man lived by.†

The way in which portion after portion of these primitive Christian churches have become grafted on the Roman vine has now been glanced at. Next to be noticed are the means in use for making the offshoots grow. Of this great work Mosul—the patriarchial seat of the whole "Chaldean" Church in Turkey—may be regarded as the centre. A delegate from His Holiness the Pope makes it his head-quarters, and round him are gathered a body of dominican priests and nuns. The immediate base of

* The name Chaldean first appears in the Assyrian inscriptions of the 9th century B. C., where it was used to designate the dominant race in the country about Babylon.

† Colonel Chesney's Euphrates expedition (1835), following on the partial establishment of Ottoman authority in Kurdistan, helped to bring these mountain Nestorians, as well as the Christian Churches of Mesopotamia generally, within the view of the British public. One result was the deputation (1842) of the Revd. G. P. Badger, by the Christian Knowledge and Gospel Propagation Societies, to the country round Mosul, to fraternise with the bishops and clergy, explain the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, and promote Christian education. Mr. (now Dr.) Badger published an account of his proceedings in a work entitled "The Nestorians and their Rituals." In 1844 he was recalled. During his stay in Mosul the services of the Church of England were performed in a small chapel fitted up in his house. This of course has ceased; but it is said a few of the natives of Mosul still use the English prayer-book. For many years the American Board of Missions at Constantinople, drawing its agents from the Presbyterian, Independent, Dutch reformed, and other Churches, has maintained its missionaries and educationalists at Mârdîn, a great centre of Syrian Christianity. A minister connected with the Mârdîn mission chancing to visit Mosul during the period when material for these notes was being collected, facts were in this and other ways gathered showing at once the practical lines on which this enterprise is based, and the good prospect there is of its producing in time substantial results. Its founder, the late Dr. Grant (a medical missionary), is still gratefully remembered in Mosul. "Nestorians on the brain" made him conceive he had discovered in them the "Lost Tribes;" but even this had its advantages; for in support of his crotchet much sound information was collected by him.

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course is the local French Consulate.* The money comes statedly from a religious society at Lyons; also on occasion direct from the Vatican. The strength of an organisation like this, any one who knows the power of money in the world generally, and the Ottoman empire in particular, will perceive. Considering the extremely backward condition of the Mesopotamian Christians, it would be a pity to take it as a foregone conclusion that Rome will not in the long run make amends to them for all the social and political disturbance attendant so far on her efforts to improve them. One of the burning questions which her operations have excited, and which still keep the Syrian Christians in a ferment, is this: Shall their churches and ancestral burial places remain with the residuary, or pass to the Romanized division? In a strongly governed country such a case would of course be dealt with by a court of justice. A judgment like the one delivered by the late Sir Joseph Arnould, in the religious dispute among the Khojah, or Agha Khan community of Bombay,† would show that there is no subject too intricate, or too technical, to be mastered and luminously expounded by a capable and unbiassed judge. But within the Ottoman empire this unhappily is impossible. Farmâns obtained by political intrigue in the venal atmosphere of Constantinople here take the place of decrees by judicial tribunals. The edicts thus from time to time issued for the settlement of the question now alluded to, being based, like Solomon's famous judgment, on the principle of division, neither satisfied nor silenced either party. They who were ordered to surrender a part obstinately refused to do so; they who claimed the whole were merely encouraged by what was given them to press for more and more. The sacred grounds and buildings under dispute had not unfrequently to be occupied by picquets of Turkish soldiers. Scenes of violence at Mosul could not of course be ignored at Constantinople; but the negotiations and arbitrations which ensued ended perhaps in the local heart-burnings being aggravated rather than mitigated. Nor would the old Nestorian Church appear to have found rest, so far at least, in union with Rome, any more than the Syrian. In the former case, as has been seen, the difficulty met with has not been unconnected with the peculiarities of Ottoman rule; in the latter, the manner in which the union has been effected seems more or less answerable for the complications which have resulted. For the Nemesis of unsound work attends spurious "conversions" as notably as it does everything else that is not based on sure foundations; and when men and women pass like flocks of sheep from one spiritual fold to another, the chances are the greater number of them neither understand what they are doing nor know where they are going. What chiefly revealed the truth of this, in the instance of the "Chaldean" Church of Mosul, was the "Papal Bull" of 1869, launching, among other improvements, the dogma of Infallibility. This seems fairly to have struck it between wind and water, for Catholic as it had become in name, it was still full of the old Nestorian leaven. A state of convulsion and division was instantly produced in it. The clerical, and out and out Roman, party, accepting, as in duty bound, the "Bull," knit itself more closely than ever with the Vatican. The residue, comprising very many of the laity, evinced a disposition, rather than go so far as that, to break with Rome altogether. France of course sided with the former party. The latter as naturally looked to England for support. Correspondences between the governments of the two nations ensued, culminating in an exhaustive inquiry at Mosul, by Colonel Miles, Acting Political Resident in Turkish Arabia and Her Majesty's Consul-General, Baghdad.‡ In dealing more especially with the Nestorian *versus* Chaldean controversy, it proved impossible wholly to brush aside the points of polemical theology imported into it by the disputants as the bases of their respective cases. Statesmen and officials thus only the other day found themselves re-discussing, or, at all events, re-examining at Mosul and Constantinople, Paris and London, the very same niceties, mostly connected with the doctrine of the Trinity, by which the Councils of Ephesus

* *Vide* in a work on Armenia, by the Jesuit Mon-Eugene Boré, published in the "Univers," the following passage:—"Si les catholiques n'avaient trouvè un appui politique dans les ambassadeurs, et principalement dans celui de France, le protecteur official de la religion des Latins, ils n'auraient pu resister à la persecution." As for persecution, so far as the government goes, there is no longer much fear of that. Perhaps in all the Ottoman empire one or two officials of the antique Kurânic type may still survive, who, if the opportunity were to offer, would exterminate with perfect impartiality every Christian community within their reach. But the average Osmanli governor is, as a rule, too intent on other objects to take up, if he can help it, such unprofitable work as the persecution of one branch of Christians at the bidding, or in the interests, of another branch. In Muslim circles at Mosul, as elsewhere, it was instructive in its way to notice how all that it was thought necessary to know with reference to the Jewish or Christian communities of the country was comprised in the brief remark "*Kulluhum kâfir*:" meaning "*all of them deniers*" (lit. cover^ers up, query *cover* et *kufr*, one word?) of Muhammad's mission and message.

† *Vide* this judgment published, pamphlet form, and otherwise, Bombay, 1866.

‡ *Vide* Report (printed) by this officer, dated 31st March 1880.

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and Chalcedon were puzzled and divided. But the result of it all has not been very great. With regard to the Syrian Church question, relating, as has been shown, mainly to the possession of ecclesiastical property, from the signs apparent now at Mosul, it may be hoped that, if only the Latin section will use their strength gently, the other, or Jacobite one, under the common tendency to accept the inevitable, will grow reconciled to the situation as it stands. The troubles of the Chaldean, or rather mixed Chaldean and Nestorian Church, on the contrary, depending, as has also been seen, less on mundane claims than on points of doctrine and spiritual jurisdiction, may, for all that any one can tell, go on indefinitely. Enough at any rate has here been said to show that the situation at Mosul from the religious view point is one of no ordinary interest, while fraught with consequences of the first importance to thousands of the Sultan's Christian subjects.

Section X.—Mosul to Sinjar Hills.

Leaving Mosul.

From Mosul the direct caravan route reaches Baghdad on the twelfth day.* By raft on the Tigris in favourable states of the river, the same journey occupies only about half that time. But for reasons already stated, a wider sweep was now to be taken. On 17th December the march began again: Tigris in rear; course west by south. Once already, as has been seen, Mesopotamia had been crossed, that is, its more southerly and narrower portion, from Hît on Euphrates to Tikrît on Tigris. And now the same vast space was to be retraversed, this time from east to west, in its broader and more northerly part, corresponding historically with "Assyria, west the Tigris." The remote point being made for thus was the Euphrates, at once line of demarcation and link of connection between the western edge of the great Mesopotamian valley and the so-called Syrian desert, the adopted home of the Ih-ni-zah Bedouin. The day was one of those rare in western, but common in eastern, latitudes, borrowed by midwinter from midsummer. Forty-eight hours before it had looked as if the sun would never be seen again. Now he was out in force, only the fleeciest of clouds were in the sky, and the balmy, yet invigorating air was filled with myriads of harmless insects. At Mosul a change had been made in the *kâfila*. The Baghdad mules had belonged to three different owners, each of whom had as usual come with his own lot. Equally, as usual, constant bickerings, by day and night, in camp and on the road, had resulted as to which man's mules should take the harder, and which the easier loads. Therefore two of the teams had been paid off at Mosul. And then, for the sake of utilising the Mesopotamian pasture, and lessening the need for chopped straw, their place had been supplied at starting, not with fresh mules, but camels. The mistake thus made soon showed itself. The camels, as their wont is, held on at a certain slow pace, shooting out their long necks and browsing as they went. The mules, if allowed to slacken, stopped altogether, or made, helter-skelter, for any superior patch they chanced to spy. Thus the small *kâfila* was inevitably broken into two, which, as the Mosul Wali had been very considerate and moderate in the matter of escort, was unadvisable in a country still filled with robbers.

Plain of Zargah.

About 12 miles from Mosul, in a plain called Zargah, a curious half-prostrate tower appeared, with about a dozen hovels round it. On maps this is marked as Sahhâgî. The Arabs called it merely "Mâkill" (pronounced Mâgill) meaning a halting place (literally *hobbling* place) for camels, many hundreds of which, bound in a way which prevents their rising, had been disposed for the night in huge rings or circles near it. The tents were pitched a few miles further on, beside a "ghadîr," or sheet of rainwater. By that time the low hills to the west of Mosul, covered with nothing but stones, had been succeeded by stretches carpeted with tender grass, over which a number of semi-nomad, semi-agricultural Arabs had spread themselves.

Tal-âfar.

Next day the route was more northerly. Its features need not here be set down. If ever circumstances draw attention to this locality, its topography will be found described by Mr. (now Sir) A. H. Layard, first in his "Nineveh and its Remains," and a few years later in his "Discoveries in the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon." In 1838, Mr. F. Forbes, of the Bombay Medical Staff, also travelled more or less over the same line, contributing an account of it to the

* Stages as follows:—

(1) Mosul to Zâb.	(7) Duz Khurmâtu to Kîfri.
(2) Zâb to Arbîl.	(8) Kîfri to Kâra Tâppa.
(3) Arbîl to Altûn Keûpri.	(9) Kâra Tappa to Delli Abbas.
(4) Altûn Keûpri to Kirkûk.	(10) Delli Abbas to Yângija.
(5) Kirkûk to Dakûk or Tawûk.	(11) Yângija to Judeyda.
(6) Tawûk to Duz Khurmâtu.	(12) Judeyda to Baghdad.

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journal of the Royal Geographical Society, Vol. IX. Enough that on the second day, after a seven hours' march, over a rather arid country, dotted here and there with mounds supposed to contain the remains of ancient Assyrian cites, the town of Tal-âfar*—a name more than much else—showed itself. Within the present century a robber horde, said to be of Turkoman race, here kept watch from an inaccessible summit over the vast plain below, ready to pounce on caravans. Wealth was gathered, an imposing castle was built, protection, albeit that of robbers,—here perhaps the best kind,—attracted a population round the copious stream issuing from the base of the hill; and the town prospered. But even in Mesopotamia times change. First the Baghdad, then the Mosul Government sent expeditions against Tal-âfar. On each occasion the inhabitants fought hard, but there was no resisting the "little Standard-bearer," Muhammad Pasha, who pounded the old castle with cannon, till now it looks as if it had been sent flying by an earthquake. One of its fragments has been in some sort made habitable (the Osmanli seldom build "Government houses") and what would be called in India a "sub-divisional officer" posted in it. But the real magnates evidently still are the native greybeards of the fields and gardens at the foot of the hill.

Transport difficulties.

It was long past dark before the camel part of the *kâfila* came up. And so a halt had to be called, the camels dismissed, and mules engaged. These were obtained only on condition of their being taken no further than Sinjâr. Every mule, it seemed, was just then at plough. Neither do plough mules (distinguishable by yoke marks across root of neck) as a rule make good transport ones. Even in mule-breeding localities, sound young animals, it is said, are sold very young to dealers; rejections from muleteers' teams being b ought for field use. Hence when the *kâfila* came to be started again the following morning (a bitterly cold one) it took four hours to get the loads arranged, and off the ground. A regular transport officer would soon have whacked both man and beast into position with his stick; indeed, a Turkish soldier offered to do so for a penny; but, considering all the circumstances, patience seemed best.

From Tal-âfar.

All Tal-âfar was out that day to welcome people returning from the Hajj or Mecca pilgrimage. These soon appeared in scattered groups, a few on camels, but most on foot, evidently much exhausted. The actual Sinjâr hills, rugged rather than imposing, and indicating the centre of a very long range, rise about thirty miles west of Tal-âfar, with which, however, minor spurs connect them. Avoiding these, the *kâfila* held across the plain which stretches away to the south. The landmarks noticed are shown on the map. Next to the numerous artificial mounds and ruins here awaiting exploration, the principal feature is the number of bituminous rivulets. Into one of these a mule fell, unhappily the one with the writing-case. When that was next opened, its contents were found stuck together as if with pitch; the ink of letters having apparently been chemically acted on. Tal-âfar is the only permanent settlement in all the eighty miles or so between Mosul and Sinjâr. The way over the plain at least was perfectly practicable for wheeled artillery, and numerous travellers were met. Water flowed everywhere, and a moderate quantity of supplies was obtained in nomad encampments. Once a number of horsemen came in sight, not Arabs, but rather of the kind which in Italy carry off tourists bodily. These belonged to one of the great pastoral lords of this part of the country: a nomadic Kurd, or "Kochar," called Shekh Mustav, keeping in summer to the Shammarkâra mountains, and coming down in winter with innumerable flocks of sheep and Angora goats to the Sinjâr plain. In appearance these men were not unlike Afghans or Baluchis. Kurdi was their language; and the only Arab things about them were their mares and their religion. Like the Hamâwands, they all had firearms; and their one idea on meeting a European was to get a rifle from him! They had been sent out, it seemed, to look for fresh pastures to move the flocks to. Their leader, one of the Shekh's own progeny, said that his father bred as many mules as sheep; and suggested a visit to him as his tents were only a day off. It was then near sunset. A few miles further on, a halt was made beside a ruined hamlet, the scattered stones of which made the place a picture of desolation.

Mesopotamian Kochars.†

The following morning, while the *kâfila* held on its course, a start was made with one attendant, and a Bedouin guide (riding a mule) to beat up Shekh Mustav. Striking north, across a stony plain

* *Tal* or *tel* (query *tellus*), pl. *tilâl*, et *tulúl*, is the Arabic equivalent of the Kurdi *tappa*; *vide* footnote, page 16 *ante*, while *afar*, as here used, probably means *white, mingled with red*.

† From *kúch* to *move*, or march, in which sense it has been imported, probably from the language of the Turks or Tatars, into the Indian vernacular. The term *kochar* indicates merely the mode of life, not the nationality. Thus among the *Kochars* (there called *Kúchis*) of Afghanistan, were found camel-owning, and more or less migratory, hordes of many different races; Momands, Ghilzais, and even Arabs; some of them living in tents, others in permanent houses; but all of them pastoral.

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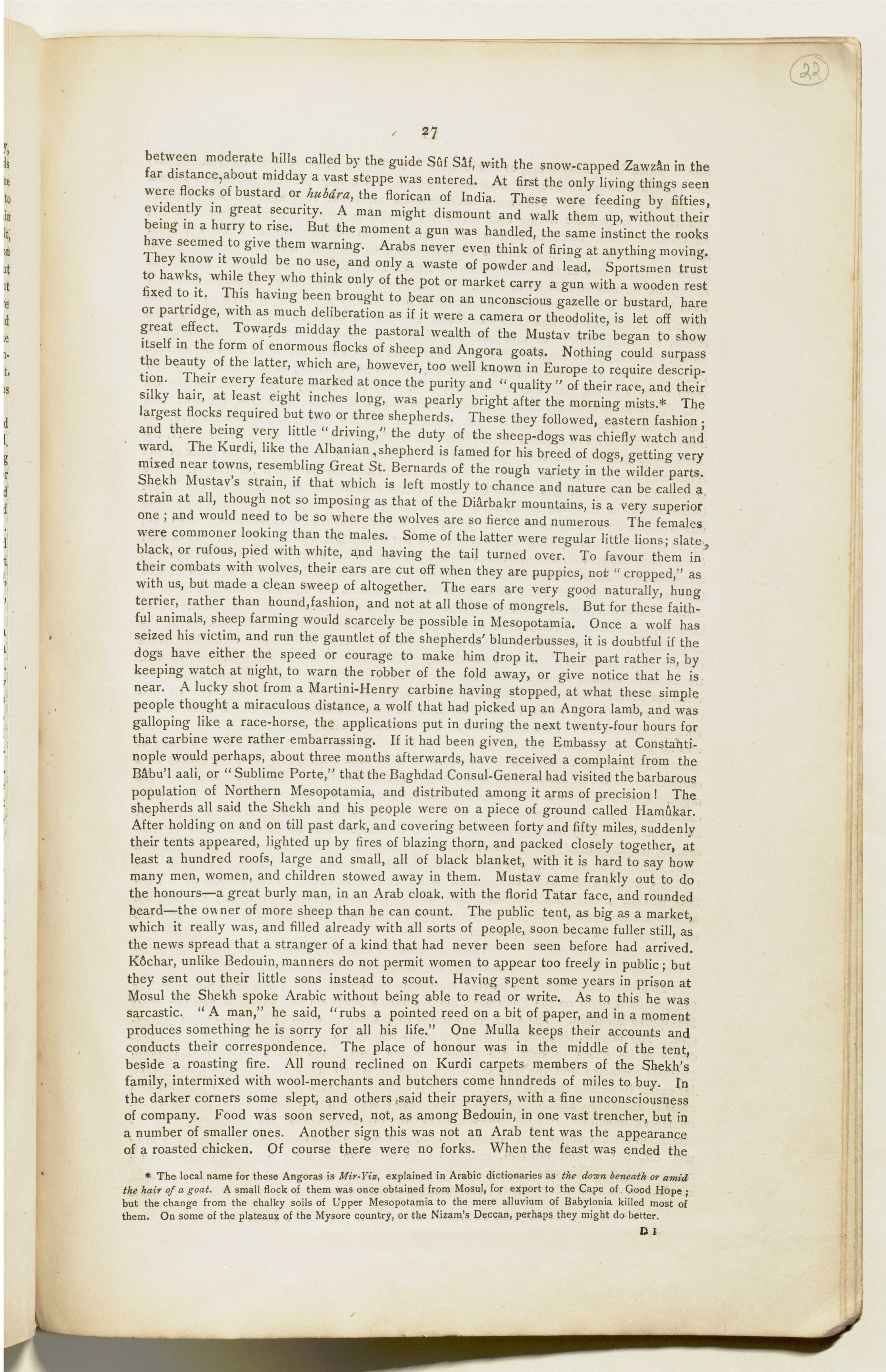

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between moderate hills called by the guide Sûf Sâf, with the snow-capped Zawzân in the far distance, about midday a vast steppe was entered. At first the only living things seen were flocks of bustard or *hubâra*, the florican of India. These were feeding by fifties, evidently in great security. A man might dismount and walk them up, without their being in a hurry to rise. But the moment a gun was handled, the same instinct the rooks have seemed to give them warning. Arabs never even think of firing at anything moving. They know it would be no use, and only a waste of powder and lead. Sportsmen trust to hawks, while they who think only of the pot or market carry a gun with a wooden rest fixed to it. This having been brought to bear on an unconscious gazelle or bustard, hare or partridge, with as much deliberation as if it were a camera or theodolite, is let off with great effect. Towards midday the pastoral wealth of the Mustav tribe began to show itself in the form of enormous flocks of sheep and Angora goats. Nothing could surpass the beauty of the latter, which are, however, too well known in Europe to require description. Their every feature marked at once the purity and "quality" of their race, and their silky hair, at least eight inches long, was pearly bright after the morning mists.* The largest flocks required but two or three shepherds. These they followed, eastern fashion; and there being very little "driving," the duty of the sheep-dogs was chiefly watch and ward. The Kurdi, like the Albanian, shepherd is famed for his breed of dogs, getting very mixed near towns, resembling Great St. Bernards of the rough variety in the wilder parts. Shekh Mustav's strain, if that which is left mostly to chance and nature can be called a strain at all, though not so imposing as that of the Diârbakr mountains, is a very superior one; and would need to be so where the wolves are so fierce and numerous. The females were commoner looking than the males. Some of the latter were regular little lions; slate, black, or rufous, pied with white, and having the tail turned over. To favour them in their combats with wolves, their ears are cut off when they are puppies, not "cropped," as with us, but made a clean sweep of altogether. The ears are very good naturally, hung terrier, rather than hound, fashion, and not at all those of mongrels. But for these faithful animals, sheep farming would scarcely be possible in Mesopotamia. Once a wolf has seized his victim, and run the gauntlet of the shepherds' blunderbusses, it is doubtful if the dogs have either the speed or courage to make him drop it. Their part rather is, by keeping watch at night, to warn the robber of the fold away, or give notice that he is near. A lucky shot from a Martini-Henry carbine having stopped, at what these simple people thought a miraculous distance, a wolf that had picked up an Angora lamb, and was galloping like a race-horse, the applications put in during the next twenty-four hours for that carbine were rather embarrassing. If it had been given, the Embassy at Constantinople would perhaps, about three months afterwards, have received a complaint from the Bâbu'l aali, or "Sublime Porte," that the Baghdad Consul-General had visited the barbarous population of Northern Mesopotamia, and distributed among it arms of precision! The shepherds all said the Shekh and his people were on a piece of ground called Hamûkar. After holding on and on till past dark, and covering between forty and fifty miles, suddenly their tents appeared, lighted up by fires of blazing thorn, and packed closely together, at least a hundred roofs, large and small, all of black blanket, with it is hard to say how many men, women, and children stowed away in them. Mustav came frankly out to do the honours—a great burly man, in an Arab cloak, with the florid Tatar face, and rounded beard—the owner of more sheep than he can count. The public tent, as big as a market, which it really was, and filled already with all sorts of people, soon became fuller still, as the news spread that a stranger of a kind that had never been seen before had arrived. Kôchar, unlike Bedouin, manners do not permit women to appear too freely in public; but they sent out their little sons instead to scout. Having spent some years in prison at Mosul the Shekh spoke Arabic without being able to read or write. As to this he was sarcastic. "A man," he said, "rubs a pointed reed on a bit of paper, and in a moment produces something he is sorry for all his life." One Mulla keeps their accounts and conducts their correspondence. The place of honour was in the middle of the tent, beside a roasting fire. All round reclined on Kurdi carpets members of the Shekh's family, intermixed with wool-merchants and butchers come hnndreds of miles to buy. In the darker corners some slept, and others said their prayers, with a fine unconsciousness of company. Food was soon served, not, as among Bedouin, in one vast trencher, but in a number of smaller ones. Another sign this was not an Arab tent was the appearance of a roasted chicken. Of course there were no forks. When the feast was ended the

* The local name for these Angoras is *Mir-Yiz*, explained in Arabic dictionaries as *the down beneath or amid the hair of a goat*. A small flock of them was once obtained from Mosul, for export to the Cape of Good Hope; but the change from the chalky soils of Upper Mesopotamia to the mere alluvium of Babylonia killed most of them. On some of the plateaux of the Mysore country, or the Nizam's Deccan, perhaps they might do better.

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Shekh wiped his greasy hand, or *"khamsah,"** on the smart cloak of a Mosul merchant; and the tent was given over to tobacco-smoke, endless coffee, brewed by African slaves, and talk. Several of the townsmen present knew all about England and Englishmen; and it was only their asides that made the Shekh feel satisfied his visitor was not an Osmanli officer come to squeeze him, or walk him off to prison! Luckily a *tente d'abri* had been brought, so that a separate place to sleep in was ready. The crowd gathered round this in the morning showed that if the Kôchars were a curiosity to the European, he was equally so to them. His ablutions in particular set people who rarely wash in winter a wondering what secret cause or infirmity necessitated such an inconvenient custom. The central tent was found still full of sleepers, the Kôchars, like the Arabs, evidently loving to talk half the night, and lie down when they ought to be rising. Presently the Shekh, followed by numerous sons, came out of his *haram*; and the work of buying and selling began. The mules proved fabulous; at all events very few were seen, and not one was brought for sale. Horse-breeders, also, these people are not. They showed about a dozen good-limbed and fairly well-bred mares, brought from the Shammar, and used for riding; but no stallion. In the Dilêm, as described above, had been seen one form of modern desert life, that of *Bedouin* turning into *Fallahîn*. Of the unchanged Bedouin, the only specimens met with, so far, had been in the tents of the Shammar; Ih-ni-zah Salgah, between Hît and Tikrît; and the Sâ-yâh in Al Hawîja. Here was a third type: not Arabs, but Bedouin Kurds, resembling Bedouin Arabs (1) in not building; (2) in declining agriculture; and differing from them (1) in migrating only from one well-known spot to another; (2) in paying under pressure the Government demands; (3) in satisfying, not fighting, neighbours, like the Shammar, who would otherwise raid on them; and, lastly, in breeding neither horses nor camels. If ever, in Egypt or Asia-Minor, a commissariat have a large order for mutton, Shekh Mustav and others like him would be the men to send to. In point of religion the Mesopotamian Kôchars are Sunni Muslim, of a stamp little likely ever to let considerations of this sort interfere with business. After breakfasting, chiefly on Kurdi cheese, not bad, but oversalted, and full of chopped herbs, the next thing was to overtake the *kâfila* at the town and Kaim Makâmate of Sinjâr. With nothing but featureless plains or downs touching all round the horizon, and a broken compass, the chances seemed against this. But the Shammar guide *Ishteywi*—diminutive of the word for winter—picked out here and there a landmark, and went very straight. At first the soil was dry, but verdant; then, towards the northern base of the Sinjâr hills, full of springs, and hollows containing water. The start not having been made till noon, there was no hope of getting out of the wilds that night. Towards sunset, flock upon flock of Mustav's sheep, each led by its own shepherds, were seen converging, like regiments on a rendezvous, in the direction of an undulating ridge where they were to be massed for the night. Beside them was soon pitched the little tent amid the remonstrances of their canine guardians. Not to be propitiated these with a handful of tobacco, or a copper, and even after they had been thumped by their masters into acquiescence, one or two seniors, it was noticed, put themselves on duty between the new object and their charges. Next morning, a bowl of freshly drawn ewes' milk—the most milky milk that had been seen for long, with a barley bannock baked, if baked it could be called, in the shepherds' watch-fires, formed no bad substitute for "early tea." The two horses were nearly knocked up. Mustav's encampment had yielded no chopped straw, or cut forage of any kind; and the barley carried on the mule was done.

Sinjâr range.

To-day, instead of the eastern end of the Sinjâr hills being rounded, the range itself was crossed.

This important limestone barrier, stretching from near Mosul to a little below Rakka (pronouced Ragga) on the Euphrates, divides into a northern and southern half the great Mesopotamian plain. The view commanded from some portions of it is thus most extensive. The narrow, sinuous, and rushy streams dispersing themselves through it, the tendency of its strata to split into flakes, forming here broad and slippery tables, there gigantic obstacles, and the ravines which seam it, would make it, like most such places, far easier to defend than to force. Still it is only moderately precipitous. Cavalry could cross it anywhere, and in favourable spots even wheeled artillery. Dotted over it are numerous mountain villages, where guides, but rarely supplies, are obtainable. In the afternoon level country was reached again, and presently appeared, conspicuous a long way off, the broken minaret, still some 40 feet high, of what must once have been a noble mosque. This was close to the *"Albalad"* of the Arabs, that is the capital, Sinjâr, of what formed an independent Arab principality of the same name, when Harûnu'r Rashîd

* Meaning "*the five*;" this is what the Arabs always call their natural knives and forks!

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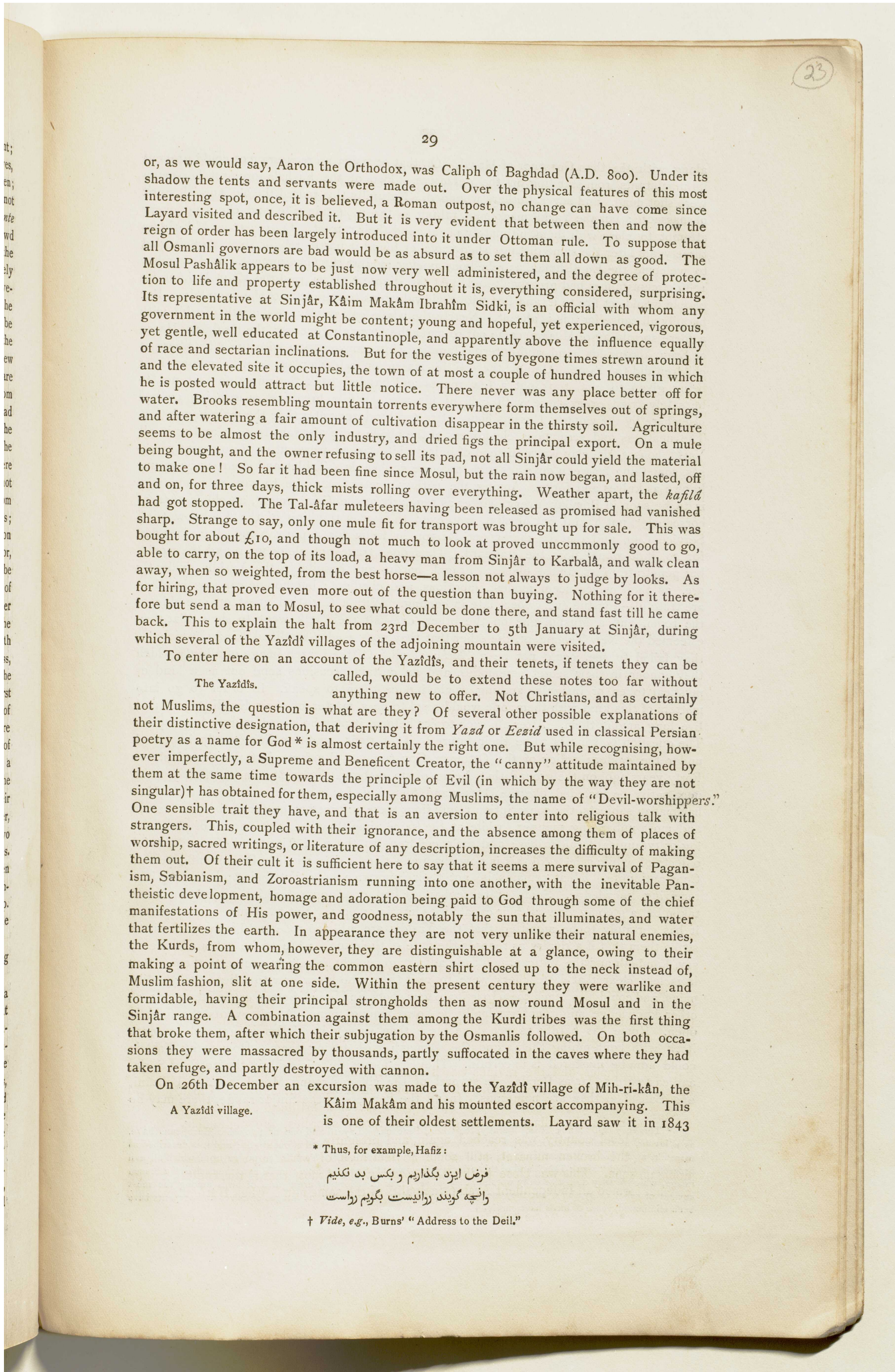

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or, as we would say, Aaron the Orthodox, was Caliph of Baghdad (A.D. 800). Under its shadow the tents and servants were made out. Over the physical features of this most interesting spot, once, it is believed, a Roman outpost, no change can have come since Layard visited and described it. But it is very evident that between then and now the reign of order has been largely introduced into it under Ottoman rule. To suppose that all Osmanli governors are bad would be as absurd as to set them all down as good. The Mosul Pashâlik appears to be just now very well administered, and the degree of protection to life and property established throughout it is, everything considered, surprising. Its representative at Sinjâr, Kâim Makâm Ibrahîm Sidki, is an official with whom any government in the world might be content; young and hopeful, yet experienced, vigorous, yet gentle, well educated at Constantinople, and apparently above the influence equally of race and sectarian inclinations. But for the vestiges of byegone times strewn around it and the elevated site it occupies, the town of at most a couple of hundred houses in which he is posted would attract but little notice. There never was any place better off for water. Brooks resembling mountain torrents everywhere form themselves out of springs, and after watering a fair amount of cultivation disappear in the thirsty soil. Agriculture seems to be almost the only industry, and dried figs the principal export. On a mule being bought, and the owner refusing to sell its pad, not all Sinjâr could yield the material to make one! So far it had been fine since Mosul, but the rain now began, and lasted, off and on, for three days, thick mists rolling over everything. Weather apart, the *kafilâ* had got stopped. The Tal-âfar muleteers having been released as promised had vanished sharp. Strange to say, only one mule fit for transport was brought up for sale. This was bought for about £10, and though not much to look at proved uncommonly good to go, able to carry, on the top of its load, a heavy man from Sinjâr to Karbalâ, and walk clean away, when so weighted, from the best horse—a lesson not always to judge by looks. As for hiring, that proved even more out of the question than buying. Nothing for it therefore but send a man to Mosul, to see what could be done there, and stand fast till he came back. This to explain the halt from 23rd December to 5th January at Sinjâr, during which several of the Yazîdî villages of the adjoining mountain were visited.

The Yazîdîs.

To enter here on an account of the Yazîdîs, and their tenets, if tenets they can be called, would be to extend these notes too far without anything new to offer. Not Christians, and as certainly not Muslims, the question is what are they? Of several other possible explanations of their distinctive designation, that deriving it from *Yazd* or *Eezid* used in classical Persian poetry as a name for God * is almost certainly the right one. But while recognising, however imperfectly, a Supreme and Beneficent Creator, the "canny" attitude maintained by them at the same time towards the principle of Evil (in which by the way they are not singular)† has obtained for them, especially among Muslims, the name of "Devil-worshippers." One sensible trait they have, and that is an aversion to enter into religious talk with strangers. This, coupled with their ignorance, and the absence among them of places of worship, sacred writings, or literature of any description, increases the difficulty of making them out. Of their cult it is sufficient here to say that it seems a mere survival of Paganism, Sabianism, and Zoroastrianism running into one another, with the inevitable Pantheistic development, homage and adoration being paid to God through some of the chief manifestations of His power, and goodness, notably the sun that illuminates, and water that fertilizes the earth. In appearance they are not very unlike their natural enemies, the Kurds, from whom, however, they are distinguishable at a glance, owing to their making a point of wearing the common eastern shirt closed up to the neck instead of, Muslim fashion, slit at one side. Within the present century they were warlike and formidable, having their principal strongholds then as now round Mosul and in the Sinjâr range. A combination against them among the Kurdi tribes was the first thing that broke them, after which their subjugation by the Osmanlis followed. On both occasions they were massacred by thousands, partly suffocated in the caves where they had taken refuge, and partly destroyed with cannon.

A Yazîdî village.

On 26th December an excursion was made to the Yazîdî village of Mih-ri-kân, the Kâim Makâm and his mounted escort accompanying. This is one of their oldest settlements. Layard saw it in 1843

* Thus, for example, Hafiz:

فرض ایزد بگذاریم و بکس بد نکنیم
وانچه گویند روانیست بگویم رواست

† *Vide, e.g.*, Burns' "Address to the Deil."

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along with the then Governor of Mosul. On that occasion no reassurances could prevent its inhabitants from standing on the defensive. Two of the Pasha's foremost horsemen were shot dead, and several others wounded. Naturally this roused the old Turkish spirit of massacre; but the Yazîdî marksmen, taking to the mountain side, and checking every attempt to close with them, ultimately made good their retreat. On revisiting Mih-ri-kân three years later the same distinguished traveller found it partly rebuilt, but, though glad to welcome the Englishman, as rebellious as ever against the Government. In December 1886 circumstances had greatly altered. At the slightest alarm, said the Kâim Makâm, its people would set fire to it, and flee with their valuables to the clefts of the mountain. But happily all cause for this is absent. Nearly the whole community, essentially Yazîdî with a mere sprinkling of Muslim, came out to meet the Osmanli governor, the headman, Hassu or Esau, kissing his hand, and entering familiarly into conversation with him. Numbers of children did the same. One of these, little Hassu, on a leather purse with money in it being given to him, took out a few pieces and handed back the purse—a test not to be safely tried everywhere with lads of his age. While breakfast was being cooked elsewhere by the women, Hassu's house attracted by dozens at a time the male population. The neatness and scrupulous cleanliness of the abode were pleasant to see; and as in all Yazîdî houses, the clay walls, instead of being whitewashed, were cut out into quaint recesses, something between dovecots and Japanese cupboards. Tables and chairs were as unknown as knives and forks. Among the natives present, strange to say, was one who is to be seen in Bombay every winter as regularly as the Government, an old *jambâz*, or horsedealer, not Yazîdî, but Muslim, who even then was thinking of the Lucknow Civil Service Cup, and that he might get R1,500 in India for a pony bought the other day for 20, if it would pass the standard. Thus does trade not alone go round the world, but penetrate to its inmost places. Frugal, hardy, and hospitable the Yazîdîs evidently are, as their wives seem modest, laborious, and obedient; but no one can say that they are truthful—a virtue everywhere late in coming. With a Christian guest on one side of the room, and a Muslim one on the other, one-half their talk went to show that they esteemed the New Testament, the other that they possessed a modified Kurân, which, as they failed to see, could not be a Kurân at all. Of the brazen image of a bird* which they honour in their secret assemblies, and on certain occasions send out as a kind of mystical token or insignia, nothing would induce them to speak. In order to go into matters of this kind with them, one would need to be a master of their Kurdi *patois*, and live long among them. After all, such topics belong, it may be hoped, merely to the past. The question is, what is to be their future? That their condition has greatly improved under the modern policy of the Ottoman Government the facts just mentioned show. Forty years ago, on the ground that, being of no recognised non-Muslim sect, they must necessarily be included, like the Druses and Ansyri of Lebanon, among the Porte's Muhammadan subjects, the conscription regulations were enforced among them in the severest and most unbending manner, while at the same time they lay at the mercy of persecuting or tyrannical local Pashas; and their children, as those of "infidels," formed lawful objects of public sale. All this is now changed—thanks very much to British influence at Constantinople. What remains is, not their ignorance only, but their prejudice against receiving knowledge. Some of those having had good opportunities of judging have taken but a gloomy view of their capabilities in this respect. Not to dispute with experts; it has certainly to be admitted that the Yazîdîs are still too rude and backward for it to strike them that if a rivalry as regards the cure of their souls were to be set up between, say, Lambeth and the Vatican, mundane advantages might therefrom accrue to them. But it is less clear that if teachers were to visit them who knew how to relieve their bodily pains, and could also teach them to irrigate new spots, and breed better cattle, the seeds of other knowledge might not gradually be sown among them. At all events the field is open. Rome has hardly as yet done more than survey it. Islâm in general contents itself with contemning them, and the Osmanli with taxing them. How many Yazîdîs could now be mustered is uncertain. They are met with, it is said, in the north of Syria, and eastward as far as Persia. In several of the villages round Mosul, notably Bahzâni, and Bahshîka, they are numerous. In all the hamlets of the Sinjâr range, there may be

* This they call "Malik Tâûs," literally, the "Lord Peacock.' Layard and one or two other Europeans have, as a favour, been allowed to interview it. Its resemblance to any known bird is but slight; and it is described as more like an Indian or Mexican idol. In the theological nomenclature of the Yazîdîs the power from which all evil proceeds is called "Malik Tâûs," and of this principle they would appear to have "made unto themselves" a brazen image, which if they do not actually worship, they go very near it. Not only are figures of birds among the most ancient of religious symbols, but they seem to die the hardest. Long after the images of calves and serpents have been eliminated, those of birds have survived.

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two thousand families of them. Not to mention certain *quasi*-sacerdotal orders established among them, they have a kind of patriarch (hereditary), or spiritual head; also a temporal chief, or Amir, with head-quarters at Ba-adh-râ in the Shaikhân district, a few hours from Mosul. Not far from Ba-adh-râ, within a wooded valley, is a shrine, or so-called tomb, to which "go up" annually, like Islâm to Mecca, all the Yazîdîs of Mesopotamia. This place of pilgrimage is called Shekh Aadi, *Aadi*, strange to say, being also the name which in their dim theology stands for God. In 1843, Mr. Layard was an honoured guest at Shekh Aadi during the three days the proceedings lasted; and in the description given by him of what he then witnessed the number of pilgrims when the festival was at its height is set down at about seven thousand—a nice little contingent truly for guerilla warfare, of which centuries of experience have made them perfect masters. In physique not unlike the Gurkhas, early accustomed to arms, and by no means over-careful of their skins or lives, they are the *beau-ideal* of light infantry, that is, if not stuffed into European uniforms.* In the matter of diet they are very hardy, though not without their own prejudices. Mr. Forbes (1838) wrote of them that they drank only water; but if ever this was so, it is not so now. Though drunkenness does not seem common among them, there is nothing they will work harder for than arrack, unless, perhaps, it be tobacco. Only a few of them understand Arabic; and although, of course, Persian is unknown among them, yet it is worth noting that one who can speak it is half-way towards mastering Kurdi. The funny thing is that, with so many possibilities ahead, the Government of India has hardly any officers who can speak Turkish. Mosul could not be occupied without the Sinjâr hills being held by way of outpost; and good as the climate of the former may be considered, that of the latter is as superior to it as Gandumak is to Jalâlâbâd. At Sinjâr, on the same rations, horses and mules improved greatly, which the natives all ascribed to the excellence of the water.

Section XI.—Sinjâr to Der on the Euphrates.

Reduction of *kâfila.*

The muleteers brought out from Mosul refusing to proceed unless allowed to fix the route, the knot was cut by the whole of them being sent back, and half the *kâfila* with them. The camp as pitched the first march out of Sinjâr was therefore merely thus:—

Flying camp: Sinjâr to Karbala (all three tents Baghdad-made).

Yet there remained to be fed 1 clerk (Arab), 1 khawwâss, 2 servants, 1 groom, 1 lascar, 1 (Bedouin) guide, 3 horses, 8 mules, with their 2 attendants; total men 7, transport 11; besides the Sinjâr escort, happily only of the mounted police, who, as usual, either helped themselves as they went along, or did without.

Route.

Course west by south, under Sinjâr range; here presenting low saddles or spurs, there serrated and truncated blocks. Search was made for the river, said here to rise out of these hills, and go on to water the southern plain; but the only streams observed were such as disappeared after a little space in the desert. And yet nothing but these enable the Sinjâr hills to support even the semblance of a settled population; poor squatters in hamlets often moved from

* One of the things which proved most distasteful to the Yazîdîs under the attempt alluded to above to draft them into the Ottoman army was the uniform, the colour of which, blue, they hold, it seems, in religious reverence. When in any of the villages inhabited by them a Jew or Christian starts a shop for dyeing cloth blue, the sacred colour attracts them to it much as the herb valerian does cats.

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site to site. Of Mesopotamia as a whole the modern inhabitants, as has been seen above, principally are the nomad Shammar, one of whose chiefs, the Abdu'l Karîm of desert song and story, had his stronghold, till the Osmanlis hanged him about fourteen years ago, in the ruined tower or "peel" of Ihyâl passed to-day (5th January). After an easy march the tents were pitched at Keerân or Geerân, consisting of about two hundred hovels, at the mouth of a huge gorge, separating Sinjâr proper from the spurs running eastward and northward. The inhabitants were unmixed Yazîdîs, if possible more ignorant, and certainly more squalid, than those nearer Mosul. At the sight of a European the children roared with fright. For a time not even the near prospect of coppers gave them power or courage to move. By next morning they were rolling one over the other inside the tent, fearlessly collecting any little refuse they fancied as toys. From the first the seniors had been friendly. One old man, a "*Kawwâl*," or leader of their sacred chants and dances, insisted on coming on as guide. Soon after sunrise he was observed bowing down, and kissing a stone, the first act savouring of worship any Yazîdî had as yet been seen going through. Was this essentially the same fetich as that of the Hajji when he kisses the famous black stone of the Mecca shrine, originally, as is well known, a pagan temple, Islam itself having been to some extent a direct graft on paganism? To some extent yes; but it was impossible in this instance to tell whether the object of reverence was the stone, or the rays of the sun falling on it. The rather formidable mountain pass receiving the *kâfila* at Geerân is called Bâloom. Within it, beside the Sheelu rivulet, were camped out a colony from the Yazîdî village of Samooga. On the right a pathway diverged to the hamlet of Bârah. After two hours' difficult going, which laden camels could scarcely have managed, the open Mesopotamian plain was re-entered; with the Abdu'l Azîz range, the volcanic cone of Kawkab (some 300 feet high) and many other bold hill outlines, scarcely distinguishable from cloud land in the remote distance. About noon it began to rain pitilessly, and for a couple of hours the *kâfila* caught it. The gypsiferous soil, not free from nitrous exudations, became in consequence very slippery.

Lake and village of Khâtûnîya.

The evening had brightened by the time the Muslim village of Khâtûnîya was sighted. This is most picturesquely situated on a sheet of water about four miles long by several broad; or rather it carries itself right athwart the lake, by means of a hilly peninsula running out from the mainland into it. The water unfortunately is brackish and bitter. Till recently it swarmed with fish, but these are said to have gorged themselves to death on putrid locusts. Wild fowl covered it, safe from people who have no boats, and very little powder. The village greybeards overflowed with hospitality; and scouted the idea of a tent being pitched. "What!" said their half-blind spokesman, Shekh Sulimân, a disciple of Kaka Ahmad of Sulimânîah, and himself pretending to supernatural power, "is my roof accursed, that its shelter should be refused?" This was irresistible. Happily the same argument was not used, as a Bedouin would have been sure to do, in the matter of food. That was allowed to come from one's own resources, but a feast lasting far into the night was made for the party. The houses mostly opening on to one another's roofs, the flat surfaces, or clear spaces, in the village nearly all consisted of house tops on which animals could not be picqueted. The people looked very ill and sallow, more than half-starved, and not half-clothed, and the air from the lake smelt of ague. For a wonder not so much as a policeman represented the Government. Barley and chopped straw are usually to be found in Khâtûnîya; but in buying or hiring trasport there is the greatest difficulty. What poor supplies the inhabitants buy they get from travelling pedlars, and their only traffic seems to be taking tobacco round among the Shammar. There are no Yazîdîs in the village, and the remains of a large mosque near it attests its Muslim character. But the only scraps of writing seen were the texts of the Kurân, or other cabalistic scrolls, which men women and children, and even the mules and donkeys, wore on their bodies, to cure diseases, and avert the "evil eye."

Route continued.

Though it was near noon before a start was made, the north-east wind struck piercingly cold. Riders grew stiff, and the only footman, the Bedouin guide Ishteywi, failing to warm himself by running like a desert partridge, every now and then set fire to a tuft of grass, and put himself in the middle of the flame like a martyr in a picture book! The night's halt was in the wilds, at the spring of Lifrâti, a black and reedy spot suggestive of throat-cutting. A strong flow of water gushed from the ground at one place, and re-entered it at another, forming intermediately a stagnant pool, with a camp of cattle-feeding Arabs beside it. The women coming to fill the waterskins had their lower lips much disfigured with tattooing. Next morning there were several degrees of frost. The plain now being crossed, even at this

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season clothed with sheeh, hymri, and other shrubs or grasses, is the favourite hot weather resort of the Shammar. When townspeople say of Shekh Fâris that he is "between Butin and Sinjâr," it is here he is to be looked for, Butin being a hill range not commonly marked on maps. Watered by the two principal branches of the Khâbûr* river (ancient Habor, or Khaboras), not wholly without shade, and of vast extent, this forms the very cream of all the Mesopotamian pastures. One of the streams running through it, the Ja-gha-jagh or river of Nisibin (Nisibis) was reached towards sunset. This is the ancient Mygdonius. Its name at the present time has rather perplexed travellers and map-makers.† Happily it proved fordable, at a pool called Isfaiyah, not much broader than the "first flight" in England sometimes negotiates. Next morning a dark mist hung over the partly frozen river as the *kâfila* followed it to its junction with the Khâbûr near Tal Kawkab. After this the Khâbûr, a very considerable affluent of the Euphrates, flowing generally S. S. W., became the guide. Towards noon it threw itself across the track, at the ford of Ih-sih-cha. This was guarded by a strong military detachment, with barracks on an adjoining height. A great volume of water flowed past. It looked as if a raft would have to be made, involving at least a day's delay, with not a pound of chopped straw procurable. The soldiers declared they had none. Their mules it seemed mostly shifted for themselves in the desert. The only civil population was nomadic. Presently a long line of mounted infantry, riding mules, appeared on the further bank. This was the relief, from Der, of the Ih-sih-cha garrison. Then for the first time signs of life appeared among the soldiers on the hill top, and down came the commanding officer, in his slippers, to meet the new comers. Piloted by the indispensable Bedouin, bare as a fish, and up to his shoulders in water, these entered the river, in single file, without halting. The way the mules followed almost in one another's steps was admirable. All got safely over, and the baggage too. Among the latter, perched on a mule, was a small French or Maltese lapdog, not very long ago perhaps an English or Parisian lady's pet, also several deal boxes having on them a Bombay wine merchant's well-known trade-mark. Whether these actually contained the Major's "Glenlivat," or had merely been picked up empty, perhaps somewhere near the Suez canal, and utilized as portmanteaux, they showed, equally with the little dog, how things do get distributed now-a-days. After the military had settled down the *kâfila* crossed the river.

Across the Khâbûr.

West the Khâbûr the best maps show a more or less unexplored steppe stretching to the banks of the Bilîkh, another important tributary of the Euphrates which helps to collect the waters coming down from the mountain range (Mons. Masius of Strabo) above Urfa, Mârdeen, and Niseebeen. To traverse this great block of desert pasture, and striking the Bilîkh below Urfa (the ancient Edessa) follow it southward to its embouchure at Rakkah (Nicephorium) was the purpose which had brought the *kâfila* to the spot now arrived at. It was said at Mosul that, all along the course of the Bilîkh (between one hundred and one hundred and fifty miles) were settled Birâzeeah Kurds, on the produce of whose fields the garrison of Der chiefly depended for supplies. This it was desired to verify. The steppe itself is also roamed over by, among other nomads, a warlike tribe called Jais (possibly the Najdian Kais) as to whom but little information has as yet been collected. One circumstance was favourable, and that was that the small Sinjâr escort, after crossing the river, declared, and reasonably, their horses could go no further. The Ih-sih-cha commandant, on being informed they were going back, made no sign of sending on another guard. So at last, and in a strictly legitimate manner, the *kâfila* had got rid of all official espionage or encumbrance. But the supply difficulty was another matter. The muleteers declared their team would starve before Bilîkh was reached, while even there the chances were locusts had eaten up everything. The idea of visiting the Birâzeeah, and seeing the Jais and Adwân Arabs by the way, had therefore most reluctantly to be given up; and the *kâfila's* head held, not north-west towards Harrân and Urfah, but nearly due south to Der. A beaten track now offered itself, with Abdu'l Azîz and Kawkab still the principal landmarks, and, further off, Sinjâr. Although by chance the Khâbûr had now proved fordable, no one who approaches it after it has been joined by the Ja-gha-jagh should calculate on finding it so. It is a deep and sluggish, rather than a broad or rapid river, very sinuous, and navigable for a considerable distance by steamers. Needless to say nothing of the kind plies on it at present.

* Not to be confounded with another river of the same name, rising in the Kurdistan mountains and joining the Tigris above Mosul.

† The shot Layard makes at the name is "Jerujar." In one of Kiepert's maps it is written Djakhdjakha, and in another Dschachdschacha! All this to represent an Arabic word of four consonants, *i.e.*, two jims and two ghains, having three (*fatha*) vowel marks. Evidently a W. W. Hunter is required.

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Fifty years ago beavers abounded in it, and lions reared their cubs on its wooded banks. The beavers have been exterminated for the sake of their musk bags, a precious medicine among the Turks. The cutting down of the trees has made the lions also disappear. Herds of wild asses still quench their thirst in it. The Arabs along its banks are excellent raft-makers. Still skins and timber are not always procurable in a moment, and this is a point requiring to be thought of.* After a course of fully two hundred miles, the Khâbûr joins the Euphrates at a spot which the Arabs call Buseyra (the ancient Circessium) about four hours below Der.

Der.

Two days from Ih-sih-cha the *kâfila's* course, leaving the Khâbûr, struck west by south for Der. For promoting speed a failing commissariat often answers better than a full one. For some time past the marches had been lasting from sunrise till it was too dark to go any longer. Water wheels all along the river spoke of cultivation and on both sides of it sheep were grazing. But the cultivators were all nomadic and nowhere visible; and when the shepherds did not run clean away, all that money could extract from them was that they had no power to sell. Happily three thin chickens were bought in a small encampment of Jibûris. The following morning (January 12th) the *kâfila* was left to find its own way to Der; and with only one (Arab) attendant the intervening forty or fifty miles—the perfection of galloping ground, and alive with antelope—got over rapidly. Still it was dark before the Euphrates was reached. Just across the river within the arid region called Shamîya the Turks have posted themselves conspicuously in the ancient little desert town of Der, a minor civil charge under the Aleppo Wali, with from fifty to five hundred soldiers, according to what can be spared. With the Shammar on one side and Ih-ni-zah on the other, and scarcely an attempt at fortification or entrenchment, it can only be the Sultan's "star" that keeps Der from being pretty often plundered. Next to the trade of the country, there is nothing the Ottoman authorities keep a sharper eye on than the ferry boats; and yet it is only after a fashion that they do so. At Der, as elsewhere, the one licensed boat is always stationed on the official bank. The boatmen had gone off to the town, and shouts were answered only by the echoes. It seemed as if there would be nothing for it but lie down on the sloppy ground horse in hand. At last a few huts were discovered a little way up the bank; and after a tiresome parley, an Arab was persuaded to swim across and beat up the boatman. It seemed incredible on such a night that any one should for a few pence venture into so broad and formidable a current; but presently a splash followed by the sound of swimming showed that he had done so. Apparently the ferry had not been working that day, for a number of wayfarers, including several soldiers, were collected in the hamlet. After an hour or more the welcome sound of oars was heard. Evidently the same potent spell that had sent the peasant into the swollen river had prevailed on the boatman to turn out in the rain. Still it seemed as if there would be no getting off, as the greedy Charon, not satisfied with the bribe that had brought him began driving separate bargains all round. Only the soldiers were taken in free. Not being supposed to have any money, these are franked by their uniforms everywhere in the Ottoman empire. An old Hajji, who struggled in without paying, was pitched into the water after the boat had started with its freight of twenty or thirty people and half a dozen fighting kicking horses. An Arab horseman's cloak and Sulimânîah saddlery with a muffled up head, and starless night, prevented one all this time from being recognised as an official, far less a European, or the stream of native life would not thus have flowed so naturally. To get among the meshes of Osmanli courtesy and hospitality lay outside the present programme; else a house would have had to be taken in Der, as at Mosul, and at least a week consumed in paying and receiving visits. Moreover, a strong inclination existed to pay a visit from Der to the multitudinous tribes of the Ih-ni-zah roaming over Shâmîya; but owing to these being then in the very heart of the desert, beyond

* "If I had possessed a bridge equipment of ten pontoons," wrote Napoleon during the most brilliant campaign of his life (1814), "the war would have been finished, and the army of Prince Schwartzenberg annihilated. I should have taken eight or ten thousand carriages, and beaten his army in detail. But for want of boats I was unable to cross the Seine where it was necessary to do so." On the Tigris and Lower Euphrates an exceedingly useful kind of boat, called a Kuffah, or Guffah, is in common use. These are made of osiers, plaited over a circular frame of stout materials. The section shows a gentle curve at the bottom, with a deep one above forming the side. Sometimes the outer covering is of well-stretched hide: but the more common method is to apply a coating of bitumen, which effectually excludes the water. Guffahs range from about 3 feet 6 inches in diameter, and 2 feet 6 inches deep, to 15 fee from gunwale to gunwale. One man can work an ordinary guffah, plying a large bladed paddle on the two sides alternately. Even camels can be taken across a river in guffahs, and horses and mules being used to them, jump in and out of them readily. A boat of this kind is almost as easily constructed as a raft. Hundreds of them are always to be bought at places like Hillah and Baghdad. Noah's ark, it will be remembered, was made of "Gopher wood, covered within and without with pitch."

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Palmyra (the ancient Tadmur), the idea of this had to be given up. The next best thing was to push on. Even more immediately necessary, however, were rest and food. These were obtained in a quiet lodging, while the *kafilá*, on afterwards coming up, consigned itself to one of the numerous khans or caravanserais. Even after the main arm of the Euphrates had been crossed, a minor branch remained. Over this there is a straggling bridge, made apparently of wood. At the barracks a band was playing; but as far as watch and ward were concerned, the most formidable Rob Roy in all the Shammar or Ih-ni-zah, with a thousand men ready to follow at a signal, might have entered Der that night unchallenged. Raised apparently on the ruins of an ancient town or city, the best thing about Der perhaps is its site. Strategically it is not more important than any other spot on the middle course of Euphrates, and apart from the official element, its inhabitants are chiefly villagers. It is generally mentioned as a good place to go in search of high class Arabian horses. Most years, no doubt, the Bedouin of Shâmîya spread their blanket tents near it (usually in June). Then they buy wheat barley, coffee, and other articles, giving in exchange their desert products and manufactures. That some of their best horses, or even mares, may then become, in whole or part, the property of Der townsmen is very probable; but these are mostly either broken down old ones, or young stock little likely to develop the fine qualities of their race when reared in yards or stables. For desert news, if not for desert horses, Der is a sure find. In its coffee houses the uppermost talk is not the politics of Stamboul, but what the next move will be among the Shammar, or what new splits or combinations are occurring among the Ih-ni-zah in consequence of Muhammad Ibnu'r Rashîd's now fast growing power in Najd.

Section XII.—Right bank of Euphrates, from Der to Rumâdi.

Shâmîya.

The limits assigned to Arabia by the ancients, and by the stricter of modern geographers, were stated in a footnote to page 1 *supra*. But in order to realise how far short of existing facts that definition falls, it needs but to follow the Euphrates, on its right or western bank, from considerably above Der to where it enters, near Hît, the alluvial soil of Babylonia. Separated from the river by a strath or valley of several miles in width, what Europeans call the "Syrian desert," and the Arabs Shâmîya,* here extends along it. In physical features this vast region resembles parts of Najd, presenting a gravelly or sandy plateau, of secondary formation, traversed in places by low ranges of rocky hills, and by deep natural channels called "*wâdis*." Except round oases like Palmyra (the ancient Tadmur), where the Usmanli have a revenue-post, a settled population would be lost in such a country. But for nomadic shepherds it is admirably adapted; and all over it, as has often had to be mentioned in the course of these notes, now roam the untamed Ih-ni-zah.† Crossed from time to time by all the nations of antiquity who have passed successively from Asia into Eastern Europe, the Euphrates no longer yields a passage to anything more formidable than *ghazús* of the Ih-ni-zah on the Shammar, or of the Shammar on the Ih-ni-zah. In winter, when the nights are long, and icy freshes fill the river, these raids are out of season. In spring also, when after foaling, it is difficult to keep the mares from growing fat, *ghazús* do not happen every day. But in midsummer, when the fords are easy, and earth and sky glow like a brazier's furnace, among the features of the landscape sometimes are clouds of Bedouin spearmen passing like sandstorms over the rocky ground, or emerging naked and dripping from the river.

Euphrates Valley Route.

The track struck into at Der is not at present a postal one. The mails between the Mediterranean and Persia are mostly taken by Tatar horsemen, going round by Mosul. A more direct line is also to some slight extent favoured, called the "desert route," or, from being practicable for camels only, the "dromedary post," going out from Baghdad *viâ* Damascus to Beyrouth

* The etymological history of this geographical term seems a little involved. *Shâm* (radical meaning *the being unlucky*, or *on left hand side*) no doubt is the Arabic name for Syria generally, as also for its capital *Dimishk* or Damascus. Therefore it may, in a sense, be right to translate *Shâmîya*, "Syrian desert." Nevertheless, as shown in the text, Shâmîya cannot properly be regarded otherwise than as part of Arabia. Where Syria ends Shamiya begins. When Paul went out from Damascus he went, it will be remembered, "*into Arabia*."

† Three marches from Der was passed a ridge on which it is said the Ih-ni-zah spread their first camp in Shâmîya, on entering it, less than a hundred years ago, from their native Najd. To this day the spot is called *Talaat Milham*, or "Mount Milham," after Shekh Milham, the Moses of their Exodus, in memory of whom the name of Milham still goes with the chiefship of the (Ih-ni-zah) clan Ihsennah. In summer the same place often receives large camps of the Ih-ni-zah, when they flock from the interior to dress their *joods*, or waterskins, in the river.

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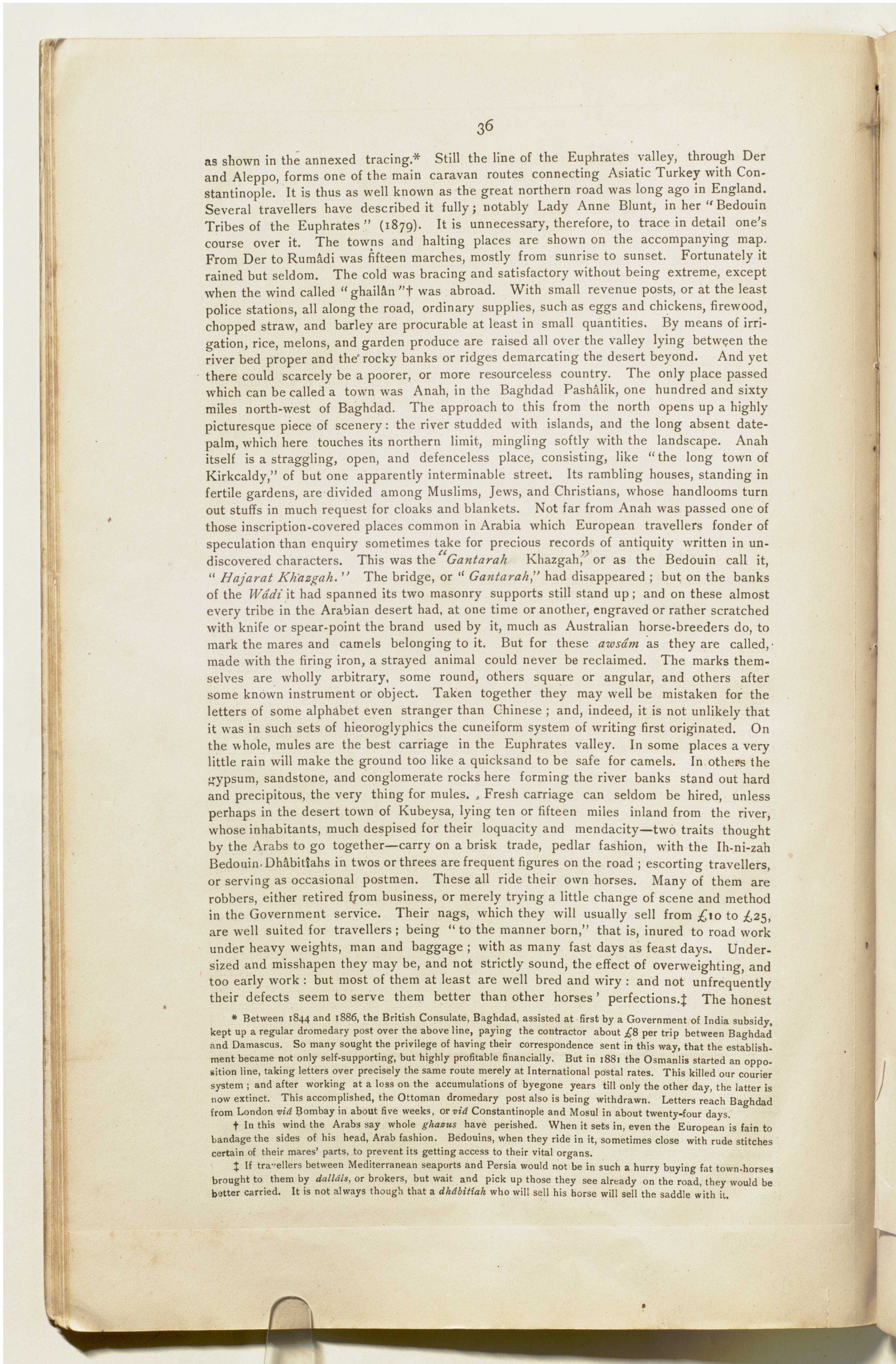
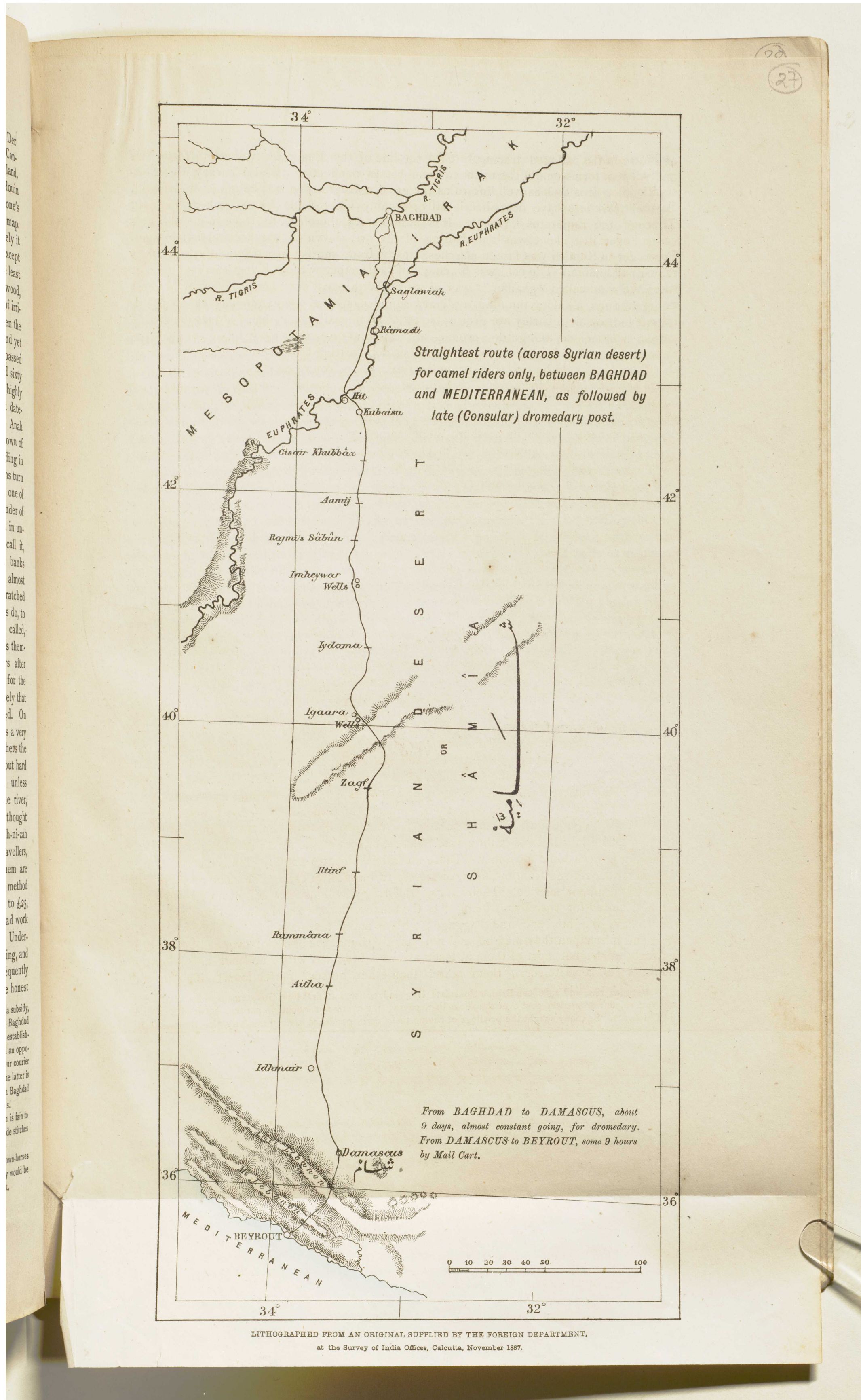


as shown in the annexed tracing.* Still the line of the Euphrates valley, through Der and Aleppo, forms one of the main caravan routes connecting Asiatic Turkey with Constantinople. It is thus as well known as the great northern road was long ago in England. Several travellers have described it fully; notably Lady Anne Blunt, in her "Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates" (1879). It is unnecessary, therefore, to trace in detail one's course over it. The towns and halting places are shown on the accompanying map. From Der to Rumâdi was fifteen marches, mostly from sunrise to sunset. Fortunately it rained but seldom. The cold was bracing and satisfactory without being extreme, except when the wind called "ghailân"† was abroad. With small revenue posts, or at the least police stations, all along the road, ordinary supplies, such as eggs and chickens, firewood, chopped straw, and barley are procurable at least in small quantities. By means of irrigation, rice, melons, and garden produce are raised all over the valley lying between the river bed proper and the rocky banks or ridges demarcating the desert beyond. And yet there could scarcely be a poorer, or more resourceless country. The only place passed which can be called a town was Anah, in the Baghdad Pashâlik, one hundred and sixty miles north-west of Baghdad. The approach to this from the north opens up a highly picturesque piece of scenery: the river studded with islands, and the long absent date-palm, which here touches its northern limit, mingling softly with the landscape. Anah itself is a straggling, open, and defenceless place, consisting, like "the long town of Kirkcaldy," of but one apparently interminable street. Its rambling houses, standing in fertile gardens, are divided among Muslims, Jews, and Christians, whose handlooms turn out stuffs in much request for cloaks and blankets. Not far from Anah was passed one of those inscription-covered places common in Arabia which European travellers fonder of speculation than enquiry sometimes take for precious records of antiquity written in undiscovered characters. This was the "*Gantarah* Khazgah," or as the Bedouin call it, "*Hajarat Khazgah.*" The bridge, or "*Gantarah*," had disappeared; but on the banks of the *Wâdi* it had spanned its two masonry supports still stand up; and on these almost every tribe in the Arabian desert had, at one time or another, engraved or rather scratched with knife or spear-point the brand used by it, much as Australian horse-breeders do, to mark the mares and camels belonging to it. But for these *awsâm* as they are called, made with the firing iron, a strayed animal could never be reclaimed. The marks themselves are wholly arbitrary, some round, others square or angular, and others after some known instrument or object. Taken together they may well be mistaken for the letters of some alphabet even stranger than Chinese; and, indeed, it is not unlikely that it was in such sets of hieoroglyphics the cuneiform system of writing first originated. On the whole, mules are the best carriage in the Euphrates valley. In some places a very little rain will make the ground too like a quicksand to be safe for camels. In others the gypsum, sandstone, and conglomerate rocks here forming the river banks stand out hard and precipitous, the very thing for mules. Fresh carriage can seldom be hired, unless perhaps in the desert town of Kubeysa, lying ten or fifteen miles inland from the river, whose inhabitants, much despised for their loquacity and mendacity—two traits thought by the Arabs to go together—carry on a brisk trade, pedlar fashion, with the Ih-ni-zah Bedouin. Dhâbitîahs in twos or threes are frequent figures on the road; escorting travellers, or serving as occasional postmen. These all ride their own horses. Many of them are robbers, either retired from business, or merely trying a little change of scene and method in the Government service. Their nags, which they will usually sell from £10 to £25, are well suited for travellers; being "to the manner born," that is, inured to road work under heavy weights, man and baggage; with as many fast days as feast days. Undersized and misshapen they may be, and not strictly sound, the effect of overweighting, and too early work: but most of them at least are well bred and wiry: and not unfrequently their defects seem to serve them better than other horses' perfections.‡ The honest

* Between 1844 and 1886, the British Consulate, Baghdad, assisted at first by a Government of India subsidy, kept up a regular dromedary post over the above line, paying the contractor about £8 per trip between Baghdad and Damascus. So many sought the privilege of having their correspondence sent in this way, that the establishment became not only self-supporting, but highly profitable financially. But in 1881 the Osmanlis started an opposition line, taking letters over precisely the same route merely at International postal rates. This killed our courier system; and after working at a loss on the accumulations of byegone years till only the other day, the latter is now extinct. This accomplished, the Ottoman dromedary post also is being withdrawn. Letters reach Baghdad from London *viâ* Bombay in about five weeks, or *viâ* Constantinople and Mosul in about twenty-four days.

† In this wind the Arabs say whole *ghazus* have perished. When it sets in, even the European is fain to bandage the sides of his head, Arab fashion. Bedouins, when they ride in it, sometimes close with rude stitches certain of their mares' parts, to prevent its getting access to their vital organs.

‡ If travellers between Mediterranean seaports and Persia would not be in such a hurry buying fat town-horses brought to them by *dallâls*, or brokers, but wait and pick up those they see already on the road, they would be better carried. It is not always though that a *dhâbitîah* who will sell his horse will sell the saddle with it.



LITHOGRAPHED FROM AN ORIGINAL SUPPLIED BY THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT,
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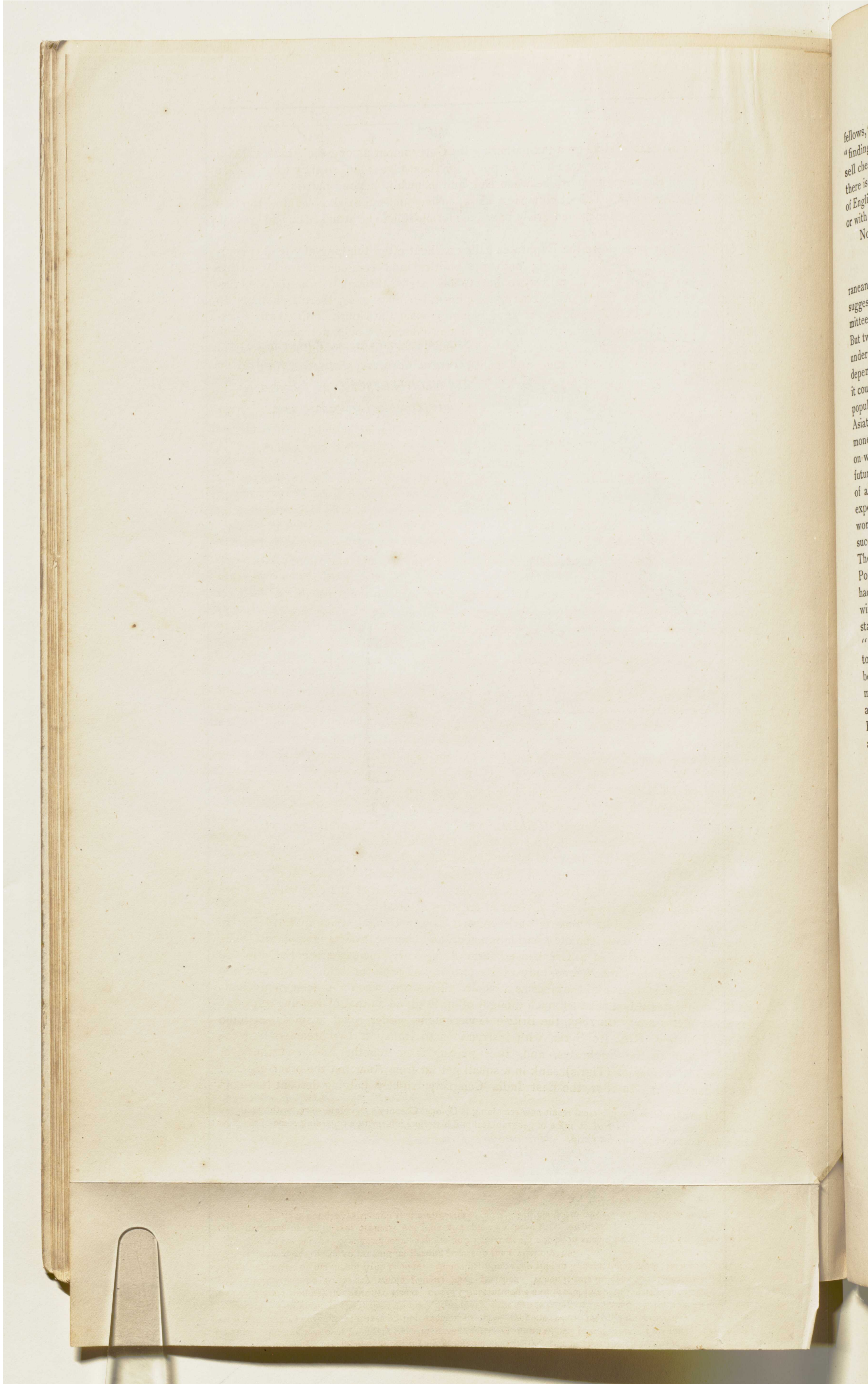

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fellows, their masters, seldom go a tax-gathering for Government among the Arabs, without "finding" a mare, or at any rate a colt or pony, for themselves; and so they can afford to sell cheap. In the way of sport, between Der and Rumâdi, beyond partridge shooting, there is little attraction. Out of clumps of *awsaj* (osier) and tamarisk not unlike the best of English fox-covers, often sallied grisly boars, too formidable to be attacked on bad ground, or with half knocked up horses.

Railway question.

No one can pass down the Euphrates valley without often thinking of the idea exercising both the political and commercial worlds that a railway ought to be carried through it from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. As far as mere physical feature goes, there is nothing to suggest that the sum of £10,000,000 sterling, which is what the House of Commons Committee of 1872 calculated as the probable cost of construction, would not prove enough. But two things seem certain: *Firstly*, so long as the Tigris and Euphrates valleys remain under their present administrative and political conditions, such a railway would be dependent for its receipts mainly on its ocean termini; and, *secondly*, with that the case it could never pay. In some countries perhaps a railway may attract, if not even create, a population; but one would need to be very sanguine to look for such results in the case of Asiatic Turkey at the present time. Not only are there countries in which other peoples' money cannot be invested without much risk of disappearing, but there are countries also on which the introduction of foreign capital is apt to have anything but a good effect. The future of England's ancient ally on the Bosphorus no one can predict. Not only have we of all European powers least to gain and most to lose by her decadence; but our own experiences in many lands may well render us sympathetic with reference to the political work she is engaged in over so large a part of Asia. That she is meeting with some success one would need to be either very ungenerous, or very ignorant of facts to dispute. The magnitude of the difficulties she has to contend with could hardly be overstated. Possibly some of the few energetic, honest, and patriotic administrators she has recently had, such as Midhat Pâsha, have done her as much harm through their zeal for putting new wine into old bottles as the drones, fanatics, and plunderers also figuring among her statesmen and proconsuls have done. But however that may be, the motto of "*Yawâsh*," "*Yawâsh*," or "gently," "gently," which is always on her lips is so eminently appropriate to her condition, that it almost merits being inscribed on her imperial flag. If time be given her, who can say that, present symptoms and appearances notwithstanding, she may not one day be able to make railways, dig canals, and embank rivers, for herself all over her Asiatic provinces. But for the present perhaps it is best for busy pushing Europe to consider this as a part of the world which is lying fallow till its turn come round again.

River Euphrates.

The Tigris and Euphrates, the former some eleven hundred and fifty, and the latter some eighteen hundred miles in length, main windings inclusive, are the only streams of the first order in all the regions which they water. They alone, both before and after their confluence at Gurna, bear the dignified appellation of "*Shatt*," or river. As to this, Arab, nomenclature is particular. A river is never called a stream; or a stream, a river. The former, and the former only, is a *shatt*; the latter, if of goodly size, being termed a *nahr*; if but a brook, *jadwal*; and if even smaller, *sâkiya*. The general features of Turkish Arabia can no more be understood than its physical ones, without a clear idea of the part which its two great historical rivers have played, not less in creating it, or at any rate the lower portion of it, as the Ganges and its affluents have created Lower Bengal, than in fertilising it, and determining at once the distribution, number, and character of its inhabitants. The modern word Euphrates is a Grecianised form of the very ancient name Furât which, though strictly belonging to one only of its two initial arms or branches, is now the common local designation of the river as a whole. Time was when the idea of navigating the Euphrates was almost as much thought of in England as that of running a railway alongside of it is now. In 1835, the British Government, under royal auspices, deputed Colonel Chesney, R.A., to Syria, with instructions to transport two steamers from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and, after putting them together, descend the river to the sea. One vessel (Tigris) sank in a squall not far from Ana, but the other reached the Persian Gulf.* In 1841, the East India Company, rightly judging descent to be but

* Of this expedition the principal result now remaining is Colonel Chesney's elaborate work, with charts and illustrations (1850), forming a perfect mine of geographical and historical information regarding some of the most interesting portions of the ancient world.

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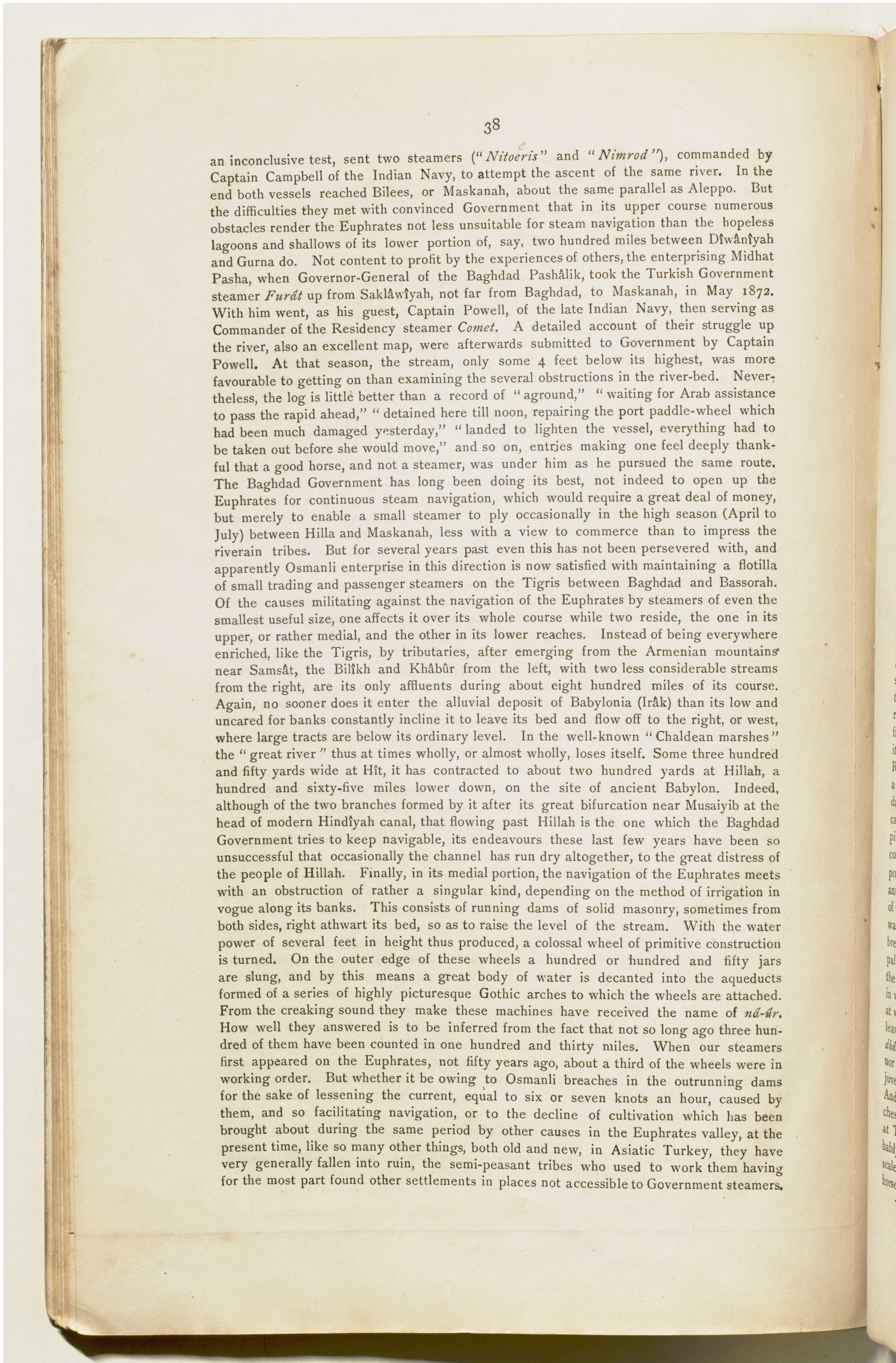

an inconclusive test, sent two steamers ("*Nitoeris*" and "*Nimrod*"), commanded by Captain Campbell of the Indian Navy, to attempt the ascent of the same river. In the end both vessels reached Bilees, or Maskanah, about the same parallel as Aleppo. But the difficulties they met with convinced Government that in its upper course numerous obstacles render the Euphrates not less unsuitable for steam navigation than the hopeless lagoons and shallows of its lower portion of, say, two hundred miles between Dîwânîyah and Gurna do. Not content to profit by the experiences of others, the enterprising Midhat Pasha, when Governor-General of the Baghdad Pashâlik, took the Turkish Government steamer *Furât* up from Saklâwîyah, not far from Baghdad, to Maskanah, in May 1872. With him went, as his guest, Captain Powell, of the late Indian Navy, then serving as Commander of the Residency steamer *Comet*. A detailed account of their struggle up the river, also an excellent map, were afterwards submitted to Government by Captain Powell. At that season, the stream, only some 4 feet below its highest, was more favourable to getting on than examining the several obstructions in the river-bed. Nevertheless, the log is little better than a record of "aground," "waiting for Arab assistance to pass the rapid ahead," "detained here till noon, repairing the port paddle-wheel which had been much damaged yesterday," "landed to lighten the vessel, everything had to be taken out before she would move," and so on, entries making one feel deeply thankful that a good horse, and not a steamer, was under him as he pursued the same route. The Baghdad Government has long been doing its best, not indeed to open up the Euphrates for continuous steam navigation, which would require a great deal of money, but merely to enable a small steamer to ply occasionally in the high season (April to July) between Hilla and Maskanah, less with a view to commerce than to impress the riverain tribes. But for several years past even this has not been persevered with, and apparently Osmanli enterprise in this direction is now satisfied with maintaining a flotilla of small trading and passenger steamers on the Tigris between Baghdad and Bassorah. Of the causes militating against the navigation of the Euphrates by steamers of even the smallest useful size, one affects it over its whole course while two reside, the one in its upper, or rather medial, and the other in its lower reaches. Instead of being everywhere enriched, like the Tigris, by tributaries, after emerging from the Armenian mountains near Samsât, the Bilîkh and Khâbûr from the left, with two less considerable streams from the right, are its only affluents during about eight hundred miles of its course. Again, no sooner does it enter the alluvial deposit of Babylonia (Irâk) than its low and uncared for banks constantly incline it to leave its bed and flow off to the right, or west, where large tracts are below its ordinary level. In the well-known "Chaldean marshes" the "great river" thus at times wholly, or almost wholly, loses itself. Some three hundred and fifty yards wide at Hît, it has contracted to about two hundred yards at Hillah, a hundred and sixty-five miles lower down, on the site of ancient Babylon. Indeed, although of the two branches formed by it after its great bifurcation near Musaiyib at the head of modern Hindîyah canal, that flowing past Hillah is the one which the Baghdad Government tries to keep navigable, its endeavours these last few years have been so unsuccessful that occasionally the channel has run dry altogether, to the great distress of the people of Hillah. Finally, in its medial portion, the navigation of the Euphrates meets with an obstruction of rather a singular kind, depending on the method of irrigation in vogue along its banks. This consists of running dams of solid masonry, sometimes from both sides, right athwart its bed, so as to raise the level of the stream. With the water power of several feet in height thus produced, a colossal wheel of primitive construction is turned. On the outer edge of these wheels a hundred or hundred and fifty jars are slung, and by this means a great body of water is decanted into the aqueducts formed of a series of highly picturesque Gothic arches to which the wheels are attached. From the creaking sound they make these machines have received the name of *ná-úr*. How well they answered is to be inferred from the fact that not so long ago three hundred of them have been counted in one hundred and thirty miles. When our steamers first appeared on the Euphrates, not fifty years ago, about a third of the wheels were in working order. But whether it be owing to Osmanli breaches in the outrunning dams for the sake of lessening the current, equal to six or seven knots an hour, caused by them, and so facilitating navigation, or to the decline of cultivation which has been brought about during the same period by other causes in the Euphrates valley, at the present time, like so many other things, both old and new, in Asiatic Turkey, they have very generally fallen into ruin, the semi-peasant tribes who used to work them having for the most part found other settlements in places not accessible to Government steamers.

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Hît and Rumâdi.

The day Hît's tall minaret broke the horizon—the country of the Albu Nimîr Arabs being about the same time left for that of Shekh Muhammad Al Bakr of the Dilêm (*vide* page 49 *ante*)—a pretty wide loop was felt to have been thrown over all these localities, since the disappearance in the distance of the same minaret three months previously on a north-easterly route across the narrow portion of Al Jazîrah towards the Tigris and Tikrît being followed. From Hît to Rumâdi (*ab rumâd*=ashes, or broken up charcoal) is but a summer day's journey. Rumâdi began like many another place now a great city. Government made a civil and military post of it, running up a few rude buildings, dignified with the name of "*Kala*" or fort, round which in time shops and houses rose. Beyond its present nascent stage it is probably not destined ever to go. It proved to contain one carpenter, one blacksmith, and one saddler; but no wood, no iron, and no leather. Its distance (about a couple of miles) from the river is against it. Its one advantage is a telegraph station, having which it is not held to require a post office. Baghdad *jambûzes* much frequent it, on the look-out for Irâki colts, to take to Bombay and pass off for something better. From Rumâdi the caravan route to Baghdad, after crossing the Euphrates, strikes east by south through Saklâwîya, occupying usually three days; but the *kâfila's* course was still to be slightly lengthened.

Section XIII.—Southern Shâmîya.

Rahâlîa.

In leaving at Rumâdi the line of the Euphrates, to dip deeper into Shâmîya, almost as if bound for Najd, there had first to be traversed the narrow alluvial strip on the river's western bank which, belonging strictly to Babylonia, interposes itself between the Euphrates and Arabia. Then came Shâmîya again in all its vastness and vacuity. All places appeared alike. The ground, thinly strewed with white and yellow gravel, seemed the very type of sterility. And yet, on looking closely, it was seen not to be without shrubs on which mares and camels do well. The landmarks passed were a low truncated range of igneous-looking rock called *Abu'l furûgh* and numerous *ghudarâ* or collections of rainwater. Bitterly cold in early morning, the afternoon heat gave one a foretaste of Central Arabia. For once the *kâfila* lagged and got belated. Darkness followed sunset like a piece of conjuring. Much shouting and fire-lighting were necessary before stragglers were collected and settled for the night. Direction all day south by west. Next day, about noon, the desert town, or rather village, of Râhâlîa was sighted. A good mare or camel would take one easily from Rumâdi to Shathâtha, or perhaps even further, in a day; but no *kâfila* could manage it. In the long summer days heat and thirst would stop the best mules. At a distance Râhâlîa looks not unlike Bussorah, a long dark green belt or fringe of date palms. It is a desert oasis like Tadmur, the water coming out of and re-entering the ground. Its dates are in great repute. Bedouin come long ways to buy them, and strings of camels carry them to remote markets. Near it were pitched several small Bedouin camps, hospitably yielding piles of dates and draughts of camels' milk. Owing to tortuous water-courses and other impediments the town is not very easily got at. It is in two blocks or portions at some distance apart. Groves of date-palms completely shroud it. Its inhabitants cultivate little else except lucern, or *jat*, which grows luxuriantly under the shade of the palms. Not a pound of chopped straw was forthcoming. Here for the first time was encountered the prejudice or objection the genuine Arab feels to the sale of baked bread. Emblem and basis of hospitality, this it is thought a shame to traffic in. The principal inhabitant at the present time is an old man called Hajji Dâûd, Ashshâyir, or "David the Poet." Forming the "kahwa" (guest-room) of his house is a large bare hall like a barn, in which, Central Arabian fashion, the wayfarer spreads his carpet and hangs up his belt, at will, without a question asked. The Turkish revenue officer was absent, with or without leave, at Karbalâ, or perhaps Baghdad, the Hajji acting as his honorary deputy. A solitary *dhâbitîah* hovered round the spot to represent the Government. No record can be found, nor was any trace obtainable on the spot, of previous visits to Rahâlîa by Europeans. The juvenile part of the population at all events was as frightened as if it had seen an octopus. And yet in the principal shop, by the side of Birmingham hardware, were exposed Manchester handkerchiefs stamped with tableaux of a Highland regiment charging apparently at Tel-el-Kabîr! For one of those works of art combined with utility—intrinsic value probably one halfpenny—the price asked was R5! In the smaller towns, it seems, on a small scale, as in the larger on a large one, while one brother keeps a shop another takes horses to Bombay and carries back part of their price in cheap European goods.

The following day's stage was but a four hours' one.

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a saint and "martyr." This tragical ending to an unfortunate life gave him a place for ever among the heroes of Islâm. With all his knightly qualities and devotion, the Ali who died at Cûfa probably bore about as much, or as little, resemblance to the Ali still living in two hundred millions of hearts as the prince who turned back at Derby and fled at Culloden did to the "Young Chevalier" of Jacobite song. All the more unique therefore the place now occupied by him, in spite of his name having so long formed the shibboleth both of religious schism and political party. Palgrave, it is true, in his article Arabia in ninth edition of Encyclopœdia Britannica, can find no better epithets for him than "ambitious," "unprincipled," "blood-stained."* But, on the other hand, an English missionary clergyman of High Church views, just now on a visit to Baghdad, declares himself so much *en rapport* with the politico-religious system distinctive of Ali's sect that he too could make pilgrimage to the splendid mausoleum, enriched with princely gifts, which, as will appear presently, Shîa piety has erected over his tomb at Najaf. Muslim parents call their children after Ali almost as often as after Muhammad. Even his charger lives in numerous Arthurian legends; and his two-edged sword Dhû'l fakâr† is the Excalibur of Persian and Arabian romance. But all this developed itself afterwards.

Hasan.

At the time of his death, as has been seen, Ali was almost out of it, Muâwîa being *defacto* master of the Arab empire. In vain the people of Irâk chose Ali's eldest son Hasan Caliph. This grandson of the Prophet had inherited none of the stronger qualities of his race. Declining the champion's rôle he went into inglorious retirement at Madîna, where he died, as is generally believed of poison. As long as Muâwîa lived he was able to put down internal intrigue with the one hand, while with the other making the arms of Islâm victorious towards, on the west the Nile, on the east the Indus and Oxus. On his death the Caliphate passed as he had desired to his son Yazîd.

Rapid spread of Shîa doctrines in Persia.

The subjective and imaginative genius of Persia had all this time been fast assimilating Ali's tenets. Not alone had the summary methods in which Islamism had there been propagated left the masses, as usual, almost unchanged; but the essential incompatibility between the religious conceptions of Aryan and Semitic races (Jew and Gentile) had even then begun to show itself in those religious exaggerations and aberrations, from Sûfiism down to "Bâbism,"‡ for which Persia is so remarkable. If within the Sunnite system there lay the germ of what has come to be called Erastianism, or the theology of the "family living" school, still more inevitably did the Shüte, or "spiritual Headship" dogma lead to the inordinate elevation of demagogues, popular preachers, and fanatics. Among the *Ahâdîth*, or sayings addressed by the Prophet to his disciples, and collected after his death, was one directed against the "praying in front of tomb." This may have been suggested to him by a consciousness of the lengths to which a practice not in itself objectionable would be carried once it was begun. How far it has spread among Shîas does not require to be told. What Mariolatry has been all these centuries in Roman Europe, something very like the adoration of Ali soon became in Persia; and in Arabia wherever Persian influences extended.

Husain.

While Muâwîa's death was thought to afford to the rival party the opportunity, his successor's persecution of Hasan's younger brother, Husain, that is the little Hasan, acted on them as the stimulus. When it was known in distant Cûfa that Husain had fled from Madîna to Mecca, a thrill went through it, and all Irâk invited, or was supposed to invite, Ali's son to come and strike another blow for the "divine right" of heredity, or so-called legitimacy. In an evil moment he yielded to the temptation, and taking all his family with him turned his head towards the Euphrates. Nothing but the most discouraging intelligence met him by the way. When with his retinue he reached the plain of Karbalâ, four thousand horsemen sent out by Yazîd's governor of Bussorah brought him to a halt and on 10th Muharram A. H. 61

* Alluding, of course, to his alleged part in the murder of his immediate predecessor in the Caliphate, Othmân. Not the least of Ali's misfortunes was his being pursued all the best years of his life by the enmity of a vindictive and formidable woman, A-î-sha, one of the Prophet's widows. That she and others were not slow to bring this charge against him is certain. But it is less so that he was guilty of it: and at the present time among the Sunni doctors of Baghdad none has been met with who thinks he was so.

† Literally, *possessor of vertebræ*, possibly from its high degree of temper and flexibility; more probably because scolloped at the edges, for the more easy cleaving of coats of mail. A trophy and favourite weapon of the Prophet, it formed a present from him to Ali. *Fakîr*, vertebrated: hence humble, is but another form of word fakâr.

‡ For an account of this extraordinary movement, *vide* "Religions of Asia," by M. deGobineau.

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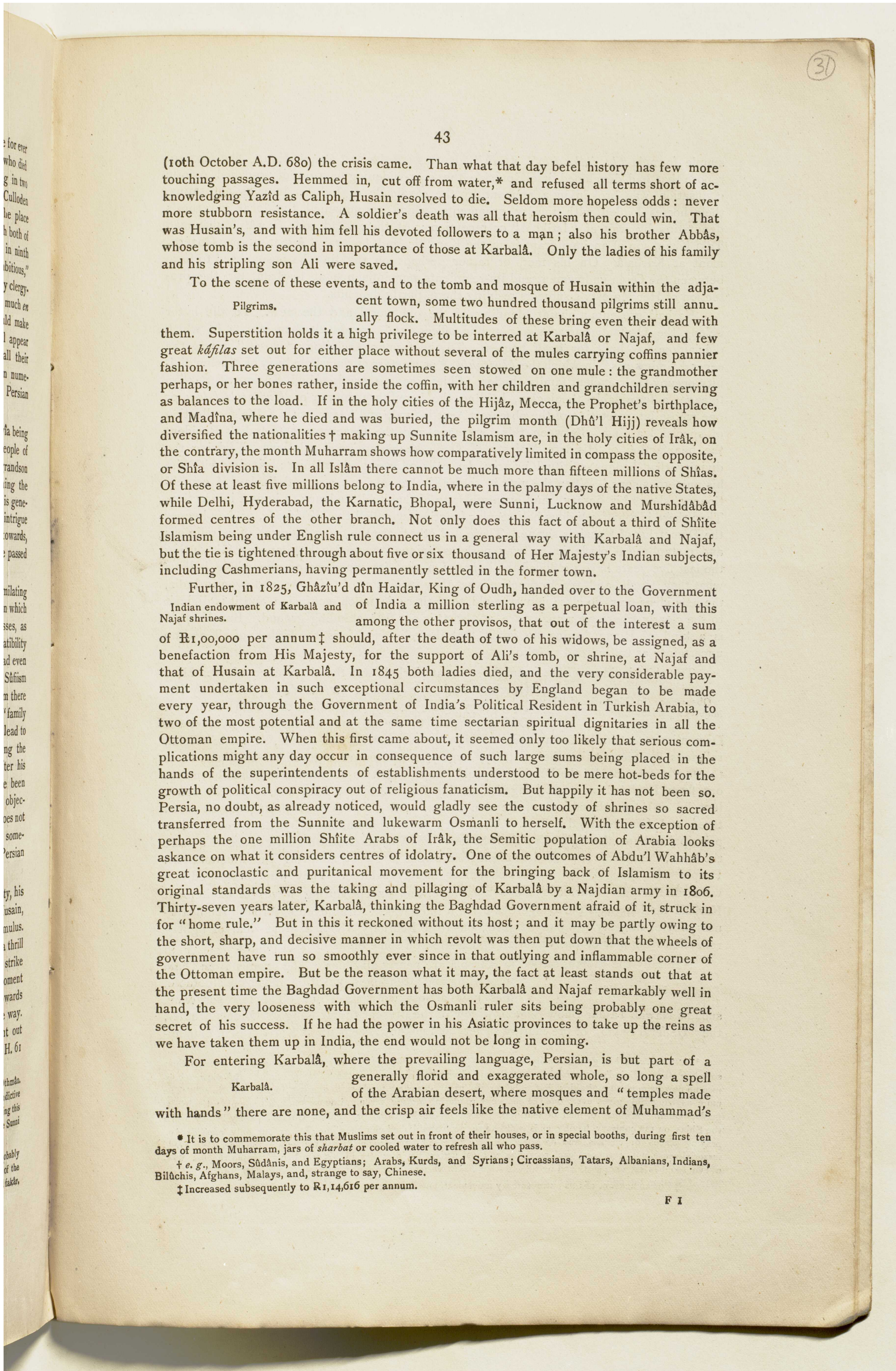

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(10th October A.D. 680) the crisis came. Than what that day befel history has few more touching passages. Hemmed in, cut off from water,* and refused all terms short of acknowledging Yazîd as Caliph, Husain resolved to die. Seldom more hopeless odds: never more stubborn resistance. A soldier's death was all that heroism then could win. That was Husain's, and with him fell his devoted followers to a man; also his brother Abbâs, whose tomb is the second in importance of those at Karbalâ. Only the ladies of his family and his stripling son Ali were saved.

Pilgrims.

To the scene of these events, and to the tomb and mosque of Husain within the adjacent town, some two hundred thousand pilgrims still annually flock. Multitudes of these bring even their dead with them. Superstition holds it a high privilege to be interred at Karbalâ or Najaf, and few great *kâfilas* set out for either place without several of the mules carrying coffins pannier fashion. Three generations are sometimes seen stowed on one mule: the grandmother perhaps, or her bones rather, inside the coffin, with her children and grandchildren serving as balances to the load. If in the holy cities of the Hijâz, Mecca, the Prophet's birthplace, and Madîna, where he died and was buried, the pilgrim month (Dhû'l Hijj) reveals how diversified the nationalities † making up Sunnite Islamism are, in the holy cities of Irâk, on the contrary, the month Muharram shows how comparatively limited in compass the opposite, or Shîa division is. In all Islâm there cannot be much more than fifteen millions of Shîas. Of these at least five millions belong to India, where in the palmy days of the native States, while Delhi, Hyderabad, the Karnatic, Bhopal, were Sunni, Lucknow and Murshidâbâd formed centres of the other branch. Not only does this fact of about a third of Shîite Islamism being under English rule connect us in a general way with Karbalâ and Najaf, but the tie is tightened through about five or six thousand of Her Majesty's Indian subjects, including Cashmerians, having permanently settled in the former town.

Indian endowment of Karbalâ and Najaf shrines.

Further, in 1825, Ghâzîu'd dîn Haidar, King of Oudh, handed over to the Government of India a million sterling as a perpetual loan, with this among the other provisos, that out of the interest a sum of R1,00,000 per annum ‡ should, after the death of two of his widows, be assigned, as a benefaction from His Majesty, for the support of Ali's tomb, or shrine, at Najaf and that of Husain at Karbalâ. In 1845 both ladies died, and the very considerable payment undertaken in such exceptional circumstances by England began to be made every year, through the Government of India's Political Resident in Turkish Arabia, to two of the most potential and at the same time sectarian spiritual dignitaries in all the Ottoman empire. When this first came about, it seemed only too likely that serious complications might any day occur in consequence of such large sums being placed in the hands of the superintendents of establishments understood to be mere hot-beds for the growth of political conspiracy out of religious fanaticism. But happily it has not been so. Persia, no doubt, as already noticed, would gladly see the custody of shrines so sacred transferred from the Sunnite and lukewarm Osmanli to herself. With the exception of perhaps the one million Shîite Arabs of Irâk, the Semitic population of Arabia looks askance on what it considers centres of idolatry. One of the outcomes of Abdu'l Wahhâb's great iconoclastic and puritanical movement for the bringing back of Islamism to its original standards was the taking and pillaging of Karbalâ by a Najdian army in 1806. Thirty-seven years later, Karbalâ, thinking the Baghdad Government afraid of it, struck in for "home rule." But in this it reckoned without its host; and it may be partly owing to the short, sharp, and decisive manner in which revolt was then put down that the wheels of government have run so smoothly ever since in that outlying and inflammable corner of the Ottoman empire. But be the reason what it may, the fact at least stands out that at the present time the Baghdad Government has both Karbalâ and Najaf remarkably well in hand, the very looseness with which the Osmanli ruler sits being probably one great secret of his success. If he had the power in his Asiatic provinces to take up the reins as we have taken them up in India, the end would not be long in coming.

Karbalâ.

For entering Karbalâ, where the prevailing language, Persian, is but part of a generally florid and exaggerated whole, so long a spell of the Arabian desert, where mosques and "temples made with hands" there are none, and the crisp air feels like the native element of Muhammad's

* It is to commemorate this that Muslims set out in front of their houses, or in special booths, during first ten days of month Muharram, jars of *sharbat* or cooled water to refresh all who pass.

† *e. g.*, Moors, Sûdânis, and Egyptians; Arabs, Kurds, and Syrians; Circassians, Tatars, Albanians, Indians, Bilûchis, Afghans, Malays, and, strange to say, Chinese.

‡ Increased subsequently to R1,14,616 per annum.

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simple formula "*la iláha illa'l Allah,*" &c., was not the best preparation. The sense of repose that had developed itself outside the ever-widening margin of so-called Asiatic civilisation was broken in a moment by the cavalcade of Indians in silks and satins, their horses loaded with tawdry ornaments, which accompanied the local governor's deputation by way of "Istikbal" or reception. At their head rode Nawâb Muhammad Taki Khan, son of an immigrant from the Karnatic, and honorary Agent of our Government at Karbalâ. On his tact, or rather perhaps on the link he is supposed to form between the Oudh endowment and its recipients, our influence at Karbalâ, for the protection of Her Majesty's subjects residing there, partly depends.

Karbalâ presents a quaint blending of the old world and the new. To the latter belong the Osmanli barracks and public offices, and broad suburban streets in which officialdom has built for itself houses. To the former, the dingy "closes" round the several "ministers" in which the *Mujtahids,** or masters of the whole body of Muslim divinity occupy their ancient family abodes. Chief among these is Abu'l Kâsim, of Persian lineage, a formidable theologian, holding the hereditary degree of *Hujjatu'l Islám*, or one whose interpretation of the obscurest text is final, and heavy with a life's collection of special learning. Between this personage and the Government of India's Resident the benefaction of His late Majesty of Oudh keeps up good relations. Waiving the divinity that hedges spiritual princes, he calls on every opportunity; bringing with him his numerous sons. When the visit is returned, he sets out a great display of confectionery, shows his library, and even yields to his habitual tendency to impart instruction. Then there is a half-religious half-secular functionary called the *Kilîd-dâr*, or key-keeper the Demetrius of Husain's shrine. These and others are the central figures of a religious and metaphysical circle in its way perhaps unique. Occasional glimpses of it during the last five years have produced the impression that its members on the whole believe what they teach, and try to practise what they inculcate. In Europe, and even in India, the new ideas press so close upon the old, that there is much confusion and it is difficult to see clearly where we actually are, and what is our firm standing-ground. But Karbalâ is a kind of Rome, having no doubt that the religious life is the highest of all, and no uncertainty as to the road to follow.

Observance in Karbalâ of Her Majesty's Jubilee.

The chief incident of the fortnight spent at Karbalâ was the observance of Her Most Gracious Majesty's Jubilee, on the day appointed by His Excellency the Viceroy of India, the 16th February. Owing possibly to the absence of the local governor the Osmanli element in the town made no sign or response. The official, or *quasi*-official, religious community, on the contrary, largely composed of naturalised Persians, came to congratulate, as did the Persian Consul. To suit visitors the tents that had been sent out from Baghdad were exchanged that day for one of the best houses in the town, lent by an Osmanli subject of Persian origin. All day this was thronged. Between three and four hundred called. After dark it was illuminated by its owner. The principal Indians also lighted up their homes. Leaving his Osmanli guard or escort outside the town, the Resident walked at night from street to street, admiring the illuminations. People who thought him a Turkish officer merely saluted. They who recognised him were unaffectedly courteous and sympathetic, and except during waves of excitement Karbalâ no longer is the dangerous place it once was. At all events, through the heartiness of Her Majesty's Indian subjects, on 16th February 1887, a great deal of light—reflection from afar of the Victorian epoch—fell on some of its darkest places.

Indian inhabitants.

Naturally the Indians settled in Karbalâ are nearly all Shîas. The exodus from Oudh preceding and attending annexation, never considerable, has now almost worn itself out. The few survivors, such as Nawab Tâjdâr Bhow Begam, widow of the present titular King of Oudh's brother, the "General Sahib" of pre-mutiny society at Lucknow, keeps up at Karbalâ in a mummi-

* A "*Mujtahid*" is, grammatically, one who expends all his strength in any task; technically, one who does so in the study of God's commandments. Sunnis, favouring more or less the "Presbyterian parity' view, recognise no new or modern mujtahids, but only certain great departed teachers answering to our "Fathers." The more aspiring Shîa gives every one the chance of rendering himself, through intense study, a pre-eminent spiritual guide. Sunni "*Mullas,*" or men of learning, preach in the "*Jâma,*" or "Parish Church," every Friday, while the Shîas, on the contrary, having, as is well known, no "established churches," or *Jamas*, but only *masjids, i.e.,* praying places, or chapels, and no special Friday "diets;" their *mujtahids* are teachers in the Socratic, or professorial,sense, not preachers; each receiving and instructing his disciples in his own house. Nevertheless, Sunni-ism too has its excesses, and between its Mullas, or Shekhs, of the Kaka Ahmad (Kurdi) type, and the mujtahids of Shîaism the difference lies well beneath the surface.

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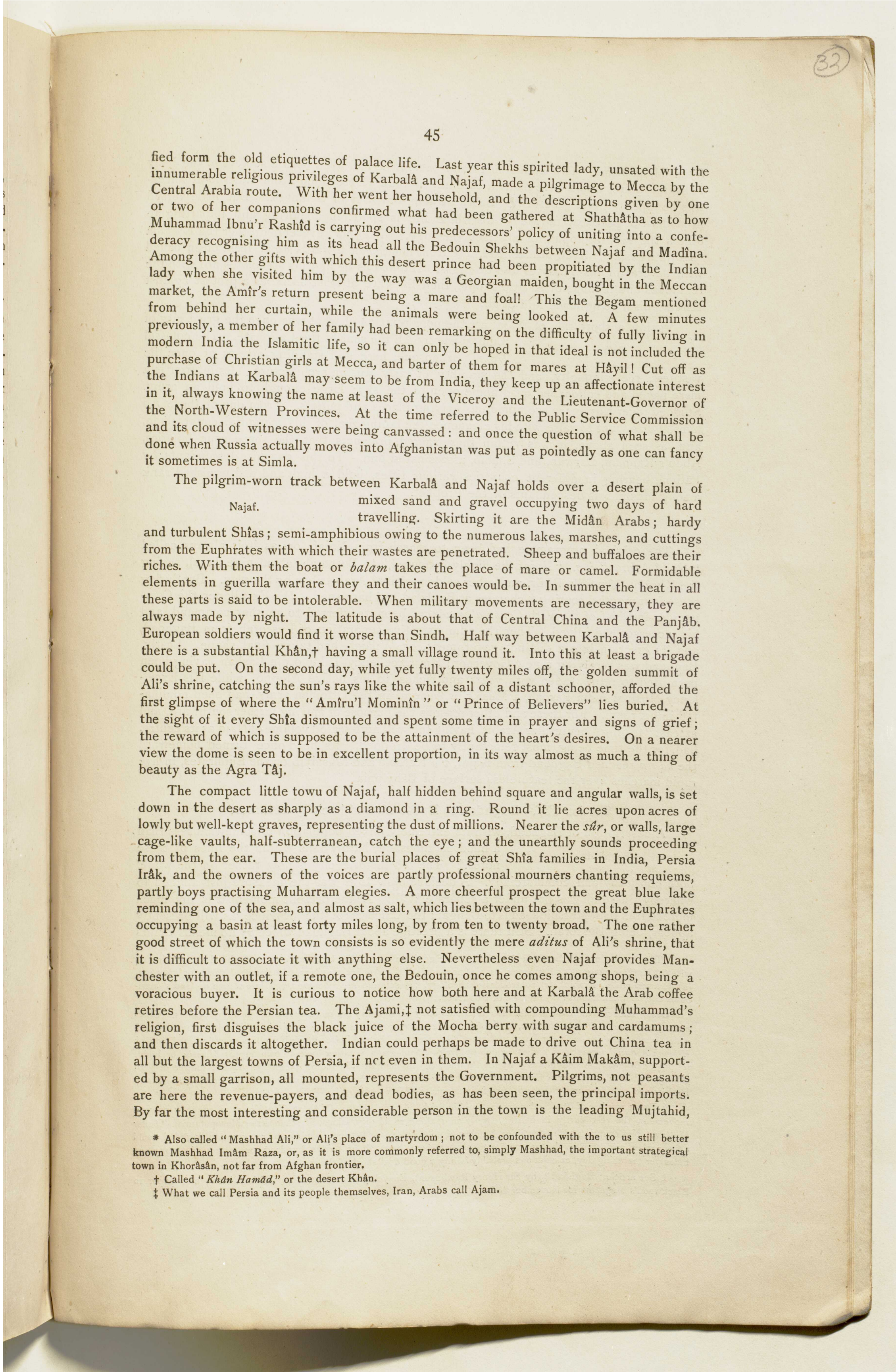

fied form the old etiquettes of palace life. Last year this spirited lady, unsated with the innumerable religious privileges of Karbalâ and Najaf, made a pilgrimage to Mecca by the Central Arabia route. With her went her household, and the descriptions given by one or two of her companions confirmed what had been gathered at Shathâtha as to how Muhammad Ibnu'r Rashîd is carrying out his predecessors' policy of uniting into a confederacy recognising him as its head all the Bedouin Shekhs between Najaf and Madîna. Among the other gifts with which this desert prince had been propitiated by the Indian lady when she visited him by the way was a Georgian maiden, bought in the Meccan market, the Amîr's return present being a mare and foal! This the Begam mentioned from behind her curtain, while the animals were being looked at. A few minutes previously, a member of her family had been remarking on the difficulty of fully living in modern India the Islamitic life, so it can only be hoped in that ideal is not included the purchase of Christian girls at Mecca, and barter of them for mares at Hâyil! Cut off as the Indians at Karbalâ may seem to be from India, they keep up an affectionate interest in it, always knowing the name at least of the Viceroy and the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces. At the time referred to the Public Service Commission and its cloud of witnesses were being canvassed: and once the question of what shall be done when Russia actually moves into Afghanistan was put as pointedly as one can fancy it sometimes is at Simla.

Najaf.

The pilgrim-worn track between Karbalâ and Najaf holds over a desert plain of mixed sand and gravel occupying two days of hard travelling. Skirting it are the Midân Arabs; hardy and turbulent Shîas; semi-amphibious owing to the numerous lakes, marshes, and cuttings from the Euphrates with which their wastes are penetrated. Sheep and buffaloes are their riches. With them the boat or *balam* takes the place of mare or camel. Formidable elements in guerilla warfare they and their canoes would be. In summer the heat in all these parts is said to be intolerable. When military movements are necessary, they are always made by night. The latitude is about that of Central China and the Panjâb. European soldiers would find it worse than Sindh. Half way between Karbalâ and Najaf there is a substantial Khân,† having a small village round it. Into this at least a brigade could be put. On the second day, while yet fully twenty miles off, the golden summit of Ali's shrine, catching the sun's rays like the white sail of a distant schooner, afforded the first glimpse of where the "Amîru'l Mominîn" or "Prince of Believers" lies buried. At the sight of it every Shîa dismounted and spent some time in prayer and signs of grief; the reward of which is supposed to be the attainment of the heart's desires. On a nearer view the dome is seen to be in excellent proportion, in its way almost as much a thing of beauty as the Agra Tâj.

The compact little towu of Najaf, half hidden behind square and angular walls, is set down in the desert as sharply as a diamond in a ring. Round it lie acres upon acres of lowly but well-kept graves, representing the dust of millions. Nearer the *sûr*, or walls, large cage-like vaults, half-subterranean, catch the eye; and the unearthly sounds proceeding from them, the ear. These are the burial places of great Shîa families in India, Persia Irâk, and the owners of the voices are partly professional mourners chanting requiems, partly boys practising Muharram elegies. A more cheerful prospect the great blue lake reminding one of the sea, and almost as salt, which lies between the town and the Euphrates occupying a basin at least forty miles long, by from ten to twenty broad. The one rather good street of which the town consists is so evidently the mere *aditus* of Ali's shrine, that it is difficult to associate it with anything else. Nevertheless even Najaf provides Manchester with an outlet, if a remote one, the Bedouin, once he comes among shops, being a voracious buyer. It is curious to notice how both here and at Karbalâ the Arab coffee retires before the Persian tea. The Ajami,‡ not satisfied with compounding Muhammad's religion, first disguises the black juice of the Mocha berry with sugar and cardamums; and then discards it altogether. Indian could perhaps be made to drive out China tea in all but the largest towns of Persia, if nct even in them. In Najaf a Kâim Makâm, supported by a small garrison, all mounted, represents the Government. Pilgrims, not peasants are here the revenue-payers, and dead bodies, as has been seen, the principal imports. By far the most interesting and considerable person in the town is the leading Mujtahid,

* Also called "Mashhad Ali," or Ali's place of martyrdom; not to be confounded with the to us still better known Mashhad Imâm Raza, or, as it is more commonly referred to, simply Mashhad, the important strategical town in Khorâsân, not far from Afghan frontier.

† Called "*Khân Hamâd*," or the desert Khân.

‡ What we call Persia and its people themselves, Iran, Arabs call Ajam.

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Syud Muhammad. This man's head and face, if he had been born a subject of the Holy Roman Empire, would have made a cardinal of him. Descended from sacerdotal ancestors he inherits the degree of "Bahru'l Ulûm" or "Sea of Sciences." But little versed in modern or practical knowledge his whole life is spent in acquiring and imparting to others the several topics of abstract theology.* Like his reverend brother the Karbalâ "Hujjatu'l Islâm," Syud Muhammad, free from fanaticism towards us at least, often called with several of his relatives and disciples. Intoned as he and his associates are with the real ideas and feelings of Asiatic people, their lives are at least useful as a protest against utilitarianism being made lord of all.

Cufâ.

Within a short ride of Najaf are the poor remains of what was once the great city of Cufâ, made by Ali the seat of the Caliphate. The colossal *Jáma*, or mosque, here still standing attests at once the vastness, the simplicity, and the stability of early Muslim architecture. Its interior is a mere paved and collonaded quadrangle open to the sky; large enough to hold an army. Studded over this space are numerous praying places and pulpits. From one of these Ali himself was wont to raise with his eloquence the falling zeal of his mercurial countrymen, and, as seen above, it was within these sacred precincts that the three sour fanatics, Abdu'r Rahman, Darwan, and Shabîb, assassinated him. To this day his descendants by Fâtima, bearing in different countries various titles, hold a high and distinguished rank among Muslims as descendants of the Prophet.

Note.

The original programme had been to march from Najaf, or as it is always called "Najaf Ashraf," *i. e.,* "Najaf the highly honoured," to Bussorah (about nine days), seeing the Khazâil, Muntifik, Dhfîr, and other seldom-visited Arab tribes by the way. But during these four months' touring,† changes at Baghdad had happened. His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief of the VIth *Corps d'armée* had been transferred to another command, and his successor had joined. Then the administrative separation of Bussorah from Baghdad, and its erection into a distinct government, or Wilâiat, had taken final shape. Lastly, Baghdad was receiving a new Governor; His Excellency Takiu'd dîn Pashah having been permitted to retire, laden with years and riches, to his native Aleppo, while His Excellency Mustafâ Asim Pashah, a Mushîr or General in the Ottoman army, had been nominated in his room. For these and other reasons the purpose of moving further southward, and at least "feeling" peninsular Arabia, having the well nigh sealed volume of Najd as its centre, had, for the time being, most reluctantly to be dropped. Its head once turned homeward the *káfila* reached Baghdad from Najaf, *viâ* Karbalâ and Musaiyib on the Euphrates, in five rapid marches over the featureless surface of Babylonia.

Section XV.—Baghdad to Bussorah and back by Steamer.

Baghdad.

A description of Baghdad, with its extremely mixed population of somewhat less than a huudred thousand, hardly falls within the lines of these notes.‡ The old historic city is now rather on the wane, both politically and commercially. A decided blow to it was the measure just alluded to whereby Bussorah was put under a separate Wâli. At the present moment it is not much more to Irâk than Murshidâbâd is to Bengal; the Calcutta of the province, as will presently appear, being Bussorah. Still there is a prestige about Baghdad which by no means counts

* The curriculum of the Shîa Mujtahid and Sunni Mulla or Aâlim branches out, in Baghdad at least, in this wise (*a*) Kurânic exegesis or hermeneutics, (*b*) knowledge of the Prophet's sayings, (*c*) science of words or language, (*d*) Grammar (*i.e.*, Arabic), (*e*) controversial theology, (*f*) solution of difficulties, (*g*) knowledge of God's attributes and commandments: (*h*) rhetoric or eloquence.

Other sciences there are which, though outside body of Divinity are more or less taken up by divines. Chief nmong these are (*a*) *Hikmah Ilâhîah*, or simply, *et par excellence*, *Hikmah*, corresponding, so far as it has been carried which is not very far, with our Physics, Natural Science, and Natural Philosophy: but not comprising medicine, or *Hikmah Abdan*" (science of bodies) which by Iraki Theologians is rather looked down on (*b*) *Mantik*, or logic, (*c*) poetry discountenanced however by the Prophet, (*d*) mathematics, including geometry. In the matter of geography and secular history a Cimmerian darkness still overhangs the east, such as even in modern India seems to hold its own against our perhaps not very fully adequate efforts to dispel it.

† Exact number of days under canvas one hundred and twenty-five. Of these, fifty-nine were spent iu onward movement, the rest partly in halting, partly in making rapid digressions, like that to the Mesopotamian Kôchar Mustav. Not counting such excursions, number of miles gone over between leaving and returning to Baghdad would appear when measured on the map with compasses to have been about twelve hundred, or at rate of twenty-one miles per marching day, calculations probably falling a good deal short of the reality.

‡ See article "Baghdad" (by Sir Henry Rawlinson), Encyclopœdia Britannica, IXth edition; also paper in Blackwood's Magazine for November 1882.

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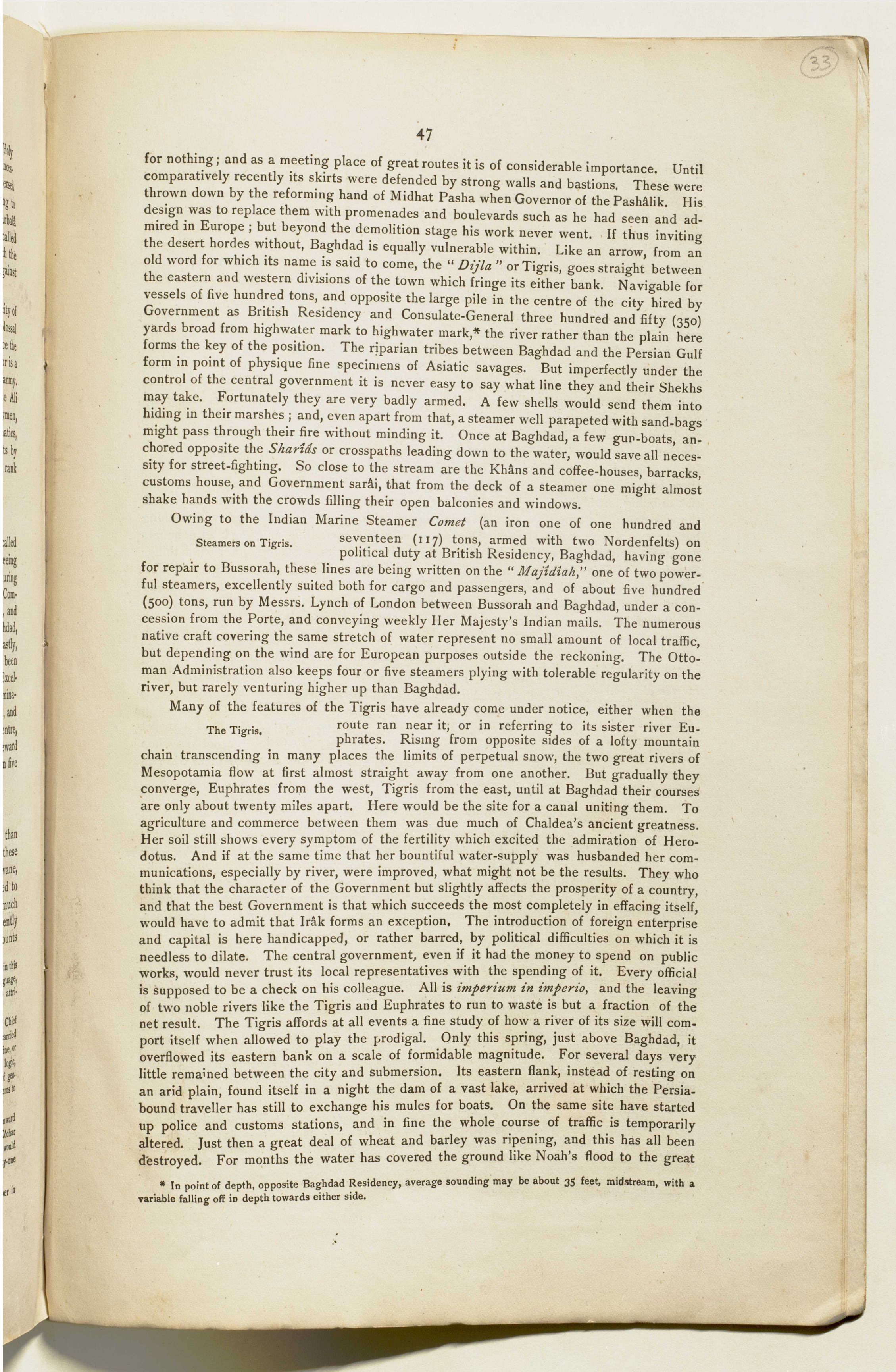

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for nothing; and as a meeting place of great routes it is of considerable importance. Until comparatively recently its skirts were defended by strong walls and bastions. These were thrown down by the reforming hand of Midhat Pasha when Governor of the Pashâlik. His design was to replace them with promenades and boulevards such as he had seen and admired in Europe; but beyond the demolition stage his work never went. If thus inviting the desert hordes without, Baghdad is equally vulnerable within. Like an arrow, from an old word for which its name is said to come, the "*Dijla*" or Tigris, goes straight between the eastern and western divisions of the town which fringe its either bank. Navigable for vessels of five hundred tons, and opposite the large pile in the centre of the city hired by Government as British Residency and Consulate-General three hundred and fifty (350) yards broad from highwater mark to highwater mark,* the river rather than the plain here forms the key of the position. The riparian tribes between Baghdad and the Persian Gulf form in point of physique fine specimens of Asiatic savages. But imperfectly under the control of the central government it is never easy to say what line they and their Shekhs may take. Fortunately they are very badly armed. A few shells would send them into hiding in their marshes; and, even apart from that, a steamer well parapeted with sand-bags might pass through their fire without minding it. Once at Baghdad, a few gun-boats, anchored opposite the *Sharîás* or crosspaths leading down to the water, would save all necessity for street-fighting. So close to the stream are the Khâns and coffee-houses, barracks, customs house, and Government sarâi, that from the deck of a steamer one might almost shake hands with the crowds filling their open balconies and windows.

Steamers on Tigris.

Owing to the Indian Marine Steamer *Comet* (an iron one of one hundred and seventeen (117) tons, armed with two Nordenfelts) on political duty at British Residency, Baghdad, having gone for repair to Bussorah, these lines are being written on the "*Majîdiah*," one of two powerful steamers, excellently suited both for cargo and passengers, and of about five hundred (500) tons, run by Messrs. Lynch of London between Bussorah and Baghdad, under a concession from the Porte, and conveying weekly Her Majesty's Indian mails. The numerous native craft covering the same stretch of water represent no small amount of local traffic, but depending on the wind are for European purposes outside the reckoning. The Ottoman Administration also keeps four or five steamers plying with tolerable regularity on the river, but rarely venturing higher up than Baghdad.

The Tigris.

Many of the features of the Tigris have already come under notice, either when the route ran near it, or in referring to its sister river Euphrates. Rising from opposite sides of a lofty mountain chain transcending in many places the limits of perpetual snow, the two great rivers of Mesopotamia flow at first almost straight away from one another. But gradually they converge, Euphrates from the west, Tigris from the east, until at Baghdad their courses are only about twenty miles apart. Here would be the site for a canal uniting them. To agriculture and commerce between them was due much of Chaldea's ancient greatness. Her soil still shows every symptom of the fertility which excited the admiration of Herodotus. And if at the same time that her bountiful water-supply was husbanded her communications, especially by river, were improved, what might not be the results. They who think that the character of the Government but slightly affects the prosperity of a country, and that the best Government is that which succeeds the most completely in effacing itself, would have to admit that Irâk forms an exception. The introduction of foreign enterprise and capital is here handicapped, or rather barred, by political difficulties on which it is needless to dilate. The central government, even if it had the money to spend on public works, would never trust its local representatives with the spending of it. Every official is supposed to be a check on his colleague. All is *imperium in imperio*, and the leaving of two noble rivers like the Tigris and Euphrates to run to waste is but a fraction of the net result. The Tigris affords at all events a fine study of how a river of its size will comport itself when allowed to play the prodigal. Only this spring, just above Baghdad, it overflowed its eastern bank on a scale of formidable magnitude. For several days very little remained between the city and submersion. Its eastern flank, instead of resting on an arid plain, found itself in a night the dam of a vast lake, arrived at which the Persia-bound traveller has still to exchange his mules for boats. On the same site have started up police and customs stations, and in fine the whole course of traffic is temporarily altered. Just then a great deal of wheat and barley was ripening, and this has all been destroyed. For months the water has covered the ground like Noah's flood to the great

* In point of depth, opposite Baghdad Residency, average sounding may be about 35 feet, midstream, with a variable falling off in depth towards either side.

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delight of the storks and other winter visitants, the boatmen, and the melon-growers. Continents, peninsulas, islands now begin slowly to shape themselves out of the face of the waters, and the smells and malaria which will set in later on can be imagined. But with all this the Tigris keeps delivering, it is calculated, during the high season something like one hundred and sixty thousand cubic feet of water every second at Baghdad. Its fits of playfulness apart, of all the world's workers one of the hardest working it. Receiving the drainage and mud of the country, and absorbing tributaries on every side, the weight of silt which it carries with it in its course exceeds what the mind can easily picture. Equally interesting to the geologist and important to the navigator the changes undergone by it in the performance of its several tasks. The low limestone and conglomerate hills washed by it, as has been seen, in its upper or Assyrian portion, constantly send it from this side to that, the broad surfaces of rich soil left exposed by each deflection being quickly taken up as corn-fields or pasture. Once within the stoneless alluvium of Babylonia, the changes in its channel are chiefly due to the way in which it keeps undermining and devouring the solid land, and depositing the spoil in new places. Eminently navigable as it is for vessels drawing up to three or three and a half feet of water from Baghdad, or rather Tikrît, downward, equal care and experience are needed to prevent accidents, especially between August and November. In so soft a bed bumping and scraping lead to little harm. Of wrecking in the sense of a hole being knocked in the bottom there is not much danger. Mistaking the channel, and holding across the arable, at the risk of being left high and dry till the river's next annual rise, is much more likely. On the way down this time several sunken *safînas* or sailing craft * were passed, with nothing but the tips of the masts visible. One day a solitary boar as big and black as a buffalo was seen swimming the river merely on his private affairs. Among other kind things Sunnis say of Shîas is that when they die they are turned into pigs, and sent back unblessed to their old haunts! Under this view the travelling hog immediately attracted the greatest interest. From his size it was said he must have been a Shekh; and as the steamer was full of Shiâ pilgrims, there might have been a disturbance.†

Gurna.

At Kurna, or Gurna, where the two great rivers of Mesopotamia unite their waters about forty (40) miles above Bussorah, to form the Shattu'l Arab, a Turkish gunboat is generally on the watch. Thus far vessels of all nations are supposed freely to come and go, but the ascent of the Tigris or Euphrates proper is matter of privilege. In the vicinity of Kurna, as along the lower reaches of both rivers generally, military operations would be difficult. Marshes here act as mountains do in so many other countries, and the ease with which the natives when pressed can retire where troops are unable to follow them is a fine check on local Governments.

Bussorah.

Long ago, when Cûfa was at its best, Bussorah, founded by the Caliph Omar, formed a kind of sister city. In those days it stood some eight miles inland on a canal, where the Arab settlement of Zubair is now. The modern town is but a poor affair: population certainly under ten thousand. Standing on western bank of Shattu'l Arab, seventy miles from its mouth, like Calcutta on the Hughli, or rather, it should be said, speaking of the native town at least, on a creek at a distance of about a couple of miles from the river, it may perhaps have a future before it, commercially, not unworthy of its past. As it is, it forms no inconsider-

* Of these the Arabs build a great variety, with a distinct name of course for each variety from the huge sea-going "*baghlah*" (literally female mule) down, through the "*mâshûwah*," "*imhailah*," "*ishwâee*," and others, to the bird's nest like and rotatory "*guffah*" described above. Long ago the Aryan tongues of Europe received through the Crusaders and the gipsies a number of semitic words, many of which, *e.g.*, Saracen (pl. of *Sârik* Arabic for robber or bandit) English lexicographers are only just beginning to identify. Now has come our language's turn to pay off the debt. Notably is this going on with respect to terms of navigation. "*Vapour*," or "*Wâpûr*," is now one of the accepted words for a steamer both in Arabic and Turkish. "Anchor" has been similarly Arabicised, with unfortunately a number of nautical expressions (both English and Hindustani) not so worthy of having their currency thus extended. Same with weapons: "Martini-Henry" is now as fairly an Arabic word as "cannon" is an English one, while for pistols of all descriptions in Turkish "*Varvar*," in Arabic "*Warwar*" (revolver) is fast driving out the older names. Still more curious some of the transferences made to express political ideas: such as the appropriation by the Arabs of our word "Company" to denote the French and American Republics.

† The pig, it may be noted, holds too considerable a place in Nature's scale to be anything like effaced by the prohibition as to his flesh taken by Muhammad from the Mosaic law. In Irâk a tame pig is often given the run of a stable yard or cavalry lines; though, perhaps, rather as a lodgment for evil spirits than out of love for him. The Arabic name for whooping-cough means "pig's cough," for which, curiously, water from a pig's drinking trough is thought a sovereign remedy. The worthy Captain of one of Lynch's steamers keeps a piggery; and the difficulty is to prevent its being invaded by green-turbaned Saiyids and other Muslims, anxious to carry away cupfuls of the healing water.

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able emporium of Indian commerce, distributing over all Syria and Arabia, by means of caravans, the silks and muslins, gold and silver brocades, and innumerable other products of Hindustan, with Bahrain pearls, Mocha coffee, Persian shawls and precious metals, Java spices, and European commodities from many a sea and port. Enough to enrich it, its own yield of dates, exported in large quantities annually to London, to be turned, as is believed, into the famous Revalenta Arabica, and patent foods for cattle. The whole surrounding country also is fertile; and although, owing to moisture of the atmosphere consequent on vicinity of the sea, the climate is depressing to Europeans, on the indigenous races these influences seem to have rather the opposite effect. Avoiding as usual the native town, the European merchants have planted their places of business close to the river. There, too, the English Consulate, and the Customs House, key to the fiscal resources of all Irâk. The roads directly opposite give anchorage to numerous steamers, while forming the head-quarters of the two small gunboats used by the Osmanli in support of their land operations for the extension or consolidation of their power towards Central Arabia. This casual reference to an important subject is nearly all the notice that can here be bestowed on it. What the Jabal Shammar Chief Muhammad Ibnu'r Rashîd is at Hâyil, his kinsman and rival Abdu'llah-bin Faisal—acknowledged head perhaps at the present time of the Wahabi faction—is at the capital of Najd, Riâdh. Within the spheres of both these desert lords alike Turkish influence, if it exist at all, is very shadowy. The famous deserts, called Nufûdh, formed of shifting sand which encompass Najd proper as with a fiery lake effectually exclude invaders, making it perhaps of less moment for the Najdian districts that, owing to Turkish expansion over their eastern seaboard, they are now almost completely cut off from the Persian Gulf. What mainly concerns civilised powers in connection with the expansion or occupation last referred to is the obstacle it interposes to the check of slavery and putting down of piracy. Untamed chiefs, whose status not long ago was little better than that of robbers by land and sea, and whom any one strong enough might chastise, have now become, at least nominally, subjects of a central government, the Sublime Porte, too remote, or too apathetic, to control them. The question of how far within Turkish limits England's concurrent maritime jurisdiction admits of being maintained is, however, one of those the discussion of which seems always to suggest more difficulties than it solves, and further reference to it is therefore best avoided. Only time can disclose what the tendency or results will be politically of the measure already once or twice alluded to, whereby, not for first time in its history, Bussorah has been made into a separate Pashâlik, including, besides Bussorah proper, Mutasarrifships of Amârah, Muntafik country, and Al Hasâ.* One curious thing is that the last named, or most southerly, of those divisions is called in official nomenclature "Najd," a territory from which it has now become as dissevered politically as it always was geographically. The assertion of Turkish supremacy along eastern littoral of Arabian peninsula from Fao, its older, to Ujair, its present limit, dates from 1871. In that year the Amîr of Riâdh, the abovementioned Abd'ullah, invited the then Wali of Baghdad (His Excellency Midhat Pasha) to side with him in a family quarrel. The usual result followed. Districts including Katif and Hasâ having been taken possession of by the Turk, in Abdu'llah's name, and not without his assistance, were quietly added to the Sultan's dominions. To this day an Ottoman official bearing the misleading designation of "Mutasarrif of Najd" has his head-quarters at Hufhuf, principal town of Hasâ, with a garrison of two hundred regular Turkish infantry (furnished from Baghdad) at his back.

Whatever the political results, whether present, or merely anticipated, of the setting up of a Bussorah Pashâlik, a good deal of inconvenience seems to attach itself to the new arrangement from the administrative view point. For while a separate head, or Wali, has been given to the Bussorah executive as a whole, several of its branches, such as Customs, Posts, Telegraphs, and all the tribunals, have been left subordinate each to the superintendent of the corresponding bureau at Baghdad. One consequence is, as the latter again is independent of the Baghdad Wali, and answerable only to Constantinople, if, for example, the Bussorah Customs House become disorganised, and if—no improbable

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supposition—the corresponding department at Baghdad is interested in conniving at, rather than checking, its malpractices, there is no official in all Asiatic Turkey vested with powers of inspection or interference.

The lately appointed Wali of Bussorah is an official of the antique type, whose experiences are mostly of the Hijâz. The functionary on whom chiefly perhaps depend the commercial interests of the town is, as has been seen, the Superintendent of Customs. There is also at Bussorah, as at Baghdad, a semi-religious (Sunnite) functionary of some importance styled Nakîb,* in origin at least questor and registrar of the pedigrees of all claiming to be Saiyids, or descendants of the Prophet. The Baghdad and Bussorah Nakîbs respectively hold hereditarily the far more lucrative situations of "custodier" (*mutawalli*) of the tomb of two famous *awlîa* (pl. of *wali*) or saints.

Arab Coast.

The Baghdad stationaire *Comet* being suited for rivers only, an attempt was made to obtain from Bushire a sea-going steamer for the purpose of skirting the Arab littoral of the Persian Gulf from Bussorah, past the harbour of Kuwait,† island of Bahrain, and districts of Hasâ and Al Katr (seaports Al Katîf and Ujair or Ukair) to Cape Mussendom, places either directly or indirectly subject to the Porte, or else held by independent Arab chiefs. But as it happened, no such vessel was just then available and this purpose too has had to stand over for another time.

Muhamrah.

As far as Muhamrah only, on the eastern or Persian bank of the Shattu'l Arab, about twenty-two miles from Bussorah, the *Comet* was taken before her head was turned towards Baghdad again. Here was tapped territory owning the sovereignty of the Shah of Persia, but administered in the main by native, or more strictly speaking immigrant Arab Chiefs. Shekh Mizâl, son of the late well known Hajji Jâbir Khan, and head at the present time of the Kâb Arabs, a nation rather than a tribe, partly settled in villages, partly nomadic, and fast becoming Persianised, did the honours of Muhamrah, a rising town commercially, lying close to where the navigable Kârûn, after bisecting the so-called "Arabistan," falls by one mouth into the Persian Gulf, by another into the great Bussorah *shatt*, or river.

The return trip from Muhamrah to Baghdad in Her Majesty's Indian Marine Steamer *Comet* having formed subject of separate reports, these too voluminous notes here come to an end.

* Ab *nakb*=excavating; whence prying into, or scrutinizing.

† Diminutive (formed, by the Arabs) ab *kôt*, or *kût*=a building, especially fort; a waif, as far as can be traced from India; and perhaps our *cot*. Kuwait is also called *Grane*, corruption of Arabic *kirn*=*cornu*; the bay being horn-shaped. In all the gulf there is no port having a more thriving commerce, hardier sailors, or better craft than Kuwait. As a rule the best Arab horses taken to India are those brought from the interior for shipment at Kuwait. Its horse-dealers, if any at all, buy from the Bedouin, instead of making up their strings in towns.

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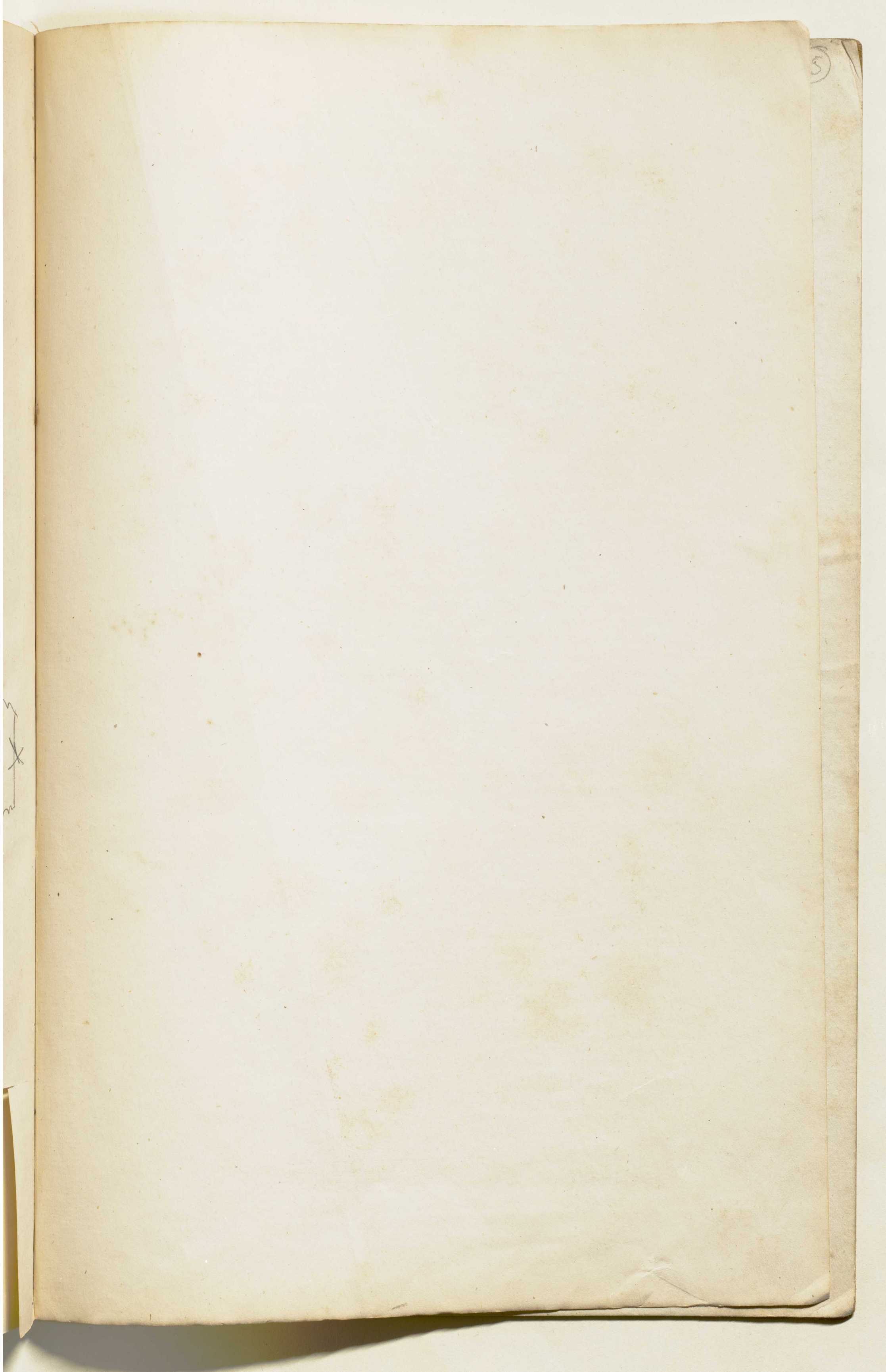

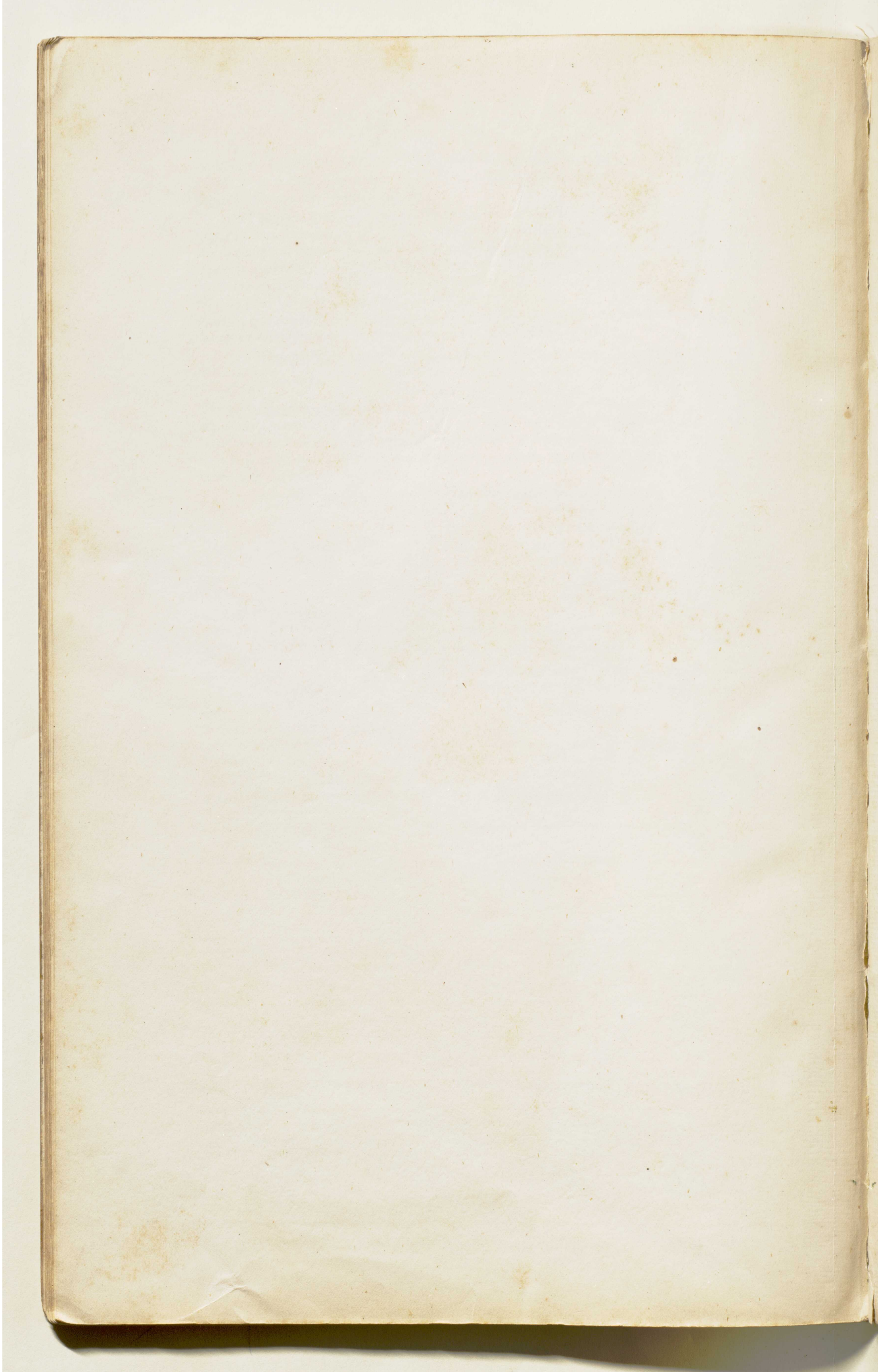

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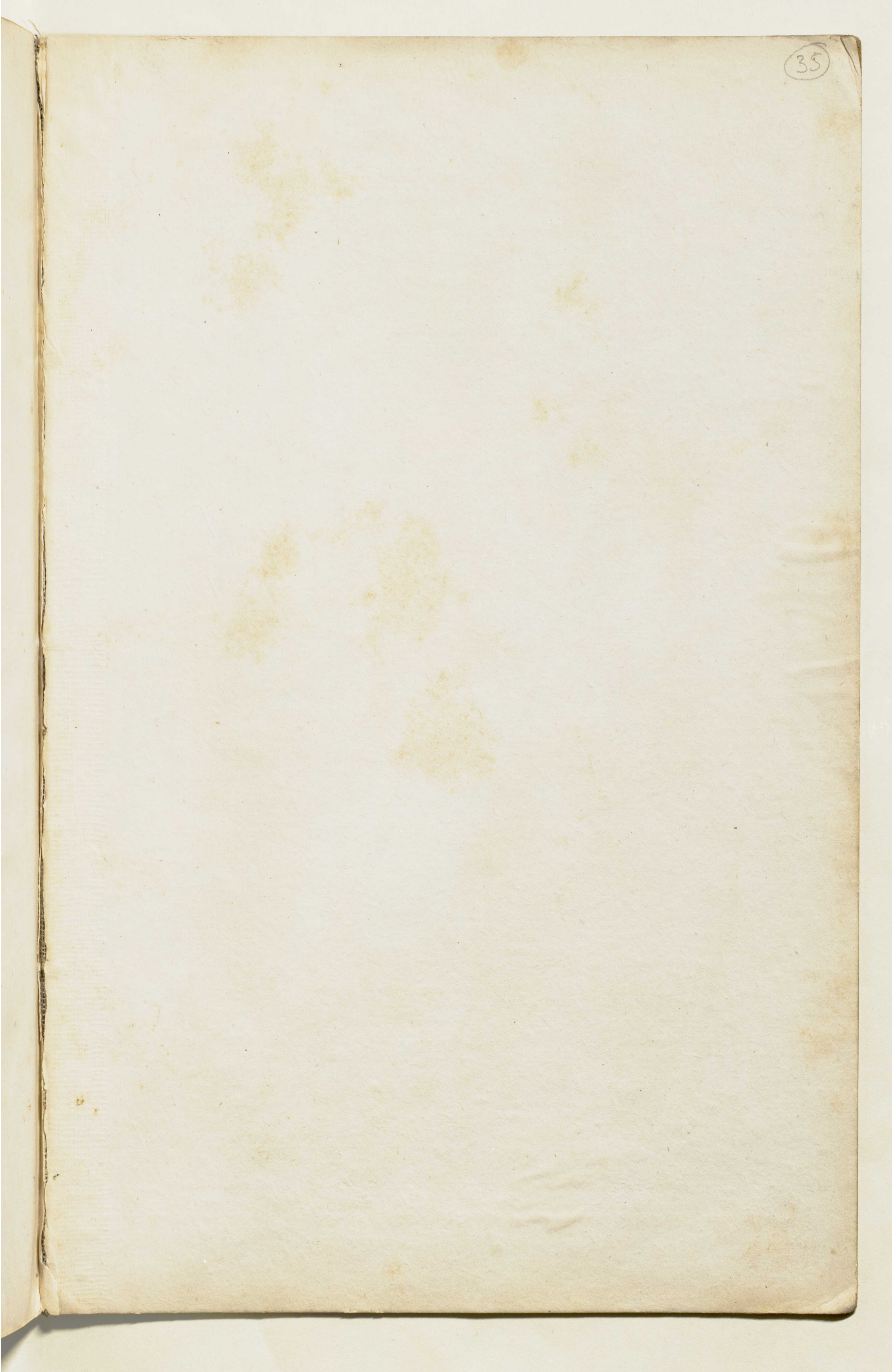

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Shathâtha.

Notwithstanding the bitter early morning cold "David the Poet" so far abated his puritanical sternness as to come and see the *kâfila* off. Towards noon the very considerable town of Shathâtha rose like a bank of clouds on the horizon. Miles upon miles of dark green date-palm here embrace a great natural spring and basin of tepid mineral water having a highly medicinal smell. Strictly speaking it is less a town than a large collection of semi-chateau semi-fortalice homesteads, spread over an extensive surface, and many of them surrounded with small hamlets. In so straggling a place the population is difficult to reckon, but it must be counted by thousands. Here, too, dates and lucern are the principal products. The latter not being ready for cutting, no forage was to be had. In the centre of everything the Osmanli have a government house or *Sarâi*. As mere townspeople, and moreover Shîas, the inhabitants of Shathâtha may not have much in common with their Bedouin neighbours. Nevertheless, just as Der was seen to be a good place to feel the Ih-ni-Zah, so Shathâtha will generally be found affording numerous glimpses of Cental Arabian tribes and politics. At the period now referred to the talk was all of the Amîr Muhammad Ibnu'r Rashîd, of Jabal Shammar, now without doubt the rising star of independent Arabia. Quite lately the Amîr had shown himself as far north as Shathâtha, at the head of his desert legions, pillaging and driving before him the Ih-ni-zah, but scorning to touch settled folk. Nevertheless, the Osmanli had not liked it, and a letter of remonstrance had been sent to him, it was said, by the Baghdad Government. Wonderful stories were in everyone's mouth as to the generosity, prowess, and barbaric splendour of this latest aspirant to the empire of Najd. Camels laden with dollars, it is believed, always form part of his train,* while a guard of black slaves waits day and night on his glance, equally to avert from him the fate he has meted out to so many others, and to deal in a moment with any one obnoxious to him. Taking his stand less on Wahâbyism, now perhaps played out, than on the surer foundation of dollars, camels, and breech-loaders, there is no saying how far this scion of an adventurous stock may go.†

To Karbalâ.

In passing out of Shathâtha the route was over narrow paths, by the side of blue and vapourish running water; past at first squalid shops and cottages, then houses and date plantations, and so by degrees into the desert. Like Madîna itself and so many other spots within Arabia the Shathâtha oasis seems at one period to have supplied an asylum to the Jews, and ruined mansions of imposing size are still called by the names of otherwise forgotten Israelites. Nearly due west seemed to be the direction. Gradually, after passing on the left two very large lakes of brackish water, the surface of Shâmîa, here powdered with saline or nitrous efflorescence resembling newly fallen snow, was once more exchanged for the Babylonian alluvium. This marked out the Karbalâ district; and presently the minarets and gilded domes of the historical little town (population fluctuating round fifty thousand) of the same name ‡ rose against the sky. Included partly within the Arabian desert, partly within the fertile plains of Lower Mesopotamia or Chaldea, this district, while offering boundless spaces for the tents of the Ih-ni-zah, when they come in autumn to buy corn and dates and sell their colts and camels, contains also some of the best cultivated and most productive land in the Baghdad Pashâlik. The town unfortunately stands about a day's journey from the present course of the Euphrates, and the ancient canal connecting it with the river is sometimes running, sometimes dry. But all over the cultivated parts wells abound.

Section XIV.—Karbalâ and Najaf.

Twelve centuries have revolved since the date of the tragedy which first made these names household words for Islamism. But to this day, as is well known, once in every year, that is during the first ten days of the lunar month Muharram, the memory of it is revived by dramatic representations and other means everywhere in the Muhammadan world.

General features.

Among the political and religious facts lying near the surface at Karbalâ and Najaf the following may be mentioned: millions of pious Muslims hold the spots themselves not less worthy than Mecca

* Nothing falls in with Bedouin humour more than after striking a big blow to turn all of a sudden host and patron. In 1880 this same Ibnu'r Rashîd led a *ghazú* to within eight miles of Damascus.

† Hâyil, capital of the important province of Jabal Shammar on the northern confines of Najd, forms his head-quarters. Palgrave visited Hâyil (in disguise) in 1862—*vide* his "Central and Eastern Arabia;" also Mr. and the Lady Anne Blunt, openly, in 1879; latter's "Pilgrimage to Najd" containing a picturesque description of present Amîr and his surroundings

‡ Also called Mashhad Husain, mean[ing] *place* of *martyrdom* (lit. testifying) *of Husain.*

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of religious pilgrimage and offering. The Sultân clings as tenaciously to those two little desert towns as to his richest cities. Persia covets them as keenly as ever Christendom did the holy sepulchre. England, as disposing perhaps almost as many Muhammadan subjects as Shah and Sultân put together, is bound to look on them as not outside the circle of her protection. And, lastly, what was in its conception the most unequivocally monotheistic faith perhaps the world ever saw is here loaded with superstition and given up to the deification of dead men. To open so large a subject would involve a survey of the very beginning of Islamitic history, or rather of the essential features of Islamism itself out of which that history grew. To pass it over altogether would be to ignore one of the objects with which this tour was made.

However absolute and despotic the actual government in Muhammadan countries may be, the political ideas of Islamism itself are, as is well known, essentially religious, and in their original form democratic. And yet never did any religious system emerge from the ideality of its beginnings more rapidly or notably than Islamism did. Even in the lifetime of the Prophet-king all his commanding genius and prestige were needed * to keep down a conflict between at least two antagonistic elements: on the one hand, the enthusiastic and supernatural; on the other, the political and secular. Out of a book, there grew an empire; out of a preacher, the founder of a commonwealth; but while to the hereditary aristocracy of Arabia Muhammad became more and more of an earthly, if Heaven-directed, ruler, to the "true-blue" champions of theocracy, the idea was intolerable that a mission such as his should eventuate merely in the setting up of another kingdom of the common worldly type. The founder of it, as will be remembered, died sonless, all his children except Fâtima, wife of his cousin Ali, having predeceased him. Even had this been otherwise, it is doubtful whether he would have regarded his son as necessarily his successor; while had he done so, the chances are the second Muhammad would have proved as great a failure as the second Cromwell. Corroborating the view here taken is the fact of his omitting to nominate any successor at all, or even indicate by whom the election should be made. How, when his death occurred, to the bitter disappointment of his kinsman Ali, and all the tribe of Hâshim, the elective principle prevailed equally over the legitimist and the Messianic, and the Madîna elders chose Abu Bakr first Caliph (more correctly *Khalîfa*, meaning successor) partly from his pre-eminent services, and partly because one day during his last illness Muhammad had made him lead the prayers of the people; how two years afterwards he also died and was succeeded by the lion-hearted Omar—the rock, next to the master himself, on which Islâm was founded; how after Omar had been struck down by a disappointed suitor, and his successor Othmân had in his turn been foully murdered, the brave but unfortunate Ali was at last appointed Caliph; all these things belong to history.

Sect of Ali.

If ever a party was badly handled, or a leader badly followed, that party was the purely theocratic or "high-flying" one in the early Islamitic commonwealth, and that leader Ali. His accession to the Caliphate, so far from crowning, greatly complicated his impossible task of trying to build up in this imperfect world a kingdom fashioned after a heavenly model. The newly formed Arab empire was far too good a thing, from the secular view point, to be left to fanatics. Civil war broke out directly. When the sectaries and enthusiasts composing in the main his following came to be pitted against the resources of the State, wielded by the foremost man of the time Muâwîa, prefect of Syria and founder of the so-called Omayyad dynasty of Damascus, the perilous stuff they were made of soon came out. Considering what a force religion is politically, it is fortunate for the world it cannot be pushed very far in any one direction without its tendency to split into ever so many pieces showing itself. Ali himself was no zealot. His eloquent Arab tongue was always ready with a negotiation or a compromise. But this trait, while useless with Muâwîa's generals, amounted in the eyes of the more thorough going of his own party to apostacy. In the end half of his followers deserted him altogether, to form a separate schism,† very like that of Balfour of Burley in the army of the Scottish Covenanters. After that the success of his cause was impossible. Driven by reverse after reverse out of Syria, Egypt, and Arabia he was Caliph only in name, with a footing nowhere save in the half-Persian Irâk, when one day in the great mosque at Cûfa near Najaf the sword of a fanatic made of him

* Throughout these remarks Gibbon's hint is borne in mind: "Some reverence is surely due to the fame of heroes, and the religion of nations." Similarly Carlyle in one of his essays: "The word this man spoke has been the life-guidance now of a hundred and eighty millions of men these twelve hundred years."

† Known as the sect of the *Khawârij* or Dissenters; also *Mutazila*, a word expressing the same meaning.

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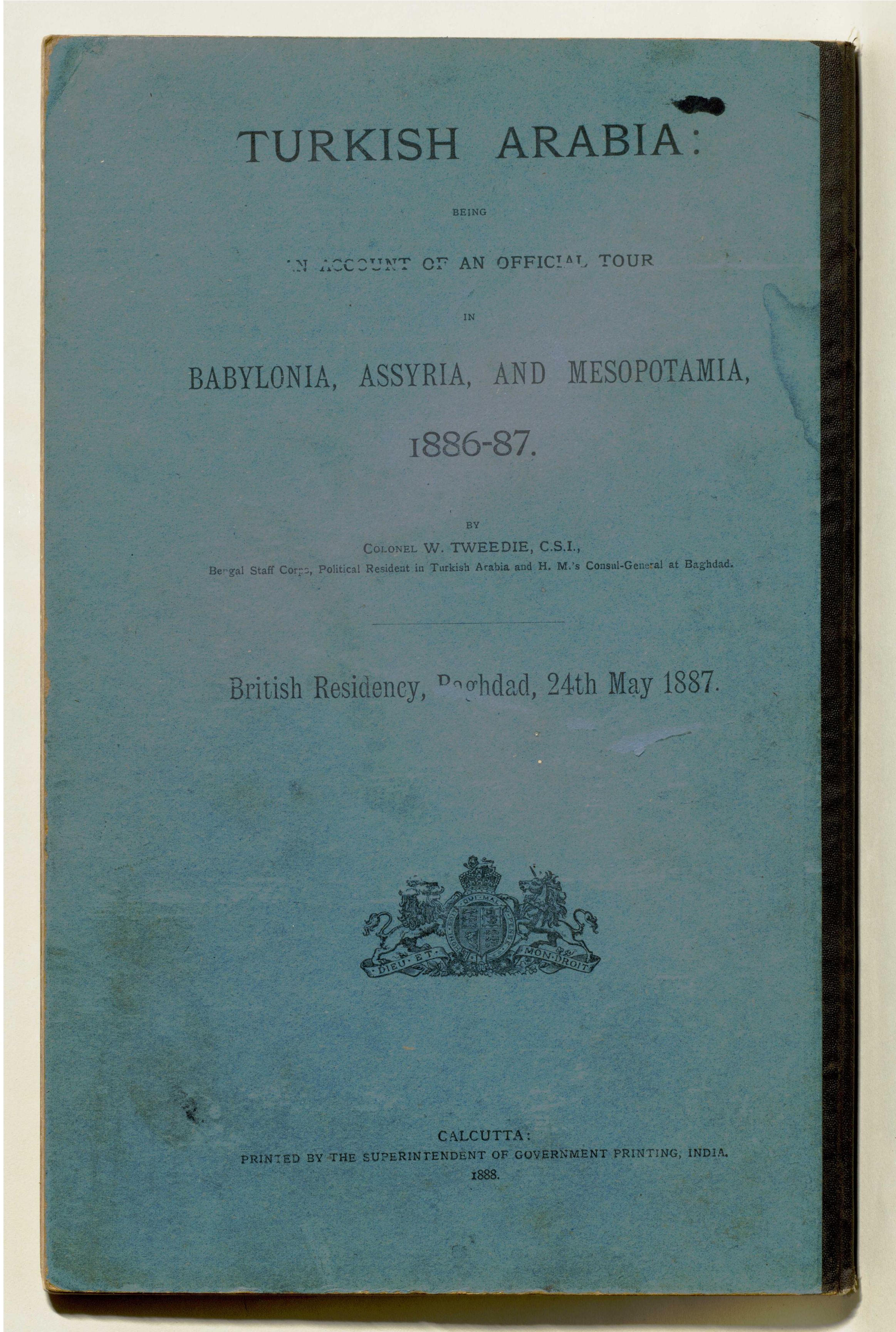

TURKISH ARABIA:

BEING

AN ACCOUNT OF AN OFFICIAL TOUR

IN

BABYLONIA, ASSYRIA, AND MESOPOTAMIA,

1886-87.

BY

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