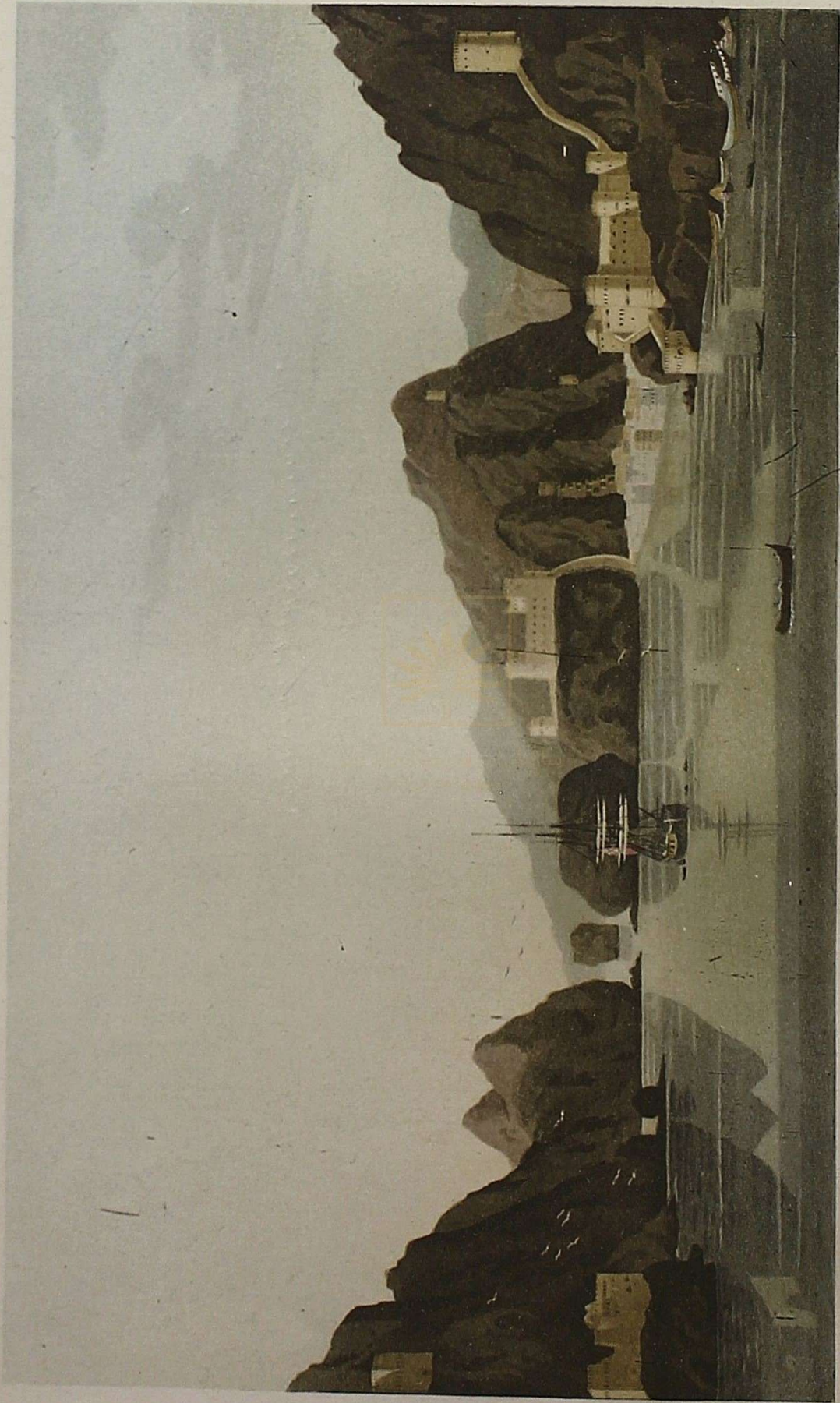




سازمان اسناد و کتابخانه ملی
جمهوری اسلامی ایران

کتابخانه عمومی

کتابخانه عمومی مارف



MUSCAT, FROM THE HARBOUR, IN 1809

From a water-colour sketch by Major R. Temple, H.M. 65th Regiment

٢٧٩ = ٧٠٦.

No: 598

THE PERSIAN GULF

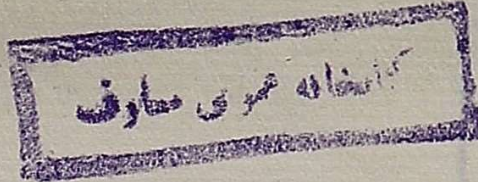
AN HISTORICAL SKETCH FROM THE
EARLIEST TIMES TO THE BEGINNING
OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

BY

LT.-COL. SIR ARNOLD T. WILSON
K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.M.G., D.S.O.

With a Foreword by
The Right Hon. L. S. AMERY, P.C.

No. 1672



OXFORD
AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1928

DSR

۲۱۳۴

/ ۲۹

۱۳۰۹

No. 3641



بخش ایرانشناسی
کتابخانه ملی

TO
MY WIFE

IT IS NOT HOWEVER NECESSARY
that a man should forbear to write, till he
has discovered some truth unknown before ;
he may be sufficiently useful, by only diversi-
fying the surface of knowledge and luring the
mind by a new appearance to a second view of
those beauties which it had passed
over inattentively before.

JOHNSON, *THE ADVENTURER*, Vol. 37

P R E F A C E

THE writer is very conscious that he is not equipped for the task to which he has set his hand by any qualification other than that of almost continuous residence in the Persian Gulf for eighteen years, during which his duties have brought him into close contact and uniformly friendly relations with all sorts and conditions of men drawn from every country and from almost every port on its shores.

He makes no claim to original research, the bulk of the book being admittedly and almost inevitably compiled from the very voluminous works of previous writers, and he takes this opportunity gratefully to acknowledge the assistance he has received in this regard from his collaborator, Mr. H. W. Mardon, formerly of the Egyptian Education Department, who is primarily responsible for the chapters relating to the early historical period and the Middle Ages, which are printed substantially as they came from his pen, and for the Bibliography, study of which will, it is hoped, absolve the writer from the late Lord Curzon's eloquent condemnation of those who 'either not having read what has been written by better men before, or reading it only in order to plagiarize and reproduce it as their own, . . . misunderstand, misspell, and misinterpret everywhere as they go'. It is not the intention of the author to replace or even to supplement existing histories dealing with the region to which this work relates. He has attempted to write, however inadequately, a regional history, in order to enable local residents, whose curiosity is the raw material of local patriotism and of historical scholarship, to learn something of the early records of the country in which they live. To study the broad lines of history without the correction afforded by its application to the scenes in which we live, is apt to dull our senses to the true lessons of history. In the Persian Gulf, as elsewhere, it is in our power, as it is our duty, to learn from and to profit by the mistakes of past generations. If we do so, we may look forward with confidence to the future.

The reader is asked to regard the foot-notes, with which this book is plentifully provided, as invitations to pause on his way to examine more closely some object of interest or suggestion for further study. If, however, they fail to attract the general reader, they may nevertheless serve to direct other workers in this rich field to sources which might otherwise be overlooked.

The imaginative reader will find in many of the works quoted herein themes that could be put to fiction not less successfully than poetry has been put to music. The Gulf awaits an historical novelist who will do it justice: the continued vogue of *Hajji Baba* and the renewed popularity of *Vathek* and *Zohrab* indicate that he would find a ready public, and it is certain that the history, no less than the summer climate of the Gulf, contains ample material for a new series of a thousand and one romantic if sleepless nights.

It is the writer's object to enable those whom duty or inclination brings to the Gulf, or whose work brings them in contact with its problems, to study in the compass of a single work the pageant of its history, in which Great Britain has played such a distinguished part since Drake defeated and the winds of Providence destroyed the Spanish Armada. In every port, on every island in these waters are the forgotten graves of men of our race, whose careless sacrifice of their lives has made existence and trade in this region possible for us, just as the labour of generations at sea and on land has made 'this realm, this England, this dear, dear land' what it is to-day. In their honour, and for those who believe that the British Empire is still, under Providence, the greatest instrument for good that the world has seen, and who hold, with the writer, that its work in the East is not yet accomplished, this book is written.

A. T. W.

FOREWORD

A CERTAIN aroma of romance hangs round the name of the Persian Gulf, but those who know the region best are probably least disposed to regard it in a romantic light. It is an area of bleak coasts, torrid winds, and pitiless sunshine. The amenities of life are few and far between. Nature is in her fiercest humour and man has done little to improve upon her handiwork. The population is scanty, the standard of living low. Towns are few and insanitary; villages little more than clusters of mud huts.

To a casual visitor it might seem a mere backwater to which civilization has scarcely penetrated.

But appearances are proverbially deceptive. For centuries past this remote backwater has played its part in the world's history. Its shores echoed to the tramp of Alexander's legions. It has seen Empires rise and fall. It has watched the rivalries of the maritime nations of the West.

Lying as it does on the high road to India it has acquired in British eyes an ever-increasing importance during the last hundred years. For more than a century Great Britain has been the predominant power in the Gulf waters. It is due entirely to British effort and British enterprise that this maritime highway has been kept open for the commerce of the world. It is we who have policed its waters, built lighthouses, laid down buoys and cables, suppressed piracy, put an end to the slave trade, and controlled the traffic in arms. We have compelled the restless Arab tribesmen to keep the peace at sea. We have been in Treaty relations with them for many years past. The necessity of maintaining our predominant influence in the Gulf has long been an axiom of British-Indian policy. Lord Lansdowne announced in the House of Lords on the 5th May 1903 that 'we should regard the establishment of a naval base or of a fortified port on the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and that we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal'. This policy was reaffirmed by Lord

Lansdowne's successor, Sir Edward Grey, in 1907. It stands unchallenged to this hour.

The outbreak of the Great War threw our interests here, as everywhere else, into grave jeopardy. At the head of the Gulf stood the Turk, and when the Turk joined our enemies we were bound, if our rights were to be preserved, to act at once. Otherwise the results of decades of patient effort and sacrifice would have shrivelled in a night. It was with this object that the famous Expeditionary Force D was dispatched to Basra in the autumn of 1914. It was bound on no purposeless adventure. Action was forced upon us by stern necessity. We were led, it is true, into strange experiences and into new responsibilities which some would have preferred to avoid. But in its inception the step was inevitable. We could not have acted otherwise.

Our record in the Gulf region will bear the closest scrutiny. We have worked, not for ourselves alone, but for all nations. We have claimed no special facilities and no exclusive privileges. We have been content to place our energy and enterprise into free competition with those of others, and to abide by the result. We can survey a century's work with a stout heart and a clear conscience.

So much for the past. What of the future? Is the Persian Gulf likely in the years to come to play the same part as it played in the years that lie behind us? I believe that its importance is destined not to diminish but to increase. The Middle East is being opened up. Everywhere there are new conditions and new opportunities of development and progress. To take one point only. We are often told that the future lies in the air. In our air communications with the East the shores of the Persian Gulf are likely to furnish an essential link. This is a new factor, the full significance of which we can at present only dimly comprehend.

But if our good work is to continue we must depend in the future, as we have depended in the past, upon our own qualities. I should wish, if space were available, to say something of those devoted Englishmen who have laid down their lives in these

inhospitable regions. *Quae caret ora cruore nostro?* It is these men that have built up, bit by bit, a structure that stands to-day. Will the future bring others to tread in their footsteps? On this point I have no doubt whatever. The British Empire can always count upon men to do its work.

Of living authorities on the Gulf region, few can point to a finer record of service than Sir Arnold Wilson. Few men are better acquainted with the Middle East as a whole, and with the Gulf region in particular. Few can be better qualified to paint the picture in its true colours and to present to English readers the full story of what their countrymen have achieved. It is with every confidence that I commend his book to their notice.

L. S. AMERY.

25, 1, 19

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTORY	I
II. PRIMITIVE MAN IN THE PERSIAN GULF AND OMAN	18
III. THE PERSIAN GULF IN THE EARLIEST HISTORICAL TIMES	25
IV. THE CLASSICAL WRITERS	36
V. THE MIDDLE AGES—IRAQ, <u>KHUZISTAN, FARS,</u> <u>KIRMAN AND MAKRAN</u>	56
VI. THE MIDDLE AGES (CONTD.)— <u>OMAN AND BAHRAIN</u>	77
VII. SIRAF, QAIS, AND HORMUZ	92
VIII. THE COMING OF THE PORTUGUESE	110
IX. ENGLISH AND PORTUGUESE RIVALRY	128
X. THE EXPULSION OF THE PORTUGUESE	143
XI. THE DUTCH	153
XII. THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE GROWTH OF BRITISH INFLUENCE	171
XIII. PIRACY	192
XIV. THE SLAVE TRADE	213
XV. THE GROWTH OF THE ARAB PRINCIPALITIES	231
XVI. THE PERSIAN GULF IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS	254
APPENDIX. A SUMMARY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE PERSIAN GULF	274
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	295
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	296
INDEX	315

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Muscat, from the harbour, in 1809. From a water-colour sketch by Major R. Temple, H.M. 65th Regiment	<i>Frontispiece</i>
I. <i>a.</i> View of 2,000-ft. gorge of the Diz River at Kūh-i-Langieh. Photograph by Mr. J. Nason Jones	
<i>b.</i> A 30-ft. cleft in the Kuh-i-Langieh. Photograph by Mr. J. Nason Jones	
<i>c.</i> Flats of the Ab-i-Diz below Dizful: Evening. Photograph by Mr. J. Nason Jones	
<i>d.</i> The reputed tomb of the Prophet Daniel at 'Shushan the Palace' near the Diz, south of Dizful. Photograph by Mr. J. Nason Jones	. . . . . <i>To face p. 6</i>
II. <i>a.</i> The morning's catch (Muscat)	
<i>b.</i> Muscat. Arab youth in 'hoori' or dug-out canoe	. . . . . 22
III. The Sepulchral mounds at Bahrain	. . . . . 30
IV. Alexander the Great	. . . . . 38
V. Tang-i-Buharigh, Khuskh Kuh, east of Bandar Abbas	. . . . . 76
VI. <i>a.</i> Vasco da Gama (<i>Commentaries</i> , iii, Frontispiece)	
<i>b.</i> Albuquerque (<i>Commentaries</i> , i, Frontispiece)	. . . . . 112
VII. <i>a.</i> City of Hormuz, from an old print	
<i>b.</i> Portuguese Caravel of the sixteenth century	. . . . . 116
VIII. Abbas the Great (Malcolm's <i>History of Persia</i> , London, 1851, vol. i, p. 525)	. . . . . 128
IX. Anthony Sherley (Sir Anthony Sherley's <i>Travels into Persia</i>)	. . . . . 130
X. <i>a.</i> The British Minister, Tehran (Mr. Murray and his suite) (from <i>Illus. Lond. News</i> , 4 April 1857)	
<i>b.</i> Gombrun (Le Bruyn's <i>Voyages</i> , ii, p. 74)	
<i>c.</i> Hormuz, Larak, and Qishm (Le Bruyn's <i>Voyages</i> , ii, p. 74)	. . . . . 146
XI. Muscat, circa 1670 (Struys, <i>Voyages</i> , Amsterdam, 1681)	. . . . . 156
XII. Gombrun, Bandar Abbas, circa 1670 (Struys, <i>Voyages</i> , Amsterdam, 1681)	. . . . . 166
XIII. <i>a.</i> Dutch vessel at Hormuz, 1638	
<i>b.</i> Basidu, on the Island of Qishm (from <i>Illus. Lond. News</i> , 4 April 1857)	. . . . . 208

XIV. A 'baghalah' in the Shatt al Arab	<i>To face p. 226</i>
XV. View of Muscat Harbour. Photograph by Mr. H. Conacher	230
XVI. Three Generations of the Muscat Royal Family	238
XVII. <i>a.</i> Persian Fortune-Teller. Photograph by Rev. E. E. Calverley	
<i>b.</i> One of the Ikhwan of Nejd at Kuwait. Photograph by Rev. E. E. Calverley	
<i>c.</i> Arab youth with falcon at Kuwait. Photograph by Rev. E. E. Calverley	
<i>d.</i> Arab women on camels at Kuwait. Photograph by Rev. E. E. Calverley	256
XVIII. Mohammerah (Hunt's <i>Outram and Havelock's Persian Campaigns</i> , London, 1858)	258
XIX. Ismaini, on the Karun (Hunt's <i>Outram and Havelock's Persian Campaigns</i> , London, 1858)	266
MAP OF THE PERSIAN GULF	<i>In pocket at end</i>

ERRATA

Plate XVI, *for* Sayyid Ali Bui Sälim
read Sayyid Ali Bin Salim

Page 241, line 9, *for* British Somaliland
read French Somaliland

I

THE PERSIAN GULF

Introductory

NO arm of the sea has been, or is of greater interest, alike to the geologist and archaeologist, the historian and geographer, the merchant, the statesman, and the student of strategy, than the inland water known as the Persian Gulf. 'The Gulf', as we shall hereafter often call it, following the custom of master mariners for three centuries, has a place in the written history of mankind older than that of any other inland sea; its story can be traced, though not continuously, from the very earliest historic times; its central position on one of the main highways between East and West has from the dawn of civilization invested it with peculiar importance: it was the scene of great events, which determined the trend of development of the human race, while the Mediterranean was probably still unfurrowed by the keels of ships. The mass of literature on the subject in half a score of languages, of which a proportion only is included in our bibliography, bears eloquent testimony to the continuous interest of Europe in the subject from the earliest times. Portuguese explorers in the sixteenth, and British, French, and Dutch Trading Companies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sought to establish trading monopolies in its waters to the exclusion of each other, the first named at the point of the sword, the others by more peaceful means.

Though, as a stage in a great line of communication, the Persian Gulf has at all times had a formidable rival in the Red Sea, at the commencement of the nineteenth century the envoys of Napoleon sought to acquire interests and influence here¹ in the

¹ 'Buonaparte will, as much as possible, avoid the dangers of the Sea, which is not his element, but, trusting to his own exertions and the enthusiasm of his followers, endeavour to accomplish his object, by marching to Aleppo, cross the Euphrates, and following the example of Alexander, by following the River Euphrates and the Tigris, and descending to the Persian Gulph, and thence proceeding along the coast to the Indies.'

Henry Dundas,

Secretary of War, to Lord Grenville,
13. 6. 1798. (Autograph letter.)

pursuit of French dreams of world conquest. From the end of the last century until the outbreak of the World War in 1914 the Gulf was an important factor in world politics, as a consequence, up to 1907, on the one hand of the territorial ambitions of Russia in Persia, and on the other of the *drang nach Osten* of Germany and the centralizing and nationalistic policies of 'Young Turkey'.¹

Apart from these extraneous and, in an historical sense, transient factors, the position of this inland sea, lapping the shores of the territories of Arabia, Iraq, and Persia, and on the flank of all ocean routes from Aden eastwards, invests it inevitably with strategical importance. The fact that Consular Officials and Political Agents along the littoral are nominated and controlled by the Government of India is a practical recognition of the inescapable reality of 'Indian interests', of which the extension of the sphere of the Indian Navy to these waters is a logical and necessary sequence.

The Persian Gulf and, in a somewhat less degree, the Red Sea are two great prolongations of the Indian Ocean penetrating the very centre of the Old World, running almost parallel to each other, both attaining at their extremities the same latitude (30° N.) and both giving access to Europe from the Indian Ocean. In its strict geographical sense the Persian Gulf, which covers an area of about 97,000 square miles, is almost an 'inland sea', but, more broadly, it cannot be dissociated from the Gulf of Oman to which it is joined by the Strait of Ormuz. The total length from the coast of Oman to the head of the gulf is about 500 miles, while the length of the waterway from the open ocean to the same point is not less than 800 miles: its breadth varies from 180 miles at its widest part to a minimum width of only twenty-nine miles at the strait.

X On either side of the Persian Gulf lie the two great plateaux of Iran and of Arabia, the former, however, lying much the nearer to its coast. The Iranian upheaval is buttressed up by a great mountain chain seamed by interlacing spurs and radiating from the great massif or nucleus of Armenia, the Elburz and Caucasus ranges being other radiations. It trends south-eastwards from the crown, first in simple character, but later to split up into long parallel alinements of distinct chains with intervening half-filled valleys running south-eastward or eastwards for nearly one

¹ Until 1892, or even later, Great Britain sought to interest Germany in Persia, Mesopotamia, and the Persian Gulf in order to ensure that her influence would be used to check Russian expansion southwards. In 1892 our Ambassador at Berlin was actually urging Bismarck to interest German shipping and German trade in these regions, but our efforts at this period met with scant encouragement.

thousand miles. The lower parallels of this great range are separated, east of Bushire, by but a little interval from the coast, and the ground changes by quick gradations from arid alluvial tracts to desolate gravelly hills, to the north of which emerge, gaunt and forbidding, a long and seemingly endless series of hog's back limestone ranges: those nearest the coast are from 3,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level, and each successive range to the north increases in height, as do the intervening valleys, until, at a distance of some two hundred miles from the coast, the main Persian plateau, of an average height of some 5,500 feet, is reached, bounded by ranges of mountains which rise to a height of some 13,000 feet. Flat alluvial plains with occasional marshes or salt lakes fill the upland valleys, in which sturdy tribesmen, semi-nomadic by necessity rather than by choice, graze their flocks and coax a precarious subsistence from the parched soil wherever perennial water can be found sufficient for their flocks and for human needs. In South Persia the line of perennial snow is about 14,000 feet, an altitude to which hardly any peaks attain, except perhaps south-west of Kirman and Yezd; below 6,000 feet, snow only lies in normal years for a few weeks.

By comparison, the rise to the broad central highlands of Arabia is by a much easier gradient, the long drainage slope facing north-eastwards. Maximum heights of about 4,000 feet are attained in the basaltic and granite uplands of Jabal Shammar and the limestone ridge of Tuwaiq, lying but little short of 300 miles from the coast, the intervening country, after a broad strip of coastal flats, consisting of sand ridges. On the south the littoral tract passes into a more arid territory divided by pebbly downs from the Red Desert or *Al Rimal*; eastwards along the coast of Oman, at a short distance from the littoral, runs a precipitous range less than 5,000 feet in elevation, of which Jabal Akhdhar, or the 'Green Mountain', is one of the most striking features, terminating in the 'dreaded' Ras Musandam, or Ruus al Jibal (hill-tops), the *Mons Asabo* of Pliny. X

The Tigris and Euphrates, though flowing from the near neighbourhood of Ararat, are not ancient streams. Geology, looking farther than history, knows of a time when neither these rivers nor the uplands that nourish them existed, and an ocean flowed over the Holy Places of Iraq, over Persia, and over much of Central Arabia. A Miocene upheaval in Central Asia gave birth to the Persian plateau: the reverse process, a synclinal depression, in tertiary times, produced the Persian Gulf, which must once

have extended from Hit and Samarra, if not as far as Sanjar, to the mountain barrier of Musandam, which then cut it off from the Indian Ocean.

X On the Arabian coast the mountain folds, though less pronounced in elevation than those on the Persian side, are parallel, and this vast stratigraphic system in the various mountains presents the same characteristics and is due to the same causes. Formerly, the volcanoes of Central Arabia and the environs of Aden joined forces with those of Persia, resulting in a vast depression near the middle of the space comprised between the two centres.¹ Just as the upheaval in the Caucasus and of Iran gave birth to the Caspian Sea and to the steppes of the north, so that of Arabia and Persia has been the cause of the Mesopotamian depression of the Persian Gulf; whilst in the north, the Don, Volga, and Oxus filled the hollow by their incessant tribute of silt, so the Tigris, Euphrates, and Karun filled the westernmost parts of the inland sea of the south and, little by little, all Mesopotamia rose out of its waters.²

But this does not mean that the coast line of the Mesopotamian delta was, as is assumed by De Morgan, Hogarth, and Myres, gradually pushed forward into the Gulf by the annual increment of silt. The probability is that the delta formed by the joint action of the Karun, Diz, and Karkheh rivers from the Zagros range, and that of the Wadi Batin, which drains an area of 150,000 square miles, from the highlands of Arabia, combined to form a barrier of comparatively high land in diluvial times, between Chaldea and the Persian Gulf, thus creating and perpetuating for all time a lacustrine régime.

The Batin brought down heavy gravels and coarse sands, which can be seen round Zubair: the streams from the Zagros brought lighter material, but still heavier by far than that brought down by the less rapid stream of the Tigris, and by the still slower waters of the Euphrates.

X The annual volume of silt annually carried past Falluja by the Euphrates is 1·22 million cubic yards: that of the Tigris at Baghdad³ is 2·2 million cubic yards. The Karun, Diz, and Karkheh, between them, bring down about 1·5 million cubic yards, but of all the silt carried by the Euphrates and Tigris not more

¹ Pilgrim (1).

² De Morgan (1), vol. ii.

³ De Morgan (1), vol. ii; Hogarth (3), p. 58; Myres, J. L., *The Dawn of History*. For a fuller discussion of this question see a paper by the present writer, G. J., March 1925.

than ten per cent. reaches Fao: the rest is deposited, and probably has been deposited since diluvial times, in the Chaldean Lakes. The silt of the Karkheh is entirely deposited in the marshes: that of the Karun and Diz alone reaches without substantial diminution the bar of the Shatt al Arab.

X The Persian Gulf is remarkably shallow for so large an area of water. The sea-floor rises rapidly from an extreme depth of about 1,800 fathoms in mid-Gulf, off Muscat, to about 80 fathoms in the Strait of Ormuz, just off Ras Musandam. Within the Gulf itself, deep soundings range from 40–50 fathoms and the line of greatest depth lies much nearer to the Persian coast than the Arabian, the consequence being that the whole of the southern shore, right round to and beyond the Shatt al Arab extending to Bushire, is extremely shallow and shelving, making it impossible for modern ships of 5,000 tons or more to approach within five miles of the shore.¹ The 20-fathom line lies 70 miles off the coast at the mouth of the Shatt al Arab, and 100–105 miles off Bahrain. The shallowness is intensified by an intricate maze of shoals and reefs, of great extent, in the southern sweep of the Gulf—the home of the pearl oyster, for which the Gulf was famed even in Nearchus' day and probably far earlier,² and the retreat of the pirates who infested the Gulf from the fifteenth century onwards and, indeed, at a far earlier period.

Rising here and there above the general level of the sea-bed are isolated eminences which manifest themselves in the numerous islands which dot the expanse of the Gulf, especially its western part, and mostly at no great distance from the shore. The islands differ in physical character, however, one from another: whilst those of the Persian littoral—Shaikh Shuaib, Qishm, Hormuz, Larak, and Hanjam—are, in places, rocky and scarped, like the coast of which they once formed a part; those near the Arabian littoral are little more than shoal islands and coral islets, though several are, in geological structure, akin to Hormuz.

X The salinity of the waters of the Persian Gulf is low for an inland sea. The water is fresher at the head of the Gulf than nearer the strait, and in summer than in winter, owing firstly to the great discharge of the Mesopotamian rivers³ and secondly to the absence of currents from the outer ocean. The water mass is too

¹ *The Persian Gulf Pilot*, 1924.

² A cuneiform tablet found at Ur in 1926 by Mr. C. L. Woolley, dated about 2000 B.C., refers to a parcel of 'fish eyes' from Dilmun (? Bahrain), which may stand for pearls.

³ Schott (1).

inconsiderable and ingress at the bottle-neck entrance of the Gulf too restricted, for ocean currents to enter freely.

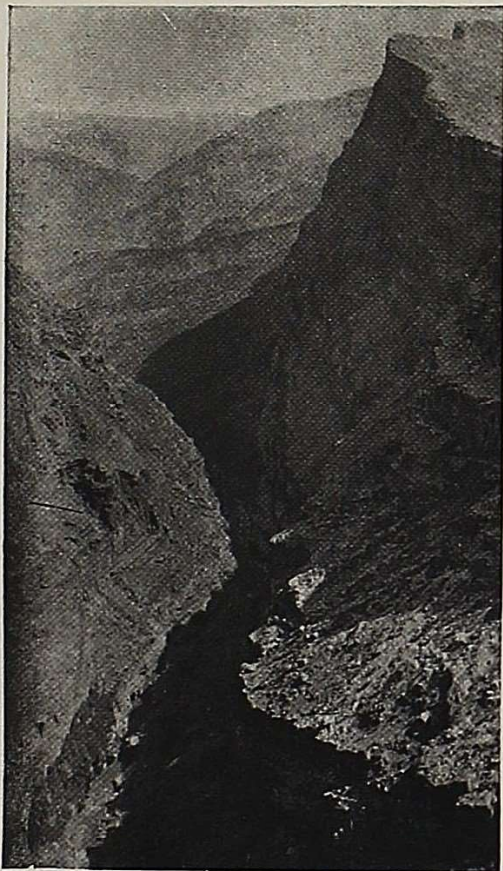
X In the Gulf of Oman the trend of currents corresponds to that of the air; there is a flow towards the Strait of Ormuz from May to September, i. e. during the period of the SW. monsoon, and during the rest of the year a slight out-flow towards the open sea. But within the Persian Gulf little or no current oscillation other than tidal can be observed; what movement there is is entirely superficial, the result of high winds, which make as much as two feet difference to the soundings over the Shatt al Arab bar. X

The Persian Gulf receives the waters of but one perennial system of rivers—that of the Euphrates, Tigris, Karkheh, and Karun—which, with their tributaries, combine in bringing down the snow waters of the Zagros ranges and of the massif of Armenia. The only other independent streams worthy of mention are the Jerrahi and Hindiyan or Tab (known to classical authors as the *Arosis*), which bring their own quota of silt to combine with that of the greater streams in the creation of vast mud flats. With these exceptions the coast is ill-supplied with fresh water, its scanty streams being, without exception, brackish.

X Climatic conditions in the Gulf are profoundly affected by the configuration of the surrounding region. The broad mountain chains which extend to the north and north-west interfere with the free inflow of tempering winds from the north; while the absence of mountains on a grand scale to the south and west gives free ingress to scorching winds in summer. During the late spring and summer the prevailing wind is the *shamal*, from the NW., hot but dry and healthy. In the late summer and autumn, and occasionally in winter, the SE. wind, known as the *qaus* or *sharqi*, blows for a few days at a time, accompanied by a falling barometer and an increase in the wet-bulb temperature in summer, and by rain in winter. This wind, disliked by local inhabitants and Europeans alike, has enjoyed a bad reputation from all time. A charm against 'the evil of the South Wind' was found by Mr. Woolley during his excavations at Ur in 1925.

Meteorological observations¹ systematically taken at various places for periods varying from eight to thirty-three years, give the following mean annual rainfalls: Basra 6.23 inches; Bushire 11.07; Jask 4.17; Muscat 3.94; Bahrain 2.47; from which it will be noted that the Persian coast receives, in general, more rain than the Arabian.

¹ Admiralty Handbook, I.D. 1117.



a. View of 2000-ft. gorge of the Diz River at Kuh-i-Langieh. Note belt of full-grown date palms flanking left bank of river and snow-capped Kuh-i-Salun (7,500 ft.) in the background



b. A 30-ft. cleft in the Kuh-i-Langieh, through which breaks the Ab-i-Diz after traversing the gorge shown in *a*



c. Flats of the Ab-i-Diz below Dizful. Evening



d. The reputed tomb of the Prophet Daniel at 'Shushan the Palace' near the Diz, south of Dizful

سازمان ملی

Mean temperature varies as follows :

Basra and Mohammerah	51.8° Fahr. in Jan. to	90.7° in Aug.
Bushire	57.5°	89.4° " "
Jask	66.7°	89° " "
Muscat	69.3°	89.7° " June
Bahrain	61.2°	91.2° " Aug.

Absolute shade temperatures are :

	<i>Absolute Min.</i>	<i>Absolute Max.</i>
Basra and Mohammerah	23.7°	120°
Bushire	32.0°	115°
Jask	41.8°	111.8°
Muscat	57.5°	114.3°
Bahrain	40.8°	108.2°

Relative humidity is high throughout the Gulf proper, the maximum being experienced at Bahrain. X

The climate of the Persian Gulf, as a whole, has an unenviable but undeserved reputation. From November to April inclusive, it does not suffer from comparison with that of Egypt : cold, dry, and bracing, Europeans, who have found the short winter of the Indian plains an all too brief respite from the enervating damp heat of the summer, here maintain their health and energy to the envy of their fellows in India. Wherever local or official enterprise has provided electric light and ice and decent living accommodation, the health and efficiency of all concerned have immensely benefited, and the health of the troops stationed during the war, often in large numbers, at Bandar Abbas and Bushire, compared most favourably with that of troops in any part of India.

The Anglo-Persian Oil Company—in whose service some 900 Europeans work, largely in the open, at Abadan, on the oilfields east of Shushtar, and at half a dozen spots between Khanikin and Bushire—have amply demonstrated the efficacy and economy of providing all their employees with proper quarters and the necessary amenities of life in a hot climate, with the result that the health of the staff is actually better in summer than in winter, and at all times incomparably better than that of similar categories of workers in any part of India. The Admiralty have made a similar discovery and, though the gunboats which patrol the Gulf are not specially constructed for tropical climates, the provision of ice, lights, and fans, and of suitable fresh food—notably fruit—has enabled them to keep their European crews as healthy in the Persian Gulf as in the Mediterranean.

The Arabian coastal region is peopled almost exclusively by Arabs, but alien elements occur in many of the towns. The Arabs of Oman belong, according to tradition, to two racial groups: Yemeni, said to have been the first Arab settlers in this district, and Nizari or Nasiri, less purely Arab and, for the most part, later immigrants. A large proportion of the population of Bahrain and the oases of Hasa and Qatif belong to a race or clan known as *Baharina* whose origin is doubtful, but they are regarded either as an aboriginal tribe conquered and absorbed by the Arabs, or as a class formed by the conversion of certain Arab tribes to Shiism, about 300 years ago. The nomads are exclusively Arab or quasi-Arab. Besides these main elements there are, at various places, communities of Baluchis, Persians, Indians, and Negroes, the latter being the outcome of several centuries of slave trade. At the head of the Persian Gulf the indigenous population is principally Arab, while, along the Persian littoral from the Shatt al Arab as far as the Strait of Ormuz, it is composed of a medley of races and racial blends, of which the most important elements are Persians and Persian Arabs, the latter of whom may be described as Arabs under Persian rule who have become denationalized by settlement, subjection, or inter-marriage. Besides these main elements there is, in the north, a strong Lur element, while, in the neighbourhood of Behbahan, a Turkman (Qashqai) strain appears. Along the Makran coast are a number of tribes claiming descent from Arabs who either originally settled in Makran or moved there later from Sind or Kach. On the Persian coast the hill tribes of Qashqai or Arab origin make periodic migrations with their flocks from the cold mountain regions (*sardsir*) to the warm coastal districts (*garmsir*) without however actually debouching into the plains.

It is not improbable that the Gulf witnessed the first attempts at navigation of the most ancient peoples of whom there is historical record—Sumerians, Elamites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Chaldeans—but exact knowledge of the history and geography of the Persian Gulf, in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian Era, is exceedingly meagre and fragmentary. What is known has been gleaned from the works of the Greek and Roman geographers and historians—Ptolemy, Strabo, Pliny, and others—who give not inconsiderable though often conflicting and contradictory information about the places and people of the Arabian shore, but very little regarding the opposite littoral. They say enough, however, to show that the peoples around the Persian

Gulf shores were, even as early as those days, not unused to its waters as a means of communication for commercial as well as military purposes. In the seventh century B.C. Sennacherib constructed a fleet which proceeded against the Chaldeans (who had taken refuge in the towns of the sea-coast of Elam) from Bab Salimeti, near the Euphrates mouth, to the mouth of the Karun River (distant 100 miles and, then, having a separate outflow into the Gulf down the Khor Musa past Qubban), and successfully looted and broke up their settlements. Coming down to the fourth century A.D., we read of raids on the Persian coast, made by Arabs of Bahrain and the adjacent districts, being common, till Shapur made a naval reprisal in the Persian Gulf which was completely successful.

But during all these centuries, though absolute proof of extensive communication with the outer world beyond the narrow limits of the waters of the Gulf is wanting, there is high probability of trade with India and farther east. Then came an epoch-making event :

‘The voyage of Nearchus’ (326–325 B. C.), says Vincent, ‘from the Indus to the Euphrates is the first event of general importance to mankind, in the history of navigation ; and if we discover the comprehensive genius of Alexander in the conception of the design, the abilities of Nearchus in the execution of it are equally conspicuous. Historical facts demand our attention in proportion to the interest we feel, or the consequences we derive from them ; and the consequences of this voyage were such, that as, in the first instance, it opened a communication between Europe and the most distant countries of Asia, so, at a later period, was it the source and origin of the Portuguese discoveries, the foundation of the greatest commercial system ever introduced into the world ; and consequently the primary cause, however remote, of the British establishments in India.’¹

Following this great achievement, in the sixth century Noshirwan of Persia, fired by the desire for conquest in Arabia, fitted out a great expedition and sailed down the Gulf from Ubulla (Apologos), an important mart of commerce with India, situated near the mouth of the Euphrates, doubled Ras al Hadd (Oman), and, coasting along the southern shores of Arabia, reached Aden.

Gradually the veil is lifted, and we learn more fully of the maritime happenings in the Gulf. It is now to the long succession of Arab and Persian geographers and historians, who wrote between the ninth and early part of the seventeenth centuries, that we turn for enlightenment on the conditions and activities of the peoples

¹ Vincent (3), pp. 1 f.

on its shores. At first their works were largely translations of the earlier classic geographers, but they become more original as their explorers in due course traversed nearly every country of central and southern Asia, northern Africa, and Mediterranean Europe; and from such voyages as those made by Sulaiman the Merchant about A.D. 850 gradually arose the series of narratives which we know by the name of Sindbad the Sailor—'a real account with a little more of mystery and exaggeration than usual of the experiences of the early Arab mariners in the Southern Ocean'.¹

The zenith of Arab and Moslem intercourse with China was reached in the latter years of the ninth century. In the twelfth century we find Siraf 'with its lofty palaces and other stately buildings' coming into prominence, and regarded in the thirteenth century as the emporium of Fars (Persia), after which the commercial prosperity passed to Qais, the island port farther to the east; and this place was supplanted in turn, probably about the fourteenth century, by Hormuz as the principal trade emporium of the Persian Gulf.

Trade with the West was coming into being all this time. It must not be thought, however, that commerce between East and West, of which the Arabs enjoyed the monopoly as middlemen, flowed entirely through the Persian Gulf and Euphrates waterway. It was shared almost equally by the Red Sea route, and it was by one or other of these lines of communication that most of the products of the Indian Ocean and south-east Asia, as well as Sudanese Africa, reached the Levant. The routes were sometimes closed by political difficulties, and one pretty constant danger to both was the existence of pirates at Socotra and elsewhere.

The European States trading most extensively with the East, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, were Venice and Genoa. When these lost their supremacy in trade, it was evident that, in order to escape the hostility of the Turks and Mamelukes of Egypt, the discovery of some untrammelled line of access to India would confer great wealth and prestige on a nation able to profit by it: the country which most earnestly devoted itself to this quest was Portugal. Certain it is, that by the epoch-making discovery of the Cape route by Vasco da Gama in 1498, the history of the Persian Gulf enters upon a new phase. Among Europeans, the first comers to its waters were the Portuguese themselves, and the acquisition by that nation of a firm footing in the Gulf, in the opening years of the sixteenth century, was one of the fruits of

¹ Beazley.

da Gama's discovery. The 'Great Albuquerque' began by attacking Hormuz, and completed his task by devastating and occupying a number of towns on the Oman coast, thus gaining command of the inland sea. The Portuguese held a not always undisputed sway until their final expulsion from Hormuz in 1622.

In the interim the East India Company had come into being and, having taken steps to open up trade with Persia, succeeded, in the face of Portuguese opposition, in establishing a factory near Jask. Hormuz was wrested from the Portuguese by the Persians, with the aid of the East India Company who, by grand promises, were enticed into an agreement to assist in its capture. By this event the foundation of British commercial supremacy was laid, and it paved the way to the establishment of political preponderance in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Gombroon (Bandar Abbas) became the first centre of British enterprise in the Gulf. During a long period of the seventeenth century the Company had to carry on a keen struggle with the Dutch, who, first appearing in the early years of that century, had succeeded in becoming for a time the predominant power. British supremacy was not fully established for many years, but the Dutch finally gave up the commercial contest in 1766, when their only remaining factory on Kharag Island was destroyed by the Persians.

The three outstanding indigenous spheres of dominion of the Persian Gulf, all through these events, were the Persians in the north-east, the Turks in the north, and the Arabs in the south. Each had its period of supremacy, but, finally, the controlling element seemed to be the Omani Arabs of Muscat whose power extended both to the African coasts and to India. At the end of the seventeenth century we hear for the first time of their power on the sea, and of the Jawasim of the 'Pirate Coast'. Arab rule in the Gulf was for long periods synonymous with piracy, and very early in the evolution of the English power in Asia the obligation to control and suppress that evil forced itself upon the agents of the East India Company. By their tardy and unwilling intervention three results of capital importance to humanity were eventually achieved—the suppression of piracy; the cessation of war between the chiefs of the various petty states; and the extinction of the slave trade.

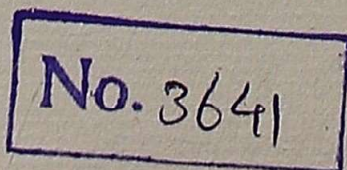
The suppression of piracy and slavery is a long chapter of endurance and brave deeds: whatever of civilization and of public order exists to-day in these waters has its origin in the

patient labours and generally unrewarded gallantry of successive generations of soldiers, seamen, and supercargoes, British and Indian, under the orders at first of the East India Company, and later of the British Government and of the Government of India. It was a struggle waged not always with the sympathy and assistance of France but even with her open hostility, for British men-of-war have had to see slavers plying with impunity under the protection of the tricolour. To quote Lovat Fraser :

‘ For more than a century we have made of the Gulf, by the force and prestige of our arms, a haven of peace. There is no part of our work in the world that can be contemplated with greater satisfaction. We routed out the nests of pirates, captured their strongholds and destroyed their fleets, suppressed slavery, and stopped the importation of slaves from Africa. We kept the peace between the pirate chiefs and their successors, and bound them by a truce to refrain from hostilities at sea, so that to this day they are known as the Trucial Chiefs of Oman. Out of that permanent truce grew treaties, by which they acknowledge the British Government as their overlords and protectors. We established a protectorate over Bahrain and special and preferential relations with Koweit. We saved the native dhows from being plundered during the date season, and we maintained order at the annual pearl fishery. We surveyed the greater part of the Gulf, and at the request of Persia we created a sanitary organization which has kept the plague at bay. Our Residents in the Gulf have been the arbiters in all the quarrels of the Chiefs on the Arabian Coast, and have time and again averted bloodshed. If we were to withdraw, slavery and piracy and kidnapping and anarchical strife would reappear to-morrow.’¹

On the other hand, the impartial historian will record that, during this period, whilst in our own interests maintaining public order and health with exemplary solicitude, and paying, as a great maritime nation should, some attention to marine surveys and to the lighting and buoying of the Persian Gulf and to cable and wireless communication, we made nowhere, except at Abadan and on the oil fields, any attempt to establish schools or colleges, or to assist the inhabitants to develop local industries, or to fit them to take their place in a rapidly changing world: medical aid was restricted to the maintenance of a few dispensaries of little practical value: the vast hinterland of Oman and of the Arabian coast remained virtually unexplored, and instead of making use of our position, and of the unequalled resources of the Topographical and Geological Surveys of India, to make a thorough survey of the hinterland of both coasts, we left this task, for the most part, to chance travellers.

¹ Fraser, Lovat (3), p. 82.



The marine and terrestrial fauna, the flora, and the geology of this region have never been systematically studied, as they should have been, by the highly competent experts available in India, and, though we have surveyed, it is true, a large part of the Gulf, it has not been systematically undertaken and it is not an unknown occurrence for a ship to strike an uncharted rock. We poured out money like water in fruitless endeavours to suppress the Arms Traffic, but grudged the comparatively trifling sums necessary for such purposes. In these directions a fresh orientation of the benevolent policy pursued by Great Britain for over a century is necessary, if we are to retain in the twentieth century the honourable position vouchsafed to us by our efforts in other spheres of activity in earlier years.

The trade monopoly of the East India Company, in its corporate capacity, came to an end about 1813, and gradually, under pressure of events in Europe, a political as well as a commercial policy was inaugurated and the direction of Persian Gulf affairs was assumed by the Government of Bombay, to pass, none too soon, from their feeble and incompetent hands into those of the Government of India. Towards the close of the nineteenth century, rival interests again sought a footing in the Persian Gulf. The French, whose status in Muscat was nominally identical with that of Great Britain, desired to secure a coaling station there in 1895; Russia, in the endeavour to enlarge her sphere of influence, sent various missions thither, ostensibly to establish a 'warm water port' to serve as a constant outlet for her trade, and heavily subsidized a line of steamers from the Black Sea; Turkey assumed control of native states on the western littoral, claiming suzerainty over Hasa and Bahrain and even Oman, and endeavoured to bring within her orbit the long autonomous principality of Kuwait; while Germany, in pursuance of her Oriental policy and the realization of her dream of a through route from Hamburg to the Persian Gulf, spared no pains to obtain a solid footing under the guise of commercial expansion, and urged the Young Turks and Young Persians alike to further efforts in the supposed interests of their respective countries.

The changes wrought in the Persian Gulf by the World War were not less profound or less perplexing than in Europe. The Armistice found Great Britain in a *de facto* position which appeared stronger than ever before. Russia was in temporary eclipse; Turkey had been cut off, apparently for ever, from Gulf waters; Germany had suffered a reverse from which she would scarcely

recover in a generation ; the French, whose attitude at Muscat up to 1914 had seldom been helpful and was sometimes one of avowed obstruction verging on hostility, were our comrades in arms in Europe ; Ibn Saud, our subsidized ally and protagonist in Central Arabia, had extinguished all his rivals ; the war had enriched in many ways the maritime Arab principalities, who one and all had the satisfaction of feeling that they were on the winning side ; we were in temporary military occupation of nearly every port on the Persian side of the Gulf, and the South Persia Rifles, under British guidance, had defeated our enemies, which were equally those of the Persian Government, in Kirman and Shiraz and in many other inland towns.

A reaction was inevitable, and was not unforeseen by those on the spot. Our subsidies to Ibn Saud were bound to come to an end sooner or later¹—and, with them, our only title to control or influence the ruler of Nejd and Hasa. The inflated value of the rupee, which rose during the war from its normal parity of 1s. 4d. to double this figure, was bound to fall, and to involve even substantial merchants in bankruptcy, and our Consuls and Agents in endless claims on the part of British merchants unable to obtain payment for goods delivered. The military occupation was bound to terminate, and with it the fertilizing stream of British gold : as the seven fat kine were the precursors of seven lean, so the prosperous years of the war had their profitless successors. The produce of the Persian Gulf—wool, wheat, barley, hides—became temporarily unsaleable : the market for pearls alone was unaffected or even improved, thanks to the greatly increased demand for pearls from the United States and from South America, to many of whose citizens, fabulously enriched by the prices they were able to extort from Europe for essential commodities, this form of wealth seems to have made an irresistible appeal, to the great advantage of Bahrain and, doubtless, to the despair of the various Customs Administrations.

The aspirations for independence of King Husain, of the Egyptians, Syrians, and Mesopotamians, had no counterpart in the Arabian littoral : there, except at Muscat, we had nowhere landed troops, or had resort to measures of compulsion in the prosecution of the war : resentment at the measures taken by us between 1909 and 1912 for the suppression of the Arms Traffic still lingered in places, but no leader arose to fan the embers into flame. In Oman, it was realized on all sides that the measures taken by us to protect

¹ They were finally discontinued in 1923.

Muscat from a threatened invasion, in 1916, by the tribal forces of the self-constituted and all but universally recognized Imam, were inevitable and necessary and aroused no resentment. On this side of the Gulf, therefore, the reaction was mild.

On the Persian side, where the *status quo ante bellum* had been more violently disturbed, first by hostile German agencies and later by the vigorous measures taken by us to combat them, the reaction was proportionately severe. The central Government in Tehran, jealous of the independence of Persia which they imagined to be menaced by our policy, set themselves to purge the country of foreign influences, and as the English were, for practical purposes, the only foreign element in South Persia, it was against British influence, in every form, that the energies of local officials were directed. Officials known to be on friendly terms with the British were removed: notables with pro-British tendencies were persecuted: those who had fought against us, even though outlawed at the time by their own Government, were decorated and rewarded: Persians in British employ were threatened. On the common people the campaign had little effect, and British travellers amongst the villagers and tribes received, and still receive from them, at all times and almost in all places, a cordial and often affectionate welcome.

Amongst the merchant classes in Persia, for reasons given above, and amongst the younger generation who had received some education, the seed fell on more favourable soil. The *intelligentsia* had seldom secured employment with the British forces; more often had they lost it, when sinecure offices were abolished on British advice.

Some of them, too, were anxious to see the last of us on national grounds: patriotism is a plant which bears strangely different flowers in different soils and in different ages; and its fruit is sometimes bitter. Persians love their country and their fellow men not less genuinely and perhaps more deeply than many western races, but in times of emergency they are apt to summon racial prejudice and religious intolerance to their aid with such effect, that a movement, which may be genuinely patriotic in its origin, appears on the surface to be an artificial agitation created by a few self-seeking men and vulgar intriguers working on the emotions of an ignorant mob. So it was, only too often in South Persia, to the distress of many well-meaning Englishmen who, conscious that they were whole-heartedly seeking to forward the best interests of Persia, as they understood them, were unable to fathom

the deep-rooted antipathy manifested towards them by the leaders of public opinion.

More than once, in past decades, have British counsels been darkened by our inability to put any generous interpretation on the mixed motives of our opponents. Too often have we, and with us many Persians, judging men by their worst hours and most equivocal actions, seen in the desire of a people for a more active share in the shaping of their national destinies no more than the ambition of the idle scions of well-to-do families for the spoils of office. Until recently we have been unable to make an 'act of faith' in the bona fides of the progressive party in Persia. We have ignored progressive movements because we knew, better perhaps than most Persians, the ignoble ambitions of some of the leaders, movements which might well have been forgotten in the greatness of the ultimate potential issues: and our tendency to take a narrow view has been accentuated by the fact that the leaders of political movements have generally resided at Tehran, or on the Persian plateau, so that British Consular Officers in the Persian Gulf have seldom been able to make personal contact with them, and have perforce judged movements primarily on their local manifestations and by their often disreputable local exponents.

This phase, too, has passed and, thanks to the patience of British diplomacy and the good sense of Persians in authority, both military and civil, all over Persia, the good-will of Great Britain is now more widely recognized than at any time since 1907, and the official and mercantile classes alike are beginning to realize that the publicly declared object of British policy 'to maintain the integrity and independence of Persia' is no mere diplomatic fiction but an essential part of British world policy and strategy: but much remains to be done to enlighten the public, both in Persia and elsewhere, as to the history and aims of British policy in Persia. Notwithstanding the classic researches of Professor E. G. Browne and the monumental works of the late Lord Curzon, and, later, of Sir Percy Sykes, there still remains a great field, the fringes only of which are touched by this book, for those who would study the records of British policy in Persia in an historical spirit. Of material for such researches there is no lack; it is in our power, and it is our duty, to learn from and to profit by the mistakes of past generations. If we are to do so we may look forward with confidence to the future, bearing in mind that if we lower our standard in history we cannot uphold it in our national life and international relations. *Magna est veritas, praevallet.*

Lastly, while ample facilities exist in England for the study of Persian literature and thought, it is less easy for a student to gain from lectures, or from any books however well written, an insight into the many subtleties of Persian character and an appreciation of the Persian outlook on life. It is the business of those whom we send to Persia to learn to understand Persian character: the amusement, contempt, or even repulsion, which human observers, wedded to their own ways of life, are apt to feel for a mode of life which differs vitally from their own, cannot but give way, on deeper acquaintance, to a measure of sympathetic understanding. There is a real need for more books which will encourage this tendency, without drifting into needless apologetics more likely to offend than instruct. The study of Persian travel-literature is an important aid in this direction, and if this book helps to foster it in any measure, the writer, deeply conscious of his lack of experience and of the inadequacy of his pen to do justice to his theme, will be well content.