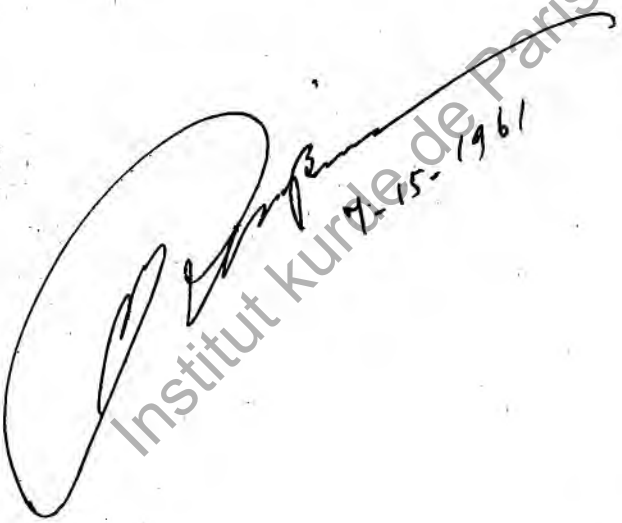

DEAD TOWNS AND LIVING MEN

The author and T. E. Lawrence at Carchemish.

DEAD TOWNS AND LIVING MEN

Being pages from an antiquary's notebook

by

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TO THE

WARDEN OF NEW COLLEGE

OXFORD

1903–1924

Thanks are due to the Editor of "The Cornhill Magazine" for permission to reprint the paper "Environment," and to the Editor of "Blackwood's Magazine" for "Busrawi"

Introduction

It was at Oxford in 1904, towards the end of my last year at New College, that I was summoned to wait upon the Warden in his lodgings at 10 a.m. Wondering which of a good many things might be the reason, and hoping that it was not most of them, I duly presented myself in as non-committal a frame of mind as I could assume; but I was not at all prepared for the turn which the conversation took.

"Ah, Mr. Woolley," began the Warden. "Quite so. I think that when you came up to Oxford you had every intention of taking Holy Orders?"

I murmured something unintelligible and waited.

"And I am afraid that you have quite abandoned the idea?"

"Oh, rather," I said hurriedly; "yes, quite, Mr. Warden, quite given it up."

"And what do you propose to do?"

"Well," I answered, "I want to be a schoolmaster. I've done a little at odd times and like it awfully, so I think of going in for it permanently."

"Oh, yes; a schoolmaster, really. Well, Mr. Woolley, *I* have decided that you shall be an archæologist."

I was not quite sure what an archæologist was, but there was no gainsaying Warden Spooner, so I became one, and I have never regretted it. Work in the Ashmolean Museum, on the Roman Wall, in Egypt, in Italy and at Carchemish filled me with gratitude to the pastor and master who had thus "decided" on the course I was to follow.

Towards the close of 1916 I was a prisoner of war in Turkey, and my fellow-prisoners—there were but four of us together at the time—bewailed the fact that there

was not so much as a single book to read, nothing to help make the long days pass. So I said that I'd write one, and this book was the ultimate result. My companions did not want to be instructed in the details of scientific discovery, so I planned to set in order a mere scrap-book of a digger for antiquities. The work of such a digger takes him far afield, and he gets to know countries and the ways of men from a point of view other than that of the tourist or the resident official. He is thrown into close touch with just that class—the labourer and the country villager—which is least obvious to most; he penetrates into the less well-known parts, becoming more familiar with some obscure town or lonely hamlet than with the social centres that attract the student or the casual visitor; he speaks the language of the people and, because of duties towards them freely shouldered, becomes in a measure a sharer of their lives and of their confidence. In this book, then, archæology plays but a minor part and the stories deal mainly with things seen or done in work's interludes. The work goes on meanwhile—that is the background of it all—but there are free times when one can study, as one must study if the work is to go well, the men who are busy with pick and spade and basket, their characters and the conditions of their being: there are the incidents which arise out of the work without being precisely of it, serious happenings and laughable. All about one as one digs there is the atmosphere of the historic past and of the still living world wherein that history took shape; and if out of all this a man cannot reap a harvest for the widening and the delight of his own soul he must be a purblind creature and poorly suited to his task—for him and through him there can be no stirring and murmur of new life in the valley of dry bones where he works. It was this side of the digger's life which I thought might appeal to my fellow-prisoners.

After the war the book was published, and later was re-issued in a somewhat longer form, and now I have been asked to add to it again and to bring it up to date.

To add to it was easy, for, although many tales that might have been included have already appeared elsewhere,[1] there were plenty more to be told; but to "bring it up to date" was not easy at all. I had written of the Middle East as I knew it, but since 1916 that world has changed beyond all recognition, and certainly my description of Turkey and the Turks bears no relation to the Turkey of the present time; my story would be pointless if it were not set against its proper background, but the background is no longer true. For that reason I have decided to let it stand; it is not true, *but it was*. To my many good Turkish friends I would say that only by picturing things as they were in the last years of the old Sultanate can we do justice to the miracle which is modern Turkey; to have substituted order and decency for that chaos of corruption and ineptitude is the measure of the Revolution's triumph.

But in any case this is not a very serious book and should not be taken seriously. It has given a certain amount of amusement in the past, and if what is to-day almost ancient history can yet amuse I make no further excuse for it; let it go at that.

[1] As in *Spadework*, Lutterworth Press, 1953.

Chapter One

EGYPT

FOR anyone who would be a field archæologist Egypt is an admirable preparatory school, though its teaching is strictly limited and for his higher education the pupil must pass on to other establishments. It is a rich hunting-ground and generally provides plenty of objects, so that he quickly gets experience in the handling of "antikas"; it does not give great scope for the imagination, because so much work has been done in the Nile Valley that its archæology is for the most part well known, and he can, and must, at almost every turn check his results by reference to the published records of his predecessors; in that way he can avoid palpable mistakes; moreover, if he is to add any detail at all to the knowledge we already possess, it can only be done by really minute observation and the most painstaking method.

I shall always be thankful, therefore, that I served my apprenticeship in Egyptology, though I had no intention of specializing in that branch, nor was qualified to do so. I am convinced that nobody ought to undertake field-work in the Nile Valley unless he has at least a fair knowledge of Egyptian, and can decipher sufficiently for his own guidance the hieroglyphic inscriptions which he may find. I never had that knowledge, and cannot forget how great a drawback was my ignorance when I was digging some XIXth Dynasty graves at Anibeh in Nubia. Many of these graves belonged to members of a single family, descendants of one Penno, who was governor of the city of Ma'am under Thothmes III. Penno's own rock-cut sepulchre, the only known example of its kind between the first and second cataracts, lies on the edge of the upper desert: the painted reliefs of the main chamber were well preserved, and it is a grievous pity that they were ruined in 1910 by a

plundering dealer. The shaft-tombs of his descendants, cut in the lower plateau, contained inscriptions and named *ushabti* figures which would have enabled me to arrange all my finds in a series accurately dated by generations, and it would have been of the utmost use to do this on the spot instead of months later when the objects were scattered between different museums; but I could not read the hieroglyphics, nor was there anyone to help me, and my work suffered in consequence.

I was fortunate, therefore, in that nearly all my digging was done on non-Egyptian sites. These lay between Korosko and Halfa, beyond the limits of Egypt proper, and, for the most part, yielded the remains of a civilization unknown before, whose language, it being as then undeciphered, the field-worker could be excused from knowing.

It was at Karanòg, on the outskirts of the Nubian village of Anibeh, that Dr. MacIver and I dug the first big Meroïtic cemetery on record, and that season was exciting enough.

A certain number of inscriptions in mysterious characters had long been noted in Nubia or as coming from that country; a few painted pots, of which neither the date nor the place of finding was assured, had made their way into museums or private collections, and there was always the sensational treasure of enamelled jewellery which Ferlini claimed (and I think truthfully claimed) to have found in the pyramids of Gebel Barkal in Dongola; but the character of the civilization which had produced these things, even if all were to be assigned to the same civilization, as many refused to credit, remained a problem. Great was our joy, therefore, when, attracted to the spot by traces of brickwork resembling that which had marked the tiny plundered graveyard of Shablûl, discovered by him the season before, MacIver and I set to work at Karanòg, and from its crowded graves, brick-vaulted or burrowed in the hard mud, recovered the whole art and industry of a new race. There were inscribed and painted gravestones and tomb-altars by the hundred, bronze vessels, some of Greek workmanship and some engraved with pictures or patterns of a strange and local style, implements and weapons, woven stuffs, glass vessels and beads, and caskets of wood and ivory, and, above all, pottery, pottery in bewildering quantities, much of it painted in bright colours and with de-

signs now delicate and now grotesque. I can well recall how enthusiastic we were over each fresh discovery, and how proud of the really wonderful collection that resulted from our season's work; but I must confess that when we began finding tombs of the same sort at Halfa, a year later, our enthusiasm was not so keen, and when I dug some hundreds more of the same type at Faras in 1911 it was difficult to pump up any pleasurable emotion. Whether these finds belong to the earlier Candace Empire, which was driven out of Nubia by Petronius, the General of Augustus Cæsar, or whether they represent, as most of the Karanòg things do, the later Blemmyan occupation which, up to Justinian's time, so worried the frontier of Roman Egypt, the damping fact remains that we have to deal with something of purely local interest. The whole Meroïtic civilization was but a backwater, remarkable as an isolated phenomenon in African history, but contributing nothing to the general stream of culture and of art. To most of us an ancient civilization appeals in so far as it has directly or indirectly influenced that of to-day; but Meroïtic art was sterile and died with the power of the people that produced it. Much, therefore, as I enjoyed those early days of discovery, when *omne ignotum pro magnifico* was splendidly true, I should be more than loth to return to the same field; and heartily relieved was I, at Faras, to leave the Meroïtic cemetery for the little Ist Dynasty graveyard and the frescoed churches of the Christian town.

For our work in Nubia we brought with us a gang of trained diggers, fellahîn from the village of Kuft, in Middle Egypt, but we also raised a certain number of recruits from the neighbourhood. Nubia is, properly speaking, the home of the Berberines, but the Berberine devotes himself to domestic service in Egyptian towns, is cook, butler, bottle-washer or chamberman, and hates manual work out of doors; all our local men were negroes who during Mahdist times or in the earlier years of our reoccupation had settled in the depopulated reach between the two cataracts. These Sudanis are much pleasanter fellows than the Egyptians to work with, though they are far less skilful and have the disadvantage that when under the influence of their beloved *merissa*, or native beer, they are rather apt to get out of hand. They are a cheery,

open set who admit of a more personal touch than the fellahîn can suffer or contrive, and they have a sense of loyalty and of attachment which makes them much more attractive than the Egyptian, whose horizon is limited to piastres.

At Shablûl we had a very original negro foreman, by name Isgullah. MacIver had given him a little French chiming clock which played the "Marseillaise," and Isgullah had so successfully tampered with the works as to induce it to play its tune at the rate of about one note a minute: he used to keep the precious timepiece beside him on the work, wrapped in a red silk handkerchief to protect it from the dust, and each solitary note, as the interminable tune droned out, was echoed by an appreciative grunt from the owner. One day he came to me with his black face all swollen from toothache and, still grinning one-sidedly, begged me to remove the offending ivory. I hastened to refuse, explaining that I had no proper instruments for the operation, whereupon he went off, only to reappear waving a large pair of carpenter's pliers, and begged me to start in at once. I was not going to do anything of the sort, but looked at the tooth and, seeing that it was quite sound, decided that the trouble was probably neuralgia. So I mixed a dose of iodide of potassium and told him to drink it. Isgullah was very contemptuous of the idea.

"What good can that do?" he asked. "It will only go into my stomach, which is all right; but the pain is in the tooth." Still I insisted that he should drink it, and he complied grumblingly. The next morning I saw him at work with his usual cheerful grin, so asked him how he was, and was told that he was well again.

"But, Isgullah, that can't be," I urged; "you said yourself that the medicine could not do any good."

The old negro looked serious. "It was a very fine medicine," he said, "and did wonderful things. In the night I swallowed my tooth, and it went down into that medicine, and when I woke up it was back in my mouth again quite cured!"

Poor old Isgullah! my drugs were not always to prove so efficacious. After a feast whereat he had indulged too freely in the rare luxury of meat he got violent stomach-ache, and nothing would persuade him that he was not going to die. He took medicines obediently enough, but they could not over-

Faras: (*above*) Digging Meroitic graves. The remains of a Coptic Church are in the foreground.

(*below*) The Coptic monastery on the hill.

come his conviction, and he just lay under a tree and wasted away. I sent him off to his own village, but he died as he had said he would.

Another old negro workman was equally childlike in his simplicity. Asrag el Arab had, as a boy of thirteen, been servant to a British officer when Korosko was our advance-post against the Mahdi, and he was never tired of extolling his old master's virtues: "But he was mad, very mad," he would add sorrowfully; "it was a pity that so good a man should be mad." I asked him what made him suppose that the officer was insane. "Well," he answered, "he used to shout for me, and I would say, '*Naam!*' ('Here am I!'), but he would tell me, 'You must not say "*Naam*," you must say "Righto!"': was not that madness? Moreover, he would never call me by my proper name. I would say, 'My name is Asrag,' but still he would always call me"—and the old man paused for a deep breath and shouted at the top of his voice—"'Sambò!' I am very sorry that he should have been mad."

His distress was so real that I determined to comfort him. "He was not mad at all," I said, "but you did not understand. *Asrag* means 'black,' and the English for black is Sambo. There was once a very famous Englishman of that name, and we have a book all about him called the *Book of little Sambò el Asrag*; and so your officer liked to call you after that great Englishman."

He thought it over and seemed satisfied. That night, before going to bed, I walked out into the desert for a breath of air, and there I saw Asrag. The old man was strutting up and down in the moonlight, and each time as he turned on his beat he slapped his bare chest and exclaimed in a voice of pride, "*Ana Sambò*" ("I am Sambo")—and the name was shouted aloud as his old master had shouted to summon the little house-boy.

Asrag's confidence in the English was indeed touching. He came to the house one day carrying a child about ten years old and said the boy was very ill, could not eat or drink anything, and would I cure him? The boy was apparently in the last stage of diphtheria, his throat almost wholly blocked up, and I felt pretty sure that nothing short of tracheotomy would save him; but as I had no intention of trying that, and knew

it was quite useless to explain to Asrag the real nature of the case, I simply told him that I was sorry but could do nothing; the child ought to see a doctor.

" But you cure us all right," he urged; " why won't you do something for the boy? "

" Because you are grown-up men," I answered; " but this is a child and needs a children's doctor, who is quite a different sort."

The argument struck him and he weighed it awhile; then, " But you are an Englishman," said he.

" Well, what of that? "

" If an Englishman takes mud from the Nile and makes pills of it and gives to us, saying, ' Eat this and be well,' by the will of God we are well."

But the child died, and I fear old Asrag always believed that I could have saved it had I wished.

Northern Nubia, the Dodekaschoinos of Greek and Roman Egypt, contains a fair number of temples, from Philæ dreaming on its lake-island to Kalabsheh, where the grim rocks close in on the Nile and form the famous Gates which bounded the Empire. Guide-books deal at length with this region, and visitors come obediently to inspect the ruins whereof they read. But Southern Nubia, where all my work was done, is still for most people an unfamiliar land. Even the tourists who pass through on the river steamers see but little of it ; they land at Abu Simbel, they climb the rocks of Kasr Ibrim or of Korosko; but apart from that they do no more than watch idly from the deck the long panorama of river and desert with the strip of green that separates the two. Sometimes, as at Tomas, Anibeh, and Argin, the sandstone hills fall back and leave room for cultivation on a larger scale, and the palm groves and fields of durra may be as much as half a mile in width, but more often it is but a ribbon of green that edges the river, a shelving bank of lentils topped by a fringe of blue-grey castor-oil plants or yellow-tasselled acacia, in all not twenty yards across; and sometimes even this fails and rock or sand runs down, unrelieved by any living growth, to the hurried waters of the Nile. It is a barren place—too barren, one would suppose, ever to have supported more than the few straggling villages

which to-day are strung along the skirts of the desert—too barren, certainly, to have played a part in history or to have been fought for by great nations. Yet this inhospitable land has had its full share of the clash of civilizations and of war. Narrow as it is, a country of rock and river, it has always been the highway between the fertile valley of Egypt and the fabled South. He who would from Egypt control the Sudan must hold Nubia, and therefore from the time of the early Pharaohs to our own these rocks have echoed to the tramp of armies, the river has borne warships sailing southwards and merchant vessels drifting north, and in the few fertile reaches forts and walled towns have secured the desert road.

And all these things have left their mark. True, it is not a land of great monuments and, with the splendid exception of Abu Simbel, can put forward nothing to rival the vast ruins of Egypt; the tourist southward bound is perhaps well advised to be content with the view from his steamer's deck. Yet if one be not pressed for time nor sated with antiquities, there is much even here eloquent of the past, and sometimes of more modern happenings no less dramatic.

When I was digging at Karanòg town, four miles or so north of Anibeh, we noticed running inland from the river along the southern edge of the ruins what at first glance seemed the top of a broad wall buried in the sand. I moved a few stones and found clean sand below—it was no wall, but a causeway: I followed it up over a low rise and across a narrow dip; it climbed a second rise, and there before me on the level ground lay a British camp! There was the stone zariba, foursquare and complete, with its gates and broad main street: rings of big boulders, arranged in ordered lines, showed where the tent-ropes had been made fast, and in the circles where the tents had stood the gravel was swept smooth and clean; even the broken medicine bottles lay there to mark the site of the hospital. The camp might have been deserted but yesterday, yet in fact these stones are a monument of the Mahdist War—a monument which in that lifeless, changeless desert will last as long as all the books written about the Nile Campaign. Go to the hills above Korosko, and in the gravel of the upper plateau you will see the ruts of the wheels of transport wagons and of guns where Hicks Pasha and his ill-starred army set out in

1883 to cross the desert: the ruts are still clear and sharp, though Hicks Pasha and all his men have been dead these many years.

These are records of yesterday, as it were, alone, but there are other spots in Nubia which sum up in themselves the whole long history of the land. The tourist who climbs up the bluff whereon, three hundred feet sheer above the Nile, are the clustered ruins of Kasr Ibrim, is generally more interested in the wide view along the river valley or in the sunset which paints the desert saffron and purple than in the tumble-down houses of dry rubble all around him; but this rock castle has seen many events in its time. Look straight across the river where, just above Anibeh village, the level rays of the sun throw into relief certain long mounds enclosing a broken space all hillocks and hollows; these are the ruins of Ma'am, Ma'am which was a walled town before Rameses the First was born. On the gravel plateau above is the cemetery of its people, a few of the pyramid-chapels of crude brick still standing there, ruined now, and with the frescoes peeling from their walls, to show what a New Kingdom grave was like; some of the chief men lay in rock-hewn tombs under your feet, and the doors of the rifled chambers look out from the cliff's face towards the forgotten city where they lived. It may well be that the rocky summit itself was crowned by a temple of the Ramessids: I have found a few inscribed blocks from such among the castle ruins, and though it is quite possible that these were brought over from the town site on the western bank to be re-used in a building of a later age, yet it seems hardly likely that the Egyptians would have overlooked the advantages of this bold, rocky bluff, whose sanctity is in a measure guaranteed by the tomb-shafts driven into its face. But however this may be, the standing remains upon the height belong to another age and another civilization than does the town of Ma'am.

At the north end of the fortified enclosure, where the rock plateau shrinks to a narrow spit overlooking the river, there stands, still fairly well preserved, a small temple of finely-cut ashlar, Egyptian indeed in general style, but singularly severe and unadorned; only the uræus over the doorway relieves the simplicity of the massive stonework. This is a Meroïtic shrine.

When the sun of the greater Ramessids went down in

anarchy and weakness, in the far South there rose to independence an Æthiopian power whose swarthy kings in the XXVth Dynasty overran and for a time ruled Egypt as Pharaohs. Driven out thence by the invading arms of Persia, they set themselves to develop their own land of the Sudan. Certain Egyptian priests who took asylum with them from Persian iconoclasts for a while eclipsed the monarchy and had to be put down with a strong hand; but though they were beaten in their bid for temporal power, they set their mark upon the land of their adoption and went far to complete the Egyptianizing process which the rule of earlier Pharaohs over the South and the South's conquest of Egypt had begun. The worship of Isis was firmly grafted on to whatever barbarous beliefs had held sway at Meroë, Egyptian writing was adapted to the uses of the native tongue, and Egyptian art was encouraged by the lords of the Sudan; the Meroïtic Empire was not Egyptian, but it had absorbed enough of Egyptian culture to raise it far above what could have been expected of a hybrid negro race ruled by an aristocracy of Semitic immigrants. Thus it was that, when Egypt fell under Greek rule, the heirs of Alexander who wore the crown of Upper and Lower Egypt found their southern neighbours willing, upon the whole, to enter into friendly relations with them, and able to imbibe something at least of their new civilization. The Gates of Kalabsheh, where the narrowing river runs swift and strong between walls of rocks, formed the boundary between the two kingdoms, for the Meroïtic sovereigns had taken advantage of the weakness of the Saïte Pharaohs to push up through the "Belly of Stones," which is the Second Cataract, and to establish themselves in Southern Nubia. They built their forts wherever a wider stretch of fertile soil gave such chance of livelihood as a desert folk might covet; but they made no effort to come farther north, nor had the Ptolemies much interest in the land already occupied now that it was no longer the high road to any possessions southwards. Only trade-ships and peaceful caravans passed the frontier, bringing Greek goods and Greek ideas to the Meroïtic folk, who copied or freely adapted these, and from the mixture of Central Africa, Egypt, and Greece evolved an art which was not any of these, but was unique of its kind.

It was about this time that the temple of Kasr Ibrim was built and a wall thrown up around the rock plateau: strong by nature and strongly fortified, Primis was the main bulwark of the northern colony of Meroë. Nor was it very long before such defences were required. Egypt fell before Rome. Cleopatra, last of the Ptolemies, was minded when all seemed lost to find asylum with her Meroïtic friends, but events moved too quickly for her; she died by her own hand, and her sons, whom she had sent on south before her, were murdered by a faithless tutor anxious to curry favour with Octavius. But the Candace who then ruled in the Sudan was not inclined to welcome the Romans as she had favoured the Greeks, and her armies passed through the Kalabsheh Gates to snatch something of the spoil from the victor's hands. Border troubles vexed the new Roman province, and even the city of Aswân and the holy island of Elephantiné were taken and put to the sack, and the bronze bust of the Emperor Augustus carried off as a trophy to Meroë.[1]

To avenge this insult the legate Petronius Gallus invaded Nubia, and from the towers of Primis the Æthiopians could see the legions in long line advancing up the western bank and deploying for the battle there, where the main forces of Queen Candace were drawn up to dispute the road; and from those towers they watched too the rout of their people and the massacre of the fugitives. Then crossing the river, Petronius seized the city. The strength of its position appealed to the military instincts of the legate, who was anxious to add a new province to the Empire; so, while he pushed southwards into Dongola, and at Napata (now Gebel Barkal) reduced the African queen to terms, a force left behind at Kasr Ibrim was busy refortifying the place and transforming it into a Roman outpost. He must have been no little disgusted when two months later he received peremptory orders from Augustus to evacuate the conquered territory and to retire behind the old frontier of Kalabsheh. He dismantled the defences he had laboriously thrown up and withdrew.

Years passed, and a new factor entered into the problem. Probably about the close of the first century A.D. the Blemmyes,

[1] And at Meroë it remained till the twentieth century. When brought to light by the excavator's spade it journeyed afresh, to find a final resting place in the capital of another Empire, this time on Thames bank.

an offshoot of the Meroïtic Empire, whose language and civilization they shared, began to filter into the marshes laid waste by the Roman legions and to establish themselves on the deserted sites. At an early stage they set to work to repair the breaches in the walls of Kasr Ibrim, and to put it again in a state of defence. No sooner were they settled down and their strongholds built—at Karanòg, at Faras, Tomas and elsewhere —than they started to raid the Roman province of Egypt, and endless trouble did they cause to its rulers. Even Diocletian, though he claims to have conquered them, did not succeed in stamping out the pest; on the contrary, he withdrew the Roman frontier from Kalabsheh to Aswân, bringing in the Nubians or Nobatai to occupy the territory thus relinquished and to form a buffer state, while with the Blemmyes he made such terms as confirmed their religious privileges at Philæ, secured their political independence, and gave them an annual subsidy to boot. But the raiding continued as before.

Kasr Ibrim played no part in these happenings, for the fighting was all to the north, sometimes indeed far into Egypt, where the marauding bands pushed up to Luxor and beyond. The castle enjoyed a time of peace, a village grew up on the opposite bank close to the great cemetery, and for four hundred years the walls were not called upon to resist an enemy. Then in A.D. 540 the end came. The Empire was now Christian, and not only were the Blemmyes persistent border thieves, but they were too the last of the Isis-worshippers, and the terms whereby Diocletian had guaranteed their religious rights at Philæ were intolerable to a Christian emperor. In alliance, therefore, with the Nubian king Silko, an opportune convert, Justinian declared war on the stubborn pagans: the combined forces in two campaigns stormed Kasr Ibrim and exterminated its defenders. The Blemmyes now disappear from history.[1]

Under the tutelage of Byzantium the Nubians settled down in the conquered territory, and Kasr Ibrim became a Christian city. The old temple was not destroyed, but in the centre of

[1] It would be tempting, though it would be unwarranted by any evidence, to see them again in the pagan tribes which about A.D. 850 attacked Upper Egypt, withheld the tribute from the gold-mines, and spread terror over the land. They were put down at the cost of much bloodshed, and their leader, one Ali Baba, was admitted to terms and carried off to Samarra on the Tigris. His tribe still held to their creed though serving under the Moslems, and the Caliph's court was scandalized to find Ali Baba carrying about with him the stone idol of his worship.

the town there rose a fine church whose ashlar walls and columns, with decorated capitals, are still conspicuous amongst the ruins; the Christian dead were buried on the low ground beneath the castle rock, where the crowded brick tomb-chapels stand to-day.

Very soon after, the new faith arose which was in its turn to supplant Christianity in North Africa and the Near East; but though Egypt fell before the Moslem arms, and in A.D. 641 the Arabs raided upstream as far as Dongola, yet this was only a raid; the wave retreated to the old Roman frontier, and the walled forts of the Nubians long sufficed to keep out the Crescent from their barren reaches. It was not till the twelfth century that Shems ed Doulah, brother of Saladin, advancing southwards, laid waste the many churches of Christian Nubia. Then once more Kasr Ibrim was taken by assault. The church became a mosque, and the later tomb-chapels at the foot of the rock are those of the True Believers who now held the land. But now there was no enemy to be kept out, and the useless defences fell into disrepair; the population of the town dwindled as men, living without fear, moved down from the cliff-top to low-lying villages closer to their fields; it would seem that by the beginning of the nineteenth century Kasr Ibrim was wellnigh if not quite deserted.

But the old fort was to know one more adventure. In 1811 the ruler of Egypt, Mohammed Ali, finding that his Mameluk bodyguard was becoming too strong for its master, determined to rid himself of the danger, and gave orders for a general massacre. Most of them fell victims to his treachery, but some of these Bosnian troops escaped, and, fighting their way southwards, sought asylum in Nubia; seeing Kasr Ibrim on its sheer cliff above the Nile, they seized on that, and for a while the old Blemmyan fort became a Bosnian city of refuge. But the Khedive's troops were upon the track of the fugitives; there was a last assault, the Mameluks were wiped out, and the town was finally ruined and left to its decay.

No inscriptions commemorate at Kasr Ibrim the many changes it has known, but all or nearly all have left their mark upon its walls. Look at the old temple of Candace's time, and then if you clamber round the town walls you will see here a few courses, there a buttress wellnigh complete, where the

stones dressed in the same fashion as those of the temple show that here you have the defences which Petronius stormed after routing the field army of the one-eyed queen. Look again, and you will see, hard against this Meroïtic masonry, work of another sort—the squared stones are large but differently dressed, or most of them are, for here and there a Meroïtic block is built in amongst them—good solid walling, but, as you follow it round, breached in many places to its foundations, and seeming wantonly destroyed. Here, and it needs no imagination to see it, Petronius threw down the ramparts which he had himself not fully built, Roman walls which he could not leave whole to shelter the enemies of Rome. There, again, these breaches are filled with more slipshod work of smaller rubble less truly laid, the hurried labour of the Blemmyes who, new-come to the land, made all haste to repair the old defences. And so it is throughout: fresh breaches and fresh patchings mark the vicissitudes of a town which so often changed its masters, and fresh courses were added above as the ground-level rose. The rubbish of centuries, flung outside the gate to free the narrow confines of the plateau, was heaped up there until the gate itself was choked, and the walls must needs be raised and a new gateway built whose threshold was the carved lintel of the older door. The simple shrine, the church, and these patched and crumbling ramparts, which seem so small a thing to eyes sated with the temples and pyramids of Egypt, are yet a record of dead peoples and forgotten fights which it were surely worth while to stop and read before the sunset calls all one's thoughts to the eternal wonder of sky and desert.

Faras, farther up the river, has an ever longer record than Kasr Ibrim can boast, reaching back before the dawn of history and continuing to our own time. The Nile here has changed its course, and the old river ran half a mile or more west of the present stream. It was on the west bank of this dried-up bed that we discovered in 1911 a small cemetery of the Ist Egyptian Dynasty (the civilization of Nubia and of Middle Egypt was all one five thousand years ago), and on the gravel of the desert's edge were clear to see the traces of a village of those far-off days. A few lines of rough stones showed where huts had stood, and within these the hearths were still

marked by smoke-blackened stones and ash; fragments of pottery lay all about, rubbers and mortars of stone, pieces of worked bone and ostrich-shell, flint implements and masses of flint chips struck off when the implements were in the making. The tombs of course yielded far better "finds"—polished celts, slate palettes, unbroken vases, and all the furniture of a burial such as one finds in Egypt; but somehow the deserted village site, scanty as were its remains, spoke more vividly of the life lived so long ago. Here these people lit their fires and plied their simple crafts; their huts, mere piled stones roofed in with tent-cloth, maybe, or with reeds and boughs, were the same as one sees used nowadays in the barren valleys of Sinai. I remember an old Bedouin whom I found brewing his morning drink of tamarisk tea on just such a hearth, in just such a rude shelter, one cold spring morning in the tangled wilderness east of Kadesh. The very simplicity of their life makes it dateless and bridges the gulf of its five thousand years; in their graves these ancient folk strove to achieve perpetuity, but, all unwitting, they left a more lively record in the open desert.

The history of Faras throughout the Middle Kingdom and the New Empire, under Meroïtic and under Christian rule, has been recorded elsewhere; at all those times, and not least during the last, it was a flourishing city, and in melancholy contrast to that prosperous age are the huts of the modern village and the narrowing fields on which year by year the sand-dunes steadily encroach.

These dunes are one of the wonders of the place. Look at them, and you would say that they were but steep hills of drift-sand covered with low-growing scrub, long ridges and cone-shaped mounds that threaten from the west the fields of durra and lucerne. The truth is the reverse of the appearance: it is not the growth that veils the sand, but the sand that shrouds the living tree. The husbandman of an earlier day, Meroïtic or Christian, planted tamarisk hedges to protect his fields; the wind-borne sand caught in the thick spiny growth and formed mounds against the bushes, but these pushed their branches through the drift and still formed a barrier. More sand blew on, the mounds grew higher, and still the bushes struggled to keep their heads clear, until now they are trees sixty or a hundred feet high, the tips of whose branches only push out

from the sides and tops of the dunes, while their trunks go down through the centre to the solid ground beneath. Many are dead now, and the winds, finding the sand bared of the greenery which sheltered it, undo their old work and carry it forwards over the fields where a later and less provident folk have devised no barrier against the yellow tide. I have seen elsewhere, at Khalassa for instance, in the Sinai desert below Beersheba, just such long lines of tamarisk, Byzantine hedgerows, showing through the sand-drifts, but nowhere else have I seen them as at Faras towering aloft in banks up which it is hard to scramble, one hundred feet above the plain.

There is at Faras one more monument of history, and that of a later date. When in 1889 Wad Nejumi started against his will on the last hopeless venture to conquer Egypt for the Khalifa, an English force from Halfa marched with him, keeping ever between him and the river. The thirsty multitude—for their women and children came with the fighting men to settle down in Egypt—pressed along the desert edge, and over against Faras followed the valley that is the old bed of the Nile; and from the monastery mound of Faras and from the river the English guns shelled them as they passed. If to-day you climb the sand-hills of the buried tamarisk groves and look down on the long trough which separates them from the gravel desert, it looks as if a school paper-chase had passed that way. But they are bones that whiten the valley bottom, bones of men and horses and camels, tatters of cloth and tags of leather, the debris of an army beaten even before it was crushed at Toski. Thus Faras, starting at the beginning of things with the ruins of its stone-age village, can show, but a hundred yards or so therefrom, relics of the last war the Nile Valley has known, and of the last invasion which threatened Egypt from the South.

Whether the changes of history have left their mark upon the people as they have upon the buildings of Nubia it is difficult to say; these folk are not given to talking about themselves to foreigners, and, question as one may, it is hard to elicit from them anything of interest. But a chance encounter once showed us that there is in some things a continuity of tradition which goes back to early times.

Mr. and Mrs. Griffith and myself had gone out one day from

Faras to picnic in the desert where from the gravel plateau there rises an isolated hill whose semi-sacred character made us suppose that an older sanctity might have been retained into the Moslem age. It was said that a Mohammedan saint was buried here, but as he had no name other than " the Sheikh el Gebel " (the Hill or Desert Sheikh), his authenticity was not above suspicion. In fact, the so-called grave proved to be but a rough stone enclosure at the hill's foot, a mere zariba, nearly circular, with an opening facing towards the hill, the whole bearing no resemblance to a Moslem tomb. But in the hill itself a cave with Christian *graffiti* on its walls showed that before the Mohammedan faith prevailed an earlier hermit had settled here and hallowed the spot, while a few Egyptian hieroglyphs on the rocks pointed to the possibility that even he had been attracted hither by religious associations older still.

We had finished our search and were at lunch when across the desert a little procession was to be seen coming towards us. At its head was a man driving a donkey laden with firewood, behind him walked a young man bearing a kid across his shoulders, then an old bearded fellow who carried a long knife, and behind him women with a cooking-pot, bags of flour, and bunches of herbs. It was another picnic party, but in this case a religious one, come out to do sacrifice. The young man who carried the goat was a Berberine of Faras who had just completed four years' domestic service in Cairo; before he left home his father had vowed to sacrifice on his son's return a kid to the Sheikh el Gebel, and now the young man had come back to get married and the vow was to be performed.

In a corner by the entrance to the Sheikh's zariba, where the blackened stones showed that the ceremony was no unwonted thing, a fire was kindled and the cauldron was set on it; the kid's throat was cut, it was skinned and cleaned, and set to boil " with bitter herbs " in the pot. While it was cooking, the men of the party went in turn into the enclosure and prayed, and the women kneaded flour and baked their flat unleavened loaves on hot stones pulled out from the fireplace. Then all set to and ate, and afterwards collected the fragments of bread and meat, which might neither be thrown away nor

kept till the morrow, but must be given to the poor of the village. It was a curiously old-world scene, and quite un-Mohammedan; the manner of the sacrifice was Semitic, brought from the Eastern desert where things were done just so in days when Abraham shifted his camp there with the changing seasons, and the place of it was a "holy mount" whose sanctity was derived from an alien faith, and a saint long since forgotten. Just as at Karanòg I heard dim legends of an old king "Kara" who dwelt in the ruined castle and thence levied toll on the trade-boats passing up and down the river, so it may well be that the modern Berberine preserves many traditions which might throw light upon the history of this troubled borderland.

I have tried to show, in the case of Kasr Ibrim, how a place not very attractive at first sight may in the light of archæological results be made interesting, but about our actual digging in Egypt there is not much to be said. One excavator's experience in Egypt is very much like every other's, apart of course from his particular finds; he has his work and his workmen, both demanding care and study, but he meets with no adventure worthy of the name, and if things go wrong he has confident recourse to the law. To tell the truth, Egypt is dull. Its archæology as such is interesting, but the country is too well regulated to allow of much incident, and the joyous occurrences of Carchemish would be impossible in the smooth tenor of Egyptian life. Neither is the *fellah*, the agricultural peasant whom for the most part one employs, a very sympathetic character. He is a hard worker when driven, and with experience becomes very skilful, but he has remarkably little interest in the work as such and less in you; with him it is a question of wages and *baksheesh* and nothing else. The amount of his wages is fixed but that of the *baksheesh* is unforeseeable, so on that he can pin the most extravagant ambitions. At Halfa one of our gang, a good digger from Kuft and as a rule a lucky one, grew so melancholy because his *baksheesh* account did not come up to his hopes that he developed homicidal mania and beheaded his wife and daughter. Of course that was an extreme case, and even the worst of seasons does not fill one's camp with raving lunatics; but it does result in a discontented and a troublesome gang. The *fellahîn* work

with you for what they can get and have no idea above money; for the smallest rise in wages they will take service elsewhere without regret, they will cheat you without compunction, and they will steal from you outright if they think that stealing will pay. Sometimes, I think, they will steal on principle. Professor Flinders Petrie told a story of how, under the corners of the walls of a ruined temple, he found two foundation deposits each with its set of little cartouches in gold and silver, bronze and lapis lazuli, but though he knew that there must have been other sets and knew exactly where they should have been found, no more came to light. At last he found them, in the shop of the local dealer in antiquities, and although the dealer undoubtedly made a handsome profit Flinders Petrie bought them from him for considerably less than he was paying in *baksheesh*; he certainly believed that his men had stolen them not so much for gain as for the satisfaction of stealing.

Perhaps the most annoying characteristic of the Egyptian is his absolute disregard of truth. Personally I do not think that he is the wilful liar that he seems, but rather that he has not the same conception of truth as ourselves, and does not distinguish as we do between subjective and objective reality. An idea, even one newly born, may appeal to him as true though it flatly contradict facts with which he is familiar; after all, they are both ideas in his head, and he gives the preference to that which most appeals to his taste or answers best to the needs of the moment.

One day MacIver and I were copying some inscriptions cut on a rock that stands out from the Nile bank just below the Nubian village of Tomas, when a villager who had been watching us for a while in silence asked what we were doing. We said, " Looking at the inscriptions." He asked whether we were interested in such things and, when we said we were, inquired further whether we had seen the " temple " at the farther end of the village. As we did not believe that such a thing existed, we said " No," rather curtly, and asked him what he meant. In reply, the fellow gave us a very fair description of a New Empire rock-tomb. There was, he said, cut in a rock-face behind the village a doorway having writing above it; on either side was a statue, but these were so damaged that he did not know what they were meant to be. Inside was a small

room, whose walls were covered with figures and writing—painted in colours, but at the same time cut in the stone—and behind this was a smaller room not decorated at all, but with a hole in the floor. He knew the place well, in fact everybody knew it, because it was a favourite playground for the village children. Three other villagers had strolled up and overheard the latter part of the story, and the narrator appealed to them for confirmation. Two of the new-comers agreed with all that was said, and added a few details; the third said he had never seen the thing himself, but knew of it from hearsay. Rather puzzled, for such a rock-tomb was unknown in the district, we cross-questioned the men, but could not shake their statements; at last they seemed hurt at our disbelief, and volunteered to show us the place. We told the first informant that we would go with him, and if satisfied would give *baksheesh*; otherwise he would get a kicking for deceiving us. He agreed readily enough, and we all moved off towards the lower end of the village. On the way MacIver pointed to some rude rock-drawings such as are common in Nubia, and date from all periods between the prehistoric and the present day, and asked whether that were the sort of thing we were to expect; the men grew quite indignant at the suggestion, and repeated their detailed account of the tomb. We walked for three-quarters of an hour, and just as we were growing impatient our guide pointed to a rock-face wherein, he said, the cave was cut. The rock-face stood not more than four feet high, too low to allow for a door—and of a door there was not the remotest sign.

" Here is the place," said the three men.

" Where is the tomb? " said we.

The chief guide looked puzzled. " It certainly *was* here," he said; " perhaps the sand has covered it up," and going down on his knees he began to scoop away the drift-sand at the foot of the rock—only to find that a fresh rock-shelf ran out but a few inches below the surface. The story was palpably absurd. But those villagers insisted still that the tomb had always been there, that they had played in it as boys, and that this was the very spot; their only explanation for its non-appearance was that some jinn, to cheat them of their reward, had before our arrival carried the cave bodily away!

I do not believe that the thing was a practical joke. The

men had a long tramp and an unpleasantly violent cursing at the end of it; nor is the Egyptian *fellah* given to such jests. It seems to me a case of auto-suggestion; the first man, seeing our interest in what looked to him poor scratches in the cliff, thought how splendid it would be if he could show us such a decorated " temple " as he had heard tell of in other parts—and at once the temple was to him a reality, and the reward for its discovery as good as in his pocket. The other men adopted the idea with the same readiness, and it became as truly a part of their experience as were their own houses in the village. Every archæologist in Egypt has been told of the great temples in the desert behind Abu Simbel; how two days' or three days' journey westward from the Nile you may find buildings vaster and more glorious than the rock-cut shrines of Rameses themselves. Some natives have seen them, others go on hearsay only, but many are prepared to guide you to this undiscovered marvel. These tales are lies, but it is no use to call those that tell them liars, for they are thoroughly persuaded of their truth.

There is an amusing story which shows how readily the *fellah* will believe what is to his advantage, even when there are no Europeans to be fooled. In Kuft there is a shrine of some local holy man, a little shrine served by a local *mullah*, whereto pilgrims were wont to come with offerings from the neighbouring villages. As time went on the saint's merits began to be forgotten, the pilgrims grew fewer, and the tale of offerings diminished sadly.

One Friday the *mullah* announced to his congregation that he had three times running dreamed a wonderful dream:

" I stood," he said, " on the river bank, and there came floating down the stream two great rocks, greater than a man could lift, and one drifted on down below the village and went out of sight, but one came to the shore hard by where I stood. And as I watched, the rock moved slowly up the steep bank where Hassan Ahmed's lentils are, and then rolled on through Ibrahim Suliman's durra patch, up to the houses and along the village street to this shrine, and it entered the door and came to rest below the mimbar from which I speak to you to-day. And I dreamed that from that day the fame of this shrine grew great again, and pilgrims flocked in from all around, and their offerings were as rich as they were in years gone by."

(*above*) The north-east corner of Karanôg Castle.

(*below*) Kasr Ibrim from the south, showing the podium of a temple (?) incorporated in the wall.

The sermon gave rise to a good deal of discussion, which was changed to awe and wonder when two mornings later the report came in that a great stone was in fact lying at the water's edge below the village; all flocked out to see the portent, and to discuss its connexion with the *mullah's* dream. The next day Hassan Ahmed was loudly bewailing the damage done to his lentils, but the stone was lying now upon the top of the steep river bank. On the following day the villagers came out from the houses wherein they had carefully barred themselves all night for fear of such supernatural powers as were abroad, to find Ibrahim Suliman's durra crop all crushed and trampled and the great stone lying in the middle of the village street. Here was miracle clear and beyond cavil, and no one was surprised when the next morning saw the stone safely ensconced in the little shrine. The news was published far and wide, the sanctity of the saint was vindicated, and the *mullah* reaped a handsome profit. Not a man but believed that spiritual agencies had been at work. Even the somewhat free-thinking villager who told the story was convinced of its truth, and in proof thereof pointed to the fact that the stone was indeed too heavy for any man to lift; only when asked whether one man, given plenty of time, could have *rolled* it up the bank and onward did he burst into laughter, and admit that no one had ever thought of that!

This power of suggestion is not confined to the *fellahîn*. In the midsummer of 1915, nearly six months after Jemal Pasha's army had been driven back from the Canal, an educated Egyptian, a judge of the High Court, if I remember rightly, was heard to declare in a public tram that the Turks were and had been all along in undisputed possession of Port Said, Ismailia and Suez and at any moment might advance on Cairo. Bought up before General Maxwell, he admitted that he had done wrong in talking but pleaded the difficulty of always keeping silence about what one knew; he was in fact honestly convinced of the truth of what he had said. No mere argument could shake his belief, so the General sent him on a personally conducted tour of the Canal zone to persuade him that the British were still masters there. But some months later a number of upper-class Egyptians were found to be spreading the same rumours, and amongst them was our judge.

He was again brought before General Maxwell, who expostulated with him on his behaviour, reminding him of what he had seen with his own eyes. The Egyptian smiled appreciatively. "Ah," he said, "that was a very clever trick of yours and it took me in completely at first. It was only afterwards that I realized that you had persuaded the Turkish Commander-in-Chief to dress his men up in British uniforms so as to deceive me."

For when an Egyptian has once got an idea into his head it is very hard to disabuse him of it. When I first went to Jerablus I took with me for my photographic work two Egyptian boys; one had been trained by Dr. Reisner and the other by Griffith and myself, and they were both of them experienced and, so far as my requirements went, capable photographers. One day I went into the newly-installed dark-room and found the two boys plunged in stubborn despair over the china developing-dishes.

"What are these things for?" they asked.

I told them, and they groaned. "Developing-dishes are made of metal," they said; "it is impossible to develop photographs in these things."

No amount of argument could move them, and they had to be driven into making the experiment by threats of being sent straight back to Egypt if they didn't. The photographs came out all right, but to the end of their time nothing would convince those Egyptians that china was not an inferior substitute for enamelled tin and an added difficulty to their trade.

Chapter Two

ITALY

A FOREIGNER does not often get the chance of doing field-work in Italy. Italian archæologists look upon the interference of strangers in their country with a jealousy which is natural enough, and is further justified by the splendid work done by themselves. The Government, comparatively poor though it be, spends yearly upon excavations and upon the upkeep of national monuments an amount of money which the British public would grudge in a decade, and for carrying out its excavations there is no lack of capable men. To get permission to dig is therefore no easy matter for an outsider, and, as the law is chary of allowing the export of antiquities, it is equally hard for him to find funds for work which can bring in but small material recompense to those who finance it. For the greater part of my time in Italy, then, I was busied only with such investigations as are open to all, and it was by a stroke of unusually good luck that I was able on one site to carry out regular excavations on a large scale.

Teano, a hill-town hard by the railway line from Rome to Naples, Teanum Sidicinum of the ancient Sabines, was my headquarters, and the actual site chosen was that of the city baths, lying some four miles away from the modern town. The building, provincial though it was, had played a part in history, for in the second century B.C. an incident occurred here fraught with dire results. The Roman Consul, while on tour, visited Teanum, and his wife wished to take a bath. It was not a ladies' day, but the bathrooms were cleared and the distinguished dame had them to herself. But she complained that the place was dirty, and her indignant husband laid hands on the local magistrates and had them flogged for their negligence. It was a scandalous abuse of authority against the

officers of an allied, not a subject, state, and the riot that followed led to the outbreak of a war between Rome and the Latin races. Though, of course, in the centuries through which they remained in use the baths had been re-modelled and re-adorned, it seemed not unreasonable to hope that some remains of their earlier as well as of their late Imperial stages might be brought to light, but this hope was doomed to disappointment. Indeed, the work, though interesting enough in itself, was not very remunerative, and since all my results—notes, plans and photographs—were published without acknowledgment by a fellow-scientist,[1] I got but small professional satisfaction out of it; but the conditions of life were delightful, and make Teano one of the pleasantest of memories.

An old friend, Baron Zarone, had lent me a set of rooms in his palazzo, once the stronghold of the medieval hill-men, and one could not ask for better quarters. The great courtyard opening off the town's main square had been modernized in the eighteenth century with doubtful taste, though the broad staircase of pink and white marble redeemed to some extent the dullness of the rest; but at the back the massive grey walls had suffered little change during the six centuries and more which had weathered and mellowed them. From their foot sloped down a terraced garden, beautiful in neglect, where the straggling rose-bushes of the upper levels made splashes of colour against the glossy leaves of orange-trees and nespolas below, and farther down the silvery olives led the eye on over field and vineyard to the far hills and to Vesuvius' squat cone with its flower of faint and shifting cloud. Teano was indeed an ideal spot for a holiday had one been seeking such. The town with its narrow stair-like streets, its hanging gardens, and its girdle of old walls was picturesque enough to satisfy the soul of any artist. Below lie the ruins of the amphitheatre, vast and sombre, and the whole smiling countryside is dotted with relics of the historic past—broken walls and tombs, Oscan inscriptions on stones built into modern field-walls, and Roman milestones in the hedges. Farther afield there are glorious walks to be made, and one such walk which I took in company with the Director of the British School at Rome was something not to be forgotten. We followed the

[1] "Teano", by Dottore G. Gabrieli, in *Notizie degli Scavi*.

Marble head of a river god, the stone eaten away by the salt, found at Teano.

The bath buildings at Teano.

Roman road which for miles runs across country, paved with polygonal blocks of dark-grey tufa, now polished by the feet of centuries, shaded by great trees and dotted with wayside shrines; then over lonely pastures and uphill till in the afternoon we reached our goal, a high-set fastness of the early Sabines, known nowadays as Queen Joanna's Garden, whose cyclopean walls half-hidden in chestnut scrub were haunted, so a timorous goat-herd warned us, by heaven knows what ghosts of old marauders; then pushing through the thick undergrowth we fell into a leaf-filled torrent-bed and, hidden from one another by a brown whirlwind, we slid, literally slid, nearly two hundred yards downhill till we pulled up breathless with laughter on the lower levels. Through the beech-woods we went on to Fontana Fredda, where, famished after our long day, we washed down our dry bread with the water that spouts from three holes in the rock into a marble basin—ice-cold the water was, and oh! how good!—and so to a little village where we were fain to dine, and instead were all but arrested by a too zealous carabiniere as German spies, and found that we had yet ten miles to tramp through the dark before reaching Teano and our beds.

Another pleasant excursion was to Calvi Risorta, the ancient Cales, where they made in Greek times the bowls of fine black-varnished pottery with ornament in high relief known to archæologists as Calene phialæ. Excavations on the property of a friend of mine, Signor Nobile, had recently proved that Teano also had a peculiar pottery of its own, a black ware with incised and painted flower-designs, and I was curious to see whether further search at Calvi, where little digging had been done, would not throw fresh light on the local fabrics. I could not carry out any excavations, as I had no licence for such, but luck served me well, for in exploring the acropolis I found, laid bare where the soil of the hillside had slipped away, a great heap of pottery fragments, perhaps a refuse pile where discarded temple-offerings were thrown, which yielded quite a number of local potters' names and marks not before recorded. It was an interesting little discovery, and warrants the belief that regular excavations on the site would give valuable results. Indeed the whole place is strewn with relics of past glories. On the acropolis, now

ploughed fields and shrub-covered slopes, are many standing ruins, one of which, a small temple built of brick and flint rubble, still bears traces of such delicate stucco reliefs as can be seen entire in the grottoes and buried vaults of Baiæ: the sunken lanes here have cut through the sewers and conduits of the vanished city, which show like giant rabbit-holes in the steep banks, and the ground above is littered with fragments of pottery and marble, and with the tesseræ of the broken mosaic floors. The village church, whose west front is a fine example of ornate Romanesque, is built almost entirely with Roman stones, and the clustered columns of its crypt, each with an ill-fitting capital of different pattern, all come from the classic ruins.

But though carved marble blocks and fragmentary inscriptions are scattered broadcast, yet this wreckage of Roman Cales will appeal to the ordinary traveller less than do the grotto-chapels of a later age. Two of these are in a deep valley below the acropolis; their entrances are screened and wellnigh blocked by fallen stones and trailing brambles; another, the best preserved, lies away to the far side of the village and is still in use; its floor is clear of debris and an iron door shields it from sacrilege. The sides of what was originally a natural cave have been straightened and squared, and on the walls are frescoes in the stiff styles of Byzantine art. Nails have been driven at random into the rock to take the votive candles, whose smoke has played havoc with the rigid figures of saints arow round the dim chapel ; the brilliant tints of their embroidered vestments have faded, the inscriptions above their heads are blackened and almost illegible, but there they stand in the severe formalism of their still enduring school, strangely modern, for you can see their like on the ikons of any Greek or Russian church of to-day, and as strangely old both by their setting and by the style so alien to our canons. The effect is perhaps most striking in the lowest valley shrine, where the sunlight thrusts in in splashes of green and gold through the veil of hanging leaves, where the rock-encumbered floor speaks of oblivion, and where the clustering wasp-cells and the bat-droppings give to the scaling walls that air of antiquity which one finds in Egypt's painted tombs. I know nothing of the date or history of those little chapels, nor

what may be their interest to the student of Byzantine art, but to any lay traveller they are well worth a visit. For the classical ruins which crowd these Campanian foot-hills may grow wearisome by their surfeit, and it is a relief to turn from them and find in the painted grottoes of Calvi these livelier monuments of a more familiar faith.

But these excursions were perforce only too infrequent, and, for the most part, work at the baths claimed all my time. Venturi, my Tuscan servant, an invaluable fellow with a most un-Italian passion for cold baths and a genius for makeshift engineering, kept house for me in the palazzo and acted as foreman on the work. He would prepare our early breakfast, and soon after daybreak we would walk together to the diggings four miles away, where we would find our gang of some sixty men and girls eating their morning meal under the ruined vaults of the bath buildings. At midday we lunched in the farm close by, where an upper room served as office (and later as living-room for Venturi and myself), and at dusk we would walk back up the long white road to the town, turning aside religiously into a certain orange-garden where a wizened apple of an old rustic would hoe and prune, or, sitting on a fountain-basin backed by the weed-grown walls of the amphitheatre, overlook the labours of his many children; then we would pick an orange each and pass the time of day with " old grandfather", and so on to the hostel in the town where we dined. It was a fairly strenuous life, and at the end of the open-air day sleep came easily.

The scene of our work was a little valley planted with poplars through which ran the stream that once supplied the baths. The bathing-rooms had occupied the low ground at the valley's bottom and were now buried deep in the silt of many freshets; a steep bank some thirty feet high rose on the left, and up this the ruins climbed in stairways and terraced chambers to the plateau above, whereon the façade of the building had stood fronting on the Roman road. These upper works had long since vanished, but in the bank's side there remained open to view walls and cave-like vaults of massive flint concrete; here the pitted surface of the cement showed how the ceilings had once been rich with glass mosaic, and strips and slabs of many-coloured marbles scattered over the

ground bore further witness to the splendour that had been. But it was obvious that little save the ground-plan could be recovered from these weathered ruins exposed upon the slope; the statues and carvings which once adorned the entrance and the upper chambers must all have fallen into the wrack of rooms buried below the level ground which stretched from the bank's foot to the stream; here, therefore, most of our work was done, and it was with high hopes that we started, for the soil lay deep and undisturbed. But there was a factor with which we had not reckoned. The water of the stream possessed mineral qualities which doubtless built up the reputation of the ancient baths and were destined no less surely to complete their ruin. To the depth of some four feet the ground was fairly dry and objects found here were tolerably well preserved, but below this came the level of perpetual saturation, and there the chemical action of the water had ruined everything. Slabs of coloured marble crumbled at a touch into red mud, white tesseræ from the mosaic floors ran liquid through one's fingers, and only a rust-red or green stain in the water-logged earth showed where metal had once lain. Our first experience of this corroding element was rather dramatic. About four feet below the surface we came upon the torso of a faun; it was lying face downwards, but the Praxitelean curve of the body and the careful working of the back muscles prepared us for a prize, so very cautiously the earth was scraped away all around and then, with the whole gang of workers clustering close in their excitement over the first "find", the figure was lifted up and a couple of bucketfuls of water thrown over it to wash away the mud that shrouded its front. As the mud ran off, the workmen started back with oaths of genuine dismay and the girls screamed or crossed themselves and ran, for, in place of the graceful faun we looked for, there lay before us a skeleton, and not cleanly bones at that, but an obscene thing about which still clung the rotting tatters of its marble flesh: the acids of the soil had eaten away all the soft parts of the stone to a depth of three or four inches, while the harder veins had resisted and stood out like the ragged framework of the white body. It was so grotesquely life-like—or death-like—that, quite apart from one's natural disappointment, one felt a real physical disgust at the sight of

it, and we were only too glad to leave the thing to itself, face downwards, in the stable where our scanty finds were stored. It was the same with nearly everything which we unearthed here: inscriptions upon statue-bases or altars were illegible, fragments of sculpture could with difficulty be identified as such; and as soon as the ground-plan of the building could be made out I was obliged to abandon the work. Only two statues, lying in the upper soil, came out tolerably unscathed, one a rather coarse replica of the Capitoline Venus, headless and armless, which is now in the University Museum at Philadelphia, and the other a pretty Cupid, veiled and flower-crowned, leaning on a column; the Cupid, a pair to one in the Museo Baracco, which also came from the Teano baths, is now in the Naples Museum.

These two statues, which were found quite early in the course of the season, nearly involved me in serious trouble.

Permission had been asked for our work to begin on May 1, but when that date arrived the Naples Museum could spare none of its staff to act as the guardian or commissaire who, according to Italian law, must be present at all excavations. Not wishing to lose time and good weather, we applied to the Minister at Rome for a special permit, and were told complacently enough that the law allowed experimental soundings to be made without the presence of a guard, and we might therefore begin at once, but must immediately report to the Ministry any finds of archæological importance which might be made during this trial stage. On May 1, therefore, I started work with my full gang, expecting the commissaire to turn up at any moment; actually it was not till the 23rd of the month, when things were in full swing, that the humble Museum guard, sent to keep watch over my doings, arrived in mufti at Teano station.

Naturally enough, he began by asking the stationmaster whether the English archæologist had yet arrived.

"Arrived?" replied that worthy; "why, for months he has been carrying on his work—work which is to enrich our artistic patrimony and restore to Teano its ancient glory!"

The astonished guard tried to insist that digging could not have begun already, but the stationmaster was not to be shaken, so, having learnt that I was probably to be found at

the little inn where I always dined, the now thoroughly disturbed official took a carriage and drove up the long dusty road to Teano. On arriving at the *trattoria* he was told by the innkeeper that I was then, as every day, down at the excavations.

"But have the excavations really started?"

"Started indeed! but they are enormous! and such discoveries!" (this with the gusto of one who had never been near them), "such magnificent statues, such grandiose ruins!"

This was too much. Hurriedly donning his uniform and girding on a heavy revolver, the guard drove at full speed down to the farm and appeared on the scene just as we had laid our new-found Venus by the stream's side and were washing the earth from off her marble limbs. Then pandemonium broke. Inarticulate with rage, but shouting lustily, the guard drew his revolver and began brandishing it in unpleasant proximity to my head; the women screamed, the workmen seized their picks and advanced to the rescue, while the guard, recovering a little his wits, shouted that all work must stop, that all of us were under arrest, that he forbade a man to move, or me to speak, that he forbade everything.

By a mere chance I had been amusing myself that morning with some revolver practice, so, taking advantage of a more than usually splendid gesticulation in which both of the official's hands were involved, I drew the weapon and, putting it to his head, persuaded him by his own argument to keep quiet; at the same time I ordered the men to stop work, assuring them that it was all a mistake, but that the representative of the law must be obeyed; and then, when things were calmer and our respective weapons back in their holsters, I began to reason with him. My first argument was that I was engaged in such "soundings" as the law explicitly allowed, but he only snorted and, pointing to my sixty workpeople and half an acre of deep trenches, dismissed the definition: these were excavations, carried on in his absence and therefore illegal, and now all was to be stopped, and he would wire to the Ministry at Rome denouncing me. I then urged that as we had been expecting all along the permission which had now admittedly been given, we should never have been such fools as to compromise ourselves by an illegal act—in fact

we had an understanding with the Minister for everything. The guard replied that he knew of no such understanding. I retorted that he, naturally, was not in the secrets of the Ministry, but would certainly get into trouble if he disregarded them; he grew obstinate, did not care about arrangements of which he had not been informed, and was determined on doing his duty. Upon this I at once became sympathetic, agreed that he ought indeed to report me, and only regretted the trouble that he was bringing on his own head.

" What trouble? " he demanded, obviously taken aback by my change of tone; " it's only my duty that I'm doing."

" Precisely," said I, " that is the danger. Do you realize where and what you are? "

" I am an official of the Italian Government——"

" Yes, and where? "

He was puzzled, then said. " Why, in South Italy, of course."

" And did you ever know of a Government official who, in the south of Italy, did his duty and did *not* get into trouble? "

That settled it. " Never! " he said, with a sigh. " Please, Signor Professore, would you tell me what I had better do? "

In the end I telegraphed for instructions myself; the poor guard received an official answer which brought him to me in tears, and I got a request to report regularly on his conduct, together with the offer to recoup myself for lost working hours out of his scanty wage. I did not explain to him that my telegram and the answers to it had passed through somewhat devious channels, but I did send in an encomium on his character (I was careful to show it to him first) which made the much-wronged man the most obliging of commissaires.

In those days, indeed, it was wise to have the Camorra on one's side. Already that great criminal organization was in its decline, and its weak-kneed leader had been stabbed to death by his lieutenants in the sunken lane that winds between Resina's vineyards; but the great trial of the murderers, a trial which was to shake Southern Italy to its core, had not yet taken place, and most people still believed that no Government would dare to put the Camorrists in the dock. Naples had, in fact, but just enjoyed a good illustration of the Society's power. Tired of the extortionate ways of the Neapolitan cabby, which affected disastrously the tourist traffic of the

town, the Municipality had decided to introduce taximeters and to grant licences to no cabs that did not carry such. Tenders for the supply of taximeters had been received from two firms, and the Council had met to assign the contract and to fix the date by which the new regulation was to come into force, when the President announced that he had received a letter which he felt obliged to lay before the Council before proceeding to the business in hand. The letter was from the Camorra: it spoke with approval of the new law, agreed as to the benefits it would confer on the Municipality, the tourists, and the contracting firms, but expressed inability to see "where the Camorra came in"; the writer proposed, therefore, that a gratification of so many thousand liras should be paid in advance to the secretary of the Society, to which should be added annually a fixed tariff on each taximeter in use, "which you might enter in your books," he remarked "as payment for the life of drivers using such machines." The Municipality accepted the proposals and the money was duly paid.

One day in Naples I was approached by a working plumber from Pozzuoli, who told me that he had got something which I might like to buy; digging alongside his house to lay the foundations for a new cellar, he had found some stones which his parish priest assured him were valuable antiques. I went to Pozzuoli, and sure enough there were several inscribed slabs and one marble panel, about six feet high, magnificently carved in relief with almost life-size figures of soldiers and of one of the members of the family of Augustus; as an Imperial monument of the first century A.D., it was of outstanding importance. Would I buy it? asked the plumber. I said certainly not. In the first place, it was worth much more than I could afford; in the second place, I should never be allowed to take it out of Italy, and to smuggle a thing of that size was impossible. He must report his discovery to the Government; in that way he would avoid all danger to himself—and it was dangerous for any one but a licensed dealer to sell antiquities—and he would be paid three-quarters of the estimated value of the stone, which would be a very handsome sum indeed. The plumber did not like my advice, but at last he was persuaded to take the honest course and I went

(*above*) The author, standing behind the seated boy, with his work people in the baths at Teano.

(*below*) La Civita in the valley of the Sabato.

off. But a week later he came to me in deep distress. He had made his report to the Naples Museum, and the Inspector of Antiquities had duly come to Pozzuoli; the Inspector had carried off the inscriptions, saying that they had some scientific interest but no financial value, and he had photographed the relief but said that it was a miserable thing not worth coming to see—the Museum wouldn't dream of taking it; and as for value, it would be dear at £10! The unfortunate owner, whom I had buoyed up with such false hopes, was bitterly disappointed; now a dealer from Naples had come along and offered him £20; ought he to accept? At first I was completely puzzled, but when I consulted a friend who knew Naples better than I did the mystery was explained; the dealer was the Inspector's brother-in-law, and the two were in partnership at the Museum's expense. So I told the plumber that he mustn't take the offer of £20, he ought to get twenty times that amount at least; and again came the question, wouldn't I buy it? I repeated that I could not afford a fair price, but he was insistent. At last I told him that, if he could get a permit for export, which the Inspector could hardly refuse for an object which he had condemned as valueless, I would pay the Government tax on a nominal selling price of £100 but could not actually find so much money; he would get £60 for himself, but the stone was worth vastly more. Perhaps the Museum, rather than allow export, would make an offer of more than the hundred pounds; and if they did, so much the better. He was delighted and went off to the Museum to get his permit.

He came back to me a broken man. He had seen the Inspector and told him that he had an offer for the relief, which he had accepted. The Inspector said, "Excellent! You're a lucky fellow to find any one who'll buy a thing like that!" "Yes, Eccelenz'; and now I want a permit for export." "Export?" "Yes, it's a foreigner who is buying." The Inspector was furious. "You ignorant fools of peasants!" he said, "you think you're clever when you can raise the price of a thing by a few lire, but you forget that the profit's all wiped out by your having to pay a quarter of the money to the Government; you hadn't counted on that, had you?" "Oh, but I had," said the plumber, "and here's the quarter value—

twenty-five pounds." There was a long pause and then the Inspector said, "You can keep the money. There will be no permit for export. The relief is scheduled as a national monument and is valued at four thousand pounds. The Museum is *not* taking it over; it will remain in your keeping and you will be responsible to the Government for the four thousand. Go!" "And I am a poor man," sobbed the plumber. "Signor', you have ruined me by your advice!"

Naturally I was angry and indignant and I repeated the story in, as it proved, the right company.

Naples was represented in Parliament by three members, all staunch supporters of a government which at the moment had a precarious majority of one. The three members were suddenly summoned to Naples and told that the Prime Minister must at once appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter of the Pozzuoli relief and have it removed from the list of national monuments; failing that, the lamented decease of the members of Parliament for Naples would lead to by-elections resulting in the return of three opposition candidates. Both the three members and the Prime Minister knew that when the Camorra said a thing like that it meant what it said. So the Royal Commission was appointed without delay and did its duty expeditiously; the Inspector was punished, which was very right and proper, and (though this was perhaps more questionable from the moral point of view) the plumber was allowed to export the relief, which is now in the University Museum in Philadelphia.

On one occasion I had come down to Naples for a week-end when Baron Zarone, meeting me in the Club, began to ask how I was getting on in the quarters he had lent me in his palazzo at Teano. I told him that I was very comfortable except for one thing, but that that was so serious as to drive me to distraction. Quite upset and believing that I was in earnest, the Baron demanded what this could be. I told him that, some ten days before, I was awakened at about half-past three in the morning by a terrific din in the palace courtyard, on to which opened the tall french windows of my bedroom; as the noise went on I got out of bed and, running to the window, could just see in the half-light of the early day an old man who stood below me in the courtyard and bellowed

" Giuseppe, Giuseppe," as though to wake the dead. When I asked him what he wanted, he stopped his bellowing for a moment to explain that it was a Saint's Day, and Giuseppe, who was not dead but asleep in a garret somewhere above my head, was wanted to help ring the church bells. Then he began again, but I used such a flow of good Neapolitan—and Neapolitan is a rich *argot* to swear in—that he took to his heels and left me to a peaceful if a sleepless pillow. But a few days later another Saint's Day came, and the nuisance was repeated, and this time the old man, strong in the righteousness of his cause, refused to be alarmed by my oaths and woke Giuseppe, even at the cost of an hour's yelling. Then it happened a third time. " My dear Baron," I said, " it is too much. I go to bed tired, and if wakened by this horrible noise I can't sleep any more: the strain is telling on my health, and as there is a whole string of Saints' Days coming on next week, I shall probably die." The old gentleman was full of regrets, though barren of remedies; but an acquaintance of mine, a prominent Camorrista, who, standing close by, had overheard my tragic story, was at once ready with a suggestion. " Go down and shoot the fellow," he said.

" My dear sir," I retorted, " there's nothing I should like better, but a pistol-shot at 3.30 a.m. attracts attention, and the police-station is just against the door of the palace courtyard. What should I do if a policeman came in and found a dead bell-ringer on the ground and me standing over him with a revolver still smoking in my hand? "

" What should you do? " answered the Camorrista; " why that is quite simple; just give the policeman a couple of lire and mention my name! "

I believe that my friend's confidence was genuine, though perhaps exaggerated, but I was not likely to act on it. However, when next the old sexton started to make morning hideous, I did run down with a revolver and therewith emphasized my desire for silence; and he certainly took the threat seriously, judging by the speed with which he scuttled. Only once more during my stay at Teano did I hear him call Giuseppe to the belfry—and then, waking by chance, I caught pathetically faint from some far alleyway behind the palazzo a wail which could surely have evoked no answer but a snore.

As a matter of fact, pistol-shots were not altogether uncommon when of an evening things grew lively in the town; but I never heard of an arrest resulting from them, and it was only an incident down near the diggings that explained for me this immunity for violence. Beyond the *fundo* where my field headquarters were there lived an elderly farmer, a fat, jovial man who used often to come to the valley of the baths and watch our work. He spent most of his time wandering about with two dogs and a gun in pursuit of hares, assured me that a hare *had* been seen on his farm once, but pending its reappearance contented himself with shooting cuckoos, whose call he imitated well enough to bring them within a few yards of him. One day I was told that his son, while walking out with his sweetheart, had quarrelled with her over the question of going to America, and in his rage had stabbed her three times and thrown her body into a ditch: so, meeting the old fellow on his rounds, I ventured to sympathize with him on this domestic *disgrazia*. But he did not seem at all depressed.

"The girl is not dead," he said; "in fact, I don't think she's going to die, so it will be all right."

"And your son?" I asked.

"Oh, he's in hiding."

"What! taken to the hills, I suppose?"

"No, no, he's down at the house; but of course he is keeping indoors for a day or two."

A good deal puzzled, I pushed my inquiries further, and learnt that in cases of murderous assault the police are supposed to hunt down and arrest the assailant; but if at the end of three days he is still at large and the victim still alive the criminal charge is dropped, nor are the police further interested in the matter unless the assaulted party takes out a warrant, which, fearing a repetition of the attack, he very seldom does. So when the assault has not proved fatal, it is obviously simpler for the police to reduce their investigations to a mere pretence, and after three days be quit of the whole troublesome business. In this Teano case the young man was soon going freely about his business, and as the lady recovered and was so forgiving as to marry him, the system after all may be said to have been justified by its happy results!

Pleasant as life was in the palazzo at Teano, the town lay

The Pozzuoli relief of three Roman soldiers.

too far from the work to be really convenient, and at a later stage of the dig I moved down and took up my abode in the farmhouse close to the baths. Here Venturi and I shared the upper room, which was approached by an out-of-door stone staircase, the invariable feature of these southern *fundi*, and the farmer's wife cooked our simple meals in the great room on the ground-floor, which served at once as kitchen, sleeping-room for the whole family, and fowls' run. They were good simple folk—the farmer with long whiskers drooping to sparse points of faded brown; his wife, a thin flat-chested woman, with anxious deeply-lined face and an inexhaustible energy; and their strapping daughter, who worked in the fields and cooked or did the rare redding of the house in the intervals of outdoor work. Often of an evening I would sit with them in front of the open hearth—I and any labourer who chanced to have overstayed his time—talking of village gossip, the crops, or, for it is still a living subject there, the divine right of the Borbone kings. They were much interested in the diggings, too, and deeply grieved at the poor success of them. One day, I remember, a sudden rainstorm had driven us into the kitchen, and Zarone's factor, a fine old countryman, Giuseppe Caianello by name, was lamenting our scanty finds, when the farmer's wife assured him that my luck would soon turn—oh, it would turn beyond a doubt, for she had but that morning hung above my bed a coloured picture of Sant' Antonio, and he was a lucky saint if ever there was one!

" Sant' Antonio?" retorted Caianello with deep contempt; " and what, pray, is the use of Sant' Antonio? You hail from Bari way, and of course over there he may be all right, but he's got no power in these parts! If you want anything here you must go to San Paridi."

" But who is San Paridi? " asked the *padrona*, who was in truth a foreigner.

" Well, he's the only saint who counts for much hereabouts, and a good one for your money too. It's his picture you ought to put up over the Eccellenza's bed."

The goodwife sought further enlightenment, and, as the rain showed no signs of stopping, " *'o fattor* " settled himself at ease, relit his cheroot, and related the veracious story of Teano's saint. It was a long yarn, full of digressions, of contradictions,

and of gaps, and told in an *argot* none too easy to follow, but as well as I can remember it, it ran thus:

"*Ecco:* Signor Paridi—he was no saint then, but a poor man, though book-learned—he lived long ago at Teano, very long ago, before ever our Lord Christ was born, and he was a Saracen by race, and a pagan; and because of his learning he became a sorcerer too. Now at that time there was at Teano a Dragon which lived in a cave and ate men and laid waste all the country. You know where the road from Teano on its way past here crosses the river valley by the bridge? Well, it was in that valley the Dragon lived, in the cave in the cliff there; and out of that cave he used to come and kill folk on the road, and right up to the town, and all the world was afraid of him. And Dom Paridi, who was a good man, though a Saracen, was sorry for the people, so he came down to the cave where the Dragon was, and, so they say, he turned himself into a dragon too—for no mortal man could have stood up against a beast like that; but anyhow he fought the Dragon and killed him, and saved all the country. And that's true enough, for there's his chapel to this day, standing just below the bridge and in part of the Dragon's cave, as you can see it for yourself. After that, of course, the people thought a lot of Dom Paridi, and talked about him and what he had done, until news of it came to the king. For in those days there was a king in these parts, and he was a Saracen too, and a bad lot. He had a great park with a wall all round it full of live tigers, and if a man did wrong, or if the king just didn't like any one, he'd take him and throw him over the wall to the tigers, and they ate him up—the king, Saracen that he was, watching all the time over the top of the wall. Lots of people he treated like that, and they say you could hardly see the grass in the park for the bones that lay about in it. Well, as I was saying, news came to the king that Dom Paridi was a great sorcerer, more powerful than the king himself, and that he could change himself into a tiger or anything else he pleased. Now sorcery was a forbidden thing in those times, so the king sent the carabinieri and arrested Dom Paridi and brought him to the park and threw him over, *povero disgraziato*, into the middle of the tigers. The king himself was sitting on the wall to watch, for he thought that Dom Paridi would change him-

self into a tiger, but that the real tigers would see that he wasn't a proper one at all, and so would be more savage than ever and eat him up quick. But Dom Paridi didn't. He just remained a man as he was, and all the tigers came up and—what do you think?—they all went down on their knees to him and said their aves and their paternosters, and him standing in the middle of them! Then of course the king knew that he wasn't a bad man at all, and so he took him out of the park and gave him a job under the government, next to the king's self. So Dom Paridi became a very great man and ruled the country round here: and after that our Signor Jesu was born, and Dom Paridi became a great saint for all Teano, though he was a Saracen up till then, and the only Saracen that ever was a saint. So if you want anything done here in Teano you go to San Paridi, and let Sant' Antonio look after Bari and those parts."

The farmer's wife agreed that a saint who was a Saracen and lived before the coming of Christ must be a very fine saint, and two or three days later San Paridi, dragon and all, took the place of Saint Antony over my bed; but to every one's astonishment my luck underwent no change for the better!

The religious ideas of these southern peasants are delightfully simple. Many of them are more than a little suspicious of their priests as such—and the ignorant pedantry of these latter too often warrants the suspicion—but in the Faith itself they have that profound belief to which the perverseness of the Southern temper aptly witnesses. Just as the oath *per la Madonna che m'a creato* ("By the Madonna who made me") gives weight to the most common lie, so when things go wrong and tempers are lost the Meridionale reserves his coarsest invective for the Virgin; it is the fervency of his belief that gives point to his blasphemy. "Black-jowled humbug," the peasant will murmur as the priest meets him in the road, and will cross himself devoutly as soon as he has passed: the curse is for the man and the system, the gesture for the faith behind it.

Two of the best of these free-thinking, pious Southerners I got to know during a short time I spent once exploring in the valley of the Sabato, where there are some ruins which writers in Italian journals had tried to identify with the birthplace of

the ancient Sabines. A journey by train up from Naples through the foot-hills of Northern Calabria, and then a tramp from the little station, brought me to Serino, a valley of deep, bubbling springs whence Naples draws its water-supply, the best water, perhaps, that any great city boasts; then came a long trek up along the valley, across watercourses and through beech woods, till, the last little hamlet left a good five miles behind, we climbed the hillside to the ramshackle two-roomed cabin which I was to share with my companions, hosts, and servants. These were two forest-rangers, hardy open livers, who knew nothing of the lands beyond their woods and mountains. One was a young fellow, handsome of face, supple of body as a lynx, and a great dandy to boot with his long love-locks, his finely-curled moustache, heavy gold ear-rings, a gaudy silk kerchief for his neck, and brown velvet corduroys like the sleek brown fur of a wood animal. The other, a grizzled veteran, remembered the old days when robbers and outlaws infested all the hills, and a forest ranger had need be featly with his gun if he was to keep a sound skin. His father, a ranger before him, had died in such a way. "It was in the early morning, eccellenz', with a mist over the upper rocks, and my father saw three of them at once coming towards him. So he got down behind a big stone, and with three shots he killed all three. Ah! he was a true master of the gun, and he loading between each shot; but there were five others there whom he had not seen, so they killed him, and because he had shot so well they carried him down to the house, and we buried the four all together. So went things under the Borbone, eccellenz'."

Our life in the Sabato valley was simple to an extreme. We got up before daybreak, drank a cup of coffee, and went off to the work; lunch was served in the hut shortly after noon—macaroni and bread, cherries, and a bottle of wine; then out on the work till dusk, and at any time between seven and eight we three, together with any of the workmen who might prefer to stop the night with us, sat down to an equally plain meal of thin Bovril soup, a dish of the golden-brown fungi that clustered round the chestnut boles, bread, and a couple of bottles each of the same rough red wine, and then over more wine and cigarettes we would sit and talk till heads nodded for

bedtime. Once in answer to some jest the elder ranger with a " Funny dog ", smote his young companion on the shoulder just too hard, and in a flash knives were out, and I had to jump in to make peace. Once the old topic of the King of Naples and the disastrous effects of a United Italy almost led to bloodshed: but for the most part they were splendid rambling talks, wherein past times met and mingled with the present—which in that lonely valley showed so little change—and I spoke of Egypt, maybe, or of England, and they of their woods and hills and of the evils of emigration, of landlords, and of the priesthood, and of the faith that was above the priests. " What, is everything then that we are told in church a lie? " demanded the younger man once when my phrase " B.C." had seemed to him to clash with the priest's description of Christ as " The First Man ", nor would anything persuade him that the words were meant in other than a literal sense. " No, it was a lie; but thank God we don't depend for the Madonna upon them! "

On another occasion as we sat drinking together I turned to the older forester and, recalling our first meeting, which had been in the village street of Serino on the evening of the last Sunday in May, I said, quizzing him, " Do you remember that you said to me then, ' Of course you are going to church,' and we all went together, for it was the Feast of the Madonna? Now, why did you say ' of course ' ? "

" *Ebbene*," replied he, " it was a day when all good Catholics would go to church, and I saw you were a good Catholic."

" But how could you see that? "

" How? but really, eccellenz', that's simple enough! "

" I shouldn't call it so, anyhow; tell me how you knew."

The old man glanced up sharply to see whether I was making fun of him, but since I looked serious enough, he went on with a rather laboured patience to explain his system.

" After all's said and done," said he, " there are only three sorts of people in the world—good Catholics, atheists, and pagans, and as I could see you were neither of the last two, I knew you must be of the first."

" But *how* did you know? What's the difference in the looks of them? "

" Oh, come now," he said simply, " good Catholics, why,

they're just ordinary people like you and me; and as for atheists, it's stamped on their faces that they're damned already in this world, to say nothing of the next. And pagans are black!"

The ruins I had come to examine, rough walls of concrete and rubble encircling some acres of wooded hill-top, were not indeed the cradle of the old Sabine race, but dated from well on in the Christian age and seemed rather to have been a place of refuge to which the villagers might betake themselves and their cattle for shelter, perhaps, in those parlous times when Alaric turned southwards after the sack of Rome and when the long-drawn war between Goth and Latin gave rein to anarchy in the unguarded hills. From the point of view of the archæologist, these late and nameless ruins had little to recommend them, but no one could ask for a fairer working-ground. The rounded hillock which the ramparts crowned rose steeply from the river-bed, and was joined to the true foot-hills of the valleyside by a narrow saddle which led to the one gateway in the wall's whole circuit. Great beech trees covered the downward slope, beech trees and chestnuts mingled on the hilltop, and from here one looked northward along the straight valley where the stream ran, low in those summer days, between its broken banks with here and there beside it a narrow strip of tilth or grassland and patches of cherry trees half smothered in the thick chestnut scrub which clothed the lower slopes. A little higher up on either side the chestnuts gave way to oaks, and these again to darker pines, while towering abrupt above the pine-tops stood the cliff which like a marble wall shut in the valley and hid all but the highest snow-clad peaks beyond. And with all this, in all this clear-cut distance, not a house to be seen; only, perhaps, for sign of man, a slender spire of smoke would be rising from the chestnut copses where the charcoal-burners were at work. The deserts of Nubia were not more out of the world than this valley of the upper Sabato, but in place of parched land and sun-split rock here were running water, grass, and trees and mountains, few but kindly human folk about one, and glimpses surely of Pan and the woodland sprites in tangled gullies and on long-shadowed lawns.

At about eight o'clock of a morning my workmen would

stop for breakfast, while I, instead of eating, would stroll round or sit and smoke, looking at the view up the valley. But one day at that time I saw one of the gang, who had cut the early hours of work, come running and jumping down the hillside to the great gateway, swinging as he came a half-filled goat-skin; it was fresh mountain milk which he was churning in this rough-and-ready fashion, and coming up to where I sat, he undid the skin and showed me the white creamy cheese already separated from the whey. Then he squeezed it between bracken-fronds to strain it, and while others hurried up with cherries, red wine and bread, he whittled a spoon for the soft cheese out of a fresh beech branch, and found broad dock-leaves for a plate. I ate my breakfast there on the slope above the river, the men, a little way apart, laughing and singing sometimes a snatch of song over their wine; and unseen in the woods below me a goat-boy played on his pipe of single reed an air older than Rome, older than the Sabine hill-towns, the air which the wind sings to the rocks and shrubs of upland pastures.

Chapter Three

ALEPPO
(in 1916)

ALEPPO is one of the oldest, the largest, and the most picturesque cities of Turkey. Coming in by the French railway from Rayak, you climb a low rise that had bounded your horizon and see the town lying in a shallow, saucer-like hollow whose rim of rounded hills is broken to north and south by the valley of the Kuwaik River. High above its close-built houses of white or grey weathered stone rises the Mound capped with the rust-red Castle ruins, and clear of its outskirts on the nearest hill-side a great Dervish *teke*, or monastery, with graceful minarets and dark secular pines stands out boldly against the grey-green slopes of stony pasture; northwards a broad band of orchards and gardens winds along the stream and fills all the valley bottom, where shade, the murmur of streams, and the droning music of the water-wheels give welcome refuge from the sweltering streets.

The railway skirts the saucer-rim to a station built outside the town against the hill's foot, and hence you will be driven past the ugly new suburb, across the Kuwaik, here a dwindled and a dirty stream, to the only hotel professing Western comforts, or up a long, straight and hideous street to the Konak by the Castle moat. The town which from the railway carriage window looked so splendid seems in this first drive to have lost all its glamour, but in truth these bastard European houses and half-built shops, the pride of the Aleppine, are but the modern blot on a still lovely Oriental city: pay off your ramshackle cab and plunge on foot into the native quarter and you will forget the monstrous " improvements " of the West End in wonder and in delight.

The bazaars of Aleppo are an unending joy. If from the

airy ramparts of the Castle you look down upon the city spread map-like at your feet you will be surprised to see, hemmed in by crowded roofs, a wide stretch of meadow where goats and cattle pasture, a meadow broken here and there by square sunken wells and dome-like mounds, and by slender minarets which spring like builded poplars from the grass. This seeming meadow is the roof of the bazaar. Go down through the streets and pass under a massive archway with iron-studded doors and ponderous bars, and you will find yourself in a maze of cobbled lanes bordered with booths and roofed with vaults of stone. Here is coolness and a subdued light which at your first entering seems wellnigh darkness, but to the accustomed eye resolves itself into a very riot of colour. At every so many paces a small hole in the vaulting lets through a slant ray of intense sunshine to the narrow ways: the shops, open recesses with a low counter whereon the merchant sits, are brightly lit in front and run back into obscure caves whence you catch flashes of red and green and gold as the broken sunbeams chance on piles of silk or carpets, fresh garden-stuff, hammered copper ware, or jars of spices. As you pass from the bazaar of one trade to that of another you gain ever some new effect: in the cloth-market the whole alley-way is festooned with gaudily-coloured stuffs; the jewellers' bazaar has its rows of glass boxes where gold and silver trinkets gleam with flashes caught from the live coals of the goldsmith's brazier; the vegetable market is one mass of green, with crates of oranges and heaps of white and purple grapes in their season, or fat yellow melons and early apricots; the Sûk el Nahasin, where the copper-smiths are at work all day long, is a blaze of burnished metal and a babel of hammering: there are the glowing ovens of the cook-shops, where the counter is spread with sesame-cakes steeped in honey, and cavernous restaurants where many-coloured sherbets are served to you in tumblers full of snow. You can wander literally for miles through these vaulted alleys, and jostled by the crowd and deafened with the noise of their chaffering you will find it hard to realize that the stone roof above your head is indeed that wide field which from the Castle you saw green with grass and dotted with goats placidly at feed.

Here and there you can turn aside into a *khan* with its square

courtyard open to the sky, its tree-shaded fountain in the midst, and its arcade and gallery running round the quadrangle where the wholesale merchants have their offices and the bankers sit at their tables of exchange; or through a carved doorway you may see the cloisters of a mosque with the sunlight broad and dazzling on the marble pavement, the faithful at prayer on their carpets beneath the colonnade, and the vine-covered, turban-crowned tomb of some old saint.

And then the people! Syrians in European clothes and fez, town Arabs with cloaks of thin light-tinted silks embroidered with silver, swaggering Circassians with their long black coats, high boots, and crossed bandoliers stuffed with silver-plated cartridge-cases, Dervishes with tall sugar-loaf hats of brown felt, red-slippered villagers in gaudy prints with brown *abas* and heavy black ropes over their head-cloths, driving donkeys laden with garden produce, Bagdadis with their slender *brîms* or head-ropes bound and tasselled with silver, Anatolian Turks with baggy trousers and voluminous waistbands, Kurds from Lake Van, drovers from Samarkand or Teheran heralded by the fivefold bells which dangle from the necks of their camels whose swaying bales block the narrow streets, black-cloaked Bedouin, Jews and Persians, Afghans and Turkmans, kavasses with their gold-embroidered Zouave jackets and silver scimitars, all these and many more crowd on the cobbled ways, all with their distinctive dress and their own manner of speech; it is a kaleidoscope of colour and a mixing-pot of races.

You pass along the tunnel where the tent-makers and the saddlers sit, and through the gateway into the sudden daylight, and before you is the Castle. A huge moat with steep stone-revetted sides runs round it, and in the midst rises the mound with its coronal of mellow walls. Just in front of you, a little to the right, is the main gateway: a lofty tower four-square and with bronze-latticed windows set in carved stone frames stands rooted on the moat's bottom, and from its arched doorway springs a gossamer bridge with slender stone piles to span the ditch and join the outer gate-tower on the level beyond. The mound, which like that of Carchemish is in part natural rock and in part artificial, must have been the site of a fortress since very early days. Aleppo or Beroea was a city allied to

the lords of Carchemish: a Hittite inscription can still be seen built into the wall of one of its ancient mosques, and until recently there stood in the Castle gate-tower a lion supposed to be of Hittite workmanship, which may originally have been found in the older ruins of the acropolis; but a few years ago the lion was prised out and its head broken off by an enterprising German scientist, and we have no evidence left as to the early character of the Mound. The Castle that stands there to-day was mostly built by the Saracens, who held it against the crusaders. It replaced an earlier Byzantine fort which was captured from the Christians or their Syrian rivals by a daring *coup* in A.D. 638, when, as the tale goes, a single warrior, a giant slave named Dames, climbing up over the shoulders of his comrades, scaled the walls and so availed to admit the troops of Abu Obeidah. It is still regarded as a military stronghold; soldiers guard it, and when I paid my first visit there it was a depot for Turkish army stores: in one room were the rotting remains of bows and arrows, and several vaults were filled with gun-flints. But indeed it is no more than a ruin, with only the gate-tower and the outer walls still tolerably complete, while within, mosque and bailey are but a huddle of broken walls and grass-grown hollows; yet even so it is one of the finest examples left to us of Arabic military architecture of the twelfth century, and more than anything else does its dominant bulk give character and beauty to the town.

One cannot speak of Aleppo without a word about the old houses of the Christian quarter. From narrow lanes shadowed by blank walls and spanned by frequent bridges one passes through a small double doorway into a sunny courtyard, marble-paved and gay with orange-trees and flowering shrubs; in the centre is a fountain of rose-pink or honey-coloured marble, where the water runs from basin to basin along fantastic channels and gives to the air a pleasant coolness; the door- and window-frames are richly carved, and long gargoyles, in the form of grotesque lions, threaten from the roof-edge. On one side of the court is a wide arch with coloured voussoirs intricately cut, behind which lies a square open-air reception room, the *selamlik*, with its raised mosaic floor, its open-work balustrade, carved roof, and brightly-covered couches. Inside

the house are rooms with painted panelling or curious inlay of many woods, the ceilings of eighteenth-century gilt and lacquer all a wonder of flowers and arabesques and texts in red and blue and gold. It is hard to credit that the rich families who own these glorious old places should leave them for the cramped jerry-built villas of the western suburb, but so fashion wills, and the neglected palaces are one by one falling to decay.

Beyond the castle and the open space of the camel-market stretches the Arab town. Here too, behind inhospitable-seeming walls, are exquisite interiors. You must stop outside the door and shout a warning, so that the women-folk may take refuge from the eyes of the intruding male, and only when the coast is clear may you pass into the court and so to the *selamlik*. Here—if you get right of entry at all, and that is none too easy—you will find lacquered ceilings and carved panelling, shelves crowded with old porcelain running round the rooms, and rich rugs on the matting-covered floors: here too are fountains and pavements of marble, black and white and *rosso antico*, and dais steps inlaid with many-coloured tiles of Damascus or of Anatolian glaze, and your coffee cup may be brought to you in holders of old filigree work, and preserved fruits in silver baskets of Selim II's time.

But I am not writing a guide-book to Aleppo, and God forbid that I should try to attract visitors to this still fairly unspoiled city of the East. I only wish to push home my indictment. Hitherto I have told of what Turkish government means in the villages of North Syria, and lest it be thought only natural that conditions should be backward and the abuse of power rife in the remote country-side, I would say something also about Ottoman rule over a beautiful and a historic city, a city whose population—put at a quarter of a million, but the figure is surely too high—is at least a large one, where business is considerable, where education is above the level normal in Turkey, but where the official class alone is Turkish, and the inhabitants, Moslem Arabs or Christian Syrians, Jews or Armenians, are all alike alien to their masters. Here if anywhere outside Stamboul, here in one of the most important towns of the Empire, the Committee of Union and Progress should have made its greatest efforts, should have installed its most enlightened officers, and justified itself by its works.

In 1912 the Municipal Council of Aleppo decided to raze the Castle, to fill up the moat with the debris of wall and mound, and on the level space so made to build a new "model" quarter with electric tramways running on an endless and an aimless joy-ride round the circle of the ditch. Quite apart from the question of vandalism, there were practical difficulties more than enough to damn the scheme, but these were never even discussed: a contract for the work of destruction was given out, and doubtless this much at least would have been done and the town's chief ornament reduced to an unsightly mass of rock and rubbish had not our urgent appeals to Constantinople resulted in an order forbidding the Castle to be touched. Another suggested "improvement" is to run a broad roadway with an electric tram-line through the heart of the bazaar; no business reasons have been adduced for this, and it might have been supposed that the terrible example of the existing main street would have prevented a second such experiment: but it means a change and a deal profitable to someone, so the scheme is only too likely to be carried out. The Young Turk reverses the sentiment of Theodoric the Goth, and in agreement with some local boards nearer home holds that the destruction of anything old is the truest progress.

But ill-judged though these projects were, they yet might seem to argue that the rulers of Aleppo are anxious after their lights to do something for the town. It is quite true that various schemes of reform have been from time to time put forward, but these, even when laudable in themselves, have only thrown into relief the hopeless inefficiency of the Turks or their corruption.

The local Minister for Public Instruction once approached me with a request which he quite clearly thought a moderate and simple one. He had started a National Public Library at Aleppo and wished me to ask the British Government to present thereto a copy of every book published in England! I told him that this was a big order, and asked what kind of works the library was to contain. He answered, every sort—history, poetry, novels, science, everything, and that in every language; there were no limits at all to his ideas. I wondered what buildings were to house this enormous collection,

but was assured that adequate accommodation had been provided already. So I went to visit the institution. I found that in the new offices of the Ministry two fair-sized rooms had been set apart, one as reading-room, the other as library proper, and in the latter a few ornamental bookcases had been installed, with a total capacity of perhaps three thousand volumes: the Minister showed me round with the greatest pride, and would not admit that his arrangements left anything to be desired or that his scheme was at all incommensurate with his space. Perhaps he was right after all, for he left Aleppo shortly afterwards, and I do not imagine that his successors would ever trouble themselves about the Library, and so the bookshelves are really not likely to be overcrowded for many years to come.

Lack of continuity is one of the great faults of the Turkish administration. One *Vali*, for example, is interested in roads, *i.e.* thinks that road-making will be a good source of income, so embarks on a far-reaching project, collects money by special taxation, gives out his contracts, and starts work with a flourish of trumpets. Then he is moved to another province. His successor finds that the road-contractors have already been bled for all that they are worth, and neither credit nor profit is to be got by following out another man's scheme: so the roads are left, very likely in a worse state than before the improvements were begun, and a pressing need is felt for new public buildings, for sanitation, or what not, and fresh taxation and a fresh set of contractors line the pockets of the new *Vali*.

At Aleppo a much-needed reform is that of the water supply. The Kuwaik, the only stream, is wellnigh exhausted by the irrigation channels of the gardens; when swollen by winter rains it sometimes floods out the low-lying quarter of the town, but in summer it is a mere trickle of water half lost in a broad bed of mud and shingle, which below the houses is no more than an open sewer. About five miles away there is a small spring whence water is brought on donkey-back and sold in the bazaar, but the supply is scanty. For the most part the town depends on stored water. Every house has its underground cistern to catch the drainage from courtyard and roof, and these cisterns, filled by the autumn and spring rains, suffice more or less throughout the hot months; but it is a precarious

and none too healthy system. One *Vali* tried the experiment of artesian wells. The wells were bored and towers for the windmills erected above them—low squat towers of solid stone, set in the most sheltered spots so that the delicate works might not be damaged by excess of wind. Then a difficulty arose about some part of the machinery, to whose cost the *Vali* would not agree. By the time the rest of the machinery was too rusty to have any value it was sold as old metal: the windmills which no obtrusive breeze had ever made to turn were dismantled, and the masonry towers were allowed to fall to gradual ruin.

But another *Vali* bethought him of another plan. Thirty miles or so above Aleppo, the Kuwaik runs but a few miles distant from another river, the Sajur, which has three times its volume: what more easy therefore than to dig a canal between the two, and so give Aleppo all the water it could want? It was true that if the Kuwaik alone sometimes caused serious floods, the Kuwaik *plus* the Sajur was likely to do considerable damage in spring-time, but that was a consideration which did not bother the Turk: the town required water and it was going to get it.

So the canal was dug, and a day was set apart for the opening ceremony. In a clear space in the gardens above Aleppo grand-stands were erected, gay with crimson bunting: all the local Ministers and the whole Consular corps were invited to attend: the *Vali* himself was to press the button which would give the signal for the last barrier of earth to be cut away, and the Mufti was to bless the waters when they came down in a healing flood to the parched city.

It was summer and the Kuwaik was low between its banks when the guests crowded the grand-stand, the button was pressed, and the canal was opened. All looked for the rise of the waters. For some time nothing happened, and then the anxious watchers saw the Kuwaik slowly shrinking and dwindling away before their eyes until where the shallow stream had run there was left but ooze and mud. The Turks had forgotten to take the levels, and their canal drained in the wrong direction; there was nothing to be done save to fill in the cutting and content themselves with the old inadequate supply.

Under the old regime telephones were forbidden in Turkey, as Abdul Hamid thought that they lent themselves too readily to the use of conspirators. The Sultan, though himself a good handicraftsman—I have seen beautiful specimens of cabinet-work made by him—had a rooted distrust of electricity.

But since the Young Turks came into power the advantage of the telephone, at least for Government purposes, has been realized, and in 1912 it occurred to the Chief of Police at Aleppo that his various police-stations ought to be thus connected up with each other and with his central office. The scheme was at once approved by the Municipal Council, for up to that time there was no such thing as a telephone in the city, and this would mark a distinct step forward on the path of civilization.

But the suggestion that tenders should be submitted by engineering firms was strongly opposed: the Municipality urged that to employ contractors was but to waste Government money and was quite unnecessary. "The Turks," they said, "are as civilized as any one else, and have nothing to learn from others: these European inventions present no difficulties for us. The necessary plant can be purchased in Germany, and we can put it up ourselves." Such patriotism recommended itself strongly to all the members, the outfit was purchased *en bloc*, and the telephone duly installed by the Council's own workmen.

But when the Chief of Police came to test his new machine he could get no answer from anywhere. The telephone would not work. The Municipal Council met and discussed the matter: they adjourned to examine the instruments and they met again to talk, but the cause of the failure remained a mystery. At last, and much against the grain, they called in an electrical engineer, who pointed out that whereas all else was in order the workmen who had put up the insulators had not seen the need of attaching the wires to these and so had as a rule wound them round the iron brackets or nailed them to the posts: the whole current was running to earth.

The Municipal Councillors were much disgusted at the stupidity of their workmen and soon had the oversight corrected, and once more the Chief of Police made trial of the telephone. He called up the most outlying of his branch

Carchemish: (*above*) The view looking south from the Acropolis.

(*below*) The South Gate.

offices and ordered all men attached thereto to report to him at a certain hour. When the hour struck the streets leading to headquarters were packed with a seething mob of policemen from every office in Aleppo, all trying to fight their way through to their Chief: again something had gone wrong, for this time instead of no one hearing the call everyone had received it.

The Council held no less than three agitated meetings to discuss the fresh fiasco, and at the third a prominent C.U.P.[1] man, who had lived long in Constantinople and had visited Germany, undertook to explain the matter. "The Council made a mistake at the outset," he declared, "in buying dry batteries: for a telephone, wet batteries are essential, and until you get these you can't possibly have any success." The Council were deeply impressed: of course that was the reason, and it was extraordinary that no one had remarked on it earlier: well, they must scrap the present batteries and get wet batteries from Germany. They did so, the Chief of Police repeated his experiment, and Aleppo again saw all its police force collected in a struggling mob round the central office. After a vain discussion and many mutual reproaches the Council threw its hand in and invoked the aid of a professional engineer. The expert pointed out that as they had only a single wire and no exchange board they could hardly have expected any other results; he offered to put in an exchange, but the Council were not going to be overridden like that by an outsider and a foreigner, and preferred to abandon the telephone.

Of all the towns I know, Aleppo was the worst paved. In the winter of 1913–14 cabs going along the new main street had to drive on the side-walk, because the roadway was too dangerous: in the space of a quarter of a mile on the only road between the city and the Bagdad Railway Station I have seen four carriages, all going to meet the same train, broken into bits in the ruts and holes: the minister responsible for the state of the streets incautiously stepped out of his cab in the principal square (the cab had stuck fast) and was nearly drowned in three feet of mud. The scandal became so crying that at last the cabmen, who found that no amount of employment repaid them for the damage done to carriage and horses, went on strike and brought traffic to a standstill.

[1] Committee of Union and Progress.

The Municipal Council, feeling that this matter was beyond their powers, had recourse to a Young Turk, a member of the Committee, who had recently come to Aleppo: as he was a native of Beirut, had lived in Berlin, and was rather a light of the Party of Progress, they felt that he would certainly solve the difficulty and were prepared to be bound by his recommendations.

After mature thought the expert produced his panacea: it was that all drivers of vehicles for public hire should be obliged to wear khaki uniforms of an approved pattern. The idea was hailed as a stroke of genius and at once put into law, and the Council felt that they had done all that could be expected of them.

Of course there was something behind this. The men had to procure their uniforms from the local government at an exorbitant price, and the profits might have formed a nucleus for a road-repairing fund: possibly too there was a notion that the drivers, once dressed in quasi-military uniform, would not be able to go on strike at pleasure: actually, the weather being cold, the cabmen hid their khaki under civilian cloaks or overcoats and soon forgot to wear it at all, while the profits on the uniforms disappeared through the usual channels.

As the cabmen, however, seemed ungrateful for what had been done, and the condition of the streets grew worse, a new plan was devised. A famous Egyptian singer had been engaged to give a series of performances in a garden-theatre and his coming had been advertised freely. When he reached Aleppo the Egyptian was dismayed to find that his concerts were forbidden by the Government. He went to the *Serai* to make inquiries, and was then told that the programme might be carried out provided that he gave an opening performance the gross takings of which should be made over to the Municipality for the paving of the streets. The artist had no choice but to agree, and then the local ministers and the members of the Council assumed the rôle of ticket-sellers: they went round to the wealthy Armenians and Christian Syrians and forced them to buy seats at five pounds apiece (I saw this being done myself), and as the garden-theatre was a large one they made a very handsome sum out of their concert. No plans for the road repairs had been made, and no estimates

drawn up: but three months later a number of cart-loads of soft local limestone were dumped down along the main street, making it finally impassable, and the heaps were still there when I last saw Aleppo. It is worth while remarking that fine hard stone can be quarried alongside the railway at Akhterin, thirty miles to the north, and that the Municipality owns an unexploited asphalt spring not a great distance from the town.

Even worse than the main street was the principal thoroughfare of the new Christian quarter: here our Consul, returning one night from a party, saw a two-horsed carriage just in front of him disappear bodily; it had fallen into an unprotected hole twenty feet deep, and the Consul had to fetch ropes to rescue the inmates. Granted that this state of things was rather abnormal, the reason for it was characteristic. The Arab town in Aleppo is served by open drains running down the middle of the streets, an unpleasant and malodorous system, but under an eastern sun not altogether insanitary. The southern quarter, with the bazaar, is drained into a great common sewer which when not choked up empties itself into the Kuwaik and makes of that unlucky stream a noisome swamp. The rest of the town has no common sanitary system, but each house or pair of houses is built over a soakage pit: these pits are foul in themselves and the more dangerous from their proximity to the drinking-water cisterns, which also lie below the houses.

The inhabitants of the street in question, one of the most aristocratic in Aleppo, appealed to the Municipality to install a proper drainage system connected up with the main sewer. The request, naturally, was refused. They then determined to carry out the scheme at their own expense, and, for a consideration, leave to do so was granted. Huge holes were dug in the road, and the intervening spaces were tunnelled: but then it was discovered that to connect with the town sewer was still forbidden and would mean more heavy expenditure in *baksheesh*, so some of the householders objected, and for a month or two work was stopped. Then they decided that if a proper system could not be obtained they might at least use their excavations for a common soakage-pit, which would be less noxious to their water-supply; so work was re-started. A few days later one of the labourers unearthed two or three bones at the bottom of his shaft: the discovery was reported, and the

Municipality accused the Christians of desecrating a Mohammedan graveyard! Again the work was stopped while the character and religion of the bones was under discussion, and at last a final embargo was put upon the whole drainage-scheme. The householders were not going to pay out any more money, the Council denied responsibility for the state of the road, and the result is that some of the best houses in Aleppo are only to be approached gingerly and with peril over mounds of sticky earth and past yawning crevasses; at night, as lamps are few and feeble, it is a street to be avoided.

One could tell innumerable stories of such incompetence on the part of the Turks when faced with the problems of city government: every Turkish town would give material evidence of the same in streets begun well but half blocked by rubbish and ending in cart-tracks, in buildings planned ambitiously and left half finished, in expensive machinery thrown aside to rust, in schemes promising on paper but childishly attempted or dropped as soon as money has been made by their exploitation. But it may be urged that this incompetence does not necessarily go hand in hand with corruption such as I have attributed to the Turkish officials of the great towns as freely as to their naturally more backward brethren of the outlying villages. Now, while making all allowance for an honest individual here and there, I do impute corruption to the major part, and perhaps I may be allowed to tell two stories in support of my charge: the first deals with a single officer, the second with a whole provincial government.

The Military Commandant of the Aleppo Vilayet, an official no less powerful than the *Vali*, received one day in 1913 a visit from a foreign antiquary, whom, as the good man is still alive, I will call Mr. X. The conversation touched on antiquities, and at once the Turk was full of a recent scandal. It appeared that a certain Baron von Oppenheim had been carrying out excavations in North Syria, and a report had reached the Government that he was not handing his finds over to them, as by the terms of his agreement he was bound to do; so when he came down country the Military Commandant had seized his luggage. The baron protested that the ninety odd packing-cases contained only the clothes and personal effects of his assistants, but they were opened and found to be full of antiqui-

One of the chariots on the Long Wall of Sculpture at Carchemish.

The staircase at Carchemish.

ties of all sorts, so they were promptly seized. The Turkish officer was full of self-satisfaction at his capture, and of reproaches against the German, who not only had broken his agreement but was stealing Government property and robbing Turkey of her historic monuments: he seems to have waxed quite eloquent and very wordy in his denunciations. When at last the subject was exhausted he turned to Mr. X. and asked to what he owed the pleasure of his visit. Mr. X. replied that he had heard indirectly that the Commandant's son was, illicitly, carrying out excavations on a promising medieval site: was that true?

" Well, as medieval Arabic is just in my line," said the antiquary, " I hoped that if your son found anything of interest I might be the first to see it, and perhaps I might be able to buy."

The Commandant said that he would write at once to his son telling him to hold over all finds for Mr. X.'s inspection.

" But of course," pursued Mr. X., " I should want to take the things home, which might be difficult, and I could only buy if I were sure that I had facilities for getting them out of the country."

" I quite understand that," answered the Commandant, " and I will undertake that anything you buy from *us* will pass through the Customs without the least trouble."

Whether or not he kept his promise I cannot say, but his readiness to make it speaks for itself.

It was in 1911, if my memory serves me, that a certain Frenchman living in Aleppo bought a plot of building-ground on which he proposed to erect a shop. In accordance with local by-laws, all plans and specifications for the building were sent in to the Government offices, and in due time were returned to him approved, with permission to begin work on the date proposed by him. But when early that morning the Frenchman went to see things started, he found the site occupied by soldiers under a sergeant, who refused admission to him and to his workmen, and said that the building had been forbidden.

The Frenchman, much perplexed, went to the *Serai*, and seeing the Minister concerned, asked for an explanation: none was forthcoming, but the prohibition remained absolute. So he went to his Consul and asked him to take the matter up.

The Consul saw the Minister, who deeply regretted that permission to build had been withdrawn, but insisted on its withdrawal: as he could give no reasons the Consul demanded to see the *Vali*, and referred the question to him. The *Vali* at first professed ignorance of the whole affair—probably with truth—but after consulting his subordinate, told the Consul that though the specifications were all in order, and had been approved, circumstances had since changed, and the Government had been obliged to rescind its permit. " I cannot explain it all," he said, " but it is little more than a matter of form: if your compatriot will submit his plans a second time, I have no doubt that they will be finally passed."

Then the would-be builder saw his mistake. He remembered that when he sent his papers in the first time there was one official whom he had failed to bribe: now he was being asked to make all the other payments over again, as well as to satisfy the one disappointed functionary; he explained this to the Consul.

The Consul was a strong man, and now an angry one. " You admit," he said to the *Vali*, " that the specifications were approved, and that permission was given to dig. I quite refuse to admit that any circumstances have arisen such as to invalidate the permit, and I insist that this gentleman be allowed to go on with his work unhindered."

The *Vali* politely regretted that this was impossible.

" Very well, then," said the Consul, " I shall tell my client to bring his workmen to the site at 6 a.m. to-morrow, and I shall go there myself to meet him. I shall wear uniform, and shall be accompanied by my *kavasses:* also, I shall be armed. If any soldier or officer sent by you attempts to stop the work being carried out, then, acting in my official capacity as representative of the French Republic, I shall shoot him on the spot. In wishing your Excellence ' good morning ', I beg you not to forget that the hour is fixed for 6 a.m."

The next morning the Consul appeared as he had promised to do, but there were no soldiers, nor was any further objection raised to the building of the Frenchman's shop; nor did the *Vali* ever show the least resentment for the Consul's high-handed action.

The salaries assigned by the Ottoman Government to its

civil servants are low in theory, and in practice are often reduced by fifty per cent, thanks to stoppages and forced contributions to supposedly national funds: it is hardly surprising therefore that these civil servants, who have little or no sense of public duty, follow in the steps of Verres and his Roman compeers, and recoup themselves by the plunder of their provinces. In town or country alike, the Turkish official, set in authority over an alien population, is a mere beast of prey, as incompetent as he is corrupt, and as corrupt as his opportunities allow: the skin-deep civilization of the Young Turk, while leaving him just as incompetent, has but increased his opportunities and helped to cloak his corruption. Even were it possible to reform the Turkish Civil Service, that would not avail to end abuses, for the real abuse is the fact of a Turkish Government over Arab Syria. I have seen enough of what that means to welcome any change whatsoever, if only to rid the country of that incubus which for centuries has lain so heavily upon it.

Chapter Four

CARCHEMISH

IN 1912, T. E. Lawrence and I drove from Aleppo northwards in the old-fashioned covered touring-wagons which had not yet been displaced by the motor—and the railway line, too, had still to be built—and after two days' journey were welcomed at Jerablus, then a squalid little village built alongside the ruins of Carchemish. We were welcomed, because though I was new to the country Lawrence had worked there throughout the previous season with Hogarth and Campbell Thompson and was therefore an old friend. Even in those early days Lawrence had acquired a marked ascendancy over the Arab workmen, partly by his genuine interest in and sympathy with them, partly because his impish humour was of a sort that they could relish. One instance of it might be recounted. Hogarth had made his headquarters in the one tolerably decent house in Jerablus, and the Government had insisted on his having with him a guard of Turkish soldiers. One day one of them complained of illness and Lawrence administered a dose of whisky, which so pleased the soldier that a day or two later he came and demanded more. Since there was nothing the matter with him Lawrence refused and, when the man turned from pleading to sheer insolence, ordered him out of the house; the man got obstreperous and threateningly demanded what right a foreign unbeliever had to give orders to a Turkish soldier? What power had he? "What power? I'll show you," said Lawrence and, taking two glass tumblers, half filled each with water and put into one the contents of the white packet of a Seidlitz powder, and into the other the contents of the blue packet; then he said to the soldier, "Take these glasses, one in each hand, and tell me, is the water in them hot or cold?" "Cold," said the soldier.

" Right. You ask what powers I have. Can I make that cold water boil without fire? " The answer was that of course he could not. Lawrence passed his hands over the glasses, muttered " Abracadabra " and told the soldier to pour the water from one glass into the other, and of course the mixture began to foam and bubble. The soldier did not wait to feel whether the temperature changed; with a howl of dismay he flung the glasses from him and fled, to return soon afterwards and swear that in future Lawrence could command him in everything.

Hogarth's had been only an experimental season. I was starting on a long-term project of excavation and, having no desire to stop in the village, began at once to build a house on the site of Carchemish, living there under canvas until such time as the house should be ready. It was a romantic spot.

From the line of low hills at the foot of which the railway station now stands, the ground, almost flat, slopes very gently down towards the River Euphrates, making that fertile plain from which the village of Jerablus draws its life ; but to the north of the village that gradual slope is broken by a long grass-clad mound which rises as steeply as earth will stand from a shallow trench; it runs parallel with the river, interrupted only by one V-shaped notch, and then turns sharply round to meet the river's bank; this great earth-work is the wall of the Inner City of ancient Carchemish. Pass through the notch, which is the old West Gate, and you are in a world apart; on the landward sides the high walls shut out from view whatever lies beyond; on the east the broad hurrying waters of Euphrates cut you off from the barren face of the Mesopotamian plateau, and in the north-east corner, towering above the river and the little tributary stream that comes down here between steep gravel banks, is the scarred bulk of the acropolis. And the place was entirely deserted. A few generations ago the last of the Arab squatters left " the Fortress " and migrated to the village ; nobody any longer came here except the shepherd who led the sheep and goats of Jerablus through the South Gate to pasture on the short grass that grew between the stones; for the whole area was one litter of broken stone.

In the earlier stages of our work, when Hittite remains were

comparatively few, that which most struck the eye was the wreckage of Roman Europus. From the south gateway, whose massive jambs still stood three feet high or so above the scattered debris in the gap of the earth rampart, a long straight street ran almost to the foot of the acropolis. Lines of masonry, with column bases here and there and the broken shafts of the great colonnade, marked its course across the grass; on the edge of the side-walk were the shop-fronts with the long narrow grooves into which the shutters were let down at night; here was the curved wall of a basilica apse, here fragments of moulded architrave with boldly-cut letters spelling out the titles of Cæsar. The gateway has been cleared away now to lay bare the Hittite gate beneath, and many of the walls have also had to go. Though one makes beforehand all such records as plans and photographs and writing will afford, it is a sorry task to demolish finally these ruins which have so long defied the wastage of time, and especially so to one who has worked on Roman sites in England where these things would in themselves amply repay a season's labour; but such destruction is unavoidable where one city overlies another and the lower strata are the more precious. Of course nothing is destroyed except in the sure and certain hope of finding something better underneath, and there is at least comfort in the thought that in North Syria there are perhaps a hundred sites where Roman towns stand better preserved than at Carchemish and where no lower levels of discovery need cause their overthrow.

I must admit that one's sentimental unwillingness to remove these Roman buildings is increased at the start and alloyed with exasperation as work goes forward by their remarkable solidity. To find a promising Hittite area overlaid by beds of concrete twenty feet across and six or seven feet thick, concrete as hard to-day as when the lime and flint were first mixed, and capped with building-stones each a yard square—this is enough to irritate the mildest temper, and one takes a malicious pleasure in carting off the last fragments of what one first attacked with genuine regret. Sometimes a length of wall, concrete foundations and heavy masonry, may be cautiously undercut until the earth trickles from beneath it in warning and the men are called away, and the whole will come crashing down in fragments on the Hittite pavement: more often blasting must be

employed, and this, too, needs careful work, for the Romans not infrequently threw in Hittite sculptures as a foundation for their concrete, and this must be broken up by the charge without damage to what it may conceal; so it is a slow and a laborious job, and one is thankful when the last truck-load of jagged Roman stuff is tilted into the river and the picks can turn again to deal with kindly earth.

In that sequestered spot, where the monuments of Rome showed on every side and those of the older Hittite kings lay immediately below, the past and the present seemed very close together, nor did the intrusion of the living Arab strike a discordant note. One evening Lawrence and I were walking back across the ruins to our tents when we passed a shepherd boy seated on the ground shearing a sheep which he gripped between his knees. The job finished, he flung away his knife; it was a stone knife! He picked up two big flints from a pile beside him and with a few deft blows knapped out a new knife and, seizing another sheep, started to cut the fleece with clean broad sweeps of the blade. Lawrence asked him whether he hadn't any better tool, but he said, "No; we used to use iron scissors, but they're not nearly so good as flint"; and one thought of the men who had used here tools like that before either Roman or Hittite came to Carchemish.

We have found the traces of such. Starting at the top of the acropolis mound, which is a hundred feet and more in height, we have dug down over fifty feet through the accumulated debris of the ages, and still human remains meet us. Arab huts, only just hidden by the grass, give place to Armenian: beneath these are Byzantine ruins, stratum below stratum, three or four building periods to be distinguished in a few feet's depth; then the scanty remains of the Roman fort which one of the Legions built to secure Europus ford; then Greek things dating from the Roman time back to the second century B.C. Below these comes Carchemish of the Hittites, again marked off into distinct levels and periods, of which the latest is the fort built or remodelled by Sargon the Assyrian when in 717 B.C., after nearly half a century of war, he had captured the capital of the Hittite Empire, and the earliest may date back to 2000 or 2500 B.C. Four thousand years of history, of sieges, and of changing population, and we are yet only some twenty feet down in

the great mound; behind these centuries stretches the incalculable period of the prehistoric age. In the sides of our trenches, below the lowest Hittite floor-level, you can see mud-brick walls and floors of beaten earth; under the floors the graves of those who once lived here, skeletons laid out at length in stone cists crowded with clay vessels of offerings, and farther down broken bones in jars, types of burial differing with the ages—but still the walls go down and down. Now flint implements and weapons are found in the floors or in the rubbish between the walls, and fragments of brightly-painted neolithic pottery show up in contrast to the drab waves of the upper strata: there is the whole history of Carchemish in that earth cutting. But here, thirty or fifty feet down, we can speak no more of dates nor calculate the lapse of time; the workers of the Stone Age who first held the fort on the rocky promontory came before the beginnings of history, and how long since they lived and died we have no means of telling.

Actually the acropolis gave us relatively little that belonged to the kings of the Hittites; the deep-set Roman foundations had destroyed all the buildings of the earlier date. The best-preserved ruins of Hittite Carchemish lay close to the foot of the mound.

Along the Euphrates bank there was no earth rampart as on the landward sides, but instead a great wall faced with slabs of black basalt beautifully fitted together. Against the slope of the acropolis the wall was breached by a massive water-gate whose inner walls and buttresses were richly adorned with carvings in basalt and limestone.

In all Hittite buildings of the better class the lowest part of the walling, to a height of three feet or so, is faced with stone slabs, a podium as it were, on which rests the brickwork of the upper courses. Sometimes these slabs are plain, sometimes covered with inscriptions or reliefs, and where this is the case the architect often preferred to use blocks of basalt and of limestone alternately, thus giving a black-and-white effect which is distinctly pleasing and original. Originally the white limestone reliefs were coloured: perhaps the basalt slabs too were touched up with paint, just as the Egyptians touched up their dark granite sculptures: the polychrome scheme must have been most gorgeous, how gorgeous it is difficult to realize to-day,

Carchemish: (*above*) The Seven Captains.

(*below*) The great relief at the foot of the staircase.

when the soft outlines and flattened planes of the limestone sculptures tend to make them somewhat feeble, and only the sharp-cut basalt figures preserve their due balance of light and shade.

From the water-gate a broad road—it must have been the Processional Way used for State ceremonies—runs inland, past a small temple whose ruins we found on the left, to an open square lying at the foot of the acropolis. Facing you as you come up, on the far side, is what we call the Long Wall of Sculpture. This wall differs from any other yet found in that its frieze of sculpture is not on the ground-level, but stands some four feet up over courses of plain and heavy masonry. The reliefs, on slabs of limestone and basalt placed alternately, had slipped from their places and lay against the wall's foot, or were embedded in the concrete foundations of the Roman buildings which overlay the silt; but all that have yet come to light have been replaced in position, and though some are missing, there are enough left to make this frieze of warriors a very imposing thing. At the rear of the line come foot-soldiers marching two by two, in front are chariots whose horses trample upon the beaten enemy, or their lords shoot down the flying with arrows; on the last slab, bringing the procession to a halt, as it were, stands the figure of the goddess, Ishtar or some kindred type, naked and holding her breasts, the symbol and the spirit of the temple to which the army brings its triumph. In the middle of the row, between the chariots and the footmen, is a slab, the largest of all, inscribed with the story of their warfare: one cannot read it as yet, but the severed hands and heads that end the text betray the meaning and confirm the victory.

Beyond the Ishtar slab and at right angles to the Processional Wall is a wide flight of steps that leads from the square up the hillside, which was terraced to take the lower rooms of a palace whose main quarter must have been upon the top of the mound. The stairway was lined on either side with sculptures in relief, all of basalt, and at its head was an entrance-door flanked by lions carved in the same black stone; smaller doorways to right and left gave access to the terrace chambers. It has suffered much from the ravages of time, but, in spite of all, the broad staircase in its ruined setting is a fine example of

Hittite architecture, and gives a monumental aspect to this corner of the public square. On the right of the stair's foot, balancing the Processional Wall and happily framing the stairway, stands a huge slab of basalt whereon are represented the three gods of the Hittite trinity. This sculpture must have remained exposed throughout all the periods which succeeded the fall of Carchemish; it was above ground when George Smith visited Jerablus in 1876, and it is remarkable indeed that it should have been neither shifted nor defaced.

On the south side of the square is another palace whose whole front is adorned with sculptures. Fronting the stairway we have a long series of mythological scenes, strange monsters in conflict, an archer mounted on a camel, the fever-demon, the Lord of Thunder and the Lord of Beasts, black slabs and white, whose subjects seem to stand in little relation one to another. Then the wall turns back to form a re-entrant angle, and the pictured scenes change: instead of ill-understood gods and demons we see here a row of shield-bearing warriors arrayed in tall plumed helmets, greaves and breastplates, strangely like Athenian soldiers of the fifth century B.C., who march in twos toward the palace door: the wall turns again, and at the head of their men the seven captains of the host advance, armed each in the fashion of his corps, with bow or sword, heavy spear or light javelin; the leader carries the olive branch of peace or victory. In the angle between officers and men a statue of the god Hadad stands on a lion-supported base; in strong contrast to the free and delicate carving of the reliefs is this clumsy columnar figure, a type which old convention doubtless constrained to lines so much ruder than the living art of the day: the god was found thrown down and in fragments, and we were really sorry to restore him to his pristine ugliness against the background of the Greek-looking spearmen and the exquisite captains.

Beyond the chief captain the wall turns south again, leading to the palace gate, and on it is figured the procession which comes out thence to welcome the conquering army. A long and beautifully-cut inscription forms the corner-stone, and then we have the king and all his family. The royal children are represented twice over on the same slab: above, they march soberly in procession, but in the lower panel they have relapsed

to a more congenial pastime, and are seen tossing knuckle-bones or playing whip-top, while the queen or nurse brings up the rear carrying the baby of the house—leads too its pet animal at the end of a string! It is a charmingly domestic group, and by a pretty touch of sentiment even the animal's name is duly inscribed on the stone above its head.

A group of musicians and a sphinx (both in the older Hittite style) flank a side stairway, and then the procession is renewed; the statue of the goddess is borne forth, and behind her come priests and priestesses in a long line reaching back to the doorway proper, which is flanked with further sculptures and its basalt side-posts covered with inscriptions. On the other side of the door is a great statue carved in the round, a seated god throned upon twin lions. You pass through the gateway between the guard-rooms, and an inner gate leads you to a court-yard whose walls are also sculptured in relief, and show lions and stags and huntsmen armed with bows.

I have written elsewhere about the ruins of Carchemish, and in any case a detailed description of them would be out of place in such a book as this; perhaps I have indulged overmuch in detail already, seeing that the object was no more than to give the general setting of my stories of Jerablus. But the spirit of the place, of this ruin set in the wide, wind-swept, treeless land, is hard to give in words. Cross the Kala'at where the lichened Roman columns strew the grass, and walk down the earth slope to those lower levels which are Hittite ground, and you are in a strange world wherein anything might happen. To your right the Euphrates runs past in a bold curve, its brown waters eddying and leaping in their haste: the acropolis mound, scarred and seamed with trenches, rises huge and high above the river; landward the sweeping line of the walls shuts out all beyond, and gives the feeling that this is still a fenced city. You stand there on flagged pavement or cobbled court whose polished stones have not known the tread of man's feet since Carchemish went down in smoke and tumult two thousand five hundred years ago, and about you and above are the long rows of sculptured figures, gods and beasts and fighting men, and inscriptions in honour of forgotten kings; statues of old deities; wide stairways and gates, where the ashes of the doors still lie in the corners of the threshold; column-

bases whose shafts were of cedar and their capitals of bronze wrought in patterns of nets and pomegranates—and the scarlet anemones push up between the stones, and the lizards sun themselves on the walls of palace or temple, and the spring wind drives the dust over the ruins of the imperial city. Very magnificent must Carchemish have been when its sculptures were gay with colour, when the sunlight glistened on its enamelled walls, and its sombre brick was overlaid with panels of cedar and plates of bronze; when the plumed horses rattled their chariots along its streets, and the great lords, with long embroidered robes and girdles of black and gold, passed in and out of the carved gates of its palaces; but even now, when it lies deserted and in heaps, it has perhaps in the melancholy of its ruin found a subtler charm to offset the glory of its prime. Melancholy it is, like all ruins; but come down before the luncheon-hour is quite over, when the men are lounging at ease on the great staircase or clustered under the shadow of the Processional Wall, or when, perhaps, a couple of wandering minstrels have been enticed there, and to the sound of their shrill pipe and drum half a hundred men are circling and swaying in the palace square—the sadness of old things is forgotten them. These idlers in their gaudy dresses, like flowers in a rock-garden, those careless brown dancers, could find no background more fitting than the tumbled stones, the steps rising like a theatre set for their outdoor play, the row of sculptured chariots showing off their life against its frozen age.

Chapter Five

HAJ WAHID—AND OTHERS

AMONGST all the natives whom we employed at Jerablus the most amusing character is Haj Wahid. An Arab from Aleppo, he is a big brawny fellow, handsome, vainglorious, a lover of finery, honest and faithful, and a brave man for all his boasting. His besetting weakness is for strong drink, the curse of the Arab town, thanks to which he is, at forty, no longer the man he should be; but he is so far case-hardened by habit that his excesses seldom force themselves upon one's notice, and as a house-servant he leaves little to be desired.

The Haj was in younger days *kavass* at the British Consulate in Aleppo, and considers therefore that he owes to the English an allegiance which far outweighs his duties as an Ottoman subject. The post must have suited him to perfection, for on the one hand vanity could ask no more than the magnificence of a *kavass*' embroidered kit, and on the other his office protected him from the results of his outrageous conduct. For it is as well to admit at once that Haj Wahid is not a model of propriety; and a lady missionary who once at Jerablus fell in love with his charming manners as a table-waiter had not heard more than half his record before she was refusing to be served by a man who was "a cold-blooded murderer and worse." It was, in fact, the exuberance of his spirits which in the end severed his connexion with the Consulate.

The Haj's house at Aleppo lay just outside the old city walls and facing the Antaki Gate, a busy corner where three roads converge, and the country-folk, bringing their goods to and from the market, jostle each other under the narrow vaulted portal. This strategic position suggested a form of amusement of which Haj Wahid was extremely fond. After a prolonged

drinking-bout he would ensconce himself on the flat house-roof, and thence with rifle and revolver would hold up all the traffic of the Gate. To try to run the gauntlet was to be made a target for the Haj's rifle; did some camel-driver disregard his shouts of prohibition, a bullet striking at his feet would emphasize the order; and sometimes for a whole day at a time the gateway would be deserted and the crowd perforce go about their business by devious paths. As the house of the consular *kavass* enjoyed what amounted to extra-territorial rights, the town authorities were practically helpless. A nervous policeman would edge along beneath the house-wall, out of range from the watcher on the roof, and call in plaintive tones, " Dear Haj Wahid, oh, my brother, *please* let the people come through," and the Haj would answer with stertorous curses on the mothers and female kin of all policemen, and would fire a few random shots into the archway to show that the embargo still held good; and it was only when sleep brought better judgment that the public would be allowed once more to use the Antaki Gate.

Naturally a *kavass* whose amusements were of so violent an order was little loved by the authorities, and though the Consulate protected so long as might be a really valuable servant the end came at last. Haj Wahid was carrying on a pronounced flirtation with the daughter of a Mohammedan house, whose male members determined to put a stop to scandal. In the small hours of one night the *kavass*, resplendent in full uniform, had made his way out from the lady's apartments into the courtyard of her house, when he was set upon by her four brothers and two others of her kinsmen. The six were armed with swords and revolvers; Haj Wahid had a revolver and the curved scimitar of his official dress. A Homeric conflict took place in the dark, and only ended when four of the assailants lay dead on the ground, one man had fallen badly wounded, and the last had fled for his life; Haj Wahid was picked up next morning in the Consulate garden, unconscious and half dead from loss of blood, with eight wounds in his head and cuts all over him. He recovered quickly enough, but the family of his victims clamoured for vengeance; the Government took up the case with interest, and the Consul, remarking that one murder or two might have been overlooked, but four

in a night was too much of a good thing, had to let the law take its course. Haj Wahid, the victim, as he still maintains, of a gross miscarriage of justice, was sentenced to imprisonment for life and shut up in the Aleppo gaol.

He did not serve his full sentence, and the manner of his getting out was peculiar. After rather more than two years the Haj was bored to desperation; so when one of his friends came to push some food for him through the bars (in those days the Aleppo Government did not feed its prisoners, and if their friends did not look after them they starved) he asked anxiously whether he could write? The friend could. Excellent; then, if he had any love for his friend, he must fetch pen and paper and write a letter—for Haj Wahid was quite illiterate. The friend did so, disposed himself to the intricate task and inquired to whom the letter was to be written? "To God." "But you can't write to *God*!" "Of course you can; just you write what I tell you." The letter took the normal form of politeness—"To God, the All-powerful, the All-merciful, from Haj Wahid, His humble servant"—after which it seems to have dropped into the less formal second person: "Dear God, I am sick to death of this place and if You leave me here longer I shall indeed die. Only You can get me out; I take refuge in the mercy of God. I have never been one to worry You with prayers, and I wouldn't now if there were any other way, so, as it's just this once, listen; and let me out," and he inked his thumb and told his friend to seal the letter. The friend asked how on earth he expected to deliver it. That, said the Haj, was simple; it merely had to be put in running water, and it would go at once. So the letter was deposited in the Kuwaik, the muddy stream that flows through Aleppo, and a week or so later an official bearing a stamped document and escorted by four soldiers came into the prison and called the Haj's name and told him that he was free to go; and out he went. How it all happened I do not know, but Haj Wahid had no doubts on the subject. The Consulate could hardly take back into its employ so turbulent a character, but when the Carchemish Expedition started Haj Wahid was conscientiously recommended as a servant, and he was engaged as cook, dragoman, and general factotum, nor has he failed to give full satisfaction. Some of his ways are peculiar. He has

a passion for firearms and is never without a revolver in his belt, even in the kitchen—in fact, should he be trying his hand at a new dish, he will sling a rifle too over his shoulder to give himself confidence for the task. A really good cook, thanks to lessons taken in the Consulate kitchen at Aleppo, he is fond of attempting novelties but is always nervous as to the result. The dish will be put down in front of me, and then without a word the Haj will take a bottle—any bottle—from the medicine cupboard and place it by the side of my plate as a sign of danger; then he will stand anxiously in the background waiting for the verdict. Should either of us make a remark in which the word " good " occurs (and we generally will strain a point to do so) there comes a fervent " *El hamdu 'l'Illah!* " (" Thank God! ") from behind, and Haj Wahid slips off to the kitchen to assure Ahmed the house-boy that he is the greatest *chef* in existence.

But Haj Wahid has done more for us than cook. He is dragoman, ready to act as interpreter, to drive a bargain, to ride out on messages (and his airs and graces on horseback are a sight to see!), or to entertain guests in our absence, and generally to protect our interests. It was during our absence in the summer of 1912 that he showed his mettle, quite in the old Aleppo vein, in what might be called the last siege of Carchemish.

I have remarked elsewhere that we started on good terms with the Germans who were stationed at Jerablus for the work of the Baghdad Railway, and amongst other things let them cart off for their new buildings such stones from our diggings as had no archæological value. The chief engineer, one Contzen, was, however, a man with whom it was hard to maintain friendly relations. He was a youngish man, tall and powerfully built, but running to fat, coarse-faced, and ill-mannered and of that bullying type which thinks to show strength by loud shouting. He came to me towards the end of our spring season of 1912 and told me that he required large quantities of earth for making the embankment which would lead to the abutment of the bridge, and that, as rock lay close below the surface on the slope leading down to the river, earth was difficult to get; he supposed, he said, that I would have no objection to his digging away the earth mounds which lay just inside my concession and close to the line of his railway.

Now these earth mounds so lightly spoken of were nothing less than the city walls of Carchemish, so I told him that I was sorry but could not allow anything of the sort. He started to argue the point, and when I remained firm tried to bluster; but I told him that, while I sympathized with his feelings, I was there for archæological purposes, and could not permit such an act of vandalism as he proposed; if he liked to take the earth from my rubbish-mounds he might do so, but the walls of Carchemish could not be touched. Fuad Bey, our Commissaire, was equally emphatic, and in the name of the Government absolutely forbade the Germans to encroach in any way upon our concession. Contzen went away in a towering rage, but I supposed that the matter was finished and gave it little further thought, though from that day all intercourse between the two European camps came to an abrupt end.

When our work closed down for the summer Haj Wahid was left in charge of the house and of the site. I went off to England, and Lawrence retired to the Lebanon to spend the hot weather in the hills. Then Contzen decided to act.

Gossiping in the village one day, Haj Wahid learnt that the Germans were recruiting local labour for the digging away of the Kala'at walls. Hardly believing the story, but feeling that it was his duty to inquire, he went up to the German camp and saw Contzen. He asked the engineer whether he really proposed to destroy the walls, and Contzen unblushingly assured him that he was about to do so with my full approval. The Haj expressed his doubts about this, and Contzen lost his temper and said that he was going to do as he pleased whether I liked it or not. Haj Wahid said that without orders from me he could not allow the work to be done; the engineer told him that he was going to start the next day, and cursing the Arab for his impertinence ordered him out of the camp.

Haj Wahid at once sent a man to the telegraph office at Birijik with a wire for Lawrence in the Lebanon, telling him of Contzen's intentions and saying that pending further orders he would hold up the work. Early the next morning, armed with a rifle and two heavy revolvers, he went out on to the Kala'at, and took up his position on the top of the threatened wall. About a hundred workmen under German supervision were

laying down a light railway from the embankment to the foot of the mound; but no sooner were the rails in place and digging about to start than Haj Wahid, appearing on the sky-line, announced that he would shoot the first man who drove a pick into the walls, and would follow that up by shooting any German within range. Now, many of the Arabs collected below were our own workmen, who had not the least intention of acting against our wishes; the rest had heard of Haj Wahid's reputation and were not prepared to risk their skins for the sake of the Germans; so they retired to the far end of the line and sat down to watch events. The Germans protested, but in vain. Contzen himself appeared upon the scene and threatened, but the Haj merely levelled his rifle and warned him to keep his distance; the engineer knew that violence would only lead to trouble, so did not attempt it.

All that day the two parties sat and watched each other, and on the next day the comedy was repeated; Haj Wahid single-handed held the walls of Carchemish, and the breaching party remained at the far end of their railway. That night after dinner the Germans started a little revolver practice in their compound, shooting at a lighted candle; the Haj climbed up the mound again and put half-a-dozen rifle-bullets over their heads, shouting to them to stop their noise and go to bed —and the Germans obeyed. The third day passed like the first two, but Haj Wahid was getting impatient; he had received a telegram from Lawrence, now in Aleppo, telling him to hold on, but this passive way of doing things did not appeal to him. So he sent another telegram to say that the Germans seemed persistent and he therefore proposed to cut matters short by going up the next morning to their camp and killing Contzen; he ended with the hope that this course would meet with Lawrence's approval. Then he found a friend to whose care he confided the charge of his wife and his beloved son, made his will, got very drunk, and prepared to do and die on the morrow.

Meanwhile Lawrence had hurried to Aleppo and hunted up Fuad Bey and the local Minister of Public Instruction, who includes the Department of Antiquities in his official province. The Minister was horrified at the German proposals, but too nervous to forbid them on his own responsibility. Fuad Bey

could hardly do anything independently of his superior officer, but sent off urgent telegrams to Constantinople, calling upon the Minister there to interfere at once: Lawrence also telegraphed, and then, having sent his wire of encouragement to Haj Wahid, perforce waited for the authorities to act. For once Constantinople moved quickly. At one and the same time Lawrence received the Haj's programme for shooting Contzen, and orders arrived for the Minister of Public Instruction to go in person to Jerablus and stop the intended desecration. Lawrence went off to find the local Director of the Baghdad Railway, whom he unearthed at a dinner-party, and asked leave to send an urgent wire to Jerablus by the Company's line. The director refused. Lawrence insisted that it was a matter of life and death, and, in answer to the question whose life was at stake, said that if the telegram was not sent our cook would shoot the chief engineer the following morning. The director laughed at the idea of an Arab cook daring to kill a German, and again refused, whereupon Lawrence said that he would ask the British Consul to come round and get the refusal in writing, together with a statement that the director assumed all responsibility for the consequences arising from it. This threat made matters look more serious, and in the end the telegram was despatched, instructing Haj Wahid to offer no further obstacle to the destruction of the walls. Lawrence did not choose to inform the German of the orders which had just been received from Stamboul, but merely arranged with him that an electric trolley should be put at the disposal of the Minister for Public Instruction early next morning. The director, who gathered from the wording of the telegram that our opposition to the railway schemes had collapsed, made no difficulty about supplying the trolley.

Consequently, next day Haj Wahid stopped in the house, prepared to drown his disappointment in *raki*, and Contzen, finding no watcher on the wall, triumphantly set his men to work. Two or three feet of earth and mud-brick facing had been removed, when of a sudden the Minister (whose temper had not been improved by a long journey before breakfast) appeared on the scene, accompanied by Lawrence, and peremptorily forbade the work, upbraiding Contzen in the most direct terms for his breach of faith. The discomfiture of

the attacking party was complete. The engineer had there and then to pull up his rails and dismiss his workmen, and Haj Wahid was officially congratulated on the part he had played. The fact that he had been made to look ridiculous in the eyes of the whole country-side did not increase Contzen's love for us, and from that day till the time when he was removed to another sphere there was open war between our camp and that of our neighbours.

The natives, of course, looked upon the whole thing as a contest for supremacy between Germans and English; the former had made themselves generally unpopular, and the Arabs, including those in railway employ, lost no opportunity of having a dig at the Germans. As the two camps were not a quarter of a mile apart, collisions were apt to be frequent, and at the least sign of trouble tools would be thrown down and the men—ours and theirs alike—would be clamouring to be led against the engineers. Contzen, indeed, complained that I never went to see him without having two hundred armed men at my back; and it was fortunate that, on that occasion at least, I could retort that the men were his own employees, over whom I could not be expected to have any control, so that if they did look threatening it was not my affair, as he had only to order them away. He tried to do so, and I was not surprised when they picked up stones by way of answer, and in the end I had to send them back myself to their work on the German embankment.

The following story may throw some light on the reason for the Arabs' attitude.

Our house-boy, Ahmed, was coming back one day from shopping in the village and passed a gang of natives working on the railway whose foreman owed him money. Ahmed demanded payment of the debt, the foreman refused, and a wordy wrangle followed. A German engineer on his rounds saw that work was being hindered by an outsider, but instead of just ordering him off, he called up the two soldiers of his bodyguard, seized the unfortunate Ahmed, and without any inquiry as to the origin or rights of the dispute, had him soundly flogged. Ahmed returned to the house full of woe, and as I was away Lawrence went up to the German camp to seek redress.

He found Contzen and told him that one of his engineers had assaulted our house-servant and must accordingly apologize. Contzen pooh-poohed the whole affair; but when Lawrence showed that he was in earnest, consented to make inquiries, and sent for the engineer in question. After talking to him, he turned angrily on Lawrence. " I told you the thing was a lie," he said; " Herr X. never assaulted the man at all; he merely had him flogged."

" Well, don't you call that an assault? " asked Lawrence.

" Certainly not," replied the German. " You can't use these natives without flogging them. We have men thrashed every day—it's the only method."

" We've been here longer than you have," Lawrence retorted, " and have never beaten one of our men yet, and we don't intend to let you start on them. That engineer of yours must come down with me to the village and apologize to Ahmed in public."

Contzen laughed. " Norsense," he said, and then, turning his back, " the incident is closed."

" On the contrary," Lawrence remarked, " if you don't do as I ask I shall take the matter into my own hands."

Contzen turned round again. " Which means——? " he asked.

" That I shall take your engineer down to the village and there flog him."

" You couldn't and you daren't do such a thing! " cried the scandalized German; but Lawrence pointed out that there was good reason for assuming that he both dared and could, and in the end the engineer had to make his apology *coram publico*, to the vast amusement of the villagers.

It will readily be believed that the slave-driving principles enunciated and practised by Contzen did not make for popularity, and one cannot blame the workmen if they were always ready to side against their German masters. Our own gang regarded them as natural enemies. Lawrence and I were sincerely anxious to avoid trouble, so that the two parties seldom came into actual collision, and when they did the result was generally more laughable than serious: but that was not our men's fault, for they were always trailing their coat-tails in front of the Germans. The most truculent of them all was

Haj Wahid, and once at least he went to quite inexcusable lengths. . . .

During a winter recess, when neither Lawrence nor I was at Carchemish and the Haj was left in charge, some one told him that the Germans were finding *antikas*. The truth was that in scraping the soil off the rock slope beyond the south gate for the making of their embankment they had unearthed a couple of Roman coffins rudely worked in soft limestone—things of no value or interest to us, but to the natives *antikas* and therefore ours by right of our profession. Haj Wahid went to investigate and found the labourers busily stripping the soil under the supervision of a German engineer, who was accompanied as ever by his armed Circassian guard and two Turkish soldiers. The work lay outside the Kala'at, where we had no conceivable right of interference, but that did not bother the Haj. He walked up to the German and asked what right he had to be digging up antiquities, pointing to the two coffins standing forlornly in the mud. Perhaps it was due to Haj Wahid's formidable reputation, perhaps merely from a wish to avoid trouble, that the engineer, instead of ordering him at once about his business, answered that he was perfectly within his rights, as he held permission for all that he was doing.

"Who gave you permission to find *antikas*?" repeated the cook.

The German, thinking that the Governor of the Province would be a name to conjure with, replied that it was the Kaimmakam of Birijik.

"The Kaimmakam of Birijik?" repeated the Haj scornfully; "but *I* am the Kaimmakam of Carchemish, and I tell you to stop."

This was too much for the German, who called to his two soldiers and ordered them to turn the intruder off the work.

"Oh, would you?" retorted Haj Wahid, and promptly knocked the engineer down, and seizing him then by the back of the neck proceeded to rub his face in the mud. "That will teach you how to behave to the Kaimmakam of Carchemish," he added, as he released his victim, and, forgetting all about the *antikas* that had caused the trouble, swaggered off to the gate of the Kala'at, while the soldiers stood undecided how to act, and the engineer was too busy getting the mud out of

his mouth to issue any further orders. Strange to say, the matter, which might have been serious enough, was allowed to drop, but it did not improve our relations with the railway.

The fact was that the German engineers at Jerablus were not capable of managing natives; they neither understood nor tried to understand them, and would not even trouble to see that they received just treatment. Employing as they did large numbers of workmen—far more than we had on our excavations—they could not be expected to cultivate those personal relations that we always encouraged with our men; and it was the misfortune of the Germans rather than their fault that their employees had for them no individuality, but were mere numbers in a gang, a thing not a little galling to the independent spirit of the Arabs. But it was their fault that these employees were mercilessly exploited by sub-contractors and by foremen, and could never appeal against the injustice that was regularly meted out to them. The vast proportion of the Company's work (I speak, of course, of the section with which I am familiar) was let out to sub-contractors; these were in many cases men of straw, who ought never to have been allowed to take up a contract. Any one who could speak a little German or French and who wore European clothes was likely to get his tenders accepted without further inquiry, or to be taken on as foreman for such work as the Company was doing itself; and as most of the Germans knew nothing of the language or the country these fellows had a free hand. Their sole object was, with or without the collusion of the engineers, to cheat both the Company and the workmen. I know of cases where a contractor's net profits were as much as five times the sum for which his whole work could have been carried out; and the payment of the men's wages gave a seldom-neglected opportunity for sharp practice. The system was bound to lead to trouble, and though robbery from the Company was always hushed up, yet the wrongs of the workmen at last found violent expression.

A contract for digging and sifting ballast at Jerablus had been given to a penniless adventurer who had obtained more than one advance in cash for the payment of the several hundred men, mostly Kurds, employed by him. After a time the labourers' complaints grew too loud to be disregarded, and Hoffmann, Contzen's successor as chief engineer at the station,

learnt to his disgust that not a penny of the sums advanced had found its way to the pockets of the workmen. Hoffmann was a well-meaning man, a great improvement on his forerunner, and he announced his intention of paying the workmen directly instead of handing the money to the contractor for further embezzlement. This was a step in the right direction, but, unluckily for himself, when pay-day came he went by the contractor's books without asking how the figures therein were obtained.

The first man who was called up to take his wages had been working for six weeks and had been promised fifteen piastres a day—a very tempting sum—but in the books he was entered as earning something like six piastres, and from this all sorts of deductions were made, *e.g.* for bread, which the men never received, for water, which they got for themselves out of the river, and so on, with the result that Hoffmann handed over to the fellow as his due the generous sum of twenty-seven and a half piastres for his six weeks' work. The Kurd objected, and that in strong terms: Hoffmann's Circassian guard promptly answered by slashing his face with a whip, the man picked up a stone, and his example was followed by the Kurds waiting behind him, and then the Circassian shot. In a few minutes a regular fight had started, and when, attracted by the noise of firing, Lawrence and I ran up the grassy mount of the old walls, we saw a very pretty little skirmish going on just below us. The Germans held the embankment of the permanent way and a small stone hut on the near side of it: the Kurds were sheltering behind the parallel embankment of the temporary line, which ran closer to the Kala'at, and both sides were dodging up and down and exchanging shots at twenty yards' range. The workmen, being the worse armed (many were throwing stones only), had started to bolt under cover of the bank towards the river, and, making a detour, thence began to flock up from behind and join us on the hill-top: presently about three hundred Kurds and Arabs were gathered there, half of them properly armed, the rest with iron bars and stones, and all swearing vengeance on the Germans.

Lawrence and I tried to hold the mutineers in check, but it was hard work, especially as the Germans would keep on firing at them: indeed, Hoffmann's own Circassian twice shot quite

deliberately at Lawrence and myself, and the range being but seventy yards we were lucky in not being hit; as it was, one of his bullets struck between my feet, and the other wounded a boy to whom Lawrence was talking. We went down to the Germans and begged them to cease fire as otherwise we could not control matters, but both they and their followers had quite lost their heads and were more anxious to assault us than to listen to us, so we had to go back again. The constant if not very effective fire of the Germans, and the wounding of a few men, with tales of others killed below, excited the Kurds to the utmost: one or two women started *keening* for the fallen and shrieked to their men folk to "kill the Christians" (I protested to one old hag who was loudest in this cry, but I was assured that it did not include Englishmen!), and if we had not been loyally supported by Haj Wahid, Hamoudi, and a few others of our own men we could never have kept the Kurds under control. We had to use force to stop would-be leaders who began charging down the slope, and others of the more violent we got rid of by making them carry the wounded off to our house, but it was two hours before the Germans had fired their last desultory shot and we could persuade the whole lot of Kurds to draw off and ourselves get back to the house to look after casualties. On the men's side one had been killed and eight wounded; on the German, bruises and cuts were the worst evil suffered, for from the time the Kurds joined us on the hill not a single shot had been fired nor one stone thrown at the Germans below. The affair, therefore, was not so serious as it might easily have been, or as reports both in Syria and in Europe painted, but it was sufficiently unpleasant, and we were devoutly thankful that it was no worse.

The Germans, however, did not easily recover from their fright. At the first alarm they had despatched a telegram to Aleppo saying that their camp was being fired on and assistance was urgently required: somehow the message got mistranslated, with the result that in the course of the evening a special train arrived bringing the Aleppo Volunteer Fire Brigade, brass helmets and all! When that mistake had been put right, two hundred troops came and were stationed in the German camp: no engineer would go outside the gates without an escort of twenty men at least, and the work of the advanced

section of the Baghdad Railway came to an abrupt standstill.

In reality there was nothing much to fear from the village, as few of the Jerablus men had been involved; but the workman who was killed was a Kurd of Busrawi's *ashirā*, and his whole tribe at once took up the blood-feud and announced that they would prevent by force all railway work east of the river. A commission of inquiry, headed by the *Vali*, was held at Jerablus, and its report was most unfavourable to the Germans, though, of course, there was no idea of interfering with the Baghdad Railway as such; but when the director put forward the Kurdish difficulty and asked the *Vali* to settle it, if necessary by sending troops, the answer was that the Turkish Government did not wish to quarrel with the Kurds, that the blame for their attitude rested with the Germans, and that it was for the Germans to make the peace. Unfortunately the Company could not get at Busrawi so as to come to terms with him. The Germans dared not cross the river, and the Kurds refused all communications, while the *Vali* prudently refused to risk acting as mediator, for he knew well that the sheikh would pay no attention to him. A week went by, during which the engineers lay low in their camp, Busrawi's armed followers patrolled the deserted line, and not a stroke of work had been done.

At last the German Consul came up to Jerablus to see us, and to the disgust of the railway people (I say it to their credit) asked me to make peace between the Company and the Kurds. I told him that I must have a free hand as to terms, and he agreed, but when he heard that my first condition was the payment of blood-money, he refused with the utmost indignation, protesting that the Germans had acted in self-defence, and that the Kurds had no legal case. I asked whether he thought he was in Berlin or Mesopotamia, and pointed out that you could only settle a tribal matter such as this by tribal custom; and at last he saw reason and left the matter in my charge. We sent for Busrawi, who came in in no very conciliatory mood, but as he really did not want trouble and did want to get his share of the cash, he soon made it clear that to please the English he would compromise. We fixed the blood-money at £120 and arranged proper safeguards for the future, putting on to the work some of Busrawi's head-men, who should

be paid by the Company and should receive all complaints from Kurdish workmen for transmission to headquarters, while Busrawi on his part accepted personal responsibility for any trouble that might arise through his followers breaking the terms. We put everything in writing and sent him off to the British Consulate, and in due course the agreement was confirmed. Busrawi kept his promise, and so far as I know (for this was in March, 1914) nothing more happened to break the peace in his dominions.

In connexion with this affair of the fight I owe a word of thanks to Fuad Bey. At all excavations carried on in Turkey there must be present an "Imperial Commissaire", whose duty it is to act as a spy on the honesty of the excavators and to take charge of all objects of value found by them, sending an inventory of the same to Constantinople: he is also supposed to settle differences with local landlords, workmen, etc., and generally to see that the foreigners behave themselves. In 1911 the functionaries who succeeded one another in this post were both incapable and dishonest, and Hogarth had requested that a new man be sent for the following season. In 1912, therefore, we were joined by Fuad Bey. An Arab of a good Baghdad family, he had spent all his life in Constantinople and was as much a Turk as imitation could make him—indeed, he could speak only a few words of his native Arabic. He had passed through the Civil Service College at Stamboul, and had been attached as clerical A.D.C. to the Vali of Aleppo, so as to get practical experience to fit him for the post of second-class Kaimmakam, which would be his first step on the ladder of office. He was a little fellow, about twenty-two years old, of mean physique, pasty-faced, and faint-hearted: he was convinced that we were out to steal every *antika* we could lay hands on, and would therefore make things unpleasant for him, and like a thoroughbred city youth he looked upon Bedouins and Kurds as beasts of prey whose chief amusement was throat-slitting. He came to us, therefore, under protest, nearly wept when he found that he had to sleep under canvas on the Kala'at, swallowed with open mouth the stories of the ghosts that haunted the ruins, and would not go to bed without an armed man stretched across his tent-door.

On the other hand, he was conscientious in his work and

strictly honest. He set himself to learn Arabic (for he knew no French or English), and as he talked to the men gradually lost his fear of them. He used to set traps for us by leaving small *antikas* about, until at length, when I had reproved him more than once for carelessness, he grew convinced that we really did not mean to steal the things which we had promised to hand over to the Government. Thus reassured, he threw himself into the work with enthusiasm, and became a real help to us: he took a great pride in arranging and cleaning our field museum, tried to acquire some knowledge of ancient history, and even developed views of his own on comparative dates. At the same time he improved physically, thanks to an open-air life and early hours, and took to studying local conditions with a view to a better exercise of power when he should have a province of his own. The description that I have given of Fuad Bey at his first coming is quoted almost in his own words; by 1914 he was a pleasant and a helpful companion, and as he said himself, more of a man than he had ever hoped to be.

When in March, 1914, the Commission was inquiring into the matter of the Kurdish fight, the *Vali* and all the rest of them came down to the house to get our version of the story. Having done this, the *Vali*, who perhaps would not have been sorry to see all Europeans tarred with the same brush, began asking whether we had never had trouble with our workmen. I said "No," and on his urging, "Not even in the matter of pay?" had again denied it, when Fuad Bey jumped up and interposed, "Oh yes, but there is sometimes," he said; "in fact, we had a dispute only last week." I was furious, thinking that the little man was trying to curry favour by a false charge, and the score or so of Turkish officials present smiled broadly at my discomfiture.

"Now we shall have the truth," said the *Vali*, "but first, Fuad Effendi, describe the way in which wages are given out."

Fuad answered truthfully enough. "A table is put out in the courtyard," he said, "with all the money on it; Mr. Woolley has the pay-book and reads out the men's names in order, and the *chawîsh*, Hamoudi, stands by and calls them up, and Mr. Woolley then tells the man what is due to him, and Mr. Lawrence, who sits at the table, hands the money over."

"And where are the soldiers?"

"There never are any soldiers."

"Very wrong," commented the *Vali;* "the soldiers should always be there to prevent trouble. Now tell us what happened last week."

Fuad took up his tale. "Mr. Woolley called up one man, a Kurd, and said he had been working six days at nine piastres, and the man agreed, and Mr. Lawrence gave him his money."

"Ah! and *how much* did Mr. Lawrence give him?"

"Fifty-four piastres."

"But that was right!" said the *Vali;* "what was the difficulty?"

"Well, the man took the money, but a moment later he came back and put half of it on the table and said it was not his. Mr. Woolley asked him why, and he said that at the end of last season he took a week's wage in advance, but the work closed down after three days, so he had to pay back half of his first week's pay of this year. Mr. Woolley said last season's accounts were closed and he couldn't go back on them, and the man must take the money, and the Kurd said he would not, because he hadn't earned it, and Mr. Woolley said he could have it as *baksheesh*, and the man said he hadn't found anything worth paying for—and I assure your Excellence there was quite a lot of trouble about it!"

The Turks were too taken aback to laugh as I was doing at the Commissaire's little trick. At last the *Vali* spoke.

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that a *Kurd* would not take all the money he could get simply because he hadn't earned it?"

Then Fuad Bey made his point. "Your Excellence," he replied, "when I first came to Jerablus I thought, as all Turks think, that these villagers were savages and wild beasts. Since I have been here I have learnt that if you treat them properly they are quite good and honest men, and it is only when people like the Germans treat them as beasts that they behave as such." It was sententious, but it was a bold speech for Fuad to address to the *Vali*, and that dignitary was not a little impressed. At any rate, when he had thanked us for having kept the Kurds in check, and we had told him that the real credit lay with Haj Wahid, Hamoudi, Midai the Kurd and others,

who had helped us against all their natural feelings, he sent for them all, and as they in their working clothes filed into the sitting-room the *Vali* turned to his fellow-commissioners and said very quietly, "Gentlemen, you will remain standing in the presence of these men." I think that Jellal Pasha himself and the commissioners who saluted and stood silent while he thanked the despised villagers really learnt a lesson from Fuad Bey that morning.

On another occasion, too, the little Commissaire showed unexpected spirit. I was anxious to dig some graves of the Late Hittite Period, and as the cemetery lay outside the limits of our concession I was obliged to ask for a special permit. The authorities at Constantinople instructed the Aleppo Minister for Public Instruction to look into the matter, and he accordingly came out to visit us and see the site. Holussi Bey had always been extremely friendly, and had shown quite a keen interest in our work; on the present occasion he did not want to interfere, but evidently misliked taking any responsibility on himself, and the most we could get him to say was that he would report favourably to Constantinople. To refer things back to headquarters meant a long delay and was quite unnecessary in view of the instructions he had received, but, argue as I would, the Minister could not bring himself to give permission offhand. His reluctance was increased by the fact that part of the site where I wished to dig was occupied by a modern graveyard, and he was afraid of stirring up local religious feeling by letting the place be desecrated—though, of course, I had promised to be most careful in avoiding offence, and had already made all the local arrangements necessary. Things had indeed come to a deadlock when Fuad Bey, looking very nervous, asked me to leave the room as he wished to talk to the *Mudir* in private. I went out, and from the courtyard could hear voices raised in very heated dispute; when I came back the Minister looked worried and the Commissaire triumphant.

"I have discussed the matter with Fuad Effendi," said Holussi Bey, "and I will write to Constantinople saying I see no objection to the scheme; and in the meantime you may do a little work—just a little—with a few men on the far side of the site."

I thanked him, with mental reservations, but Fuad Bey made these unnecessary. "You can work wherever you please and with all the men you want," he remarked with a severe look at his superior, "and *I* will be responsible to Constantinople."

The *Mudir* did not even attempt a rebuke, nor insist on his conditions; we started work happily next day, and no objection was ever raised. But before he left us, Holussi Bey took me aside. "I don't know what you have done to Fuad," he said, "but he is greatly changed; he seems to be becoming quite English!"

The digging of these graves was a very pleasant interlude, and incidentally showed how important it is to have one's men well-disposed. I have mentioned that the authorities boggled a good deal at granting permission for the work because part of the ancient cemetery was overlaid by modern burials, and the sanctity of a Moslem cemetery is far more inviolable than that of a Christian churchyard. I had promised to respect every possible prejudice, and therefore started on the far fringe of the ancient graves and worked forwards toward the forbidden ground. But as we drew nearer to this the old tombs were found to be richer and more numerous, and the men's interest—and their *baksheesh* accounts—grew in proportion. Now the old graves were dug some six or seven feet down, deeper than the modern villager thinks necessary for his dead, and one morning, coming up rather late from breakfast, I was horrified to see one of the gangs on the very edge of the modern cemetery, and the pick-man, hot on the scent of a Hittite burial, burrowing right under a modern grave, whose stone lining hung out above his head. The rest of the gang stopped work and grinned broadly as I called the man out and told him pretty forcibly that this sort of thing couldn't be allowed; I would not have the Moslem graves disturbed. The worker looked sheepish and the rest began to laugh out loud, and then Hamoudi intervened. "It is really all right, Effendim," he urged, "that's his own grandfather!" I let him finish what he was doing, but would not repeat the experiment, and the village cemetery suffered no further desecration. I think that the men were rather relieved at being stopped, though they professed their willingness to dig up the whole place; but they added that if anyone other than the English had worked even near

their people's graves they would have made him pay dearly for it, and I know of more than one instance to prove the genuineness of the threat.

The north Syrian Arab differs from the Egyptian *fellah* in that his horizon is not limited to piastres; his sense of fun and his personal honour are incentives almost as strong as money. It is an admirable quality which we have been able to exploit. Our foreman, Hamoudi, and Lawrence between them worked out a very paying system whereby any really good discovery made in the field is celebrated with a *feu de joie* from the foreman's revolver. This very natural mode of expression was at first indulged in by everybody, the finder thus announcing his good luck to the rest, but now there is a ritual in such matters. As soon as anything of value turns up Hamoudi, our head foreman, is on the spot—if possible without letting Lawrence or myself know what is forward—and he helps to clear the object, and then, when it is fairly visible, adjudges its value in cartridges. A fair-sized fragment of sculpture may be put down at one shot, a complete basalt slab with figures and inscriptions will rise to seven or eight, and so, whether we are on the work or in the house, we can by listening to Hamoudi's revolver make a very fair guess as to what he has to show us. But the object of the firing is not simply to draw our attention —it is a *baksheesh* to the finder, valued quite as highly as the reward in cash that luck has added to his wage, and at the same time it is, in the eyes of many of the men at least, a form of homage to the stone or to the fortune that put it in their path. The finder will grow quite pathetic over the *chawîsh's* judgment. " Oh, but six shots, *yah chawîsh*, six shots: was it not five for the chariot yonder? And here there are three sons of Adam; by God, they deserve two rounds apiece "; and the men will count up throughout the season how many cartridges have been expended in honour of their finds. I remember one Yasin Hussein coming to me almost in tears and saying that he was leaving the work; I asked him why, and then he burst out, " Effendim, I cannot stand it; my luck is evil: this season so much has been found, there is shooting every day—now it is Hamdôsh, ping-ping-ping, now it is Mustapha Aissa, ping-ping-ping-ping, now another, but for me not one cartridge since work started. I must go, Effendim, or else you must put

me where I shall find something. Honestly, I don't want the *baksheesh*—don't give me money for it; it is the honour of the thing—I want to hear the *chawish* shooting for me, and to have men saying afterwards. 'That is the stone of Yasin Hussein for which he had eight shots.'"

The whole thing may sound childish, as much on our part for encouraging the practice (for we keep Hamoudi in cartridges) as on the men's for caring so deeply for it; but in fact it is such things that make the work go well, and when digging at Jerablus ceases to be a great game and becomes, as in Egypt, a mere business, it will be a bad thing for the work. But as long as we have people like Haj Wahid and Hamoudi with us life is not likely to be altogether dull.

There is another way in which the high spirits of our workmen can be turned to good account. The whole gang is divided into companies of four, consisting of a pick-man, a shoveller, and two basket-men who carry the loose earth from the diggings to the light railway, which transports it clear of the work and dumps it in the river. All these are paid alike, but there is great emulation for the post of pick-man, for he has on the whole the easiest job, and also has far the best chance of finding antiquities and thereby earning *baksheesh* and honour. The pick-men therefore are carefully selected from the best workers in the whole gang, the spade-men are in the second grade, and the basket-carriers are, for the most part, the recruits and the boys. Most of the small objects are found by the wielder of the pick, who therefore earns most; but should a thing escape him and fall to the spade-worker the reward for it is slightly raised as an encouragement to careful work; should the basket-carrier find a thing which had been overlooked by both his seniors and was therefore in danger of being lost altogether, then the reward is more generous still. Thus all eyes are on the alert, and from the time the earth is first loosened till the moment when it is chucked down the dump-side some one is always searching it for "finds". In the case of big stones the bulk of the reward goes to the pick-man who unearths it, and the remainder is divided in proportion between the other three members of his gang. All this leads to a good-humoured rivalry between the different tools, and the nature of the soil at any moment may bring this to a head.

When there is to be removed a mass of soft surface soil where "finds" are unlikely, the pick-man has an easy time; he cuts down a heap of loose earth that will keep his two baskets busy for twenty minutes, maybe, and then sits down to a cigarette and the enjoyment of seeing others work; the spade-man too has a light job filling baskets, while the carriers are run nearly off their feet. On the other hand, when the ground is hard and stony the pick cannot make progress fast enough; the carriers come up and sit on their baskets waiting for a load and the spade-man has nothing to give them. In either case Hamoudi sees his chance, and, standing on a mound with his head-rope on one side and his hands in his pockets, he will pour scorn on one side or the other. If the earth is soft and plentiful, he begs the picks to kill the basket-carriers, sons of sloth and eaters of unearned bread; if the picks are wrestling with stones and hard-set earth, he will exhort the basket-men to make the pick-fellows, greedy seekers after *baksheesh*, cry "*pardûn*".

At once the fun begins. Both sides fall to work with a frenzy, the pick-men taunt the baskets and the basket-carriers threaten the picks; the latter, if the ground is hard, will soon be pouring with sweat and writhing under the opprobrium of the waiting basket-men, while these, if soil is soft, will be racing at full speed from trench to truck, pick- and spade-men shouting to them to hurry up: it is "Baskets, baskets, ho! baskets!" from the one side, and "Earth, earth, give us earth!" from the other; the excitement grows, and the noise gets louder and louder, while Hamoudi from his perch with wild gesticulations cheers on both sides alike; the men grow exhausted, and the winning side yells all the louder, demanding that the others say "*pardûn*". "Never!" will cry the pick-men, if they be the challenged side, "we will die, but we will not say *pardûn*," and they will attack the wall of earth and stone as if their lives really depended on the effort. But the baskets work too fast for them and the spade-men can find no loose soil to scrape up: then the empty baskets are hurled into the air with screams of triumph, or flung at the heads of the pick-men as they sink breathless and fagged out to the ground. Hamoudi, as umpire, raises his hand and grants them ten minutes' rest wherein the weary gang can refresh itself with cigarettes and laughter—and a good hour's work has been done in twenty

minutes! Of course this is only allowed when barren soil is to be cleared, but then, when there are no " finds " to keep up the men's interest, to let them go *fantêh*, as we call it, is the quickest way of getting through a dull job and acts like a tonic on the men. You can only do it once or twice a day, for the fury of the work—or game—is too exhausting, but it is a fine system, and one of the most amusing things to watch.

But though there are times when the work can be speeded up in this way, when it does not matter that the baskets are flying through the air, the men blind with sweat, and the Décauville cars swinging nearly off the rails as they race each other to and from the dump-heaps, yet, on the other hand, when finds are probable, there are no more careful diggers than these Arabs. Even the Egyptian, skilful as he is with his *touriya*, is not more delicate of touch than a pick-man after two seasons' practice. As soon as his sense of touch tells him that a stone which he has reached with his point below the soil but has not yet seen is a large block or one bedded in a wall, he sets to work as gingerly as though he were unearthing buried glass; then if things look promising the pick-axe is exchanged for the knife, and with Hamoudi hovering about like an anxious hen, or sometimes ousting the workman to do the job himself, the object is cleared without the possibility of damage. Again, to find and follow a mud-brick wall buried deep in soil which is itself composed of mud bricks, loose or fallen in masses, is no easy task, especially as the wall-face is usually plastered with mud, and this plastering must remain, so far as may be, intact. The digger will cut along, trying to keep the side of his trench an inch or so away from the wall-face; then as the earth dries he will retrace his steps, and with the blunt end of his pick or with a knife dislodge the film of soil that adheres loosely to the brickwork and so expose the true surface. The men soon learn to take a pride in their skill in following the line as closely as can be without cutting into the wall itself and then in baring the undamaged face. The wall and the brick debris surrounding it are sometimes so hard to distinguish that the work has to stand over for a few days until the weathering of the bricks shows which is really wall and which but fallen wall-material, and great is the workman's joy then if he prove to have been right where I was undecided.

One of the curses of the digger in Egypt is the wandering antiquity-dealer, who will hang about in the neighbourhood and buy from your workmen anything that they may steal from the excavations. Only once has one of these gentry turned up at Jerablus, and then the men were so furious at the insult to their loyalty that they were all literally out for his blood, and the tempter had to lie hidden until he could take the train back to Aleppo. They are not less keen to prevent any outsider from taking photographs, and if I do give permission to a visitor to snapshot one or two points of general interest, either Lawrence or myself must always go with him or there will surely be trouble; indeed on one occasion, when I was delayed on the way down and reached the field a little behind my guest, I found him looking very bewildered and not a little alarmed, with Hamoudi holding his camera and half-a-dozen workmen with revolvers blocking the view of his proposed "subject". On another occasion it was only a timely disappearance that saved a Turkish Major-General from being thrown into the Euphrates because one of his staff had tried to photograph a bas-relief against the orders of the Arab on guard; luckily the men were at work some way off on the cemetery site, and by the time the alarm had been given and they were streaming pell-mell across the intervening fields the General had effected a strategic retirement from the Kala'at.

The wilder the country in which you work the more important is it that you be on good terms with your men; the truth of that was borne in on me by the only serious accident that happened on the work. We had been clearing some Hittite remains which lay ten or twelve feet down under light mixed soil, and the vertical face of our cutting came close up to a huge block of Roman stone that lay upon the surface. Until the stone had been shifted it was unsafe to dig any farther, and as I was not sure that any advance would be necessary I moved the whole gang to another spot and announced through Hamoudi that the cutting was dangerous and nobody was allowed to go into it. Two days later there was a violent wind and a sandstorm and conditions on the dig were most unpleasant, the men almost blinded by the driving dust, and one of them slipped away for a rest and a cigarette. The forbidden cutting offered a shelter from the wind and a hiding-

place from the eyes of the foreman, so there he went; and as he smoked in peace down came the huge stone and tore away the whole front of his body. We dug him out from the fallen earth and carried him on a door up to the house, where by chance I was entertaining a guest, old Dr. Altounyan, the finest surgeon in the Middle East; after a mere glance he told me that the case was hopeless. Naturally I was much upset, but at the same time I had the unpleasant knowledge that a death on the dig meant, by Arab law, a blood-feud between his relatives and us; the whole of our work was in jeopardy. The man was not quite dead and, more to show sympathy than anything else, I poured a little brandy between his lips, and his eyes opened and he saw about him the bearers who had carried him up, and to them he gasped out his last words: "I bear witness to God that the fault was mine. I broke orders. The English are not guilty of my blood." I called his kinsfolk together and asked if they had any claim against me, and they said none; the dead man had absolved me in front of witnesses. When therefore I gave a sum of money to the young widow (for he had married not long before) it was accounted to me for righteousness. Incidentally, her family took over the money in trust, fearing that if she had the free handling of it she might be the prey of some gold-digging suitor, since she was now an heiress; the only complaint that I ever heard was from one of the workmen, who said, grinning, "*W'Allah*, it is a pity that you have done this; now all our wives will wish us dead!"

Such are our Arab workmen: loyal and good-tempered, honest, hard-working—provided that you humour them and do not press unduly or out of season, for they are not your slaves but your fellow-workers—and careful when care is needed. They love a joke, and I keep one old grey-beard on the digging, not for the work he does, for one condition of his service is that he has the smallest basket, but because he is a butt whose temper never fails him, and the owner of a scurrilous wit, he is allowed something of the licence of a court-jester even at our expense, and any little friction or discontent can be dispelled by putting old Shemali to the fore. Complaints that from others might be serious become in his mouth an absurdity at which even his sympathizers are fain to laugh; a dull stretch of work is relieved by making him the martyr on whom the

worst of it is laid. " And this to me who might be your grandfather," he said once to me in reproachful terms, " and, God knows, perhaps I am, for I was wild enough! " The whole gang shrieked with joy, and the biggest stones were selected for his load; the rest buckled to at full speed so as to drive him the harder, and the thankless job was run through as a game. It is a rowing maxim that you should always have a butt in the eight: it is just as important to have a jester in an Arab working gang.

These Bedouin are clever too. There is Dahûm, our photographer: he started as a water-boy when he was about sixteen, and could neither read nor write; he could count up to ten, thanks to his fingers, but if he wanted to go beyond that he had to take his shoes off and start on his toes. Lawrence encouraged him to read, and he picked up that quickly enough from the village *hoja;* then he was taught English numerals, so as to assist in measuring work and to read off the figures on the tape, and in a week he was well up in the hundreds and could multiply and divide in English. He was put to photography, could develop a plate at the end of three weeks, and very soon could take a photograph by himself, judging his own exposure, focus, and everything. I do not think that an English village boy would have made quicker progress.

Dahûm's name, by the way, is curious; a nickname really, it sounded to me quite un-Arabic when I first heard it, so I asked Lawrence to find out what it was. It appeared that his mother had given him the nickname because when he was born he was a very black baby, and " Dahûm " meant a dark night when there was no moon. Then I saw it. Dahûm, the moonless dark, is *Tehôm,* which is the Hebrew word used in the Book of Genesis when it describes how there " was darkness on the face of the waters " before Creation began; it is *Tiamit,* the Goddess of Chaos in Babylonian mythology; and here in Jerablus the name, with something of its old meaning, had survived down to the present day. It is perhaps not for nothing that Dahûm's family claims to have lived, not in the modern village, but on the Kala'at, deserted less than a century ago, " always and always," saying that they are " the Kala'at folk ", whereas most of the rest of the Jerablus people are newcomers. They are Arabs now, they say, because the rest are;

but before that they were Turks, Greeks, or what not (though always Moslem!), according to the Government in power; and certainly in Dahûm's face there is little of the Arab, and something at least of those rather heavy and fleshy captains who head the sculptured procession at the portal of our Hittite palace.

They are an ancient people, and they have inherited more than the physical features of forbears who lived long before the Prophet announced the Unity of God. If you are going to sympathize with, and at all understand them you must make allowances for a good deal that is neither authorized by Islam nor admissible by the beliefs of the West. We knew that on the night of the full moon, two or three times a year, the men of Jerablus celebrated some mysterious rite on the top of a neighbouring hill; what the rite was Lawrence could never learn, and we could only conclude that it was so obviously unorthodox that they were ashamed to describe it to an outsider; but it certainly took place. Where it was a small matter there was no concealment about it.

One day a workman came to me complaining of violent toothache; I could see nothing wrong with the tooth, so, assuming it to be a case of neuralgia, gave him a dose of iodide of potassium. He drank it rather sceptically, but returned an hour later saying that it had done no good at all; had I a new nail? I knew what that meant and thought I had a chance for an interesting experiment, so, going into the house, I pulled a large nail out of a packing-case and polished it with emery paper to a deceiving brightness and gave it to him, and he went off happily. What you do is this. You go to a holy man and he, for a small fee, draws a square on a piece of paper, divides the square by vertical and horizontal lines into nine compartments and writes the appropriate number in each, thus.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

So far as I can make out, this is the Magic Square of the old alchemists; and the point of it is that the numbers along each side, those of the central rows in either direction and also those along the diagonals all add up to the same total—15. You hold the paper up against the jamb of the front door of your house and drive a new nail through the top left-hand number into the woodwork; if that does not stop the pain you pull out the nail and try the next number, and so on until your toothache is cured; it is a well-known remedy and is considered absolutely certain.

An hour or so had passed when my workman reappeared with his jaw still wrapped up in his headcloth, holding the paper and the nail. Something was wrong; he had gone through all the letters and the tooth hurt as much as ever; and at the end of his sad recital he turned on me indignantly: "*Was that a new nail?*" I hummed and hawed and said, "Well, it was as good as new, wasn't it?" "That was a dirty trick," he said. "Give me a *new* nail." I did, and he went off to his house and cured his toothache immediately. It's the sort of thing that is difficult to explain, but you have to allow for it.

Lawrence and I were discussing the men once, and I remarked that one of them, Mustafa by name, was not of much use; he was physically slow, mentally stupid, and, I said, "There's a funny look in his eyes; if we were in Egypt I should have said that he took hashish." Lawrence said that that was unlikely as people round us didn't indulge in that particular vice, but he'd inquire; and this was the story he was told.

About five years before the Expedition came to Carchemish, Mustafa, whose home was in Jerablus, had occasion to go and see a friend in Merj Khamîs, the next village to the north. It was a bright sunny day in summer. He passed across the Kala'at and on along the Euphrates' bank till, just short of Merj Khamîs, he approached a little stream that runs across the track, a mere trickle of water, at this time of year only a foot or so wide, on the farther side of which was a solitary tree. As he stepped over the stream he saw that the tree was enveloped in a cloud of mist. He went on into the mist and as he did so it seemed to swirl round him and take on a half-human shape, so that he was in the middle of a Being which

was about to overpower him. So terrified was Mustafa that he forgot everything that a man knows about Them, forgot that he carried nothing that was made of iron and, like a fool, he hit out at the creature with his wooden staff. The mist dissolved and the wayfarer went on to Merj Khamîs, but when he got there and his friends greeted him, he did not know them; he did not know his own name or where he lived or anything of his past life; he remembered going into the cloud of mist and what had ensued, but everything before that was a complete blank. His friends led him back to Jerablus, but he could not recognize his wife or any one. He was taken to various doctors, but they could do nothing for him. Finally the case was brought before a religious sheikh, an old man of known piety and wisdom, whom later I got to know quite well. The sheikh explained that the tree on the Merj Khamîs road was the home of an *afrit* who was not normally malignant but had naturally been annoyed when someone hit at him with a stick; he had therefore deprived Mustafa of his senses. But the *afrit's* powers were strictly limited to a term of three years. Nothing could be done for the poor man in the meantime, but in three years and one day from the time of his possession Mustafa would return to himself. And that is what happened. On that day all his relatives assembled for the miracle, and suddenly Mustafa recovered; he remembered his whole life up to the moment when he went into the mist around the tree, but for the three years after that his memory was a blank. Everybody said it was a complete cure, and the sheikh's reputation benefited accordingly; but how did he know? All I can say is that I heard the story from good sources and knew the actors, and the look in Mustafa's eyes might well be accounted for by such an experience; but I cannot explain it. But that's the sort of thing that does happen, or at least that one must accept.

Chapter Six

THE KAIMMAKAM OF BIRIJIK

ABOUT five-and-twenty miles upstream from Jerablus there is the little town of Birijik, the seat of a Kaimmakam and the headquarters of the sub-province within which lies the site of Carchemish. It stands on the left bank of the Euphrates, a huddle of small houses, a khan or two, a rather squalid little bazaar, which forms the main street running parallel to the river, and at the north end of this the *Serai*, or Government House, built out over the water beneath the shadow of the Castle cliff. It is the Castle that redeems Birijik from the utterly commonplace. A great bluff of rock rises abruptly from the river and is crowned by a fine twelfth-century stronghold which the Atabegs built here to keep in check the crusading country of Edessa. Still almost intact—no thanks to the Turks, for in 1909 the local government decided on its destruction and was only stopped by the interference of English travellers—the old fort mercifully dwarfs the main buildings of the town below. Just opposite to the Castle the road from Aleppo runs down to the western bank of the Euphrates, where the ferry is, and the great clumsy punts, high-prowed and level-sterned, wait to take carriages and all across the water; it is a passage of some four hundred yards, could they but make it direct, but the swift current bears them far down on a transverse course to land at the town's lower end, and thence they must be towed up to the rock's foot again, and so zigzag this way across and that at the river's mercy.

Standing where the road ends on the western bank, one has the finest view of the Castle as it towers up clear above Birijik, its massive outer walls of pink and honey-coloured limestone melting almost imperceptibly into the cliff face from which they rise, its battlements outlined sharp against the sky, and its

mellow tones reflected in broken patches of colour by the hurrying stream. And if it be springtime or summer when you come down to the ferry, you will see too from here the one thing which gives to Birijik a character of its own. Half-way up from the water to the foundation of the Castle walls there runs across the rock's face a broad horizontal ledge which is crowded with ragged nests, and perched along it or flying in the air about are hundreds of large black birds of a sort unknown in any other part of Syria. This bird, a variety of the Glossy Ibis, winters in the Sudan, and yearly in the spring a great flock migrates northward from the Nile Valley up through Palestine to Birijik, where from time immemorial they have made their home on the Castle rock. In no other place along the river will you find a single nest of them; as far down as Jerablus the birds will come to feed, and you may see them wading in the shallows or flying low over the water, their jet-black plumage and curious slender crests making them easy to identify, but at sunset they all fly back to the one small spot which some freak of instinct and the habit of centuries has taught them to regard as their sole breeding-place.

When it was that the first northward-flighting ibis chose Birijik for the Mecca of his kind no one can say: but that the pilgrimage is of ancient date chance has preserved proof tangible enough. While we were building our house at Jerablus the villagers informed us that in a field three-quarters of a mile away they had come on a decorated pavement: we went to the spot and found that they had in fact unearthed a large piece of a fine mosaic floor of about the fifth century A.D. As it was quite certain that it would soon be destroyed if exposed to the weather we obtained permission to remove it, and ultimately relaid the whole as the floor of our sitting-room. The mosaic, which is well executed in moderately sized tesseræ of about eight different colours, measures some twenty-four feet by twelve and is divided into two main panels surrounded by a decorative border. The lower panel represents an orange tree flanked by ducks and gazelles; in the upper[1] is a vase from which springs a great formal vine whose symmetric branches are crowded with all sorts of birds, peacocks, pheasants, and smaller fowl; near the top of the vine a life-like portrait of the

[1] See Plate 9, p. 128.

Glossy Ibis bears witness that as far back as Roman days the visits of this capricious immigrant had won attention.

Naturally, then, a legend has grown up around the " Birijikli bird ". The villagers thereabouts will tell you—and though they have not seen the ceremony they have no doubt of its occurrence—that the birds arrive on a fixed date every year, and on this day the Kaimmakam of Birijik, the Mufti, the Cadi, and the other dignitaries of the town go out in solemn procession along the river-bank south of the outlying houses and there await the arrival of their visitors. At last, far away to the south, beyond the river, they see the solitary forerunner of the flock. Weary with his long flight the bird sinks lower and lower as he nears the home rock, rises again in a last effort to cross the river, but before ever he can win to the far bank falls exhausted and is drowned. Then a second bird comes into view, and then a third, which also have outdistanced the main body of their friends. The foremost of these, with fast-failing wings, struggles to the eastern bank, and there sinks spent but in safety at the water's edge: the other flies unfalteringly and straight across the Euphrates to the group of Turks and alights in the outstretched arms of the Kaimmakam. This, if all falls out by rule, is a sign no less sure than that of the Easter dove at Florence that the year's crops will be good and that God's blessing is on the flocks and herds; with great joy, therefore, the Turks return to the *Serai*, where the Kaimmakam gives food and drink to the tired harbinger of increase, and then sets it free to rejoin its fellow-pilgrims, who have in the meantime arrived and reclaimed possession of their nesting-place in the town's acropolis.

The official who in 1912 was Kaimmakam of Birijik was by no means worthy of the poetic rôle assigned to him by legend. An elderly man with grey hair and pointed beard, sly eyes, and flabby figure, ignorant and hardly more than literate, he was a fair representative of that bad type of minor official who, favoured of Abdul Hamid in older days, had on his fall espoused the cause of the Young Turks for what could be made out of it. Governing a fair-sized province wherein there were few strong enough to appeal against his powers, and owning in all civil matters but a loose allegiance to the vilayet of Aleppo, he had an ideal field for that profitable corruption which to his

like is the only use of office. Unfortunately Jerablus lay within this worthy's jurisdiction, and from the very outset he and I came to loggerheads.

In 1911 Hogarth, with Campbell Thompson and Lawrence as his assistants, had started excavating at Carchemish, and it was the good result of his experimental season that induced the British Museum to undertake a prolonged campaign there. I had been asked to take charge of the work, and as in the winter of 1911–12 I was busy in Egypt I sent Lawrence up ahead of me to Jerablus to get things in order for the new season and to start building a permanent house for us. On meeting Lawrence in Aleppo at the end of February I was rather annoyed to find that matters had not gone smoothly. He had been to Jerablus, where of course he was well known, but had been unable to start building. At the close of the former season it had been requested that a guard be put upon the site to prevent plundering and to see that no unauthorized work was done: the Kaimmakam had received orders to that effect, and a corporal with ten men had been posted in the village. When Lawrence arrived, the corporal, on the strength of his orders, had prevented the building of the house, and even the knowledge that Lawrence was a member of the expedition had not availed to get this prohibition modified in his favour: consequently, pending my arrival, nothing could be done.

It was a Sunday afternoon when Lawrence and I, travelling in wagons then, for the railway was yet to come, reached Jerablus and pitched our camp within the earthen walls of Carchemish. Eager candidates for work had flocked to meet us, but I put these off till the morning, and sent to the village for the *onbashi*, the corporal in charge of the guard. That N.C.O. turned up duly and was polite enough, but when I said that I proposed to begin digging at once, he demurred: he knew that I was duly authorized, but he was a soldier and had his orders, which he must obey: would I therefore send a note to Birijik, whereupon, of course, sanction would be given without delay. The man was quite in the right, so I wrote a letter to the Kaimmakam notifying him of my arrival, expressing my pleasure at the efficient way in which the site had been guarded, and asking him to instruct his N.C.O. to give me full liberty of action for my work. The letter was taken at once to

Birijik by a mounted soldier of the guard, and next morning, anticipating no difficulty (for I was new to Turkish methods), I enrolled a gang of a hundred and twenty workmen and told them that digging would start on Wednesday. In the evening came the Kaimmakam's reply. It was written, not to me but to the *onbashi*, in Turkish, and was to the effect that the Kaimmakam neither knew who I was nor cared to know, and that I was not to be allowed to touch a stone at Jerablus.

This was a nasty shock. Prudently or imprudently, I had engaged my gang, and to put off the digging now not only meant a loss of time but would destroy the men's confidence and respect—an important thing in a country none too civilized. The only thing to do was to act at once and to see the Kaimmakam in person: after all, I felt, it was a misunderstanding which a few minutes' talk would clear away. So early on Tuesday morning Lawrence and I, accompanied by our cook and major-domo, Haj Wahid, who was to act as interpreter should Turkish be required, took horse and set off on the long ride to Birijik.

We crossed the ferry and put up our horses at a khan behind the town, and then, after a hurried lunch (for breakfast had been early), we sought the *Serai*. The building forms a quadrangle enclosing a courtyard, far from clean, where a score of soldiers lounged: there was a guard-room on the ground floor, and a jail through whose gratings there peered out on us a few poor victims of Turkish justice. From the courtyard a somewhat rickety wooden staircase gave access to a broad balcony running round the upper story, where were the court-house and the various offices of the Government. We went upstairs, and having ascertained that the Kaimmakam was in his room and disengaged, I sent in my card; we waited for some little while and then sent in again, but again no answer was vouchsafed, so, telling the others to follow, I brushed past the guard and walked into the office. The Governor was seated at his desk doing nothing: he looked up, surprised by our entry, but did not ask us to sit down, so Lawrence and I made ourselves comfortable on the divan that ran along the wall close to his chair, and Haj Wahid stood by the door. At the start Haj Wahid had to act as interpreter, for the Turk knew only a few words of French, and, though he

could speak Arabic, began by pretending he could not: it was only when the interview grew more exciting that he and I both dropped into Arabic and dispensed with the third person.

I introduced myself politely, and after thanking him again for the care taken of our site, explained that there had been a misunderstanding about our identity, and asked him to issue orders to his soldiers for the work to start. He answered bluntly that he would give no orders of the kind, as we had no right to the place.

"Oh yes, but I have," said I; "here is the firman from Constantinople granting permission"; and I handed it to him.

He looked at it for some time, then said, "Precisely: this is all in order, but it is made out in the name of Mr. Hogarth, whom I know, whereas your name, you tell me, is Woolley."

Now this was the weak point in my armour, for although the authorities at Constantinople had been officially informed that I was to take Hogarth's place, and had raised no objection, yet the Turkish law distinctly states that permits for excavation are non-transferable, and no written correction had been made on the papers in my possession. So I determined to avoid the issue, and agreeing that the permit was made out in Hogarth's name I pointed out that I was acting as his *wakīl* or representative.

"And how can you prove that?" demanded the Kaimmakam, pressing on the false scent.

"Easily," said I; "here is a letter from Mr. Hogarth authorizing me to act in his name, and here is an official communication from the British Museum, which, as you probably know, is a department of the British Government, directing me to take Mr. Hogarth's place at Jerablus," and I handed him these two documents also.

He looked at them, then "What language are these in?" he asked.

"English," said I.

"Ah," he replied, "I do not understand English."

"Well, that is simple enough," I retorted. "You have a French-speaking interpreter here; call him in and I will translate the documents into French, and he can put them into Turkish."

"I should not trust such a translation," said the Kaimma-

kam; "and until the British Museum issues this order in Turkish I shall pay no attention to it."

In vain I pointed out that this was absurd: the Governor refused to listen to reason in any form, and matters seemed to have reached a deadlock. So I shifted the ground again, and abandoned argument for insistence. I told him that I had been sent to do a certain piece of work, that my papers were in order, and that I could not agree to any delay: I had already engaged my workmen, and I wished to start operations the following morning.

"It is impossible," said the Kaimmakam, and ostentatiously turned over some papers on his desk to show that the interview was at an end.

"But I *shall* start to-morrow," I urged.

"I have forbidden it," said the Kaimmakam, "and I shall give further orders to the soldiers to stop you."

"You have only ten men at Jerablus," I replied, "and I have a hundred and twenty who want to work: I shall start to-morrow."

"If necessary I shall send more from here," he retorted, "but it will not be necessary."

I was getting annoyed by now. "If you send all you've got," I told him, "I shall still outnumber you, and my men are just as well armed. I only hope that you will come at the head of your soldiers, and I shall have great pleasure in shooting you first: for I shall certainly start to-morrow."

"This is nonsense," said he. "You would not dare to shoot at the soldiers: and you shall *not* do any work."

The position was a difficult one. I felt that the whole future of our diggings depended on the result of this interview, and that it was worth risking a lot to get success: if I gave in now, a fresh permit would certainly not be forthcoming that season, and we should have lost all caste with the natives: really to use force was of course out of the question—but would a Turk be sure of that? I looked once more at the Kaimmakam, who, with a cold shoulder turned towards us, was again fidgeting with his papers, and I made up my mind that he was not a man who would call a bluff. Taking my revolver out of its holster I got up and walking to the side of his chair put the muzzle against his left ear. "On the contrary," I said, "I

shall shoot you here and now unless you give me permission to start work to-morrow." The Turk absolutely collapsed. He leant back in his chair, his hands flat on the desk before him, and tried to turn his head towards me, while his lips twisted into a wintry smile.

" Certainly," he said. " I see no reason why you should not start to-morrow."

" Will you write the order to the *onbashi*? "

" But with the greatest pleasure; and I will send it down by a special messenger to-night."

" No, you won't," I said. " You'll write it here and now, and I'll take it down myself."

The revolver was still touching his head, and he felt that it was useless to try any further trick, so pulling a piece of paper towards him he wrote something in Turkish and handed it to me. " That is what you want," said he. " Perhaps," I replied, " but I'm not certain of the translation. Please send for the interpreter, who will put it into French for me." I sat down then, still keeping the gun handy, and the interpreter duly came and the order was found to be correct. The Kaimmakam's manner had completely changed: he pressed cigarettes on us, sent for coffee, and was full of amiable small-talk, but we soon tired of his forced civility, and cut short our visit on the plea of the long cross-country ride before us. Indeed it was dark before our weary steeds drew near to the Kala'at, and we saw the glimmering outlines of the lighted tents surrounded by a crowd of anxious workmen. Then Haj Wahid spurred his horse on ahead, and long before he reached the camp, crack! crack! his revolver firing in the air announced the news of our success. In a moment there was pandemonium: a hundred men were blazing away all the cartridges they had, and we rode in through a lane of dancing Arabs, shouting and shooting in honour of the victory, which Haj Wahid's trumpet voice was declaiming with more than Oriental imagery. It was a good beginning for our work, but if I went to bed that night tired out it was less by my fifty miles' ride than by the strain of the few minutes in which I had staked so much on a guess.

I hoped, and half believed, that our troubles with the Kaimmakam were over, for the Turk is nearly always ready to accept the *fait accompli*, however keenly he may have resisted

its process: but this Turk was made of sterner—or of greedier—stuff. He had hoped, so I was told, for a substantial bribe, and though no money had changed hands and yet our work was in full swing, the hope was not dead in him and he but bided his time. But the second act in the comedy requires a prologue.

It was just about forty years ago—to be precise, in 1878—that the British Museum first started excavations at Carchemish. In those days no law had been passed forbidding the export of antiquities from Turkey, and the scientific side of field archæology had not been developed: one dug for plunder wherewith to stock museum galleries, and was interested in nothing more than that. The monuments standing above ground at Jerablus had attracted the attention of George Smith, the father of Mesopotamian archæology, and the British Museum was induced to undertake work on the site. But, when it was simply a question of uncovering and carting away antiquities, the presence of an archæologist was not held necessary. The job was first offered to Rassam, Sir Henry Layard's assistant at Nineveh, and when he refused, the British Consul was directed to send a dragoman to carry out the work. It is not to be wondered at that this worthy person did more harm than good; a few broken statues and slabs covered with reliefs and inscriptions in Hittite hieroglyphs found their way to London, but fragments of these very pieces remained *in situ* undiscovered, or were thrown into the rubbish-heaps, trenches were driven through standing walls, parts of the great palace stairway were pulled up, and sculptures not deemed worthy of removal were left exposed upon the ground to be cut up into mill-stones or mutilated by idle villagers. We can only be thankful that the dragoman, liking little his surroundings or his work, reported adversely on the latter's prospects, and after a short time left the Kala'at again in peace.

But before this abortive digging started it had seemed good to the authorities to secure some such title to the site as would give them a claim to the treasures it might hide, so the Consul himself had gone up from Aleppo to negotiate for the purchase of the ground. The Arabs who once squatted on the ruins of Carchemish had, two generations earlier, left their homes there to build a new village—the modern Jerablus—outside the walls,

and the deserted Kala'at or fort had become the common grazing ground of the village flocks. It was then that the Turkish Government undertook for the first time a registry of landed property in the Empire, and the Commissioners came in due course to Jerablus. As registration connoted land-tax, many of the country folk were none too eager to pose as landlords, but one man, more far-sighted than the rest, was quick to step forward and claim the whole of the Kala'at as his ancestral birthright. He was the wealthiest of the village folk, so witnesses to his title were easy to find, and without more ado the site of Carchemish was registered on the imperial rolls as the property of Ali Agha. It was to Ali, therefore, that the British Consul made his offer of purchase. But though the land had little value, and was indeed still regarded as common to the village, the owner refused to sell: he had no objection to the diggings, but he would not part with an inch of his property nor even with a part interest in it. The Consul retired to Aleppo *rebus infectis*.

Shortly after this some soldiers appeared at Jerablus, arrested Ali Agha, and carried him off to Aleppo, where he was flung into the common prison. Now unless money or influence could be brought to bear, imprisonment in Aleppo generally ended in one way: trial was problematical at the best, disease was endemic, and the only food prisoners got was what their friends or some charitable stranger might be disposed to bring. So in his sorry plight Ali bethought him of that all-powerful British Consul who had been his guest at Jerablus. A letter sent to the Consulate soon brought on the scene that dignitary himself, who sympathized heartily with his former host, was assured of his innocence, indeed of his ignorance of any charge against him, and promised to plead his cause with the powers that were. Ali Agha was profuse in gratitude. The Consul then remarked that when he had last seen his friend in happier days there had been some question of the purchase of a piece of land. The prisoner was horrified to think that he had in any way withstood the desires of one who was more than father and mother to him: the whole Kala'at was the Consul's, a free gift, a thing not to be mentioned between them. The Consul refused the gift, but agreed to purchase, and with Ali's blessing on his head went to intercede with the authorities; as if by

magic the prison doors were opened, and without trial or question Ali was a free man again. In return for an embroidered cloak, a pair of blue leather boots, and a revolver (the last for Hassan, Ali's eldest son) the British Government acquired an undefined quarter share in the site of the Hittite capital, and a formal deed of sale and ownership was enregistered in the Land Office at Birijik.

When in 1911 the new expedition took the field Ali was long dead, and Hassan Agha his son, now an old man, reigned in his room. He fully recognized the British rights, but as the quarter share was undefined and no one could say over which part of the Kala'at work would extend, a fresh agreement was drawn up. A flat low-lying area within the town walls, which was arable and therefore of some value, was not to be disturbed except by special arrangement: common grazing might continue as heretofore, but over the rest of the ruin-encumbered ground the excavators had a perfectly free hand for as long as they cared to work; and in consideration of certain moneys received Hassan relinquished all claim to any objects in the working area. He was quite anxious to sell the whole site outright for a mere song—for he made nothing out of it—but as the work was still in the experimental stage this offer could not be accepted.

In 1912 the construction of the Baghdad Railway had begun: German engineers were at Jerablus, and rumour ran that every landowner along the line would make his fortune. Hassan now offered us the site at a figure running into thousands, and when we laughed at him he sulked: poor old man! his last wife had drowned herself in the river, and he wanted to marry again, but the younger members of his house declared unfeelingly that he was far too old and refused to advance the necessary cash. Accordingly we resumed work on the terms of the agreement made the year before: Hassan feebly urged that the " consideration " paid to him then should be renewed with every season, but confronted with the text of his bargain was reduced to silence.

Now the hardest and most costly part of our work was that of removing to a distance, where they would not hamper future digging, the mass of broken stones which covered the surface and lay thick in the upper strata of the soil. Close by were the

German engineers, busily building houses and hospitals, and hard put to it to find rubble for their foundations. It was a great chance, and I at once agreed with the Germans that they should at their expense carry off from our work all the stones they wanted; and soon we had the satisfaction of seeing a whole procession of carts and donkeys shifting our spoil-heaps and making easy our future excavations.

Then Hassan Agha came to me with a grievance. These stones were being given away gratis, whereas he might have sold them to the Germans for a good price: could not I get the Germans to pay for them? I went to the chief engineer, who at once refused: the stones, weathered by exposure, were not really good for building, though better than none: the cost of carriage represented their full value to him, and if he had to pay he would prefer to leave them alone and get his stones from the newly-opened quarries on the hill-side beyond the railway. When I told Hassan this he was much upset, the more so because all the village laughed at him: he talked loudly of his grievance, and being one day in Birijik voiced it there also; some one carried the tale to the Kaimmakam, who saw his chance, and sending for Hassan Agha he hatched with him the plot that was to form Act the Second in our comedy.

One day a soldier rode up to our tents with a written message for Lawrence. It was a summons for him to stand his trial before the Sheri' Court of Birijik on the charge of having stolen from the plaintiff, Hassan Agha, certain property, stones to wit, which he had sold for the sum of thirty Turkish pounds to the chief engineer of the Jerablus section of the Baghdad Railway.

Now, under the Capitulations, no British subject can be tried by any Turkish Court unless the British Consul be represented on the bench: moreover, the Sheri' Court in particular is a religious tribunal for administering laws founded on the Koran, and applying to Moslems alone, so that in no circumstances can a foreigner be cited before it. The present summons was therefore doubly illegal, and could safely have been disregarded: but Lawrence and I discussed the point, and—for we did not then suspect the Kaimmakam's finger in the pie—decided that it might be better for him to appear: the charge was so silly that it could be disposed of at once, and also,

living as we did in the country and on close terms with the people, we were not altogether anxious to shelter ourselves behind such privileges as attached to us merely as foreigners: if Hassan thought he had a legal grievance we would answer him, not by evading the law, but by availing ourselves of it.

On the day appointed, therefore, Lawrence rode over to Birijik and took his place in the dock. After protesting that he only attended by courtesy a tribunal that had no legal jurisdiction, he denied the charge, and produced in support of his denial a statement from myself, claiming all responsibility for what was done on the work, and therefore exculpating him, an affidavit from the German chief engineer to the effect that he had not and would not pay a penny for the stones removed by him, the original firman authorizing our excavations, and the agreement signed by Hassan Agha relinquishing all rights to anything within their area. All these papers were promptly impounded by the court. Then the counsel for the prosecution got up and stated that the stones had indubitably been sold, in proof whereof he was prepared to bring into court sixteen witnesses, all Arab workmen from Jerablus, who would swear to the details of a conversation alleged to have taken place (*in French!*) between Lawrence and the German: he therefore asked that the case be remanded for a week. Before Lawrence could object, the remand had been granted and the court adjourned.

Lawrence came back in a state of great disgust, and I was no better pleased, especially when village gossip brought us the news that Hassan Agha was only a half-hearted tool in the hands of the Kaimmakam; and then we realized that the court —in other words, the Governor—was in possession of all the documents on which we depended for authority to work at all. In view of this I decided that I should attend the next hearing with Lawrence and insist on the farce being brought to a close. In the meantime digging continued as usual, and the stones about which so much fuss was being made were still being carried off for the new buildings by the railway. This was perhaps rather in the nature of contempt of court, and we were hardly surprised when half-way through the week an attempt was made to stop it.

The Kaimmakam sent orders to his *onbashi* at Jerablus that

the Germans were not to remove stones from our work, and accordingly the soldiers took up their position at the Kala'at gate and forcibly held up all the carts and donkeys. The chief engineer, much worried, came down to me to talk over ways and means. I suggested that he should make over all his transport gang to me and give me their wages in a lump sum, whereupon I would myself have the stones carted off and dumped down handy for his buildings. He agreed thankfully, and we called the donkey-men together and told them that they were now in my employ, and having made them load up I walked at the head of the string out from the Kala'at. The *onbashi*—a good fellow—dashed forward to stop me. I asked him what he meant by it, and he replied that his orders were to stop the Germans taking stones.

" Do so, then," I answered, " but don't interrupt *me*: this is my gang, and your orders say nothing about my carrying my stones where I please."

The drivers gleefully corroborated the statement that they had changed masters: the *onbashi* was puzzled, but said that it seemed to amount to the same thing, and he must carry out the spirit of his orders.

I said, " Would you go beyond the letter of them if I were to use force on my side? "

He smiled. " Oh no! " he said; " please use force, Effendim; that will put me all right with the Kaimmakam."

So I solemnly drew a revolver and pointed it at him, and he as solemnly marched in front of me to where the hospital foundations were being laid, and we dumped our stones on the heap which the Germans had already piled there.

" Very good," he said. " I shall of course have to report to Birijik that you have forcibly prevented my doing what I suppose is my duty: but you know that I'm very glad not to be a nuisance."

We shook hands, smoked cigarettes together while the next load of stones came up, and parted the best of friends, I to go back to the diggings and he to write his report. So that was the end of that move in the game, for the Kaimmakam sent no further orders to Jerablus.

The day fixed for the re-hearing of our trial saw us riding again to Birijik, with Haj Wahid, in his rôle of interpreter once

more, tricked out in his best clothes, with two revolvers stuck in the voluminous folds of his silk sash and a carbine over his shoulder to add to his importance. Half-way on our journey we met no less a person than Hassan Agha himself riding towards Jerablus. Asked why he was thus going in the wrong direction the plaintiff told us that the case was not going to be heard that day: moreover, he had washed his hands of the whole affair, so that we need not bother to go to Birijik at all. Hassan was obviously ill at ease, and as we had received no notice of the trial having been postponed we determined to continue on our way and find out the truth for ourselves; so on we went, and, arriving at the town, proceeded at once to pay a call upon the Kaimmakam.

That slippery gentleman greeted us with the utmost goodwill, ordered in coffee and cigarettes, inquired with interest after the progress of our digging, and at last asked why we had left them to come to town and whether he could be of any service to us. I told him that he could: that we had come in answer to a summons from his court and that we wished the matter to be settled now and for good and all. The Governor was deeply distressed. He had heard of the case and had recognized at once that it was purely malicious and absurd: if only we had written to him he would have settled it at once and saved us the trouble of our journey; but since we had come and had been so happily inspired as to call upon him he would do anything we wanted. I suggested that he might send for the Cadi and inform him that to-day's hearing must decide the matter, as it was a perfectly straightforward one and we could not keep on neglecting our work to attend the court; he agreed at once, sent for the Cadi and talked to him privately for a while, then assured us that everything was arranged and that in case of any difficulty in court we had only to send for him and he would come at once. We left him with thanks and made room for a seedy-looking individual whom Lawrence recognized as counsel for the prosecution—then, after a lunch in the town, we went to stand our trial.

The court-house was in the *Serai*, opening off the same balcony as gave access to the Kaimmakam's office, a fair-sized room already crowded with an audience anxious to hear the trial of the two Englishmen. The Cadi took his seat at a desk

on a raised dais accompanied by two assessors, while a clerk at a table below him made voluminous notes. We took our places facing him and close to the door.

As soon as the case was opened (by proclamation of the usher) I got up and, through Haj Wahid, informed the judge that if any charge was brought in connexion with the excavations it could only be directed against myself, not Lawrence. I pointed out that his court had no jurisdiction over us, but said that we had hitherto waived the point out of courtesy, and were prepared to overlook it now should the case be reasonably conducted, but that if any further delay were interposed we should at once appeal to the only court which could legally try us, namely, that of Aleppo. The Cadi agreed that the charge implicated me as well as Lawrence, and noted the warning of appeal. Then I pointed out that our evidence was already in the hands of the court and was quite sufficient to decide the issue: on the other hand, the prosecution, who had asked for a week's remand to produce witnesses, had not even warned these to appear—in fact the witnesses had no intention of coming, and if they came could not give the evidence promised, as they knew no French: that the prosecutor was not in court and had washed his hands of the case, and that not a shred of evidence had been or could be brought against us. After this the counsel for the prosecution jumped up and asked—without giving reasons—for a week's remand! Of course I objected: the counsel repeated his request; and after a consultation between Cadi and assessors the court was cleared of the public, only Lawrence and I remaining behind. Then there was a long confabulation on the Bench and a lengthy document was drawn up by the clerk, after which the doors were opened and the public flocked in again. The Cadi read out the document, and, sending it across to me, asked me to sign it; naturally I inquired what it was, and after a little difficuly had it explained—it was to the effect that I agreed to a remand being granted.

This was thoroughly annoying. I got up again and told the Cadi that I refused to sign, or to agree to anything of the sort: on the contrary, seeing how things were being run, I now refused to recognize the legality of the trial and appealed to Aleppo. "So far as I am concerned," I said, "the case is

over: I shall not attend the court again, and I must ask you to return to me at once all the papers that have been handed in to you."

The Cadi replied that papers impounded by the court remained in its possession till the conclusion of the case.

" But the case *is* concluded," I urged, " and I must have my papers."

The Cadi again refused. Then I remembered the Kaimmakam's promise and determined to put it to the test. " The Kaimmakam," I said, " has promised me to come himself here should any difficulty arise: will you kindly send for him? "

The Cadi smiled and sent the usher into the next room; in a few seconds the usher returned to say that the Kaimmakam was sorry but could not come. The Cadi smiled broadly and the court began to laugh out loud.

The trick that was being played upon us, and the Governor's part in it, was now quite clear, and as long as they held our precious documents—he could destroy them if he liked—I was at his mercy. So again I said, " Will you give me back my papers? " and again the Cadi said no, adding in his official tone as he picked up the books on his desk, " The case is remanded till this day next week."

" Well," I said, " I'm not going to leave this room until I get them."

The Cadi smiled again. " In that case," said he, " you will not leave till next week at least."

Amid the laughter that rewarded this jest I turned to Haj Wahid and told him to clear out, as there was going to be trouble and he, as an Ottoman subject, might get the worst of it: but the Haj was spoiling for a fight and disdained the idea of leaving his masters in the lurch; " *Eib*, Effendim, *Eib* "—the disgrace of it! he kept repeating, and swore by his father's bones that nothing would move him. So I rose again, and levelling a revolver at the Cadi, who by this time was also on his feet, I said, " *You* will not leave the room alive at all unless I get those papers." The Cadi dropped back into his seat like a rabbit, and Haj Wahid, with a revolver in each hand, was vaguely threatening any one who caught his eye.

" Lawrence," I said, " bolt into the next room and hold up the Kaimmakam: I bet the old brute's got the papers him-

self." Lawrence darted through the door: the usher seized the chance of disappearing after him, and that gave the signal for a general *sauve qui peut*: the public and the assessors and the Clerk of the Court jammed in the doorway for an instant, then melted away, and only Haj Wahid and myself were left with the Cadi, crouched as low as he could get in his official throne. I lowered my weapon and told Haj Wahid to keep the door: the judge looked intensely relieved, and, finding some French for the occasion, begged me to come and sit on the recently-vacated chair beside him and to take a cigarette. I complied, and we had sat for a minute or two in rather uncomfortable silence, the judge still eyeing the revolver I was nursing, when Lawrence reappeared.

" I've got the papers," he announced, " the blighter had them all in his own desk! "

" Did he make any difficulty? " I asked.

" Oh no. When I got in he handed them over like a lamb. But he says he'd like to have a copy of the Hassan Agha contract made, and " (at this point Lawrence broke down) " would you oblige him with the penny stamp? "

It was almost the best joke of the lot, and I paid cheerfully; then, the copy having been made, I pocketed the original papers, shook hands with the Cadi, and left the court.

But when we came out on the balcony we had to stop and laugh again. The terror-stricken audience from the court-house had spread far and wide the news of how we were holding up the executive of the province, and of course the first to hear it had been the soldiers in the *Serai*. They felt that it was up to them to do something, but there had been no shots, no calls for help from their superiors, and they had collected in the courtyard, excited, but uncertain where their duty lay. When we appeared at the top of the staircase, obviously victorious—Haj Wahid's swagger as he came behind us twisting a ferocious moustache with one hand while the other played with the revolvers in his belt was of itself enough to show who had won the day—then the Oriental asserted itself: automatically the soldiers fell into line and stood stiffly at the salute as we passed between the files! We walked through the bazaar, the shop-keepers coming forward to salaam, and murmurs of " *Wallah!* " and " *Mashallah!* " rising on either side, and so

crossed the ferry and rode back to Jerablus in triumph.

I may add that the whole thing was reported to Aleppo, and the local Minister for Foreign Affairs there went round in a great state of mind to see our Consul, who had already received a report from myself.

"Those English of yours at Jerablus," began the excited Turk, "they are doing impossible things—perfectly impossible: why, they have tried to shoot the Governor and the Cadi of the Province!"

"Did they really shoot them?" inquired the Consul.

"Well, no, they *threatened to*, but they did not actually *kill* them."

"What a pity," the Consul remarked gently. And the Minister did not pursue the subject.

About two months later Hogarth came out from Oxford to visit us, and having occasion to go to Birijik he paid a call upon the Kaimmakam and took the opportunity of referring to our trial, expressing the hope that as nothing more had been heard about it the whole matter had blown over. The Kaimmakam assured him that the regrettable incident was quite a thing of the past: he had used his authority to quash a case which ought never to have been brought—which none but an ignorant peasant would ever have brought against us, and he begged Hogarth—and ourselves, for whom he professed the warmest feelings—to forget the whole thing. That evening—it was a Saturday—Hogarth returned to camp and congratulated us on the end of a vexatious affair.

On the Sunday afternoon following, a regular procession was seen advancing across the Kala'at towards our house: the court usher of Birijik came first, then about ten soldiers, then Hassan Agha and his son, and a little crowd of the idle and curious. I was rather busy, but went out at last and was asked to listen to a long Turkish rigmarole which the usher began to read from two closely-written pages of foolscap. I cut him short and demanded what it was all about, and learned—I was sincerely sorry that Hogarth happened to be out—that it was the verdict on our trial. The case had continued in our contumacious absence, and we had been found guilty: I was to pay forthwith to the prosecutor the sum of thirty pounds and costs, to close down all excavations, and not to resume work

(*above*) Roman mosaic pavement showing the Birijikli bird.

(*left*) Yunus Cemetery: a little girl's grave with clay dolls and a feeding-bottle set against the cremation urn.

until a fresh firman had been obtained from Constantinople and a new contract drawn up with Hassan Agha; the usher with his men had come to collect the money and pay it to Hassan on the spot, and to put a stop to my digging.

"Does the paper really say all that?" I asked, and, being assured that it really did, inquired whether I might have it. The portentous document was at once handed over, and I promptly tore it into small pieces, much to the horror of the usher, who saw the Sultan's signature printed at the top go neatly in halves. "There," I said, "that's the end of that. I'm not going to pay a penny to Hassan or any one, I'm not going to make a new contract, and as for stopping work, I'll restart to-morrow with more men than ever. Now, is there any one here who wants a job or would like to recommend a friend?"

One of the soldiers of the usher's escort spoke up. "Effendim," he said, "would you take on my brother?"

"Certainly," I answered, "send him along early to-morrow." And the procession went disconsolately back across the Kala'at and embarked for Birijik. That was the end of the matter, but it gave us a certain amount of satisfaction, for Lawrence and I are probably the only foreigners alive who have been tried and condemned by the Sheri' Courts of Turkey.

I am afraid that a somewhat distorted version of the affair must have got abroad, for when shortly afterwards I went to Constantinople my reception by our then Ambassador was hardly cordial: he seemed to think that our action had been altogether too drastic, and told me that Turkey was a civilized country. However, I saw to it that the Kaimmakam received such an official wigging as made him regret the part he had played, nor did he ever trouble us again.

But a word must be added about poor old Hassan. Our commissaire, Fuad Bey, annoyed at the trouble he had caused, raised the question of the real ownership of the Kala'at, and a Commission was appointed to look into this. The Commissioners took up a plea which had formerly been urged by the Turkish War Office to oppose our application for a digging permit—the plea that Carchemish had been a military stronghold, that it was still known as the Kala'at or Fort of Jerablus,

and that by law no Turkish fortress could become the property of an individual nor could the right of examining it be granted to foreigners. In spite of the argument which we had successfully employed that no fort had stood there since Roman times, the new Commission decided that Carchemish was the inalienable property of the State and that its registration as private property had been fraudulent: the British Museum waived its quarter right, and Hassan was arbitrarily ousted from the rest —all, that is, save the low-lying tilth which could not be brought within the Turkish definition of a Kala'at. Of course it was a hardship, not to say an injustice, of which we were ultimately the cause, so when all was settled above our heads we made Hassan a present of the sum for which he had originally offered to sell us the whole site; it was a very popular act, considered by everybody to be characteristically English, and it bound Hassan Agha to us as a most penitent friend.

Chapter Seven

NABOTH'S VINEYARD

A Story of 1910

I CANNOT join in those panegyrics which have been so often chanted in praise of the Old Turk as "the finest gentleman in Europe." The Turkish peasant is a decent enough fellow—as are peasants nearly all the world over: he has the good qualities of those who live close to the soil; he is industrious, patient, wonderfully amenable to discipline, good-tempered as a rule, and withal of a more cheerful disposition than his hard life would seem to warrant; on occasion, too, he can be an incarnate brute. But Turkey claims to be a civilized and a great power, and by the degree to which she makes good that claim must she be judged. Armenian massacres and the persecution of Greek Ottoman subjects might of themselves suffice to damn the ruling class that orders them; but these things do not stand alone, they are only more glaring examples of Turkey's utter inability to understand the rudiments of what civilized government should mean. The Turks have never outgrown the stage of conquest. They ceased long since to add by force of arms province to province, and to extend the dominions of the Crescent; but just as the first inroads of the Tartar hordes had loot and sack as motive and as sequel, so to-day the Turk looks upon power as a means to self-enrichment, and regards the alien peoples of his empire not as fellow-subjects but as enemies for his plundering. I know little of Turkey proper, of the Anatolian highlands where the Turk is at home and the governing class have to deal with people of their own kith and kin; but in the provinces, where he is set as a stranger in authority, he is an unmitigated curse.

Of course, there are individual exceptions to the rule, such men as Jellal Pasha, Vali of Aleppo in 1913, well-educated,

honest and well-intentioned; but even these are out of sympathy with the people they have to govern, and their best efforts are thwarted by their associates and ministers. The hopelessness of doing much real good, and the fear of those slanders which find so ready a hearing at Stamboul, reduce the best of such men to a policy of harmless inaction; and the worst, who form the vast majority, have no incentive to well-doing, and fear no sanction for its opposite: extortion, corruption, and violence are their most coveted perquisites of office.

North Syria is perhaps particularly unfortunate, for lying as it does on the fringe of Turkey proper, its population of Arab, Turkman and Kurd is leavened with a number of resident Turks over and above its share of officials and place-holders. Now one relic of the old conquering Tartar spirit is an inordinate land-hunger, and this appetite in people whose race sets them in the eyes of government above their neighbours is for the latter a very dangerous thing. This is, or was, a country of peasant proprietors. Most Arab families own sufficient land for their own needs, land which has been handed down from father to son, and, ill-cultivated as it is, yet suffices for the wants of the household, seeing that the population increases but slowly. But if you were to compare the original Land Register drawn up thirty years ago with its present entries you would find changes which affect the whole economy of that countryside. Landlordism on a large scale is fast ousting the small-holder, and entire districts are passing into the hands of a small number of wealthy men. The change is not so apparent on the surface of things, for in very many cases the family of the old small-holder is still resident and working as tenants on the land they have lost; but in reality it has gone even deeper than official records show, for many who still by the letter of the law retain their little farms do so only on the sufferance and at the convenience of their virtual lords. Prominent above the flat roofs of many an Arab village you will see the stone house of the Turkish effendi. Probably this man will own a good half of the land belonging to the village, and may have large properties besides in the neighbouring hamlets; the villagers may still for the most part possess land of their own, but through debt or other mischance they have so fallen into the power of the big landlord that they owe him unpaid service

for so many months of the year, and for that period are little better than his serfs. This state of things does not depend on any old feudal tradition, but is the modern outcome of the Government's favouritism to the Turk and absolute disregard of native rights or interests.

If this were all, there would be no need for any great outcry: but the worst feature of it is that the system of aggrandizement by alien and often absentee landlords is still spreading, and no Arab small-holder is safe from it. I have often asked an Arab—and that, too, in villages where as yet no Turkish effendi has installed himself—why he did not do more to improve the land he owned. The answer has always been the same—he dared not, if he wished to keep it. The soil may be deep and fertile, capable, with irrigation (which in the valleys is often an easy matter), of yielding two fine crops a year: yet the owner will but scratch the surface with his wooden plough, sow the exhausted seed that has been the same for generations, and if the spring rains give the expected harvest will let his land lie fallow till the winter. If the rains fail, and only then, he will clean out his ditches or set his water-wheel to work and so win an autumn crop: but he never tries to raise much more than will pay the tax-collector and leave enough over to keep his household in food until the following year. Very little corn from these small farms finds its way to market: the ground is only asked to yield a tithe of what good husbandry would make a normal crop. Did landlordism change this state of things and result in the proper cultivation of the soil it might as a system stand excused: but it does nothing of the sort. When an effendi has grabbed a new piece of land he has not the least desire to sink money in its improvement. He instals a tenant, or employs the former owner as such, on terms that yield him income without outlay. Generally the conditions are that after Government taxes have been paid and next season's seed-corn set aside, the landlord and the tenant divide the rest of the harvest on some scale fixed between them: the landlord has as a rule sufficient interest and ready cash to prevent the overcharges with which the tax-gatherer was wont to fleece the small-holder, and so the old yield is good enough to meet the new needs. The farmer can make so little for himself that he has no incentive to harder work, the landlord is at once too

niggardly and too idle to insist on the double cropping of the soil: just as the Osmanlis grasped at an empire, and in five hundred years have not stirred a finger for its material betterment, so at heart the individual Turk is more anxious to own the land than to make a fortune out of it. Thus the smallholder, while he owns the land, is afraid to improve it, and things are no better when it is taken from him.

What is the danger? You have only to find out by what means these effendi have thus recently acquired their estates to understand how real it is and how easily evoked. Suppose an Arab owns some ten or fifteen acres of low-lying land on which he labours with his sons, the women-folk helping at the harvest, and suppose that he has so worked it as to make it rather better than his neighbours' and to draw the attention of some Turk, the landlord in a village hard by, or a town merchant who would fain raise himself to the effendi class. Then the sordid little play begins.

The Turk may offer to buy, and his offer naturally be refused, or he may lie low and bide his time. The harvest is gathered and the grain heaped on the threshing-floor, but it must not be removed thence until it has been assessed by the Government tax-collector who will come his rounds to collect the moderate $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent due to the State. The inspector delays his coming; the price of corn is going down fast, and the Arab farmer begins to fear that his stock may suffer in quality also: both are serious considerations, for he has probably some small debts that his harvest is to pay off, and thunderstorms are bad for grain lying in the open. The inspector, prompted by the Turk, still delays until a bribe induces him to make his visit: the farmer saves his corn, but at a price. In front of the inspector the grain is divided into eight equal heaps, of which one represents the share of the State. But this share is to be paid, not in kind, but in cash, and its value is assessed by the inspector who takes for his basis the prices current in Aleppo just before the new harvest—that is, the maximum city price of the year. The Arab has not got this money—or, at any rate, does not want to part with it and thereby betray the existence of his little hoard—so must needs realize part of his crop. To help him to do so, the inspector has in his train a grain-merchant, perhaps a creature of the Turkish effendi,

more often the inspector's own business partner. His offer is, of course, based on the lowest price current in the villages, where the new season's corn is at a discount: the farmer cannot possibly find another market, for no one in the district buys corn, he has no means of transport, and if he had the law forbids him to move any grain at all before the tax has been paid. Consequently he is forced to sell on the spot at the merchant's figure, and in order to raise the sum at which one-eighth of his harvest was assessed must part with maybe the half. Perhaps when he has concluded his unwilling bargain he will find that the price agreed on was for grain delivered in Aleppo and that he is responsible for the transport: this is quite beyond his powers, but the grain-merchant will once more accommodate him—at a price; some chicanery can always be found to cheat the villager, and by the time the collector is satisfied the tax has risen in effect from the original 12½ per cent to something nearer 60 per cent of the year's yield.

Then the effendi pays a friendly visit to the official who compiles the register for compulsory military service, and the Arab is notified that his eldest son is called up for the army. Now a man who joins the army is, in nine cases out of ten, lost to his family for good and all: the service is hated too, in that it is for the Turkish Government: and without the eldest son the farm perhaps cannot be worked; the only thing for our farmer to do is to pay the *bedeli*, the exemption fee, of sixty Turkish pounds. Maybe he has that amount buried beneath his house floor, and must sacrifice these savings of years: if he has it not, he must borrow. Now the Turk comes forward, full of sympathy, and is willing to accommodate with a loan in return for a mortgage on the farm: an agreement is drawn up in writing, the money is paid over, and the first strand of the spider's web has been spun about the victim.

Soon afterwards the eldest son is called up as a reservist, and some forty pounds has to buy his freedom. The Turk is again willing to grant a loan, and the farmer is lucky if his obliging friend does not, to save trouble, note the two sums together on the same new mortgage while still keeping the original in his possession. The Arab knows nothing of any interest—indeed the idea is foreign to him as forbidden by his faith—but the interest mounts up all the quicker through his ignorance; I

have known a man who for a loan of twenty pounds paid about ten pounds annually for seven years, and for six months of each year worked as the unpaid serf of his creditor, and at the end of that time still owed him nearly ninety pounds.[1] Then too if the Turk has, as is not infrequently the case, the control of a shop in the market-town, he will encourage his debtor to deal there on credit, and these new debts will rival the mortgage interest in luxuriant growth. This may last a year or two: if necessary, and supposing that the land be worth such outlay, the other sons may be required for military service, and the payment of their *bedeli* will plunge the farmer deeper into debt; but in any case the end is the same. The mortgage is called in and the farmer is broken: the farm is put up to auction, but, encumbered as it is, no one will bid for it but the lender: the Turk therefore gets the property he coveted for a fraction of its value (and that paid on the instalment system!) while the Arab is lucky if he be left to work as a labourer on the land of his birthright.

This, with such modifications as circumstances may advise, is the normal method of the land-grabber. A more daring way may be illustrated by a story in which I knew all the actors.

On the east bank of the Euphrates, just opposite the Kala'at of Jerablus, lies the village of Zormara. The river here runs in a gentle curve. Its main current is to the right of the bed and has cut deep into the western bank, forming earthen cliffs for some five miles above the citadel rock: on the other side the old bank that rises to the upper Mesopotamian plateau falls back in a more or less straight line and is as it were the cord of a string bow whose arc is the river: between the water and the eastern hills stretches a long segment of flat fertile ground at whose lower corner stood the village. The people of Zormara were Arabs, an isolated rearguard in a country whence the Kurdish advance had ousted nearly all of the older inhabitants: they had no landlord or sheikh, but each household possessed a strip of the rich riverine plough-land and a strip of the poorer tilth or pasture on the highlands behind the village: all these holdings were duly registered in the Land Office of Birijik.

[1] This was one of my own workmen. On getting the rights of the case I sent him to the effendi with a note asking him to return to me at once all the deeds, etc. which he held against the bearer, failing which I should see to it that he died suddenly: I received and destroyed all the papers and declared the debt off.

About 1906 it occurred to the villagers that their property would be vastly bettered by a canal from the river starting at the north point of their low ground and running along the foothills, so as to irrigate the whole riverine area for an autumn crop. The scheme was approved, and the whole village set to work: the canal was dug, some three or four miles in length, fruit-trees were planted along its banks, and irrigation channels were cut so as to water each man's plot: Zormara bade fair to be the most prosperous village of the whole river country.

Unfortunately this prosperity drew the covetous attention of one Ahmed, effendi by courtesy, a well-to-do Turkish shopkeeper of Birijik. He started operations in the usual way, and by money-lending methods acquired part ownership in three of the village holdings: no others would sell, nor did he himself wish to part with further cash. Collecting about him a goodly force of armed and landless Kurds he made a surprise attack on Zormara, defeated the villagers in a scrambling fight, and drove them with their wives and children across the river. Then he settled his henchmen in the deserted cottages and started to build a stone house for himself on the village outskirts.

After a few futile attempts to regain their homes by force of arms the evicted peasants had recourse to the law, and appealed at Birijik against their supplanter. But they were Arabs—and now poor men at that—while Ahmed effendi was a Turk. To supplement the few titles he had legally acquired, he had taken the precaution of drawing up deeds of sale for all the village lands, to which his Kurdish second-in-command had forged the signatures of the Arab owners. These deeds were legally quite valueless so long as the original entries stood in the Birijik register, but a small payment to the Kaimmakam and to the Cadi was enough to decide the case in his favour without recourse to such invidious comparisons.

The villagers, who in the meanwhile had squatted in tents near Jerablus and were busy raiding the neighbouring countryside for a livelihood, now appealed to Aleppo. There Ahmed effendi had small local interest and his bribes were insufficient to bolster up his case against the plain justice of things and the profits that the Zormarites had made out of stolen cattle: Aleppo gave orders to the Kaimmakam of Birijik that soldiers

must be sent to Zormara, Ahmed effendi and his men evicted in their turn, and the original inhabitants restored. The Kaimmakam despatched the troops and wired to Aleppo that the Vali's orders had been carried out. The arrival of the soldiers seems to have taken Ahmed by surprise: he attempted no resistance but begged for time; then while his son did the honours of hospitality he himself galloped off to Birijik and saw the Kaimmakam. The sum of three hundred pounds changed hands, Ahmed effendi returned in triumph to his new house, and the troops, finding their orders cancelled, departed, leaving him in possession. In vain the villagers appealed again to Aleppo: judgment had already been given, and it stood on record that judgment had been executed; the authorities refused to re-open the case.

For some time the Zormarites were too busy collecting property from the district round to indulge in anything more than a few long-distance shooting matches across the river, and Ahmed effendi was left undisturbed. But at length they got an Aleppo lawyer to take an interest in their claim, and he, in view of Ahmed's local influence and of the undeniably bad reputation which the dispossessed villagers had now earned for themselves, decided to leave provincial justice strictly alone and to appeal direct to Constantinople. It was a good move, for the authorities there took up the matter and sent down a Commissioner to make inquiries on the spot, but, unfortunately, news of this came early to the ears of Ahmed effendi, and as the mills of Turkish justice grind slowly, he decided that he had time for a *coup*. He called his Kurds together and he razed to the ground the village of Zormara. Then with the materials he built a new village a quarter of a mile away, and on the site of the old he planted fruit trees, taken already well grown from the banks of the canal, and dug irrigation channels for his new orchard across the foundations of the vanished houses; he shifted all the landmarks of the plough-lands, he filled up some of the branch canals and dug others; and then folded his hands and waited in confidence the arrival of the Commissioner from Stamboul.

In due time this functionary arrived, and Ahmed effendi crossed the river to meet him. He declared that he was delighted to see the Commissioner who would at last free him

from a persecution under which he had long suffered. A gang of Arabs, he protested, well-known throughout the country as thieves and evil-doers, had tried by force of arms to turn him out of his village: failing in this they had sought by every means that the corruption of local tribunals could afford to evict him by process of law from the lands that had been his and his father's and grandfather's before him; their impudent claims had worried him for years, but now the justice of Stamboul would settle the whole matter to his relief.

The Commissioner retorted that the plaintiffs seemed to have made out a very good case, and that their title-deeds were apparently in order. Ahmed effendi was first astonished and then delighted at this. Hitherto the villagers had brought against him only loose verbal charges: if now they had been so imprudent as to commit things to paper and to produce title-deeds, which must of necessity be forged, then the case was simplicity itself. "Indeed," he added, "considering that none of them have ever seen the village at close quarters, their detailed descriptions must be something of a curiosity," and he asked to be allowed to see the deeds. He saw them and laughed aloud: "It is just as I thought," he said, "but come over to-morrow to Zormara, and you will see for yourself the shamelessness of the forgery."

The next day the Commission visited the village. Where the title-deeds showed houses was a flourishing young orchard; where they showed open land stood the mud-brick houses (it is surprising how soon you can make a mud-brick house look old: but in any case the Commissioner was in no mood to look into details), and in scarcely a single point did the description tally with the actual site. The Commissioner was furious at having made his voyage for nothing, and was glad to abandon so unprofitable an inquiry for the comforts of Ahmed effendi's hospitable house and to receive a *solatium* for the trick that impudent brigands had played on the Supreme Court.

Ahmed effendi is still Lord of Zormara.

Chapter Eight

HAMOUDI

THE success of any dig will always depend very largely on the quality of the foreman. From 1911 until 1946 my foreman was Hamoudi—Mohammed ibn Sheikh Ibrahim, sheikh of the Damalka tribe, but to me and to all his friends simply Hamoudi—and to him I owe more than I can say. He was originally appointed by Hogarth, who excavated at Carchemish before me, in 1911, and Hamoudi was never tired of telling the story of his promotion.

Hogarth, who had brought as foreman Gregori of Cyprus, a veteran archæological digger who had worked as a boy under Cesnola and later had been Evans' right-hand man in Crete, started by recruiting at random a hundred men from Jerablus and the neighbouring villages. Hamoudi listened to the call but hesitated; he was desperately poor and the wages offered were attractive, but he had never worked in the service of any man, and the thought of doing so grated on his pride; but he felt a lively curiosity about these Englishmen, creatures he had heard of but never before seen. Here was a chance to learn something of them at close quarters, and after all to work for them was not like working for another Arab or a Turk, so, merely stipulating that he should be a pick-man and not have to carry a basket, Hamoudi joined up.

A few days later Hogarth told Gregori that he ought to have a local man under him as assistant foreman; had he any choice in the matter? "Yes," said Gregori, "that red-headed fellow; give me a red-headed man all the time, for a red head means a hot liver!" So Hamoudi was called up. He was horrified; there had been a lot of weeding-out of slackers, so he expected instant dismissal, and it was indeed no small thing to interview Hogarth, who had already earned amongst

the workmen the nickname of Azrael, or the Angel of Death, thanks to the temper he showed on the work before breakfast had exercised its mellowing influence; so he came with shaking knees, trying to find courage to ask even that he might carry a basket, or that he might keep his pick but be given double his allowance of spade- and basket-men—anything rather than be sent off in disgrace. When he was told that he was to be foreman of the whole gang he could hardly believe his ears; he had to go off and say his prayers—" a thing I had not done for a long time."

But of course the appointment awoke a storm of jealousy amongst the other men. One after another came to Hogarth with scandalous stories against the new *chawîsh*, and Hamoudi himself was threatened with every kind of vengeance and assured that he need not look to the English for protection, because the English had already found out the truth about him and were only waiting for an opportunity to strike hard. That was the normal course for events to take, so Hamoudi, anticipating the inevitable end, formally resigned his post. Hogarth naturally told him that he didn't listen to malicious gossip and that when he appointed a man he stood by him as long as the man showed himself worthy of the job—and of that he, Hogarth, was the sole judge. To an Arab it was so novel an interpretation of the duties of an employer that it presented life under a new aspect. Hamoudi stopped on, and in a very short time convinced his fellows that scandal simply didn't pay; and by the end of the first season he was a popular foreman.

From the start he took his work very seriously. He watched Hogarth calling the roll and checking the attendance sheets (Gregori could not read or write) and decided that such was properly the foreman's job, but as he was himself illiterate he couldn't do it. So during the summer, after Hogarth had gone, Hamoudi earned the mockery of his fellow-men by attending the little school kept by the village *hoja*, sitting on the ground with half-a-dozen small boys and toiling at the Arabic script. When I arrived on the scene in 1912 Hamoudi had progressed so far that he could keep the men's record himself (though it was painful to watch him wrestling with pencil and paper) and could help Gregori to run the gang without undue bother to me.

Between him and Haj Wahid there was intense jealousy. Hamoudi's sphere was, of course, the dig, and Haj Wahid's the house, so that there was no need of any clash between them; but each feared that if the other got my confidence his own position was endangered, and each of them, therefore, would accuse the other of the most outrageous misbehaviour. I would listen gravely to the charges and, of course, do nothing. But at last one day Hamoudi came to me in one of his introspective moods. He said, " I have been thinking about you English, and it is very strange. Last year Hogarth was here with Thompson and Lawrence under him, and I was made foreman; they would talk to me, but never did Hogarth complain about the others, and never did Thompson or Lawrence tell me nasty things about Hogarth or each other. Now you are in Hogarth's place, and Lawrence has not made a single accusation against you, and you've said nothing against him. This must be the way of the English, and it seems to me a good way. Many times I have come to you with stories against Haj Wahid; I tell you now that nearly all of them were lies. I don't like Haj Wahid, but never again shall I tell you lies about him. If there should be something that you ought to know, I'll tell you that, but not unless I am quite sure that it's true; and I don't suppose I shall ever do anything of the sort." And though the enmity continued Hamoudi kept his word.

In 1912 Hamoudi was about thirty-four years old. As I described him then, " He is rather tall, gaunt, with a thin sandy beard cut short, long-armed and immensely powerful, and a striking figure at all times, but if things go wrong, or if big discoveries are on hand and the work has to be pushed, then his eyes blaze, the skin is drawn tight over the face-bones, his teeth are bared, and the man labours like a fury and looks like a devil. He affects a long-sleeved coat of sham astrakhan worn over the skirt of many colours which our men call ' the Seven Kings '; his head-cloth is of purple silk and gold tissue, the *brîm* or black woollen rope that holds it in place is vastly thick and tweaked up in front to show a man of spirit and fashion; his belt is of leather and well stocked with cartridges for the inevitable revolver; his socks are European but gaudy." To the end of his life he clung to his already old-fashioned garb, though the colours were somewhat dimmed and in more

intimate moments the head-cloth might be discarded and only the white knitted skull-cap would crown the lined face. That would be the case at our regular ceremony of evening coffee. At about half-past six Hamoudi would come in carrying a tray with coffee-pot and cups (he brewed the best Arabic coffee I have ever had) and, shaking off his red slippers at the door, would squat on the floor and, until dinner was announced, would smoke and chat while the cups went slowly round. On one such evening at Atchana after there had been a longish silence he said musingly, " Yes, there have been two passions in my life, archæology and violence! " My wife laughed at him. " You wicked old murderer! " she said. Hamoudi was indignant. " Murderer? " he protested. " I'm nothing of the sort! I have never in all my life killed a man for money; only for fun." He had indeed a chivalry of his own. Once, in the village coffee-shop at Jerablus, three men were having a discussion and one of them objected, " Hamoudi would not approve of that." " Hamoudi, Hamoudi," said another, " I'm sick of the name! Who is Hamoudi? " That was a mortal insult and it was duly reported to Hamoudi, who would have been justified in shooting the offender from any safe ambush. Instead, he waylaid him outside the village and, producing two swords, told the fellow to choose his weapon and defend himself and, having thus armed him, fell upon him and left him for dead on the path. Actually the man recovered, but Hamoudi was looked at askance in the countryside, not for murderous assault but for running unnecessary risks.

That incident—one of many—occurred before Hogarth's time, in Hamoudi's tumultuous youth; for although of reputable stock—his written pedigree goes back to the time and to the house of the Prophet, and his father was a man of saintly life—he had been no model of propriety. For five years he was an outlaw, with as many as sixty soldiers on his track, but well mounted and well armed, with friends all down the river ready to shelter him, he was never caught. His narrowest escape was once when he ventured back to Jerablus to see his wife, and some enemy betrayed his presence to the troops. It was early summer, and Hamoudi was asleep on the flat roof of his house when a summons from below woke him; looking down he saw a Turkish officer and soldiers posted all about the

house. The officer summoned him to surrender. " The house is surrounded," he said; " you had better come down quietly." Hamoudi looked below. " It is as God wills," he answered, " but I am naked and in bed; let me first dress myself, that I may not be shamed, and I will come down to you." The officer agreed to the delay, glad enough, in all likelihood, to have taken so desperate a character so easily. Hamoudi whispered his instructions to his wife, and while he dressed she slipped down and, unhindered by the soldiers, who recognized her for a woman, made her way to the open pent-roof shed where was her husband's horse and unhobbled him and held him ready. A moment or two later Hamoudi hailed the officer again. " Are you ready at the door? " he asked, " for I am coming down." The officer took his stand before the door, immediately below where Hamoudi stood. The outlaw, now dressed, picked up the heavy quilted mattress on which he had been sleeping, and, holding it before him, jumped straight on to the top of the Turk. Down went the officer with all the breath knocked out of him; up jumped Hamoudi, and before the alarm could be given was at the stable and on horseback. The soldiers fired into the darkness, but a few shots fired back in defiance and a shout of derision told them that their victim had slipped through their fingers.

When in 1908 a general amnesty was declared, Hamoudi, tired of his outlawry, came back to the village and settled down to a peaceful life; but the old restless spirit is not wholly dead in him. When the work is dull, or when towards a season's end the strain of his job tells on him and he gets headachey and nervous, then he will shake himself impatiently and sigh for the freer life. " Oh, Effendim," he will say at such times, " give me a hundred pounds, so that I can leave my house to take care of itself and buy a good horse and a rifle, and I'll have done with all this! I'll shoot a man or two and take to the hills again, and, by God, I should be happier than living within walls like a cow! "

The recklessness of the man is shown by the following story.

His brother Mustapha owned a melon-patch. I fancy that a few melons had been stolen; anyhow Hamoudi was arguing that they might be, and that his brother did not take proper care of his crop. Mustapha maintained that as he himself

Door of the Expedition house at Carchemish with the "Hittite" lintel carved by Lawrence, here seen washing photographic prints.

Gregori at work.

slept in the little reed shelter amongst the vines everything was safe; Hamoudi retorted that as he *slept* there everything could be stolen—" I bet that I could steal them myself without waking you," he added, and Mustapha took up the bet. That night Hamoudi with a friend crept into the melon-patch, and while the friend collected a couple of sackfuls of fruit Hamoudi took his stand inside the shelter with a heavy wooden club, iron-spiked, balanced over his sleeping brother's head. " I was ready to hit him as soon as he woke up, but he never woke," he told me afterwards. " But, Hamoudi," I said, " if you had hit Mustapha on the head with this thing you'd have killed him! " " Possibly," he answered, " but then he had said that I could not steal his melons! "

Lawrence stopped on in Syria during the summer, when work at Carchemish had closed down for the hot weather, and went on walking tours with camera and revolver, often at no small risk. On one occasion he struggled back to Jerablus almost dying of malaria and typhoid, and Hamoudi nursed him. The authorities at Birijik heard of this and, as they did not want the responsibility of having an Englishman die in their area, ordered Hamoudi to expel the sick man and let him die elsewhere; and when he refused told him that, should Lawrence die, as seemed most likely, they would resolve their own difficulty by arresting Hamoudi on the charge of having murdered him for his money. There was no possible defence against such an accusation; it meant death and disgrace, and Hamoudi confessed that he was shaken, but none the less he stood firm and in the end brought Lawrence back to life and delivered him in safety to the British consulate in Aleppo. It was in return for this that Lawrence's father invited him to England. Lawrence took him and Dahum by sea to Trieste, and so across Europe for a three-months' stay in Oxford and London, and the effect of that visit was to last Hamoudi all his life; he was an unsophisticated peasant for whom everything outside the confines of North Syria was new and strange, but he was determined to learn from everything, and he learned readily.

When we were at Beirut H.M.S. *Black Prince* was lying off the port (she has had her great day now and done her work,

and with her gallant crew lies under the waters of the North Sea), and we took the two Arabs on board. They had heard in the town wonderous tales of this the first warship they had seen, and how two shells from her great turret-guns would lay all Beirut level with the dust, so their delight went beyond all bounds when it transpired that firing practice was just over and they were allowed to watch the handling of the guns. They were taken into a turret, and through the casemate they saw the town. Both exclaimed at once, "Oh, *do* shoot at the town, just two shots, at this end of it and at that!" The officer in charge of the party expostulated. "Good heavens, no!" he exclaimed, "why, it would knock half the place to bits!" "Yes," urged Hamoudi, "but it's a bad town—and it would be *such* fun!" and the one blot on their happiness was that when they left the ship Beirut still stood untouched by shot and shell.

To go to England was a treat undreamed of, taken in the spirit of schoolboys, but with a joy made somewhat tremulous by the dire forebodings of their friends that they would never come back. Even Hamoudi was rather deliciously uncertain about the truth of our solemn yarn telling how natives were enticed to England and then turned into tinned meat, and he admitted afterwards that his coming was a supreme act of faith in ourselves. But though they had their fill of wonders abroad it was to them but an excursion from which they came back gladly to their village life: they saw the convenience of much that was Western (Hamoudi particularly wanted to pocket and take home with him an ordinary bath-tap, so as to have hot water always handy without the bother of lighting fires!), but the meal of herbs at Jerablus was, as a permanent thing, far to be preferred to the stalled ox of England. In the coffee-shop at Jerablus Hamoudi delighted to tell the most hair-raising (and amusing) stories of the water-chute at the White City and such-like improbable adventures, but when one day I asked him what of all that he had seen in England had really struck him most he did not answer immediately but thought for a few minutes and then said, "It was in the parks at Oxford. There was a gravel path to walk on and alongside it little low hoops of iron to keep people off the grass. Anyone could step over them, they were so small, but nobody did; and it seemed to me that that was England."

He conceived the most whole-hearted admiration for and devotion to England, and therefore when Turkey joined the Germans in the 1914 war was a natural suspect; life became somewhat difficult even in his own village. Neighbours took a malicious pleasure in reading out in his presence the official bulletins of the war, with their staggering tales of British casualties, and at first Hamoudi was worried, but after a while it was noticed that he would take out pencil and notebook and write the figures down with obvious satisfaction. At last they asked him why he seemed so happy about his friends' losses. "It all shows," said he, "that God is on the side of the English." How was that? "These figures," he explained, "are given out by our Government, and God forbid that any should doubt them. Well, up to date I have noted nearly ten million killed and wounded on the English side; that is more than all the fighting men in the English nation, but still they carry on the war, so it must be that whenever an Englishman is killed in battle God brings him back to life to fight the Germans over again. Clearly God is with them." And nobody knew how to answer him. Once, however, he was tried too far and lost his temper. Some one had boasted of what the Sultan would do to the King of England. "The Sultan?" scoffed Hamoudi. "Why, whenever he likes the King of England can lay the Sultan across his knee and smack him!" That was too much. The tale was carried to Birijik, to the Kaimmakam's ears, and a Turkish sergeant with ten men was sent to Jerablus to arrest the traitor and bring him back for execution. It was in 1916, when famine and typhus had brought desolation to Syria, and when the sergeant reached Jerablus and demanded Hamoudi, two weeping women led him to an inner room of the house where he lay apparently at the point of death. "Do not go too near," they whispered, "for he has the plague," and the soldiers drew back. But Hamoudi had heard them. "Guests?" he muttered in a hollow voice, "and I cannot entertain you, whosoever ye be, for I am a dead man, smitten with the plague. But God forbid that I should send guests empty away. There is a bag of barley by the door; take it and go in peace." A bag of barley in the time of famine was a royal gift, and the sergeant took it, rejoicing, and returned to Birijik to report that Hamoudi was

dead—he had himself seen the corpse. So Hamoudi's death was officially announced and he was free to get up and go about his business in safety for the future, for no tale-bearer could denounce to the Kaimmakam a man whom the Kaimmakam had declared to be dead.

Officialdom could scarcely be blamed for the easy assumption of one man's death in that terrible year, for what with pestilence and famine almost a third of the population died. Certainly when I got back to Jerablus in 1918 nearly half of my old workmen could not be found, and men still spoke with horror of the days when the fear of death by starvation had overcome even the Moslem law of hospitality, so that no man dared ask his neighbour for food. One story they told me of what had happened in the village had a curiously Old Testament flavour. There was a poor woman in Jerablus whose husband died, and then her only son died and she was left alone, and a handful of wheat at the bottom of a bag was all that remained to her in the world. So she went to one of the rich men of the village and said to him, " Oh, Father of Mercy, give me three cakes of dung fuel that I may make myself a loaf of bread with this handful of grain, and eat once before I die." Now the man was rich and had many relatives in Jerablus who had died and their houses had passed into his hands, and since the walls of every one were plastered with the dung cakes made ready for the winter he had more fuel than any household could use; so he said, " Be content, my daughter; go to the house of So-and-so, which is empty, and take three cakes of fuel, and the mercy of God go with you." So she went and took the cakes home, and she ground the grain and made dough, and when all was ready broke the first of the cakes to light her fire; and as she broke the cake there fell out of it a gold sovereign. And the widow said, " God is merciful. With this gold I can buy grain and shall not die yet." And she broke the second cake, and out of it fell a gold sovereign. And she said, " God is great and all-merciful. With this I can buy grain enough to last me until harvest comes; I shall live and not die." And she broke the third cake, and out of it fell a gold sovereign, and she said, " God is great and merciful and wise, but I, too, I am no fool. What avails it that I outlive the famine? I shall be a poor widow with neither kith nor kin,

nor will any man desire me for his wife. What sort of a life shall I live? But I know what I shall do so that after the famine I shall be a great one in Jerablus"; and she went back to the rich man's house and she said to him, "In the house of So-and-so to which you sent me there is a whole store of dung cakes; I would buy them all of you." He held out for a high price, but she argued with him and at the end agreed to pay three pieces of gold, and he was secretly glad and yielded to her. So she gave him her three sovereigns and she found a sack and carried all the dung-cakes to her own house, and she shut the door and started to break up the cakes; and she found nothing. She broke cake after cake, and at last all were gone and the room was piled high with broken dung; and she made a great fire and she cooked the dough that she had prepared and ate bread, and afterwards, having nothing, she died, the woman who thought herself wiser than God.

When I came back to Jerablus it was as political officer for North Syria, and Hamoudi became my unofficial assistant, travelling round the country with me and finding out the truth, which by myself I should never have been allowed to learn; it was a responsible position and one of absolute trust. One evening he began moralizing in what was for him a characteristic way. "Life is a strange thing," he murmured. "I was an Arab brought up under Turkish rule, and an outlaw at that, and then chance brings me up against you English, and somehow things change. In this job now, what a chance I have to make money! I don't mean by working against you or betraying you in any way, but just taking what people would be glad to give me; but for you English I should be taking it, of course, and nobody would blame me, but somehow I don't want to. How much do you think that I could make in a year—without letting you down?" "Quite a lot, I suppose," said I. "Twelve thousand pounds," said Hamoudi reflectively. "Come, come," I protested, "that's absurd!" "No," said he. "If I said to Ahmet Effendi, 'I should like a thousand pounds,' would he give it me?" I had to admit that Ahmet Effendi would. "And *flan* and *flan*—So-and-so and So-and-so—wouldn't they be good for five hundred each?" Yes, there were half-a-dozen who would give that much unconditionally. "And then all those at a hundred,

and smaller sums from every one; it wouldn't go on for ever, of course, but in the first year I reckon I could get twelve thousand. And as it is I get four pounds a month, and the funny thing is that, though I'd very much like twelve thousand pounds, I prefer the four pounds and a clean name. People think I'm a fool, but they know that my name is clean and, thank God, so do I. It's a queer job you English have done."

Fortunately it was not only the local Arabs who recognized Hamoudi's way of doing things. When, late in 1919, British troops were to evacuate Syria I went to Aleppo, and the G.O.C. there showed me a letter he had received from Lord Allenby telling him to think of some excuse for giving Hamoudi a sum of money (*not* twelve thousand pounds!) in recognition of the part he had played; " and," added Allenby, " give him a personal message from me. It is this: had there been two Hamoudis instead of one I should not have had to keep British troops in North Syria." Hamoudi always had an innocent pleasure in telling stories to his own credit, but this one he never repeated; it was something too great to be shared.

Praise from the soldier whose lightning campaign had driven the Turks out of Syria was praise indeed, but I'm not sure that for Hamoudi who for all his great wisdom was a simple soul at heart, Allenby's earlier reputation did not add something to its worth. When, during the war, the rumour spread through Syria that the British general in Egypt was laying a pipe-line across Sinai to bring water from the Sweet-water Canal to the advanced base south of Beersheba, the Arab troops were panic-stricken, recalling an old saying that when the waters of the Nile flowed into Palestine the Turks would lose Jerusalem. Who was the man who thus fulfilled prophecy? They were told that it was Allenby, and panic was redoubled because the name, written in Arabic characters, would normally be read as " God and His Prophet ". The Turkish Intelligence Service decided that, to avoid so bad an omen, the general's name must hereafter be written backwards; it was done, and in its reversed form it became " ibn 'Allah " (" the Son of God "), and the heart of the Arab soldiers turned to water, for they said, " What are we that we should fight against God? " For most of the Arabs whom I knew Lord Allenby, whom they had never seen, was a legendary figure of

Hamoudi, the head foreman of the excavations at Carchemish.

something more than human stature ; his approval might well be a crowning glory.

I have described in Chapter X something of the hectic season's work that we did at Carchemish after the First World War. I went off in the early summer expecting to return in October, but by the time I got back as far as Beirut, Carchemish itself and the village of Jerablus were in Turkish hands, and though the French hoped to recover it shortly there was in the meantime nothing for me to do but kick my heels there in the South. I was living at the Consulate-General, and one morning when my early tea was brought to my bedside I looked up to see, not the usual *kavass* but, to my astonishment, Hamoudi. After our greetings I asked him how on earth he had managed to come down from enemy-occupied territory, and his face fell. There was, of course, plenty of sporadic fighting in the North and feelings were bitter on both sides. Suddenly the French authorities at Aleppo had seized and imprisoned an old and highly respected Arab whose son was leading a band of guerrillas against them; it was a mistake and an injustice, for the man was in any case far too old to be dangerous (he was over seventy) and it was well known that he was opposed to any form of violence and had quarrelled with his son for taking an active part in hostilities. Arabs and Turks alike were furious. One day they had arrested Hamoudi in Jerablus, together with all his family; they had told him that he was the friend of the English and of all foreigners, including the French, so he could go to his friends and secure the release of the old sheikh. For that he would be sent to Aleppo; if he came back without the old man then he'd be shot; if he failed to come back, then they held his family as hostages and the whole family would be shot. Hamoudi protested that he had no authority over the French, but they wouldn't listen; he was to go to them, and he was to bring back their prisoner, and failing that he or his family would pay the penalty. Feeling absolutely desperate, Hamoudi had gone to Aleppo, slipping through the French outposts, and there he had heard that I was in Beirut; so naturally he had come to me, and now what was I going to do? For, come what might, his wives and his sons must be saved.

I first asked him if it was true that the old man in prison was

really as pacific as was said, and he assured me that it was so; the French had blundered badly in arresting him, and if they released him he would acquire a good deal of credit. Then I told Hamoudi that I could do nothing directly; it was up to him; nobody would pay any attention to me because I had no first-hand knowledge, but I would take him to the right people and he must do the talking. "But what am I to say to them?" asked poor Hamoudi. "Tell them the truth." "Yes, but they'll only be angry." "Never mind whether they're angry or not; speak to them as freely and as openly as you would to me. Try to imagine that you *are* talking to me"; and Hamoudi said he would.

So I took him round to General Goureaud's headquarters and introduced him to the Chief Intelligence Officer, whom I found in the Chief of Staff's office, and, saying that Hamoudi had something to tell them that might be important, as he had come from Jerablus, left him with them. What happened then I learnt partly from Hamoudi, partly from the Chief of Staff.

Hamoudi told them exactly how it was that he had come to Beirut—but for his fear for his household he would never have come near the French. He explained about the old man and his son and very quietly but very plainly pointed out what egregious fools the French had made of themselves, the injustice of it confirming all that their enemies in Syria said about them. The two officers heard him out, then talked together, and the Chief Intelligence Officer left the room and came back to say that Hamoudi was to go with them to see General Goureaud and to repeat the whole story to him. The General listened and turned to his staff officers. "Gentlemen," he said, "this is the first Syrian I have ever met who told me the truth." He paused, and then said, "And that being so, I want to ask him a question. Why are we French so unpopular in Syria? We came here full of goodwill, we thought that we should be welcomed, and instead people hate us and fight against us. Why is that?" Hamoudi told me, "They asked me that, and my liver turned to water, but I remembered what you had said, and I spoke." "No," he said, "we don't like you." "But *why* not?" The answer was an epigram, short and to the point: "Because your officers

have no tact and your men no morals." [1] The French gasped, and then the General said, " Bravo! "

He was given a sealed letter which he was to deliver to the General in command in Aleppo, and he journeyed north by military train still not knowing how far he had succeeded but thankful to have got away alive from the Quartier Général. He went to headquarters at Aleppo and, as bearer of an official letter, was taken into the General's office. General H. read the note and rang a bell, and to the A.D.C. who answered it said, " Send me a photographer at once." " A photographer, *mon général*? " " Yes, a photographer! I must have a photograph of an Arab villager who comes to me with a letter from General Goureaud saying that I am to do whatever he tells me! " The picture was made and the General smilingly asked Hamoudi for his orders. Hamoudi said that he wanted the old sheikh to be released and handed over to his keeping. " Certainly," said the General and, after writing something, " That is arranged. And now, what do you want for yourself? " Hamoudi was taken aback. " For myself? Nothing." And then, struck by an after-thought, " Yes, of course; a free pass through your lines for the two of us, so that I can go home." As he explained to the Turks when he reached Jerablus, you only had to make the French see reason and they were perfectly ready to do the right thing.

In 1922 I took Hamoudi with me to Ur. Here he was in a strange land, set in charge of men recruited from an unusually lawless and unruly tribe, and only by sheer force of personality could he exercise authority over them. It must have been about a fortnight after our arrival that an incident occurred which showed how far he had succeeded. Colonel Tainsh, Director of the Iraq Railways, had very kindly agreed to lend me a Décauville line for use on the excavations, and word came that trucks and rails had reached the station, a mile and a quarter away; so I sent Hamoudi with a big gang of men to bring them up. " They're a lazy lot," I warned him, " and not used to working; see that they don't shirk things ; with

[1] The word Hamoudi used for " tact " was *syasi*, which also means " diplomacy " and, in military use, " intelligence "—the Chief Intelligence Officer was the *zabit es syasi*; so Hamoudi's phrase was a rather malicious hit at one of his audience.

the sleepers, for instance, make it at least two to a man's load" —I was thinking of the Décauville set we had used at Carchemish, with its light steel sleepers, and the order seemed reasonable enough. Some time later I was coming from the dig to where our Expedition house was being built when I saw a thin trickle of men strung out across the desert on the track from the railway station; there were bowed figures advancing very slowly, there were men standing still or even squatting on the ground, and evidently something was wrong. As I reached the house site the first man arrived. A great wooden beam, almost as large as the sleeper on an English railway line, slid to the ground, then another, and then the carrier of them rolled over at my feet in a faint. I threw water over him and as he recovered asked what on earth he was doing. "Carrying sleepers," he said. "But you can't carry *two* things of that size; you'll kill yourself!" "Yes, that's what we said; and Mohammed *chawish* told us that it was a mistake, but you had given the order, and orders had to be obeyed; we had to carry two each. It's that man's fault! If he tells you to do something it may kill you, but you've got to do it." I had to send a messenger down along the line of stragglers ordering them to drop their loads and bring them in as best they could —it was generally two men to a sleeper!—and in time all came in, and last of all Hamoudi arrived indignantly (but with a twinkle in his eyes) demanding to know why instructions had not been literally obeyed—and the wild Muntafik tribesmen roared with laughter and thanked God for giving them a foreman who was a real man.

Towards the end of one season's work at Ur, Hamoudi came to me for advice. His wages and *baksheesh* together came to a very respectable sum, and he wanted to buy land, but irrigated land at Jerablus was expensive and his money would not go far; what was he to do? I said, "Buy land by all means, but not the costly land towards the river; buy part of the uncultivated slope behind the village." Hamoudi objected at once; it was filthy ground, nothing but the village latrine. I told him that that was why he should buy it, for it was the only soil that had been regularly manured; but of course it needed water. Hamoudi had been immensely impressed by the *saqqiehs*, the "Persian water-wheels" which were nor-

mally used in southern Iraq but were unknown in Syria; he had studied them and made measured drawings. He went home and bought, for a song, a wide strip of the despised hillside, and near the foot of it he dug a well and got the village blacksmith to make him the cogged wheels and the endless chain with its string of buckets, and in due course the *saqqieh* was set up, with a concrete cistern alongside, and the blindfolded ox started on its treadmill round. Jerablus was agog with excitement; here was a novelty indeed. The village *imam* solemnly cursed the whole proceeding: "Hamoudi went travelling round the world with unbelievers and learnt from them the wiles of the Devil. Had he been a good man he would have spent his wealth on a pilgrimage to Mecca instead of on the wheels of Satan; now there was a curse upon him and all his works and he was cut off from the company of god-fearing men!" But the ox plodded his round and the wheels revolved and the water rose in the cistern, and Hamoudi came out and stood watching as the women, his neighbours, started out to fetch their household supply of water from the well in the middle of the village. "Ho, my daughters!" he hailed them. "What do ye? It is a weary journey to the well and the full jar is heavy on the head of her that toils back therefrom. Behold, here is water at your doors, fresh water and abundant, to be taken without price and without labour. Come ye to the waters!" Obediently they came and filled their jars. "*W'Allah*, Hamoudi," said the women, "you have no need of Mecca. To give water to the poor, is not that better than any pilgrimage?" And the *imam's* curse was conveniently forgotten.

Hamoudi planted the whole slope with grape vines—and for many generations no vines had been grown at Jerablus—and at the foot he put fruit-trees and pomegranates and rose-bushes, and instead of hedging them in he announced that this was a public park ("like Oxford," he told me smilingly), and rugs and cushions were spread over the sides of the cistern so that the elders could assemble there as at a club for their cigarettes and coffee in the evening. He built a new stone house for himself at the garden's edge, well away from the dust and dirt of the village; the vines brought in a handsome revenue, so that more land could be bought; others followed

his example, and to-day the mile-long hillside which I had known as a barren waste is one rich vineyard.

Hamoudi worked with me for twelve years at Ur, and then for three years at Atchana, after which, in 1939, the Second World War put a stop to digging. When we took over Syria he was in his element. Very seldom were there no British troops being entertained in the guest-room of the stone house by the orchard; his reputation had spread far and wide, and senior British officers from Baghdad or from Egypt would travel to Jerablus simply to see him, and a British Order was conferred on him as a proved friend of England. For a long time he had been urged to stand for the Syrian Parliament and had always refused, maintaining that he was "an archæologist, not a politician," but at last he was elected without his consent—I imagine, the only candidate who incurred no election expenses!—and for two years and more attended the sittings at Damascus, but then resigned his post, disgusted with the corruption of Syrian politics. "There is not an honest man among them; no, not one," he told me sadly. "All that they want is money. It is better to live at home than amongst thieves."

When I returned to Atchana after the war Hamoudi joined me. He was astonishingly unchanged in himself, but physically he was an old man, too old for the work. He worried terribly that he could not play the part that he had played in the past, that even his voice had lost its compelling resonance when he shouted orders, and that he could not set an example to the pick-men by man-handling the biggest stones or jumping down amongst them to disengage some delicate antiquity; he was really glad to hand over the job to Yahia, his elder son, and to go home. I went twice more to Jerablus; he was bent and feeble and wracked with coughing, and he had built in the orchard the tomb beneath which he was to lie. Now he lies there, one of the very finest men it has been my privilege to know.

Chapter Nine

A CHIEF OF THE KURDS

CROSS the Euphrates from Jerablus and you find yourself in a country of rolling grassy steppes, treeless and waterless, which reaches eastwards to the Tigris and northwards to the hills of Diarbekir and Nisibin. Here and there are rocky outcrops of limestone or basalt; steep-banked *wadies*, dry nearly all the year round, intersect the country, but there are few outstanding features to break its sameness. The wide prairies, over which the spring rains spread a shimmering carpet of grass and short-stemmed flowers, lie all summer long parched to a weary brown, unrelieved and never-ending, and in winter turn to brown mud reaches or are shrouded under short-lived snow. But there is a fine spaciousness about these stony down-lands: the wind blows free across them, whether from the north-western mountains or from the far Persian hills, finding nothing to stay its course, and though the sun may be a burden at mid-day, yet the nights are fresh and cool, there is a vigour in the air and a glory of sunrise and of sunset, a beauty of far-flung moonlight across valley and rise which not even the arid deserts of Egypt can outdo.

Over this wide tract wander the Milli-Kurds. Less differentiated than most West-Kurdish tribes from the old Persian stock, they are new-comers here, whose migration is scarcely ended yet, for they are still by slow degrees pushing before them farther and farther west the Arabs who had held this North Mesopotamian fringe, and villages which but ten years ago were purely Arab are to-day in Kurdish hands. Their language is a dialect of Persian, though most of the men are bi-lingual and speak either Arabic or Turkish, according as their movements bring them in touch with the one or the other people on their borders. A nomad race, their riches lie

in herds of sheep and goats and in the horses of which they are vastly proud; in the spring-time they till after a fashion the valley-bottoms, growing grain enough to keep their households and their live-stock through the coming year, but they have no hankering after the settled farming life. A few chiefs boast houses set in some richer valley and surrounded by the huts of their immediate followers, huts which, thanks to the scarcity of roofing-timber, are built in fashion like tall beehives or like the giant ant-heaps of Africa, of mud-brick throughout from ground-level to the top of the cone; but even the chiefs, so soon as summer sets in, are glad to leave the bondage of stone walls and to wander forth over the open country, pitching their tents where fancy wills and striking camp again when sojourn in one place irks their roving spirit. Their tents are of black goat's-hair cloth, closely woven to keep out the rare rain, hung on a row of upright poles, with shorter props along the sides to give head-room: by the number of a man's tent-poles you can judge his wealth and rank—from the one- or two-poled shelter of the common clansman to the moving palace of a tribal chief with its twenty or thirty poles and living-room for half a hundred people. Inside, the tent is divided by curtains into the closed women's quarters, the main room where the men-folk sleep and eat and meet their friends, and often too the half-open space at one end which serves as stable and byre; those of the rich are hung along the sides with coloured *killims* woven by the women, their fine patterns too often disfigured to our eyes by tags of every sort of fancy cloth knotted tassel-wise into the web.

The women are seldom veiled, and unless you are actually a guest in the tent—in which case they stay discreetly hidden—are little shy of strangers. Bigly made for the most part, with a high colour and features bold but not unpleasing, crowned by masses of black hair worn in heavy braids, none too cleanly perhaps, and dressed clumsily but in brilliant colours, they are a cheerful and a hospitable crew, though at times embarrassingly curious as to how an Englishman's clothes take off and on. The men dress like the Arabs, with whom indeed they are on friendly terms, united by a common hatred of the Turk; good riders, often hard drinkers and professing the faith of Mohammed but at heart recking little of any religion,

devoted to all games of skill and to the chase, gamblers who will cheerfully stake their last coin and even the liberty of their persons on a throw of the dice, cruel and treacherous—for they will break even the bond of hospitality which Bedouin honour holds sacred—music-loving, great dancers, money-grabbers and yet spending their all on personal finery, boastful and suspicious, thieves by open profession to whom robbery is as honourable as ever it was held to be on the Scottish Marches, and as fond of a practical joke as is an undergraduate—one may condemn them as a bad lot, but as sportsmen and as good company one must needs like them well.

The polity of the Milli-Kurds is patriarchal. They are divided into twelve main tribes or *ashiret*, subdivided into clans or households more or less straitly organized as families congregate yearly in some richer valley for the spring sowing or wander in isolated freedom over the less fertile uplands. The headship of the *ashira* is hereditary, but does not descend always by right of primogeniture: from the ruling house the tribes elect that member whose abilities point him out as most likely to make a good sheikh, and do not hesitate to pass over the eldest son. The chief so chosen is far from being the untrammelled master of his people: not only are all domestic matters, such as those pertaining to women-kind, ruled altogether out of his province—for in these, unless they involve wider issues, the head of the household has the final say, and at most the chief may be invited to arbitrate between families at feud—but he has no force to compel the sheikh of a clan who may dispute his orders; democracy is the key-note of his rule, and while he may be absolute enough so long as he stands for the received traditions of the race, yet when he would venture on a line of his own choosing he must commend this to the minds of his people before he can rely on their obedience. Indeed, that their loyalty is none too hard and fast a bond, but rather a matter of convenience sanctioned by use, is shown by the fact that an able sheikh of a tribe, whose rule makes for prosperity, will attract to himself men of other tribes, and these seem to transfer their allegiance without incurring objection or reproach. The authority which binds together nomad folk must always be a loose one, affecting the individual but lightly, for personal freedom is at once the condition and the

object of their manner of life; only by some pressure from without, such as drought or persecution, or else by the uprising of a great natural leader who knows how to turn their combined strength to profitable ends, can real unity and a common cause be for a time imposed upon them.

At the end of last century all the Milli-Kurd tribes were united under one leader, Ibrahim Pasha, who in his lifetime was the *beau idéal* of his race, and since his death has become almost a legendary hero. His tent of forty poles was hung with rich embroideries outside and in. When he would shift his camp the women rose betimes and in hurried silence stripped down the heavy hangings and rolled them up, took down the poles, packed all upon the hundred camels which formed his constant baggage-train, and stole away before the light. So when the sun woke the men-folk, lo! all the paraphernalia of the great camp had melted away as if by magic, their horses, stalled the night before, now stood tethered in the open, and they needed but to mount and ride away as if all the world were out-of-doors and tents undreamt of. A hundred and twenty cavaliers formed the Pasha's bodyguard, and these never left him. At any moment the forward march could be changed into a race, or stopped for a *jereed*—the sham-fight which the Kurd loves. His falconers rode in his train ready to slip the jesses and let fly the hawks at any game that showed. Did he wish coffee, as the Kurd does at all hours, he had but to clap his hands and the *gahwaji* would gallop up, the brazier with its boiling pot and the tray of little cups slung like kettledrums on either side of his saddle, and would pour and hand to his lord without need even to slacken pace.

The Pasha was very wealthy, and prodigal as became his station. It is told of him that one day in the silk khan of Aleppo he wished to buy himself an embroidered cloak. The shopkeeper produced one, and when asked the price replied that it was five pounds; Ibrahim called up a porter who was loitering on the far side of the courtyard, and tossed over to him the unworthy garment. A second cloak was shown of double the value: Ibrahim turned to one of his followers and asked whether he would accept it. A third, better and more costly, was given to a chief of his suite; and it was only when

an *aba* of gold and silver tissue, valued at some thirty pounds, was brought out for his inspection, and he was assured that there was none finer or of greater price in Aleppo, that the Pasha felt himself fitted. To the Kurd or Arab, who will bargain for two days over a piastre, there is something truly royal in a magnificence that will neither dispute a price nor even refuse goods once offered lest the refusal be read as meanness.

The Milli-Kurds have never acknowledged a more than formal allegiance to Turkey, and Turkey has left them fairly well to their own devices: in particular, they have successfully stood out against all liability to army service. Abdul Hamid, however, towards the end of his reign suggested that they should enrol themselves as tribal horsemen under their own chiefs in the irregular force of *Hamidieh*, which the astute Sultan was raising throughout his dominions, a force owning loyalty only to the person of the Sultan himself, and designed to uphold him against any revolt on the part of his other subjects. Ibrahim Pasha was quite willing to accept the offer. It did not interfere with but rather strengthened the tribal organization, it introduced no foreign element, and it enabled him to arm and equip his followers without rousing the suspicion of the Government. Indeed, at this time Ibrahim was but little less than an independent monarch. He was rich; he had, if not a standing army, at least the power of calling up an armed *levée en masse* such as no Turkish Government would care to provoke; his territory was practically inviolate, for no tax-gatherers and no troops dared show their faces on the wide steppes; and his people owed no fealty to the Turkish overlord save through his own person. On the northern confines of the desert, at Wiranshehir, he built a capital for himself, bringing in thither Arab and Armenian settlers, and he even showed his broad-mindedness by setting up an Armenian bishop in the new town; he had no idea of himself abandoning the nomadic life, but he saw the advantages of having a fixed seat of government and a commercial centre for the produce of his own country.

The revolution that overthrew Abdul Hamid came about too suddenly for the *Hamidieh* to fulfil their rôle; but Ibrahim Pasha was quite willing to do his part, taken by surprise

though he was, and he rallied his tribesmen in arms to strike a blow for the old order. Unfortunately for him the new Government was ready: troops were sent out from Aleppo, and at Tel Bashar near the Euphrates, twenty miles from Jerablus, met and scattered the *Hamidieh* levies before the mobilization was complete. Then the Young Turks sent envoys to the Pasha, requesting him to come in for an interview at which they might explain to him the ideals of the Committee, the justice of its cause, and the liberality of its intentions. Ibrahim came into the enemy's camp, but, being warned that his murder was arranged, slipped away and prepared to organize a fresh resistance. Again the envoys were sent to find him and reproached him with his want of faith in the Young Turk party; treachery and murder were the very features of the old regime against which the Revolution was a protest, and a talk with the local leaders of the Committee would convince him that in the new-born age of liberty, the *Huriet*, he had nothing to fear from its champions. The Pasha let himself be convinced; he came in to a conference with the Young Turks, who received him cordially, and with a cup of poisoned coffee settled his last scruples.

Ibrahim Pasha being dead, the Milli-Kurds had no further powers of resistance. A punitive force from Aleppo harried their country and laid waste the town of Wiranshehir, and Ibrahim's sons, who were still but boys, were seized and carried off as hostages; lacking a common leader, the chief tribes broke up their confederacy, and in the feuds which soon set them at loggerheads with one another gave to the Government the best of guarantees against future trouble.

I had only been a short time at Jerablus when I received a visit from Busrawi Agha, certainly to-day the most prominent of the sheikhs who, not being Milli, yet once adhered to their alliance. A man of about forty-five, of medium height and heavy build, with a broad intellectual face and a pleasant expression, he is a good specimen of his people, and if he shares most of their faults, he has also more good qualities than most. He was the second son of his father, but succeeded to the chieftainship on the score of diplomatic gifts, his brains outweighing his elder brother's better record as a fighting man. The choice was justified by the event, for Busrawi has raised

the prestige of his *ashira* far above what it was in his father's time, so that now not only Kurds of other tribes but even many Arabs are proud to boast of him as their overlord. He claims to have control over 4,000 tents, a tent meaning anything from one man to ten, and the vast majority of his followers are mounted and, after a fashion, armed: but it would be difficult to say how many of these he could count upon to answer his summons in case of war. As I have said before, the patriarchal system, based on the unit of the family, has a greater influence on the Kurds than has the more complex organization of the tribe, and men own a more direct obedience to the head of their own clan than to the sheikh of their *ashira*. The allegiance of the heads of the clans, especially since the break-up of Ibrahim Pasha's confederacy, is a doubtful matter, largely one of convenience, and any one of them is free to defy his superior, provided that the strength of his following or the remoteness of his grazing-grounds give warrant for defiance. In fact, a Kurdish chief must walk delicately if he would rule and yet not alienate his people, and it is much to the credit of Busrawi's tact that he has not only held his power but increased it.

When in the Balkan War the Bulgarians reached the Chataldja lines, and the whole empire stood on tip-toe expecting the capital to fall, the Milli-Kurds saw a chance to revenge Ibrahim's death. Under the leadership of some of the murdered Pasha's family the scheme was formed of attacking Aleppo as soon as the news of Stamboul's capture should have announced the collapse of Turkish power. The plan affected me closely, for the line of march proposed by the Kurds was through Jerablus, and as they promised openly to cut the throats of all the Germans on the Baghdad line between Aleppo and the river, I felt that my own position might be none too secure. So I asked Busrawi to come in and see me, and laid the difficulty before him; but he scouted the idea of any danger to myself, and said that if I liked he would put a guard of two thousand men on the place, so that I might continue my work without hindrance. I took this opportunity of inquiring how large a force he proposed taking with him for the attack upon the vilayet, and, in view of the reputed number of his followers, was interested to hear that he would have no more than five

thousand; he assured me that this was because the contingents from all the tribes were to be proportionate, but I cannot help thinking that in fact he would have found it hard to raise a greater force sufficiently well armed to encounter the regular troops of Turkey.

The Kurds were looking forward with no little pleasure to the sack of so rich a city as Aleppo, and being one day in the town, I was much amused to meet both Busrawi's eldest son and one of the Shahin Bey brothers, joint rulers of the neighbouring *ashira*: they both gave at the outset very lame excuses for their visits to Aleppo, and it was only when I taxed them with it directly that they admitted their real object, which was no other than the drawing up of lists of such houses as would yield the best plunder. Constantinople did not fall, so the raid never took place; but this anxiety to get in first for the loot led to a queer incident, which, though it has nothing to do with Busrawi, I will quote here for the light it throws on Kurdish character.

Derai was then the leader of a small tribe, the Karagetch. An ignorant and a brutal man, low in the councils of the chiefs, he felt that he might be worsted when it came to the division of the spoil, and determined therefore to be first on the spot. With his contingent of 945 men he marched to Birijik and quartered himself upon the town, taking what he would from the bazaar without ceremony of purchase, and generally terrorizing the inhabitants. One night a false alarm reached Birijik that Stamboul had fallen: the Kaimmakam proclaimed the news from the Serai, the Mullahs indulged in lamentation from the minarets, and Derai crossed the Euphrates. He had not gone far on his way—was in fact billeted on the little town of Nizib—when he learned that the rumour was false. While he was stopping there, undecided how to act, officers sent out from Aleppo arrived and demanded to know what he was doing with an armed force on the western side of the river. Derai, alone and unsupported, answered with innocent surprise that he was doing what any patriotic subject would do—hurrying to put himself and his followers at the disposal of the Government against the foreign invader; he was as surprised as he was chagrined when he was taken at his word and told, with thanks, that

he would be sent at once to the front. A few days later he was ordered to proceed to Aintab. As he was leaving Nizib he was overtaken by an officer in uniform who, saluting, said that he had been appointed medical officer to the Kurdish contingent, and had come in to report. Derai, taking the man's papers, inquired who and what he was, and learning that he was an Armenian doctor, turned about and ordered his men to shoot him there and then. The thing was done, and Derai sent back a messenger into the town with orders that the body be not moved from the roadway where it lay, but be left to testify to the sheikh's attitude towards all unbelievers.

Derai's battalion was first sent to Constantinople, but as they began by laughing at the Turkish major who was sent to drill them, and then when they found that he was serious stoned him out of their camp, they were dispatched to Gallipoli, where the Bulgarians were threatening the Bulair lines. Their only deed of arms was when one day they were ordered to advance against the enemy forces entrenched upon a hill to the north: the wild horsemen galloped forward in true Kurdish fashion, blazing away with their rifles in the air and shouting as they rode, but coming under the Bulgars' shrapnel-fire retired more hastily than they went, declaring that this was no civilized warfare. Found to be useless here, they were shifted again into the Ismid peninsula, where they profitably employed themselves in plundering the refugees from the conquered European provinces, and finally, on the conclusion of peace, returned to Mesopotamia laden with booty taken from the Turks.

The Kurd is in fact a desert warrior, absolutely unsuited, by temperament as well as by tradition, to modern methods of warfare. He is not lacking in courage in his own way, but his wars, like those of the Bedouin, are pleasure parties, marked by more noise than bloodshed. For nearly thirty years there was a standing feud between the tribe of Busrawi and that of Shahin Bey, a feud which, kept in check by Ibrahim Pasha, broke out into regular tribal warfare after his death. The usual course of mutual raiding, cattle-lifting, and murder was aggravated by the fact that the winter houses of the rival chiefs lay but some ten miles apart at the far ends of

the same fertile valley. On one occasion, hearing that Busrawi was away and only a scanty guard left in his village, Shahin Bey determined to strike a blow which would cripple his enemy; he would attack the village in overwhelming force, destroy the chief's house, and make his wife and sons prisoners. Preparations were made in all secrecy, and it was only on the day set for the attack that Busrawi's elder brother, left in charge at home, heard from a panic-stricken messenger that Shahin with more than a thousand mounted men was at that moment advancing against him. The hurried alarm brought together a hundred and twenty men, all that could be mustered in so short a space, and counsel was divided; but there was no time to get their households clear away, and it was too great a disgrace to abandon the sheikh's house to the enemy. In the open space amongst the houses—the village dancing-floor—the little band sat on the ground and wept for the tribe's shame to come. Then (I had the story from one of the actors in it) the sheikh's brother rose and pointed to the growing dust-cloud in the distance that betrayed Shahin's advance. "We can only die," he told them; "let us at least die well. Take your horses, and mount in close order. Throw away your guns and tie your head-cloths over your face that you may not see Death coming, and charge, knee to knee, with the sword." [1] They mounted, and they waited till the enemy came close, his horsemen breaking rank to wheel this way or that, waving their rifles, shooting in the air, and yelling for their easy victory. They waited in silence, and they charged without a sound. "We smote them all together like a stone, and like a stone we broke them," said the teller of the tale. It was a new thing in Kurdish fighting, these blinded men who came on so quietly, and they cut their way through the enemy who had not looked for resistance—turned and cut through again, and then—then tore off their bandages to see half a dozen of Shahin's men dead on the ground and the rest, with many wounded among them, scattered in panic along the track for home. Such fighting savours rather of the tourney than of the butchery of a modern battle-field, but such is Kurdish warfare, the *jereed* played in earnest, the best of games for men.

[1] Compare the exhortation of Zeid to the Arabs at the battle of Yemāna, A.D. 632, as he led the charge against the Beni Hanīfa, "Close your eyes and clench your teeth. Forward like men!"

The feud between the two tribes, which after Shahin Bey's death was carried on by his two sons, ended in a, for me, dramatic scene. I had just finished breakfast one morning when I was told that the two Shahins were outside and wished to see me. As it chanced that a lady missionary on her way up-country had stopped the night with us, and it would have been a breach of etiquette to bring the chiefs into the room where she was, I had to ask them to sit outside with Haj Wahid for company until the lady was safely on her way. When she had gone, and we were all inside busy with coffee and cigarettes, Midai, my Kurd house-guard, beckoned me to the door and whispered that Busrawi was to be expected at any moment. I was more than a little nervous, as I knew all about the feud and had no wish to see it brought to a head in my sitting-room; so I went out again and suggested to Midai that he might meet Busrawi and get him to put off his visit till the afternoon. But Midai, with a portentous secrecy which made his whispers almost unintelligible, assured me that it was all right and that the chief's coming was timed on purpose; but I was still feeling very uneasy when word was brought that Busrawi was on his way across the Kala'at.

I went out and met him in the courtyard. This, by the way, is a nicely calculated compliment: the ordinary native walks into your room and you do not leave your chair; to a greater one you rise, or go to meet him at the door if you would do him honour; a head chief you may go out to meet as an equal in the courtyard; but as an Englishman you must not, in welcome or at leave-taking, go beyond the entrance of the court, for that would stamp you as the inferior of your guest. Busrawi was dressed in his best, not gaudily, but as befitted a chief—I put down his head-cloth as costing eight pounds, and his cloak was well worth double that sum: with him was a big stoutish Kurd, also well-dressed in Baghdad fashion, a stranger to me, and, as I learnt later, a cousin of Ibrahim Pasha; two of Busrawi's personal following completed the group.

I welcomed the sheikhs, and, still wondering what line I was to take regarding their enemies seated inside, led them to the sitting-room. The two Shahins rose to their feet: Busrawi's party stood silent by the door. I took the bull by the

horns. "Busrawi Agha," I said, "I want you to meet my friends the sons of Shahin Bey. Busrawi Agha—Shahin Bey," and I pointed to the elder of the two brothers and anxiously wondered what would happen next. The two looked at each other, then slowly stepped forward and held out their hands: Busrawi drew the younger man towards him and kissed him solemnly on both cheeks, then he saluted the younger Shahin in like manner. Every one—not only I—gave a sigh of relief, and we sat down all together, while Midai, beaming with smiles, handed coffee to the reconciled chiefs. Then Ibrahim's cousin made a speech: he said that this meeting, which was ardently desired by the Milli-Kurd leaders, and was most necessary with a view to uniting Arabs and Kurds alike against the Turk, had taken place on the only ground where the two rival houses could have met in safety and without loss of prestige, namely, on British soil; the fact that an Englishman was witness to the peace must ensure its sincerity, and as friend of both parties I would settle any little difference that might hereafter rise between them. We all had lunch together, and I sent the whole lot off to Aleppo to confirm their agreement before the British Consul. They did so, and the incident, I fear, caused great annoyance to the local Government.

It was on his first visit, long before this time, that Busrawi proposed to take me over to his house (he was in winter quarters) that I might spend Bairam—the chief religious festival of the Mohammedan year—with him. Though it was inconvenient to leave the work it was clearly politic to be on good terms with the chief, so I left Lawrence in charge at Jerablus and started off with our head foreman, Hamoudi, as personal attendant, while Busrawi with four of his men made up the party. Horses were waiting for us on the far side of the river, and we rode up a wadi bed to the rolling plateau that stretches indefinitely eastwards. As we rode, a conversation that I overheard between Hamoudi and an elderly man who was Busrawi's chief house-carl gave me my first insight into Kurdish ways. Hamoudi, who comes of a sheikhly house distinguished for its piety, and is himself called "hoja," though notoriously a blot on the family's high record, began to inquire how the great Mohammedan festival was regarded by our hosts.

Busrawi, with two minor sheikhs.

"You keep Bairam properly in your village?" he asked.

"Of course we do," retorted the other, "and this year, with the English effendi there, we mean to have fine doings. There will be music and dancing and such-like for three whole days without stopping."

"And how about prayers?" asked the hoja.

"Prayers?" said the indignant Kurd. "We'll knock any man on the head who says prayers during Bairam in *our* village!"

Busrawi himself made a not dissimilar remark once when jestingly I rebuked him for his unorthodox indulgence in strong liquors. "Forbidden they are," he allowed, "but we Kurds like drink, and we are Kurds first and Mohammedans afterwards."

We rode on, and about five o'clock in the afternoon reached a single black tent pitched in a hollow. Several men came out and cuffed off the great slate-grey hounds that guard the Kurd's flocks, and, Busrawi suggesting coffee, we all dismounted and took our seats on rugs and cushions in the open men's quarters. The women made coffee and handed it out through the coloured curtains that veiled them from us: we drank and smoked and talked, and Busrawi's house-carl produced a bottle of raki in which he and the chief indulged freely. There were no signs of a move, and presently Busrawi made himself comfortable on his pillows and dropped asleep: conversation between the rest of us wore thin. At last our escort told me that as the day was hot it had been decided to dine here and go on by moonlight. In due time the tent-owner's sons brought in the felt tablecloth and spread it on the ground between us, throwing down along its edge in front of each man's place the folded rounds of bread, thin as fine cardboard and soft as linen, that serve at once as napkins and as food: then roast fowls were brought in, and rice, and crushed wheat boiled with millet, and we fell to with our fingers, our hosts hugely pleased to find that I had learnt beforehand the trick of twisting a piece of bread into a cone and scooping it full of rice and then swallowing the lot. After washing our hands and smoking a farewell cigarette with our coffee, we mounted our horses and, in the bright light of the newly-risen moon, went on towards the east.

We had ridden for two hours or more and the bottle had been passed times and again, for the night air struck chilly, when we passed close to a village, its tents but a huddle of black shadows between us and the moon, and saw close to our path a stack of light brushwood, liquorice tops and the like, collected for the people's firewood. Busrawi asked if I were cold.

" A little," I answered.

In a moment he was off his horse and had set a match to the wood-pile: a great sheet of flame spurted up, lighting up the village and turning all the grey stones that litter these barren lands into pools of rosy pink: the village dogs woke and made night hideous, and the Kurds shouted with laughter as we held out our hands to the blaze. In but a few minutes the whole pile was burnt, the flames died down, and we were again on our way.

It was nearly midnight when we breasted a long stony rise and saw beneath us, a mile away or so, one of the few permanent villages of the country-side, a cluster of slender bee-hive huts whitewashed and gleaming ghostly in the moonlight. Busrawi, who by this time had drunk well—though not so deeply as his old henchman, who was rolling in his saddle—pointed to the village.

" There's a man down there," he said, " who has the silliest name you ever heard—Shashu " (" Shashu " means " Ethiopian " in the tongue of ancient Egypt); " and what's more, he's got the funniest-shaped head you ever saw! You would like to see his head! "

The escort began to laugh.

" Let's wake him up! " cried the sheikh, and in a trice the horses had been spurred to the gallop and we were dashing down the rocky slope yelling " Shashu, Shashu! " as loud as we could yell. Then as we drew nearer, Busrawi pulled out his revolver and, shouting " Shashu, get up, get up, you misbegotten son of an unnatural father; get up, we want you! " started blazing away at the village: all followed suit, shouting and shooting in every direction. As we rode up to the first house Shashu himself came running out to see what the uproar was, and at that moment the drunken henchman, galloping ahead, seized him by the back of the shirt, which

was his only garment, and dashed through the village street dragging his victim with him.

" Ah, Shashu," he shouted, " you've got to see us home! "

Our horses were winded and we were weak with laughter: for my own part I was thankful to have reached the level ground without a stumble, and we slackened our pace, the luckless Shashu still being pulled along ahead of us, hardly able to keep his feet. Before we had gone far, however, he recovered his scattered wits and saw the joke; then, catching hold of his tormentor's foot, he heaved him neatly out of the saddle, jumped up himself, and, seizing the old man by the hair, dragged him along in his turn amid the renewed laughter of us all; fortunately we had only two or three miles more to go, but, tired as I was, I was not so glad to dismount before Busrawi's door as was the grey-haired old reprobate to stop running.[1]

I slept in the guest-chamber, a long room down whose either side were spread thick mattresses and quilts of satin embroidered with tinsel thread. When I woke the dancing had already started on the beaten floor outside : a long pipe and a drum supplied the music, and the dance was of the usual type, a row of men shuffling their feet and clapping hands in monotonous rhythm. After the early coffee Busrawi came in and sat beside me on the dais and received the annual homage of his headmen; his elder brother first, then his sons, and then the other chiefs came in and, bending low, touched his foot and placed his hand upon their heads, wishing him the good things of the feast: the same honours were paid to myself by way of courtesy. Then we went out to watch the dancing. Busrawi's eldest son, a rather dull-witted youth with no ideas beyond sport, was here in his element and led the dancers for hours together: sometimes it was a sort of march, the leader waving a handkerchief and setting the pace as he led his line in and out as along the paths of a maze; sometimes they formed a ring with the musicians in the centre, and these would move about and then, stopping at some point in the circle, would

[1] I had the privilege later of seeing Shashu's head, and it was certainly odd. He belonged to a small clan which practises artificial malformation of the skull. The head and shoulders in infancy are tightly strapped against a board so that, when the process is complete, the back of the head rises in a flat disk from the nape of the neck to the abnormal peak above.

lean forward, and with redoubled noise and gestures encourage the dancers there till they leaped high in the air, twisting and writhing like men possessed, yet ever keeping time with the soberer shuffle of the main body. I must confess that the thing grew wearisome in time. Busrawi's second son, a keen-faced clever boy of about fifteen, had been told off to look after me, and he did his duty well; no sooner had I finished a cigarette than he had rolled another, lighted it himself, and, once satisfied that it drew properly, had handed it gravely on to me. At the door of the inner courtyard was a great mud oven where two men kept the fire going and the coffee-pot ever on the boil: the little cups with their spoonful of bitter black coffee were passed round without ceasing—I drank forty and then gave up counting in despair. At last lunch came—an admirable meal—and then more dancing till dinner. At meals the sons of the house waited on us, according to tradition, retiring afterwards to share what we left with the house-servants: Busrawi and I, Hamoudi and three other Kurdish guests sat round the huge copper tray whereon were brought in all together the various dishes—lamb roasted whole and stuffed with truffles and chicken-liver, pilau, soup, fowls stuffed with pistachios, stewed apricots, stuffed tomatoes and stuffed cucumbers, ground rice, very sweet and flavoured with cinnamon, pickles and cream and dried plums—all lay before you at once and you took them in what order you pleased. Busrawi pointed out the great advantage of this system over the European one of separate courses, whereby, as he complained, the dish you liked best was snatched away before you had had half enough, and you were obliged out of politeness to eat things that you didn't like at all. Really there is something to be said for his view.

After dinner came music, and this proved an unexpected treat. Instead of the monotonous accompaniment of the dance, we had a trio of small drum, long wooden pipe, and a queer five-stringed zither, very sweet and mellow in tone, and there was an old man who sang. The four musicians squatted against the wall of the room in the harem where we had dined, guests and house-servants flocked in, and soon thick tobacco-smoke dimmed the light of the one lamp: it was an extraordinary scene, the crowded figures crouched upon the

rugs, their brilliant garments making splashes of barbaric colour amid the heavy shadows, and their wild lamp-lit faces working with emotion. The music was quite unlike any Turkish or Arabic music that I have heard: it had the same minute subdivision of the octave which is so difficult a thing for any but the Oriental ear to seize, but it was as natural as the song of birds and full of little phrases and harmonies that reminded me somewhat of Hungarian music. There was a "pastoral" of really remarkable beauty, a solo by the flute with occasional accompaniment: Busrawi whispered to me the motives—"here he reaches the pastures and the wind is strong amongst the stones . . . here he sits in the sun and plays a love-tune . . . here evening comes and he calls the scattered goats together for the home journey . . ."—but the comments were hardly needed, so clearly did the pipe tell its own tale. Then there was the "Lament for Hussein Ahmed". Hussein was a Kurdish Rustum, a mighty hunter, and a doer of great deeds in war, and in return for some exploit he won the hand of a princess, daughter of a sultan in some country far from his own. And as he rode homeward with his bride through a mountainous land covered with forest, there appeared amongst the trees a wolf, a bear, and a lion, and it seemed that these would fight together. But then there came from the wood a small black beast, and it fought all three, the wolf first, then the bear, and lastly the lion, and overcame and slew them all. And the bride watched all this and then turning to her new lord she mocked him and said, "Thou hast killed wolves and bears and lions and many men, but darest thou fight with the small black beast yonder?" So Hussein Ahmed got off his horse and left the princess there and went into the wood and fought with the black beast, and in the end he overcame it; and as it lay dying on the ground he came close to thrust it through with his sword, but the beast, in its last agony, kicked him and sent him flying through the air and crashing against the branches of the trees, and he was left hanging dead in the branches. So when she saw what was done, the princess went into the forest and took down the body of her husband, and she sang the "Lament for Hussein Ahmed", and she threw herself over a cliff in the forest and died. It is a wild song of passion with a long-drawn sob,

almost a gasp, as burden to every verse: the old man sang it in a sweet voice, not too strong for the narrow room wherein we were: the audience bent and swayed with the growing anguish of the words, and broke into a low sigh with each recurrence of the refrain. After that, the tribal march, a modern piece, sounded a poor thing.

The next two days were a repetition of the first, save that I escaped some of the dancing and rode over to call on Busrawi's elder brother, who lived a mile and a half away, and to visit some old caves in a distant hill. A Roman sarcophagus of beautiful rose-pink marble, decorated with carved garlands, formed the drinking-trough of the village herds and spoke of a more civilized past. The caves proved to be Byzantine rock-cut tombs of the usual type, square chambers with lateral niches for the coffins, but I could see no inscriptions nor anything of interest. Indeed my visit palled on me a good deal, and I was not sorry when it came to an end, interesting as it had been to get even a passing glimpse of the Kurdish life. But though during my visit I saw probably the best side, one or two things even so reminded me that my hosts were primitive savages at heart. I noticed that one of the house-servants was nursing a wounded arm and asked how the hurt had been incurred: with great glee they told me that this fellow was one of three whose duty it was to impart to Buswari's eldest son practical lessons in the gentle art of robbery by night; a few nights before the teacher had shown how things ought *not* to be done by giving the alarm and getting a bullet-wound from the householder. A society in which the polite accomplishments of a gentleman are so catholic cannot be considered to have reached a high level. Again, being hard up for a subject of conversation, I remembered that at Jerablus Busrawi had described to me a stone about whose value he was curious, and I suggested that he should show it to me. The stone was produced, a small amulet carved in pale jade: I told him that it was not of any value and asked him where he had got it.

"Oh," said he, "it was on a gold chain between two turquoises; that's what made me think it might be valuable."

"And where did you get the gold chain?"

"Well, that was round the neck of a foreign woman we killed here a little while back." And the chief was not a whit abashed.

On our way back to Jerablus, Hamoudi and I were escorted by the sheikh's younger son, a boy friend of his, and the same old house-carl who had attended us on our way out. We rode across country in the bright early morning, the boys insisting on showing off their mounts by challenging us to races, when the leader in the chase would swerve sharply to right or left, shooting his revolver in the air or throwing up his head-rope and trying to catch it again while still at the gallop. It was not bad fun at first, but racing over those stony pastures on a native saddle loosely girthed, and with nothing but a rope halter, is parlous work for the new-comer, and I was not sorry when Hamoudi took a heavy toss and expressed a strong desire for quiet going. Passing a mound whereon a few broken foundations showed above ground, I got off my horse to have a closer look; the ruins were of no interest at all—the site of some village deserted perhaps a century before, but my eye was caught by a new-made grave. Now a wayside grave usually means a violent death, the victim being buried where he is found, so I turned to the old Kurd and remarked that this one looked very fresh.

" Oh yes," he said, " the man was only killed about ten days ago."

" Who was he? " I asked.

" I don't know exactly, but he was a stranger, an Arab of sorts, who was keeping goats here."

" And how did he die? "

The Kurd chuckled. " That's a really funny story," he said " It was this way. Two men came out to see what he had on him, and one of them hid here behind the well-head and one behind the big stone yonder; the Arab was hereabouts. Well, the man behind the well-head fired first and missed—it was a shocking bad shot—and the Arab started to stalk him round and round the well-head. But the joke of it was," and here he laughed aloud, " that he never saw the man behind the stone, so *he* got him as easily as could be! "

I looked at the old scoundrel, who was shaking with merriment. " You seem to know all about it," I remarked.

" Of course I do! " he cried. " I was the man behind the stone! "

A few days after my return to camp a Kurd drove up to the house a donkey bearing the guest-presents from my late host—a fine *killim* or woven hanging, a Hamadan rug which had been in the mosque at Medina wherein Mohammed is buried, and the coat of chain mail and the steel battle-mace last used by Busrawi's great-grandfather. It is a point of etiquette to accept such presents and, equally, to make a full return in kind, and I had been duly informed as to what would prove acceptable in the chief's eyes—to wit, two revolvers and a safety razor! These were sent back by the messenger, and I think that both sides were satisfied with the exchange.

It is indeed etiquette to make such gifts, but occasionally it is not expedient. When in 1919 I was coming away from the tents of ibn Ibrahim Pasha [1] and the horses were brought up I saw, instead of my Army mount, an exquisite grey mare of the famed Sheglawi stock, and when I asked where my horse was, Sheikh Mahmud answered, "This is yours." I said that I could not take it, and the sheikh looked furious and all the men round us not less so. I said, "Ya ibn Ibrahim, I have come here as a soldier to find out what are your plans towards the English. If I go back and say that you are a friend, and have with me this mare beyond price, who will believe my report?" Hamud hesitated and then smiled. "Thanks be to God that you have given a good reason," he said. "To refuse seemed like an insult, and I had the right to kill you; I should not have done that, for I like you, but I should have had to shoot the mare!" For a very different reason I once refused a gift from Busrawi. I was on a visit, and a crowd of us were sitting over coffee in the long guest-room of his house when he remembered that he had promised to show me something, and he told his son to go and fetch it. The lad went off and shrieks could be heard from the women's quarters, and he came back empty-handed and whispered to his father. He was sent again, and again without success, and this time the sheikh himself went; the clamour began once more but ended suddenly, and he reappeared carrying the treasure—a great square of black silk damask woven with texts from the Koran in lovely Kufic characters, the sacred pall from the tomb of the Prophet. This, together with the rug which I already had,

[1] See Chapter XI.

had been part of the loot carried off by the Wahabis when in 1805 those Puritan iconoclasts of Islam sacked the holy city of Medina. When Ibrahim Pasha, son of Mehemet Ali of Egypt, led an expedition into the Hejaz to punish the Wahabis he called in the Milli-Kurds to his aid, and amongst those who answered to the summons was Busrawi's great-grandfather; after a fight in which the schismatics were routed and their camp taken he received the pall and the rug as his share of the booty. It was a glorious piece of weaving and I could not help expressing my admiration for it, whereon Busrawi, as in duty bound, said, "It is yours." Now my rug had come from the same mosque, but it had been one of many, dedicated by some pious pilgrim, and it had been brought to my house unostentatiously; the actual covering of the Tomb was in a different category altogether and the offer was made in public. I looked round and saw thirty or more louring faces and watched thirty hands stealing towards the revolvers in men's belts; the sheikh's hospitality notwithstanding, I was not going to get away alive with that piece of silk. "Busrawi," I said, "it's beautiful, but it's also a very sacred thing. It would be a pity that it should pass into the hands of unbelievers; let it rather stay in the keeping of a really pious and orthodox Muslim like yourself." Such a description of their sheikh was too much for the assembled followers and they leaned back and roared with laughter—and Busrawi himself was not a little relieved. The silk went back to the women's quarters and we were all good friends.

About the steel battle-mace a story is told that shows Busrawi's sense of humour. One of the first acts of the Young Turk Committee on their coming into power was to forbid the carrying of firearms. After Ibrahim Pasha's death the Milli-Kurds had no wish to incur by disobedience the further hostility of the Government, and Busrawi having business in Seruj, the seat of a Turkish Kaimmakam, was divided between his anxiety not to give offence and his shame at going unarmed amongst the Osmanlis. He hated the Young Turks and had good cause to mistrust the "liberty" which they preached, but he could not defy them. So when at the head of his retinue he rode into the courtyard of the Seruj serai and the Kaimmakam and his officials came out to do honour to the great man,

they saw the steel mace dangling at his wrist by its cord of coloured silk.

" Mashallah, Busrawi Agha," exclaimed the Kaimmakam, " what is this? "

Busrawi tossed the mace aloft and caught it. " This is the Kourbash of Liberty! " he said. It was the story of Rehoboam over again: the whip of the old regime had become the deadly bludgeon of the new.

But the chief could turn a compliment as deftly. I was dining with him once and, remarking with justice on the excellence of the meal, asked who was his cook. He told me that his sister was responsible. " Good," I replied, " Busrawi, I shall marry your sister." The Kurds who were at meat with us looked up horrified and angry, for loose though they may be in the Faith, yet for a Christian to suggest marriage with one of their womankind is an insult not easily to be brooked. But the chief smiled.

" I'm afraid it is impossible," he said quietly.

" But she is an excellent cook," I insisted, " and I want to marry her."

" It is quite impossible."

As the other men looked angrier than ever I was determined to see the jest through, so " What makes it impossible? " I asked.

With the utmost gravity Busrawi replied, " It is written in the Koran that a man may not marry his brother's sister."

There was a shout of laughter from the audience, in which the chief and I joined: but I was always known thereafter as " the elder brother of Busrawi."

I have remarked before that the Kurdish women enjoy far more freedom than do their Turkish sisters, more even than the women of the Arab villages, though the latter are moderately well-off in that respect: they will talk freely with the men, unveiled, and carry on village flirtations in truly European style. At the same time, their morals compare very favourably with those of Western women: prostitution, outside the great towns, is unknown, and adultery is very rare. I asked Busrawi whether the latter ever occurred, and while admitting that cases were known, he assured me that they were few and far between: " as a matter of fact," he added, " there was an

instance only a little while ago in a distant branch of my own family, but it was soon dealt with." Pressed for details, he told me that his kinsman's young wife had run away with a man of another tribe: the alarm was given, and the injured husband and his relatives started in pursuit, chased them down river for a hundred and twenty miles, and caught them in a village whither they had fled for sanctuary. "And what did you do to them?" I asked. "We shot the man at once." "And what about the woman?" "Oh, we dealt with her in the way proper for such." "Which is——?" "We cut her in half and burned the two halves. But really, adultery is very rare amongst the Kurds."

Quite apart from the deterrent, which is severe enough, the ease of divorce is a great safeguard. The man has only to say three times "I divorce you," the woman has only to go off to her own family and remain there, and the marriage tie is broken. Yet divorce is not common. With the Kurds as with the Bedouin a wife is purchased from her family for cash paid down—hence the guardianship of a marriageable girl is a distinct asset—but this payment is calculated less by the maiden's charms than by her possessions and prospects. The bride will bring with her a dowry according to her station in jewellery and in household furniture: moreover, on a man's death his property is divided in set proportion between his sons and his daughters, the latter having a legal claim on the estate, and the daughter of a wealthy house is therefore a good investment. But should a man divorce his wife he must send her home with all the dowry intact that she brought with her, which he is naturally loth to do: and should she divorce him her family must return the whole of what he paid as purchase-money, money maybe spent long since and certainly not to be unearthed without reluctance, and the wife's family therefore will be all for reconciliation. A good deal of stigma too attaches to the divorced party; so that an erring or an unkind husband can nearly always be brought to reason by, at worst, a temporary flight, and a repetition of the divorce formula is seldom needed to reduce a shrew to silence.

How punctilious is Kurdish honour where their women are concerned was illustrated by an incident that occurred in our own work and caused us no little anxiety. One morning the

village hoja came down to the diggings in a state of the utmost alarm, and drawing Lawrence to one side begged him to send one of our workmen, Yasin Hussein by name, up to our house at once with orders to remain there; otherwise, he declared, there might be bloodshed at any moment. Lawrence sent the man up forthwith, and then, with him in sanctuary, we started inquiries. Yasin was an Arab of Jerablus, a young fellow, good-looking in a rather effeminate way, and a dandy with no small conceit of himself: he had been carrying on a mild and perfectly harmless flirtation with a Kurd girl living in the village with her two brothers, who were also engaged upon our work, but he was not in a position to marry and had taken the little affair very lightly. The two brothers, acting as the girl's guardians, had destined her for marriage with a man of their own people, a desirable *parti* from their point of view, which was the amount that he would pay for her, but by no means to the taste of the lady. The feelings of a well-conducted girl would not have entered into the matter, but this one was headstrong and had set her heart upon the beau (who really was only amusing himself), and that very morning after the men had started off to work she had gone into Yasin's house, where his mother and sister were, and flinging herself on the ground had declared that she would marry him and no one else.

Judged by Kurd standards this was an insult put by Yasin upon the girl's family which only his death could wipe out, and sure enough the news of the outrage had no sooner reached the diggings than the injured brothers were hunting for the culprit to have his blood. I sent for them and tried to smooth things over, but they would listen to nothing: I could only tell them if they shot Yasin without my permission I should certainly shoot them, and so cleared them out of the place. Yasin Hussein passed the night in our house, but the next day things looked still more serious. If Yasin were killed, this would at once start a blood-feud between the murderers and his family, which was a large one: in fact, at least seven villages were involved on his side, and it seemed probable that the Kurds would be supported by the whole of their tribe—which was Busrawi's—and that thus the escapade of a silly girl might lead to a regular racial war. A deputation of the sheikhs

of the seven villages waited on us that day and begged us to mediate in the quarrel.

So I sent for the two brothers, and in the presence of the sheikhs made my suggestions. I pointed out that the last thing the Kurd chiefs wanted just then was a quarrel with the Arabs, and that therefore there must be no bloodshed. Yasin was to marry the girl (for nobody else would have her now), and the purchase-money would be found by the sheikhs, his relatives, who might recover from him later if they could: I fixed the price of the bride at seventy-five purses plus ten purses as solace-money for the irregularity of the proceedings. The two brothers had quieted down since the previous day, and after many protests accepted the ruling. I ordered the sheikhs to start payment at once.

But the following afternoon came bad news. Some of the money, in cash and in kind—sheep, goats and a horse—had been taken to the Kurds' house, but they had gone back on their agreement and returned the goods, saying that nothing short of Yasin's life would satisfy them. I sent for them again and told them that this time they had put a shame upon myself, and that if they did not submit to my ruling I should myself take up the quarrel against them. They showed clearly enough that they did not like this, but argued that to give Yasin what he had always wanted was but a poor way of avenging the insult to them, and that the insult was too great to be atoned for by the mere fact of his marrying their sister—in fact, they would still have to kill their brother-in-law to uphold the family honour. I said, "All right, then we will so closely unite the two houses as to make a blood-feud between them impossible: Yasin shall marry the Kurds' sister, as arranged, but also Yasin's sister shall marry the elder Kurd; the latter bride must bring her dowry in full, but there is to be no payment for her."

This suggestion took everybody by surprise, and it certainly would have solved the difficulty, as all admitted, though the Arab deputies did not relish the idea of their paying for Yasin's bride and the Kurd getting his *gratis:* but the elder brother raised the objection that he had one wife already and neither wanted nor could afford to keep a second. "Very well," said I, "then your brother shall take her; it's all the same to me." But the younger brother maintained that he had no desire to

marry, and—with more point—that Yasin's sister was really too young and not at all nice-looking: "Have you see her?" he asked pertinently, and I had to acknowledge that the objection was a fair one. So I went back to the original proposal and tried to enforce that, but the Kurds were sullenly obstinate; they now said that they dare not, after such an outrage, agree to peace on any terms without the approval of their tribal chief. This annoyed me, partly because Busrawi was in Aleppo and could not be got at without a delay which I was anxious to avoid, and my relations with him quite justified my acting in his place, but still more because, as I told them, the affair was one dealing with their womenkind, in which the tribal chief had no right of jurisdiction: but since they had appealed to the Sheikh, I said, the case should be reserved for him, and they were to keep the peace—and to absent themselves from the diggings—until his return. This they agreed to do.

On Busrawi's arrival at Jerablus I laid the matter before him and called up his two followers for the judgment. Busrawi cursed them in unmeasured terms for not having accepted my ruling—all the English, he said, had a right to authority over all the Kurds, and I in particular as his brother could lay down the law for his tribe. So Yasin Hussein was to marry the girl who loved him, but to punish her brothers' contumacy the purchase-money should be reduced to sixty purses, "and since you have chosen to call me in without cause," he added—for the Chief has a keen eye to the main chance as well as a sense of humour—"you shall pay a sixth of that to your Sheikh!" The brothers had to apologize humbly: and I believe that the marriage has proved a happy one!

I have already remarked that the Kurd has a strong love for money and no scruples as to how he gets it. This may be due in part to the fact that, where barter is common, coin of the realm is generally scarce; and a Kurd's wealth consists of his livestock, whereof he only sells enough to procure the few luxuries which he must needs get from the towns. A chief, therefore, who collects his tribute in kind, but has greater calls than others on his purse, may well be hard put to it at times to find ready cash; Busrawi certainly never let slip a chance of earning an honest—or a dishonest—penny (there is, by the way, no such thing as dishonesty when enemies deal together,

though you should not cheat a friend), and he saw just such a chance when he ran up against the Germans.

The Kurds viewed with distrust and dismay the coming of the Baghdad Railway, which runs right across their territory; they feared the advance of civilization in general and the coming of the Germans in particular. But though they are so far beyond the reach of the law that no Turkish soldier in uniform would venture alone across their steppes, or if he did would not return from them, the chiefs dared not resist the power of the Turkish Empire backed by German authority; they decided not to oppose the railway, but to make what they could out of it.

The temporary wooden bridge across the river at Jerablus had been finished and the railhead was at Arab-punar, some thirty kilometres on, when the demand for ballast for the line became urgent: for a certain distance from the Euphrates shingle from the river-bed was used, but beyond the point where the cost of transport made this impossible new sources of supply had to be sought, and the Germans decided to avail themselves of crushed basalt. They selected for this purpose a basalt outcrop which stood up in the form of a rugged hill a few miles away from the line near Arab-punar, and they gave out the contract for the mining and crushing of the rock to a German-speaking Salonica Jew who was doing a good many jobs for the Company. Now when building their railway from Aleppo to Jerablus the Germans had shown the least possible regard for the rights of local landowners. In defiance of the terms laid down by the Turkish Government, compensation for the expropriated land had not been paid even now when the line was already open to traffic, and the repeated claims therefore had been postponed indefinitely; they expected to pursue the same economical course east of the Euphrates, and so the quarry was chosen and the crushing machinery installed without any with-your-leave or by-your-leave put to the presumed owner. But this hill stood on the edge of the long valley at whose opposite ends lay the houses of Busrawi and of the brothers Shahin Bey: they waited till all was in place, and then, bringing up their armed men, drove off the workpeople and effectually stopped all progress.

The news came to me in the form of a pathetic letter from

the Jewish contractor, begging that I should use my influence with the Kurds to allow the work of the railway. Rather puzzled as to what this meant, I sent a note to Busrawi and asked him to come and see me: in due course he appeared with the two Shahins and explained matters; their object, he said, was not to stop the work altogether, but to get compensation before it started, wherein they were acting strictly within their rights as defined by law, and they were now going to Aleppo to see the contractor and to insist on immediate payment: they suggested two hundred and forty pounds as a fair indemnity. Remembering the tone of the Jew's letter, I remonstrated and pointed out that the hill was an absolutely barren rock that never had been and never would be of any use to the Kurds.

Busrawi smiled and agreed that it was quite useless.

"But I like that hill," he said slyly. "I can see it from my house, and I like the shape of it; and Shahin Bey, who lives closer by, thinks it a beautiful hill. We can't have our pleasure spoilt for nothing."

The idea of a Kurd cultivating a taste for the picturesque was too much for my gravity; they joined in the laugh, and I sent them off with a note to the Jew advising him to pay up.

The chiefs returned with beaming faces and new cloaks, for the contractor had protested but had paid.

"So that's settled," I said, "and now the work can go on all right."

"Oh, not at all," replied Busrawi, "we couldn't allow that."

"Now look here, Busrawi," said I, "you've got to keep your word: I'm mixed up in this; I've seen that you got your compensation, and now you must do your share honestly."

The Kurd smiled. "You don't seem to understand any more than the Jew did," he said. "That hill doesn't belong to me or to Shahin Bey, *and we never said it did.* We said we liked the hill and we got paid for its being dug up; but there's the owner to consider, who's one of Shahin's men, and we are bound to see justice done to him. When he's been paid too we shall let things go on."

Sure enough there was another block, and again the Jew had to pay up; and then Busrawi was as good as his word.

On another occasion, however, the Sheikh was outwitted on his own lines. He came in to lunch with us one day looking

rather glum, and explained his depression by the fact that he had got to pay some Government tax amounting to fifty or sixty pounds, and didn't like having to find the cash. We laughed at him, saying that we had not supposed he paid these taxes.

" Well, as a rule I don't," he admitted; " but this time I must, to save money."

Then the story of his discomfiture came out. Payment was as usual long overdue, and Busrawi hoped that it had been allowed to lapse, as had often happened, when one day the Kaimmakam of Seruj in person appeared at the Chief's house, together with two of his staff and a " guard of honour " of about fifty soldiers. Suspecting that this was a tax-gathering party, Busrawi had remembered a pressing engagement elsewhere, and had slipped away without meeting his uninvited guests, leaving orders that they were to be shown all the hospitality due to their rank and his own. That was a fortnight ago, but the Kaimmakam still showed not the least disposition to vacate his comfortable quarters. " I can't go home and turn them out," complained my poor friend, " for that would be inhospitable and a disgrace to myself: also it would be rather dangerous. In the meanwhile they are eating and drinking me out of house and home, and the only way to get rid of them is to pay my taxes." In justice to Busrawi it must be said that he quite saw the joke against himself, and joined in our merriment. But that year the Turkish Government got its money.

The problem of the Kurd tribes would undoubtedly be a hard one for any Government to solve. The first and most obvious step is to settle them on the land; but they have themselves not the least desire to give up their nomad life, whose freedom they are never tired of praising, nor are they the kind of settlers to reclaim the neglected steppes, for they are not by nature industrious, and when they work do so capriciously and without concentration; moreover, to develop the riches of their country would only be giving them facilities for corruption, for the vices of civilization, as we understand it, appeal to them more strongly than do its virtues. It is indeed difficult to see what part or lot they could have in a modern State, and perhaps after all the best course to adopt with them is that of the Turk, to leave them alone so far as may be to live their

lives in their own way. The re-establishment of the old confederacy under one of Ibrahim Pasha's house, and a strict delimitation of frontier, at least upon the north and west, would probably be the best safeguard against active trouble; but to make " good citizens " of the Kurds is a task which would tax and overtax the powers of any one rash enough to undertake it.

Chapter Ten

BUSRAWI OF MANY WILES

BEFORE November 11, 1919, when the British forces evacuated Syria, I had been acting as political officer in the north, with Jerablus as my base; in less than a month after the evacuation I was back there, but this time as a civilian, to resume the British Museum excavations on the site of ancient Carchemish, interrupted by the years of war. With me was Guy, and Hamoudi of Jerablus was, as before the war, my foreman in charge. Our programme was to carry out during the winter such minor pieces of digging as weather would allow, and with the beginning of spring to embark on the big job of working out the whole system of the city's defences. We carried out our programme, but in the face of greater difficulties than we had ever expected.

I had anticipated trouble. Long before we left Syria clouds were gathering in the north. The long delay in the formulating of peace terms for Turkey, the disastrous occupation of Smyrna by the Greeks, the Nationalist campaign organized by Mustapha Kemal against the Turkish Government of the day, all gave promise of trouble. In Syria itself the coming of the French was unwelcome to the Moslems, partly because they were expected to favour unduly the Christian minority of the population, partly thanks to propaganda put about by Algerian exiles in Damascus, partly, too, because a vague Nationalism was beginning to ask why Syria should not have that " self-determination " which means the licence for every man to plunder his neighbour. When the French did come, their obvious inferiority both in numbers and in military equipment to the forces which they replaced was an encouragement to violence which agitators were not slow to use. Of course, I knew this, but it was no longer my business to keep in touch

with the politics of the country, and we were soon too hard at work to bother much about the rumours which, in the East, are always so plentiful and may mean so little.

One day towards the end of January, Colonel C., who commanded the French forces and had his headquarters at Jerablus railway station, came down to see me with a very serious face. Trouble had broken out farther north; the garrisons of Urfa and Birijik and of one of the railway stations on the Tell Abyad line had been attacked, and he had news, as yet not fully confirmed, of large numbers of the enemy advancing on Jerablus itself. He was not strong enough to reinforce or to relieve the outlying posts, not strong enough even to hold the railway station at Jerablus if it were attacked. He proposed to move his forces down into the ruins, and to content himself with holding the ancient walls of Carchemish and the great bridge of the Baghdad Railway which lay at their feet. Had I any objection to the move?

It was polite of the Colonel to ask, but, of course, I could not have objected if I had wanted to, and I did not want to, for we were very good friends; but I did not relish the idea of any interruption to the excavations. I pointed out that we as Englishmen had nothing to do with what was not a recognized war, but a local disturbance; that we would go on working as long as we could, and clear out if work became impossible. Our sympathies were, as he knew, with the French, and we could be of much more use to them if we could retain the position of being strictly neutral, but we appealed to him to respect the antiquities of the site. Colonel C., who was keenly interested in archæology, of course agreed. It was arranged that a number of trial pits dug by Campbell-Thompson in 1912 should serve as dug-outs for the troops, the Colonel to have a bedroom and staff office in the expedition house, and the other officers to live in tents alongside. The wall mounds of Carchemish were to be wired and emplacements dug in them for the two machine-guns which formed the total of the French artillery, but otherwise there was to be no disturbance of the ruins. And apart from the rooms allotted to the French, the expedition house was to be neutral ground; any natives desiring to see us were to have free access through the French lines; visitors and workmen alike were to leave all firearms

with the French outposts, and have them returned on leaving the lines. We all felt that it was a rather Gilbertian position, but probably the best that could be devised in the circumstances.

On the other side of the Euphrates, where the trouble had begun, the nearest tribes were the Kitkan Kurds under Busrawi Agha, and the Barazi, also a Kurdish tribe, the headship of which was divided between two brothers, Mustapha and Bozan ibn Shahin Beg. Between the two tribes there had been a long-standing feud, which I had patched up before the war; during the war it broke out again, and in 1919 we had only with difficulty maintained peace. The sheikhs were old friends of mine, and at the beginning of the previous November I had been at especial pains to urge on them the wisdom of submitting cheerfully to the French occupation. Both parties had agreed to do so, and to Lieutenant B., the French Political Officer, I had confidently reported that he would find them friends; but I had failed to allow for Busrawi's diplomatic astuteness.

The day after the arrival of the French staff Busrawi had presented himself, and had been lavish—and quite sincere—in his professions of goodwill; his old enemy ibn Shahin's name was mentioned, and Busrawi spoke of him in the warmest terms; he went off leaving an excellent impression. Immediately after his visit the rumour spread that Busrawi, with his usual cunning, had got in first with the French, and had seized the opportunity to poison their minds against the Shahins. Busrawi indignantly denied this, and declared that he had gone out of his way to recommend his old foe. It was true, but it was so improbable that every one was convinced of the contrary, and each denial was taken as a further admission of guilt. The Shahins, feeling that the pitch had been queered, remained at home awaiting events. The sheikh of the Kitkans sent them a message urging them to call at French headquarters, and that, of course, decided them to stop away. Lieutenant B., on Busrawi's second visit, asked him why the Shahins had not called. He replied that he had urged them to do so, and if they did not come, it was presumably for some good reason of their own; beyond that he would not discuss the matter. The French naturally suspected the Shahins of

being deliberately hostile; the Shahins felt that it was too late to remove the bad impression, and resented the influence which, as they imagined, the French had allowed Busrawi to acquire over them. By the time I reached Jerablus the Kitkan sheikh, without doing a thing which was not strictly correct, had succeeded in creating a definite breach between the new Government and his old enemy.

When the outbreak occurred, the Barazi tribe were inevitably on the side of the Turks. Busrawi, on the other hand, came in at once to Jerablus and talked the matter over with Colonel C. and myself. He was disarmingly frank. He had, he said, no particular love for the French, and certainly owed them no loyalty; his only motive was to save his own skin and to preserve his tribe. He could quite understand that in the end the French were bound to win and it was therefore best to be on their side; but in the meantime the Turks were calling on him to rally to the Nationalist cause, his neighbours the Barazi were seeking an occasion against him, and they and the Turks together could crush him in a moment. Were the French prepared to give him efficient support? His eyes twinkled, for, of course, he knew the answer. C. was not less frank. He replied that for the moment he could do nothing; if he could not relieve the threatened railway posts, he certainly could not send men out into the blue to defend Busrawi's open villages. Busrawi must temporize, pretending to stand in with the Turks, but in reality doing nothing against the French. When the latter were strong enough to take the field, then he could show his true colours, and his loyalty would be properly rewarded. The sheikh went off promising to do his best.

It was, I think, on the last day of January that the Colonel came to me with more serious news, sent in by Busrawi. A large force of Kurds and Arabs with some Turkish support was marching against Jerablus, and was already only some thirty miles away. It was a bad look-out for the French, and also for our excavations. I asked him if he were anxious to fight.

"Good heavens, no," he replied. "I was sent here to preserve the peace, and there is nothing I should so like to do, especially as we are not really strong enough to hold this place if seriously attacked."

"Then you would not think it interference on my part if I tried to stop the fighting?"

"I should be delighted, but you couldn't do it."

I told him that there was a chance of my being able to do so. I knew personally most of the leaders on the other side, and had a little influence with them. If he gave permission, I proposed to go out and meet the enemy and talk things over with them.

"But you'll be shot on sight!"

I assured him I should take good care about that, though I could not be sure of succeeding in the mission; Guy, if he could borrow a mount, would go with me, and we looked forward to a very pleasant picnic. Colonel C. laughed, and remarking that, after all, General Gouraud had suggested that I should be consulted on matters of local politics, gave the scheme his official blessing.

Two days later we passed through the French outposts, Guy on the Colonel's horse, a fine Arab grey, and Hamoudi, who was to act as go-between, on a less showy mount, but far outdoing us in the brilliance of his attire. A few miles out we were met by the Kitkan escort for which I had arranged, headed by Busrawi's son, and together we rode in the direction of Busrawi's house. Our track took us within a mile or two of Arabpunar, a station on the Baghdad line, and as we came along we heard quite distinctly the sound of shots away to the north, and once or twice the thud of a rifle grenade; the station was being attacked.

Suddenly a man galloped up and drew the chief of our escort aside. He listened, shouted an order to the rest, and with the exception of one elderly man they all turned their horses and cantered off in the direction of the firing; the Kitkan were taking part in the fight, and the chief's son had received the order to join them.

At Busrawi's house there was an atmosphere of suppressed excitement, but nothing was said about the attack; and as in addition to the usual collection of followers there was conspicuously present a fez-wearing Turk named Fuad Beg, an unpleasant creature who, we understood, was a Nationalist envoy sent to spy on Busrawi's movements, no questions could be asked. From the desultory conversation that went on it

would have been difficult to guess that anything abnormal was in the air; but the sheikh found occasion to whisper to me that the meeting had been arranged for the morrow.

The next morning a regular cavalcade rode out. Ahead of us went men loaded with the poles and canvas of a small tent of Damascus *appliqué* work; behind were others with charcoal and a set of big coffee-pots, trays, and cups and water. It was only when we had ridden a mile that someone discovered that the coffee itself had been forgotten, and a servant was sent back to repair the omission. The tent was set up in the middle of a shallow saucer-like depression, men lit the fire and busied themselves with the initial rites of coffee-making, and we sat down to await events.

After a while the Barazi sheikhs joined us, attended by a following considerably more numerous than Busrawi's; they were friendly but ill at ease, and clearly mistrustful of the Kitkan. I took them aside and upbraided them for the part they were playing, and was pleased to find they were none too happy in it. They did not want to fight, they said, but the French had been hostile to them from the first. They blustered a bit about ties of religion and race (they had Turkish blood in them), and declared that when it came to a choice between the Turks and the French, they must needs throw in their lot with the former; but it was clear that they would welcome any way out of the present difficulty.

Some time later a sentry posted on the crown of the slope gave notice that the Anayzeh were coming. Guy had just got out his small stand camera, when over the top of the ridge, strung out in a long line, spears and rifles brandished in the air, came Hachim's men. Yelling, they charged straight down the hill at us (I could hear Guy, with his head under the black cloth, expressing the pious hope that they would not mistake the camera for a machine-gun!), and only reined in their horses a few yards from where we stood. They were as wild a looking lot as one might hope to see, lean and ragged desert men not likely to be won over by smooth words, men to whom war, as they knew it, was a game and loot the main passion of life. I was glad to remember that their leader was not of the same kidney.

Hachim ibn Muheid—who, riding behind his Arabs, now

Peace or War? (*above*) The Kurdish horse.

(*below*) Council of War in the desert.

dismounted, and after giving me formal greeting received the welcome of the other sheikhs—was, as all sheikhs must be, a diplomat, and he was also shifty and unscrupulous. For years, during the minority of his nephew Midghem, he had been regent of the western Anayzeh, and had little relished handing over the reins of power to the younger man. Now Midghem had proclaimed his allegiance to the French, and rumour naturally had it that he was well paid for so doing. Hachim, furious that no money had come his way, had taken the more popular course of joining the Turks, thereby posing as the true leader of his tribe and standing a good chance of earning Turkish gold where none was forthcoming from the French. I had last seen him, frightened and humiliated, waiting in an ante-room at our Aleppo headquarters an opportunity to apologize for misbehaviour, and that gave me an advantage over him which I could not afford to let slip. At my hint of it the other sheikhs, all lesser men than he, smiled covertly, and something of his arrogance went from him.

On a carpet spread on the ground in front of the tent we sat and drank the bitter coffee of the desert, with only now and then a murmured reiteration of our greetings to break the silence. Fuad Beg faced me in the circle. After a while I pointed at him. "I am here to speak with my friends, with the sheikhs of the tribes," I said, "and this man is neither; let him go." The Turk got up scowling, and the others breathed more freely. Now we could talk.

We started on the main issue of peace and war. At first all were bellicose enough, but gradually their truer sentiments came to the fore. Busrawi was the most violently Nationalist, but that was, of course, a pose not to be taken seriously, and it had the effect of weakening others from sheer love of contradiction. The Shahins did not want the French, but they did want peace. Several minor sheikhs were of the same mind. Hachim said that for himself he did not desire war, but he had brought his tribe up from far away to fight, had promised them the loot of the French garrisons, and could not lead them back empty-handed. This was a clear hint, and I took him aside with Hamoudi to ask his terms, for Hachim was to be bought. Actually he was less exorbitant than I had expected. If the French chose to pay, we could secure at least a temporary

peace, a breathing space, for the defection of the Anayzeh would mean that the other tribes would keep quiet; but, of course, I could promise nothing, and when we rejoined the circle on the carpet Hachim had to appear more obstinately resolved than ever on war to the knife.

This brought in my second issue, the excavations. I pointed out that we were neutral, and cared nothing whether Urfa or Birijik were attacked or not, but if there were fighting at Jerablus the dig could not go on, and that did concern us. They replied that they were only attacking the French, and there was no need for us to be involved. This, I retorted, was nonsense, for the French were actually installed in my house, and any one who shot at them would be shooting at us. " And is there any one here who will fire a shot at my house? "

" God forbid! " came the pious chorus.

" Well, then, since you cannot fight the French there without shooting at me, you cannot fight the French."

There was a rather dismayed silence, and then some one made the happy suggestion that I should send the French back to the railway station, where they could be attacked at pleasure while we carried on our work as usual. The sheikhs brightened up.

I turned to Busrawi. " If I were in your house, having *dakhled* to you, flung myself on your mercy, and were threatened by an enemy who would attack you for sheltering me, and he were stronger than you, would you put me out to save yourself? "

The whole shocked circle cried out on the idea.

" And would you ask me to do this shame? "

" God forbid! " once more.

" And, by God, the French stay in my house until they choose to go, and either they have peace or our work must stop. Tell me, oh sheikhs, for whom do you do this thing? "

" For the Turks."

" And for what aim do you work? "

" For the independence of the people! " the agitators' slogan came patly from all.

" And I serve the British Museum, and work for archæology, which is knowledge. Which is greater, the British Museum or the empire of the Turks? "

" *W'Allah*, the British Museum! " replied the sheikhs, who had probably never heard of it before.

" And which is greater, liberty or archæology? "

" Archæology is greater."

" Therefore my work must go on and yours must stop. There shall be no attack on the French at Jerablus, nor within an hour's walk shall any man of you fire a single shot. Ya Fuad Beg! come here and learn the decision of the tribes! " and in front of the furious Turk the sheikhs swore to the terms.

They had been jockeyed into accepting a ruling which was not likely to be popular, so it was well to let them talk the matter over among themselves, and to give Hamoudi a chance to have his say, repeating and embellishing all that I had said, so I got up and joined the group of Anayzeh behind the tent. They had caught wind of the way things had gone, and bore me no goodwill for robbing them of excitement and plunder. One great hairy-chested scoundrel thrust his face into mine, asking truculently what business I had out in the desert. He was bluffing me, so I bluffed him back, and told him I went where I pleased.

" The desert is ours," he declared, " and if you enter it you find death." I assured him no one had ever hurt me out there, or was likely to.

" If I saw you I should kill you, were it only for the sake of the coat you wear, which is a good coat."

" You wouldn't, because you couldn't."

" I could not? "

" No, never."

" *W'Allah, w'Allahi*, it is in my mind to kill you now! " and he drew out the long curved knife.

As his sheikh's guest I was perfectly safe, so I laughed and pushed the crowd back, retiring a step. " Make way, my brothers, for this man would kill me and needs space for the blow. Mark well, you, where you would strike! "

The fellow looked abashed. " But I cannot kill you *here*."

" Not here nor anywhere, nor at any time, as I told you."

He swore a great oath, and laughed with the rest. " By God, you were right, brother, so give me a cigarette instead! " And we rode back to Jerablus, leaving only one angry man, the Turk, Fuad Beg.

We awoke next morning to a white world and driving snow, which was to lie deep on the ground for twelve days. The change of weather hit the French hard, for they were short of firewood, and could get none from a hostile country. Cooking was difficult, and fires for warmth were out of the question. The poor Senegalese in the dug-outs suffered terribly, and in the staff office, which served also as mess-room, we could hear the officers stamping up and down and swinging their arms against their sides in the vain effort to keep up their circulation. Meal-time brought the only comfort, and at half-past seven the orderlies trudging across the courtyard with the hot soup were welcomed with cheers of relief.

On the second day Hachim sent me word that the enemy forces, while they would not attack, were to be sent forward to the edge of the forbidden zone so as to bring pressure to bear on the French with a view to the settlement which he had proposed. Colonel C. was ready to agree to the proposal, but the Anayzeh leader demanded cash down, which the Colonel had not got, and swore that his men could not be put off with promises; and since communications with Aleppo were now cut, the negotiations came to nothing. It was after this that Busrawi dropped in one day with a minor Anayzeh chief, and in strict confidence told me that an attack was planned for that night. I protested violently against this breach of the agreement, but Busrawi merely smiled slyly. It was, he said, not really a breach at all. There were Turkish representatives in the camp who were accusing the sheikhs of being half-hearted, and were reporting adversely on them to headquarters. Besides this, it was hard to keep the tribesmen together when they were suffering so from the cold with nothing to distract their thoughts from the weather, and so, to satisfy them both . . . He whispered to me all the plan, and taking my laughter for approval, stamped off through the snow. "They do always eat at the same hour, do they not?" was his last question, shouted through the dusk.

Guy and I dined at the same time as the French. We were already at table, and had listened smilingly to the joyful voices from the next room which hailed the soup, when there was the crack of a rifle, and a bullet whistled above the roof; then came a scattered volley, followed by the sharper sound of the French outposts returning the fire.

From next door came exclamations, orders, the sound of men donning greatcoats and thrusting their feet into the heavy boots which had been discarded for the day ; the attack had begun, and the officers were hurrying out to organize the defence. We, on the other hand, knowing the secret, could go on quietly with our dinner. Already, except for one or two shots let off by nervous sentries, the " attack " had fizzled out. In less than half an hour the French officers, puzzled and angry, had returned, and were flinging down belts and coats preparatory to starting afresh the interrupted meal. Then came a stream of curses; the soup stood cold and uninviting on the table—the cooks had been called out to strengthen the defence force—other dishes had been neglected and spoilt, and, with their parsimonious wood ration, dinner, the one joy of the miserable day, might be salved after a fashion but could not be made good.

On the next night and the next after that the farce was repeated. Nobody was hurt. The enemy, true to their promise, never tried to hurt any one, and never came in sight, so ran no risks themselves. Once it was a slow desultory fire kept up for twenty minutes, once a series of ragged volleys which drew the fire of rifle grenades from the defenders, but both " attacks " were most carefully timed to ruin the French dinner. On the fourth day Busrawi came in with a letter for the Colonel signed by the leading sheikhs. After due salutations, they expressed their regret that " owing to the cold weather there would be no battle to-night," and hoped that the officers would enjoy their soup!

Busrawi used to come in pretty often, usually seeing Colonel C. in my room, and sometimes giving him useful information. Once the Colonel, who had conceived a genuine liking for the wily Kurd, remonstrated with him on the risk he ran by these visits. " You say that you come to see the English," he urged; " but every one knows that you see me too, and the Turks cannot fail to look on you as a traitor. I know that you are on our side, but there is no need for you to prove it by coming so often, and I don't want you to get into trouble with them."

" There is no danger," said Busrawi airily; " I tell them I come to spy on you, and I give them news every time when I get back."

" But nothing worth having," replied the Colonel; " I take care of that. "

" What matter? They are fools."

The Colonel returned to the charge. The Turks might be fools, but they could not be otherwise than suspicious of the sheikh's comings and goings, and he really ought to stop them. " Why, even to-day," he added, " you may be running your head into a noose."

Busrawi smiled. " I have never been safer than to-day."

" How so, seeing that they know that you are here? "

" Of course they know that I am here, but they also know that my eldest son is at this moment blowing up the railway bridge over the Sajur! "

It was a nasty knock for the Colonel. True, no trains had run for some time past, but the bridge over the Sajur valley was an essential link in his communications with the south, and its destruction seemed to cut him off finally from all hope of speedy relief. His face was very grim as he turned on the Kurd.

" Busrawi," he said, " I told you to pretend friendship with the Turks but to do nothing against us, and now you confess to cutting our lines. Is this your goodwill towards France? "

" How could I show it better? " retorted the sheikh imperturbably. " The Turks decided to blow up the bridge, and as their loyal subject and the sheikh of my tribe, I claimed that my son should command the raid and himself fire the mine. That makes me safe, and so preserves your friend. Further, my son may be a brave man, but he has small brains, and knows nothing about explosives. Any one of the Turks could have done the destruction better than he, but as my son he will do it himself, and very badly it will be done, so there will be the least possible damage to your bridge. *W'Allah!* " and he sighed, " it is my fate to be misunderstood! "

As I translated the Colonel began to laugh, and at the end threw up his hands in surrender. " *Il est impayable, ce brave* Busrawi! "

A few days later Busrawi was seated on the floor against the wall of our living-room, smoking and drinking coffee, lamenting, partly to me but more for the benefit of the two followers who sat on either side of him (one, I knew, a man in whom he

had little trust), the hardships of his lot. He painted a moving picture of himself as a man of peace, a simple-minded man, living at the wrong time, and threatened by perils which he could not understand:

> Alas for the woeful thing,
> That a poet true and a friend of man
> In sorrowful days of broil and ban
> Should ever be born a king!

I suggested the proverb of the devil and the deep sea, which was new to him, and he seized on it with avidity and enlarged on it, pointing out the moral to his companions. Suddenly I leaned forward—

" And don't you love it all, Busrawi Agha? "

" My God, I do! " his eyes flashed; and then, recollecting himself and covering up his face with his headcloth, " My God, I often wish that I were dead! " And while the two Kurds groaned in sympathy, I caught again the glint of the sheikh's malicious smile.

At Jerablus we had peace, but not so the other posts. No direct news came through from them, but rumours reached us, and were none too happy. The little garrison at Birijik, twenty miles up the river, was reduced to sorry straits by hunger, though still holding out gallantly in a group of stone-built houses on the outskirts of the town. Had the Turks possessed artillery the place would have fallen at once, but luckily they had none, and even when they tried to make good the omission they were unsuccessful. An Armenian blacksmith in the town was compelled to manufacture a trench mortar out of wood bound round with iron hoops, and three solid round-shot were cast from scrap-iron; black powder was the charge. An emplacement was dug in the shelter of a ruined house some thirty yards from the French fort, and the Turks essayed to make a breach. Sometimes the gun failed altogether, and the ball trundled harmlessly across the open; sometimes it really did shoot, and a stone in the wall face might be splintered. In either case it was incumbent on the Turks to recover their precious projectile, and the French, unable to silence the gun, took a sporting pleasure in picking off the enemy soldiers who left cover in their attempts to field the ball. The siege had its

comic side, but the defenders were almost at their last gasp when a flying column arrived at Jerablus and set out for the relief of Birijik.

As soon as he knew that Birijik was to be relieved, Busrawi with all the followers he could collect rode off to the town, informed the Turks of the approaching danger, and demanded that he and his tribe should have the honour of bearing the brunt of the enemy's attack. The Turks were delighted to comply, and the Kitkan, leaving their horses in a sheltered spot behind the trenches, which the Turks had dug in anticipation of an attempt to relieve the post, took up their position in the front line, supported by such Turkish regulars as were available, and by a heterogeneous collection of armed townsfolk. The French force advanced from the south-east along the river, their right flank covered by a slender screen of Algerian cavalry, and on coming within range opened fire on the trenches with two light field-guns.

At the first shot the Kitkan scrambled out and, not leaving their rifles, dashed helter-skelter through the supporting lines, spreading dismay and panic; reaching their horses they mounted, and with a remarkable recovery of discipline galloped round the town on the land side, and took up a fresh position behind it on the road leading north-west to Rumkale. Their stampede had broken up the defence, and while the French advanced almost unopposed to the walls of the beleaguered post, there was pouring out from the north gate of the town a stream of fugitives, men and women, wild with terror and laden with such treasures as they could salve at short notice. Busrawi's men, astride the road at a convenient point, held up the stream, and relieved the runaways of their burdens, cursing the cowards who would so betray the cause of liberty. Busrawi subsequently handed over to the Nationalist representatives a decent percentage of his loot, which he described as fines imposed for desertion in the face of the enemy, and his tribe profited to the extent, it was said, of £1,500 in cash and jewellery. As there was nobody to contradict his version of the day's happenings, he gained considerable credit with the Turks for courage and loyalty to the cause, while he could claim to have put the French under an obligation by assuring them so easy a victory. He had paid off a number of private

scores and pocketed a handsome sum of money. Altogether Busrawi had had a very successful day.

The position of the garrison at Urfa was known to be well-nigh desperate. Hemmed in by the Turks, exposed to artillery fire at point-blank range, themselves short of ammunition and with rations reduced to a starvation minimum, they could not hold out much longer; and unless the whole left bank of the Euphrates was to be given up, something had to be done for their relief. Unfortunately the French Government had responded ill to General Gouraud's demands for reinforcements, and the only force available was the small overworked "flying column" commanded by Colonel Normand. It came at last to Jerablus, but though there was gallant talk of saving Urfa few really believed that these tired men, poorly equipped and with little artillery backing, could fight their way through the mountains that lay between Urfa and the river. But however the soldier might appraise the column that came straggling in along the Aintab road, to the unsophisticated native it appeared formidable enough. As soon as Colonel Normand crossed the Euphrates, Busrawi, encouraged by this show of strength, abandoned all disguise, and with his whole tribe joined the French.

The Turks, supported by the Barazi and other tribes, had taken up position in the plain of Seruj. There was a hard-fought battle in which the Kitkan took part, but did not greatly distinguish themselves, and the Turks were defeated; but they were not routed, and merely withdrew to the foothills, where they could fight again with the advantage of terrain on their side. The French, left masters on the field, had suffered fairly heavy loss, and were too weak to venture on a further advance. The stalemate, fatal for the Urfa garrison, was likely to be no less so for the Kitkan sheikh.

Two days after the battle, when it had become known that Normand could not advance and would eventually have to retire, Busrawi announced his intention of going home. The staff remonstrated with him, for his house, though not far away, was too far to have French protection. He would have to cross part of the Shahins' territory, and the Shahins had been further embittered by the fact that, on their march up, the French had burnt their house and village. Busrawi had

openly thrown in his lot with the French, and clearly his wisest course was to remain with them until the fortune of war turned. But he was deaf to counsel and went.

A few days later Colonel C. brought us the news that Busrawi had been captured and shot by the Turks. We were all genuinely distressed, I for an old friend, the Colonel and his officers for the genial rogue who had endeared himself to them almost as much by his rogueries as by the fine qualities which he undoubtedly possessed—courage, good comradeship, and humour. The next day rumour had it the sheikh was captured indeed and condemned to death, but not yet dead, and we all smiled, for where Busrawi was concerned, while there was life there was very much hope; given a chance to use his wits, he might well escape, even from such a fix as this. Two days later we heard that he was back in the French camp by Seruj.

He had ridden up to Colonel Normand's headquarters solitary and morose, his headcloth wrapped about his face and his shoulders bowed. Greeted joyfully as one come back from the dead, he had shrunk as from a blow. "Dead I am," he muttered. "Would that I had indeed died before this, would to God that I had died!" They took him into the tent and asked his news. It was a sorry story.

He had reached home without ill chance, but that same night the Turks surrounded the village and captured him and all his family, including his younger son, a clever lad who was the apple of his father's eye. He had been court-martialled and condemned to death. Just before he was to be led out and shot the Turks offered him an alternative—namely, that within the space of four days he should find for them the sum of three thousand pounds in gold. His family were kept as hostages, and would be shot if he failed to return; did he come back without the money and surrender himself, his life should stand for theirs. "I ought to have refused," he groaned, "but a man's life is dear to him, and I had no time to think, and so I came away. But for what? They have plundered and burnt my village and my followers are scattered; they have dug up the floor of my house and found and carried off such money as I had, and they have driven away my flocks and herds. I am a beggar, and how can I find three thousand pounds who have not three pence? I have no friends, for all

the tribes are against me, saying that I have joined myself with the enemies of the faith. I must go back and die a dog's death at the hands of the Osmanli, and what gain are these days of grace to me? They have made me a mockery and a laughing-stock, and men of my own tribe will spit at the name of Busrawi, who left his children and his womenfolk in the hands of his enemies in order that for four days more he might draw the breath of a coward. I should have died then; and now, why am I here? Before God, I have not come to you as my friends, but because the world is shut against me, and there is no place of my own where I can go. Would to God I had died!"

The officers had liked Busrawi, and were moved by the man's utter misery, but this was not merely a question of sentiment. The sheikh had always been on their side, and at the last had joined them openly, and his was the only tribe on that side of the river—indeed, in all the country north of Aleppo—which had espoused the French cause, so that for the sake of prestige alone it was impossible to let him down. It was not an easy thing to raise three thousand pounds in cash, but to do so was cheaper than to incur the odium of letting their ally go back to his death, and Busrawi was told that the French were ready to pay his ransom. For once the Kurd seemed taken aback, the unexpected generosity of the gift struck him speechless, and only when he was about to ride away with the gold hidden in the folds of his belt was he able to give thanks with anything of his usual aplomb.

This was the story as we heard it at the time from the French. Another version, pieced together from the sheikh's half-willing admissions and from the reports of tribesmen, shows him in another light and bears the stamp of truth to those who know him.

When Busrawi rode home from the battle-field of Seruj, it was a night of very black despair that covered him. The French had shot their bolt and failed, and could no longer help him; to the Turks he now stood confessed an enemy and a traitor, and his territory was in their hands. He must have turned over in that tortuous mind of his many a shift of cunning before there came to him the idea of that master-stroke which was to save him, an idea which perhaps appealed to him

less for the real hope it held out—indeed, the hope was slight at best—than for the humour it contained, for its effrontery.

At dawn of the next day Busrawi rode into the Turkish camp. The Turks were astounded at the apparition, but soon recovered sufficiently to arrest the traitor, and buffeted and insulted on every hand he was dragged before a council of the chiefs. One after another bore witness, the Shahins most vehemently of all, and their witness was conclusive. Many old offences were raked up against him, but such were felt to be beside the point. They were smarting from their defeat of two days before, and everybody knew that the Kitkan tribe had fought on the side of the French, that Busrawi himself had been with the enemy. In the face of this, trial could be no more than a form, and its result was a foregone conclusion. But Busrawi demanded a hearing. He denied indignantly that he was a traitor to the Osmanli cause, to which, he averred, he had in the past rendered signal service. He had always been a subject of the Turks, and hoped always to be such, nor had he for one moment dreamed of fighting against them.

Bozan ibn Shahin Beg interrupted him with a not unnatural impatience. Busrawi had marched out with the French, and if he had not meant to fight the Turks what had he proposed to do?

This was just the opening that the sheikh wanted. He pointed an accusing finger at Bozan.

"There is my enemy, as all the world knows," he retorted. "The French told me that they would attack the Barazi, and I went with them. Has there not been a feud of blood between us these many years, and which of you all would refuse help against an enemy too strong for you? I went out with the French, but it was not against the Turks, my masters; it was against those men who have fought me in the past and are my accusers to-day. The grudge that they have against me now is the answer to their charge, for I have laid waste their villages and burnt their houses. This is the warfare of the tribes!"

Busrawi had scored heavily, for few if any of the sheikhs present cared greatly for the Turks, and none of them would have set the Turkish cause before a blood feud, of all motives the strongest to a tribesman. But if he had won in a measure the sympathy of the Kurds and Arabs, he could not expect so

easily to impose on the more sophisticated Turks, and these turned on him at once with the obvious objection that, even if his first move had indeed been against his private enemy, that was no defence, for he had fought on the French side when the Turks were against them in the field, and there could be no pretence of tribal war. As a subject of the Osmanli he ought to have been with them, and the actual battle had found him and his tribe with the enemy. Could he deny that?

"I take refuge with God!" replied Busrawi. "I am a simple man, and it may be that I have done mistakenly, but in all things my heart has been loyal to the Turks."

They cursed him for a man without shame, but he demanded to be heard.

"You call me a friend of the French," said he, "but you bade me pretend to be such, and from that you have won no small profit in the past, seeing that I went freely into their lines and brought you back news of their doings. This time I was with them when they planned to march out from Jerablus, but they spoke only of attacking Shahin Beg, and as that was my own affair, I said nothing, but marched with them against the enemy of my tribe. But after Arslan Tash was burnt, I learned that they would farther advance, and I knew that the next fighting would be with the Osmanli. Now I could have left the French then as easily as I have left them now in the hour of their victory, and all men would have praised me; and I was minded to do so, but I bethought me of another plan. Had I come away my veil of friendship would have been torn from my face, and I could never hereafter have served you by their means as I have done in the past; and yet that was but a small thing, seeing that my heart was wholly with you in the battle. But in the battle, thought I, what could I do? The power of the Osmanli is as the power of God, and what am I, and what are the men of my tribe, that the Osmanli should have need of us in war? Every man who has known their rule is loyal to them, and will rise in arms at their bidding; they have no lack of men to aid them against their enemies, and of what avail are the few tribesmen who follow such an one as me? No, what the government of the Turks lacks to-day is not men but money, and I resolved to give them gold. I am a poor man, but in friendship there is a great treasure, and I

saw that if the French were but sure of my friendship I could get from them the gold that the Turks most need. Therefore I stayed with them for the battle, but all you will bear me witness that I and my tribe were of no account therein. We were in the rear, and no man here can say that one of his tribe was slain by the Kitkan, yet were the French persuaded that Busrawi was their man heart and soul, and I came away from their camp a proved friend. And now I am here to do my duty to the Osmanli. Go you to my village—no man will resist you—my wives and my children are there, take them prisoners, and bring them to the camp. This for the sake of the game that I would play with the French, and also should any here doubt me they will be my sureties. To-morrow I will go to the French as one whose friendship for them has brought him to ruin; I will tell them that I was captured with all my house, was judged and condemned to death for their sake, and am held to ransom for a thousand pounds. For very shame they will pay, and I will bring the money here as my offering to the cause of liberty and the Osmanli nation; and is there any now present who has given to that cause a thousand golden pounds? And if I fail, or if any think that I would go back to the French and not return—well, have I not put my household into your hands, and they are hostages for my honour? Such is the plan that I have devised to help the Turks, and will any man after this call me traitor? If indeed they do, then let me die, for death is better than an ill name with one's friends."

Only half convinced, but eager for the gold, the Turks laid hands on the sheikh's family and let him go, and he proved as good as his word. It was characteristic of Busrawi that when all seemed lost he should so have played his game that the one desperate throw which could save his life would also, if it succeeded, enable him to pocket two thousand pounds.

In the summer of 1920 the French withdrew from Jerablus, and Busrawi, always suspect and now useless, was seized by the Turks and exiled. From some motive of policy they refrained from killing him, but he was subjected to every form of hardship and insult. When France and Turkey came to an agreement, one of its terms was Busrawi's release. He was compensated for his losses and decorated by the French, and,

feeling himself more secure on the Syrian side of the frontier, settled down in Jerablus to pass his old age in peace.

I saw him once more, years later. It was in 1938, when I was excavating at Tell Atchana that one morning a motor drove up to the foot of the mound, and I was told that Busrawi had come to see me. It was an older and a heavier man but still the same cheerful Busrawi that met me on the hill-top and greeted me with real affection. I asked him what had brought him so far, and he replied that he had been in Aleppo and, hearing that I was only some ninety miles away, he had naturally decided to pay me a visit—what else could he have done? If was, of course, the only answer that good manners would allow, and of course it was not the truth, but he would never tell me the real reason. He looked with interest at the dig, at lunch he talked about old times, during the afternoon we discussed politics, archæology and the state of the crops, but as tea-time grew near I told Hamoudi to find out from the sheikh's followers what was the true object of his coming; that was the proper line to take, and Hamoudi duly reported the facts. Busrawi's eldest son was in Aleppo, imprisoned for debt, private debts and non-payment of Government taxes, and his father had come to me to get money for his release. I asked how much I was expected to give and was told that twenty-five pounds was what my position and my old friendship required. It was much more than I could afford and I felt rather badly about it, but when I told my wife she said that we could always cut out the holiday in Greece which we had been planning, and anyhow one couldn't ruin one's reputation; so when our visitors prepared to go after tea I gave Busrawi an envelope containing the cheque. He took it, very properly, as a matter of course and slipped it into his pocket without any word of thanks; only when our farewells were being said and I sent greetings to his son, adding, " He is well, please God? " the answer came, " Thanks be to God, he is well," with a marked emphasis on the " Thanks be to God ".

The rest of the story I heard later. Busrawi returned to Aleppo, but he never went near his son's creditors or the collectors of taxes; instead, he went into the bazaar and spent the whole of my twenty-five pounds on household furniture of a bulky and ornate sort and then, with that as security, took

as much again on credit; then he loaded the lot on two hired motor lorries and paraded through Aleppo on the way to Jerablus. The whole town was agog, for everybody knew that his son was in the debtors' prison; how then could Busrawi be buying furniture—the value of which rumour soon magnified tenfold? Very quietly the sheikh explained that he had just been visiting the English; the English were his friends and were always ready to give him as much money as he wanted; the cost of the furniture was a mere trifle. Soon the story reached Government circles; Busrawi had unlimited wealth; he had left Aleppo and gone home, but at any moment he could pay his son's debts, and what was the use of keeping the son in prison at the public cost when the money could be had for the asking? Besides, why hurt the feelings of so rich a man? So the young man was released with due apologies for the mistake that had been made, and as for payment of the debts—well, nobody could expect Busrawi to pay until time had wiped out the memory of the insult that had been put upon his house. As the sheikh explained to Hamoudi, the twenty-five pounds was far too small a sum to satisfy the creditors; but by exercising a little tact he had re-furnished his home, secured his son's freedom and assured himself for quite a long time against all the importunities of the Law; and it was all thanks to his old friend!

Chapter Eleven

ENVIRONMENT

WE had been riding since daybreak and now the late afternoon sun shining aslant on the stone-strewn waste with its thin growth of desert grass lent to each downward slope a deceptively deeper green and to each rise that faced the west a yet more barren red. It was a poor land and empty. Only once in all the day had we seen the dwellings of men; then our track led us through a cluster of squalid flat-roofed huts of which one, larger than the rest, boasted a coat of whitewash to mask its mud walls. We had asked the way of a boy who seemed loth to direct us and, his unwilling answer at last given, had scuttled into the white hut leaving his two dogs to bark at the heels of the intruders. No one else was to be seen. But as we capped the rim of the hollow in which the village lay hid, a rider on horseback hailed us from behind, the head-man of a tiny clan, brandishing his gun and shouting abuse. What had he done? he demanded of the group reined in to hear his grievance, what had he done that we should thus pass by his house without stopping for his hospitality? Did we reckon an enemy a man whom we had never seen, and put one blameless to shame before his people? We said that we were in haste and must reach our goal by nightfall. What haste was there? Had not God given man all the span of life and ordained that guests should be given and should receive such things as a host could give? By God, he would take us back by force and in his house we should spend the night whether we would or no. It had been a long and a heated argument as we rode slowly forward, his anger giving place to beguilement and then to regret, our reasoning to compliments on his kindness and praise of his village: for an hour he rode with us, and then at length admitted himself worsted and waving a friendly

hand turned tail and cantered over the bleak ridges in the direction of his home.

That had been about midday, and we had munched our thin bread and *helawi* in the saddle: now I asked where it was proposed to spend the night. "With Sheikh Ahmed of Gulkeui," was the answer; while we talked with the head-man one of our party had ridden on ahead to give notice of our coming. Gulkeui, the Village of Roses, sounded an anomaly in this barren steppe. "Are there then gardens at Gulkeui?" I asked. Yes, *ma sh'Allah*! there were gardens, but it was not from them that the place got its name, but because the virtues of Sheikh Ahmed were like the odour of flowers!

Just before sunset we climbed a slope and from our feet the ground fell away to where, winding with the turns of the valley, a broad belt of trees lay flanked by cornfields unbelievably green: here and there the glint of water showed in hill-side channels, and at the nearest point to us there rose amid the poplars two white domes of fretted ashlar, the tombs of the sheikh's father and grandfather, and the black and white banded walls of his own house. We splashed through a little stream and skirted a garden gay with apricot blossom and the crimson stars of pomegranate bushes, and turned into the courtyard. At the end of it lay the house, built of alternate courses of limestone and basalt, with round-topped windows picked out with red; on the right was the long low guest-house, on the left kitchen and stables; but to-day the central space was taken up by a great tent, its canvas half hidden by Damascus embroidery, its floor piled a foot deep with rugs and cushions, and from it there came out to greet us the most splendid figure I had seen in Syria.

Sheikh Ahmed was an old man, but tall and erect, with a venerable white beard exquisitely combed; round his high cap of white felt was wrapped an enormous turban of pale blue and silver; his wadded coat of white silk embroidered with gold was open down the front to show an undergarment of apple green striped with gold, and from its sleeves, cut open and falling in long points, hung the full lawn sleeves of his shirt; his trousers were of deep blue piped with scarlet, and he stopped for a moment to slip his feet into the scarlet shoes which stood by the tent door. If his clothes were magnificent,

The Sheikh of Gulkeui.

The sons of the Ibrahim Pasha at the door of their tent.

his manners were not less so; to the ordinary Arab dignity he added a gentleness very rare amongst men of that race. As we walked round the gardens and he told me of the difficulties he had had to preserve his oasis from the depredations of government officials in war-time, some expression that he used drew from me the remark, "You think then that the Turks are a bad lot?" He caught me up at once. "God forbid! I have suffered much from them and have no cause to love any one of them, but can I condemn a whole nation? Surely there are good men amongst the Osmanli—or would you, who know more, say otherwise?" I laughed and asked whether I were greater than God, and in answer to his look of shocked surprise told the story of Abraham before the Cities of the Plain, and, mollified, he stroked his beard: "Yet were you wrong," he added, smiling, "for by saying that almost you put me on a level with the prophet Khalil!"

Dinner was a marvellous meal. The red tablecloth spread over the tent floor was set thick with plates and bowls of tinned copper, twenty-two courses in all and all destined for me alone until by swearing that I would otherwise go supperless to bed I constrained my host to sit down and eat with me. My Arab companions were in the guest-house, and while the meal was in progress I saw four or five more wayfarers turn in there for food and rest. As we sat smoking afterwards I praised my host's liberality and excused myself for the trouble to which he had been put on my account: but he looked genuinely puzzled and asked what trouble he had taken. I pointed out that at short notice and for a total stranger he had prepared this splendid tent and so well entertained myself and the other uninvited guests. "Guests!" he said. "Is that what you meant by trouble? I am a rich man, thanks be to God, and I could not sleep at night if I had not entertained at least one passer-by in the course of the day." He shook his head and I heard him repeating very softly to himself, "*W'Allah*, I could not sleep at night."

In the morning we said farewell to Sheikh Ahmed and his Village of Roses and rode on to Viranshehir, the object of our journey. It was the capital of the Milli Kurds, and my business was with their chief. In that year of grace, 1919, the attitude of the Kurds was none too certain, and the Milli were the

most important of their tribes. Only lately there had almost been a battle on a large scale between them and the Anayzeh; and we knew that their fighting men were gathered in force. According to the Arabs the Milli sheikh contemplated a raid on Syria and an attack on the British forces there, according to the Turkish officials he was openly renouncing his allegiance to the Government: that he should actually attack us seemed unlikely, but he might well have little love for the Turks who had killed Ibrahim Pasha, his father, and our duty was to bolster up the Turkish civil power and to keep the peace for it until such time as it was strong enough to look after its own house: hence my visit.

The country improved as we went on. The rolling prairie was covered with clover and rye-grass two feet high, but the going was not the easier for that, for under this waving carpet the ground was still strewn with boulders against which our horses constantly risked breaking their knees, and we were obliged to advance cautiously. A scouting party met us and we learnt that the sheikh and his brothers were not in the town but encamped with their men in a valley some five miles away, and we turned aside in the direction somewhat grudgingly pointed out by the Kurds, cantering now over smoother ground and cropped grass, to relapse into a more dignified walk as we drew in sight of the camp.

Black goats'-hair tents dotted all the hillside, but there was no doubt which was our bourne. Sheikh Mahmud's tent was unmistakable. Twenty-four poles arow supported the high-pitched roof, it was a hundred and twenty yards long and from the back curtain to the open front where the horses were tethered to the tent-ropes was nearly thirty feet: one end was as usual partitioned off and enclosed for the women-folk, the rest was common to the chiefs and their retainers: close to the windward end was set up a small bell-tent of embroidered canvas which was the private room of the sheikh and his council-chamber. It was the normal Arab tent except for its colossal size, but even of this Mahmud made light: "My father's tent had forty poles," he said regretfully. At dinner I admired the trays on which the followers' food was brought in, copper trays four feet across piled with a great dome of rice on the top of which reposed the carcass of a sheep roasted

whole. " Ah," he smiled, " but the big dishes are in the house at Viranshehir ": and he had need of such, for a hundred and eighty men were feeding there that night, but " those that eat at his table " numbered more than that and he might be called on to entertain three hundred henchmen. I was reminded of this years afterwards at Ur when we excavated a grave of the Sargonid Age—some 2700 B.C.—and found a man's body richly adorned with gold, by its side a dagger and two spears of unusual size, and amongst the offerings round about copper vessels also abnormally large. Seeing the gold, our Iraqi workmen said, " Here was a great man "; when the spears were unearthed, " A man indeed! one who loved a fight "; but when they came to the big cooking-pots, " *W'Allah*, an outlaw and the chief of a band of robbers! "

Till late at night we talked, sitting round the scooped-out fireplace with its array of coffee-pots from one to another of which the intent coffee-man poured the fluid now pale, now dark brown, and at intervals rose to hand round the cups with their few drops of the finished brew: the more honourable of us formed three sides of a square, reclined on cushions and rugs, the hangers-on squatted or stood in a dense ring behind. No serious subject could be broached before so mixed a company—the conversation was desultory and confined to safe channels. Something was said about the Great War, and Haj Wahid, my henchman, embarked on one of his favourite tales of how he lay in the Turkish trenches at Al Arish under fire from ships so far out to sea that none knew where they were; aeroplanes flew overhead and the men cowered down in momentary dread of bombs; " I waved my head-cloth and cried aloud, ' I am English, I am English,' and, by God, not one bomb did they drop! " The speaker paused and looked round to mark with pleasure the effect produced on his audience, who sat round-eyed and silent, but after a moment Sheikh Mahmud turned to me.

" Why did they not throw bombs? " he inquired.

I explained that the aircraft were directing the ships' gun-fire and, in reply to further questions, that they communicated with them by wireless. " Wireless on aeroplanes! " mused the sheikh. " That is a marvel indeed." The explanation impressed them more than the original tale.

Half-way down the square sat a mullah, Mahmud's private chaplain, black-frocked, white-turbaned, with a hairless face like a eunuch's and a soft sly voice; he now broke the silence. " Marvellous perhaps," he said, " but nothing new."

I expostulated; how could it be otherwise than new considering that aeroplanes had only been known for ten years, and wireless scarcely that?

" Three thousand years," corrected the mullah gently. All eyes shifted from him to me as I made indignant denial.

" You are an archæologist and ought to know," went on the soft voice. " How many years before the Messiah did Suleyman ibn Daud live? "

I allowed 900 B.C. for Solomon.

" And where? "

" At Jerusalem, of course."

" And where lived Balkis? "

I answered that Sheba might have been in southern Arabia, or on the Abyssinian coast, it was not certain.

" Anyhow it is a very long way off; now we are never told that Suleyman left Jerusalem, yet the Koran says that he communed often with the Queen of Sheba and had children by her. How could he have visited her without any man knowing it except by aeroplane, or talked with her except by wireless? That is three thousand years ago and to-day clever men have but re-discovered the machines which the *jinn* made for Suleyman ibn Daud."

There were broad grins and murmurs of applause. I do not know that many present were convinced of Solomon's aeroplanes, but the mullah's verbal victory delighted them all.

The next day we rode into the town. Viranshehir was a Roman city planted in the midst of this empty land, and broken walls of black basalt still ringed in the site; much of the inner space was open, a tangle of mounds covering the ruins, and such modern buildings as there were, constructed for the most part of stones dug up on the spot, with column-drums and bits of mouldings showing here and there, lay at right angles along the tracks of the Roman streets which ran from gate to gate, bisecting the town. From some time in the sixth century A.D. Viranshehir had lain desolate. Then when the sultan Abdul Hamid enrolled his *Hamidieh*, the irregular

cavalry who were to support his throne against constitutionalism, Ibrahim Pasha the Milli Kurd found that instead of being a brigand chief he was an officer in the imperial service and the acknowledged head of a great tribal confederation: being an enlightened man for all his brutality he conceived the idea of having a permanent capital for his tribes, and set to work to rebuild Viranshehir. Abdul Hamid fell, and Ibrahim Pasha, slow to disown a lost cause, was defeated by the Young Turks and then poisoned by them; his sons were carried off as hostages and the buildings he had set up were razed to the ground; Viranshehir was deserted for a second time. Now Sheikh Mahmud and his brothers were trying to restore the work of their father. Each of them had built for himself a large stone house; there was a bazaar consisting of two or three streets of small booths, a khan for travellers, a big café—" the Club ", Mahmud called it—and a Turkish bath: a mosque started by Ibrahim was nearing completion and boasted some really good stone carving on which Armenian masons were busily employed; for the rest, a few squalid huts and goats browsing among the scattered blocks of limestone and basalt. Just outside one of the gates the ruins of a great church rose gaunt against the sky, some modern patching showing in the masonry of the lower walls: Ibrahim Pasha, mistrusting the powers of his own Kurds to form a city, had brought in a colony of Armenians as the nucleus of an urban population and had encouraged them to restore their ancient church: the ruin that had overtaken his schemes had cut short this work also. There was something very pathetic about the whole place; the Roman ruins so massive in their decay seemed like a cynical comment on these modern efforts once already frustrated and now with so slender chances of success. Even the sheikh appeared to feel something of the sort: I had expected the facile optimism of the Near East, but found in him a very reasoned moderation. The buildings were important, he said, but it was useless to have buildings if there were no inducement to people to live in them: that was why he was doing more for irrigation than with bricks and mortar—and he showed me the long water-channels that were being dug and the places where he would put water-wheels; if he could get a settled agricultural popula-

tion the growth of the town would follow. It was, of course, impossible to change the character of the Kurds as a whole, and undesirable, since their wealth consisted in their flocks and herds: most of them must remain a pastoral folk moving with the seasons from pasture to pasture, but he did hope to induce a certain proportion to settle down and till the fields, and since there was water enough round Viranshehir to make agriculture possible, the spot chosen by his father was his choice also; moreover, a desert town had its advantages, it was a readier market for the nomad tribesmen, and by its isolation might be more free from attack—and his eyes turned to where blackened stumps of walls marked the site of Ibrahim Pasha's house. There was a chastened idealism about Sheikh Mahmud that was altogether attractive.

Encouraged by the collapse of the Turks and by what was going on in Syria and Mesopotamia, the Kurds were at that moment vehemently discussing the question of their own independence, and I had to listen to and oppose many arguments on the subject, arguments sometimes amazing in their *naïveté*. In Mahmud's own tent a minor sheikh had put in his claim to "self-determination", alleging that it was a definite promise made by the King of England: when I demurred at this he said that at any rate it was one of Mr. Wilson's Fourteen Points, and that came to the same thing because Mr. Wilson could never have spoken without the prior consent of the King: challenged again on this he replied in all good faith that, since Mr. Wilson was President of the United States and the United States were one of the chief quarters of London, Mr. Wilson must necessarily be carrying out the King's orders! At Severek, on my way to Viranshehir, I had been approached on the same subject by a disreputable-looking Kurd who wore the white turban of a scholar and a ragged brown *aba* over a striped European shirt with no collar. He had urged a very different plea. Why, he said, should we deny to the Kurds the possibility of advance? It was all very well to do that with the Turks, they were Orientals and incapable of progress, but not so the Kurds. Thanks to the accidents of history, they were centuries behind the English in civilization, but at bottom they were of the same stock and therefore had in them the seeds of better things if only they were given a chance.

I questioned the relationship, but he retorted that both alike were Indo-Europeans (he actually used the word!) and therefore akin: on the strength of that he claimed Asia Minor for the Kurds. I pointed out that the Armenians made the same claim on historical grounds. "On those grounds," said he, "we win, for we were here long before the Armenians." "They were here in the time of the Romans." "And we were here earlier still, at least four hundred years before the Messiah." I asked for proof, wondering, and it came even as I hoped. "There was a traveller then who went through these parts and wrote a book about it, a Greek, what was his name? you ought to know . . . ah! Xenophon! . . . He said he met the Karduchi here, and if those are not the Kurds, who are they?"

To hot-heads such as these Mahmud was a great contrast. A Kurd through and through, keen enough on his nation's future, he did not deceive himself as to the practical politics of independence. "We have no spirit of unity," he said. "Tribe is opposed to tribe and we are all jealous of each other. Who could be head of a Kurdish nation? I can hold my own tribes, but those of the Caucasus would not accept me, nor would my people let me submit myself to their chiefs; Sheikh Seyid has won himself a name in the East, and is of a good house, but what do the Milli care for Suleymania? and the Persian Kurds, could they control the west? Only an outside power can keep the peace in Kurdistan and enforce the law. Besides, even could we unite, what would be the result? We have been shepherds and raiders since the beginning of time; that was all very well in the past, but now if a people is to live it must go forward, and we have learnt nothing except how to keep flocks and to raid. We are too ignorant for independence. Give us some kind of autonomy under a power which will keep us in order and instruct us, and in time independence might come; what we need first is schools. The next building I am putting up here at Viranshehir is to be a school, and there ought to be a school in every large camp."

In his demand for education Mahmud was not only himself sincere but voiced the sentiments of many of his people. On another journey I was stopping with a tribal sheikh who was, I think, the most savage creature I ever met: he had won his

position by the wholesale murder of his father and his brothers —it was said that no sheikh of his house was ever less than a fratricide—and there was not a neighbour with whom he had not a blood-feud: religious bigotry seemed his only virtue. Yet as the long Ramadan day drew to its close and with parched lips and twitching eyes men watched the low sun, he turned to me and breaking a spell of silence said bitterly, "They talk of reforms now. Reforms! what we need is schools. It comes too late for me, I belong to the past; but look at my sons—do you suppose it is a satisfaction to a man to have brought three wild beasts into the world? Of course it takes time; I know that. But if they were taught perhaps they would be a little better than their father, which is something: and in three generations there might be one of my house who would really have his use in the world."

I went back from Viranshehir to Urfa by the southern track. Sheikh Mahmud and two of his brothers with a bodyguard of sixty men rode out to see me on my way, a gay cavalcade, the sheikh with his falcon on his wrist, which he loosed once at a rock-pigeon, the escort breaking rank every now and then to race each other across the turf. We passed the gardens and the ruined church and crossed two streams of running water, at each of which I begged Mahmud to return, but he insisted on going a good five miles and then, where a third stream plashed along the bottom of a little canyon with black forbidding banks of piled basalt, called a halt and committed me to the mercy of God. His brother Timur with a dozen men was to go on with me till noon, to the border of the tribe's grazing-grounds; he and the rest of his followers turned about and from the far bank of the stream we watched them gallop along the dusty track towards the desert town.

From here nothing could be seen of its gardens and the few modern buildings, only above the horizon showed the jagged pinnacle of the ruined church. To what extent was that the end of the story? Mahmud Pasha's dreams of reconstruction and progress, true to one side of his character, could they outweigh the fickle and the savage side which he shared with all his race? And even if he were to persevere, could he do more than the Romans had done, who had challenged here the

solitude and so soon succumbed to it? The whole history of the land, such as it was, seemed to tell of the futility of human effort.

Again the empty undulating steppe with its grass, thick now only in the hollows, and its stone-strewn slopes, the same league after league. We passed one or two flocks of sheep and a bunch of camels at graze with their guards in attendance, but no tents; we were due to reach at dusk a deserted village where there was a well (incidentally when we found it it was dry), but that, our guides told us, was the only building we should see this side of Urfa. It was the more astonishing therefore, when we drew rein for a moment on the crest of a higher ridge than usual, to look out over the vast plain and to see it dotted with *tells*. There were half a dozen or more all in sight at once, grass-covered mounds which hide the ruins of the habitations of ancient man: this land, now so desolate, was once thickly peopled. The Bedouin of to-day passes, leaving the ashes of a camp-fire as his ephemeral record: the builders of an age thousands of years remote have set on the landscape a stamp which yet endures.

Even without excavating one can distinguish something of the nature of these North Syrian *tells*. There is the simple tumulus-like mound which represents probably a small village or an isolated fort; there is a longer mound, flat-topped and rather fan-shaped, rising to a higher knoll at its narrow end, which is the village commanded by the head-man's house or fortress; there is the cup-shaped mound, hollow in the centre and with a depression in one side of its rim, which is the walled town with its gateway; and, on a bigger scale, you have as at Carchemish or Tell Ahmar the wide ring of the earth rampart enclosing the town ruins and the high acropolis hill. From where we stood all the *tells* were too far off for even so superficial a judgment to be possible, but one, rising abruptly in the middle of a flat plain, struck me by its size and steepness; I remarked on it to Timur ibn Ibrahim Pasha.

"It is the largest of the *tells*," he answered, "and the strangest: it is all of stone."

"All stones?" I said. "How can that be? No *tells* are all stone." He cupped his hands together. "In the whole of it there is not so much earth," he said, "and about that there is a tale."

"Tell it me."

"You have heard of Timur Leng?"

"Tamerlain? Yes, I have heard of him, Timur."

"Good. This then is the tale. Timur Leng went forth to conquer the world and he came to this place and encamped here, and passed in review all the host that was with him. And when he had reviewed them by their regiments and their tribes he gave orders that every man should bring a stone and make a great pile in the middle of the plain where they lay. Some of the soldiers therefore brought each man a stone, and others were more proud and made agreement between ten men or twenty and working together they brought up ten or twenty great stones so that each might have the more glory; and they made a pile of all the stones, big and small, and Timur Leng gave the word and they marched away to conquer the world.

"And when Timur Leng had made an end of conquering he turned homeward by the same road and he came again to this plain and halted his army; and he gave order, saying, 'This is the mound of stones which we piled up on our outward march, for every man a stone: now shall each man of you take a stone from the pile and cast it far out on the plain, and the stones that remain shall be a memorial for those that have not come back.' And they did so, taking a stone for each man, great or small; and there was left that which you see—the biggest *tell* in all this land, the *tell* of the dead of Timur Leng."