

Expedition to Bêhân

(Nov-99 to March 1900)

Récit de Voyage

I have the honour to report that I left Aden on Monday Nov 20<sup>th</sup> to conduct the above-mentioned expedition on behalf of the Imperial Academy of Sciences - Vienna.

Over-taking my caravan about 25 kilometres from Aden, we arrived at Shukra on Nov 25<sup>th</sup>.

before would

Here I was received in a very nonchalant manner by the Fadli Sultan who in spite of a letter from the Political Resident at Aden in my behalf, stipulated for an enormous sum (Dols 2000) ~~before he would~~ give me permission to pass. While declaring the greatest respect for the letter I had brought and protesting that I had every liberty to proceed (without my caravan!) he privately intimidated my camel-men and with-held 'piyârah' or escort. At the same time with true Oriental acumen he refused to mention any sum in my presence but communicated through my 'asâkie'.

Eventually I compromised matters for Dols 200 and Dols 50 for piyârah and was allowed to proceed on Nov 29<sup>th</sup>

I took the coast-route via Maikâtein, but having received reliable news that there was collusion between the Lower Julaki Sultan (then at Aden) and his representatives at Shuar to extort a large sum as black-mail and turn back the expedition, - I avoided that town, giving a large cash present to the two chiefs of my escort (Ba Kazim men whose position in Lower Julaki was paramount) to conduct me direct to the interior.

1. Subsequently admonished by the Political Resident at Aden on the subject.



Severe famine was prevailing in Lower Sulaki owing to continued drought and crowds assailed our bivouacs daily in order to obtain a meal. It was impossible to refuse them as tribal etiquette is inexorable on this point, and even at this early stage in our journey I foresaw that our commissariat would be severely taxed.

Passing from Takiātein across a large expanse of sand and volcanic debris (see notes on Geology) we halted at noon near Bir Sumbakiah in a belt of mimosa and maintaining a general NE direction crossed W. Shwar about 20 kils above the town and halted for the night near a small hamlet known as H. ibri Ali. (Dec 3)

Next day we left bivouac before dawn and travelled parallel with the left bank of W. Shwar i.e. NNW for about 5 kils, then taking a northerly direction crossed the sandy plain of Göl el Hadad (so called from a blacksmith who bored an abortive well here) and scaled the hill ranges which border this plain to the north by the Khalifah pass, descending onto another broad sandy plain across which we bore in a NNW direction and reached W. Akhdar which borders this plain to the northwards at 4 p.m. after a long and rather fatiguing march, and halted for the night. On the rocks above our bivouac were a few roughly scrawled Hamyaritic characters, but too illegible to be of any service.

Many interesting geological problems presented themselves during the course of the day's march, and my time was so fully occupied that I felt only too thankful that I had decided not to survey on the out-ward journey. The course of W. Akhdar which ran just north of our bivouac towards the west to join W. Shwar is well-wooded with the ulrub (See Botanical notes) & mimosa. Next morning our bivouac was visited by a relative of Shukh Ali Tuchsui (our principal pijarak) who with his brother Fadl Tuchsui had decided to brave the Shwar Sultan's displeasure in aiding and abetting me to



to avoid that town). This man declared that the authorities at Shwar were greatly incensed against him and his family and hinted at some sort of pecuniary indemnity for the false position in which he was placed.

I curtly refused anything of this sort as I had foreseen this contingency when drawing up my treaty with Ali Jackson and had particularly stipulated that he was to settle all claims made upon us, other than those for food, entertainment and hire of animals.

We left bivouac at 7 a.m. and crossing a tributary of W. Akhdar descended into a broad open shingly plain much intersected by gullies. This plain is known as Gol or Rahab and has one curious feature. - although the shingle with which it is strewn consists almost in every part of fragmentary quartz and sandstone, still in many places long narrow divergent & convergent lines may be seen formed by some distinctly different stone.

On close examination, this turned out to be composed of small loosely piled slabs of limestone which ran in regular rows about <sup>6</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in width and perhaps 2 decimeters in height at the crest.

The curious appearance which this represents has evidently struck the native mind, and a tale is told of two shepherds who while herding goats here, were for some misdeed or other changed into blocks of stone with their herds.

We bore across this plain WNW having the Akhdar mountain system close on our left and that of Rahab on our right. At noon we swung northwards ~~we~~ and entered W. Laikah which here emerges onto the plain and joins W. Gahr (which receives the whole Wadi system of Dalkinah), both wadis then flowing into W. Shwar, or in other words, below the junction of these two, the wadi gets the name of Shwar.

(Gahr)

Laikah

We now entered the gorge of W. Laikah, along which this wadi winds its way



way

among the mountains of the Rakah system.

At 12.20 we halted by a brackish pool under the shade of a lofty overhanging cliff. This pool ~~by the way~~ becomes fresh and drinkable just after a *sét* or freshet has come down, and W. Raikak is by the way - noted for the violent and sudden character of its floods.

Leaving our noon-day bivouac at 2 p.m. we pressed on up the wadi our path being much encumbered in places by loose stones. The view was to the say the least of it - restricted - as on either hand towered precipitous rugged heights and the gorge itself was barely 100 metres broad, and wound to and fro in a most bewildering manner, although the general direction was north.

At 3 p.m. the gorge began to widen considerably and we soon came upon successive pools of water from which we flushed several teal & duck. Vegetation was here very dense. Tall reed-rushes, pidge etc. The tamarisk was of course much in evidence but rather stunted and as we proceeded we came upon a plant which is very characteristic of these regions viz the *Ultras* which gives its name to an important wadi. (This plant will be fully discussed & a specimen forwarded in due course.)

At 5.30 we entered a species of amphitheatre formed by low hillsides between which several small ravines led down into the main wadi. Here the bed of the wadi (Raikak) measured about 300 metres across and the tamarisk attained considerable height and luxuriance. We halted for the night at 5.45 in one of these small tributary ravines just below a tall bare pinnacle of red felspar.

Next morning (Dec 6) we resumed our journey at 6.30 passing several Neswat id shallow percolation wells in the bed of the wadi, which was viz the lower part of W. Shevar from Hibri Alidowx to the coast.



was

here very wide - sandy - and comparatively straight, the hills on either hand, being also lower & less precipitous.

We only traveled for 2 hours and then turned aside to a Bedouin camp (Ba Kâzin) to obtain further supplies of meat as we had been on short commons ever since leaving Makâtein.

Here I had a chance of seeing a very interesting industry, - that of distilling the famous Ba Kâzin nabitk from the juice of the nerke Cappensis of palmetto (A full description with photos - of this industry will be given in due course). Vide Album pp 4 & 30 & 31. extract

Notes  
Wain

We stayed here for the mid day meal and as soon as I had completed my observations for noon, packed up & resumed our journey. On our road we passed several plots of this nerke all of which are jealously looked after by their owners who permit no encroachment although any way-farer may help himself to one of the queer little conical cups (made of strips of palmetto leaf) which may be always found standing ready, below incisions made in the tap-root. Some of our escort made rather too free with this privilege and by the time we had reached our bivouac for the night, were in a state of alcoholic excitement, and I had more than once to interfere in order to prevent serious quarrels. (A sample of this nabitk will be forwarded with the other specimens for inspection.)

The spot where we bivouacked is known as Seilat en-katak and is merely a recess formed by a curve in the cliff wall on the right bank of the wadi. Here may be seen a very interesting & striking instance of panned erosion in the rock which here as elsewhere since leaving the Khalyfah pass is chiefly calcareous (Vide Album p 5). This spot is 3185 metres above sea level.

Swarms of hungry people emerged as it were from nowhere and sat down in a huge circle waiting mutely expectant for their supper. After re-



20-

sources were taxed to the utmost, but no-one dared even to hint that a single one of this unworked mob should be sent away. The law inscripta as regards the duties of hospitality in S Arabia is in this respect most stringent. We had to submit to the inevitable.

Next morning (Dec) we started the caravan before day-break and I followed with a small escort at 6 a.m., our path still lying along the Wadi Lunkah although at 7 a.m. we were compelled to leave its bed and cross a small plateau to avoid making a wide detour.

Northwards of us towered the precipitous peaks of Hegd Athegli which mountain system drains into W. Lunkah from its southern slopes and also forms a water shed between this and the wadi systems of Dalkhah & Upper Sulaki.

At 8 a.m. the wadi bed in which we were travelling curved sharply towards the ~~west~~<sup>East</sup> running parallel to the above-mentioned range which lay close on our left hand. Here the mountains on either hand became most precipitous, and the gorge through which the wadi ran was in parts densely wooded with tamarisk and mimosa. We also crossed several springs of running water.

Surging towards the north east at 9.30 a.m. the valley began to open out being in some parts over 1 kilometre across and well wooded with luxuriant clumps of tamarisk and althrit. Several pools were passed, in some of which duck & teal were feeding, and the small mountain partridge was met with for the first time (specimens secured)

At 11.30 we halted for noon in a broad well wooded amphitheatre across which lay the wadi-bed.

At this bivouac I was astonished to meet some Jornahs, who - I afterwards ascertained were engaged in obtaining myrtle for the Jews

Sinai  
myrtle



7  
Aden

trade. They were under the protection of the local chiefs and seem to be enjoying a kind of monopoly for nobody else were the trees, my informant saying that the natives were not enterprising enough for such a task. Resuming our journey, at 4 p.m. we left the wadi, and ascended a long steep ravine running towards the East. At its summit was a cairn of loose stones (topped by a pole) - erected in honour of Sheikh 'Abid.

In passing this spot, guns were fired and there was great rejoicing among our escort who now considered themselves at home.

Descending a gentle slope we reached the plain of Munkia and skirting along the hill-range of Hd. Minirah reached Bir esh-Shakiat - which name applies to a well and two houses inhabited by the Ahl Sa'id. Up to this point and all along the plateau which lies between Hd. Minirah on the south and another hill range called Hd. Karara (Karara) on the north, most of the ground is under cultivation.

Bir esh-Shakiat is 526.2 metres above sea-level.

Early next morning we resumed our march and passing the easterly spurs of Hd. Minirah turned from ENE towards the East ascending a gentle rise onto the plateau of Tuhfid, which is littered with black metamorphic debris and thinly brushed with several species of small gum-bearing trees, among them the myrrh itself.

Here we came in sight of Tuhfid itself - a small town nestling at the foot of a slight eminence on which stands the village of Kabth while westward of these two distant about 400 metres stands the small hamlet of Sidhabah - the home of our two escorting chiefs Ali & Fadh Tuhfid.

We reached Sidhabah at 9.30 a.m. and were well received, the usual  
1 See notes. History of the Hejaz.



usual

makah being performed amid clouds of choking dust, and - in spite of my request that no great ceremony should be observed, Ali Tukurin insisted on slaughtering a young bull in honour of the occasion.

He placed his horse at the disposal of the party, as a halt of some days would have to be made here before procuring camels and piyarak for our journey. ~~Gidhabak is 5 1/4 miles above sea-level~~

Of course the rest of this day was spent in receiving visitors and holding palavers in connection with the state of the country on our future line of march. Among the guests was Hase bu Hawad, a cousin of Saleh bu Ali - sultan of Ahwar (since deposed) who held a nominal jurisdiction over Mankia and resided about 7 kils NW of Melfid at a fortified stronghold known as el Masna. Here he keeps a small force of asakia for collecting taxes from the rayja (i.e. the industrial population) and owns a large tract of ten or arable land.

This worthy pressinglly invited me to pay him a visit but 'times dures et dona ferentes' - I had heard enough about him to know that he was a worthy representative of one of the most rapacious houses in S. Arabia so I merely promised to visit him on the first opportunity which occurred (it has not occurred yet)

Next day was spent in examining the immediate vicinity & obtaining specimens. It will be noticed (Album pp 8-10) that a striking sand-stone formation occurs east of Melfid. - This goes by the name of el Halu - and I determined to ascend it for it was evident that a splendid view of the surrounding country could be obtained from here.

Accordingly we left ~~Melfid~~ ~~Gidhabak~~ early on the morning of Dec 10<sup>th</sup> and made forwards the northern spurs of el Halu. Ascending these diagonally we crept up the northern scarp of the formation, the ascent



ascend

being extremely difficult & rather dangerous owing to the treacherous nature of the sand-stone, which afforded no secure foot-hold, frequently fell in large masses, narrowly escaping some of us. Large beds of shale also occurred at frequent intervals and owing to their extremely brittle character much increased the dangers of the ascent.

On reaching the summit, we found ourselves on a broad table-land of bare rock which sloped gradually towards the SE. (Height by aneroid ) From here looking north-wards towered the central ridge of the great Kaur which under the name of Kaur el Adhabak has been mentioned in the report of my last journey.

Here it goes by the name of Kaur el 'Uhegi, Kaur er-Rabiz, Kaur el 'Oid & Kaur Edhi (the loftiest of all). A rough sketch of the mountain & wadi systems of Maankaa is given on the next page.

The Halim system is bare and desolate in the extreme, the higher levels being almost destitute of vegetation. Strange to say however I saw the tracks & droppings of an ibex even in this barren waste.

Descending towards the East we reached a tributary of W. <sup>Haderah</sup> ~~Shamrah~~ (see sketch), and here we found sand-stone & lime-stone formations of such striking character & shape, that I bitterly regretted that the rapidly fading light made a photograph impossible.

Striking the main wadi we kept along it until we reached Tuedjed and arrived at our quarters long after dark.

The rest of the time spent here was devoted to packing & preserving specimens & taking observations from which I ascertained that Adhabak was 5745 metres above sea-level, with a latitude of 15° 52'

On the afternoon of Dec 14<sup>th</sup> we resumed our journey but minus one of



of  
 our little band. This was a *Merkeha* raiv who had accompanied us to attend  
 to my saddle-camel & make himself useful in bivouac. In point of fact  
 he rode my camel most of the way for I was generally on foot looking for  
 specimens and when we got into bivouac, lay down exhausted, while  
 one of the *isaker* did his duties.

A tribe called the *Rakamark* often raid the *Yeshbrum* route among  
 the mountains near the southern slope of the *Kaur* and a rumour  
 was extant that they were lying in wait for us. The raiv was much  
 impressed and on the very day that we started, declared that he felt  
 too ill to travel and requested that he might follow on when he was  
 well. As he appeared in perfect health I was benighted & found  
 that he had been avowing his intention of following us up if he  
 heard that we had reached *Yeshbrum* safely. He wished to be allowed  
 to remain behind on full pay, but this was too palpable so I gave  
 him money for his return journey and told him that he was dismissed.  
 He had two months' pay in advance, so could hardly complain, but it  
 was this man (whose name it would be unsafe to give) who in collusion  
 with the *Marzuke* concocted the report of the exact failure of the expedition  
 which caused so much uneasiness in Vienna.

Leaving *Gidkabak* at 3.30 pm we passed across the plateau and descend-  
 ed a long gentle slope onto the plain below, crossing widest *Faki* & *Meria*  
 & passing between the two black metamorphic ridges of *Kaurat es-Siffah*  
 and *Kaurat el Olya*. On the banks of *W. Meria* occur large tracts of  
 cultivation - the country is but sparsely wooded - chiefly with *minora*,  
 but several fine <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>2</sup> occur in the vicinity of *Mausia*.

Towards dusk we halted for the night at *Whib-lib* - a small house  
 belonging to the *Ahl Kansur* subdivision. Here we were warmly

1. I need not specify this man. His treachery to all parties is known in the quarters  
 which concern me.

2. *Jajubiers*



warmly  
 welcomed as one of my *asâkir* was a son of the owner of the *husa*.  
 After supper as we were pitching in bivouack (for the *husa* was too  
 small to hold us, *hâsâ* the *Shurâ* - sultan of *Maubâia* paid us  
 a most un-welcome visit. He declared that I was passing through  
 his territory and insisted on black-mail. It was soon obvious from  
 his potentate's conversation that his peremptory demands & threats  
 of violence were mere gasconades. When he threatened to bring up his *asâkir*  
 & attack the bivouack unless he were given *Dols* 100, I closed the audience  
 and he departed vowing vengeance. I doubled the usual guard for the  
 night and visited them frequently but we were not disturbed.  
 Next morning at day-break he returned in a much milder frame of  
 mind and departed satisfied on *Ali* *Teksin* promising to give him  
 the same sum that the sultan of *Shurâ* had received from me  
 in *Aden* (this was *Dols* 20). Subsequently he obtained a letter from  
*Saleh* *bu* *Ali* stating that I had given him *Dols* 400 & claimed a  
 similar amount from *Ali* *Teksin*. The fraud was of course  
 palpable enough and this incident was one of the final acts of  
 bad faith which caused the deposition of the *Shurâ* sultan, by  
 the tribes headed by *Ali* *Teksin*.

Leaving *H. lib-lib* at 7 a.m. we struck into *W. Rafal* and soon  
 entered its gorge running through a tall hill system known  
 as *H. Sababak*. Here we passed through a dense undergrowth  
 of the *ittirâ*, on emerging from which we entered a thick jungle of  
*tamarisk* (تمر). Further up the *tamarisk* became stunted &  
 parched & soon gave way to the *umora* which seems to flourish  
 where no other tree can find sustenance.

1. Height above sea-level 590.2 metres



Maintaining a general nor-easterly direction we came in sight of the peak of Had Mîiârah after an hour's journey up the gorge, and then purging towards the ENE we left the wadi and travelled up a gently rising plateau strewn with black metamorphic debris, the wadi curving north-wards on our left.

Another kilomètre across this plateau (known as Gôl el 'Ik) brought us to the village of el 'Ik inhabited by a family of ~~nomads~~ <sup>سائقي</sup> (i.e. ~~est-<sup>sh</sup> marhâikh~~) or sheikhs, known as the Ahl Ba Zeb.

Here the wadi rejoined our path and a small tract of tén and a few <sup>زيتون</sup> lay between the wadi & the village.

We halted under these trees for water, although it was only 9 a.m. for one of the camels showed signs of exhaustion, as they had none of them been fed the night before. Here the BP thermometer gave an altitude of 6704 metres above sea-level.

We did not resume our journey until 3 p.m. and still kept up the Rafal gorge which here led NNE towards Hd Rafal.

On leaving the village I was shown a gap in one of the irrigation channels (سقيّة) connected with the wadi & was informed that here once lay a gigantic boulder which blocked up the passage of water onto the tén, until a former sheikh of this village removed the obstruction by the miraculous powers which he possessed. I asked to see the boulder but was told that he had removed it beyond all mortal ken - nor - as I suggested, was it shattered by some supernatural explosion, it simply was, and one fine morning it was not. There is nothing like thorough workmanship!

About another 100 kilomètres further up the wadi was a stone which interested me far more. This was Hagar 'Er

1. or more regularly ساقية



Erui

which marks the frontier between Upper & Lower Adalaki.

It is simply a large block of pink felspar (about 1 metre in height) lying on the left bank of the wadi.

Here Ali Meksem's piyarak ended and our future escort were Abdullah & Bakke on Farid the two youngest brothers of the *akel* of Yeshbum. They had travelled up with us from Aden for this purpose, and their piyarak held good to Yeshbum.

A short distance past the frontier, the wadi-gorge swinging sharply to the NNW. Following it we came upon a *husu* in a strongly walled enclosure at 4 p.m. - about 1 *akel* from the frontier. This is H. Keneb and belongs to the *Ahl Wakar* (a *fakhid* - *ak* of the *Ahl Wiaau*)

Here we left the wadi which curved away to the NW round H. Keneb which stands on its left bank and ascending this bank rejoined the wadi about 200 metres further on where we came upon a few *husu* and a broad tract of *ku* on the right bank of the wadi. This settlement is known as *Hu el Wakarak* and is inhabited by another section of the *Ahl Wakar*.

Maintaining now a general easterly direction, *Sawads* pursued we approached the source of W. Rafal. Here the wadi turned sharply to the SE up a gently rising stony ravine well wooded with mimosa and *ultrab*.

Close to the spot where this ravine enters the main gorge, stands *H. el Zelt* on the right bank of the Rafal ravine. This *husu* is not generally inhabited but is used as a place of refuge by

The main gorge still keeps an easterly direction, and the wadi running through it is known as W. *Edth*. Turning up the Rafal ravine we



we

passed Hel Gellb and bivouacked just above it, in the bed of the ravine.

Here we found an encampment of the *Ahl Bu Bekrath* their flocks. Water was procurable near the head of the ravine.

I took no *Barometer* reading here owing to a violent attack of ague & fever but next morning the aneroid showed me that we were 43 metres above our last station this giving a total altitude of 713.4 metres.

Leaving our bivouack at 6.30 a.m. we retraced our steps down the Kafal ravine to the main gorge of W. Edth which is well wooded - chiefly with tamarisk. Here our progress was very slow as the bed of the wadi was strewn with large stones.

A short distance further up (about 200 kils) the narrow deep ravine of W. Habam joined the main wadi from the NW. The sides of the Edth gorge just here are also extremely steep, in some places the cliffs on the left bank rising up sheer for 200 metres. As this was the locality where the *Ahl Lakawash* generally commit their depredations on caravans, I could not help admiring their tactical ability. They could not of course have a better spot for a small force on these beetling heights could crumple up a caravan and its escort by simply throwing stones, which from that height would strike with the velocity of a cannon-shot, while - owing to the shape of the match-lock butt it would be practically impossible to fire up at them from the ravine, and even with a rifle it would be very awkward. All that the marauders would have to do after such a one-sided fusillade would be to descend leisurely by some convenient ravine and pick up the pieces.

It was out of the question to throw forward parties to crown these heights. The nature of the ground is such that it would have taken them a day



day  
to rejoin the main body. The only feasible precaution was to send an advance guard up the gorge about 400 metres ahead of the caravan, and this was done, although I had little confidence in such a measure for any marauding band gifted with ordinary intelligence would on seeing such an armed party - see close and reserve their fire for the caravan which would obviously be in rear of its escort.

At 8 a.m. we came to a spot where the wadi forked, - W. Latta running down from the NE, while the other ravine - that of W. Enimakh led in an easterly direction. We followed the latter between precipitous and lofty mountain peaks - Ras Muirak being now close on our left.

At the junction of the two wadis I noticed that the men busily engaged themselves for a few minutes in piling up a few small flat stones one on top of the other to a height of about 2 decimètres. Each man made one of these little piles and I was informed that it was always customary to do so at this spot in honour of Sheikh Aboid (See Historical notes) These piles are known as *سنگ* Sing *سنگ* ho cairn or large monument of any description existed in the vicinity.

The mountains along this part of the gorge rose sheer on either hand to a height of about 300 metres, and I was much relieved when at 8.15 we reached a small plateau thickly strewn with granite boulders & smaller debris. Here we came well in sight of ~~Ras~~ the two peaks of el Bikâren between which W. Enimakh takes its rise and drains down a precipitous ravine which gives out to the above mentioned plateau, Leaving the wadi which was now impassable we bore ~~ENE~~ across this plateau and approaching the eastern slope of the Enimakh gorge ascended it in a plating direction towards the eastern peak of el Bikâren of which this slope forms a spur. At 8.45 a.m. we reached the shoulder



shoulder

of this spur after an arduous climb. Here we (the advance guard) halted and waited for the caravan to come up. While waiting I took two aneroid readings which gave a height of  $\quad$  inches above the last station. Hence the summit of this pass may be said to be  $\quad$  inches above sea-level. Resuming our march we made a descent of about 20 inches into a long broad valley between two lofty ranges (the Bikhâren system being on our left).

This valley rose in a gradual slope towards the ENE where a steep ridge lay across it. On the other side of this ridge lay the pass of Thelit by which we were to cross the back-bone of this great system.

We halted in this valley at 10 a.m. to give the camels a chance to get their wind before attempting the big pass. We had of course brought water with us from our last bivouac, for there was none to be got here. I spent most of the time during this halt in turning over large stones and up-rooting shrubs, in the hopes of finding some peculiar and characteristic forms of insect life at this altitude (10000 inches), but I met with no success. The ground was as dry as a bone to a distance of at least 1 metre below the surface.

We started again at noon up the valley which presented a most desolate scene. The only sign of life consisted in a pair of eagles circling slowly overhead. It was intensely hot between these ranges and the tortuous climb up the big ridge was a real infliction.

As our advance guard reached the top of the ridge they suddenly opened out & commenced firing. On hurrying up I found that the objective was a small party of Bedouins about 800 inches away, who had moved about in a suspicious manner and drew the fire of our zealous scouts. Their fire was not returned, in fact I do not think



think

that these Bedouins possessed firearms, and were probably harmless goat-herds ( *بنا*, *Sing* *اع* ) who took the head of our column for a raiding party and naturally scattered to cover.

Turning north-wards we now began the ascent of the Thebt pass. (1.15 p.m.) and then ensued much pulling and hauling of camels up a steep zigzag path cut in the rock. At some points there were several big steps which the camels surmounted with great difficulty. The path had undoubtedly been cut by human hands and the work is ascribed to the Hamyarites, no doubt correctly, for the Arabs are not an engineering race.

Wing  
made

We reached the summit at 2 p.m. and here found that a fresh breeze was blowing from the SSE. The aneroid gave an alt of 7210 feet above the last station (14340 feet above sea-level).

I was disappointed in the view from this spot which was much obstructed by adjacent mountain peaks. We did not tarry long here as - after the intense heat of the valley below, the wind felt piercingly cold.

Down the northern slope of the pass we struck into W. Thebt, and its firm sandy bed afforded an excellent road. The *uttrak* occurs here in plenty and cacti of several varieties (*Baccharis* or *Botany*) are very numerous.

At 4 p.m. the wadi curved round towards the north & took a plunge down a steep rocky ravine where the camels found great difficulty in keeping their footing. On the left wall of the ravine about 5 ft above its bed we passed a slit and a projection in the rock. The natives with their usual freedom of speech have nicknamed this formation

*جـبـ و سـ*, and it appeared to be a point of honour to throw stones into

this phrase is better left untranslated - I may mention that *سـ* is used in an enigmatical sense.



into

this cleft.

At H. 45 we reached the mouth of this ravine which opens out to W. Shābah a broad sandy bedded wādi lying in a NW direction & fairly well wooded with  $\text{عش}$ . On the right bank are large tracts of  $\text{سب}$  and several small settlements of  $\text{نوبات}$ , also a few irrigation wells.

Keeping down the wādi we passed H. el Hāth & el Karkhān on the right bank, and a little further down H. el Shāb on the left bank at the junction of W. Shāb (a small narrow wādi) with W. Shābah.

Past this point stands H. el Kaurak on a small hill in the valley, but before reaching this, W. Shābah turns sharply away to the NE, being joined by W. Radaw from the west & eventually entering W. Yeshbun. We left the wādi at its confluence with Radaw and ascended a small hill pass known as Higd el Ma'bar, maintaining a general NW-westerly direction. From its crest we had a splendid view of the Yeshbun valley which with its broad tracts of brilliant green (young crops) & its tall wide-spreading  $\text{عش}$  presented to the eye the appearance of a noble park, and the striking mediæval style of architecture, so common in the remoter districts of S. Arabia still further enhanced the likeness. Unfortunately the light was now too weak to obtain a satisfactory photograph.

Descending the pass we travelled up the valley until we reached Yeshbun sōk - a thriving town on a small eminence on the right bank of the wādi. Here we obtained quarters in the spacious hūsu of a leading merchant who placed a couple of goats before us, which quickly disappeared before the determined onslaughts of our party.

A B.P.T. observation here gave the height above sea-level as 1112.8 metres. Early next morning we got on the move again, attended by huge crowds



crowds

of *rāyā* of all ages & both sexes, who made any attempt at photography impossible. I noticed as we went along that the branches of many of the *ḥ* were propped up with stout wooden joints to keep them from breaking under the weight of their fruit, with which they were covered. The season was however very backward and it would be another two months at least before they were thoroughly ripe.

We heard at the *ḥ* that there was serious friction between the *Ahl Farid* (whom we were about to visit) and the *Ahl Ba Ras*, a strong sub-tribe having a settlement - *el Kawlak* in W. Yeshtrun and also inhabiting the country to the north of W. Yeshtrun, and we were warned that we would probably have to fight to get through.

Accordingly we had sent on a messenger over-*ḥ* to *Ulu Rusās* or *Farid* the *ākil* at *Said* advising him of our approach and hinting that a covering party from his end would be desirable.

As we travelled further up the *wādi* our impromptu escort of *rāyā* fell back, and shouted after us parabolic warnings as to what the *Ahl Ba Ras* had in store for us (these *rāyā* can be very disagreeable).

We huddled on up the deep shingly bed of the *wādi* past the villages of *Lahdil* and *Hegil* on the left bank until we reached a mountain spur round which the *wādi* curved sharply to the NW.

On the near side of this spur, lies a broad tract of *ḥ* dotted with *ḥ* and beyond & above to the WNW rose the spurs of *Fardāh* over which our supporting force from *Said* was expected to come.

As it was still too early for them to put in an appearance, we halted under the shade of a large *ḥ* at 9 a.m.

It was rather an anxious time for *el Kawlak* (the *Ba Ras* town) was only about 2 *ḥ* distant round the bend of the *wādi* on the other



other

side of the spur, and if it had occurred to them to come round by the wadi and attack our bivouac before the Farid party came up we should have been in rather an awkward predicament.

At noon our friends arrived led by two of the 'Abid's brothers & mustering about 20 men. & at 1 p.m. we moved out of bivouac and made for the Fardah pass which had already been crowned by a detachment of the 'Abid Farid.

As the caravan commenced the ascent a few shots were exchanged between these men and a party from Kawlak below, who wished to dispute our passage, and as we crossed the summit the firing ceased. Here, passing along a narrow ridge we saw below us on our right the stronghold of Kawlak perched on a small hill <sup>on</sup> the right bank of W. Yeshbum.

There was a great deal of shouting and running about as the inhabitants caught sight of our caravan on the ledge above them but no one fired a shot probably because we were rather more numerous than they expected and also the advantage of position was all in our favour for one could have almost thrown a stone into their village from the ledge we were on.

Descending the pass, we re-entered W. Yeshbum and travelled up its broad shingly bed towards the Farid domains.

As we approached within 2 kils the party formed line and chanting an appropriate <sup>شعر</sup> we advanced towards Said at a steady jog-trot. At sunset we halted in the wadi close under the towers and were met by the former 'Abid <sup>Crus</sup> <sup>br</sup> Farid and a large party. (The 'Abid himself was then in Aden we having passed him at Shukra on our way up). A tedious and protracted waha<sup>h</sup>

1. A song containing only a few lines made up on the spur of the moment. Each line consists of 4 feet & each foot of 3 Spondees. Sung while moving at the double.



makah  
 was performed by both parties, the usual salutations were interchanged  
 & a bullock was led out between the two parties, then hamstringing  
 and as he dropped his throat was cut, the butcher (شاذل) finishing by  
 hacking off the head which becomes his perquisite according to recognized  
 custom.

Then followed the usual target practice (سنة) which lasted some  
 time as both parties together numbered about 150 men, and I should be  
 reluctant to estimate how much lead was pumped into the opposite  
 bank of the wadi, for fear of exaggeration. Suffice it to say that  
 the furillade lasted about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an hour without cessation - the targets  
 being as usual small stones set on end.

After this ceremony we were conducted to the house of Bu Bekr &  
 Meksin bu Farid where we spent the night - this by the way in  
 deference to the laws of hospitality as we had already made  
 arrangements (for economy's sake) to reside during our stay at  
 Said with Ali bu Meksin, who had a small house in the town.

We were well entertained but I was not in a condition to thoroughly  
 appreciate the hospitality shown to us, as I was still weak from fever  
 and had moreover a very promising ulcer on the right leg with which  
 I had marched up from Taubaa & which now showed symptoms  
 of resenting such treatment.

According to established custom we sat & smoked & drank قهوة until  
 at length food was produced - two goats and an enormous  
 quantity of the usual unleavened cakes of bread (قراص)<sup>2</sup> and several  
 bowls of قس or broth, to which the party did ample justice with  
 one sad & solitary exception. Then followed more smoking and

1. Let one who is unfortunate for alms from Root سئى = to beg. (I fear that there  
 been mistakes in this word, in my last report, please see if this is the case)
2. Colloquial plural - more correctly اقراص which form is also used. Sing قراص

Nahumy



and

coffee-drinking, and the atmosphere in that room may be imagined but not described.

Kaffe mit  
Ingwer

Much has been said about this coffee or قهوه, and how it is prepared. I will only mention here that the more important or hospitable one's host is, the more ginger (جوز) he puts in, until at a big sheikh's house one is served with coffee which would certainly make an excellent sinapism but as a beverage is rather trying and apt to produce distressing symptoms. Our hosts قهوه was no exception to the general rule.

Finally as many people as could find room to stretch themselves out lay down to sleep, well wrapped up in their indigo-dyed cotton shawls (صبايح), the shutters (قشور) over the loop-holes which serve as windows up-country being carefully closed to keep out the cold, and most of the men had been unable to eat the whole of their meat ration which they had stowed away the balance among their bedding, to be out of the way of marauding cats & serve for breakfast next day.

This, with the odour inseparable from native indigo-dyed garments added the finishing touches to the situation, and by the use of a little diplomacy I got the use of a small empty room ( ) at the top of the husu, and slept fairly well in spite of the cold. Next day we made a move into the house of Ali Tachsin and here I spent one terrible night in a small which was used as a store-room and the walls of which - I found out when too late were infested with

After this experience, on finding that all the other rooms were likewise subject to these pests I took possession of the courtyard or at the top of the house which was a tall composite mud & stone tower or برج and

( ) pronounced قهوه as a common instance of interpolation of ق + ع.



and

found very suitable quarters there for the rest of my stay. I had a canvas awning thrown over the greater part of the courtyard leaving an open space near the entrance where I had a small mud fireplace made without which the temperature would of course have been insupportable at night. Opening onto this courtyard was a small which I used as a store-room for such articles as were constantly required, and on the roof I mounted my meteorological instruments. In spite of the cold I never had better quarters in S. Akkra before, for I was able to work here undisturbed for as a rule only invited guests cared to brave that temperature and when a chance caller dropped in, and his conversation ceased to be of interest or adopted an importunate turn, I let the fire go out, and this hint never failed in its effect except during the warmer hours of the day.

On Dec 19<sup>th</sup> I found that I could no longer walk or stand without considerable pain and in spite of every attention I could give, that ulcer kept me a prisoner in my quarters until I employed my enforced leisure in compiling notes, close meteorological observations and preparing Zoological specimens which were brought to me daily. One of my *asākir* went out every day with a small shot-gun & poor learnt to distinguish the birds which I required, and on the whole my days were fairly well occupied. I made numerous observations as well, the only results that need be mentioned here being Altitude above sea-level of my quarters by B.P. Thermometer 1170.9 metres, Latitude 16.18 and Magnetic Variation (by bearing of a Polaris) 2°-29'.

It was during this time that negotiations were opened with the *asākir*



âkil

of the *Sh. Hamam* regarding a further journey to Bêhân for it was now quite evident that the funds would not be adequate to take us there under existing conditions.

Before committing myself to an agreement I determined to get my masts up from Aden in order to see if any change of plans or fresh instructions were forth-coming, and for this purpose despatched a runner on Dec 20<sup>th</sup> via Mankia & Makâtein, the only practicable route owing to the disturbed state of the Dakûak route which made travel for a single individual somewhat hazardous.

Sheikh Uu-Rusâs br Farîd arrived at Saïd from Aden on Jan 3<sup>rd</sup>. He was extremely ill with fever and my services as a medical man! were called upon. I dosed him with the usual remedies Phenacetin & Quinine under which treatment (chiefly aided no doubt by a sound constitution) he recovered.

On Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> I was able to resume work out of doors but on the 4<sup>th</sup> a spell of very cold wet weather set in and for three days the rain was incessant and very little firewood could be procured (barely enough for the household cooking) while a bitterly cold wind from the north & north west, known as *شمال* prevailed.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> the rain ceased but the weather was still intensely cold. I went out after specimens but got nothing but two shrikes. All other bird-life seemed to have disappeared except the bulbul & sparrow. Crops had been much beaten down by wind & rain and there is no doubt that the dove crop was much delayed.

We ascended the Furdak pass in order to get a comprehensive sketch of the surrounding country, but were perceived by the *Sh. Ra Râs at Kaulah*, who must have imagined that we



we

were the advance-guard of a Farid attacking force and a strong party began to ascend the hill to make enquiries. My two 'asâkir wanted to open fire to check their advance but this I forbade as it would have precipitated an engagement & my sketch was not quite finished.

The Ba Ras party was still 200 metres off when the sketch was completed and had still a very steep climb before them. We did not wait however to offer any explanations which might not have been well received, but retired most rapidly down our side of the pass. A single thought occurred to all three of us simultaneously & added considerably to our speed viz - Perhaps they have sent a party round by the wâdi to cut us off! This caused us some anxiety as, if another party were waiting for us below in the wâdi we were caught like rats in a trap.

For this emergency I exchanged arms with one of my 'asâkir (an indifferent shot & rather a nervous man) taking his Werndl carbine and giving him my shot-gun.

Fortunately we got past the bend of the wâdi unharmed & halted in Farid territory under cover of the <sup>3</sup>J<sup>3</sup>.

The âkil Abu-Rusâs was much perturbed when he heard of our adventure as we had taken no escort, but if we had, an engagement would have been inevitable so we had acted for the best.

On Jan 8<sup>th</sup> began the first of five days severe cold, the day however being fairly warm & still while at nights the thermometer seldom recorded a mean temperature of more than freezing point.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> I was down with ague & fever, (temperature rising to 105.2 Fahr.) owing to the unpreseen delay of the runner, I



I was absolutely without medicine or proper food.

It occurred to us that the man might be waiting down at Mankai unwilling to come further for fear of the Ahl Ba Ras who were now in open revolt against the Farid a'kilship. Accordingly we sent one of the asābir (a native of Mankai) to bring the makattib back by the mountain route over the Pihā pass.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> a sharp skirmish took place between the Farid party & the Ahl Ba Ras. The latter held the Furdah pass against a caravan passing through from Said to Geshkun pōh. The Ahl Farid got news of it and turned out with praiseworthy celerity. There were a few scattered shots fired and then the Farid forced the pass, dislodging the Ba Ras contingent, who withdrew with two casualties.

That same afternoon the delinquent runner turned up, our pursuit had been correct, he was found at Tushfid where he had intended staying until a caravan afforded him a chance of safe conduct up to Said!

No further instructions having been received from the Academy I communicated at once with the Hawaiian a'kil, closing with his terms.

The same day (Jan 16) I got a letter from the two principal chiefs of the Kusābeii (see map) pointing out that they were under Turkish protection and would not tolerate my presence in the Bēhān district, threatening to use force if their <sup>behest</sup> request was disregarded.

I took counsel with the a'kil Um-Rasās & from what I heard came to the conclusion that the letter was a mere "canard", and



and had simply been written with the object of extorting black-mail. At all events I determined to disregard their communication for we could count upon the presence in our party of the Hamami 'a'bil and three of the brothers of Ulu-Rusās, thus the two most powerful chieftaincies in Upper Sulaki would be represented and any disaster to our party would involve the Tausābein in war with the whole of Upper Sulaki, a contingency which they would be hardly likely to face. Moreover Kahlān our objective point is not in Tausābein territory but belongs to the sphere of Hakaba - the chief of the ashraf and by courtesy Amir of Rēhān who has a considerable following and would certainly not tolerate any breach of tribal etiquette on the part of the Tausābein. In short, although we ran some risk in daring the resentment of a notoriously bellicose tribe, they ran a far greater risk if they molested us.

I did not answer their letter, but wrote again to the Hamami 'a'bil requesting him to come to Sa'id with his escort as soon as possible.

He arrived on Jan 24<sup>th</sup>, having been delayed by a raiding party which he had conducted against one of the desert tribes, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> we left Sa'id at 10 a.m.

Gold

The expedition was now very short of funds and I had to borrow Dols 200/- from a rich merchant of Wāsītah (see Allman p. 16). Lest any one who reads these lines should still possess the idea that a Mussulman never takes interest, let me mention that this unsophisticated son of the Prophet insisted on good security (which was readily given by the 'a'bil Ulu-Rusās) and asked for 18%



18%

per cent per mensem!! He was eventually induced to accept 6 $\frac{1}{4}$  per cent per mensem, but considering that he insisted on the interest running until he received the money at his house in Wasitah & that he knew from the nature of our journey that the principal would take two months to reach him, he may be said to have a very shrewd idea of business which is by no means hampered by Chap II Verse <sup>(Surt 3)</sup> 22 of the Koran.

Travelling up W. Yeshbun we soon entered a ravine between the hills which encircle the valley. Shortly after entering this ravine the wadi forked, one branch called W. Tuarbin bearing off sharply to the SSW up a deeply cut precipitous gorge, while the other - W. Shab along which we travelled lay in a westerly direction.

About another 800 metres further up, this ravine divided into three under the names of W's Kevdah, Hehak, & Domareu, forking respectively W. NW & North. We took the middle gorge which was thickly wooded with small scrub & bush.

Leaving this ravine on our right we crossed a low hill spur and descended into another ravine, general bearing NW up a long gentle slope at the summit of which is a large cairn erected in honour of Sheikh Aboid which we reached at 12.10.

Descending a gradual slope on the other side we reached another ravine leading W. SW. which gradually widened to about 1 kilometre across, bounded on either hand by low hills.

Here we passed through the bed of W. Serra, which runs across from our left to right and is thickly wooded with the *gins* (See notes on Potany - Route March 1899). We were surprised to notice that nearly all



all

these plants were withered & drooping showing every sign of having been frost-bitten, a convincing proof of the severe weather that we had recently experienced. In the words of my escort *سَحَلٌ لَعْمٌ فَزَبٌ مِنَ الْبَرْدِ*, the word *فَزَبٌ* being used generally up-country to describe the effect of severe cold on plants or animals.

W. Serrā joins W. Makbilah on our right, this latter wādi draining the SE slopes of Heyd Tahm. Just above their junction stands the village of Dakhōl inhabited by a family of sheikhs, while at the junction is situated es-Serrā, a small settlement tenanted by *rāyā* who possess a considerable tract of arable land and *عُرُ* and are entirely agricultural.

Leaving these two settlements on our right we turned WNW past a small shrine known as es-Sōfi and reached the village of es-Sēniā at 2:30 p.m.

This settlement consists of two clusters of *نُوبَاتٍ* or composite mud huts, <sup>houses</sup> situated on the low rocky spurs of one of the hill-chains which run down in a northerly direction from Kaur el'ōd. It is inhabited entirely by *rāyā* who are engaged in the weaving & dyeing of cotton fabrics.

The population numbers about 400 all told.

The inhabitants possess a large tract of cultivated land to the west & NW of the village and also a quantity of fine *عُرُ*. There are several wells. (See Album p. 23). Altitude above sea-level (B.P.T.) is 1187 metres.

We halted here for the night as the rest of our journey to Hus'ib had to be accomplished in one stage since the intervening country is absolutely waterless. I spent the time until dusk in sketching the country and collecting specimens (with very poor success as there are but few forms of animal or insect life in this district). Our bivouac was formed under shelter of



of the spurs on which the village stands, a wise precaution as a piercing easterly wind arose at dusk and the night was intensely cold.

Next morning we started at 8 o'clock having been obliged to wait for three of the *Ahl Farid* who joined us here as escort.

Crossing the wadies *Midab* & *Khamar* where we encountered fairly well-wooded country we entered the arid plain of *Lol ed-Dahrah* travelling in a NNW direction within a few hundred metres of the rocky hills which border this plain on our right, and through a gap in which flows *W. es-Surr* (formed by *Khamar*, *Midab*, *Ferrā* and *Maakblak*) past a settlement of the same name, and loses itself in *Rabi' el Khali*. Were it possible to travel in this direction, a caravan could reach the *Hadramaut* in 5 days, but I am informed that no one has ever penetrated more than 2 days journey into the desert, taking with them of course their own water.

This arid waste is sparsely wooded with the *شجر* a species of mimosa almost identical in appearance with the *شجر* except that the flower is yellow & not white. The *شجر* also occurs, and both are parched to such an extent that they present an almost white appearance.

At 11 a.m. we passed a small isolated rock about 400 metres to the left of our path. One of our escort suggested that there was a hollow in this rock which occasionally held rain-water for a long period. It being now *Ramadan* our men had taken no water with them for the journey and it appeared that each one of my *asāfir* had thought that one of his comrades had filled a skin for my own use, with the obvious result that no one had done so and as may be imagined I was eager to adopt the suggestion although I had but little faith in it for rain had not fallen in this district for many months. One of the men visited the rock & to my surprise brought back a goat-skin full of very drinkable water. It turned out to be *شجر* which is the regular form.



on

enquiry that this pool was completely sheltered by an overhanging rock the rain-water not falling into it direct, but draining into it from the rock itself. I may mention 'en passant' that many of our party were glad to avail themselves of this water, before we got to the end of our march.

On the western edge of this plain, close under the hills which border it, the course of W. Hanak could now be clearly seen, marked by a line of parched & stunted <sup>جبل</sup>. As we approached the NW edge of Göl ed-Dahrak the two opposite hill systems gradually drew towards each other and W. Hanak curved round towards our path, intersecting it close to a gap between two hill spurs through which we passed following the course of the wādi for some distance, and halted at noon under a tall overhanging rock about 60 metres from the left bank of the wādi.

This spot is called \_\_\_\_\_ and is worth noting as it affords the only bit of shade between es-Sînā and Jusāb. It forms a deep recess which might be almost termed a cavern and would afford shelter to a very large party. Here those of our party who placed temporal comfort before their spiritual welfare partook of light refreshment while the ascetic minority went to sleep to avoid temptation. I used every persuasion, quoting the exemption to travellers promulgated in the Korān, for our march had already been a trying one and was but half accomplished, and it seemed to me quixotic to undergo such puffing when the orthodox tenets of their faith did not enjoin it, and moreover I feared that some of them would overtax their powers of endurance for the day was intensely hot and the sand had reached a temperature that made itself unpleasantly felt even through sandals.

At 1.45 we resumed our journey in a northerly direction steering along the hill-range on our ~~left~~ <sup>right</sup> which forms part of a system extending



extending

into the Rub' el Khali. W. Hanak ran parallel with our path on the right, and intersected it about 5 kils below our wooden bivouac. Away to our left, the plain extended towards the mountains of Khatib and was intersected by scattered hill-ranges.

The heat was intense, and sand, hills & sky seemed to dance & flicker in a quivering haze. A striking instance of mirage occurred ahead of us and this elicited a yarn from one of the escort, concerning a party of trading Jews who many years ago were travelling by caravan towards Husab and seeing the mirage came to the conclusion that they were approaching a river and emptied out the water from their skins to avoid encumbrance. The story winds up with the death of the whole party. I was most incredulous and pointed out that such a course of action as they adopted was quite at variance with one's accepted ideas concerning that thrifty race, while men who had sufficient energy in them to attempt such a journey (they are said to have come from Idku) would be hardly likely to curl up and die within a few miles of their destination. My informant however stuck stubbornly to his point and declared his father was one of the party who discovered the corpses, which prohibited further argument, especially in such a temperature. I listened with resignation however to this gruesome tale, in order to acquire the colloquial word for mirage. (See vocabulary)

This plain is known as Gol el Multa and slopes down-wards very gradually towards the north.

Keeping along the course of W. Hanak and still skirting the hills on our right we passed close under the eastern spurs of a tall hill-range which from its shape I knew to be the one situated south of Husab. Rounding these spurs we left W. Hanak, which runs



runs

away to the NE to join W. Hamam, and came in sight of Ausab. The Hamâmi 'âkil had cantered forward to give notice of our approach strongly against my wishes for I had hoped to have taken the desert route past H. er-Rakbak (See map of Route track-99) and so avoided Ausab as I knew the Sultan had been tampered with, by intrigues in certain quarters, and I mistrusted his intentions.

This plan was however impossible (so I was informed) as the Hamâmi 'âkil would thus incur the Sultan's displeasure, and as the former had undertaken to see the matter through at his own expense, I had perforce to acquiesce in this arrangement.

We reached Ausab at 5.10 p.m. - fired the usual salute or ḡayyir (ḡashirah) and were escorted to the guest-house, where we met the Sultan who while he made every arrangement for our comfort received us with a frigid reserve which plainly showed us what we had to expect. I was rather exhausted from our journey as during the last stage I had given up my camel to one of the would-be aesthetes who was in a state of collapse, so after sitting with the Sultan for some hours in solemn public conclave I made my excuses and retired leaving the Sultan & the Hamâmi 'âkil to talk things over.

Next morning (Jan 27) the latter came to me with a very long face and said that the Sultan insisted on £200/- down, before he would allow us to proceed to Bihân, and the Hamâmi declared that he could not find this sum & asked me to pay it, saying that it might be deducted from the amount that he was eventually to receive. This was quite out of the question as the funds we had left were barely adequate to keep the expedition going until we returned to Aden, even with the strictest economy, and the Hamâmi had



had

given a solemn promise that no expenses should be required of us, from the time we left Sa'id, until we reached the confines of 'Asākir territory on our way down to the coast.

I now found out by cross-examination that the man though wealthy enough in kind, had very little actual cash, and had relied on his credit to square the various chiefs we might encounter by promises of future emolument. These un-trammelled children of the desert required something more substantial "et hinc illae lacrimae."

It was sufficiently obvious that all our remaining funds would go in making payments which devolved on him, and that we should shortly be left without a single dollar.

I held a council of war and explained to my 'asākir and the leading chiefs of the sijārak what the situation was, and expressed my intention of proceeding to Behān whether starvation awaited us on the return journey or not.

The meeting was somewhat stormy, and I had to interrupt two knife-fights but eventually they took a reasonable view of the matter. The Hamāni's conduct was generally censured, but the predicament was in, and the impossibility of retreat was fully recognized. On putting the question to the party, all decided to adhere to the expedition for as one of my 'asākir expressed it

مَنْزُومٌ عَلَيْنَا أَنْ نَخْلَى نَامُوسَنَا قَائِمٌ عِنْدَ النَّاسِ وَتَمَّ بَعْدَئِذٍ عَلَى اللَّهِ

malzūm alaina an nkhalli nāmūsna <sup>firm in the</sup> kāim <sup>eyes of the</sup> 'ind on nās' khumma bādēn 'al' allah.  
 "We must leave our honour standing (firm) in the eyes of the public (but with the people) and then after that, as God (wills)"

I reminded them of the hardships which would most certainly attend the rest of our journey, at all events until we reached



reached

Dathinah, where we might expect to find a certain amount of hospitality shown to us, as the country was fertile & the people friendly.

I obtained an interview with the Sultan - Saleh bin Abdullah who called upon me privately, accompanied only by his *hakim* - a kind of magistrate, but with this difference that his duties are partly military & partly civil. He superintends the arrest of malefactors, regulates the market, adjusts petty disputes and gives his services in war when required. He is in fact the Sultan's right hand man, and in this particular instance was thoroughly in his master's confidence. (See Album p 24)

A certain amount of friendship has existed for some years past between myself and this veteran official whom I have occasionally befriended in Aden, and on the present occasion he certainly did his best to assist me. I explained to the Sultan the *fin* *suras* in, and after a long palaver he agreed to accept 2000 dollars down and the *Hamaime's* security for the rest. He admitted that it had not been his intention to let us go through to Behan as he had received a letter from one Ahmad Ali el *Merzuki* warning him against doing so, as he (the *Merzuki*) was shortly going to conduct a certain illustrious personage up-country to *Jusab* and Behan, who would make the Sultan most valuable presents, but that in case I was permitted to reach Behan this eminent individual would forego his journey, and with it all idea of presenting gifts to the Sultan, while on the other hand the Sultan might rely upon a large sum of money being given to him if he could prevent me from reaching Behan by any other route. The plot which was a fairly neat one as far as it went, was foiled in a most laughable manner. It appears that this astute individual had also written to one of my *asahib* who had formerly been a friend of



of his saying that his European principal had not yet arrived in Aden and that it was very doubtful when he was coming, while in his letter to the Sultan he had mentioned that this European would arrive at Husab shortly. Now it so happens that this particular askari is also called Faleh bin Abdullah, and the Sultan who had received both letters by runner from Aden, opened this one first and read it, before he discovered that it was not intended for him. His Highness's intelligence is not perhaps of a particularly luminous order but he was sharp enough to see that there was a serious discrepancy somewhere, and as he had once before received a similar promise regarding a visit from this beneficent individual, which was still unfulfilled, - he decided that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush.

We started from Husab for Behan on Jan 30<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm, taking with us letters from the Sultan to various chiefs & askar there, and were also accompanied by one of W's chief slaves as a visible sign of his authority. The Hawami 'akil had procured for the journey seven saddle camels (hire payable by me in Aden) as it was absolutely necessary that the whole party should be mounted. Of course we left the caravan loads and everything that was not absolutely indispensable, behind us at Husab. We numbered 20 men all told, of whom six carried rifles, and that is about the smallest party that should attempt the desert route to Behan and even then, they must be well mounted. We had nothing to complain about on that score, as the hired saddle camels were very fine animals and in fact completely dwarfed the small 'Iblahi camel that I rode. They nearly all carried two men, one of our own party in front and a Hawami escort perched behind on the animal's rump, fully accoutred with match-lock, powder-horn gimbrak etc



etc

whose attitude and bearing reminded me forcibly of the pictures one occasionally sees of a stage-coach guard perched up on the rumble with his blunderbuss.

The extraordinary activity which these men displayed in mounting & dismounting is worthy of note. I saw a very old man (uncle to the Hamâm <sup>Abil</sup>) dart rapidly after a camel that was passing him at full speed, - seize its tail and spring up its hind legs, the backward swing of which seemed to throw him upwards onto the animal's back. The paddles of course assisted this manoeuvre, all of them being constructed with high peaks fore and aft which afforded a good hold.

As may be imagined we did not get very far the first evening, but halted for the night just beyond H. er-Rakbah among the tamarisk thickets of W. Hamâm close to its junction with W. Hamak.

I had brought two goats along with us in order that the men might celebrate the عيد الصغير (or Little Feast) which was now close at hand, but after mature deliberation, and several attempts to accommodate them in the paddle-bags, it was decided to adopt a safer plan of conveying them, and we made that night our عيد الصغير.

Next morning we got away rather late (soolok) as we had to wait for the Sultan's slave who joined us from Anzâb.

We pushed on rapidly at a steady trot past Hd Inégah (See Map 99) close on our left and out into the open desert, bearing generally N.N.W. We halted once to pass the goat-skin round for a few minutes, and ate our food as we travelled for it had been decided by common consent that Ramadan was now over; in the face of starvation diet on the Great Red Desert, any voluntary mortification of the flesh was superfluous. On our left lay the craggy sterile ranges which border on the Desert



## Desert

while on our ~~top~~ right as far as the eye could see stretched a level waste of sand, far away to the ENE of which, the long Hādhenah range could be observed, which ends towards the west in a single sugar-loaf peak known as Rās Fakhat. From this point Hd Gerdān branches away in a NE direction, and beyond this range to the northeast lie the mountains which drain into W. Hadramaut.

On our left, the mountains of the Tuerkha district lay in a continuous range about 10kils away, and between us & them at the foot of this range ran W. Tuerkha, while still nearer the plain was intersected by several rocky hill-ridges, among them being Hd Birka, Hd Librak, and Hd Zaker. It was in this district that the ancient Shil Hital used to have their settlements, and are said to have possessed large tracts of fertile land, but there is no trace of any such occupations now, simply an arid desolate stretch of sand, studded with blackened metamorphic rocks. Descendants of this ancient race are said to dwell in the western portions of the Hādhenah range to this day.

(Vide also 'Kasiin' Historical Notes)

At 2.30 pm we crossed W. Tuerkha which is sparsely wooded with a species of *Planta-genista* known as شَنْقِير (shankēr). It runs NE away into the desert where it joins W. Hamam.

All along our path hitherto the sand had been fairly hard & level, but as we skirted the eastern spurs of the Tuerkha block, we came upon heavy sand-dunes through which our progress was very slow.

It is by the way incumbent on travellers to keep in close to the hills-spurs as further out into the desert the sand-dunes are probably impassable.

At sunset we halted for the night in a recess between two mountain spurs which belong to a large system known as Hd Rakāt.



Here we formed our bivouack in a small gully thickly grown with the 'neshr' plant (See Album p 30). High up the ravine which ran down between these two spurs a rain-pool was discovered, which still held a fair amount of water, for which we were very thankful as on reaching bivouack both men and horses made considerable demands on the precious fluid. (The camels did not drink until they reached Behâin.)

In spite of our sheltered position the night was bitterly cold owing to a stiff SE breeze until midnight when the wind dropped. Height above sea level at this bivouack (BPT) was 896.2 metres. Our Hamâini friends were troubled very little by the cold for each man had with him hung on his saddle a large sheep-skin cloak which completely encrapped him from shoulders to ankles, but judging by their uneasy movements during the night, it is probable that these sheep-skin cloaks only saved them from one infliction, to present them with another, and one which in European eyes would seem far the more insupportable of the two. We started the following day at 6.30 a.m. and still skirting the foot of the Lakêt system crossed W. Shahâwah (well wooded with mimosa, neshr etc and halted at noon near the peak of el Ukal (Hd Lakêt) in a belt of mimosa. The desert which up to last night's bivouack had presented a sandy desolate appearance here bore quite a different aspect. Ever since leaving our bivouack the country on our right had gradually merged into a level shingly plain thickly wooded with mimosa, and near our noon-day halting place the vegetation although much parched was very thick and plentiful and extended into the desert as far as the eye could see. Its presence here was no doubt owing to the numerous gullies and small wâdhis which drain down from Hd Lakêt into the desert all along the tract



tract

of country which - I was informed - affords in times of rain abundant pasture for all the out-lying Bedouin tribes of the desert & Hd Lakët. I saw one or two herd of gazelle feeding there as we passed (far out of shot of course) and could quite believe my informant who declared that the vegetation reached higher than a man's head after wet weather. We resumed our journey at 1.15 pm, crossing W. Uthûn (a well wooded wâdi) at 1.40 and maintaining as before a general NW direction skirting the Lakët system, we crossed W. Sarabân at 2.30 pm. This is a broad well-bushes wâdi and appears to drain the whole of <sup>the southern</sup> western portion of Hd Lakët. Here this system tends away from our path abruptly towards the south, and after leaving W. Sarabân we entered a broad sandy plain bounded to the south and SE by out-lying portions of the Lakët system, and to the west and NW by Hd Salâm. To the north and north east an apparently boundless waste of huge sand-dunes extend towards Rubâ el Khali.

At 4 pm we halted in W. Gafâ for the night as it was decided for reasons of policy not to arrive at Bihân until about sunset, so that the news of our arrival might be delayed until next morning, and thus give us time to ascertain what our reception was going to be for many doubts were entertained on the subject.

One serious difficulty existed to this arrangement, we had run short of food, in fact we had all been on half-rations since last night and during the day many of us had been reduced to eke out our scanty portions of unleavened bread by eating a species of succulent bulb (known locally as Jâil (see notes on Botany), which grows in great plenty during wet weather in the desert, and even at this dry season occurred here & there between W. Shakâwah & W. Sarabân. This is the plural form. Sing jai



They were fairly palatable - after some of the pound had been removed from them - and after sampling a few, I exchanged the rest of my day's ration of bread for ten of them & consider that I gained in the transaction.

The fact was that up to last night we had hoped to reach Bēhān by dusk the following day, but had been much delayed on this day's march by the camel on which the Sultan's slave was mounted, as the poor beast was evidently unused to such protracted & violent exertions, and completely exhausted by yesterday's march, was no longer able to keep up with the pace of the main-body, while to allow him to lag behind was of course out of the question in such a district. For the last few miles the slave had to lead his mount and at W. Gela several prominent members of our party took him aside and gave him a lucid statement of the case. Their eloquence must have been persuasive for the Hawāmi 'ākil came to me in a very few minutes and stated that the slave was willing to sacrifice his camel for the public commissariat if I would pay him Dols 10, and he would inform the Sultan that his camel had died a natural death. I examined the animal and concurred with the general opinion that it would scarcely survive the night and in any case would never reach Bēhān, so I closed the bargain and the ghastly deed was done (See Album p 32).

We had no cooking pots with us but W. Gela is well-wooded along its banks with mimosa & <sup>قز</sup>, so we soon had three big fires burning while the camel was being skinned, The meat was backed off in lumps and thrown on the embers, and was considered sufficiently cooked when the outside had burnt to a cinder. I was informed that

(commissariat)



that

this was the recognized way of cooking camel-flesh which if not considerably overdone was very indigestible!

The meat itself was coarse & tough and had an indescribable flavour but it was thoroughly appreciated.

Altitude above sea-level (BPT) at this bivouac was 942.8 metres

We moved out of bivouac next day at 7 a.m. and proceeding in a NW direction soon reached the mass of sand-dunes which border the plain towards the north. We skirted along these for some distance until we found a suitably firm spot to make our ascent, and reached the summit of the first crest at 8.30 a.m. These dunes average about 60 metres in height. Threading our way among them in a WNW direction we descended gradually onto a comparatively level sandy plain across which runs W. Gibah towards the NNE. The dunes are of course destitute of vegetation, but a peculiar plant occurs here and there among them, having one straight yellowish white stem springing from a bulbous root, and bearing a series of pale yellow bell-shaped calyces, in arrangement and shape not unlike the flowers of the 'fox-glove'. The Austrian expedition to 'Izzân obtained several specimens of this plant which is known among the Bedouins of Upper Sulaki as قَسْوَة بَجِير for the meaning of which, I must refer the reader to his dictionary merely remarking that بَجِير is the Bedouin word for hyaena and that قَسْوَة is analagous with قَسْوَة (or قَسْوَة) but has an even more offensive significance. We halted in W. Gibah at 11 a.m. and spent the noonday heat under the shade of a gigantic جَبْر. The Hamiâmi 'âkil had discovered about a bushel of corn in his horse's feed-bag and this was boiled in salt and water, and passed round, so once more



more

the reputation of our commissariat department was saved. We had however to deal very sparingly with our water-supply which had been carried with us from our bivouac near the rain-pool under *Hd Rabbit*, and while on this subject let me mention that under normal conditions this is the only spot at which the traveller will find water along this route, and it is not to be depended upon in seasons of severe drought. I was much struck by the number of *Nectariniae* (Lesser Sun-birds) which frequented this wadi. These active little birds were darting about in all directions, the only living creature that seemed to disregard the intense heat. They were feeding on the *شيرة* flowers, hovering at the blossoms like bees.

We resumed our journey at 1.30 pm bearing in a general NW direction among low sand ridges, all of which lie NE & SW doubtless owing to the prevalent directions of the wind (see meteorological notes).

At 3.35 pm we reached another system of sand-dunes which stretch northwards beyond the limit of definite knowledge. Shortening these to the westward we ascended a gentle rise of sand and descended onto a small level plain of hard shingle. Crossing this in a NW direction we struck the dune-system again at 4.30 pm and here were obliged to cross a tremendous range of sand-hills from which we could just make out some of the out-lying horizon of the *Bihân* district. A stiff breeze now blew from the ESE, and the crest of every sand-hill looked like a pushing chimney-pot, a thin streamer of sand flying from each sharply-cut apex, emitting as it did so, a low tinkling note.

The sand grains were very coarse and caused some discomfort as they drove against any unprotected portions of the body, but luckily we



we

were not facing it

At 5.20 pm we had descended into the Behân valley, which is dotted with rāk bushes and the  $\text{جِلْ}$ , a large straggling bush-like growth bearing dark green acerose leaves in small clusters. This plant forms an excellent camel-fodder, hence its name. (Best  $\text{جِلْ}$  = camels - a collective noun).

We now halted our camels behind these bushes and proceeded to reconnoitre on foot, for it was an ascertained fact that the Inezuki mentioned in preceding pages had exercised considerable patience and ingenuity in attempting to obtain a warm reception for our expedition in this district, and we had no desire to be ambuscaded. However on finding the country quiet we proceeded cautiously and soon came in sight of a cluster of black ~~hair~~ goat-hair tents the temporary abode of a section of the Bal Harith, and also of Hamed um-Inehsin (ie Inehsin), chief of the ashraf, and by courtesy - Amir of Behân.

Amir of Behân

It was now getting dusk, and the sand blew with such force that we could hardly make out the camp, but we had already sent our two messengers announcing our approach and we found a large party drawn up to receive us, showing that peace was intended or otherwise they would not have exposed themselves openly.

We fired the tashkirah and then accompanied by the principal chiefs in our party I stepped forward to salute the Amir who came out to meet us and received us with the stately courtesy which seems to come natural to these dwellers on the edge of the Great Desert. Our firearms were of course taken from us, and also spears & lances as is customary every-where in Arabia when receiving guests.



A revolver by the way is classed with the gimbrak if worn on the person and is not given up with other firearms.

Goat-hair rugs were brought out and we sat down in the form of a hollow square while coffee and pipes were handed round. This part of the entertainment was not a success for the wind was blew with great force filling our coffee-cups with sand and blowing the hot embers from the hubble-bubbles in all directions. Domestic preparations were however going on inside the Amis's tent and after a somewhat protracted interval we were invited in. There was some difficulty in complying with this invitation as nobody seemed to have a lamp (I suppose the wind was too strong to light one) and the entrance to the tent was as dark as a wolf's mouth. However we managed to crawl through in single file each man holding on to the paul of his predecessor and when we got fairly inside somebody struck a match and we found peats.

Meanwhile a large fire had been lighted just to leeward of the tent and as the whole of the leeward side of our apartment was open we soon had ample light.

The scene which it disclosed was one which I shall not readily forget, and I fervently wished at the time that I had received sufficient artistic training to have enabled me to reproduce it in its proper colouring.

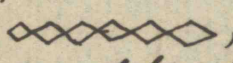
*Felt*

The tent itself was about 2.3 metres in height at the ridge which was supported at intervals by slender but tough poles of *Je* timber, there being one of these poles in our apartment, and one no doubt at each extremity of the tent. I sat facing the ridge pole, the fire outside being



being on my right and the entrance on my left. Close at my back a large goat-hair rug ran across the tent, cutting off the women's quarters from the main apartment. This rug did not quite reach the roof of the tent and when anything was required the host gave an order and it was handed across the top of this partition, providing the article was light enough to admit of such treatment.

The opposite side of the apartment formed a wall between it and what was probably a store-room. It was hung all over with specimens of the women's handiwork, which formed a most striking colour scheme. There were long narrow pillow cases of crimson-dyed leather sewn all over with small shells (these latter obtained from the coast) other smaller pillow cases fringed with long leather tassels and dyed in all sorts of patterns hung higher up the wall. Lower down hung leather paddle bags of perfectly-tanned material, and numerous covered baskets for holding coffee cups or provisions hung at frequent intervals across the wall. These baskets are marvels of good workmanship and are also profusely decorated with shells.

The roof of the tent was relieved by a kind of lozenge pattern in red & yellow which ran across it at intervals of about 1 metre thus , the <sup>outside</sup> central lines of the pattern being marked by a double row of tassels about 1 decimetre in length also of red & yellow.

The dyed patterns on the skins were red, yellow & heliotrope, while the skins themselves were buff or dark-brown according to the manner in which they had been dressed. Of course these colours looked rather bizarre by day-light, but by fire-light the effect was striking.

The apartment we were in, was roughly speaking a square measuring about 6 metres across, the entrance forming a narrow tunnel about



about

5 metres in length. It was certainly a typical dwelling of an influential Bedouin chief. The articles which hung on the walls were, I afterwards ascertained, intended as wedding gifts when any members of the family were married and were stored in this manner for these occasions. Owing to popular prejudice they were perfectly safe from theft. The occupants of this patriarchal dwelling presented also a most striking picture. Without exaggeration I think I may say that they represented every type of feature to be found in S. Arabia, from the clean-cut classic faces of our host and his boys, to the flat nose and protruding lips of the Nubian slave who accompanied us.

One type alone was missing - there were no *rāgā* present.

These desert-dwelling Bedouins are a remarkably fine race of men. They are much taller than their brethren of the south, few of the adult males being less than 1.8 metres in height. They are also much fairer in complexion, in fact some were not so dark-skinned as I was at that stage in the expedition. All wore mustaches, which hirsute appendage is never allowed to grow in any other districts that I have seen, and in many cases the colour of the mustache and beard was a deep reddish brown, a hue unknown further south.

Their manners were dignified and courteous, and their voices well-modulated and low in tone, another contrast to their southern neighbours.

The Amir busied himself in superintending arrangements for our entertainment, but he sat by me part of the time and conversed in an educated manner on Turkish and British affairs. Happens that he had visited Sana'a and Aden some years ago.

Politics are an embarrassing subject to handle in S. Arabia and  
 1 Except at the court of the Hedāli Sultan

Rasse



and

especially in a district so near to the Turkish sphere of influence, so I changed the conversation to horses and found that I had struck a congenial theme.

The Amir pointed with pride to several blood-mares standing hobbled just beyond a score or so of lances & appears stuck upright in the ground outside the tent. He added however with manifest sorrow that owing to the drought, fodder was scarce and all the horses of the district were more or less in poor condition.

At this juncture our long-deferred meal was brought in (10.30 p.m.) and after disposing of this we turned in for the night.

Next morning (Feb 3) I crept out of the tent pore after day-break to have a look round. There was very little to see; the country bore a most desolate aspect and a thick white haze hung all around us, a legacy of last night's sand-storm.

After taking coffee in the Amir's tent, he accompanied us on our road to Seylän where it was arranged that we were to stay a few days until negotiations could be concluded with regard to the project we had in hand.

Our road lay up W. Békän (called here W. Bal Hârith) the course of the wâdi being hardly distinguishable through the sand.

We reached Seylän at 9 a.m. having left the Bal Hârith camp at 8 o'clock. It is an uninteresting town to look at, and numbers about 1000 inhabitants all told, hardly more, as most of the houses in the northern quarter of the town are uninhabited and appear to be in ruins. It is situated on a slight eminence about 300 metres south of W. Békän, and the surrounding country is barren in the extreme. The town is chiefly composed of  $\text{سج}$  but in the centre



centre

stand three or four stone houses which indicate the dwellings of the ashraf. There is a small population of rāyā here who follow commercial & industrial pursuits. There is very little agriculture and such as there is, lies to the west of the town on the right bank of W. Bēhān.

A large concourse came out to meet us and the mahaf and its attendant ceremonies took an hour and a half to perform.

After this was over the ashraf of Sēylān came out to meet us and after a great deal of discussion we were divided into two parties for purposes of entertainment, the whole party being too large for one household to manage.

My party went to the house of ~~the~~ Hussein bin Ali the head shérif of Sēylān. On our road to his dwelling we passed the house of another shérif on the wall of which - just above the door-way was a large yellowish white stone bearing a small clearly cut ~~in~~ inscription. I made a careful note of its position for future use.

On entering the house coffee was served and we thoroughly explained to the ashraf and the Amir the object of our visit.

The Amir acted as spokesman, for the wife of Kahlān is one his hand. He was at all events candid, and from his point of view perfectly fair. He mentioned the Merzaki's visit to Bēhān, and said that the latter had promised him Dols 100 to prevent me from copying the inscriptions at ~~Sēylān~~ (Kahlān), but that he had refused as he had made a previous compact to a contrary effect, with Salih bin Abdullah the ashari whom I had sent up to Bēhān in the summer.

He denied the Merzaki's statement that he (the Merzaki) had copied the inscriptions at Kahlān but declared that the Merzaki had offered him a small sum to be allowed to destroy these

but declared that -



these

inscriptions, but that he had refused as he looked on them as worth more money to him than the Tuzuki could give him.

He added that he and the other ashraf incurred some danger in harbouring me as the Tuzuki had spread a report throughout the district to the effect that I was a magician and a weaver of spells, while my sorcery instruments which he called *ḡawis* (probably from the root *ḡaw* = to attack a town) were described as terrible instruments which could over-turn houses by merely being levelled at them. Fortunately the Tuzuki had described my plane-table and sighted ruler in his indictment, and I had left this instrument behind on account of its weight. The Amir went on to say that he for one did not believe any of these tales which appeared to him puerile, but he assured me that the *ḡadakh* (who live at *Hemia*) either credited or pretended to credit these stories and had done much to fan popular prejudice against me, among the tribesmen of the *Tuzabein*. He said that this latter tribe had sent him threatening letters since hearing of my projected visit, and while we were sitting there a letter came from the *ḡadakh* calling on the Amir to drive me out of his borders and threatening violent measures. This letter was not answered. In conclusion the Amir assured me of his friendship but begged me not to spend the night in any of the ashraf's houses at *Seylan*, as from their position, they were obliged to receive guests from all quarters without enquiry, and if an emissary of the *ḡadakh* effected an entrance and if I came to any harm under his roof, he would be disgraced in the eyes of every one, and also involved in complications with Upper *Sulaki*. Arrangements had been made for the accommodation of myself and some of my followers in the house of a *raawi*, who

(*Hemia*)



who

as a private individual had the right to refuse admittance to all strangers. I of course acquiesced to these arrangements, and it was agreed that the Amir and the Hamâmi âkil should discuss the terms of the compact regarding the Kahlân inscriptions.

That afternoon some excitement was caused by a small cavalry skirmish between the ashraf and a Musâbevi raiding party and in the evening we moved to our new quarters on the north side of the town.

Next day while negotiations were going on I suffered much from ennui owing to forced inactivity. I was closely watched so could not attempt to survey, as any action calculated to arouse suspicion before the inscriptions were copied would have been foolish in the extreme. In the afternoon the Hamâmi âkil came to report that the Amir had asked for Dols 1000. This was of course in accordance with the usual custom, it now remained to be seen what he would eventually accept.

All next day negotiations dragged on and in the evening the Hamâmi came to say that the Amir would accept Dols 200. This sounded fairly reasonable as the Amir was fully aware of the value of these inscriptions but as the Hamâmi had practically no cash and I had only Dols 50 the request as it stood could not be complied with.

However the following day ~~however~~ the Hamâmi tackled him again and a compromise was agreed upon. The Amir was to accept a silver-mounted match-lock from the Hamâmi as a pledge for Dols 130, & I was to give Dols 50 in cash and a Werndl carbine as security for Dols 20. I objected to the last of these terms as by complying, I was disarming one of my âsâkil at a rather



rather

critical time, and moreover it is not advisable for many reasons to place breech-loading weapons in the hands of irresponsible tribesmen.

However there was no other way out of it, but I flatly refused to allow a round of ammunition to go with the rifle, so its temporary possessor would have to use it as a club if he wanted to do any damage with it.

The Amir on his side stipulated that we were only to spend one day at Kahlân, explaining that as the spot was close to H (the stronghold of the pādah) he could only guarantee our safety for that length of time, and as from information received, one day should suffice for the work, I agreed to this condition.

Meanwhile the pādah who had just learnt that the Ahl Farid and the Hawâmi âhâl were with our party, sent a letter inviting the whole party except myself to supper at Hemia. This invitation was indignantly refused, but another one coming from the Sherif at Ed-Durb I advised the men to accept, and as I was included in it they complied.

Ed-Durb is further from Kahlân than Seylân is, but the sherif was a personal friend of the Hawâmi and would be sure to show us adequate hospitality. We had all been without meat for two days, excepting a few pigeons which I had shot near the forest, and the food in the raïr's house had been of the vilest description.

Tomorrow I required great exertions from the âsâkir, and severe sustained physical exertion requires nourishing food; moreover it was moderately certain that each man would have enough left over from his supper to serve as a light meal next day, another argument in favour of this decision for to work at high pressure all day under a tropical sun would I felt sure be beyond our powers of endurance. I dwell on this incident at some length because



because.

in itself it may seem to the reader a mere waste of time to indulge in  
 tawdry, but I would remind him that greater enterprises than mine  
 have been marred by neglecting details of this description.

We reached ed-Durb after dark and were well received. A bullock was  
 slaughtered before-hand in anticipation of our arrival and I believe  
 that every one ate enough to have killed himself if he had been lead-  
 ing a pedestrian life.

61

Next morning (Feb 6) we arose at day-break, had some coffee and  
 got away at sun-rise. As we approached Kahlân I felt extremely  
 anxious for I was poor to know whether I had been justified in  
 taking the steps I had done, or whether the whole expedition was  
 to be a miserable fiasco.

We reached the site of the buried town at 7.30 a.m., and I was at  
 once conducted to a rectangular mass of huge blocks of granite  
 much weathered & blackened (See Geolog Spec No 15c) Only two  
 faces were left intact and upon these were engraved some of the  
 finest inscriptions which it has yet been my good fortune to see.  
 It is needless to go into particulars here, as the Academy are al-  
 ready in possession of full details concerning them.

I remarked that a considerable fragment had been broken from  
 the centre of one of the clearest cut inscriptions, and from the look  
 of the stone evidently freshly done. I made enquiries but nobody  
 seemed to know anything about it until one of the Seyfân asbrâf  
 came up and offered the missing fragment or most of it for Dêr.  
 He was a young man of such coarse and bestial features that  
 at first I took him for a râwi until I was told of his social  
 status. He stated that he had found the stone some months ago



ago

but I quickly refuted his statement by attracting attention to the broken chips of stone which were lying at the foot of the inscriptions on the surface of the sand. I asked him to explain how it was that these chips had not been buried under the sand during the time he spoke of. He pulked and repeated his demand for 100 Rs. Just then the Amir rode up from Seylan to watch our operations. I stated the case to him pointing out that this covetous Vandal had done more to lessen the value of his inscriptions than I should by copying them, for his tale was palpably false and it was conclusively proved that he had been there ~~two~~ nights ago with a mattock and had deliberately hacked the piece out. The marks of the tool were plainly to be seen on the face of the stone which fortunately was extremely hard and had resisted his efforts in other places.

(vandal)

(two)

The Amir gave the culprit a severe reprimand, but even he could not force him to give up the stone without incurring a quarrel with the Seylan ashraf.

I refused even to look at the fragment, saying it was utterly useless (chab tactics) and my attitude was imitated by the ashraf. Then the serious work of the day began. The inscriptions which were above ground were poor copied, and the inscriptions ~~was~~ was photographed at a suitable moment when the sun was shining across it, throwing the undercut portions of the letters into deep shadows.

g.

The finest inscriptions however were buried under the sand and then followed a tremendous spell of work as we dug in frantic haste with our hands to uncover them. We were working against time for we feared that at any moment the usual diurnal sand-



sand

storm would burst upon us, but our luck was phenomenal for the day was calm and clear throughout.

Tools for digging were unobtainable for naturally a narrow-bladed native mattock was no use in that loose sand. of course the whole of the work had to be done by the 'asaker and myself. We could not have asked any of the chiefs to have joined us it would have been *intra dig*. our finger-nails & fingers were poor considerably cut and lacerated for the sand was full of sharp fragments of the rock, & flint, and most of these cuts came on the most painful spot i.e. the 'quicks' of the nail, and were aggravated by having sand forced into them. However we felt no inconvenience at the time for we were filled with the same enthusiasm that men must experience when they dig for gold.

By 1 p.m. we had finished all this block <sup>with one exception</sup> and were ready to move on to the obelisk where two rāyā (sent for by the 'Amir) were working desperately (with their hands and a small palm-leaf basket) to excavate the column.

While they were thus usefully employed we snatched a few minutes to wash our hands and eat some food. Fortunately there was plenty of water handy in the skins we had brought for we had been drinking most copiously all morning. (not at all a worse thing to do by the way).

While at our hasty meal the ~~handal~~ came up and again tried to sell the fragment of stone. We had seen him coming and had soon decided on a plan of action. To all his offers to sell we replied by a running fire of chaff, one genius advising him to send it down by the first steamer to Aden, where he would

(where)



would doubtless get its weight in silver for it! He then asked me what I would give him for it, and I again assured him that I did not require it, but one of the 'asakiri in a spirit of badinage offered him a sheet of our 'squeezee' paper. To my surprise he did not reject the proposal altogether but asked for twenty sheets. Personally I would have closed with this offer as we had plenty of paper, but my head 'askari begged me in private not to do so as he wanted to teach the man a lesson. I agreed and on our return to work a most amusing farce began. It appears that this would be speculator had already been deeply impressed by the evident care which we bestowed on our leather case of paper. This attention was now redoubled and the effect was not lost upon our victim.

One inscription was still left to copy at the rectangular block. How to get at it was a difficult problem for the inscription itself was almost entirely beneath the surface of the sand and worse than all a gigantic boulder lay right across its face. So huge was this mass of rock that I at first feared it was part of a metamorphic out-crop, protruding through the sand. This however on examination proved not to be the case, it had evidently fallen from the main block, and showed signs of having been 'dressed' by human hands.

The three 'Abd Farid and the Hamiami 'abit (a tall powerful man) came to our assistance and under the united efforts of eight men the boulder was slowly rolled over in its bed until we had almost got it on its edge. At this point it refused to budge any further (a small rock underneath was bearing against its outer edge) and for one awful moment it seemed that it would come back upon us, for our strength had been taxed to the utmost to get it in that position. Fortunately the Hamiami



Hamami

and myself, who were both much taller than the others managed to plant our feet on the face of the inscription and were thus able to exercise very great force. After a brief but desperate effort the boulder tottered forward, and fell over onto its face, the 'akil and myself sprawling across it. One of the 'asâkir raised a general laugh by remarking reflectively "What gân (genii) assisted the 'Emezuki to remove this stone when he copied these inscriptions, and why did he trouble to replace it?"

In point of fact I am in a position to state that at all events those inscriptions which were below the surface of the sand (including of course the obelisk) have certainly not been uncovered by any one for a very great length of time. The sand itself, as we got below the surface was firmly set, slightly damp, and had a peculiar mouldy smell about it, which it never could have had, if it had been recently disturbed.

After this inscription had been copied (i.e. an impression taken with piquee paper), <sup>we</sup> made a searching investigation all round the main block to see if there were any further traces of inscriptions. At the foot of every inscription we dug down to a considerable depth to see if any more occurred. I will not go so far as to state that there may not be more inscriptions further down below the sand, for I have no idea how deep this narrow pile goes down, but they were certainly out of reach of the appliances and labour at our disposal. At this juncture the fragment of inscription was again offered us for sale - price six sheets of paper. As its luckless owner had been waiting in the pen for about 6 hours (there is no shade at Kahlân) I thought he had been sufficiently punished for his crime and told the head 'askari to close the bargain. He did not do so however until he

might spot  
graffiti



he

had beaten down the price to 4 sheets of paper when the missing fragment became the property of the expedition.

Of course our conduct in this matter was, ethically speaking, indefensible but it must be borne in mind that we had never actually told our victim that the paper was of any commercial value, but had merely used his own habitual shrewdness, as a weapon against himself. Personally I think he deserved the punishment he got, for wilfully defacing a monument of the past, for such unworthy motives, but that is only from my point of view, he probably looked on the affair in a different light when he <sup>tried</sup> attempted to realize his paper a better price ~~to~~ attempted to write on it.

(tried)

On reaching the obelisk which is about 200 metres distant from the other inscriptions we found that the rāyā had collapsed owing to the heat, so we sent them off to get some food while two of us got down into the shaft they had excavated round the obelisk and resumed their work.

Legible character commenced about 1 metre from the top of the monument, viz all that portion which had been exposed to the weather had been worn away - probably by sand - attrition.

After excavating to a depth of 2 metres we came to the end of the inscribed portion, and after digging down for some distance all round the obelisk to make reasonably pure that there was nothing within our reach further down, we began to take impressions, a task much impeded by the sand which at every movement, came streaming back again into the pit we had dug.

We had exposed a little over 2 metres of the obelisk which proved to be a neatly hewn shaft of intensely hard granite (See Geology Specimens) its



its  
 dimensions being as follows. Northern face <sup>41.2</sup> ~~37~~ centimeters across  
 Southern do 31.7 " "  
 East-west do 54.6 " " each

The apex of the shaft was brought to a four-sided pyramid (if I may use such an expression) - thus



The eastern face was utterly illegible, and would neither yield an impression or show any out-line which could be successfully photograph-  
 ed.

The weather still continued clear so I took the opportunity to make a brief survey of the surrounding country and also a presumatic compass field sketch of the site of Kahlau which I here append. The fierce heat had long since driven away the rest of our party to the shelter of a deserted *hara* on the near bank of the wadi about 400 metres south of the obelisk, so my observations were unobscured. In this vicinity (i.e. between the obelisk and the main block of inscriptions, the formation of the ground consists of a series of small sand hills dotted here and there with stunted *raik* bushes. This evidently indicates the encroachment of the great sand-dune system which lies to the north & NW towards Harib, for the eastern & southern portions of Kahlau which border on the wadi show hardly a vestige of sand, but are covered for the most part by debris of building material and I afterwards heard from reliable sources that one village after another had been built here by the medieval Arabs and even by a more recent generation, by with material taken from ancient Kahlau. I have had no opportunity of obtaining any definite idea of the actual extent of the buried town but from what I could see



see

it must have covered a considerable area, and native report ascribes to it great wealth and importance. Now the sole denizens of its barren pits are lizards of remarkably repulsive aspect (apparently Mastigures), and a few sand-grouse.

On returning to the obelisk I found the Amir had returned and was regarding operations with interest.

We asked him if I had got to the foot of the obelisk, I replied that to do that I would require about a month's time and <sup>an</sup> ample supply of labour, as the man who accomplished that task might at the same time excavate the town. He particularly wanted to know whether the inscriptions had led me to believe that there was any gold at the foot of the obelisk, as tradition stated that there was. I replied that if he would supply me with the labour requisite to excavate the whole obelisk, I would make him a present of any gold I might chance to find. He was however evidently not of a speculative turn for he laughingly shook his head and suggested that I should return by and by with a strong party & excavate the town. He seemed to be perfectly willing for this to be done, providing his own interests were considered, but it is impossible to say what this would really mean.

We finished the obelisk at 4 p.m. and made towards the husa where the rest of the party were awaiting our arrival.

The ground over which we passed was much encumbered by debris of building material, the remnant - so the Amir said, of former Arab villages, and in some places deep gullies had been formed by water erosion - these all leading into the main wadi.

An immense quantity of baked red-clay fragments occurred at

(Tradition)



at

several spots, and these, I was informed were the remains of Hamyaritic drinking vessels, pitchers etc. I have heard the same explanation given of a similar phenomenon in various parts of the Abdali country near Aden. I do not think this supposition can be correct, so far as drinking vessels are concerned, for in that case many of the fragments would necessarily present a very marked convex and concave surface, which is not the case (See Geology Spec No 15b).

Tradition however ascribes these fragments of pottery to the Hamyarites and not to any subsequent race of Arabs.

At one spot we saw a number of peculiarly shaped mounds of baked yellow clay which occurred at wide and irregular intervals for some distance. It was impossible to form any definite conjecture as to their original shape as in every case large portions had crumbled away but local tradition declares these to have been blacksmith forges used by the Hamyarites. In this locality<sup>2</sup> I noticed a quantity of small fragments of flint littered about (See Geology Spec No ) and here & there I found some curiously-marked stones (invariably of small size) which I took to be Serpentine. (See Geology Spec No 15c) On reaching the *huru* (known as H. Tawêkah), we made a short halt to drink coffee which had been prepared for us, and during the interval I was enabled to complete my survey and also examine the Geological formation of Kahlân.

H Tawêkah is on a level (or slightly above) the site of Kahlân which slopes very gradually upwards towards the wâdi.

The *huru* itself stands on the edge of a bluff about 20 metres above W. Behân, and thus forms the highest point of the Kahlân plateau

1. See Geology Spec No 15d

2. Undoubted traces of considerable denudation occur here.



Plateau

which in either direction, towards es-Seytân or ed-Durb gradually slopes downward to a level with the surrounding country.

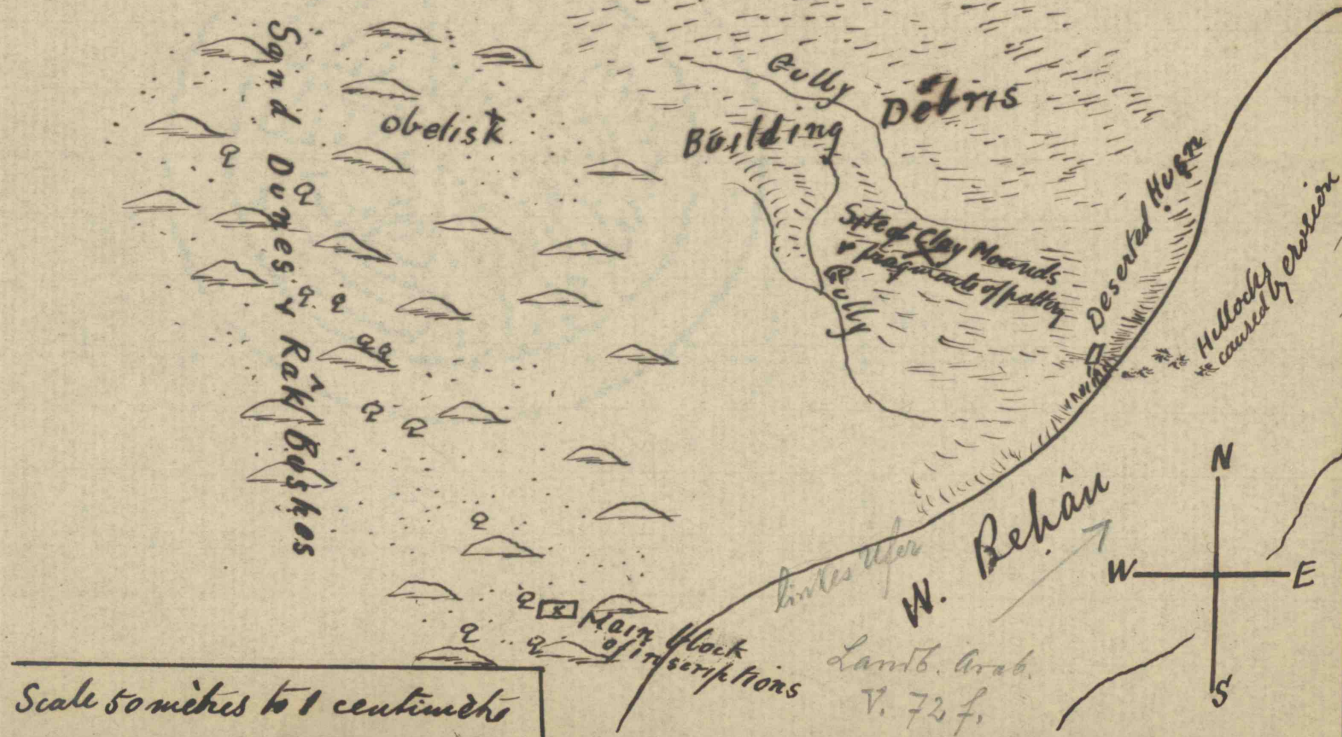
There is no corresponding ridge on the other side of the wâdi which would be the case if it had cut its way through the plateau, but in this direction the country extends in a broad open plain dotted here & there with villages, isolated husain and palm-groves.

The geological section exposed at this bluff is composed entirely of marl conglomerate, the pebbles in this mass being of large size, well rounded, and obviously metamorphic.

Small conical hillocks of similar formation reaching from this point some distance across the wâdi denote where an out-lying spur of this plateau has been subjected to fluvial erosion.

There append a rough field-sketch of the pits of Kahtân, it must however be observed that I dared not attempt to measure a base which would at once have been remarked from the husa where the ashraf were awaiting us and would have probably led to complications.

Kahtân



Scale 50 metres to 1 centimetre



At 5 pm we started towards Seylān where the arābir and myself had again to change quarters, this time being housed by a rāwī in the southern part of the town.

Our work being now finished all arrangements were made for an early departure the following morning.

Two more tasks however were still left to do, one was to obtain some record of the small inscription in the wall of the sheriff's harsu and the other - to examine the inscribed capital of a Hungarian pillar said to be in possession of a neigh-bouring rāwī.

As regards the former, the owner of the harsu flatly refused to let us take an impression or even examine the inscription from superstitious motives, so I determined to take a snap-shot at it with the camera as we passed on our way out. It seemed an almost hopeless chance as I know by experience that part of the harsu would be in shadow all morning but fortunately the stone itself was almost white, and the character being deeply cut would appear black. We opened negotiations with the rāwī who owned the inscribed capital and by mid-night had beaten him down to Dols 5 to allow us to take an impression of the inscription. I did not mention photography to him for fear of arousing suspicion when I photographed the other inscription and as it afterwards proved, this was a wise precaution. Next morning (Feb 7<sup>th</sup>) we were all astir at day-break loading up our camels and when the sun had risen high enough to give a practicable light I took my camera and went off with an arābir to examine the capital & if possible photograph & take an impression. An unexpected hitch however occurred.

It appears that our rāwī had a brother who was joint-owner

(7. II)

7 Feb.



source

of the stone and he appeared upon the scene, cancelled his brother's bargain and insisted on receiving Dols 100 before he would let us take an impression. A look of mutual understanding passed between myself and the askari (Sâlek or Abdulkak) a most intelligent man, who had some idea of the capabilities of the camera.

We asked to have the capital brought out into the sun-light where we could obtain a better view of it. This was done and Sâlek then entered into a spirited discussion with the two râyâ concerning the price they had demanded. I took no part in the argument but under pretence of dusting the camera had placed it on the ground and got it focussed upon the stone. owing to the wall behind me I could not obtain a distance of quite 2 metres which is the shortest distance to which the camera can be focussed, but as the light was good I determined to chance it, and made three exposures of about 10 psec duration with a very small stop.

The râyâ was obdurate, so after a little further haggling to maintain the deception we departed expressing well-punulated disappointment and rejoined our party who were just starting.

Fortunately the Amîr and ashraf were some distance ahead with the Ahl Farid and as we passed the last inscription, I was able to obtain two exposures unobscured. They both had to be instantaneous as there was nothing on which I could rest the camera but in spite of the bad light, the result proved to be fairly satisfactory.

(Salém) Taking leave of the Amîr and ashraf on the out-skirts of the town we bore eastwards towards Hd Salém, for we were returning by a different route, to the one by which we had come.



As I was able to commence an undisturbed mapping from this point I shall now proceed to treat the topographical description of this route in a more cursory manner than when dealing with the outward journey.

7 Feb.

We left Seylan at 8 a.m. (Dusab time) and threading our way among the sand-dunes skirted along the northern spurs of the Salim system, the sand-dunes being close on our left.

This part of the route has a very bad name, as the Ahl Karab (Shabun district) and other desert tribes are in the habit of sending out frequent raiding parties in this direction. These marauders generally lie up among the sand-dunes close to the track from which they can make a sudden dash onto any caravan passing.

We moved along this part of the route on the 'qui vive', with several men extended across our front about 400 metres ahead to act as vedettes. Our progress was extremely slow as the sand had drifted in towards H. Salim at several spots and made the going very heavy.

At 11 a.m. we reached W. Harim and halted for noon, taking the precaution of posting a look-out up in one of the mimosa trees with which the wadi is fairly thickly wooded.

Moving on again at 1 p.m. we skirted the great dune system on our left and travelled down a gradual descent into the valley of W. Gebek. An amusing incident occurred as we passed these dunes which is worth relating if only to illustrate the lawless nature of the district. I had dropped behind the main body and dismounted for a few minutes in order to take a few prismatic compass bearings from the top of one of these dunes. With me was one of



of  
 the *asābir*, a stolid but faithful fellow from Lower *Shilaki*. As I was  
 jotting the angles down in my field-book I heard him load his carbine  
 and turning round to ascertain the cause he pointed to a man plinking  
 among the sand-dunes about 1000 metres off, and asked me to give him  
 the range. He appeared rather disgusted when I peremptorily forbade  
 him to fire, and remarked that no-one would be alone and on foot  
 in such a locality with any legitimate motive, and to shoot him would  
 be a public service! While admitting the force of his logic I remained  
 firm in my refusal for although the chances were about a thousand  
 to one against him hitting the man, still the bare possibility of leaving  
 a wounded man in those inhospitable regions was not to be contem-  
 plated for a moment. I remember that when the incident was mentioned in  
 bivouac that night it excited the same regretful comments that one  
 might expect from a *garde-de-chasse* in Europe if he were forbidden  
 to shoot a pole-cat.

We travelled along *W. Gibrah* for some distance, its bed is shaggy and  
 about 30 metres across. As in its lower reaches the *شيفير* or *planta-gen-  
 ista* grew in abundance but the *قنبر* did not occur.

On emerging from its left right bank some excitement was caused  
 by one of the men discovering a horned viper (*Cerastes hasselquistii*)  
 coiled up at the foot of a small bush. He promptly pinned it down  
 with the butt end of his spear and announced his capture. I would not  
 have the reptile killed as that generally means mutilation, but  
 with the aid of two small sticks succeeded in getting it into an  
 insect-killing-bottle containing cyanide of potassium. He was  
 rather a tight fit and evinced considerable reluctance to enter his  
 new quarters, causing a feeling of general relief when the cork was



was pushed home. This species is not uncommon in these districts, but owing to their retiring habits they are seldom seen.

We bivouacked at 7 p.m. in W. Gibak close to a spur of the Raspet system. Towards dusk heavy thunder-clouds gathered overhead and passed away to the west-ward apparently over Reydañ and Behän in which quarter the lightning played incessantly and there was an occasional roll of thunder. I thought we were in for a regular down-pour and had all our perishable gear put under water-proof sheets. Only a few drops fell however, although I heard afterwards that there was heavy rain in Upper Behän.

The water which we had brought with us from Seyläin proved barely sufficient to give us one drink all round at this bivouack after the evening's ration of flour had been made up into dough. We had punished it pretty freely at our <sup>٣٢</sup>/<sub>٣٢</sub> or noon-day halting place and now had to suffer in consequence.

It cannot be too strongly impressed upon any intending traveller in S. Arabia that if he wishes to avoid any hitch in the arrangements for the comfort of the party he will attend to every detail personally, for the average Arab, be he townsman or nomad, seems incapable of exercising a little forethought. In the instance here mentioned, several members of our party were fully aware that after leaving Seyläin we should not reach water until the following day, and yet no attempt was made to deal sparingly with it during the day.

8. Feb.

We moved out of bivouack next day (Feb 8) at 6.45 a.m. all in a most unamiable frame of mind. You may compel a Bedouin to suffer fatigue hunger & thirst, day after day and he will not complain if he can only get his coffee on reaching bivouack at night, and before leaving it, in the



the

morning. Deprive him of this palace, and he gets cautious.

Leaving W. Gibah we made towards the Rakat system, ascending a steep ravine where we entered the borders of the Beni Yub.

The gorge was strewn with boulders and the going very difficult. About half way up we passed a large boulder on which was roughly scrawled  $\text{لا اله الا الله}$  - (there is) no god but God. A few rude outline sketches of an idea also occurred. The light in the gorge was too gloomy to admit of photography and of course it was impossible to take an impression, as the character was not in relief. However we made a diligent search in that locality for something more legible, but were unsuccessful. I am of opinion that the character and sketches were mere idle scribbling of a comparatively recent epoch. They were abominably executed.

At the head of this ravine lies a deep lock-like cutting in the rock which narrows the path to only about 2 inches in width. The Beni Yub had taken advantage of this in former days to collect taxes or rather toll - from passing caravans.

(or-Ribah)

A kura stood on the rising ground close to the right of the path, the cutting being on the left. It appears that this kura (known as ~~H~~ or Ribah) formerly held a small garrison of the Beni Yub, who were in the habit of blocking this narrow path with a broad flat boulder in order to prevent caravans stealing past at night unawares and avoiding toll. The upper Swahili and especially the Ahl Ba-Thobani strongly objected to this arrangement as their raiding parties towards Behan generally took this route, and travelling, as is usual when on such an enterprise, during the hours of darkness were much impeded by this cumbersome form of toll-gate and



and

took decisive measures, viz they broke the stone in half and drove out the garrison from the hasu, which has since remained uninhabited.

Passing the hasu we emerged from the head of the ravine onto the plateau of Gol er-Ribāh which slopes gradually down-wards towards the SSW. The plateau is strewed with loose stones, and thinly wooded with mimosas and a few myrrh trees.

Skirting the hill range to the west of the plateau we crossed and re-crossed W. er-Ribāh passing through a moderately well timbered belt along the wādi, where several ج<sup>2</sup> occurred.

At 10 a m we reached Bir Nāfi - the only water-supply between Bihān and Merkhā. The well itself is practically inexhaustible and the surface of the water lies a very great depth below the level of the ground, which fact we found out to our cost for having been reduced to the usual traveller's expedient of knotting the camel-halters together to form a well-rope attached to a ج<sup>2</sup> or water-skin with a branching twig inserted in the neck to keep the mouth open, - one of the knots slipped and left our extemporized bucket and four camel-halters in the well. We were then compelled to tie our turbans together to lengthen our rope and it took an hour's arduous grappling with two hooked sticks to secure our property, and obtain the now sorely needed water.

At 12.30 p m we resumed our journey maintaining a southerly direction, passing between two hill spurs out onto another plateau which also sloped gently down-wards towards the SSW, but unlike Gol er-Ribāh was comparatively stoneless.

At the foot of the hill-system close on our right, the country was 1 In spite of their constant practice few Bedouins can tie an efficient knot.



was

well-wooded with mimosa and the <sup>سوس</sup> (Vide Botanical Notes Report-99) A herd of gazelle were feeding in this cover and two of the 'asaker went in to try & get a shot. One fired but without success and the terrified animals wheeled and dashed straight through our party.

There was much indiscriminate shooting but as nearly everyone was mounted, and the camels would not stand, the herd passed scatheless. I was only carrying a revolver and heartily wished that it had been a double-barrelled shot-gun for one of our party echoed the sentiments of all, when he remarked regretfully <sup>سوسنا</sup> - our supper has fled. A laughable feature in the incident was the behaviour of a caravan coming up the track towards us about 400 metres ahead.

On hearing the firing they fled precipitately, leaving their camels in the middle of the road. It required several minutes vociferous assurance that we were <sup>سوسنا</sup> people of honest intent, before they could be induced to return.

Crossing wadi 'Asfari at 2.30 pm we passed between the spurs of Hd Rama and the Lehman system and emerged onto the plain of Inerkha. Here the kusa was pointed out to me which had been reported to contain inscriptions on its wall. I did not go up to examine them for fear of arousing suspicion as the owner of the kusa had been described to me as intensely superstitious with regard to them, but arranged with my head 'asari (who knew the man) to go over early the following morning and try to come to terms.

We reached el Hagr - a thriving little town with a population of about 800 (most of whom are <sup>raya</sup>) at 6 pm, and put up in the house of a <sup>raya</sup> who knew some members of our party.

During the whole afternoon heavy clouds had been banking up in the west



west

and we had hardly got under cover before a thunder-storm came on, accompanied by a gale from the NW which brought with it clouds of dust and finally a heavy shower of rain. The storm had burst at 6 pm and at 7.30 pm we heard above the pattering of the rain, a deep droning note which elicited a general exclamation of *es-pôl* (التَّيْنِ) - 'the flood!'

It seemed to me incredible until I recollected that it had probably been raining heavily for some time past in the Kabêt and Lehman systems and also among the mountains which drain into the upper reaches of W. Merkha to the west of our present position.

There was much rejoicing and these superstitious people freely alluded to me as *barakah* (بركة) i.e. a 'mascot'. I bore my new dignity with becoming modesty and inwardly felt supremely thankful that the freshet had not come down three hours earlier for our path between Hd Râma and Hd Lehman was right in the track of one of the main torrents.

I spent the night on the roof of the *hura* as the room below was fearfully close. The air was chilly but not unpleasantly apparent as the wind had now almost dropped. The moon-light disclosed rather a striking scene as viewed from the top of the tower. The whole of the Merkha valley as far as the eye could see, appeared to be under water from which the various villages, *hurma* and palm-tops rose like miniature islands, while a light breeze rippled the surface of the water, which beat with a rhythmic splash against the higher levels, that reminded one forcibly of the sea-coast on a calm night.

Next morning (20th) I was up at dawn surveying from the roof of the *hura*, while my head man went off to interview the owner of the *hura* on which were inscriptions.

A heavy mist hung over portions of the valley and rather impeded my



my  
 work until the sun rose. Moreover I had to be very careful not to attract attention as the people of this district are rather bigoted and I did not want to interfere with my man's negotiations by exciting hostility at el Hagr. Fortunately very few people were about at that hour as the air was very chilly and by regulating the tripod so that the instrument was only just above the level of the parapet, and only raising my head to take an observation, I successfully escaped notice.

My envoy returned at 7.30 a.m. having failed to accomplish his mission. The younger members of the family, were, it appeared, amenable to reason but the old man who owned the buru was obdurate, and no arguments or promises had weight with him. I do not think that this was owing to cupidity on his part, but sheer superstition, for he declared that the back of his house was involved in some mysterious way with these inscriptions and would not even let my man examine them, for fear he might read them, and bring me information which would enable me to cast a spell on his abode!

We had perforce to accept this - our first rebuff - as inevitable and resumed our journey. Our progress was at first slow for though the water had disappeared almost entirely, it had left the ground in a very muddy and slippery condition, and we had to proceed with the utmost caution as a camel is notoriously awkward on wet ground and may easily slip and injure himself fatally, falling as a rule with his legs asprawl and fracturing his breast-bone.

After crossing the wadi near the village of el Hager the ground became firmer and we were able to improve our pace. Crossing W. Khawra which comes through a gap in the hill-system due south of el Hagr and joins W. Gerkha a short distance below our path, we approached



approached

the spurs of the hill system bounding the Tuerkha valley on the south and entered *Fel el Haurin* - a thinly-wooded plateau at a slight elevation above the general level of the valley. (The palm (نخلة) or *numora* is the chief growth here).

At 10.30 we halted for noon as we had now reached the limits of the *Haurin*, four of whom had accompanied us as *pijarak*. These men now returned & refused even to accompany us as far as our *minisarak* to partake of our fugal fare, for there is a blood-feud between them and the *Abd Ba Thobain* whose borders we were now about to enter and they feared reprisals.

(Agaz)

From this plateau we obtained a fairly good view of the Tuerkha valley. The atmosphere was now perfectly clear and away beyond the wadi under the westerly spurs of *Fel el Agaz* we could clearly make out the mud towers of *Wasat* a thriving industrial and agricultural township containing a population of about 1200 inhabitants. A member of the *Ansab* dynasty is stationed there to receive taxes. The population is almost entirely *raya* with the exception of a small force of *Saltanah* troops (السلطنة).

The Tuerkha valley is generally speaking extremely fertile, so much so in fact that the neighbourhood is able to supply the *Ansab* district with a very large quantity of cereals during the year. There is also good grazing ground along the left bank of the wadi above *el Hagar* but the population are more ~~pe~~ agricultural than pastoral.

The local tribeship is the *Haurin* (see Historical notes) whose limits extend from a small tract of country belonging to the *Ulu Rasas* dynasty of *Reyda* down the wadi to *Fel el Agaz*.

It is rather the system to which that peak belongs.



A great volume of water must have passed down Gid el Hairin the previous night as the surface of the ground was completely denuded in some spots and a perfect network of deep-channels had been cut through the hard loamy soil.

We continued our march at noon crossing the low narrow pass of the hills and descending onto a broad open plain bounded on every side by hill ranges. But few trees occur, and these mostly of a stunted nature (principally mimosa)

Crossing another low pass between the hill-spurs, we descended onto another plain of exactly similar formation, but better wooded towards its eastern border. Traversing this plain we passed between the hill-spurs at its SE corner and turning eastwards, ascended a long gradually sloping ravine at the summit of which was a ruined house which we passed close on our right

We now entered a broad sandy plain dotted here and there with small metamorphic outcrops. Here many of our party left us to proceed to Medjah (the residence of the Sultan) where they intended to pass the night. The rest of us kept on across this plain and emerged at its SSE corner from between two adjacent hill-spurs onto a broad level stretch of sand across which the tower of Anisab was just visible. It was now 6 pm and we got in at 8 o'clock putting up with the rauc who had previously kept our stores, and at whose house-door by the way, lies as a door-step the long narrow stone block which bears on its under face the inscription, of which I have already submitted a photograph.

After a substantial meal we lost no time in turning in, as all of us

1. Vide Album p 35 nos.



us

(khalwah)

were more or less fatigued. I obtained the use of a small court-yard, containing a khalwah (كَلْوَاة) or small room opening out of it, for in spite of numerous assurances I felt moderately convinced that we should be compelled to make a stay here of some days before we could make satisfactory arrangements to pass through the various tribeships into Dakhnah via W. Khatib which was the route I had chosen as being the most practicable, besides enabling us to examine fresh country.

I spent the whole of next day in writing up notes and packing & drying specimens not feeling equal to any more violent exertion.

The following day the Hamaini <sup>ah</sup> and the three Farid brothers called on me and gave a very melancholy statement of the conditions of affairs.

The Hamaini did most of the talking and reported that they had seen the Sultan the night before and that he had expressed himself perfectly willing to assist us with letters of introduction to any chiefs within his limits along our line of route, but that he had strongly advised us not to take the Khatib route as the <sup>ah</sup> (on the Dakhnah frontier side map) was sure to refuse us permission to pass his borders unless he received an enormous sum.

A return route by W. Hawak, Zashrim, Taanhan etc was suggested but to this I firmly dissented, as I had come up by that route and knew that there was not a single inscription the whole way down to the coast, whereas along the Khatib route one good inscription at least was known to occur (at H. Dhelamah)

as)

The Khaura route was then proposed but although there was a fair chance of finding an inscription or two along the western part of the Dahr plateau, it was not certain, and moreover <sup>ah</sup> the ruling Banya chief would probably prove far harder to satisfy than



than

the Fathani 'ahel. Also this would likewise entail travelling over old ground.

It struck me as curious at the time that the Hamaini should show such solicitude regarding the welfare of the expedition beyond the limit to which he had contracted to escort it (viz the Upper Sulaki position) for disinterested friendship is seldom experienced by a European in S. Arabia and the fact aroused my suspicions.

I made a few enquiries and discovered that it was the Ahl Rabi' whom the Hamaini 'ahel really feared, and that nothing was known about the Fathani except that their 'ahel was by repute grasping & covetous while on the other hand the Rabi' had sent us a definite message to the Hamaini 'ahel stating in the plainest terms that they would not let us through unless he gave them an equal share of the money which he had received from me (of which they had doubtless by now received news from some source or another for it is impossible to keep a secret for long in S. Arabia) This he was of course not prepared to do, nor did he care to inform me that this was the principal hitch as the Rabi' are within Sulaki limits and therefore were included in the terms of the contract.

I kept my own counsel and awaited the development of events. That evening the 'ahel of the Ahl Dakir - a sub-division lying to the north of the Ahl Rabi' - brought in two caravan camels for our journey. We already had two with us belonging to 'Ali bin Tachsin and although we could have got all our loads onto three, it was not advisable to do so as our route lay partly over very mountainous country.

Meanwhile the news had of course spread with a celerity usual in countries that possess no newspapers - that we were on the road down-country, and in addition we circulated a report that we were returning by



by

our previous route viz via W. Hamak.

This news brought a deputation from the *Alh Rabi* in hot haste to *Jusab*. They arrived on Feb 13<sup>th</sup>, fired the usual *Tashirah* and put up in the Government guest-house.

In accordance with the elementary principles of *Arab* diplomacy we took not the slightest notice of their arrival, beyond making a great bustle in arranging our luggage and intimating to a few casual visitors in the strictest confidence! that we were leaving early next morning by the *Yeshbum* route. This had the desired effect for at sunset the *Rabi* deputation craved an audience.

We received them courteously but coldly, enquired politely after the health of their various chiefs (whose names I had previously ascertained) expressed a hope that they had received adequate rainfall and that their crops were doing well etc, - in short conducting the conversation into every channel but the one which lay nearest our hearts.

The *Rabi* replied in the same strain but evidently had something on their minds, and at the close of the audience suggested that we should go *drive* through their country as being the shorter route. I answered that I should have been pleased to have done so but had already made arrangements to take the *Yeshbum* route. The audience then closed.

All this had of course been mere fencing, the practical side of the question had to be left to the *Hamami* *âshel* and my head *âshari*, between whom and the *Rabi* negotiations dragged on for some days, ~~one~~ side insisting on an impossible price and the other offering about one tenth of that price and advancing the probability of my losing patience and taking the *Yeshbum* route, which they agreed to persuade me not to do, if their terms were complied with. Of course it was the *Hamami*'s concern

(over)



concern

as he had to satisfy this sub-division since the terms of the contract stipulated that he was to escort the party free of all charge for *piyārah* until we reached (and passed) *Khatib*, the *Rabizi* frontier village. of course I could not tie him down to any specified time, but a clause should have been inserted giving him a time limit at any specified place for these constant delays were a source of great annoyance and expense as I had a large party to feed and house.

However it would have been extremely foolish to show any signs of impatience so I feigned indifference and busied myself with work in the district.

We had received news of an inscription about 14 kils to the NW of the town and taking one of the Sultan's *asākir* as *piyārah* I went out to inspect it. It proved to consist of a few rough and illegible scrawls on the face of a rock lying in a small ravine, and was quite worthless.

On returning to my quarters I was informed by the *Hamiāni* that the *Rabizi* were divided, three expressing their consent to let us through on the *ākil's* terms (which he had been compelled to raise) and the other two dissenting. This gave us a majority and sounded hopeful, as a *Fathāni* chief who had accompanied them declared that he would pass us through his territory if the *Rabizi* would pass us through theirs. We mistrusted this man however for his social status was not great and the real issue of events would obviously rest with the *Fathāni* *ākil*.

On deliberation we decided that the time had come to try a policy of 'bluff' and stated that if negotiations could not be brought to a



a

satisfactory conclusion by the following day, we should leave the day after via W. Hanak.

I was rather anxious after giving this ultimatum as in case the Rabizi still held out we should be in an awkward fix.

It was absolutely indispensable that we should take the Dakhina route for the reasons above stated and also because I had arranged for my mails to await me there, and I was extremely desirous of getting in touch with Europe as soon as possible.

In the morning I went out to collect specimens and happened to come upon a flock of pigeons which with their accustomed fatuity, circled about within easy distance of the spot where I lay crouching, until I had dropped six of them. The asaher and myself shared these between us and they were much appreciated as we had not tasted meat since Feb 5<sup>th</sup>. I may mention here that I was rather handicapped in obtaining zoological specimens - especially the smaller birds owing to having exhausted all my small shot, a further supply of which had been procured me by an older traderman but was not forthcoming when I left.

I was also by now reduced to six cartridge cases (which had been loaded and reloaded until most of them were split from top to bottom) and a steel 'adapter' which did not contain a full charge.

The lever-spring of my phot-gun was broken and <sup>the lever</sup> had ~~been~~ secured with string, and the striker had become unserviceable at Yeshbrum and had been replaced with a piece of iron wire of suitable diameter, previously hardened in the fire. I think I have already mentioned the small calibre of this weapon which rendered it almost impossible to secure any of the larger birds, while the smaller specimens were too frequently



frequently

badly-mutilated, and had to be replaced.

The whole of that afternoon we heard nothing of the Rabiz and I was beginning to fear that it was a case of 'Gascon à Gascon et demi' but late at night (about 10 p.m.) we received their deputation who agreed to our terms.

Next day (Feb 15<sup>th</sup>) all was bustle and stir loading up the camels for the journey. I never interfere in these matters unless I see anything done that is glaringly wrong, such as tying on an alcohol-collecting case upside down or placing emergency ammunition in a position where it can't be got at (both common faults). Any attempt to hasten matters only increases the confusion so I contented myself with watching the proceedings from the court-yard of my quarters, and only coming down to check the loads when everything was ready. I can recommend this method to all who are desirous of retaining their sanity, for it is a kind of 'lex inscripta' among Bedouins to bawl, shout & squabble among the loads before real work begins, and to participate in such a fracas, is undignified, uncomfortable and useless.

We got away at 1 p.m. the men having taken five hours to load four camels. Of course this only happens when new camels are engaged and at the commencement of a fresh stage in a journey. On the route itself, it is surprising how rapidly and quietly the camels are loaded and led out of bivouack.

Crossing the broad tract of sand which lies south of Husab we entered the valley of Shadan passing through a strip of country belonging to the Ahl Tiabit, where the valley was strewn with small stones and phingle. Some of us travelled on ahead of the caravan and halted at Sidh Tiabari where we entered the town and paid our respects to the pasha (وَلِي) my head 'askari (an Upper Shulaki man) expressing devout thanks for the



the immunity which we had hitherto enjoyed and praying for continued protection until our journey's end.

I have already mentioned the curious and antique carving on the wooden tomb of this great saint. I see no way of getting a record of them except by entering the mausoleum with a camera and a strip of magnesium ribbon, and these it would be neither politic or fair to use in such a place.

*Summer*  
On asking for water the attendant at the shrine entered a little wigwam outside the premises, and uncovered what I at first took to be a small well-mouth until I saw that the water was barely a metre down. It turned out to be a small shaft about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  metres deep and four decimetres across the mouth, and was lined with hard white cement (سجج). This held the man's supply of water for the day and was replenished whenever opportunity occurred, which would be at least daily as donkeys loaded with water skins are constantly passing along this wadi to supply the various Bedouin camps. Passing the village of Selabah (inhabited chiefly by isabir of the Sultan) at 3.30 p.m. we halted at 4.30 for the night in the bed of the wadi under a perpendicular earth-wall about 10 metres in height, formed by fluvial erosion.

This was a remarkably short stage but we had a reason for not proceeding farther. Some distance from the left bank of the wadi stands a husn (untenanted) on a small rocky knoll. An inscription was reported to be on its eastern wall, and I wished to get the rays of the rising sun upon it in order if possible to photograph.

Several small but deep gullies let into the wadi close to our bivouac and near one of these stands the shrine of Sheikh David. The chief and  
1. These people water their camels & flocks at Husab if at their convenient distance



and

almost the only forms of vegetation near this spot consist of rail bushes and the Tamarisk. Altitude above sea-level 848.6 metres

Early the following morning I went off to examine the inscription. I found it to be about 6 metres above the ground on the eastern wall of the kusu and almost illegible. Only two or three characters were distinguishable and the camera could certainly have made nothing of it at that height up, while it was not sufficiently in relief to afford an impression of any practicable use even if we had been able to get at it. The inscription was a very small one judging by the size of the stone on which it was engraved for it was difficult to say how far across the face of it the character extended.

We moved out of bivouac at 6.50 a.m. or rather the caravan did, those of us who had visited the inscription following later.

Spurting a large tract of arable land on our left (where a quantity of  $\frac{1}{2}$  is<sup>2</sup> occurred) we followed the course of the wadi which lay in a general southerly direction until we reached a small village inhabited entirely by *padak* and known generally as *Sâkin es-Sâdak*. Here on the opposite bank of the wadi to the village stands the shrine of Hasan bin Sheikh (son of Sheikh Ganid) Here we had to halt for the caravan & main-body to overtake us as the bed of the wadi had now become very stoney and presented considerable difficulties to laden camels. About 2.5 kils past this village the wadi curves sharply to the ESE and the ravine closes in to about 150 metres across and becomes very precipitous. The ascent in the bed of the wadi itself was now also very perceptible and our progress extremely slow (about 2 kils per hour)

At 10.30 p.m. we reached a deep pool through which the caravan had to pass as there was no other feasible route on either hand owing to 1. About this point the wadi takes the name of *Khatib*.



to

enormous masses of rock which obstructed the ravine.

I remained behind the caravan here, to have a picnic and was tempted to stop in longer than was wise as there was fresh breeze blowing. For this I was afterwards to suffer.

Rejoining the caravan we found they had halted for noon in a broad amphitheatre formed by a semi-circular sweep of the ravine to the eastward. Here the gorge was well-wooded with the alhabak (أثب) and abundant shade was afforded.

After our meal the pijarah indulged in a little target practice, and some of them showed remarkable skill with their match-locks, the man depicted on pp 38 & 39 (Photo album) being particularly expert. The range was short (only about 50 yds) but he seldom missed a mark about the size of the palm of one's hand which was uncommonly good practice with such a cumbersome weapon.

At this spot the aneroid gave a reading of 20<sup>m</sup> lower than the one taken at last night's bivouac i.e. a total height above sea-level of 9291 inches. At 1 p.m. we resumed our journey the ravine winding considerably but in a general ESE direction.

After an hour's journey (at a very slow pace) we passed a rocky wall about 300 metres in height which rose sheer on our left. Turning past this in an easterly direction the ravine being much obstructed by boulders at 2.30 p.m. we reached the foot of the Akabah el Kabir or Great Pass where an ascent has to be made onto the plateau above, round which the wadi takes a wide sweep and is also I am given to understand impassable to caravan traffic.

The pass is of no great height (about 200 metres above the level of the wadi at its crest) but it is uncommonly steep and I thoroughly recognized the



the  
 wisdom of loading our camels lightly before we reached the top. It took the  
 caravan about three quarters of an hour to negotiate. At its foot occur two  
 or three large rain-pools which may be generally relied upon to supply water  
 for rain is fairly frequent in these districts.

In peaking the pass we found ourselves on a broad plateau which slopes  
 gradually down-wards towards the south. Its surface is covered with  
 small blackened stones (metamorphic in character) similar to those which  
 occur among the mountains north of Shukra (vide Geology notes - 99).

We passed H. Ba Sellen about 2 miles on our left and then crossed  
 a low ridge of black metamorphic rock coming in sight of the agricult-  
 ural settlement of el Hada a small village of the Rabiz numbering about  
 80 inhabitants who possess a considerable tract of arable land and some  
 غلور.

We maintained a general SSE direction since leaving the top of the pass  
 and re-entered the wadi at 5 p.m., where we halted for the night  
 under a large tupe of tamarisk.

At this bivouac I awoke in the middle of the night suffering intense pain  
 from what I have been led to suppose was temporary congestion of  
 the kidneys caused by the chill I had caught while bathing that day.  
 I had been in low health for some days and this was only what I  
 might have expected for indulging in an open air bath under such  
 conditions. It has been frequently stated that the natives of the interior  
 of Arabia are extremely unsympathetic to a sick European, and  
 this is I believe generally the case, but on this occasion I am  
 bound to admit that the bearing of my fellow-travellers was extremely  
 solicitous both *isâkiri* and *pyôrah* vying with each other to  
 afford me relief. I wished to apply an enema from the bivouac fore



fore

but this I was begged not to do for as the seat of pain was at the waist, any caution there would result in a serious sore from the constant friction of belt clothes etc. A cloth heated to scorching point at the fire was applied at frequent intervals and at 4 a m the pain abated and I was able to sleep.

The B.P. thermometer gave at this bivouac a height above sea-level of 1320 metres. Above this spot the wādi is impassable for some distance being densely wooded with tamarisk and much obstructed by boulders.

On leaving bivouac (at 7 a m) we left the wādi - which here enters a narrow ravine - on our right and ascended a long steep slope among the hills above the right bank of the wādi. On our right rose the lofty peak of Hd el Mākal (c. 2000 metres) and on our left the lower range of Hd Laben. The mountains in this locality are all thickly wooded and covered with pasture.

On reaching the crest of this pass we commenced a rather abrupt descent into the wādi which we re-entered at 8.35 its course lying towards the SW. Here a considerable tract of arable land occurs on the right bank of the wādi, owned by a local sheikh of the Rabiz but cultivated by the Dakāri 'ākil - a common practice (See notes on Anthropology<sup>5.11</sup>). A large number of <sup>2</sup>Je grow on this land.

At this point in our journey we received tidings that the inhabitants of el Khatib were determined to oppose our passage up the wādi unless they received a quite impossible sum, so at 9.30 a m a halt was called, and we sent on a runner to negotiate (one of the Hd Rabiz of course).

We remained all day under a gigantic <sup>2</sup>Je in the bed of the wādi and at sunset our messenger returned with news that the Khatib authorities still insisted on a considerable sum of ready money from the Hamāmi 'ākil which he could not give and neither could I. It was then agreed



agreed

to spend the night in this bivouac, and in the morning the Hamâim & Dakâre ikâl were to precede us to Khatib, taking with them a rāwi of some wealth & position, who with others had accompanied us for protection on the road to Khatib. It was hoped that as he was a well-known trader in that village - his security would be accepted.

I was not sorry for the delay as I was still feeling extremely weak & prostrate and badly needed a little rest.

The air at this altitude (6582 niches above sea-level B.P.T.) was remarkably bracing even during the middle of the day and after sunset it became very chilly. We were now in the midst of the Rabîzi mountain system.

As we were doing round the bivouac fire a snake crawled up to the outside of the circle and stopped close to my rug. Before I could seize a stick he glided away but was speedily secured and dropped into the spirit-bottle. (Spee no - Moshaki).

The men all declared that this was without doubt a friendly genie (جِنِّي) which had been sent to relieve me of my illness. If so he received most ungrateful treatment. Their theory however differed somewhat from the other forms of the same superstition which prevail so frequently in the East, inasmuch as they considered it no misdemeanour to kill the snake.

Next morning (Feb 18) at <sup>sunrise</sup> ~~sunrise~~ the two ikâl (ikâl) started on their errand with the somewhat reluctant rāwi.

We did not leave until 8 a.m. in order to give them time to bring negotiations to a head before we came in sight. The Hamâim had told me before leaving that he had very little hope of coming to a peaceful arrangement, but that we were to urge the caravan on past the village up the wādi with all possible speed, paying no attention to the threats



## Threats

of the Khatib people. He added that there would probably be a fight and I expressed some concern as to what treatment would be meted out to him and the Dakari if such a contingency arose while they were isolated from us in Khatib. He replied that it was more than ~~either~~ the Rabi'i dare do - to injure either of them as that would entail a crushing attack by the Ahl Haniam + Dakar, but that they would probably endeavour to shoot our camels which would place us in an awkward predicament.

Still following the course of the wadi we passed - on our <sup>right</sup> ~~left~~ - a long shale formation on which stands the small village of ~~al-Rhid~~ and at 9 a.m. came in sight of Khatib, - a large village situated on a very steep knoll on the right bank of the wadi at the point where it curves westward.

As we approached - we noticed the two meers of our envoys tethered in the middle of the village, denoting that negotiations were still going on, but it was soon apparent that their mission had failed for as we passed under the village several men shouted to us to stop. We took no notice and the caravan had proceeded some little distance up the wadi past the village before it dawned upon the inhabitants that we meant to disregard their injunctions.

Somebody in the village then raised the shrill ululating notes of the persha or tribal war-cry and it was taken up by a score of voices while we could discern the inhabitants running to & fro in sudden confusion. The women and children who were tending their flocks down in the wadi ran screaming out of the line of fire and while the camel-men urged their animals forward with all possible speed the rest of us opened out across the wadi and took cover.

I was armed with nothing more deadly than a camera, but carried



carried

a revolver in case we came to close quarters.

A shot was fired from one of the *husain* - apparently at the camels for it passed over our heads and the skirmish began.

My three *asakir* had all got behind a large *acacia* tree and were firing indiscriminately at the village. Before the engagement had lasted many minutes I noticed that there was one marksman (?) stationed behind the parapet of one of the topmost *husain* who was evidently using a match-lock of unusually large calibre and trying to hit our camels at long range for every time a puff of smoke came from his locality there was a deep whirring hum over-head, indicating an abnormally large projectile aimed high.

I directed the *asakir* to open fire on the edge of the parapet and gave the range (400 metres). Their practice was fairly good for after a very few rounds the parapet (which was composed of loose stones evidently) came crumbling down and that annoyance ceased.

I made three exposures with the camera but only one turned out at all passable as the light was very gloomy and the exposures of course instantaneous.

As the caravan proceeded we gradually fell back still firing and some of the *Khatib* people followed us along the sides of the ravine, but took care not to approach nearer than 700 metres. As may be imagined the shooting at this distance was very bad on both sides, for the *asakir* who had been taught how to use a rifle at a target were far too excited to shoot straight, and seemed to have no idea of judging distance. I only saw one good shot made by my party at this stage in the fight and that was fired by my head *askari*. I pointed out to him a remarkably energetic *skirmisher* who was loading & firing with frantic haste



haski-

about 800 metres from our position. I gave him the correct sighting and his bullet apparently took ground close to the man's feet. This considerably cooled his martial ardour for he did not fire another shot or follow up our retreat and by the time we had passed the small hamlet of Gembak we had no further trouble.

The men declared that two casualties had occurred among the Rabi' but personally I think not. On our side there were none but one of the is'akir had received a bullet through his loin-cloth which narrowly missed the groin and we had all had more or less narrow escapes, chiefly owing to the men packing into small clusters and not extending sufficiently. At Gembak some idiot tried to raise the village axes as we passed by jumping onto the roof of his hut and yelling but we were too large a party for them to tackle and this belligerent individual speedily disappeared when we threatened to shoot him.

This village is a very small one & contains about 40 inhabitants belonging to the Ahl Mis'ide - a race of sheikhs descended from the Ahl Rabi', but recognized alike by that tribe and the Ahl Fath'ân. A family of them live at H. G'arak further up the wâdi, thus forming a small neutral strip of territory between the Sulaki and Okh confederations.

It was probably their influence which prevented the Khatib's skirmishes from passing the village in pursuit as it is the metier of these sheikhs to adjust disputes and prevent blood-shed - they themselves being careful to remain neutral as otherwise their influence is rendered null & void.

One of their principal men came out to meet us as we passed the hamlet and apologized for the conduct of the individual mentioned above, pointing out that we were now on neutral ground.

We pushed on to H. G'arak and there halted to await the arrival of the



the  
two 'akal as previously arranged.

We were just making arrangements for one of the sheikhs to go and mediate for their release when they put in an appearance at 2.30 p.m.

They appear to have had rather an exciting time at Khatib as when the firing commenced one of the more impetuous of the inhabitants attempted to spear the Dakari 'akal but was forcibly restrained by the more prudent members of the village who realized what would be the consequences of such an act. The poor old man had also a narrow escape from our own skirmishers for having incautiously descended and stood at the open door-way of the husu to witness the engagement my head 'askari caught sight of him and not recognizing him at that distance promptly let drive with a Martini-Heuri carbine and the heavy picket bullet striking a stone near the door-way cut the 'akal about the legs rather badly with the splinters that flew from the impact.

At 2.45 we resumed our journey and leaving the wadi crossed a low ridge on its left bank on the crest of which we were met by the Fathani 'akal and a considerable force, who had come out to ascertain the cause of the disturbance. Our approach had been already notified and we were received amicably.

On reaching the 'akal's husu (el H'fah) a small isolated tower on a slight eminence we made arrangements to bivouac for the night as negotiations would no doubt here be protracted.

We had not been long at this bivouac before I discovered the true nature of the Fathani 'akal i.e. that he was avaricious to an intense degree and disposed to be miserly - an unusual vice in S. Arabia although the former faulting is a common one.

The men expressed much quiet derision at the supper which was



was

served out to us, and it was certainly rather scanty for such a large party of hungry men. It must be remembered that in *S. Chaka* it is considered very bad etiquette not to leave a certain portion of food on the common platter after a meal, ~~but~~ <sup>and</sup> in this instance the rule pressed extremely hard but was scrupulously observed.

As heavy masses of cloud had banked up in the west towards sunset and the barometer had fallen slightly I had all the caravan loads stacked together and covered with the canvas sheets. The precaution was justified for after dusk the breeze (then easterly) dropped suddenly and shortly afterwards a strong westerly wind sprang up bringing a heavy thunder-storm down on us.

The rain fell in torrents for about 2 hours and the thunder and lightning were incessant. Then the shower abated and settled into a steady drizzle which lasted until 1 a.m. We had all taken shelter between the loads under the *tarpaulin* canvas. It was rather close and an uncommonly tight fit but better than being drenched, for the burriack was on a bare slope below the busu without a vestige of shelter. As it was we should have been wet through if the ground had not had a considerable fall towards the wadi for during the first burst of rain we could hear the water pouring in torrents down the slope on either side of us.

We awoke in the morning feeling unpleasantly moist and in bad spirits. A heavy mist hung over the lower ground and the sky over-head was of a dull leaden hue presenting a generally depressing aspect. I had an interview with the *Fathani* *ahel* at sun-rise or rather the time when the sun should have become visible.

The *Fathani* after a long reguarole about his poverty and his desire





desire

to possess a rifle (which I pointed out to him - could not be, except by formal permission of the Aden authorities) at length came to the point and stated that he required Dols 300!!, and would in consideration of that sum escort us through the borders of the *Arwabi*, ~~El~~ and *Hatimi* to el Gblak on the plain of *Amidich* - our immediate objective. The offer was too preposterous to attempt to discuss so I merely remarked that I could not find a third of that sum and that even then he would have to wait for payment until we reached el Gblak where I felt fairly confident of raising money.

I then left him and the *Hanaini* *ahil* and my head askari tackled him. I went off down the slope and lay under the shade of an *Ac* affecting supreme indifference as to the result. From time to time one of them came to me and announced the gradual decrease of the original demand. At noon it reached Dols 150 but this was far more than I felt justified in paying. Here negotiations checked and my two representatives came to state that they had secured the best terms they could and that we had better close with them as retreat was out of the question and if we stopped here we should starve.

On hearing that he could not prevent any of them from proceeding I remarked that they might go on but that I intended to remain until the *Fathani* further abated his demand.

They thought at first that I was joking but when I had been there for another two hours and made preparations for spending the night in that position they went off and brought the utmost pressure to bear on the *Fathani* pointing out that I was already ill and half-starved, and would certainly die in his territory sooner than give way!

Of course this was all humbug but it scared the *Fathani* who came down



doire

to see me personally and abated his demand to Dols 95 and a Keswah (value Dols 10) As this offer though still high was within the bounds of my expectations I closed with it, the 'akit agreeing to furnish *pejirah* to el Bekkah where he was to receive his pay.

We loaded the camels and started at once (3 pm) descending into W. Hamah which runs at the foot of this slope and returning to its confluence with W. el Affak below which the wadi takes the name of Khatib.

Here we parted with the Hamami 'akit who had now fulfilled his contract (after his own fashion) and was returning to his country. He appointed Ali bin Mekri as his agent or *pejirah* and we parted on the best of terms for although he had played fast and loose with the spirit of the contract throughout, he had accomplished the letter of it and that at considerable risk.

The Fakhami 'akit agreed to join us with his party the following morning before we left bivouac.

Turning up W. el Affak we followed the ravine which runs in a general westerly direction - until it narrowed rapidly and turned off to the north-wards.

Here we ascended a steep pass on its right bank. The rocks contained considerable quantities of lime and were moreover much worn by traffic which rendered the footing very precarious for camels.

On reaching the summit we emerged onto a small plateau sloping perceptibly towards the south. Crossing this in a general southerly direction we halted at 5 pm for the night in a small gully under the shelter of a karst tree (Vide Botanical notes).

The country here was moderately well bushed and afforded us plenty of firewood which was fortunate as the cold was very perceptible after

<sup>6</sup> The keswah among Bedouins etc consists of a silk turban and a coloured woollen winter cloth. This is generally an undercoat thing.

lime



after  
 sunset. We were now 1764 metres above sea-level.

Next morning (Feb 20) we were joined by the Fathani contingent and started at 7 o'clock.

We were now in Shwali territory, which has its northern border at the summit of the 'Akabak which we had scaled the previous evening. Proceeding in a general southerly direction we crossed a low ridge which forms a water-shed between the Khatib and Durra systems. Passing this ridge we turned sharply to the west at 9 a.m. along the foot of a tall and abrupt mountain range, whose slopes were well wooded with the kark tree and covered with grass.

Panthers are said to occur in this system, and this is probably the case as it is an isolated locality and affords good grazing ground for ibex which are generally attended by a stray panther or two. The ~~mountain~~<sup>valley</sup> itself was well wooded along this reach.

(valley)

On our right, just below el 'Erib, W. Kamadak takes its rise in a series of small gullies, running down in a northerly direction to join W. Durra.

El 'Erib consists of a small shrine & cemetery situated in a belt of mimosa (not the true ~~one~~). We passed it at 10.30 a.m. and at 11 a.m. reached H. Dhelamakh some distance ahead of the caravan which passed on to form a minicar some distance beyond.

H. Dhelamakh once held a family of the Shwali who were fearfully scourged by small-pox in 98. Most of this family succumbed to the disease and the survivors abandoned the husa, which is still in good repair and fit for habitation (barring infection).

The inscription stands on the northern side of the husa, being written in Arabic.



en-

graved on a stone let into the wall just above the door and about 3 inches from the ground. A description of it need not be given here. Drinkable water occurs in a well within 200 inches or so of the house. - at least we drank of it - and experienced no ill effects.

Rejoining the caravan we halted for a few minutes to take food and resumed our journey together at 1 p.m.

At 1.30 p.m. we crossed W. Hailub (pronounced Hé-üb) which flows into W. Durra, and re-entering it again a little further up plunged into the gorge down which it takes its course.

Here our progress was very slow as the ascent was steep and much impeded by boulders and vegetation. We passed several pools lined with sedge and tall bul-rushes and at 3 p.m. reached the top of the ravine which opens onto a small plateau surrounded by grass-clad peaks.

At 3.20 we passed H. Hailub situated on a small hill to our left and leaving the wadi which here divides into a number of deep gullies turned westwards, crossing at this point the Kivali & Hätimi border, and proceeding along a straight narrow valley about 300 inches across. The ground here had been evidently devoted originally to agriculture but was now literally honey-combed by thousands of rat-holes which ramified in all directions.

Leaving this valley we ascended a gentle rise where my camel showed signs of exhaustion and I dismounted. Descending the slope on the other side of the ridge which was fairly long & steep, the animal refused to proceed, and it took two hours to get him into broad. The caravan halted for the night in a sheltered recess among the hill spurs which abut onto the ravine in which we had been



been

and which by the way drains into W. Nagar and the Azan system. This ravine is known as W. Lânis. A large rain-pool occurred in the bed of the wâdi just below our bivouac. Country here well bushed with the shersuf (شَرْشُف) and covered with grass.

That night in bivouac the donkeys belonging to the various petty traders who were travelling down to Dathinâh with us for protection, caused much annoyance by their incessant braying and plunging. It was unanimously declared that they had detected the presence of a leopard in the vicinity and they lay in hiding a great part of the night in the hopes of getting a shot but to no purpose.

This bivouac is 9080 meters above sea-level.

At dawn the following day the <sup>bivouac</sup> camp was all astir for the most difficult part of the road had to be now encountered and therefore there was much readjustment of loads etc.

With two arâker and one of the Fakhâni as *sigârah* I started at 7 a.m. intending to ascend the main ridge of *Hd. Tuaran* while the caravan took the lower route into W. Hagnûm (See Map). My object was to obtain BPT readings on these peaks, to check the survey of last year as far as possible and to secure zoological specimens & obtain a photographic panorama of the country below. I regret to say that the two last-named objects were never fulfilled. A pale blue heat-haze shrouded the distant view and owing also to unsatisfactory plates the panorama was a complete failure, while the various fauna which range on *Hd. Tuaran* were conspicuous by their absence that day. On the other hand the Lepidoptera which we met with on the summit were both numerous and characteristic but I had unfortunately no net with  
(See Botanical notes)



with  
me.

On leaving the bivouac my party travelled in a SSW direction, and ascending a steep ravine which drains into W. Hagar reached the summit of Hd Masharif at 9 a.m. This peak is one of the most prominent in the central ridge of Hd Tuaran and is 2043 metres above sea-level.

(2038)

Leaving here at 11 p.m. we visited two other peaks of the same system their respective heights being about the same viz <sup>2033</sup> and <sup>2040</sup> metres. From the third of these peaks, which is known among many Dakhilak folk as Kanlat en-Tisir i.e. the peak of vultures because the droppings from the nest of a pair of these birds form a white mark down the face of the peak which is visible southwards to a great distance - the view was rather striking.

This peak is very precipitous on its southern face and immediately below (about 300 metres down) lay the densely wooded ravine of W. el-Hij which drains into W. Shuakat, a peak of that name standing below us a little to the right as we looked towards the opening of the Tuaran gorge onto the plain of Amudieh. Hd Shuakat is part of a downward continuation of the ridge on which we were stationed, just as Umme el Hamd on our left is a lower continuation of the ridge containing Hd Masharif.

Beyond W. el-Hij rose another abruptly sloping range, the difficulties of which we were poor to learn, and beyond this the entire system slopes down not in parallel ridges but in long spurs at right angles to the main system - southwards towards W. Haguim.

Immediately above W. Haguim (on its southern bank) towers the almost precipitous crests of Hd er-Ri, whose southern slope is



is known as Hd Wāgr and drains into the Hasani country. The course of W. Shūkat may also be discerned up to the point where it enters the gorge just above the cascade (See map 99). Beyond this wādi to the southward rises the important system of Hd Thuāh. Broadly speaking this range extends between W. Shūkat and W. Thuāh and sketches right away from W. Tuarau to Hd Zorb + el Kalāh. Away to the southward may be faintly discerned the villages of el-Ghlab, Mt. Farak and el Ghbat el Wagnak (more to the SSE) while between these two stands the little fortified strong-hold of el Karu on a small knoll.

The bold prominent ridge of Hd Khanih and the sugar-loaf peak of Hd el Hawrak (see Album p. 45) may be distinctly seen, while away to the extreme southwards the mountains of the Khawasthi district appear to blend with the really much more remote range of the Turkeuski beyond which the sea is said to be visible on an unusually clear day.

Towards the SW lies the broad plain of Mt. es Saidi in which may be just distinguished the conical peak of Karu Tiershid, and beyond this in the extreme distance a double peaked range marking the Zafiri border. To the west of our position sketches the immense wall-like range of Kawr el Sudhullak which is joined to the Tuarau system by Kawr es Kabiz - the mountains among which we had recently been travelling.

Behind us to the northward W. Hagar joins W. Zhan in the broad valley lying between the Sudhullak's Tuarau systems, and this wādi curves round with a bold sweep past el Mirdak (see map 99) and continues its course southwards of el Dakhak to



to

the main system of Dalkinab (U' Fakr)

The mountain slopes are all more or less thickly bushed chiefly with the Shersaf & are covered with grass, while the ravines are densely wooded with small trees and undergrowth.

The air at this elevation was delightfully bracing, and even at noon no-one thought of getting in the shade.

There was however one disadvantage to this mountain air - it made us all feel ravenously hungry, and as we had been on half rations since the day before and could not expect to rejoin the caravan before night this was rather a drawback. Water however was procurable down a ravine tributary to W. Hagar, but it turned out to be so full of unpleasant looking animalcules that in my then weak state of health I decided not to venture.

At 3.30 pm we commenced the descent into W. Adf intending to rejoin the caravan somewhere near the confluence of Wadis Haguin & Shuabat. Of course it would have been a great saving of time if we could have followed the Adf gorge down into W. Shuabat but this is impossible as two sheer precipices occur along its course.

The descent into the Adf ravine was very tedious and somewhat hazardous for the mountain-slope was as steep as a house roof and covered with loose stones which afforded a very precarious foot-hold.

A number of aromatic shrubs grew on the mountain side and these prevented me from making more than one rapid but involuntary descent into the ravine below, for I was beginning to feel the effects of fatigue and low diet which prevented me from planting my foot-steps with the requisite firmness & agility.

On reaching the ravine I felt very much inclined to stop there for the night



night

but this was quite out of the question as it would have entailed another day's abstinence from food or water which would have caused us no great inconvenience if we had been stationary but could not be undergone while engaged in the active exertions of mountaineering.

We tackled the slope on the southern bank of the wādi and after a steep & exhausting climb reached the crest at 5 p.m. Here we fired a few shots as a signal to the main-body who replied from some spot a long way above the ravine of Aguin. They were not visible but by the sound we could tell that they had made very slow progress and that we should not probably reach them that night.

The numerous ravines which led down from the ridge on which we now were, could none of them be traversed owing to precipices and deep pools in their course. Our only path lay down the shoulder of this ridge into W. Shuabat's upper reaches about 1000 metres below, and it behoved us to get there before dark if we wished to escape broken limbs for there was no moon until long after midnight and the descent was extremely difficult by day light, and almost suicidal after dark. I had once taken this route before in '97 and knew fairly well what to expect.

As I had work to do in W. Shuabat below the cascade it was agreed that the party should spend the night in the upper reaches of that wādi while one of the *isākir* (a native of Dakhnāh who knew these mountains) was to endeavour to find the main bivouac and bring us back food. He went on ahead, and we followed at a much slower pace for I was almost in a state of collapse and had considerable difficulty in getting along at all.

It was nearly dusk when we came in sight of the wādi and I urged the *Lathāni piyārah* to go on ahead and get water for the party from



from

a pool which I knew existed just above the cascade, and which I judged by the land-marks which I saw could not be more than 400 metres below the point in the ravine for which we were making. He assured me that I was mistaken and that there was no water ~~near~~ within two hours' journey of our proposed bivouac. As the man was a native of these mountains I did not argue the point thinking that in the failing light I had mistaken the locality.

By this time I was progressing on my hands more than my feet which were lacerated rather badly, the sandals which I was wearing, having been cut to ribbons.

We got into the ravine just as dark came on and lay down in the first soft place we came to, but soon had to seek a more sheltered spot as it began to rain. Height above sea-level 11467 metres

In spite of the darkness I felt convinced that I recognized the formation of the rocks on the left bank of the ravine and suggested that we should find a deep recess about 50 metres further up and sure enough we did - it was one in which one party had bivouaced in '97.

This convinced me that I was right about the pool, and the Sathani offered to go down and get water but I would not permit him to make the attempt which would in all probability lead to broken bones for the night was intensely dark and Shihakhat gorge is an awkward place in broad day-light.

As the rain still continued I made an attempt to catch some water in a depression formed in our  $\text{خزق}$  for the purpose, but without success as the rain was very light and the goat-skin absent.

My thirst was now beginning to get rather troublesome, although the other two complained more of hunger. It suddenly occurred to me that



that

there must be several small depressions on the surface of the numerous boulders which lay about the ravine which would probably hold a little water by now. With the aid of a few matches I found several of these hollows and managed to suck up enough water out of them to abate my thirst a little.

The spectacle would have been sufficiently ludicrous could any one have seen me so engaged, but the humorous aspect of the situation did not strike me at the time. Both my comrades had gone to sleep, which a Bedouin always does when he is hungry or thirsty, seeming to be able to do so by mere volition.

At 2 a m the following day I heard the other 'askari who had returned from the main bivouac shouting to discover our whereabouts. I was not able to shout by this time so fired two revolver shots which led him to our shelter.

He had brought each man's half of unleavened bread but no water as he confirmed my statement about the pool and had thought we would obtain water from there before dark.

When the moon had risen sufficiently to render a trip down the ravine safe he fetched a skinful of water and I got a satisfactory drink at 4 a m. We started at day-light and emerging from the left bank of W. Shūahat crossed the stony plateau of Margalah and ascended the hill system bordering on the left bank of W. Shūahat below the cascade.

Descending into the wādī we halted under a big akhtrak tree. Here the Fakhāni left us to rejoin the main body and get a square meal and I went up the gorge towards the cascade to bathe. Fortunately I was carrying my shot-gun for a big chicken got up from one of the pools and was promptly knocked over.

The Shūahat cascade is a mere trickle in dry weather but must present



present

a fine sight when a large volume of water is coming down. The pools are deep and clear, and fringed by a thick growth of aquatic plants (See Album pp 43 & 44)

On rejoining the asākir I found the chikara already broiling over a slow fire and he afforded a makeshift meal for the three of us.

We rejoined the main-body at the confluence of W's Shū'abat and Haqūm and moving down the Karan gorge emerged onto the plain of Amudik near the tall rocky pinnacle of el Lubōib.

Here we disturbed a large herd of baboon feeding on the mimosa trees. It was a strange sight to see some of the big males getting in a mere bush and scambling down in frantic haste at our approach. Two of the asākir who were in advance of the rest of the party were actually among the herd before they began to move, but a Bedouin can only hit a stationary object and although several shots were fired the herd got off scathless.

I should have much liked to secure an adult male & female, and fired at one old grey-bearded patriarch at a range of about 500 metres. The bullet struck him - probably in the fore-leg but he managed to keep up with the rest of the herd. Nothing but our pressing need for a specimen and the fact that this was the last locality in which we should meet with them could excuse such an act and I much regretted the shot.

(herd)

The baboon is most tenacious of life and no one should fire at him unless tolerably sure of not merely hitting him but also of planting the bullet in a vital spot. The clear target which he presented tempted me to break my usual rule with results that might have been anticipated. We reached el Gillah at 4 p.m. and were received with great enthusiasm as our friends here had received a report of the annihilation of the expedition.

We put up in the house of an acquaintance where I found my mails awaiting



await-  
ing me.

Next day (Feb 23) we all of us felt more or less worn out and no work was done. In the evening we pushed our quarters to el Karu so as to divide the burden of our entertainment for we were a large party.

The day after I attended to my correspondence and then we set about raising a loan to pay off the Fakhāni 'ākil which we succeeded in doing on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> and left el Karu on Feb 27<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. taking the usual route via ed-Dakhlak, Mishal and Akkūb.

I shall treat this stage of the journey briefly as it has already been dealt with (vide *Récit de voyage* - 99)

A steady drizzling rain commenced on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> and continued at intervals for the greater part of our journey as far as Shukera.

(Abyān) From here I pushed on with one pījārak on horseback for Aden. We were caught in a terrific downfall that night which converted all the lower levels of the Abyān district into a lake, and found W. Bana in flood about 400 metres across, so from the time we left Dakhlak until we reached Aden we never had dry clothes on.

I entered Aden before dawn on Sunday March 4<sup>th</sup> the caravan following in two days time. We had started on the journey down from Belhān with just \$11 in ready cash! an undertaking that I should be sorry to repeat. The journey was a trying one and I trust that if I have dwelt too much on its hardships I may be excused for I presume that the object of a report of this character is to relate all matters which bore upon our enterprise without reserve, for the guidance of others.

To the Imperial Academy of Sciences  
Vienna.

Al-Burayf  
Aug 22<sup>nd</sup> 1900  
Rahay  
of Aden