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Journey from Gwadur to Karachi

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Source: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 44 (1874), pp. 163-182

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of [The Royal Geographical Society \(with the Institute of British Geographers\)](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1798787>

Accessed: 28/06/2014 09:01

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Clearing a way through 100 miles of forest, in the direction of Berber, had been partially accomplished, and a line between Suakin and Massowah projected, when, in August, failing health imperatively decided Captain Rokeby to resign the appointment. He reached Cairo, *en route* for England, ill of a fever acquired in the Soudan, and died on the 22nd February, 1873.

XII.—*Journey from Gwadar to Karachi.* By Captain S. B. MILES, Assistant Political Agent, Mekran Coast.

I HAVE the honour to submit the following diary of my proceedings during my journey from Gwadar to Karachi through Western Mekran.

I had at first intended, after leaving Kej, to return direct to the sea-coast and thence to Karachi, avoiding the more direct road through Lus Beyla, which it was not advisable I should approach. At Kej, however, I found the opportunity very favourable for visiting Punjgoor, and I accordingly extended my journey thither, for which I trust I shall have your sanction and approval. I purposely took a different road throughout from that followed by Captain E. C. Ross in 1865, in order to see as much new country as possible.

I left Gwadar for Toomp on the 14th October with an escort of one jemedar and seven sowars, and halted the first night at Ankara nullah, distant 13 miles, in which we found a long pool of rain-water. A mile to the east of it lies the village of Nigore, which has a small date-grove and a good deal of cultivation around. There are two roads to Toomp from Gwadar; the eastern and shorter one of the two through the Talar Pass has been already described.

October 15th.—Ankara to Dusht River, 28 miles, a long march over a very uninteresting, uninhabited country, almost entirely devoid of vegetation. We started at 9 A.M. The road leading north-west over a bare level plain of nitrous soil. At 8 miles reach the Ghur range of hills, composed of fossiliferous clay and sandstone, and greatly eroded by the action of water, huge boulders being worn into very fantastic shapes. At 20 miles pass Gurook, another low range of hills, then on over another plain to the Saijee range, passing to the left Kohi Toongee and Saijee nullah, which is well wooded with *tamarisk* and *acacia*, until turning round the head of the range called the Sonti Saijee, we arrive at Dardan on the Dusht River at 9 P.M.

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16th.—As several of the escort and servants had been seized with fever in the night, I made a halt here to-day. The headman of the place, Gholam Mohammed, with a number of others, came and paid a visit. They informed me there had been a quarrel between the Rinds at Sadoi Kelat, in which one man had been killed and two wounded, also that a party of Rinds from Mund were on their way to assist their friends. I gave the villagers a few presents before leaving. The fort of Dardan is small and situated on a low hill. There are about 70 houses and 300 inhabitants in the village. Buffaloes, cattle, sheep, and goats were numerous here. The river was not running, and water was only to be found in pools.

17th.—Left at 9 A.M. Road at first east between the river and spur of Saijee range for 3 miles, when we cross the river and traverse a plain covered with *tamarisks*, *scrub*, and *asclepias*, with cotton and corn-fields. The soil here is light and spongy, with sandy tracts. After 6 miles again cross the river, the bed of which is cultivated for jowaree and melons. Several villages were seen to-day. The heat during the march was intense from the prevalence of hot winds. At 3 P.M. we arrive at Sadoi Kelat, distant 15 miles.

18th.—There is no fort. The huts are, as usual in this part of the country, of matting and rushes, and are of the poorest description. The water here is good and sweet, but not abundant at this time. The lofty Saijee range to the south-east with its serrated ridge has a very fine and picturesque appearance. In the evening we had a heavy dust-storm with a few drops of rain.

19th.—Marched at 9 A.M. Cross the river and then over level scrubby ground for 6 miles, when we come to Guarok, a large nullah running east, well wooded with *tamarisks*, &c. At 14 miles pass Roostung, a low hog-backed hill, beyond which lies the village of Bul, where we arrive at 3 P.M., and halt. Direction north, the road good and level all the way. Bul is a large village of 400 houses, with about 20 wells of good water and a large date-grove. The town is surrounded by fields, which are all bunded for irrigation. The inhabitants are all Zikrees, the headman is Kowda Nooroodin. On the way we had passed signs of former cultivation, now deserted, the people being entirely dependent on the seasons for irrigating their fields. The soil here is much better than that at Dardan. I heard here that outrages had been committed by the Rinds at Nasirabad, and that two persons had been killed by them. Several persons came to me for medicines to-day. The women are not very prepossessing, and do not conceal their faces. Their dress is a long gown with pyjamas, exactly like that of

Arabs, but the gown is not quite so long. Bul is a term applied to any grove or tope of trees, especially date-palms.

20th.—Marched at 6½ A.M. Our road lay N.N.E., over a thinly wooded and cultivated plain, with small date-groves and scattered hamlets. At 3 miles pass Chelunki, a village of about 50 huts and a small fort belonging to Meer Morad Gitchkee of Toomp. At 8 miles we came to another village, Much Chât or “Date-tree well.” The headman of it is Dad Mohammed, who is much respected by Meer Morad and the people. I stopped some time to talk with him; he seems an intelligent man. The country here is better wooded, with some stately Kaheer or Sind thorn-trees. At 14 miles reach Hôt Chôt, where we halt; the baggage came up at 1 P.M. The plain we are now traversing between the lower Toomp range in front and the Dusht River behind us is called Nigore, and is a well peopled, fertile district. The inhabitants of it are all Zikrees (with the exception of Dad Mohammed), and being a united body, are able to repulse the Rinds and protect themselves from being plundered. The district is well supplied with good water from wells which are deep but extremely narrow, being only about a foot square at the mouth. They are built of stone or wood. Some of the fields had corn nearly ripe, while others were being ploughed for sowing. The headman of Hôt Chôt is Kowda Beloochan, but he was absent at Bahoo.

21st.—Hôt Chôt to Pittook Pass, 8 miles. The road lay over gradually rising ground with a little cultivation at first, but becoming more stony and broken as we approach the hills. After 3 miles we turn up north-east and ascend the Khos Pittook, which forms the natural pass into the hill range. We halt at some springs which yield a scanty supply of good water. The lower Toomp range trends, like most of the hill-ranges in Mekran, nearly due east and west, and appears to average about 1000 feet in height. There is no pass through it immediately south of Toomp, and the caravan road from the Dusht therefore has to make a considerable détour to the east. Two footpaths are known to the Beloochees through the hills between Pittook and Toomp, named Nokirah and Meerali, but they are said to be impassable for laden camels.

22nd.—Pittook to Toomp 2 miles. The pass winds along torrent-beds, is very intricate and circuitous, and in two or three places rather steep, but is better than might have been expected. Springs of excellent water are met with at intervals, bursting out of the solid rock and forming rivulets swarming with small fish. The composition of the hills is chiefly sandstone with quartz and conglomerate, the dip of the strata is very oblique. On emerging from the pass we find ourselves in the

Toomp Valley riding under magnificent date-groves watered by the silvery stream of the Nihing, and backed by a loftier parallel range to the north. The path now leads due west for about 8 miles to Toomp, passing several villages. I halted near the fort under the date-trees, and had to wait six hours before the camels with the tents came up, though they had left some hours earlier in the morning. There is a better but longer road from Pittook round by Kelaho, and the camels had come by that.

There is a small hamlet inside the wall, including one Banian's shop. Meer Morad possesses one gun, a 12-pounder, well mounted on a field carriage. From the top I had a splendid view of the country. Almost in the centre of the valley, which is here about 12 miles broad, runs the Nihing River, at this season very low, and along it to the eastward lies a long belt of date-groves stretching in an almost continuous line for miles. The cultivation is hidden from sight, as the fields are all among the date-trees and do not extend beyond them. To the west is the village of Goomaz, distant about 6 miles, while to the north-east is seen Polapoor, the fort and residence of Meer Morad's brother. There are fourteen others in the settlement or *abâdu* of Toomp, which, like Kej, is not a town but a cluster of villages, each having its distinctive appellation, but all included in the general name of Toomp. Rice is much grown here, and is reaped alternately with jowaree, beans, pulse, &c. The gardens yield figs, almonds, mangoes, plantains, citrons, oranges, and lemons, but the staple production of the place is dates, which are of excellent quality. The difficulty here is want of camel-fodder, the ground outside the belt of cultivation being perfectly barren. The population of the *abâdu* may be about 8000 souls. In the fort reside some thirty weavers, who make coarse silk and cotton cloth, and a few carpenters and smiths, who make the simple agricultural implements used by the people.

24th.—We marched at 6 A.M. this morning and rode for 10 miles along the date-groves, when we crossed the Nihing River. Cultivation is pretty extensive the whole way to Nasirabad, but there are intervals of stony land with the usual jungle wood and scrub. On the way we passed the villages of Nuseerabad, Asiabad, Khush Kelat, Balachor, and Siring, each with its date-grove. These villages are nearly all supplied with *karezes* or artificial watercourses; they are very ancient, and their construction is ascribed by the people to the Devs. The present race of Belooch is not only quite unable to dig new ones but can barely keep in repair those there are. They are numerous in the Kej and Punjgoor valleys, but I have not

heard of them elsewhere in Mekran. I arrived at Nasirabad at 9½ A.M., but the baggage did not come up till 4 P.M. Distance 20 miles. The fort here is in the hands of Dost Mohammed, and it ranks next after Toomp. Dost Mohammed is a tall, fine-looking man: he told me he was at feud with his brother Ashruf, who dwells in the fort of Nodiz.

25th.—Marched at 5:30 A.M. At 6 hours pass Nodiz, and at 7 hours Kelaho. This is the eastern limit of the Toomp district. At 7½ hours the village of Shay Kan. The scenery is little varied. Cultivation and date-groves with, at intervals, tamarisks and camel-scrub. The road is generally well trodden and good, but in places stony; we cross several deep nullahs running into the Kil Khor, but they are mostly bridged over with fallen date-trees. At 9 hours we arrive in sight of Kej, and, skirting some outlying fields, we soon reach the Wirri Fort, and under it pitch our camp on the bank of the Kej River or Kil Khor. The Naib Moolla Ali Jan visited me in the course of the day. The next morning came Meer Bhayan Gitchkee, the Naib Mohammed Khan, and Meer Kunner, with all their following. There being no room in the tent, we all sat down outside in a circle, and the greetings were long and ceremonious. Meer Bhayan is a Deenarzai Gitchkee, and since the departure of Darogha Atta Mohammed has been virtually the chief and ruler of Kej, where he is greatly respected by all. All the yearly revenue of the province is received by him through old treaty with the khan.

On the 27th I went to return visits and to see the different forts. The largest and most important is Mirri, in which the Khan's Naib resides. It is well situated on a commanding eminence, almost overhanging the river. There is a tradition that it was built by Bahman, and that the earth of the mound on which it is erected was brought from a distance of some miles by the soldiers of his army in their horses' tobras. The fort is now very dilapidated, and has been much larger and stronger. The wells are dried up, and one or two unmounted guns in the court-yard lie rusty and uncared for. Kosi Kelat is about one mile from the Mirri; it is one of the residences of Meer Bhayan, who usually passes one week here and one at Toorbut alternately. Meer Bhayan received me at the gate, and was extremely civil; he informed me he had built it himself eight years before, and had called it Kosi Kelat from its airy situation. It is small, and of little strength. I then proceeded on to Toorbut, which is at present in charge of a Kotwal named Khodadad. When Darogha Atta Mohammed was here he caused it to be dismantled and the upper storey pulled down, and it is now incapable of defence. There is one old gun in it.

There are more inhabitants here than in the other forts, and they mostly reside within the outer wall, which is still good. Of the seven Hindoo traders at Kej, four live in Toorbut. The forts of Gushtmy, Killa-i-Now, and Abser, I did not visit. The valley in which Kej is situated is, perhaps, the most remarkable geographical feature in Mekran. The parallel ranges of hills which form it are very uniform in height, the north range being, perhaps, 1200 feet, and the south range somewhat lower. In breadth the valley appeared to average about 15 miles, while in length it stretches about 270. The river here was rather low, and the current weak. This river flowing westward meets the Nihing River flowing east, the confluence being about opposite Nasirabad, whence they turn south, and force egress through an opening in the hills. The stream from thence is called the Dusht, and debouches into Gwetter Bay. It is curious that the Dusht River should have been dry when I crossed it at Sadoi Kelat, although the Kej and Nihing were still running, but so it was. I found seven species of fish in these rivers, all of which are caught and eaten by the Beloochees. It is said there are crocodiles also in the Kej River, but I saw none. Rice appears to be the staple grain cultivated at Kej, but fields of wheat, jowaree, barley, and beans are seen, as also tobacco, cotton, lucerne, garlic, and pulse, &c. The state of agriculture is decidedly low, two crops are produced in the year. The work in the fields is done by slaves. The fields are irrigated by rain in its season, and at other times by karezes, which are met with everywhere here. Manure is little used, but the stubble is burnt and the ashes ploughed in, and sometimes cattle-litter is sprinkled over the fields. Very little or no care is bestowed on the date-trees in this valley; they are left to take care of themselves, or they would be more numerous, and the fruit superior in quality. I may observe that the sugar-cane is not grown here, nor, I believe, elsewhere in Mekran, at the present day. In former days, according to old Arab geographers, Mekran was famous for the refined sugar it produced, which was largely exported. The best quality was called Masekâni. The manufactures of Kej are not very extensive. A good deal of cloth, silk, cotton, and wool, is woven, and great numbers of small neat caps, much worn by Beloochees everywhere, are made here. Some of the raw silk used is produced in Dizzuk and Serbaz, the rest is imported from Gwadur. It is a pity the culture of the worm is not more extended in Mekran. Leather powder-flasks and belts are a manufacture peculiar to Kej, which supplies nearly all Mekran with these articles. Musical instruments, of which there are six kinds known to the Mekranis, are made here. There are three varieties of stringed

instruments, also a flute, a pipe or piccolo, and the drum. There are numerous carpenters, smiths, and mooches, and I found no difficulty in getting the horses shod here with Persian shoes. There is no market held here now. I was told that one used to be held every Friday regularly some years back, but it had been discontinued. I had been inquiring into the state of affairs at Punjgoor, and heard to-day that the new Naib, Khan Mohammed, was on his way, and would shortly arrive there. I was assured the country was perfectly quiet, and there would be no difficulty. I thought it best, therefore, to take advantage of the occasion and pay it a visit.

29th.—We left in the evening and halted for the night at Jewsuk, a village a few miles further on.

30th.—This morning we were fortunate to find a man with four camels, and he was immediately hired, though at double rates. The road to Sami is partly along the bed of the Khor, and partly over sterile stony ground, with stumpy herbage. At 5 miles came to Khor Keysāk, which is one of the passes through the hills to Punjgoor. At 13 miles, Ketkin, a small hamlet, and at 14 miles to the left, Shahruk, a small fort with date-grove. At 3 P.M. arrive at Sami, distant from Kej 18 miles. Sami is well supplied with water, for, besides the Kil Khor, which runs to the south of the town, there is a small perennial stream from the hills. The dates are only sufficient for home consumption, while grain and rice have to be imported. Two Hindoos live here to collect the wool brought in from the hills, and there are about 40 weavers of cloth. I went over the fort, which Meer Esan told me was built by his grandfather; it is small and dilapidated. The revenue of Sami comes to about Rs. 740 yearly, none of which, I believe, goes to the khan. It is made up as follows:—land tax, Rs. 400; date tax, Rs. 200; capitation tax, Rs. 100; shepherd dues, Rs. 40. I was informed that there were three passes through the hill-range north of Kej. One called Girook, leading to Boleida, is nearly opposite Kej, and is the most difficult, though the shortest, route to Punjgoor; the Keysāk Pass is nearly as bad as Girook, and is not much used; the third, Balgetter, is the best, but the longest round; I chose it because the Girook had been already crossed by Captain Lovett, R.E. As I wished to be accompanied to Punjgoor by some influential person, I applied to Meer Esan Gitchkee, and it was arranged that Meer Kamalan should come with me as far as Kolwah. I was extremely glad to obtain his companionship, as he is a very intelligent and gentlemanly man, and possessed of a fund of information about the country. Meer Esan advised me to camp at Punjgoor, at the Mirri Esai, where the Naib resided.

November 1st.—Having been provided with camels, we marched to-day at 9 A.M. At 3 miles pass the village and new fort of Kullug, the old fort of which lies in ruins on a hill to the right. The road lies east, over a barren stony plain and along the khor, in which is thin jungle and underwood. At 10 miles, Herook, a small date-grove and patch of cultivation, but with no habitations. Two small streams here run into the khor from the hills, fertilising a small tract. The valley appears to be full of springs, and, though running water is only met with at intervals, in the bed of the khor, it probably continues flowing under ground. Halt at 3 P.M. near a pool. Distance 16 miles.

2nd.—Continued our journey along the stony bed of the khor, here wooded with acacias and the sombre tamarisk. Road broken and heavy. Here and there we come upon a "halk" or shepherd encampment. At 8 miles we enter a long prairie of tall coarse grass or rushes, which is said to harbour numbers of wild pig. The interval between Sami and Kolwah is almost uninhabited, being a sterile gap between two long fertile strips. At Tejabadan, 10 miles, we leave the Kolwah road and turn up north-east towards the hills; wood now ceases, and mountain herbage with "Peesh" palm in the nullahs begins. A few miles further on we halt at Chekulla, near a "halk," where flocks of sheep and goats are seen grazing on the hill-side.

3rd.—Start at 6:30. Road north, along the steep bank of a nullah up the foot-hills of the range. We then enter the Khor, which forms the Ketug Pass, the bed forming an excellent road, rising by a very gentle acclivity. The perpendicular walls gradually increase in height as we ascend. On the north side the descent is equally gradual; here a spring of water, called Balgetter, is reached, and, soon after, the pass opens into a bare level plain, also called Balgetter, bounded by hills on all sides stretching far away into the distance, their blackish hue contrasting strangely with the white nitrous soil of the plain.

At 9.30 pass a small fort to the left, called Dumb, built by Meer Boher Gitchkee. Pushing on we soon lose the way, the hard ground showing no traces of the road. After wandering about some time in the hills, we come up some fields, in one of which a man was ploughing; he was easily induced to show us the way to our halting-place. A spring of water, named Tush. Distance 18 miles. The sky now became overcast, and a little after sunset a heavy thunder-storm burst over us, soaking the baggage, and causing us considerable discomfort. A palpable change in climate is experienced directly this range is crossed;

from a close, sultry heat on that side, to chilly nights and cold winds on this.

4th.—Road to-day very intricate, and winding up and down low hills. The almost vertical direction of the strata, and the friable nature of the slaty rock, make it very difficult and slow travelling for the camels. After a few miles pass two large nullahs, the Hingol and Kurooshi, both running west into the Ghishkhor. At 9 miles arrive at a pool under a ledge or chine, named Gutti Guristichum, down which trickles a little rill of water. There is a goat-path up to the top of this cliff, where we found our halting-place, but the road is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile round.

5th.—To Goran, 7 hours. Road at first along nullah, named Lushkarikhor, in which is a spot named Lall Khan-i-jungijah, from a battle fought there about fifty years ago. Springs and pools of water are frequent in it. At 12 miles pass the nullah and hill-range of Peeree, in which traces of iron are visible. General vegetation continues very scanty, camel-grass and peesh (*Chamærops Ritchiana*) in the ravines, with an occasional *Babool acacia* and *Ber-tree*. At 15 miles we are glad to halt and pitch our camp in a picturesque little hollow or dell in the hills near a brooklet fed by springs bubbling out of the rock, full of small fish and bordered by oleanders, peesh, and other plants. There are two, if not three, species of oleander in these hills: the common poisonous one, and another non-poisonous, which is highly valued for its medicinal virtues by the natives.

6th.—To Shahbaz Fort, 6 hours. From Goran there are two roads to Punjgoor, one over the Goran range, which is a somewhat steep ascent for laden camels, and another much more circuitous, but a better road. I chose the shorter one. The pass turned out to be about half a mile in length, and not near so steep as they had made out; the camels, however, had all to be assisted up by the men. The summit of the range is level, intersected by numerous nullahs. At 3 miles we come to a spring of water, named Ledan, with a low range to north, named Bundi Koh. Passing this, we see by the roadside an extensive cemetery of simple Belooch graves. It is a curious thing that on every day's march since leaving Kej we had met with one or two of these cemeteries. The country, however, is uninhabited, except by a few shepherds, who are too few to afford tenants for so many graves. They may, perhaps, mark the site of former towns or villages, but the Beloochees can give no information respecting them, and have seldom any name for the localities. The fort of Shahbaz now came in sight, and we entered on the Dusht of Punjgoor, a flat, unwooded plain of light alluvial soil, partially under cultivation

and drained by watercourses, mostly running south-west. At 11 miles we pass a small fort to the left, named Koot.

Among the fields was seen a family party cooking locusts. They had collected large bagsful the night before, and were meditating a grand feast. The locusts are either spitted by fifties on a stick and roasted like kababs, or they are cast by bagsful into an oven formed of a deep hole in the ground, into which embers have been put; the mouth is then closed for some hours, when they are found nicely baked through. One little child was capering about, munching his greasy kababs like sweetmeats with great gusto. Arrived at Shahbaz Fort at 1 P.M., distance 13 miles. The fort is well situated on a large circular mound commanding the plain. It is small, but in good order, having been repaired about four years ago. There are no habitations near, and the fort is quite unoccupied and deserted, with the exception of a seedee, who looks after some of the surrounding fields. The only water is from a well outside, which yields a copious supply. Sheep and goats are sent here to graze from Punjgoor, where there is no fodder for them. I wrote to-day to Khan Mohammed to inform him of my arrival. The nights are very chilly now, but the cool breath of the mornings is delightful, as in an English spring.

7th.—Started off the tents early at 9 A.M. Resumed our march over the Dusht, a flat fissured and furrowed by nullahs and sparsely dotted with shrubs, varied here and there by a patch of cultivation, and backed by a dark curtain of hills. At 6 miles reach the Kasani Koh range, which takes two hours to cross by a long tortuous pass.

At 1 P.M. we come to a small pool in the Gorandi ravine, where we rest for an hour. Passing this, I soon had the gratification of seeing the valley of Punjgoor, with its fort and conspicuous date-groves lying in front of us.

Thermometer at 6 A.M. 46°, and at 1 P.M. 86°. The next morning I received a visit from Ibrahim Khan, the Chief of the Nowshirwani tribe, at Punjgoor, and the nephew of Azad Khan; he told me he had been to Kandahar and Sistan. At 11 A.M. I went to return the Naib's visit: he showed me over the Mirri and Tul forts. The former is in ruins, having been destroyed by the Khan. It must have been a fine fort, and superior to any other here in its time. The domed gateway, arched round, is a handsome entrance. Tul Fort from the outside resembles somewhat a church with a square tower; there is a good view from the top. The groves and cultivation are supplied by four karezes. From the Mirri I went on to Tusp, through the grove and hamlet of Tood. Here we passed the end of the Rudkhan River, where it loses itself in the sand;

so much water, however, has been expended on the way in irrigating the fields, that there is not much left to lose. The Tusp Fort has been destroyed. The settlement is the most populous of all at Punjgoor, and the inhabitants the most turbulent and united in resisting payment of taxes, in which they always set the example to the Punjgoories.

Punjgoor appears to be a healthy place, from the number of old grey-beards I noticed to-day. Some of the girls were very fair.

10th.—To-day I went to see Meer Gazian at Soordoo Fort, where the Naib happened to be visiting too. After sitting some time I was taken through the fields and fruit-orchards. The abundance of fruit-trees surprised me, and I regretted having come just too late to enjoy them. Apples, grapes, plums, oranges, lemons, citrons, peaches, figs, almonds, and jujubes, are some of those to be found here. At Soordoo there are no karezes, and the fields are watered from the river. From Soordoo I crossed to Khodabadan, passing on the way the large settlement of Gurmkan, the fort of which has been levelled. Here I noticed a date-press of primitive construction, the juice of the dates being required to pour over others when packed in jars for export. From Khodabadan I returned to camp through Dozanâb, where I paid a short visit to Mohammed Shah.

11th.—There is some difficulty in getting camels here for Ormara, not that there is any scarcity of them, but the men are so independent and difficult to deal with. My visitors all came again to-day, and left me little leisure to go about and see the place. The Hindoos also came to-day: there are five here; they appear to be well treated, and to have a lucrative trade in their hands. One of them, an old man, was disguised exactly like a Belooch; he had acquired the language, and had even the squalid appearance and truculent air of the native. He was better informed regarding the geography and state of the country generally than anyone else I met with.

Punjgoor bears, both physically and politically, a striking resemblance to Kej, and the description of one applies almost equally well to the other. The same long narrow valley with detached settlements, the same productions and political institutions, are the characteristic features of each. Punjgoor is, however, on a somewhat larger scale. It consists of thirteen abâdus; five large and eight small ones. Most of these were formerly protected by a fort; but, with the exception of Tul, Soordoo, and Khodabadan, they have all been destroyed by the Khan. The names of the large settlements are Esai, Tusp, Soordoo, Khodabadan, and Gurmkan. The eight small ones

are Chetkân, Dozanâb, Bood, Wushbood, Dumb, Cheri Dumb, Sureegorân, and Bonistân. Each of these abâdus is a medley of fort, fields, fruit-orchards, date-palms, houses, and water-courses; the rest of the plain in which they are being arid and unproductive.

The hills forming the valley are about 12 miles apart. There is no general name for either the north or south range: indeed, in Mekran, as in Arabia, there is a singular deficiency of general names for geographical features, such as hills, rivers, &c.

The south range extends as far east as Nooshky; the north range only reaches to Kharan.

The River Rudkhan rises four days' journey to the north-east, and except in the floods, when it falls into the Guarso at Bingee Kelat, becomes absorbed in the ground just to the west of Punjgoor. It is a shallow stream, but the current is fast, running about 3 miles an hour. I may observe that Pottinger's hearsay account of the Boodoor River is quite incorrect. There is no river of that name here; and the names of Mooleedanee and Bhugwar, applied by him to the Dusht River, are unknown to the natives now, so far as my inquiries extend. The two chief tribes are the Gitchkees and Nowshirwanis; the latter all reside in Khodabadad, which has lately been taken possession of by Ibrahim Khan from the Khan of Kelat. They are an independent and predatory tribe, and hold great influence and power in the Punjgoor valley and Kharan.

The Gitchkees are of the Esauzai branch, and are found in the Soordoo Abâdu. Their Sirdar, Meer Gazian, receives half the revenue of the place, and appears to be associated with the Khan's Naib in the government. The population of the Esai Abâdu is chiefly of the Kashâni, Keenugzai, and Burr tribes; while at Tusp they are nearly all Moolarzais. The rest of the population of Punjgoor is made up of Durzadas slaves and inferior tribes and families, and may be put down roughly at from 16,000 to 18,000 souls.

The hill-men and shepherds around are Bezunjoos, Sâjudees and Brahooes of sorts. The Punjgoories are a notoriously turbulent lot, and would require a strong government to keep them in any order. Externally Punjgoor was quiet enough at this time; but it is often, and especially when taxes are being levied, a seething pot of discord, always ready to boil over in bloodshed.

The Khan's Naib is, of course, inimical to the rebellious Nowshirwanis; the Nowshirwanis and Gitchkees are deadly enemies, and the Nowshirwanis are themselves divided. The petty political intrigues and jealousies are as necessary to the Belooch and as acrimonious as in a highly civilized state.

The revenue is derived from three sources, viz., a tax of 10 per cent. on land, the same on date-trees and transit dues. These are Rs. 2 per camel-load on imports, and 8 annas per load on exported dates.

Last year Darogha Atta Mohammed collected Rs. 35,000 from Punjgoor; the year before, the present Naib had collected only Rs. 5000. This year nothing had yet been obtained, because the people refused to pay, and there was no means of compelling them. The Naib told me that when force was resorted to, as much was taken as possible, in which case of course the poorest and weakest suffered most; he thought the general average was Rs. 15,000. About one and a half month ago, a caravan of 400 camels arrived from Kandahar with wheat, &c., and had left a few days since with dates. The Naib had not arrived here at the time of their leaving, and they consequently got off without paying any dues. Had Atta Mohammed been here when they departed, he would have taken at least Rs. 1000 out of them. The glory of Punjgoor is in its dates, which form one of the staples of food, and are exported in large quantities. They are greatly and deservedly famed for their excellence, which is attributed by the natives to the cold and to the sweetness of the soil. The best kind is the Mussâtee, and it is perhaps one of the finest dates known. These are packed in small earthen jars, called "hoombs," with the expressed inspissated juice of inferior kinds poured over them, and the mouth then closed; they are chiefly sent as presents. Though so late in the year, unripe fruit was still hanging from many of the date-trees, the best kinds being in mat bags, to prevent them dropping. The grains grown here are rice, wheat, jowaree, and barley; the Kharif crops being rice, jowaree, and pulse; and the Rabi, or spring crops, barley, wheat, beans, &c. The fields are manured with decomposed vegetation and dung. The jowaree is a little taller than in Mekran generally, but does not reach the height seen in India. It is found necessary, according to the natives, to transplant it in rows like rice, and the fields consequently look very thin; this is probably owing in some degree to the poorness of the soil. The practice obtains here, as in Mekran generally, of sowing leguminous and culmiferous plants together; a field of jowaree, for instance, may frequently be seen intermixed with moong. There is abundance of water for irrigation from the river, and from karezes, of which there are eleven at Punjgoor. Well-irrigation is not practised here; and, indeed, I did not observe a single field irrigated from wells throughout the journey. The method of raising water is by hand over a pulley,

both the Persian wheel and Indian mote system being quite unknown in the country.

The trade of Punjgoor is mostly in the hands of the Hindoos; the imports being cloth, grain, salt-fish, metals, and sundries; and the exports, dates and wool. The wool is of very fine quality, but is unfortunately greatly adulterated, being mixed with goats' hair, and packed in a damp state after having been exposed to the dew. The trade with Ormara has lately increased in proportion as that with Kelat has fallen off. The forts and pukka houses are built of mud-bricks, the friable flaky rock being useless for the purpose. By far the greater part of the houses, however, are built of date-leaves and matting. No large timber of any kind grows near Punjgoor, and the only firewood is date and peesh leaves. The manufactures are few and unimportant; they consist of felts for camel-saddles and carpeting, and coarse cotton cloths, both white and brown, the raw material of which is imported from Dizzuk. There are no "hakeems" or doctors here, or anywhere in Eastern Mekran, the healing art being practised by old women, who are acquainted with a few simples.

12th.—To-day the camels having come, we prepare to leave Punjgoor. I had been most hospitably received here, presents of sheep, flour, fruit, &c., having been sent every day; and the Naib, Khan Mohammed, had been particularly civil and attentive. I gave him a rifle, telescope, cloth, &c.; and to Sirdar Meer Gazian and the others, presents in proportion. We managed to start by 10 A.M., the road leading south through the same pass we had come by. To the south-west of Punjgoor, on our right, was the ancient fort of Khurramabad, which is said to be the old name of Punjgoor. I could not learn when or how it had received its present appellation of the "Five Tombs." In the broad nullahs near the hills is quite a green sea of peesh-palms. In lower Mekran these would soon disappear; but here the leaf is hardly used, except for fuel. This tree is held in peculiar affection by the natives, and the uses it is put to are innumerable. Excellent rope being made from the leaves by the simple process of twisting them, no other kind is used; and the fibrous virtues of the *asclepias* and other plants are quite ignored. On the way we passed numerous trains of camels, asses, and pack-bullocks going to Punjgoor for dates from Ormara, Kolwah, &c.; and evidently a brisk trade was going on at this time. At 5 P.M. we halt and camp in the hills. No water. In descending the pass, one of the sepoys was fallen upon and flattened by a camel. I thought he was killed, as he was senseless for some time, but he recovered.

13th.—Leaving at 8 A.M. to-day, we proceeded south across the Dusht to Shahbaz Fort, where we watered the animals. The road then turned south-east, and led us scrambling along tortuous torrent-beds among the hills. At 15 miles arrive at our halting-place, called Jourikân, or “Oleander Nullah,”—a picturesque spot. A copious fountain of warm, but sweet, water gushing from the solid rock, and forming a deep pool full of fishes, and surrounded by peesh, wild date, oleander, and ber trees. Large parties of poor people were to be seen here tramping back to Kolwah from Punjgoor, where they had been to glean after the date-harvest. This is a common practice in Mekran, the poorer people visiting the centres of date cultivation during the harvest from all directions. The traffic between Kolwah and Punjgoor seems to be greater than between Punjgoor and Kej. Our present baggage-camels I find are wretched creatures, but Punjgoor camels are notably inferior. The camels in Mekran generally are as inferior to those in South Arabia as the Beloochees are behind the Arabs in handling them. Compared with Bedouins, the Belooch are contemptible camel-riders.

14th.—The camelmen lost their animals this morning, and did not bring them till near nine. Road winding, over hill and dale as usual. The formation now changes from slate and limestone to sandstone; the strata lie vertical or nearly so, and the surface of the rock thus rapidly disintegrates. The hills soon assume a more verdant appearance, from the short grass and herbage with which they are clothed. Pass on the way three large nullahs running south into the Kil Khor. At 14 miles arrive at Zahm or “Sword” nullah, where are two pools fed by springs, affording a permanent supply of good water. On the bank is a parallelogram of cleared ground with a low wall, and having circles and squares inside, like the foundations of dwelling-houses. Hard by are the beginnings or remains of a small fort, about 40 yards square, the walls of which are only about 4 or 5 feet high.

These remains may perhaps indicate the site of some former town or entrenched camp. They stand on a small plain or valley, which may have been cultivated once, though it is not now. I could obtain no satisfactory account of the place, but there is, of course, a legend attached to it about a Belooch chief, who built the fort and was attacked by the Persians, who carried his sister into captivity.

15th.—Marched at 8 A.M. At 10 miles pass Goombug, a halting-place, where there is water. At 11 miles Kurpulla, and at 12 miles Dushtuk, two small plains, which showed signs of former culture. I was told that they had been ravaged about

six years before by Belooch Khan Nowshirwanee, and the people driven or carried off, since when they have remained deserted and are now overgrown with grass. At Goombug the road bifurcates, the more direct branch having a steep defile in it, which the other circles round some miles to avoid.

The country more diversified to-day, and the road better. We passed several caravans. Off the road somewhere near is said to be a curious cave, called Zik, with the tomb of a woman in it. Women (more than men), and dragons, too, by the way, play a great part in the legendary lore of Mekran. I was shown several spots where dire encounters had taken place with these monsters, and in some of them the blood of the dragons was still to be seen by those who liked. At 1 P.M. reached Khuzhma, a deep and wooded nullah, with a pool of water, where we halt. Distance 16 miles.

16th.—March at 8 A.M. At 6 miles reach the Kil Khor, here very broad and well wooded with *tamarisks*, *mimosas*, &c. At 8 miles come to the Kohi Nâg, a high range, trending east and west; and a few miles to the west lies another range, called Tunk, through which the Kil Khor flows into the valley. After ascending the bed of a torrent for some distance we come to the Hodal Pass, a short but very steep defile, in traversing which the camels had to be partly unloaded. On the top I saw a herd of "gud" or ibex, but of course out of shot; they were the first I had seen. At 2½ P.M. arrived at a small spring in Khor Khuldan, distant from Khuzhma about 12 miles, where we camp for the night. General direction south-east.

17th.—Camels ready and off by 7 A.M. Road down the Khuldan ravine, the steep wall-like bank gradually increasing in depth and width. At 3 miles pass the date-grove and springs of Khuldan. At 7 miles, emerging from the way, we debouch upon an open plain. The first hilly district has now been left behind, and we are now in Kolwah, the granary of Mekran. Crossing the valley we pass to the left, the ruined fort of Gutt, and on the right Nag and Putk. Here cultivation is seen, but a good deal of the soil appears to be untouched, and is covered with shinz, soorugs, &c. Very few inhabitants are seen here, many of them being in the hills with their flocks and herds, and others gone to Punjgoor for the date-harvest. At 13 miles we leave the valley and enter the Beloor nullah, and begin to penetrate the second hilly district. At 20 miles reach the village of Beloori Kullug, where we are glad to halt at 3 P.M. The valley of Kolwah is here about 10 miles broad; there is a great scarcity of water in it, and the cultivation is dependent on the rain alone. Many of the ravines running into it are admirably adapted for bunding, and could then be made to increase

the fecundity of the whole district; but this, of course, is beyond the power of the people in their present state.

19th.—At 9 A.M., having broken up the camp and taken leave, I continued my route southerly through the hills, the road leading along ravines and torrent-beds full of large loose boulders. A difficult path, water being plentiful from springs all the way. General vegetation, *oleanders*, *neem*, *ziziphies*, and a prickly *euphorbia*. At 12 miles halt at a pool of rain-water in Khor Kasug Purush, or "Cupbreaker Nullah," which falls into the Khor Bussool.

20th.—March at 8 A.M. and wend our way along the khor, which becomes gradually wider and deeper. Road extremely tortuous and paved with round cobble-stones, making it very painful travelling for the camels. A regular concatenation of pools and springs of water the whole way. The nullah in upper part is called Shedad or Shiadât. At 9 miles pass a place named Zoramibeit, and at 12 miles reach Appir, where we halt. The hills appear to be of sandstone, with quartz, limestone and a little slate; they are clothed with sparse herbage, and numerous flocks of sheep and goats were seen browsing on them. The Beloochees in Kolwah and hereabout are nearly all Zikrees or Mehlivis. This sect of non-conformists sprung into existence about 300 years ago, at which time their Mehdi or Saviour appeared on earth. Their Mecca is the fort of Toorbut at Kej, near which is a small hill named Koh Moorad, where they go to worship. Zikrees keep aloof from other Beloochees generally, and are always peaceful and well-behaved: formerly they were much more numerous, but have decreased through persecution by the Gitchkees, &c. I believe their tenets have a great analogy to those of Bâbism, the new sect in Persia.

21st.—Road to-day down the khor, as yesterday. Passed an immense flight of locusts, which were devouring everything, the shrubs being literally brown with them. We now come to the clay hills of the coast, and the ranges, instead of being peaked and serrated, are flat and horizontal on the top. The clay alternates with sandstone, which supports vegetation, while the clay does not. At 12 miles pass Wakab, where there is a small stream running. At 3 P.M. reach Dostinigoarrum, where we halt. Distance 15 miles.

22nd.—Start at 7½ A.M. The khor, which yesterday led due west, now circles round a low range to east or east-south-east. Road better to-day, being more sandy. The watershed of the Khor Bussool, in which we are travelling, is the sterile hilly tract between Kolwah and the coast. Receiving numerous confluent, it drains a considerable extent of country and falls into the sea about 20 miles west of Ormara. From the evidence

of the bed a good deal of alluvium seems to be brought down by it. Though no lack of water is to be found in it at all seasons, it cannot be dignified with the name of river, as it is but alternately a dry bed and a rushing torrent. Beds of sulphur are found here, according to the natives. At 2 P.M. reach a muddy pool, near which is a small hamlet, with date-trees, where we halt. Distance 14 miles. The khor is here very broad and open. I observed the liquorice-plant growing in it. We were here visited by a violent dust-storm, rendering darkness visible for some hours: it was one of the worst I had seen.

23rd.—March at 7 A.M., and soon leaving the Khor Bus-sool, we traverse in a south-easterly direction a sandy plain of camel-grass, &c., passing a small patch of cultivation. After a few miles come to a broad swamp or khor, which we cross knee-deep in mud. Road then over plain of sand-hills, tufted with bushes, along the Isthmus of Ormara, until we arrive at the Telegraph Station at 3 P.M.

24th.—Ormara is a town of about 500 houses, or rather mat-hovels. There is a good deal of trade carried on, the customs for this year having been sold for Rs. 12,000. There are about a dozen Hindoo and Khoja merchants, who trade with the interior, and with Bombay, Karachi, and the Malabar coast. The chief articles of export are salt-fish, wool, and mats, and it is noticeable that the exports exceed the imports in value. I stopped at Ormara four days.

27th.—I left the Telegraph Station at 3½ P.M., the road leading north-east under the Telegraph line over a sandy plain, with scrub and the dwarf willow, called "shemil." At 5 miles pass the village of Hurd to the left. After a short ride of 10 miles arrive at Bul, where is a well, but no habitations.

28th.—Bul to Bullaroo. Road north-north-east, over plain of sand and clay, with ordinary desert vegetation. Cross two broad salt-water creeks. At Bullaroo we found a cluster of babool-trees, with a few fields of wheat and jowaree; the *colocynth* gourd here very abundant, and the sand-hills covered with the common succulent camel-grass. Of this grass or scrub there are many species, each kind having its name, but all known to the Beloochees under the generic name of Soorug, so called from its salt or alkaline taste. It is held to be among the best fodder for camels, causing them to drink freely. From its abundance and wide distribution it forms one of the most peculiar features in the vegetation of Mekran. The road leading to the Harriani Pass diverges from Bullaroo, and I sent off some of the heavy baggage round by that way, but I intended myself going through the Malar Kundug, which is more difficult but less known.

30th.—Bullaroo to Khor Butt 13 miles. March at 9:30 A.M.,

road east, over sand-hills and bushes, and then as the spur of hills comes closer down to the sea, we leave the heavy undulating sands to make our way along the beach. The strip of plain on our left is about half a mile wide and narrows gradually as we approach Khor Butt, where the hills are close on the sea. The hills are chiefly of grey clay, the base of them being in places aproned with red sand. This red sandstone is found on the beach from Pussnee to beyond Sonmeanee. Two khoods, or deep ravines, coming from different directions, converge at this point. The eastern one, called Soorab, forms a natural road up the Malan. The western one is Khor Butt, which, winding down from the north-east, leads to the Malar Pass, or Kundug.

December 2nd.—Leaving the camp at Khor Butt, proceeded up the Soorab Valley to visit the Malan. After 3 miles we commence to climb up the almost perpendicular face of the Butt, which rises about 600 feet, by no means an easy or pleasant ascent. On the top a fatiguing walk of 10 miles over a level plateau, cut up by very deep ravines, brought us to the edge of the cliff, over which the telegraph-wires fall a clear drop of 1500 feet. From here a magnificent view is afforded of the coast-line and ranges of hills to the east, trending away for many miles—the beach below and the waves beating against the root of the cliff appearing curiously minute. It is a sight well worth seeing. The plan of carrying the wire over the Malan was certainly a very original idea, and has answered well, as it has never once given way, I believe, since it was erected ten years ago. We stayed the night here, and the next morning began to retrace our steps. Half-way over the plateau we are taken off the road to inspect the site of an old town. The ruins consist of an immense mound of stones, with the foundations of houses visible: these show that the houses were built of flat slabs of sandstone, cemented with mud, the style of building being unlike anything now seen in Mekran. It is ascribed by the natives to the Lûttees, but no name is attached to it except that of Dumb or “the Ruins.” Near by is a large cemetery, apparently ancient. Some of the tombstones had curious carvings of animals, dogs, camels, men’s hands, &c. Descending the steep we reach camp about 4 P.M., rather tired. The formation of the Butt appears to be chiefly grey clay, with coarse sandstone, limestone, quartz, conglomerate, and abundance of tree-coral and shell-fossils. There are a few sheep, goats, and camels, but the only inhabitants belong to one large family of ten brothers, whose father settled here.

The vegetation is very varied, affording a good field for the botanist: *euphorbias*, peesh, babool, ber, wild fig, liquorice, and

a variety of grasses and small plants; in the ravines, sandal-wood and wild caper, &c. The animals are said to be ibex, hares, jackals, foxes, hyenas, leopards, and bears, but the last very doubtful, I should think.

4th.—At 9.15 A.M. begin our march up Khor Butt, which is about a quarter of a mile broad, the walls being perpendicular and very high; road good up a gradual ascent. At 4 miles we come to a meandering rivulet, which we follow to its source, a picturesque spot called Pittoke. This is in a bend or angle of the khor, where the rocky bed appears reft asunder, forming a deep natural basin down the mossy steep sides, of which the water drips from numerous orifices into a clear pool at the bottom. The road now begins to get bad. Huge boulders of rock block up the way, rendering it nearly impassable, and the camels had almost to be lifted over several places, the khor gradually decreasing in width and height. At 4 P.M. we reach our halting-place at Sirbutt, having been nearly seven hours coming 8 miles. Water here sufficient, but slightly brackish.

5th.—Road along Sirbutt nullah. Direction north-north-east, stony and desolate, and almost entirely devoid of animal and vegetable life. After some miles, direction changes to east-south-east, and at 16 miles arrive at Threedâk, where we halt. Water good and abundant.

6th.—Start at 9 A.M. Road bad and intricate, winding among low hills. At 4 miles reach the Malar Pass or Kundug. The dip of the strata here being to the east, the pass is formed by the slope of the *laminæ*, down which a steep and broken path about a mile long leads to the bottom. The camels had all to be unloaded and the baggage carried down by coolies; this took us five hours. The camels had to be led, but got down without accident.

Having reloaded the camels we enter the sandy bed of the Malar Khor, which we follow for 8 miles, arriving at the wooden hut on the beach at 9 P.M. At the foot of the pass in the nullah are some curious pillars or monoliths of sandstone formed by the action of water eroding their bases.

7th.—March at 10 A.M. Direction easterly, along a stony zigzag road through a range of hills lying parallel to the coast. At 20 miles arrive at the Hingol River, here densely wooded with tamarisks, in the bed of which we camp among the sand-hills at 8 P.M. Near this is the celebrated place of Hindoo pilgrimage, Hinglaj. We passed several parties of pilgrims on the way, but I did not go to visit the scene. On the 12th I arrived at Sonmeanee, and on the 15th at Karachi.