

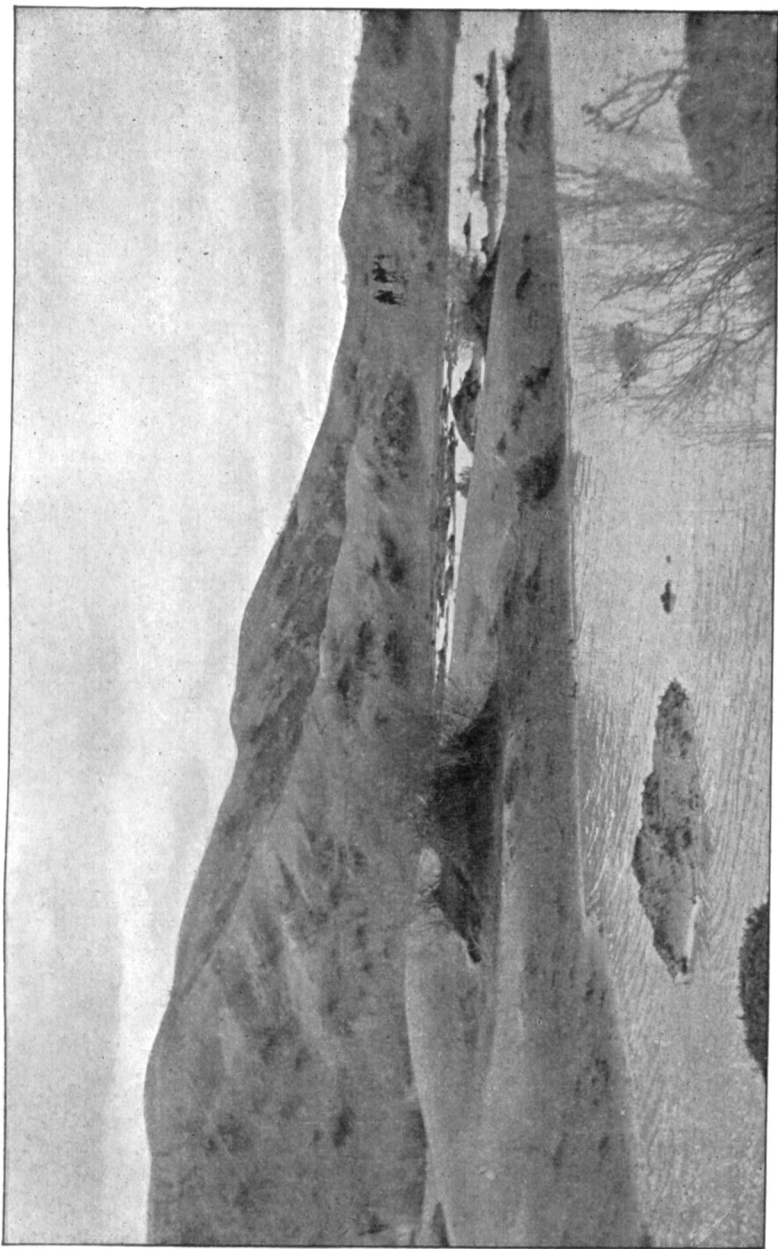
ART. XXXI.—*Historical Notes on South-East Persia.* By Major P. MOLESWORTH SYKES, C.M.G., Royal Gold Medallist of the Royal Geographical Society.

SOUTH-EAST Persia, the history of which I propose to discuss very briefly,¹ consists of the provinces of Kirmān and Persian Baluchistān, in which I have been travelling since 1893, and where I was commissioned to found a consulate in 1894. Before, however, approaching their history, it seems advisable to recapitulate the physical features of these desert provinces, which, as elsewhere, have mainly owed their history to their geographical conditions.

Southern Persia and Baluchistān occupy some twenty degrees of longitude on the map, and lie between the rich alluvial plains and ancient civilizations of the Euphrates, Tigris, and Kārun on the west, and that of the Indus on the east. The provinces discussed in this paper hold a central position, with Fārs on the west and British Baluchistān on the east; they were consequently somewhat remote from both these centres of civilization.

I begin with Kirmān, which is a province of great interest if only for the various climates, products, and peoples that it contains. In common with the whole coast of Southern Persia, the country lies low for a considerable distance inland; the heat at the ports is terrible, and there are no good harbours, while as there is always either too much or too little wind in the Persian Gulf, navigation is by no means easy. This coast strip is backed by successive ranges all running parallel to the coast, i.e. with a north-west

¹ In my recently published work, "Ten Thousand Miles in Persia" (John Murray), two chapters are devoted to the history of the province of Kirmān and two to that of Persian Baluchistān. There is also a chapter which refers to the history of Sistān, and throughout there are many historical notes.



THE LOT.

trend. In some parts the altitude increases gradually, but in Jiruft the low-lying country runs up to the mighty mountain barrier which holds up the Irānian plateau, and, as a consequence, enjoys a comparatively generous rainfall. In this range, to the south of Kirmān city, I have scaled two peaks, the Kuh-i-Shāh and Kuh-i-Hazār, which attain the great altitude of 14,000 feet. North of these Titans the country gradually sinks, although round the capital the ranges touch 13,000 feet, but beyond them are the low-lying wastes of the Lūt, the great desert of Persia. This "land of drought and of the shadow of death" stretches for hundreds of miles to the north, and forms a greater hindrance to intercourse and invasion than any range of mountains. Just as the traveller from the Persian Gulf has to cross range after range at right angles before reaching the Irānian plateau, so too his onward journey is rendered most difficult by the funereal waste of the Lūt. It must also be remembered that even outside the sinister influence of the Lūt South-East Persia is by no means fertile, and is best described as desert tempered by oases. It is hard for dwellers in Europe to realize what it means to be absolutely dependent for all crops on irrigation, but when that is once grasped the immense importance of the mountains of Persia is evident, as without these storehouses of snow the whole country would be almost uninhabitable except by a few nomads.

The inhabitants of this huge area number perhaps 750,000, and may be divided into dwellers in towns or villages and nomads. The dwellers in houses are Irānians, the pre-Aryan inhabitants and also the successive hordes of invaders having generally continued their wandering life, which is much the same as that depicted in the book of Job. Indeed, the life of a nomad is most antagonistic to civilization. Among the tribes in the province are ancient Persian clans, *e.g.* the Lak, also Arabs, Mongols, Baluchis, Turks, and gypsies.

We now come to Persian Baluchistān, which includes the western half of Makrān, the eastern and larger portion of

Baluchistān being either British or under British influence. The whole country approximately corresponds to the seventeenth satrapy of Darius as recorded by Herodotus.

Physically speaking, Makrān includes the coast strip as far inland as the watershed of the first important range of hills. This district is washed by the Arabian Sea, and just as its coastline approximately trends east and west, so too its ranges run parallel to the coast, and are, if anything, more difficult to cross than those further west. North of Makrān the country slopes down to the level of the Lūt, which not only envelops it on the north, but also separates it from Kirmān, so that few, if any, countries are so inaccessible as Persian Baluchistān. It is consequently not surprising that, after the expedition of Alexander the Great, no European travelled in this forgotten land until less than a century ago.

In the district of Sarhad, bordering on Sīstān, is the remarkable Kuh-i-Taftān or Chahīl Tan, which I scaled in 1893 when I discovered a volcano in the solfatara stage of existence. Round this range, which runs up to nearly 13,000 feet, the country is high and should be comparatively fertile, while to the west is the Lūt and to the east the equally dreary wilderness of Khārān. Baluchistān, indeed, is far less fertile than Kirmān, and is concisely described in the Baluchi proverb which relates that when the Almighty created the world Baluchistān was formed from the refuse material. Its inhabitants may number 250,000, all of whom rank low in the scale of civilization. The darkest and oldest tribes are probably of Dravidian origin, the Baluchis are Aryans from the vicinity of the Caspian, and there is a medley of Arabs, Tatārs, Kurds, and Rajputs which causes the anthropologist to despair.

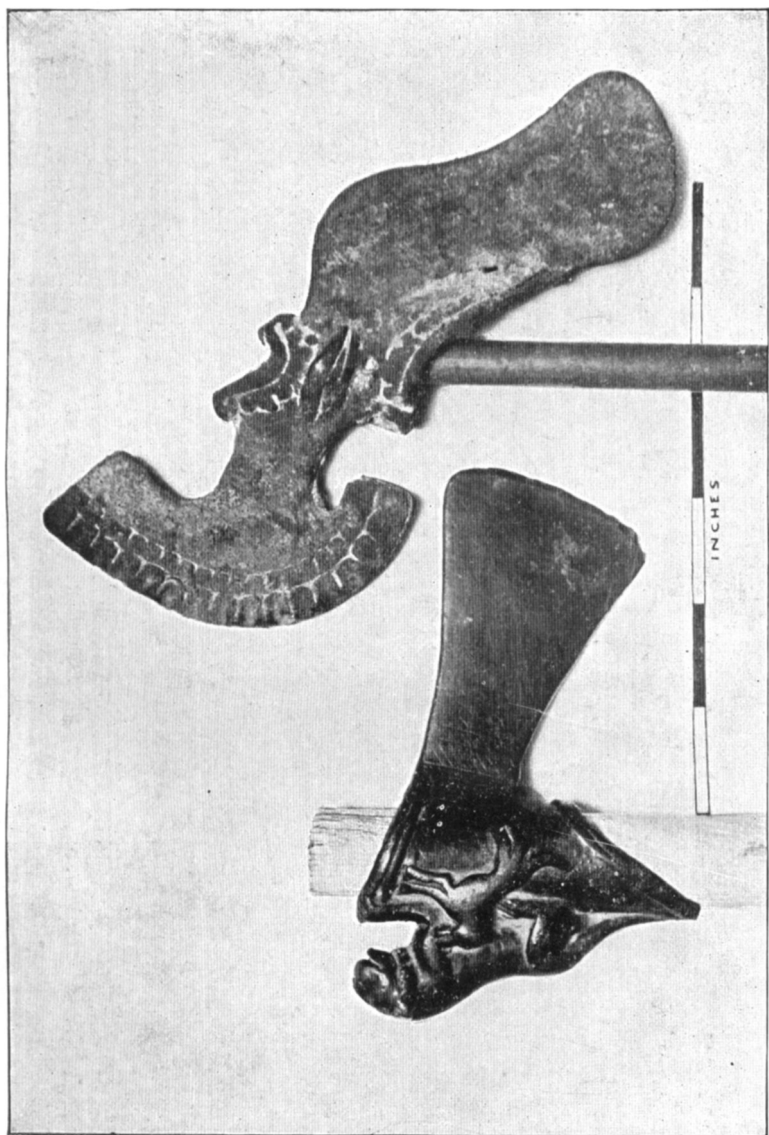
To sum up, both provinces are difficult of access from the north or south, and Baluchistān is also flanked on the west by an arm of the Lūt. Consequently no invasion has taken place by sea, and the provinces have escaped the fell massacres of Chengiz and Tamerlane. On the other hand, they have paid the penalty of remoteness by remaining

backward, and the southern prolongation of the Lūt made Baluchistān, until comparatively recent times, a separate province independent of Persia; Kirmān, on the other hand, has looked to Fārs and Arabistān for its civilization, and it was from the west that it was overrun by the Arabs.

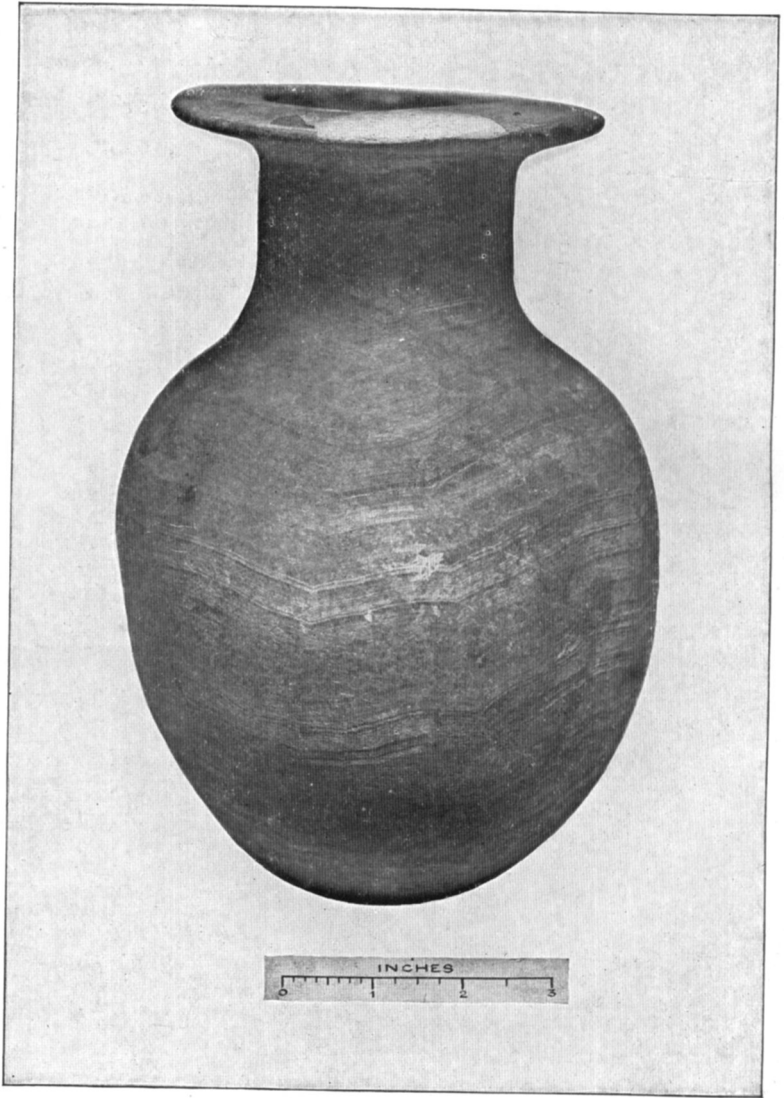
After this brief description of the province, I now propose to discuss its history. Herodotus mentions the Germanii as forming one of the twelve tribes of Persia, while the fourteenth satrapy of Darius, as he describes it, includes the province of Kirmān as it is to-day. To this period we may assign the bronzes, an account of which may be of interest.

A Khān of Khināmān, a small district to the west of Kirmān city, informed me that he had found a number of these articles, and when I was able I paid him a visit and enquired as to the details of the find. My host said that hundreds of tombs were discovered, some five feet below the surface of the ground. The corpses had crumbled into dust, and it could not be ascertained in what direction they had been laid—a very important point. In each tomb were a yellow jar of pottery, round bowls of three sizes, a pair of bracelets, two pins, and some arrow and spear heads, all of which were of bronze except the vessels. In addition, two or three cornelian gems were found, and some small silver earrings and bracelets, which I did not see. The custom of placing a cornelian in a dead man's mouth, with the names of the twelve *Imām* engraved on it, is one that obtains nowadays. An axe-head was also shown me, and there were, in addition, two handles, which may have fitted some other weapon, but not the axe-head. This completed the list of the bronzes. The vessels were of three types, one being clearly a lamp, and of the others one exactly resembled the modern Persian pocket-bowl, which is carried for drinking purposes. Some great jars, much like the *khom* of to-day, but shorter and wider, were also shown. In them a yellow dust had been found, possibly wheat or millet, but this had all been thrown away.

Mr. C. Hercules Read, of the British Museum, has very kindly furnished me with the following note on the axe-head:



BRONZE AXE-HEAD FOUND AT KHINĀMĀN (RIGHT), COMPARED WITH AXE-HEAD FOUND IN ARMENIA.



GREEK ALABASTER VASE FROM JIRUFT.

“The special interest of the bronze axe found at Khināmān is that its form shows it to be, not a useful weapon, but a survival or degradation of such an implement. The angle at which the blade is set to the handle shows that it can have no real utility, while, on the other hand, the exaggerated crest which forms a sort of counterpoise to the blade is out of all proportion to the mass of the weapon as such.

“The axe from Armenia, a fairly remote district, in Canon Greenwell’s collection, has certain analogies with it, but differs essentially in being manifestly a serviceable weapon. The socket, in this case, is large enough to admit a stout strong handle, while the ornamental lion is small, and well adapted as an ornamental appendage. The angle at which the blade is set to the shaft is also a clear indication that it was intended for use. Widely different in general appearance as these two objects are, there seems to me to be a clear resemblance in essentials, and in time this may be made clearer by further excavations and discoveries in the country intervening between South-East Persia and the Black Sea.”

We may, I think, conclude that this most interesting find dates from the Achaemenian period, although the pottery tends to show that it belongs to a late stage of that epoch.

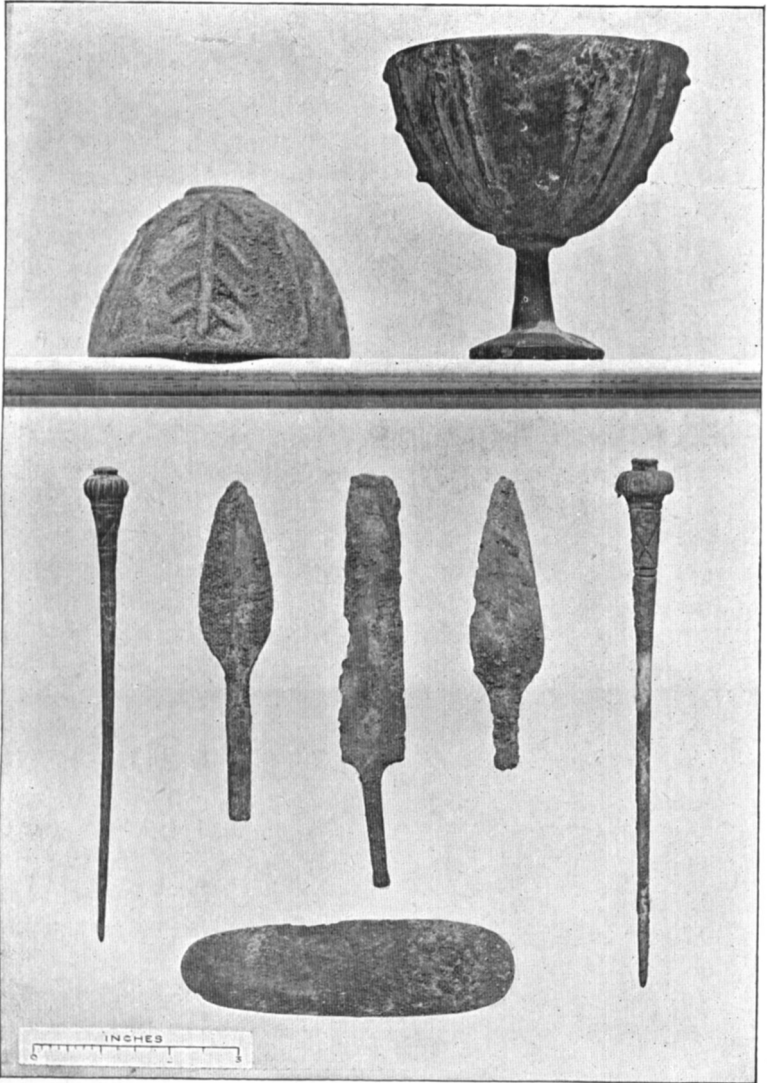
The next historical event of importance to which I would draw your attention is the march of Alexander the Great from the Indus to the Kārūn. Some years ago I proved that the mighty Iskandar Rūmī, as he is termed in the East, halted for a considerable time in the valley of the Halīl Rūd to the south of Kirmān.¹ At the end of 1900 I revisited that valley, and one of my servants brought me a vase of Oriental alabaster which he had bartered for an old pair of trousers. This interesting antique is pronounced by the British Museum to be a Greek unguent vase of the fourth century B.C., and was probably left behind by the army of Alexander the Great. It has furnished me with gratifying evidence that my deductions were probably correct.

¹ *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, p. 173 et seq.

During the period of what is now termed the Parthian dynasty, I have found no reference to Kirmān, but it became famous when, after the conquest of Fārs, it was seized by Ardešhīr, the son of Pāpak, who finally defeated Artabanus or Ardavān in a desperately contested battle near Rām Hurmuz, with the result that, after enduring a foreign yoke for five centuries, a national dynasty was re-established in the house of Sāsān, which lasted until the Arab conquest.

In connection with the illustrious Ardešhīr I would invite attention to Bam, which is situated about 120 miles to the E.S.E. of Kirmān, and is the last town in Persia in this direction. Indeed, a journey of 600 miles across deserts must be undertaken before Nushki and Quetta are reached. Bam from early times has been of note in Persia. The district was designated *Arba'* or Four, from its four cities of Bam, Rīgān, Narmāshīr, and Nisa. Of these, Bam and Rīgān were founded by Bahman, Ardešhīr can claim the credit of building the city of Narmāshīr, and his wife constructed the dam on which Nisa depended. It was also the home of Haftān-bokht, Ardešhīr's great rival, in connection with whom a curious legend is recounted in the Pahlavi *Kārnāmak - i - Artakshīr-i - Pāpakān* and also in the *Shāh Nāmeh*. The daughter of Haftān-bokht, when spinning with other maidens, picked up an apple, within which she found a worm. She thereupon vowed that if she completed her allotted task before the others, she would save the worm alive. Almost at once her spinning was miraculously accomplished, and, faithful to her promise, she cherished the worm. From this time the family of Haftān-bokht prospered exceedingly, until its chief became the ruler of the province of Kirmān.

According to the Pahlavi work, "the army of Haftān-bokht attacked a caravan of Ardešhīr, and brought the spoils to Guzārān, a borough of Gulār, where the worm had its abode. Now as regards the (worm) idolatry, it (grew) so powerful that five thousand men, who composed its forces in the different frontiers of Sind, assembled, and Haftān-bokht too collected his army. Ardešhīr sent to battle with the worm,



COPPER BOWLS FROM VICINITY OF KIRMĀN, AND
BRONZE IMPLEMENTS FROM KHINĀMĀN.

but its supporters took refuge in the hills and, falling on his army at night, routed it. Ardešīr then took the field in person, but was also routed, and barely escaped with his life." However, the worm and its supporters were finally defeated by a stratagem, Ardešīr or one of his adherents visiting Guzārān in disguise, and pouring molten tin down the worm's throat, which effected the death of the monster and the overthrow of Haftān-bokht. At one time I thought that this fable of the worm was a poetical description of the introduction of the silkworm, but later I came to the conclusion that it must be a legend of snake worship. Professor E. G. Browne, however, makes the happy suggestion that perhaps both these ideas were embodied in the legend, and this seems extremely likely.

Guzārān of the Pahlavi and Kujārān of the *Shāh Nāmeḥ*, which is probably the site of ancient Bām, is situated about a mile above the fort on the river. It is now a ruin and known as Kuzārān, which is almost exactly the same word as Guzārān, and even to-day one of the gates of the Bam Fort is known as Kut-i-Kirm, or the Fort of the Worm.

I will now discuss the capitals of Kirmān and give my reasons for having located the *Carmana omnium mater* of Ammianus Marcellinus in or a little to the north of Jīruft. Modern Kirmān mainly lies a little to the west of a more ancient city, which, on good authority, is stated to have been founded by Ardešīr. But it became the capital of the province about A.H. 315 (928), when Abu Ali Muhammad ibn Īlīās seized the province. Before this what is now known as the Kala-i-Sang of Sīrjān was the capital. Mr. Guy Le Strange,¹ trusting to the accounts of Arab travellers, and unaware of the results of my visit to Sīrjān, thought that this capital was to be found elsewhere, but my explorations have caused him to change his views. I would beg to express a sense of my gratitude for the assistance which I have derived from his studies.

I would now invite your attention to Sai'īdābād, about

¹ Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (April, 1901).

100 miles south-west of Kirmān. From this town I rode a few miles east in order to explore thoroughly what is undoubtedly an ancient capital of the province, though, to the best of my knowledge, it has been ignored by the very few travellers who have passed this way. Kal'a-i-Sang, or Stone Fort, is also known as Kal'a-i-Bayzā, and rises in glorious whiteness some 300 feet above the level plain. Its direction is from north-east to south-west, and its length 400 yards, its breadth being rather less than 200 yards. Approached from the north this remarkable limestone crag is surrounded at some fifty yards from its base by a low sun-dried brick wall, which bore traces of having been rebuilt on older foundations. Inside this we found a beautiful stone pulpit some five feet high, on one side of which were four rows of *Naskh* inscription; a fifth row had been obliterated.

While laboriously trying to make out the meaning of the inscription, three ragged peasants appeared and at once began to decipher it. I was not surprised to hear that their leader was the *mullā* of the village, and we learned from him that the pulpit had been constructed by Sultān Ahmad, 'Imād-ud-Dīn of the Muzaffar dynasty of Kirmān in A.H. 789 (1387). The inscription ran: "The Sovereign, great, just, glorious, and victorious, Sultān Ahmad." We were furthermore informed that the headman of the adjacent village of 'Izzetābād had wished to remove the pulpit to his village, and in order to lighten it the top row of the inscription had been hammered off, after which the task was given up, as the pulpit is a monolith, and must exceed two or three tons in weight.

Under the *mullā*'s guidance we moved round to the south-west corner, where, as also at the north-east angle, there is a high traverse wall, the intervening space to the south having evidently been the ruler's residence. On this side the inner wall is some forty yards from the cliff, and the outer is 200 yards distant, so that the total area enclosed was considerable.

The sole approach to the fort is on the south-west, where we found a second inscription on the right-hand side, just

below the remains of a brick dam. Nothing, however, could be read until I sent for a skin of water and carefully washed the surface of the rock, when we made out a few lines to the following effect: "In this blissful abode Amīr Ā'zam Husayn-ibn-Ali constructed the *Hammām*." The date was apparently A.H. 410 (1019), but as the third cipher was not clear it may have been anything from A.H. 410 to 420 (1019-1029). The individual who thus perpetuated his memory was almost certainly the Deilami Governor, but I have not been able to identify him further. The ruins of the *Hammām* were, however, clearly visible, the foundations of the stove having remained almost intact.

On the crest of the hill the buildings have practically disappeared, and the same is generally true of the walls, but under the north-east and highest portion of the crag is a fine grotto, known as the "King's Seat," which is faced by the pulpit, and yet a third inscription, giving the name of Muhammad Shāh, was delicately chiselled in the rock. As there was no date, it was impossible to identify who was the particular sovereign thus commemorated.

Below is a second grotto, known as the *Anderūn*, where the ladies spent the heat of the day; and as the cliff is quite inaccessible on this face, it must have formed an ideal retreat for a Persian ruler. No antiquities of any kind were forthcoming, except a lusted tile, which at once showed that this fort was inhabited during the thirteenth century, while history relates that it was the prison of the founder of the Muzaffar dynasty in the middle of the fourteenth century.

Afzal Kirmāni, who flourished in A.D. 1188, wrote: "Among the divisions of Kirmān is Sīrjān, the ancient capital of Bardsīr, a fine fertile district; and in Seljuk times they drew their troops thence, and kept a large garrison in it, as being on the Kirmān-Fārs boundary. And in Sīrjān are many old graves, and travellers and Sufis term it Lesser Syria. And there is a great fort reaching to the clouds."

Sīrjān, as already said, is the older Moslem capital of Kirmān, but we now come to the question of the ancient

