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CAPTAIN SHAKESPEAR'S LAST JOURNEY

Douglas Carruthers

(Continued from p. 334.)

SHAKESPEAR had been preceded at Riyadh by Reinaud (1793-5), Sadlier (1819), Pelly (1865), Palgrave (1862), Leachman (1912), and Raunkiaer (1912). Each of these travellers had given his own special impressions of the capital of southern Nejd, from the sum-total of which we already had a very fair idea of its size, society, trade, climate, and condition. But the Wahabi centre never fails to interest. Should a traveller venture thither this very year, an account of his experiences would be received with renewed interest and unabated enthusiasm. For although the geographical problems of inner Arabia are being rapidly solved, a haze of mystery still envelops its human affairs. Moreover, we have learnt of late, and are due to learn again, a lesson which we should have known and profited by long ago, namely, that the "Wadi Hanifa seems destined to be at least independent of other Arabian districts, if *not predominant* among them."*

Shakespear was on intimate terms with the ruling Emir and his father, Abd er Rahman, who still retained the Imamship of the Emirate. He spent a portion of each day at the palace, and although he tells us nothing of politics, he doubtless learned a lot which he never wrote in his diary! At his camp in the date grove of Shamsiya † he received the

* Hogarth in 'Penetration of Arabia.' His summing up (eighteen years ago) of the political importance of Riyadh is worth quoting, for at the present moment the star of the Saud is again in the ascendant. "Under any political conditions the unfailling ground-water of Hanifa ensures the existence of populous settlements in this valley. Those for which we have the description of eye-witnesses appear to contain a society more considerable, better united by natural conditions, and of greater resources than any other in Nejd. . . . It is neither hard to understand how this fixed population of wealthy farmers, traders, and merchants, thickly sown along a valley above 100 miles long, came to take an independent religious position, and to exercise so great an influence over the thinly-peopled steppes of the peninsula, nor easy to believe that its present subjection to the Bedawins of Jabal Shammar can be other than a temporary eclipse."

† This garden, Shakespear says, "was planted by Mahbub, the slave mentioned by Palgrave and Pelly. The well is a stone-lined shaft about 20 feet square, the stones being dressed to fit without the use of cement. Its output is 'twelve buckets.'"

return calls of the Sheikhs and their sons.* He also watched the mobilization of a great raiding expedition. The *Jaish* (army, in town speech; troops of *Thebul* riders, in Bedawi: see Doughty, vol. I, p. 431) mustered near by, and the camels were divided up amongst the fighting men. "I got some good photos of a sight probably no European has seen. Also saw Abdul Aziz lose his temper more than once. Suddenly called to prayer in the middle of all this, the whole crowd formed three long lines, and Abdul Aziz led the prayer. There must have been at least three hundred present." In company with this "ghazzu" Shakespear eventually left Riyadh. The local contingent mobilized in the central square of the town. "Abdul Aziz was squatting on the ground, cursing his *hamla* (caravan, cortège), while his men were spending the last moments in putting the final touches to a spear or sharpening a tent-peg. The cavalcade moved off when Abdul Aziz had bought a case of Anglo-Persian Palm Tree Brand oil, a carpet, and some dates." Shakespear rode with the Emir and the standards, which were green with the "*kalima*" † on them in white. Then followed short slow stages, with long intervals in camp. Shakespear wrote letters, visited the various coffee-hearths, was overwhelmed with patients craving medicine and medical aid, while the *Jaish* roared loudly during the process of being treated for mange by a Jew doctor. The line of march led northwards, and he found himself back at Banban. Here Abdul Aziz and the Sheikhs left him, supplying three *ageyl* (*uqeil*)—the official guides of the desert—to convey him on to Kasim. Thus Shakespear found himself making for northern Nejd by a new route. Instead of following up the Hanifa wadi-bed, past the ancient settlements of Daraiya, to Ayaina, Tharmida, and Shakra—the usual route for caravans coming or going between Kasim and Riyadh—he was to see the towns of central Mahmal, situated on the southern slopes of the Aridh hills. This stage of 90 miles, from Banban to Shakra, filled in a big blank, and linked together the sketch-maps and descriptions of Palgrave, Pelly, and Raunkiaer, which combined gave but a poor idea of the true lie of the country.

On March 8 Shakespear found himself on new ground. Leaving Banban he turned westwards, and the next day dropped down into the upper Malham shaib—"quite a good-sized gorge here, like the Jalajil one," the right bank rising a good 200 feet sheer from the wadi-bed. For Malham oasis itself Shakespear is our only witness. It has "very extensive date groves, and consists really of two separate villages—a mile

* It is interesting to note that Shakespear found "Palgrave's plan of Riyadh exceedingly good, although the palaces of the Saud were all demolished by Ibn Rashid, excepting a square fort in Abdulla's Kasr, which was Ajalan's house until Abdul Aziz killed him. The Sheikhs are again rebuilding the Kasrs; that of Faisal is now Abdul Aziz's, Abdulla's is unoccupied, Mahd has taken Jalowi's, and so on. Quite a third of the town is taken up by the houses of the Ibn Saud family."

† Either the formula, "There is no God but Allah," or the battle-cry, "Victory is of God. Success is near."

apart," that on the left bank of the shaib being called Ruwaika. The two villages together contain some 600 to 700 houses. The water-supply is controlled with some skill, as Shakespear's photograph of a primitive aqueduct shows—palm trunks and mud being the mediums used for conveying irrigation water across a dry wadi-bed. The inhabitants, he says, were mostly Sebei and Ateibah (there are also settled Beni Khalid). Following up the wadi he came to Jarina—400 houses or less inhabited by Ateibah folk, with gardens in proportion. Close by was Haraimla, ranking at 500 houses (perhaps 2000–3000 souls, certainly not 10,000, as Palgrave estimated), and possessing a wide expanse of open cultivated areas, which the other villages of the Malham valley do not possess. Shakespear noted lemons, oranges, figs, pomegranates, and grapes. The wells were deeper than those of Riyadh, the motive power being donkeys in place of camels. There were many ruins, a sign that the place had not recovered since the Egyptian occupation. The inhabitants, he notes, were nearly all Ateibah. The castle built by Ibrahim Pasha which so astonished Palgrave, "was not as he suggested," on rising ground, "unless a rise of 10 feet can be called such. It was good enough for Ibn Saud to have to resort to stratagem to take, twelve years ago; but it has since been demolished—the stones being used for building local dams." Raunkiaer had only camped a night outside Haraimla, while Palgrave, who slept within the walls, passed on next morning like Raunkiaer to Sadus, but he discourses at length (18 pages) on Haraimla as the birthplace of Mohammed ibn Abd el Wahab, which indeed is its chief claim to fame. Neither Shakespear nor Raunkiaer noted cultivation or settlements above Haraimla; on this score Palgrave's itinerary from Thadik to Haraimla is worth quoting, if only as an example of the difficulties which confront compilers of Arabian maps. On this stage Palgrave sees "the town of Hoolah, a large and busy locality; the size and outline of its towering walls reminded me of Conway Castle. . . . This town, men say, is one of the most flourishing in Sedeyr. . . . We left behind us many other villages and hamlets of less note, near and far, till after a few hours we reached at sunset the town of Horeimlah." Whether populated or not, the region is mostly high bare plateau, the crest of the Tuwaik, in fact, rising to a watershed of about 2600 feet;* the track then drops by a steep and difficult descent to a nameless valley (draining to the Shaib el Ats) in which Thadik is situated. "The climb down was very steep, and was in two flights so to speak. From the top of the first I could throw a stone clear of the track below. There was also a deep gorge on the west side. This is said to be the easiest pass across the Tuwaik," but it was so bad that Shakespear was at a loss to imagine what the others were like. The others were "the ordinary caravan route from

* Shakespear did not take a boiling-point reading at the pass, but there is an aneroid reading in his notes, which is much in error, but, reduced in proportion to his reliable hypsometric series, gives 2567 feet.

Riyadh up the main Wadi Hanifa, leading *viâ* Ayaina over to Barra ; another to the south (evidently by the Sakta gorge of Philby) leading to Dhurma ; one *viâ* Sadus, another by way of Bir (east of Thadik) ; the Jalajil *route* (which has not been followed, but must go by Ma'ashaiba and El Harajj to Shakra) ; lastly, the Ghat-Majma'a pass.*

Shakespear passed Thadik without entering ; curiously enough Palgrave did the same, while Raunkiaer "arrived after dark and left before dawn," so we know little or nothing of the town except that it was reported to Palgrave as being "a considerable village, a small town in fact equal to Mejma'a," and that Shakespear saw it "quite a big place, with very considerable gardens, carefully walled in." The mountain region of Nejd—rugged Aridh—was now left behind ; from the crest of the last ridge Shakespear had sighted red Nafud, and on passing Thadik he entered again a region of sand and steppe. On March 19 the Shaib el Ats was crossed again, here also known as Shaib umm Sidr ; its source was 25 miles still further south. Camp was outside Kassab, a village of five hundred houses. Most of the region traversed that day showed evidence of partial cultivation, tended by husbandmen from scattered and isolated farms ; evidently a country safe from raiders. There was another small colony of cultivators at Nakhail el Ab (thirty houses) tucked away under the lee of a Nafud, which lies between Kassab and Shakra. Shakespear found the crossing of this sand-bed an easy matter. From the dunes he could look down on Shakra oasis, with its outlying hamlets of Karain and Kusr Sanaidi. This Nafud Shakri (or Araj el Bildani) † is but a 4-mile wide belt at Shakespear's crossing, but it is of interest as defining the south-eastern limits of Washm, which district Shakespear now entered at its capital—the large, clean, well-built town of Shakra, Former travellers had spoken well of this oasis ; Shakespear also found himself hospitably entertained by an enlightened Emir, one Mahd ibn Saud (no relation of *the* Saud) whom he had met at Khafs the year before. He halted a day, heard much of local history—which contained stirring tales of the 45-day resistance Shakra made when ibn Rashid laid siege to the town, repacked his kit, and got rid of one of his *rafiks* (of the Muteir)—"a more lazy devil I have never struck." Shakra he estimated at 1000 to 1500 houses ; the gardens seemed small, but the well-water was unfailing, "unaffected by the rainfall," being 12 fathoms deep.

* To these should be added the Audah-Thadik route, by which Raunkiaer, and probably Palgrave, passed. The former had to search "the cliff-wall" before finding a possible means of descent.

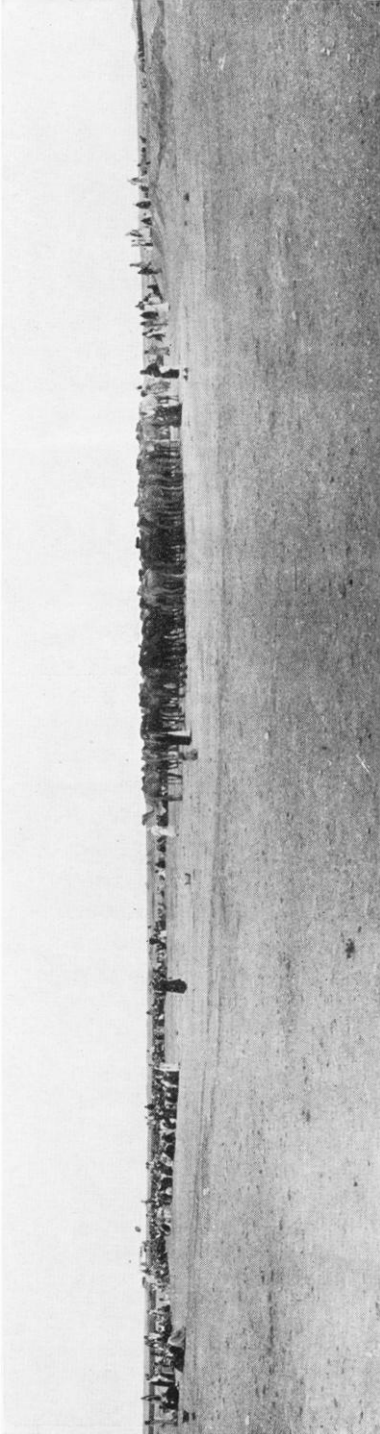
† This sand-belt is really a tongue of the very extensive Nafud which covers practically the whole of Washm, being a continuation of El Bittar of the Ajibba and Zilfi region. The main bed occupies probably some 2500 square miles between Zilfi, Mudhnib, and Shakra (or it may be divided into separate belts, no one having seen it). It is limited on the east by the Tuwaik escarpment, and on the west by the Es Sirr depression.



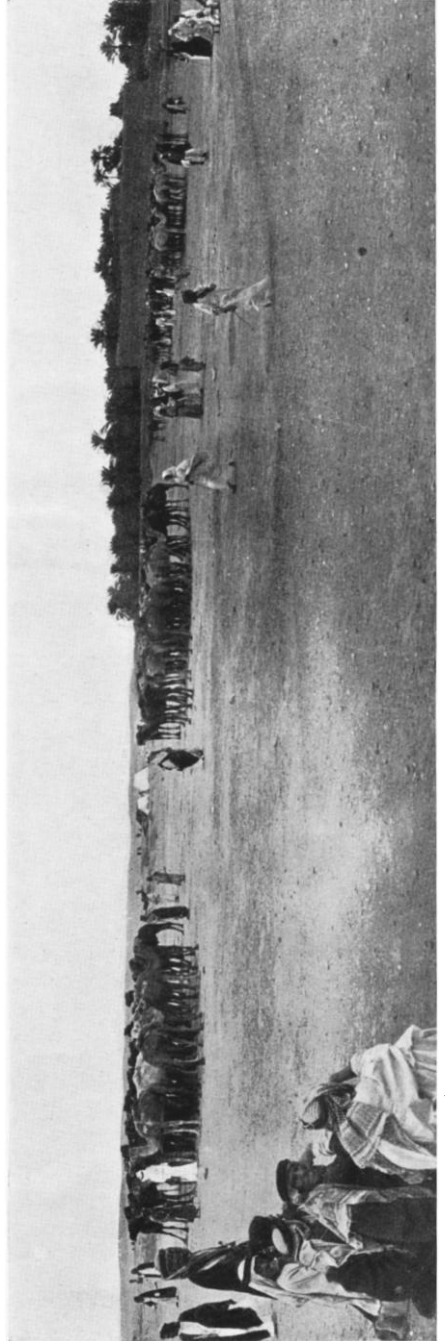
"SHAKESPEAR RODE WITH THE EMIR AND THE STANDARDS"



ABDUL AZIZ ES SAUD (IN CENTRE)



MOBILIZATION OF CAMELS FOR A RAID BY IBN SAUD



DISTRIBUTION OF CAMELS AMONGST THE FIGHTING MEN

Shakespear was now on ground already traversed by Sadlier and Leachman, and to be seen again by Philby four years later. He was, in fact, on the main caravan route which threads Central Nejd, connecting the oases of the north—Buraida and Anaiza, with the populous settlements of Wadi Hanifa, and linking up the string of towns and villages which lie along its course. The route first runs west towards Janaitha 50 miles away, the stage being remarkable for its sand-belts. The first of these—Nafud Batra—was reported to Shakespear as being “separate to itself, *not* joined to other Nafuds,” while his travelling companion told him that “old men often used to speak of this ground being flat and smooth with practically no sand on it in years gone by.” Whether there is any truth or not in these statements remains to be proved. We do know that there is an immense sand area to the north, and another, the Nafud Kunaifida, to the south. If the Nafud Batra *is* a small isolated patch, it may have collected there in recent years.

While encamped in the middle of this Nafud Shakespear was raided, in the usual Bedawin fashion, by a small ghazzu “learning the business.” The marauders were Ateibah out to plunder Muteir, but they sighted Shakespear’s camp at sunset, and decided to improve the opportunity God had given them. When camp was quiet one of their number reconnoitred Shakespear’s tent, where he was asleep, caught up a few trifles, such as saddle-bags and coats, and returned to his friends, doubtless with a story of great booty. The younger men wanted to fire into the tents, kill all they could, and loot camels and kit. The older men said they must make sure that there was no Ateibah *rafik* with the party. Such is the strength of the *rafik* free-masonry! At this juncture Shakespear awoke, found his tent disarranged, and gave the alarm. Examination showed footprints and two Martini cartridges dropped by mistake. The Ateibah *rafik* walked out into the night and shouted, “We are Ibn Saud’s men. No one must pass near this camp. If you are Ateibah, I am the *rafik*—I, Talag. We are Ibn Saud’s men. One of us has had his saddle-bags taken. If you are Ateibah make restitution.” After a few moments there was a chorus of yells from apparently every bush within 50 yards. “You are not Ibn Saud’s men. You are townsmen. We know Talag. It is not Talag. If you are Ibn Saud’s men speak truly.” “This was answered by Talag—the Ateibah, and Thami—the Shammari, swearing and shouting that they were what they said, and invited one of the unseen who knew Talag to advance and verify him. On this a mob of men were in amongst the tents like a flash, shouting, yelling, grabbing each other, swearing, denying. Suddenly a gun went off, and I thought the show had begun, but fortunately everybody cursed everybody else, and no one else fired.” It all ended in coffee drinking, an episode typical of the desert! “Having had a look at the mob round the fire, a more villainous-looking crew I never saw, who were all shouting and explaining at once, varied by the most careless unloading of rifles, I went back to

my tent and bed." The stolen goods were produced, and the raiders demanded the return of *four* Martini cartridges in place of the two!

The following day the second and more formidable sand-barrier, Nafud es SIRR, was crossed. It took six hours, representing 16 miles. Under its western *lughf*, or lee, was Junaitha (Ain el Junaitha), a "small square walled town with only one gate, containing some two hundred houses, inhabited almost entirely by Hutaim tribesmen." It depended for water on a typical Persian *karez*, or underground canal, which came from the edge of the sands towards the south-east. Shakespear immediately noted the prevalence of salt ground, which is the bane of Es SIRR—the long saline depression which stretches northwards to the borders of Kasim and comprises topographically, if not socially, a self-contained area, separate from Washm. Es SIRR is the descriptive name for the hollow between the two sand-beds—Nafud es SIRR on the east, and Nafud Shakaika on the west; on old maps it was named Wadi es SIRR, or the Wadi of Washm, the ground fall being actually to the north, but it is mostly waterlogged: hence its saline, unhealthy nature. Junaitha is but the principal of many scattered hamlets and isolated fortified farmhouses; hence its other name Ayun es SIRR, the springs of the SIRR, a generic title for the whole group of settlements, since none (with perhaps the exception of Mudhni and Junaitha) is of sufficient importance to dominate the whole. But although the SIRR valley exhibits a host of place-names, it must not be considered a well-favoured region. Its soil is poor, its wells brackish, its population all told probably does not exceed five thousand souls. Shakespear followed up the line of Kasrs and fortified *chateaux*, as his forerunners had done; there is scarcely a variance in their routes, all coming within sight of each other, which shows how narrow is the belt of settled life under the Nafud edge.* On his right hand, parallel to his

* The only other European who could have seen the SIRR is the German, Baron Edward Nolde. Having penetrated as far as Anaiza in 1893, he was escorted further south "three very hard marches" to visit the then victorious Muhummad ibn Rashid, who was receiving the submission of the Emir of Riyadh. He makes no mention of the SIRR villages, although he must have passed through them, as it is the only road southwards. He gives us no clue as to his destination, except that he left Shakra to the left, and passed over Nafud. Finally, the Emir's headquarters were five hours on beyond his "three very hard marches," and on arriving there, "Shakra and Riyadh, each about 60 kilometres away, could provide us with fresh butter and meat." Three hard marches of 50 miles each (a possible feat) and five hours would have taken him well into the Hanifa basin, in the neighbourhood of Barra, whence Riyadh and Shakra would be more or less equidistant at 80 kilometres.

† Sadlier's itinerary up the SIRR valley is difficult to follow, for the country had been devastated by the evacuating army. He evidently entered by Junaitha, having crossed the sands from Shakra, and this he calls *Aiceoon* ul SIRR [or *Aiuoon* = Ain]. He must have passed north on the same line as later travellers. *Aiceoonceat*, or *Aiooneat*, "a lake of rain-water," would be one of many in the water-logged valley. His "ruins of a walled village" to the left, 6½ hours before reaching Murraba, is probably Qasr Amar, which stands alone to the west of the route. *Mooruba*, "only showing marks of former habitation," is now the more or less thriving Murraba. His lake called

route at 5-6 miles, rose a *Jal*, rocky escarpment, which apparently kept the Nafud within bounds. Passing Marabba, a group of detached *kusur* with their own gardens or wheatfields, comprising a dozen families of Nawasir (Beni Tamim), he came to Mudhnib, "which gave the impression of a scattered town or a group of hamlets, as it took me an hour to clear it and its gardens." Its three hundred houses were inhabited by inhospitable Beni Tamim tribesmen who had extensive date groves, but endured a pestilential climate. "At one time Mudhnib was very fanatical and was the centre of Akhwan puritanism, which has since overspread all Nejd." Shakespear was lucky in finding the one well of sweet water, which the surly inhabitants had refused to show to Leachman, especially as he had a 25-mile waterless stage before him, for from Mudhnib he branched off, like Sadlier, to the north-west, and headed for Anaiza instead of continuing northwards to Aushaziya (Aufiziya) and Buraida. A stony steppe,* with broad ill-defined wadis (like the Summan) extended right up to the walls of Anaiza, which Shakespear entered by the east gate at noon on March 26. He "camped just under the walls in the Zilfi people's camping-place, and sent off Thami with letters which brought the Emir and all sorts of people out to call on me before I had dressed. I changed hurriedly, and received them. In the afternoon I rode through the *suk* and returned the calls. Everybody seemed genuinely pleased to meet me, and all clamoured for me to go and have coffee or a meal at their hearth—a great difference to the rest of Nejd." Shakespear found himself in the world again. Anaiza was cosmopolitan, even civilized; he found smoking prevalent, and he was able to talk with people who had dealings with Egypt and India, Mesopotamia and the Holy Cities. "After coffee with the Emir, Saleh ibn Zamil, went on to Nasir's, where Mahd es Suleiman turned up; thence to the famous Nejdî doctor's, Ibn Saeed, who claims to have cured Sheikh Mubarak (Koweit) of his illness last year. A most delightful reception." The following day: "To the Emir's for breakfast; very good food, which I enjoyed in spite of fingers. Afterwards coffee at the house of a dear old deaf man, whose brother was the Mukbil el Thakair at Bahrein. After this a walk over to Mahd es Suleiman's house, which was exceedingly well furnished. Saleh and others mentioned previous visitors, all seeming to be full of praise of 'Khalil' (Doughty); they also mentioned Huber, and one who was killed in the desert near Medina by Harb tribesmen.† Got a good noon sight (meridian altitude of the sun for latitude); then, after evening prayer, dined with Saleh. Later was taken by him to see his date garden, a delightfully cool, green spot, with figs, lemons, vines, peach and citron

Khubrah is one of the many khubrahs, or water-pans, in the locality. *Moosnib* (Mudhnib) lay to the north, and thence *Aniseh*.

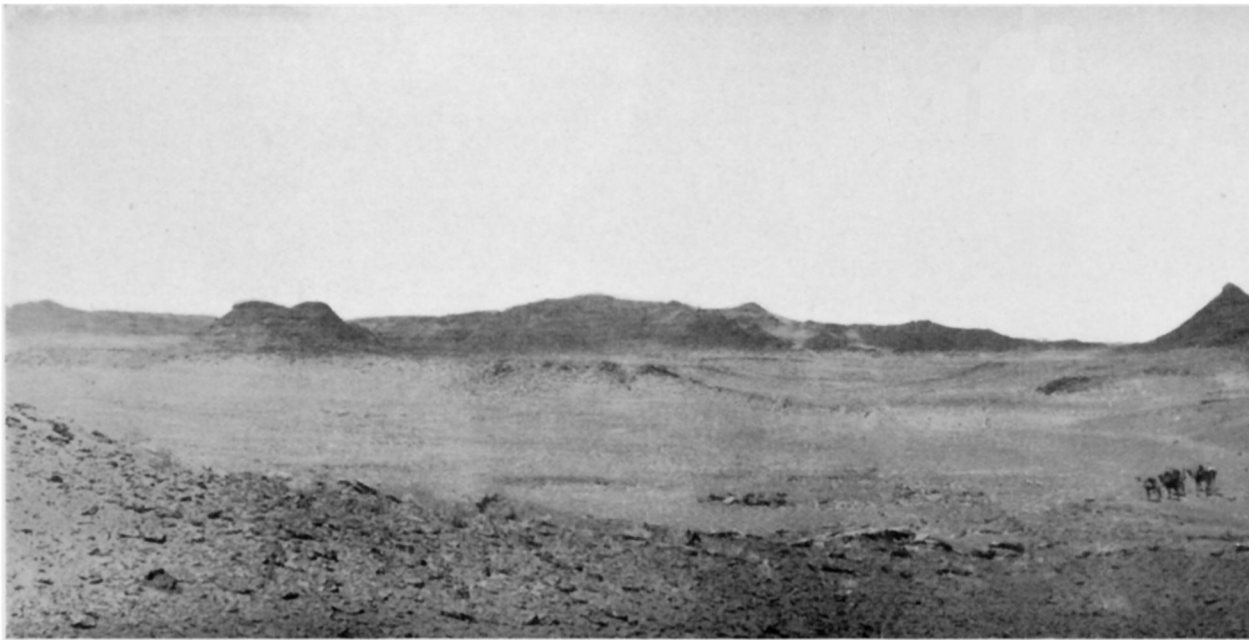
* Across which runs the undefined southern boundary of Kasim.

† We know of no one who was killed near Medina besides Huber, who was murdered by his own guides near Rabugh, in Harb territory, on his return journey to Hail.

trees in it. Thence a walk home through more date gardens, and climbed to the fort above the east gate, from where I got a splendid view of the town and its gardens, the walled town lying in date groves which are also walled, only two or three gardens being outside; it is, in fact, a fortress within a walled oasis. A big Nafud runs up from the south-west and encircles the town round the north." Shakespear's daily record is in strange contrast to the bald facts recorded by Huber and to Doughty's sorrowful tale.

On March 26 Shakespear pushed on to Buraida in the hope of catching the *ageyl* before they left for the north. He took the direct track, and accomplished the stage of 18 miles in 5 hours. Slow progress, he remarks, owing to watering camels and heavy sands. Shakespear, too, viewed "the many green villages of this country in their winding sheet of sand," and realized why Arabians say "Kasim is all Nefūd" (Doughty, 2, p. 312). He learnt, too, the secret of these pleasant oases in the deep sand-beds, for the land is seamed by the trough of the great wadi Rumma, where water lies only a few feet below. If "in the Nefūd plain of Kasim the course of the great wady is sometimes hardly to be discerned by the eyes of strangers" (Doughty, 2, p. 392), anyway between Anaiza and Buraida Shakespear found it "a fine sight with its dates and ribbon of green," bordered by deep Nafud. The wadi itself was about a mile or mile and a half in width, and like the Batin a "deepish ravine."* He reports the same phenomenon which Doughty was told of, namely, that "after heavy rains, especially when it has rained in the Harra (that is, the Kheibar Harra where the Rumma has its source), the water runs here up to 6 and 9 feet deep for a week or more, and that the wadi is impassable for as much as fifteen to twenty days. After such a flow the Khabra (that is the Khabra el Wadi or Zikaibiya backwater, to the north-east of Anaiza), will hold water 3 and 4 fathoms deep, forming a huge lake from which the Bedawin may drink for upwards of 6 months." Doughty speaks of this same *Zighreybieh*—"a great rautha, with cornlands, which are flooded with seyl-water in the winter rains" (Doughty vol. 2, pp. 392, 314). Leaving the wadi Shakespear passed over Nafud, varied by *khubs* (depressions) with flat white chalky bottoms, and an occasional *sabkha* (saline marshy ground). At last he sighted Buraida, like Doughty, from "a brow of the Nefūd," and saw the same "dream-like spectacle!—a great clay town built in this waste sand with enclosing walls and towers and streets and houses! and there beside a bluish dark wood of ethel trees, upon high dunes! . . . I saw, as it were, Jerusalem in the desert!" Shakespear "camped in the sandy plain under the fort in the north face of the town wall, in fact the place described by Palgrave [‘Central and Eastern Arabia,’ 1, chap. vii.]. The north wall of the town must be nearly, if not quite, a mile long."

* Doughty crossed it at the same point: "The soil shelved before us; and under the next tamarisks I saw a little oozing water. We were presently in a wadi bottom, not a stone-cast over; and in crossing we plashed through trickling water." Huber had crossed the wadi, a little higher up, in half an hour.



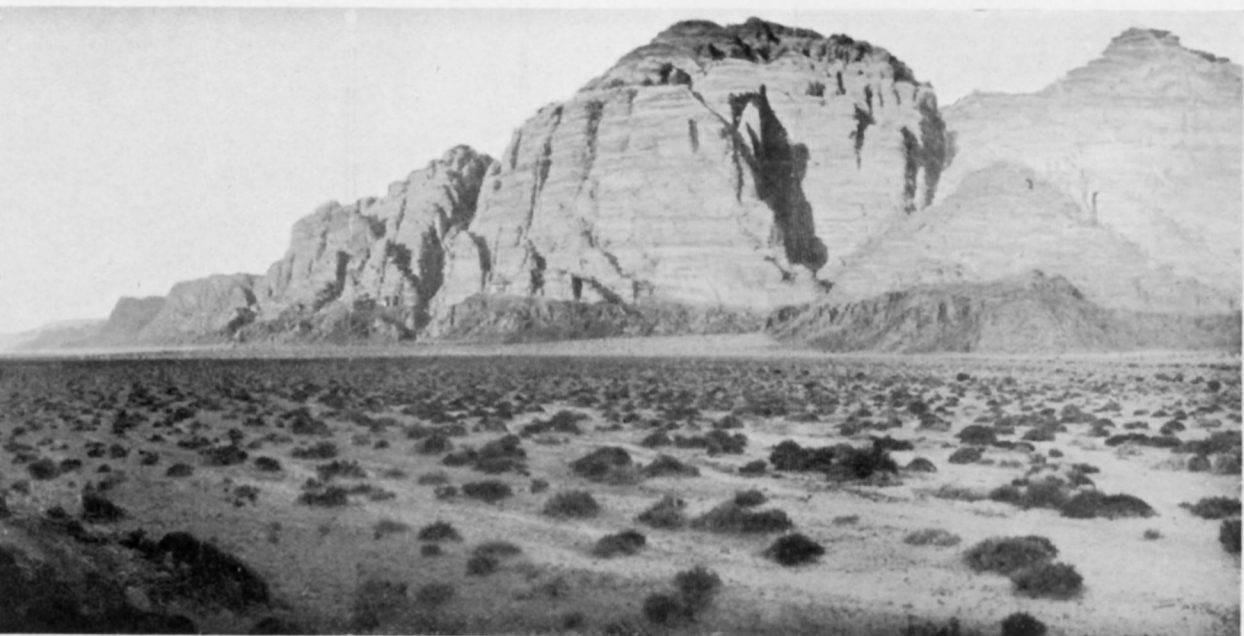
THE TUBAIK RANGE FROM THE SOUTH



WADI RUM (LOOKING NORTH)



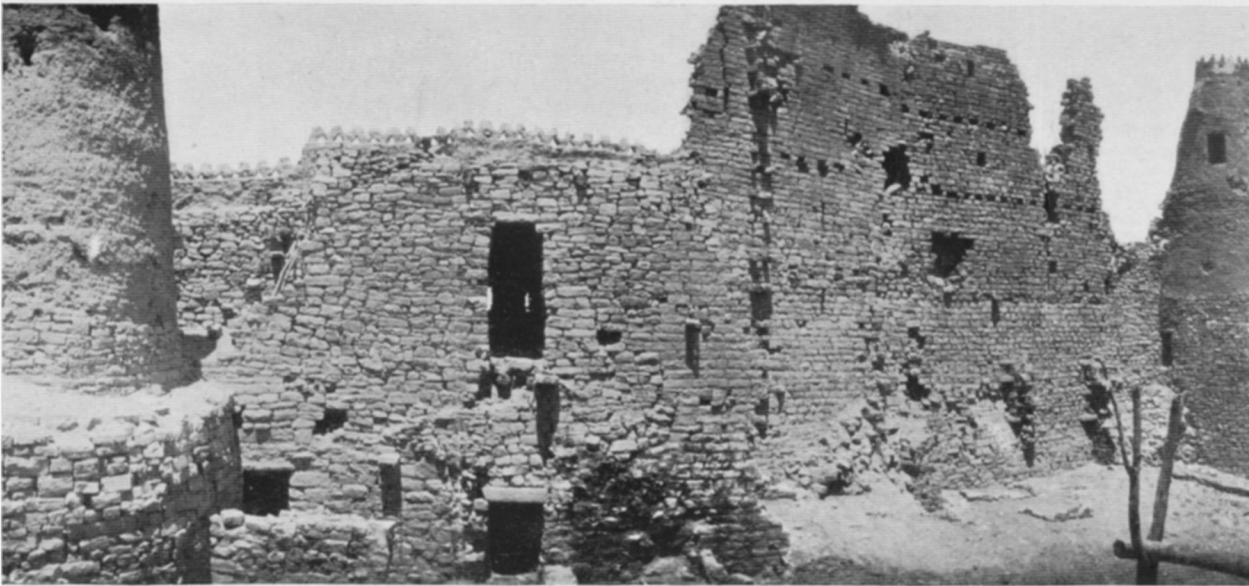
THE TUBAIK RANGE FROM THE SOUTH



WADI RUM (LOOKING NORTH)



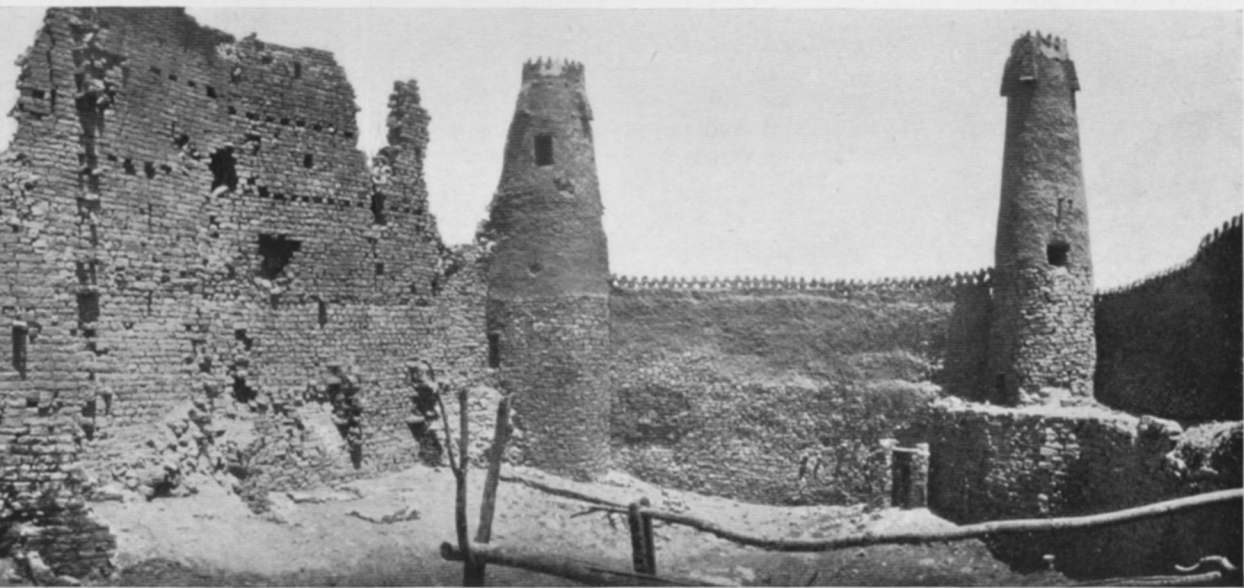
OASIS OF JAUF EL AMR (LOOKING NORTH-WEST)



INTERIOR OF KASR MARID, JAUF



OASIS OF JAUF EL AMR (LOOKING NORTH-WEST)



INTERIOR OF KASR MARID, JAUF

Shakespear had now reached mid-Arabia, Buraida being considered the halfway house between Iraq and the Hejaz, yet he was still less than a third of his way across the peninsula to Egypt. During his transactions at Buraida for safe conveyance onwards, he experienced what Doughty, Leachman, and Raunkiaer had experienced before—namely, that the inhabitants, in spite of their more than usual acquaintance with the outside world, are fanatic, inhospitable to strangers, and shameless in their dealings.* Shakespear spent two days in discussing prices and other details for getting on to Egypt, and ended by paying heavily for what turned out to be very poor service. One Ali er Ribdi supplied six camels and *Ageyl* † to convey him to Damascus or Egypt. His choice of route was probably due to chance. The most usual one would have taken him onwards to Jebel Shammar and Hail, whence the well-worn track across the Nafud leads to Jauf. Or he might have followed along the southern edge of the sands, like Doughty, Huber, and others, from Hail to Teima, thence to Tebuk and Akaba. Luckily he followed neither of these now well-known tracks, but made a new line from Kasim to Jauf along the *northern* edge of the great sand-bed, a matter of 400 odd miles. Leaving Buraida he passed out of settled Nejd and re-entered nomads' land. For twenty-nine days he saw neither town, hamlet, nor cultivation, while for the whole distance between Buraida and Jauf he found no permanent abode of man, excepting one solitary Kasr. The journey, featureless as it was, proved of great use, for since all previous travellers had approached Kasim from the direction of Jebel Shammar, there remained a very extensive unknown area to the north of their routes, while our knowledge of the north-eastern limits of the Great Nafud and of the region at the sources of some of the great dry wadis which fall to the Euphrates was nil.‡

On the last day of March Shakespear struck north on a line between the Ajibba–Batin–Koweit caravan route and the string of oases which run north-westwards for some distance towards Jebel Shammar. He made rather slow progress owing to lack of camp helpers, but he kept up his survey without intermission, and this in spite of obvious ill health caused by poor food, indifferent water, and worry. His diary becomes more meagre, and shows a lack which cannot be altogether accounted for by the condition of the country he passed through. This northern frontier of Kasim is open steppe, devoid of interest and with little water, until the southern limits of the sand-belts and the Great Nafud itself are

* Doughty was assaulted and robbed, barely escaping with his life; Raunkiaer was refused food; Leachman found "it one of the few towns in Nejd in which I met discourtesy."

† The *Ageyl* (Uqeil), a sort of trading society composed of members who remain neutral to all feuds, and act as caravaners, without fear of molestation, throughout all Arabia.

‡ Leachman is our only authority for the region between the south Syrian Hammad and Kasim. His route was, with the exception of the last few marches, far to the north of Shakespear's.

approached. Here anyway there was relief from dull monotony, even if travelling was rendered more tedious. The first sandwaves on Shakespear's route were the Nawadhir, which Leachman (their routes crossed each other at this point) described as "a down-like wave of sand 300 feet high." There are really, as the name implies, two ridges, which Shakespear recorded—Nadhir el Adah and Nadhir el Hamaid. Leachman was told by the Arabs that these sands were connected with El Bittar, although on his map he distinctly shows them as an isolated dune. Shakespear, on the other hand, records them as separate, and of different sand, from El Bittar. At this particular point Shakespear was exactly 28 miles, as the crow flies, from his former camp at Ajibba, under the northern lee of El Bittar. Immediately after crossing the Nawadhir, however, he did actually come to the last northern waves of the Bittar sand-steppes, these seven narrow tongues of Nafud sands ending in the Khub Shama and the Zazzam.

The next day Shakespear watered at Zerud and reached historic ground, for Zerud* is one of the stations on the time-honoured Pilgrim route from Persia and Mesopotamia to Mecca, stations which we have known of from the early Moslem geographers, but which have not all yet been located by modern travellers. Shakespear was, in fact, on the Darb Zobeida, the trans-Arabian high-road commemorating the wife of Harun er Rashid, whose pious fancy was to lighten the hardships of this desert route. Zerud marks the parting of the ways, for hereabouts the traveller from Baghdad (or beyond) chooses his route, westward to Hail, south-east to Kasim, south-west to Mecca and Medina. There is, in reality, a group of wells in the hollow ground (Khub Shama), between the sands of Lazzam to the north, of Ash Ali to the south, and the Nafud † itself to the west; for Zerud, Shaba, Wasait, Hasima (Hasma), and even Shaiba (15 miles across a sand-spit to the west), may all be considered as marking the ancient route. He crossed the well-worn track of the Darb Zobeida on April 11, just to the east of a landmark, Tell Windiyat, which marks the eastern extremity of the great Nafud. Shakespear here experienced a long and irritating delay; his guides, who were *ageyl* taking camels to Damascus, dallied, while lost camels were rounded up, and stray sections of the caravan joined in. He was also running short of food, making the best of bad water, and rather sick. It was still doubtful whether they would march to Jauf by the trans-Nafud route (Hail-Jubba) or along the northern edge of the sands (the Lubba track). Rumours of Ruweilah raids, and the spectacle of Shammar herdsmen in retreat from the Lubba, almost caused the *ageyl* to take the southern route; but

* In those days Zerud boasted a kasr and reservoirs (*vide* Ibn Jubair). Shakespear found "only one big well in a basin like Hafar el Ats, brackish water, of a bad colour."

† Shakespear's survey here checks the routes of the Blunts (1879) and of Huber (1881) on their way from Hail to Nejef.

in the end the whole party moved on, a straggling caravan of four hundred odd camels. They followed along the Nafud fringe, but found, to their detriment, that on its north-eastern limits the Nafud has not the distinct boundary it shows elsewhere. Sandy tracks and tongues of higher dunes lead off to the east—parents, doubtless of the Ardh el Madhna and the Dahana belts. It was not until he had advanced another 120 miles that the Nafud showed that defined wall-like edge which is its special feature on other flanks. Watering from the wells of Taraba (obviously *Kasr Torba*, where the Blunts were refused water by Ibn Rashid's garrison*), which lay three or four hours to the east of this tract, they did not find water again until reaching Hayyaniya, another fortified post supported by the Emirs of Hail, as an outpost to protect their northern nomad frontier. Hayyaniya evidently performed the same function in Doughty's day, for he records that Ibn Rashid was upon an expedition and long encamped at *Heyennéh*. "The Shammar princes have fortified it with a block-house; and a man or two are left in garrison, who are to shoot out at hostile ghrazzus: so that none shall draw water there, to pass over, contrary to the will of Ibn Rashid." The Kasr, of mud with lower courses of stone, guards a single well of good water at a depth of 26 fathoms. It lies immediately under the lee of the Nafud. Shakespear found it garrisoned by half a dozen of Ibn Rashid's men, who were relieved once a year. Hayyaniya marks an alternate route (to the Darb Zobeida) between Jebel Shammar and Irak, it being considered the safer route of the two when the Dhafir are raiding; it is noteworthy that Wallin, the earliest, and Miss Bell, the most recent of European travellers between Hail and Nejef, both passed this way. Hayyaniya is also a great nomad station; Shakespear saw it teeming with Shammar (Sinjarah) herds; while Nolde found it "enlivened by the presence of thousands of animals and herds of camels, belonging to the *Roala* (Ruweilah), who use the Nafud during the winter as their pasturage." †

At Hayyaniya Shakespear heard startling news. The *ageyl* ahead of him were warned to hurry on, as Ibn Rashid had murdered his Grand Vizier, Zamil ibn Subhan, and in consequence the Shammar were restless. "Apparently the Shammar had evinced a lack of faith in the Emir, and shown plainly that they would prefer Zamil as their leader. Accordingly young Saud ibn Rashid and the son of Saleh ibn Subhan put their heads together and determined to clear Zamil and his intimate friends out of the way. When on the march, somewhere near Abu Ghar,

* Huber spent some days here in 1881; he records two walled wells guarded by a kasr of clay.

† Nolde had come this way from Jauf, thus a forerunner of Shakespear's in the opposite direction. From Hayyaniya he turned south to Hail. He gives a detailed description of the locality, which tallies exactly with Shakespear's.

Actually the first visitor to Hayyaniya was the Italian Guarmani, who rode thither from Hail with the Emir's (Talal's) ghrazzu. He said that the blockhouse had recently been built, *i.e.* about 1860.

a slave came up from behind and shot Zamil in the back, killing him outright. Seeing this Zamil's brother and some others jumped on to their mares and made off. They were rounded up, however, and killed out of hand (an uncle, a cousin, a slave, and another man). While the murders were being carried out, young Ibn Rashid and Saud es Saleh rode on without paying any attention. Men were immediately despatched to make sure of Hail. A low-down crime, for if it had not been for Zamil young Saud ibn Abdul Aziz would not have been alive now." Shakespear only skirted the fringe of the Emirate of Jebel Shammar, but even he did not escape without experiencing something of its blood-stained annals, and recoiling from its barbarism. These tedious marches and long evenings round the coffee-hearth were relieved by the variety of his companions. There was, for instance, the Bedawi who had been to the Chicago Exhibition in charge of camels. He was a character in himself, and gave Shakespear some interesting information. We should like to know more about the European Christian, neither explorer nor antiquarian, who had come (with powers from Stambul) by way of Tebuk and Teima to Hail; thence, failing to do business with Ibn Rashid, had passed on to Nejeff. That was in April 1914! Shakespear also had further trouble with his men, two of them absconding with their pay, and he lost his spare camels, which cost him much *backsheesh* to retrieve. Of information gathered, the description of a new trans-Nafud route to Egypt is of importance. "From Jubba, three days westwards over sands, to a watering esh Shigasa,* on the edge of the dunes. Hence two to two and a half days north-west of Fajr. Thence across the Hejaz railway at, or near, Mudawara, and on to Kuntilla. This road, though the shortest, is dangerous on account of Sherarat, Huweitat, and Ruweilah, and even Harb, Shammar, and Hutaim."

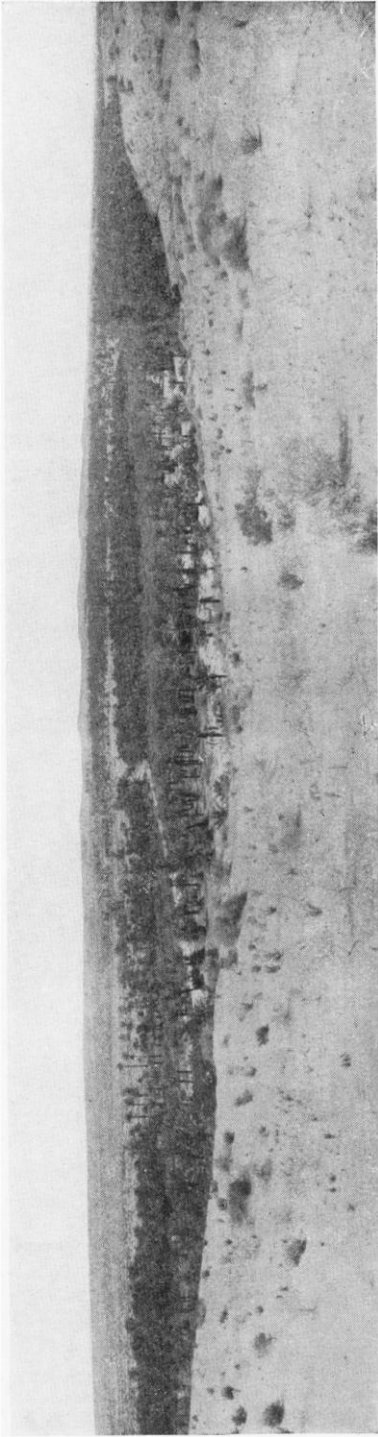
Three hard waterless marches over sand barriers † alternating with low-ground *Khubub*, brought Shakespear to another Kasr and well, Adhfa, situated in Khub Labba, "a well-marked depression, about 1 mile wide and like the Batin" which gives the track its name. ‡ Adhfa was in ruins and

* We have no record of esh Shigasa, but we have the wells of Ubeid and Asafiya, at exactly three days (40 miles each) west of Jubba in a direct line with Fajr.

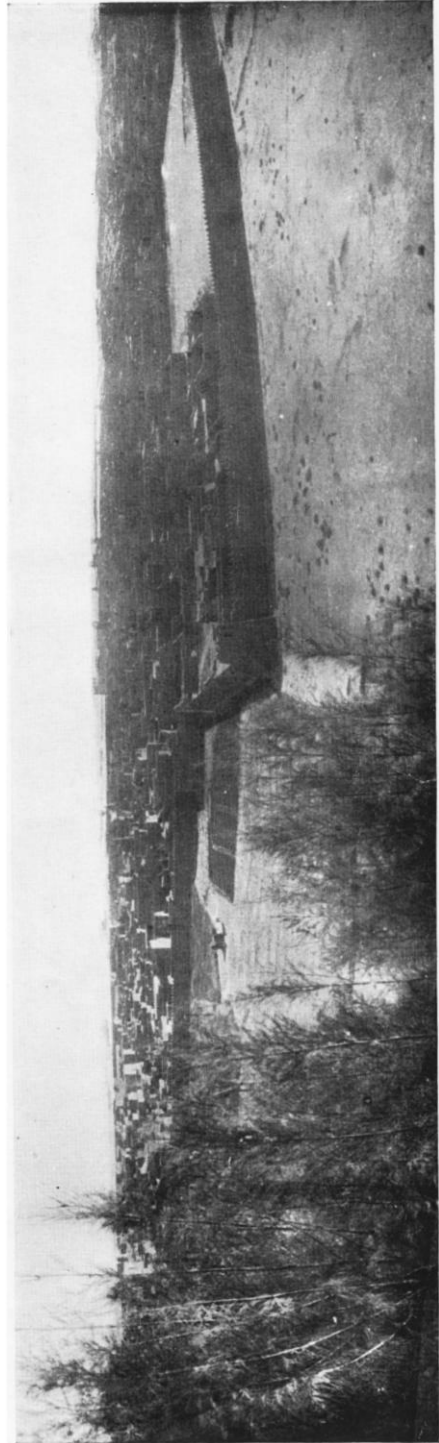
† Two of these, passed on April 21 and 22, were reported as running together and continuing eastwards as the Dahana.

‡ Huber describes the *Leubbeh* as a stony desert track, without wells, extending northwards from the Nafud to the wells of Hazil. It is one of the best pasturages of the Ruweilah when rain falls (see 'Journal,' pp. 181-3, 632, 633).

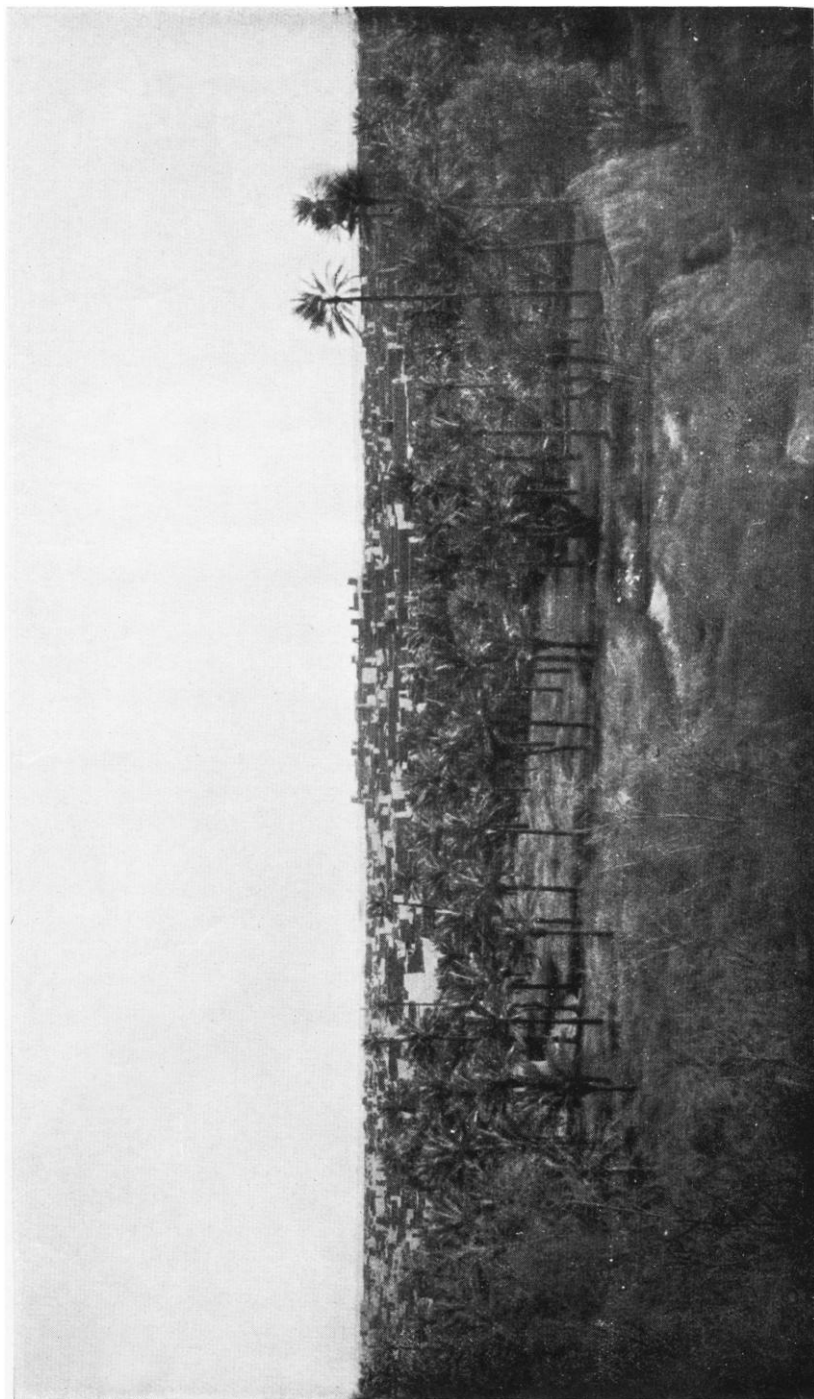
Shakespear made some interesting natural history observations on these stages. His men dug out a wolf's earth (like the jackal the Eastern wolves go to ground), and he kept and nursed one of the pups for some time. Later, three days east of Jauf, he was brought an ostrich chick. This is probably the most northern limit of the Arabian ostrich in these days. (I saw them at the same latitude further west.) But we have evidence that in former days they ranged all over the Syrian Desert right up to the Euphrates. See reports by eye-witnesses such as Bartholomew Plaisted in 1750, Sir Eyre Cote in 1771, Irwin in 1781, Major John Taylor in 1789, and Olivier in 1797.



WADI RUMMA BETWEEN ANAIZA AND BURAI DA (LOOKING SOUTH)



BURAI DA: "A DREAM-LIKE SPECTACLE!—A GREAT CLAY TOWN . . . BESIDE A BLUI SH DARK WOOD OF ETHEL TREES . . . AS IT WERE JERUSALEM IN THE DESERT!" (DOUGHTY)

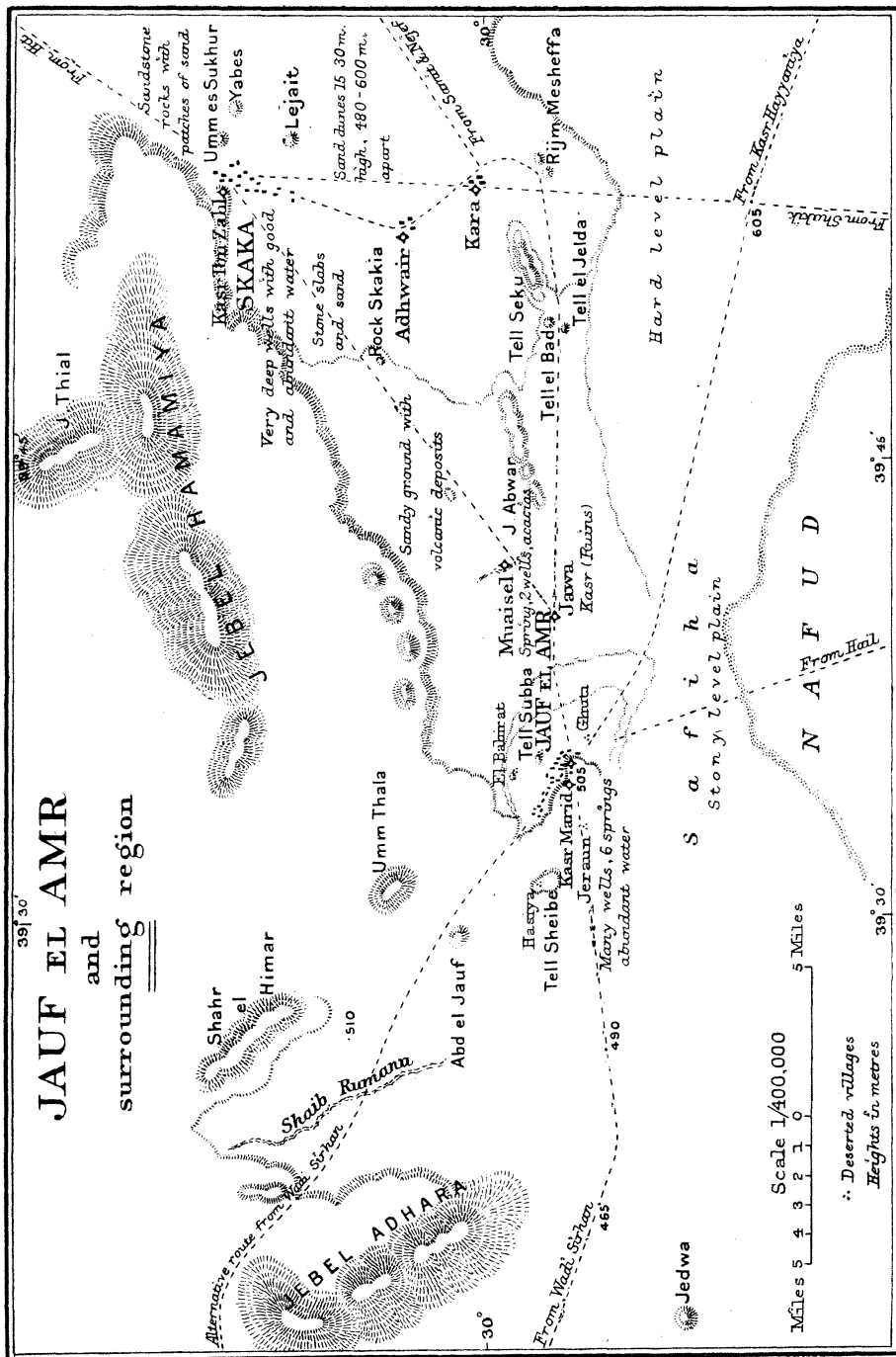


BURAI DA (LOOKING NORTH)

unoccupied, and the well "said to be 66 fathoms deep," which the Kasr protected, had been filled in by Abdul Aziz ibn Metaab er Rashid, in order to defeat Ruweilah raiding parties. Shakespear watered 17 miles on, at Hazam el Mai, "two rock pools, holding rain-water, marked by *rijms*," and passed on towards Jauf. To the north stretched the Hajara steppe, draining to the Euphrates by way of the Wadi el Khar and the Wadian; to the south rose the wall-like edge of the Great Nafud, over 30,000 square miles of continuous deep sand. Five featureless marches led the party onwards to the edge of an escarpment, whence Shakespear looked down into the curious self-contained depression which holds the northernmost of Arabian oases. "A very flat plain extending to the edge of the basin, the descent being in four successive ledges," and he arrived at "Jauf el Amr, not Amir, as the maps have it, for it was Omar, the second Caliph, who opened the heathens' eyes and made Jauf a town." * Shakespear was now on comparatively well-known ground. All travellers who have approached Arabia from the direction of Syria or Palestine, from Seetzen's emissary in 1808 onwards, have passed through Jauf. At the time of Shakespear's visit Jauf was no longer an appanage of the Shammar princes, having been wrested from them, in 1910, by the powerful Ruweilah (Anaza) chieftain, Nuri es Shalan. It has become essentially a Bedawi centre, and perhaps is better as such, for Jauf is the most isolated of all Arabian oases, cut off as it is from all other inhabited places by wide and waterless regions, Teima being the nearest at 150 miles. It is placed in mid-desert halfway between Akaba and Baghdad, between Jebel Druz and Jebel Shammar, and forms a typically nomad's centre in that vast and howling wilderness over which the great Anaza federation roams. It was the young son of Nuri es Shalan who entertained Shakespear—"a splendid little chap of ten years old, not at all shy, who took special charge of me, and chatted away without a pause." Aamar, Nuri's (semi-negro) deputy, handed Shakespear on to Huweitat *rafiks*, who bargained for £10 for safe escort to Akaba. Had Shakespear got there for that sum, he would have been lucky. He had yet 300 miles to pass the Sinai frontier, his difficulties were increasing, and he now had to deal with quite shameless robbers. His *rafiks* came the following day and "cried off"; then, being forced to keep to their bargain by the Sheikhs, they would only guarantee to safeguard him from one section of their tribe! An incident like this proves that the bad name of the Huweitat is not mere libel, for they have a reputation for treachery, and for dishonouring the time-honoured custom of *rafik*. So Shakespear was forced to go to Sheikh

Shakespear also found Hubara Bustard eggs on April 11, and he caught and bottled the venomous Horned Viper, *Umm Jeneyb*, and another called *Zarag* (this is described by Huber as *Zerrâq*, a common harmless variety, attaining a length of 4-5 feet).

* Shakespear does not add much to our knowledge of the Jauf oases, although his panoramic photos help us to get a good idea of the topography of the basin. The present population he puts at 1500.



Audah, of the Abu Tayy clan,* and found to his cost that the chieftain was no better than his henchmen. For, after a long and tedious journey, which led him northwards instead of westwards from Jauf, he fell into the hands of a Sheikh (Audah was a great character, and a famous desert raider; he made good use of himself in the War; he took Akaba with Lawrence, and followed Faisal through to Damascus. Lawrence says, "He is the best man in Arabia to have beside you in a fight; . . . when he dies the Middle Ages of the desert will have ended"), who immediately set to work to screw the last farthing he possibly could out of the Englishman. Shakespear was at the limit of his resources. He had no special present left to offer to Audah, so he put forward "a *douceur* of £10, and the promise of anything he liked to be sent from Egypt." This was considered an insult! In the end Shakespear had to hand over £20, which left him with £7 to carry on with. But the bond held good, and he started off westwards on May 7 in real earnest. The actual position of the Huweitat encampment was in the hill country to the north of the Wadi Sirhan, 50 miles north-west of Jauf. Once on the move, he rode fast and far. The first day he did 40 miles, crossed the Wadi Sirhan † diagonally and watered at the (10) wells of Arfaja. The famous wadi was here 18 miles across, with a sandy bottom. Arfaja was one of a group of watering-places, having Jebel Sebeikha as a landmark, which include Sheghar, Sebeikha, Meikum, and Mushash Arfaja. Leaving the wells at evening, in bright moonlight, he cleared the Sirhan depression almost immediately and came out on to the higher gravelly plain called Baseita, "flat and smooth as a pancake, and equally bare." This was the most inhospitable region he had seen in all desert Arabia. It was "a smooth black basalt expanse, without a vestige of growth." ‡ He crossed it in fourteen hours, § noting in passing the lower courses of the Wadi Fajr and its tributaries the Tarais and Thanayya. Failing to find water at Khabra Atik, he was more successful at Khabra Musawil, where he filled all available skins; this well, curiously enough, had been discovered that same year by a compatriot, Miss Gertrude Bell, while on her way to Jebel Shammar

* Abu Tayy and Beni Jazi, the two principal groups, though at feud, of Huweitat.

† The Sirhan depression is the principal physical feature of the Southern Hammad, being a self-contained basin with a drainage area of at least 35,000 square miles, extending from Jebel Druz and Jebel Anaza in the north to within 40 miles of Tebuk in the south. The actual depression is a well-defined hollow, 200 miles long and roughly 15 miles broad, with water at no great depth, hence its numerous wells, and its qualification for being the high-road between Syria and the heart of the Arabian peninsula.

‡ Baseita, "the outstretched" (see Wallin's narrative, *Geog. Jour.*, vol. 24, 1854, pp. 136, 137; also Huber's 'Journal,' p. 564). Although usually utterly sterile, Baseita does produce at certain seasons after rain a veritable harvest in the *Samh*, a small glaucous plant producing a seed which the nomads collect and grind into flour, using it for bread, porridge, and to eat with dates. See Doughty, vol. 1, pp. 312, 313.

§ Shakespear records that "Baseita extends northwards to a Shaib which flows a little south of Weisit (Wadi Hedrij), and is as broad as it is long," *i.e.* 70 miles each way.

Khabra Atik marked the end of the basalt plain ; this was succeeded by rolling steppe which eventually rose to rougher country, the stark serrated ridge of Jebel Tubaik showing up to the north. He was soon embroiled in the turmoil of "wild, black and red sandstone ridges, without any grazing for the camels—a forbidding country reminding me of Hormuz, only on a larger and rougher scale." Shakespear here suffered from great heat and great cold (snow lies on Tubaik in winter), bad sandstorms and the fear of being swept up by a passing ghazzu. "All this country is so desolate as to be of no use for grazing, and is only traversed by raiding parties or despatch riders."* He was already on the dangerous coasts of the desert sea, the thresholds of which are usually considered more risky than the open ocean. The Tubaik region forms a sort of debatable land, for although it is considered by the Sherrarat to be their own special *dira*, one may fall foul of raiders of the Shammar, Ruweilah, Huweitat, or Beni Atiyah and even of the Beni Sakhr from the trans-Jordan Belka. Shakespear, for the first time in Arabia, wore partial native dress, at the earnest request of his men donning Bedawin head-dress and Arab *abba*. The sight of a solitary *thelul* rider on the horizon, or even of tracks in the sand, raised a scare ; the party moved fast from well to well, mostly at night, never daring to halt long or to pitch the tents. Passing along the southern flank of the Tubaik ridge, which rose like a giant cinder heap, piled into weirdly shaped pinnacles and peaks, he crossed the outgoing routes of Guarmani in 1864, and my own in 1909, which indicate the line of the short cut (though seldom used) to Teima and the Hejaz from the north.†

The Tubaik is a small, but very rough, group of sandstone and basalt hills rising to a height of about 1000 feet above the surrounding plain, or 4000 feet above sea-level.‡ The valleys are choked with sand, and there seems to be little or no grazing. On May 10 the party "ascended a terrific pass at the juncture of the rocky Tubaik and the sandy Sanam," immediately after passing which they dropped into Wadi Fiha.§ Beyond this more broken country, then smoother plains led down to the Hejaz

* The Tubaik region is not always uninhabited. In Feb.-March I found a large section of Sherrarat at the wells of Mughaira, a day's journey to the south. In summer, when the larger tribes move away to better grazings, the Sherrarat congregate around the rapidly drying rain-pools and wells in the Tubaik valleys.

† Miss Bell found a ruined site in the Tubaik, Kilwa, which she considers to have been a station on an old caravan route, now disused. Bair, to the north, was another caravanserai on the same route.

Doughty also records the stations on a route between Teima and Ma'an, passing to the west of Tubaik (vol. I, p. 297). See also Huber's 'Journal,' pp. 572, 573.

‡ I found them "a mixture of sandstone, weather-worn black, and of lava-capped sandstone piles, often having the appearance of flat-topped table-mountains. Some of these were coal-black, and looked like immense cinder heaps ; while others were of red sandstone, with only the lava-cap showing black at the top." See *Geog. Jour.*, March, 1910, p. 236.

§ Guarmani's Wadi Fihe.

railway. After one more scare of being caught up by a Huweitat ghazzu, Shakespear reached Umm Shaithiya, a good watering and summer headquarters of the Huweitat, while grazing their herds near Sanam. He rested here in order to let his exhausted camels graze, and to write up his notes. "For the first time in six days we dared to light lanterns at night." Then starting again by moonlight, Shakespear crossed the old Haj route and the modern Hejaz railway—"a mile width of innumerable tracks running north and south." He crossed the railway just to the south of Mudawara, two years later the scene of many of Lawrence's exploits. The country was still unknown; in spite of the ribbon of survey which is the railway, both to the east and west of it Shakespear had not been preceded; his route continues as *new* right across to his very last bivouac in the peninsula.

A few marches along the now disused Egyptian Pilgrim route, which joins the Syrian Haj route at Mudawara, brought him to rougher country—"the hills were magnificent battlemented walls," the wadis were deep-cut gorges, and the scenery was on a grander scale than anything he had seen in mid-Arabia. He had, of course, reached the lip of the Arabian plateau, and was about to drop into the deep rift valley of the Dead Sea and Akaba. Watering at Ain el Iram (Rum), a cleft in the rocks, he found that he had yet to run the gauntlet of Turkish territory (the Ma'an-Akaba track and telegraph) before making safe his entrance into a British sphere of influence. "Sentries were posted on the road at night, and the guide knew of no other road. After a council of war, we decided to leave for a spot somewhere three hours or more north of Akaba, camp in a ravine, if possible, and spend a day searching for a way through." Moving on they picked up a young Arab, who was tempted by the offer of a good reward to show them a road. But this entailed an act of deception which is most dangerous to practise in the desert; Shakespear had to pose as a member of that exclusive brotherhood the *Ageyl*; however, his men made him up as a *sick* one—"I had a fearfully hot time with my head bandaged up in two *khafiyahs* and the *abba*. Had to grab my breakfast as best I could lying prone sick under my native cloak; and did not come off very well." May 15 and 16 were "the worst days on record. Loaded up at 2.30 p.m. and dashed across Wadi Ithm, with its single telegraph wire. Then climbed up and up the other side until at sunset we reached the Nakb el Murghan, something over 4000 feet by my aneroid. We got a view of the sea to the south, through a cleft in the rocks, and saw smoke or haze over Akaba. Then dismounting we had to get down a fearful place. The descent went on precipitously for another hour, but at dusk luckily the going became better. My shoes had given out, and the men were all very done up, when we halted at 9 p.m., the first pause since the pass. Then Abdul Aziz came to say that they wanted to go on all night, in order to clear Wadi Musa (Araba) before daylight, that two camels were

badly lame, and that if we stayed where we were discovery would be certain. The only course left us was to "cast" part of the loads and to trust to luck. We left behind all we could dispense with, redistributed the loads, and stumbled on into the night. The rest was a nightmare of confusion, of tumble and scramble, of bruised feet, and of falling about for want of sleep, until we got down into the Wadi Araba just as the moon rose behind us over the hills which we had been clambering down for the last five hours." After getting across the Araba depression (here 12 miles wide) they experienced the same difficulty in the hills opposite; the guide came to the end of his knowledge and was sent back. But eventually they struck a well-marked track which was supposed to be the Ma'an-Kuntilla route; then they camped after "completing over twenty hours on end, with only two halts." The next morning "a search with the glasses revealed three white objects like buildings to the north; we bore down on them, and found them to be the police post of Kuntilla."

Shakespear passed on to Suez, Port Said, and Europe a contented man, having achieved his ambition, and having added his jot (no small one) to the sum-total of human knowledge.

GEOLOGICAL RESULTS OF THE MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION, 1921

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Read at the Afternoon Meeting of the Society, 10 April 1922. Map follows p. 480.

THE area geologically examined consists of over 8000 square miles, included within a rectangle some 120 miles from east to west and 70 miles from north to south. This corresponds with the Tibetan portion of the drainage area of the Arun river, a complicated system of valleys which unite to form the Arun before it breaks through the main Himalayan range in the impressive gorge below Kharta. The headwaters of the Rongshar Chu and the Bhutia Kosi (Pö Chu) above Nyenyam were also examined.

The southern watershed is the line of great snowy peaks running from the Khombu pass south-eastwards through Everest and Makalu to the Arun, and to the east of the Arun is the continuation of the range which divides Sikkim from Tibet; a range which lies considerably to the north of the great Kangchenjunga group of peaks.

The northern watershed is the extension of what has been termed the Ladak or northern range of the Central Himalaya; there this is hardly a definite range but rather a broad belt of high and much-dissected country, with a few peaks of over 20,000 feet distributed without linear arrange-