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'Koweit: A Report'

Holding Institution	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
Reference	Mss Eur F111/383
Date(s)	1903 (CE, Gregorian)
Written in	English in Latin
Extent and Format	2 volumes (60 folios)
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About this record

Two copies of a report, marked as secret, on Koweit [Kuwait]. The report was compiled in the Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's Department, by Captain H H Dowding, The Essex Regiment. It was printed at the Government Central Printing Office, Simla, 1903.

The report contains information on the geography, history, politics, military strength, administration, resources, climate, and communications of Kuwait. It includes appendices on routes and prominent families in the region.

The volume also contains a number of photographs and maps:

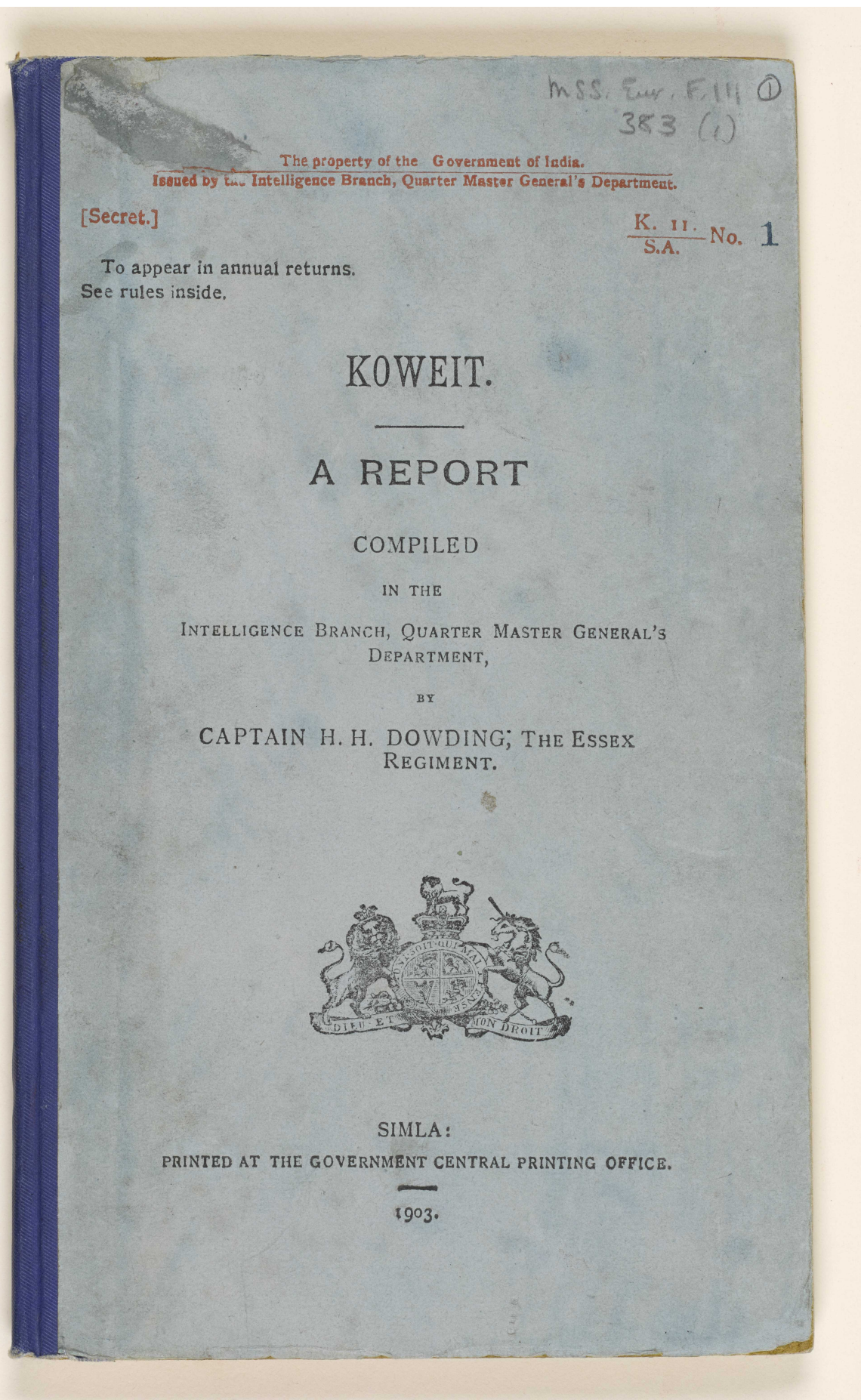
- A photograph of the foreshore of Kuwait (folio 3)
- A photograph of Mobarek-Bin-Subah [Mubārak bin Ṣabāḥ Āl Ṣabāḥ], Shaikh of Kuwait, and his youngest son Naser (folio 9)
- A photograph of the residence of the Shaikh of Kuwait (folio 17)
- A rough diagram of the village of Jehara (folio 31)
- A map of Kuwait Harbour (folio 32)

- A map of Kuwait and surrounding country (folio 33).

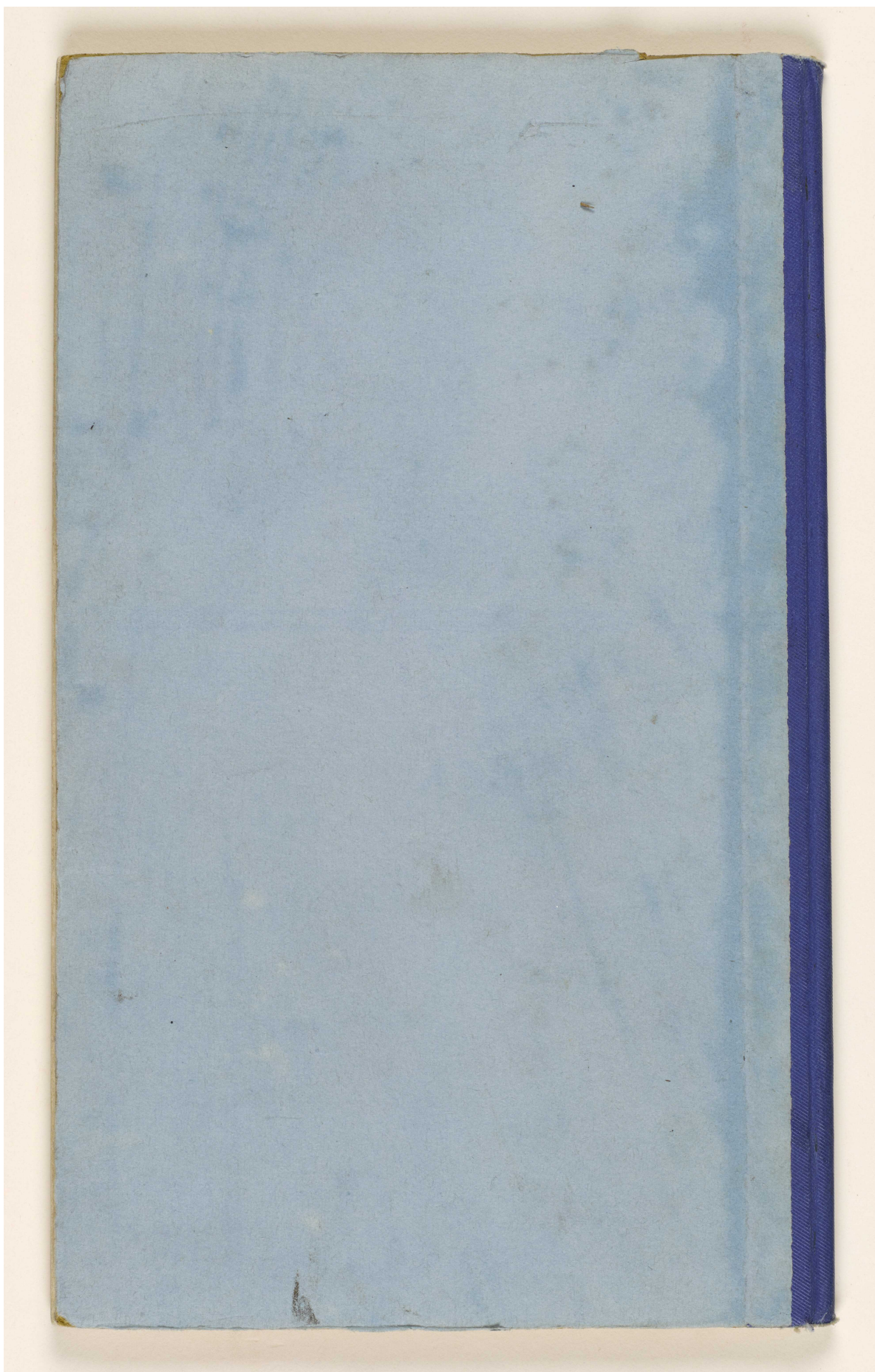
At the rear of the volume is an index, arranged alphabetically and with reference to the original pagination (folios 26-28).

Folio references given are for the first of the two copies. The second, identical copy runs from folio 34 to 66.

'Koweit: A Report' [front] (1/140)



'Koweit: A Report' [back] (2/140)



'Koweit: A Report' [spine] (3/140)



'Koweit: A Report' [edge] (4/140)



'Koweit: A Report' [head] (5/140)



'Koweit: A Report' [tail] (6/140)



Issued by Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's Department in India.

To the personal charge of Foreign Deptt.

CUSTODY AND DISPOSAL OF SECRET DOCUMENTS.

The Commander-in-Chief desires that, in future, the following regulations may be strictly adhered to :—

1. When an Officer, who has signed for the receipt of *secret* documents on Army Form A. 2006, either *resigns his command or vacates his appointment, he will hand over all such documents to the Officer taking over his command, or replacing him in his appointment, either temporarily or permanently, receiving from him a receipt in duplicate for them on Army Form A. 2006.* The Officer handing over the documents will send immediately through the proper channel one of the receipts thus obtained to the Intelligence Branch, Simla, from which the documents were issued, and will retain the other copy in his possession.

2. If the Officer in charge of secret documents quits his post on leave of absence, or on duty for a period of over two months, the same formalities will take place on his departure and on his return, as on a change of appointment.

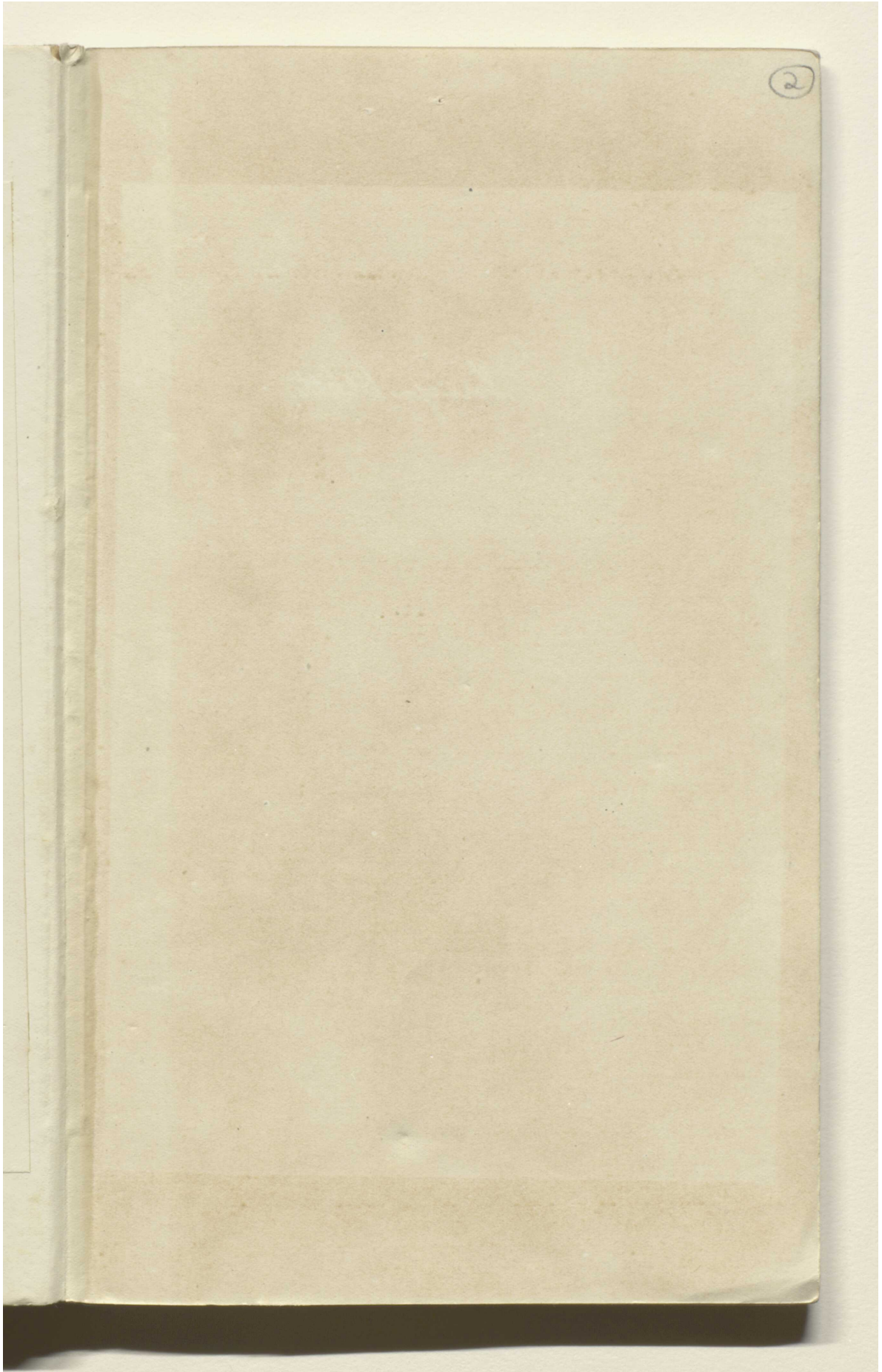
3. Every Officer after having signed for the receipt of *secret* documents will be held *personally responsible* for them, even after he has left the station or the Service, unless he has handed over his charge in strict compliance with the above orders. In case of an Officer quitting his station for less than two months, it is optional for him to hand over the *secret* documents in his charge to another Officer with the above prescribed formalities, but if he does not do so, he is responsible for them during his absence as he is during his presence at his station.

4. The Officer to whom *secret* documents are issued will keep a list of the *secret* documents in his charge, which list will be compared when taking over the documents with the receipt form then signed. He will compare the documents personally with the list on the last of January in each year, and will furnish a report on Army Form A. 2007, certifying that he has done so.

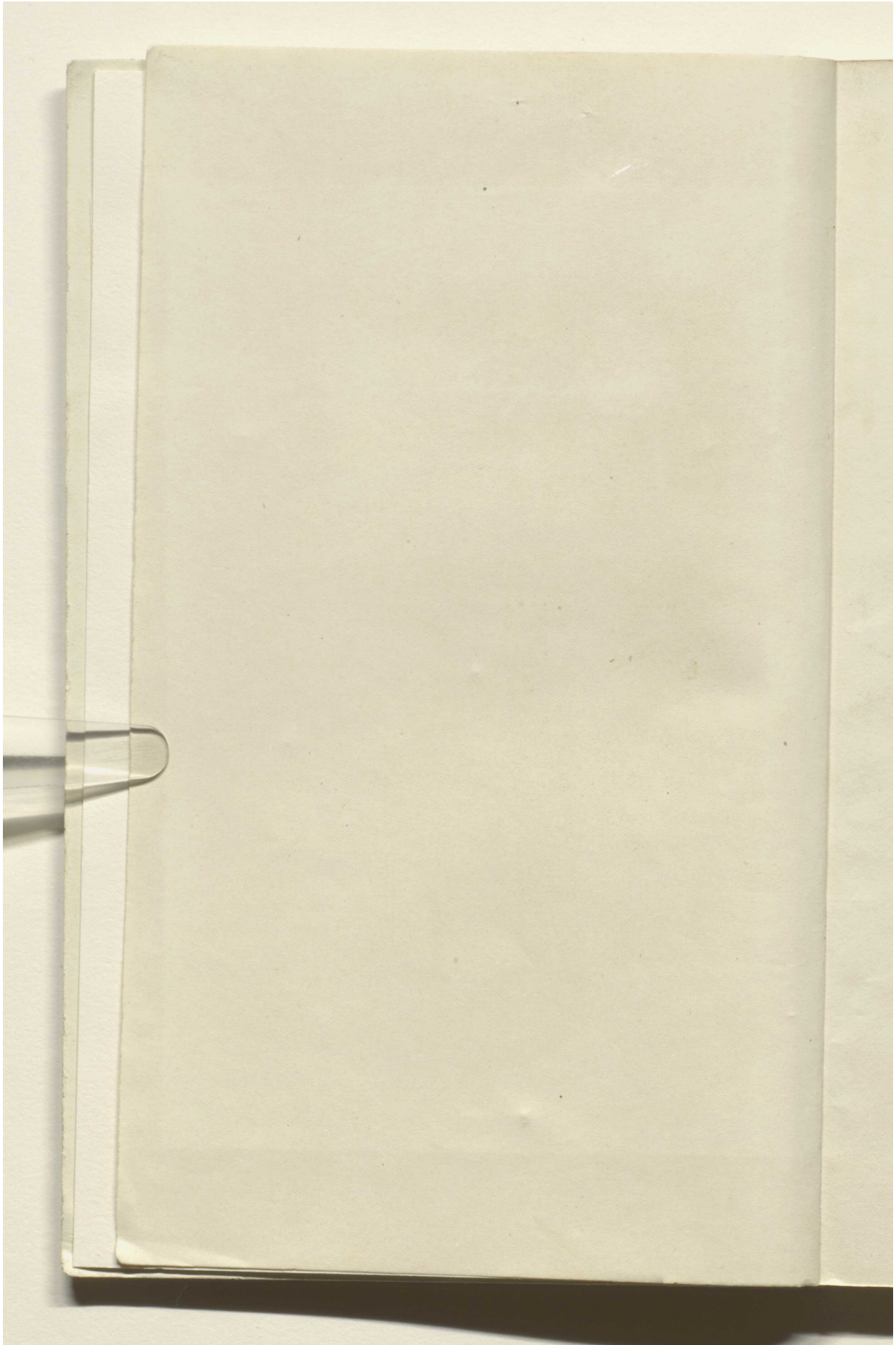
INTELLIGENCE BRANCH,
QUARTER MASTER GENERAL'S DEPT. IN INDIA;
Simla, 1st December 1899.

ALFRED GASELEE,
BRIGADIER-GENERAL,
Quarter Master General
in India.

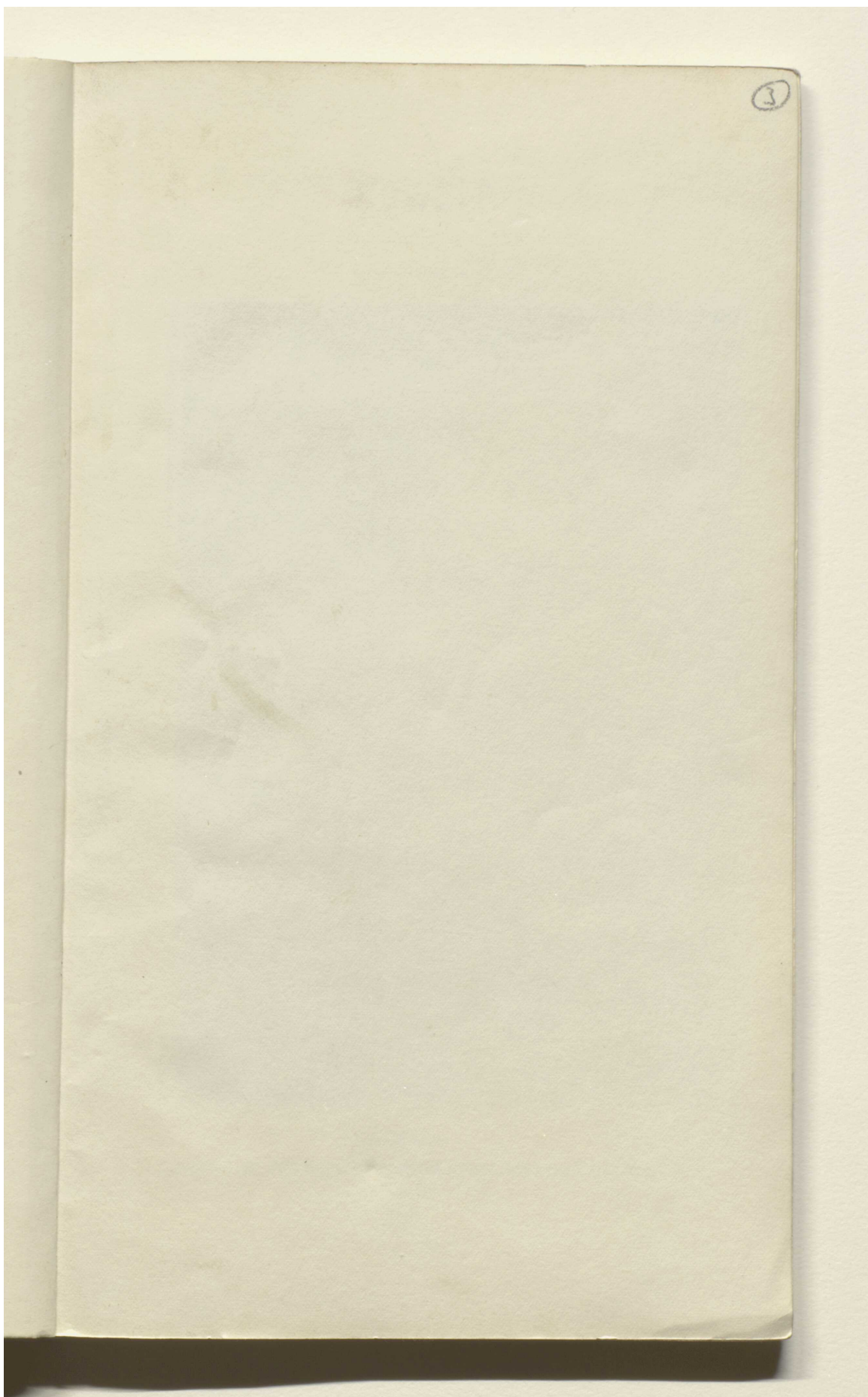
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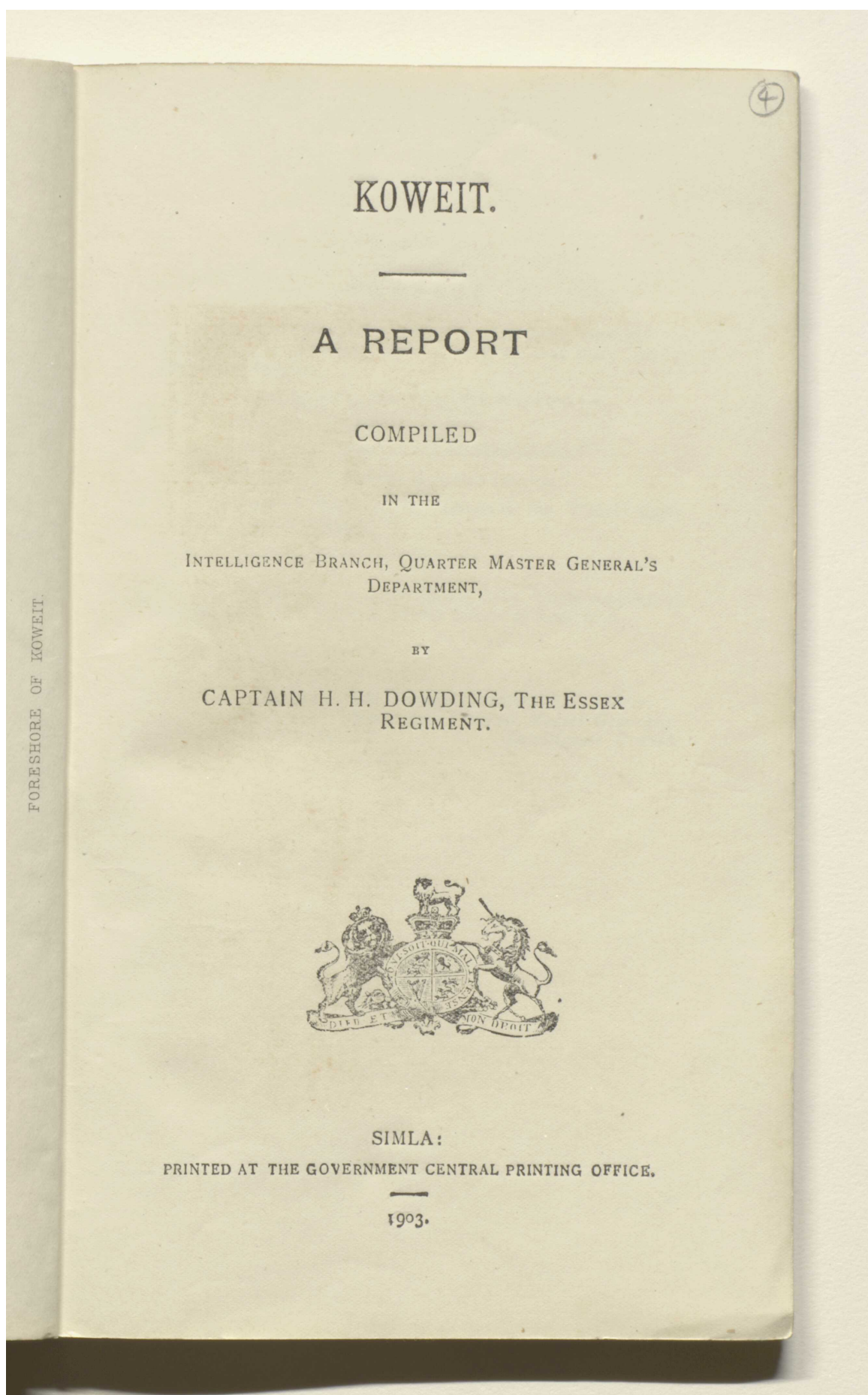


FORESHORE OF KOWEIT.

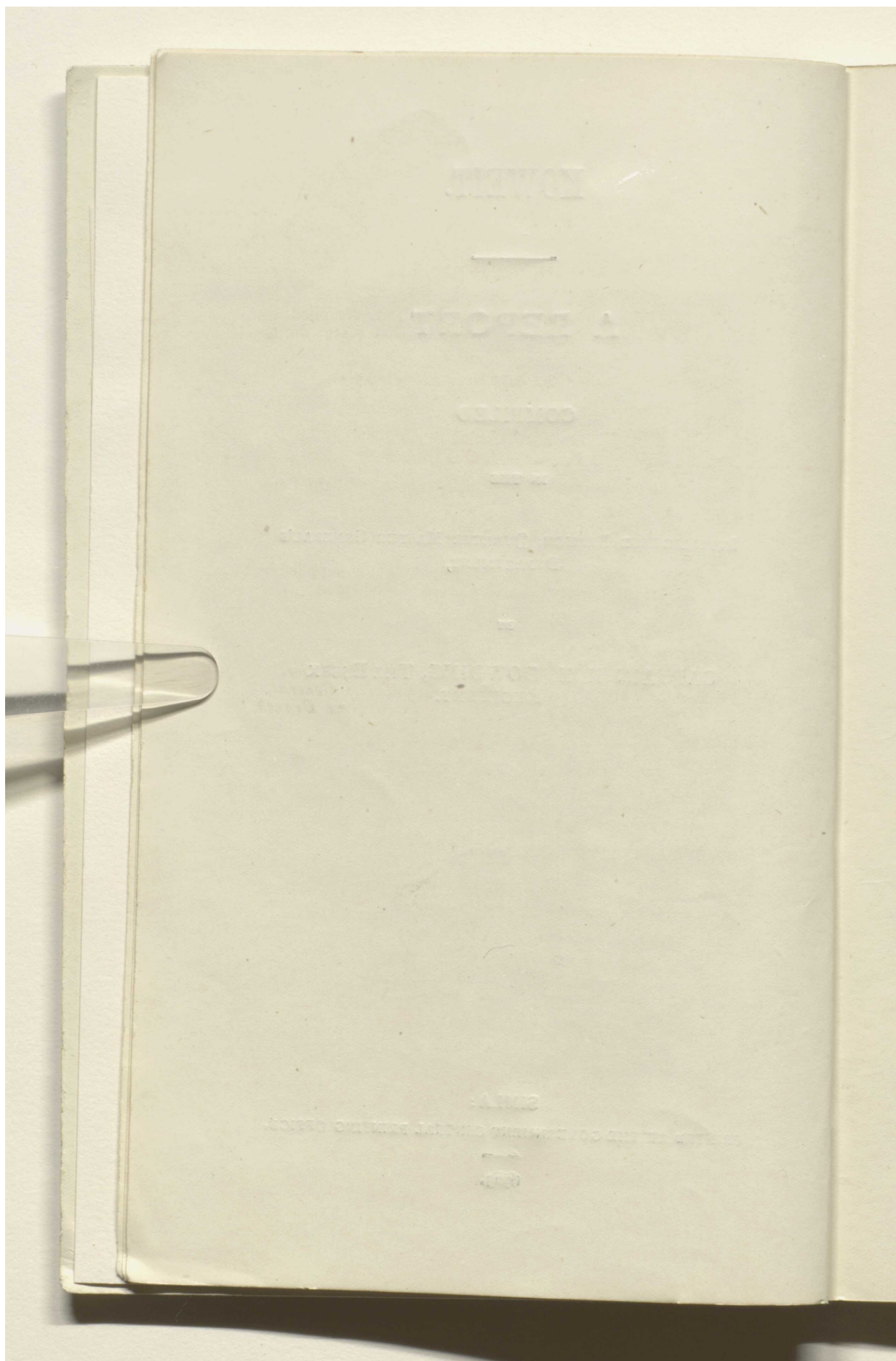
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Survey of India Office, Calcutta, August 1903.

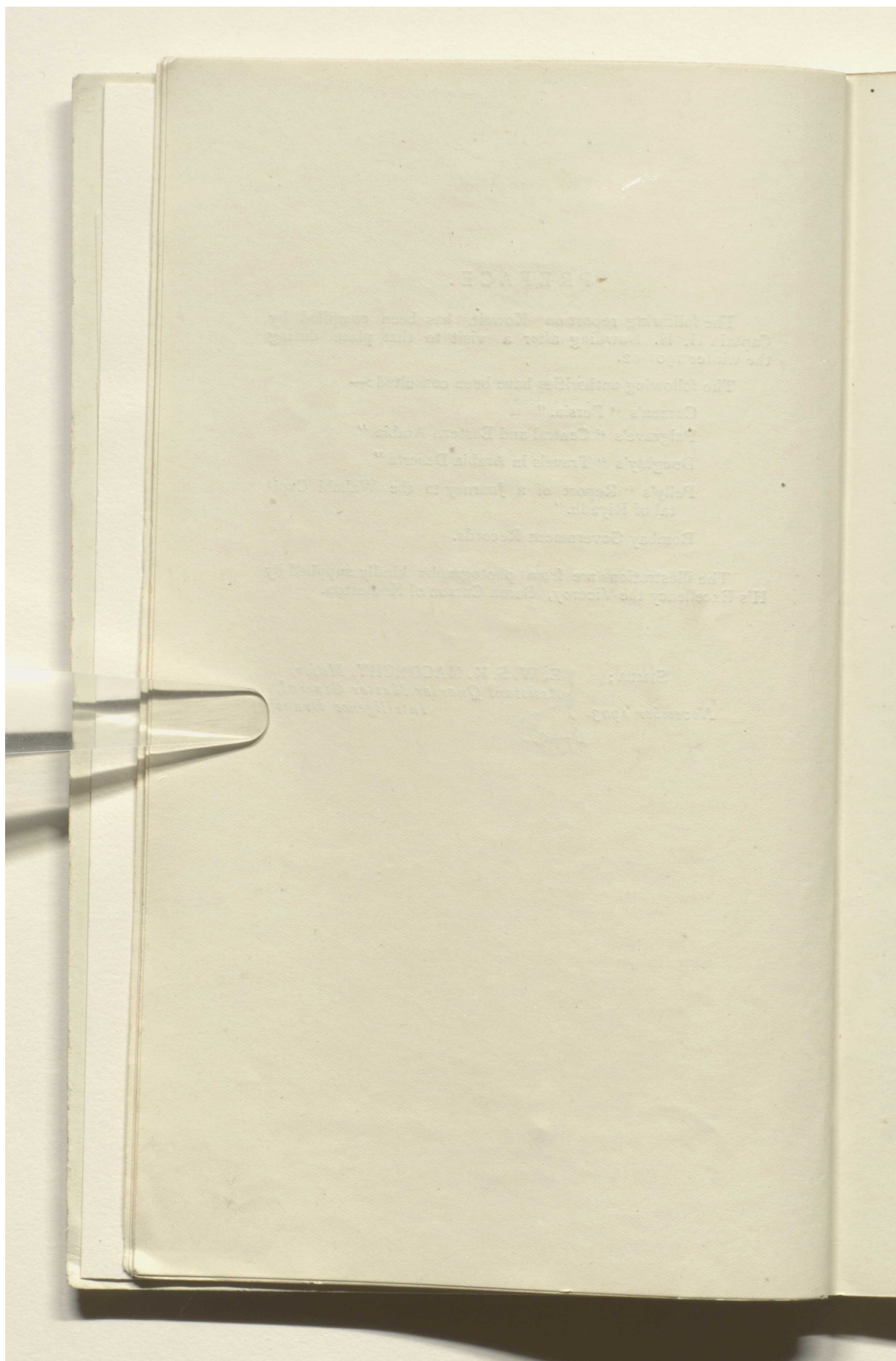




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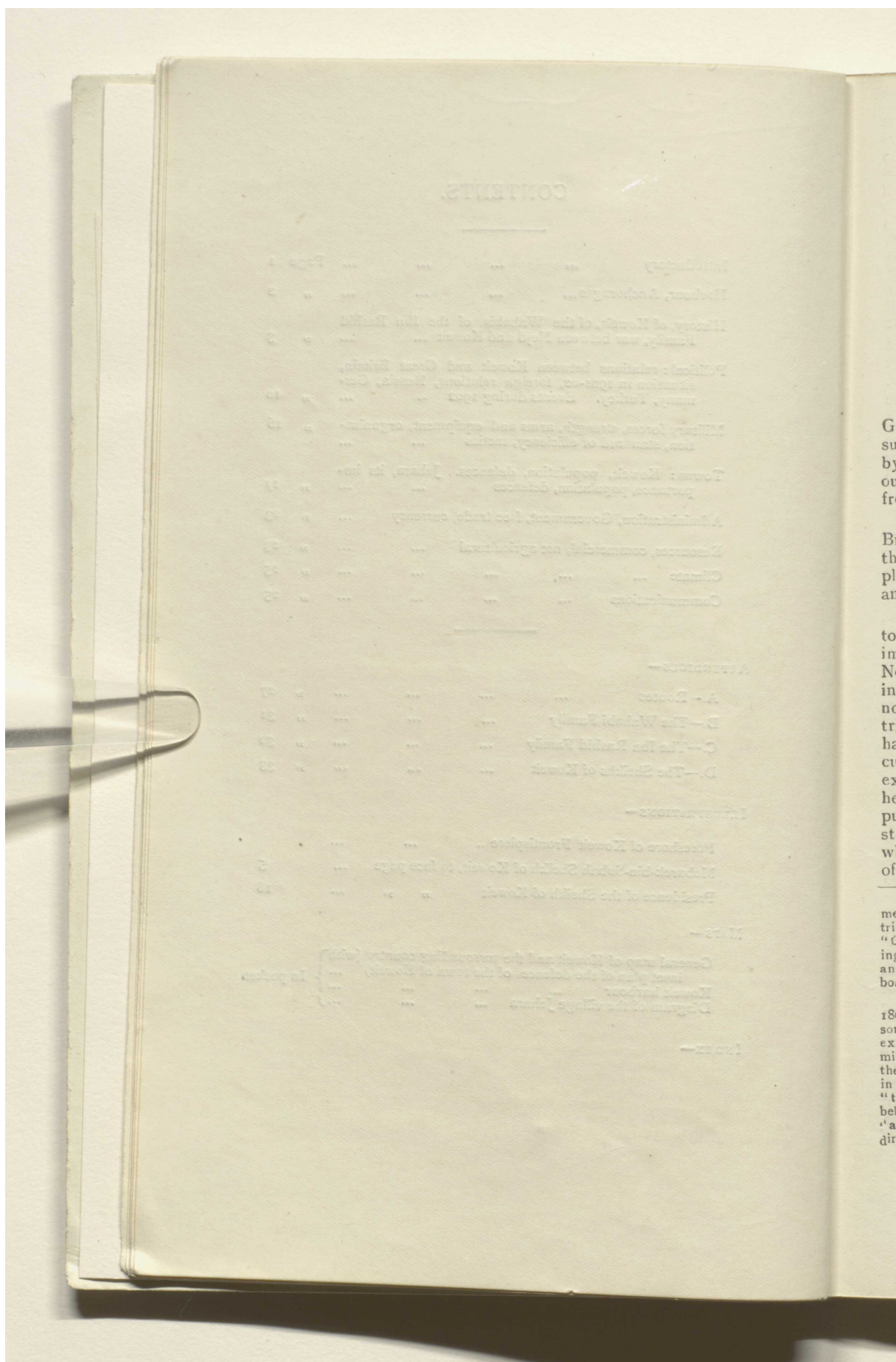
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KOWEIT.

The name of Koweit,* or rather the alternative name of Grane, first came into prominence, for English readers, as the suggested terminus for the Euphrates Valley railway, projected by General Chesney. More recently it has again become notorious as the coveted terminus of the proposed German railway from Constantinople to Baghdad.

Introductory.

In 1821-22, it was for a short time the head-quarters of the British Resident at Basrah, who moved there in consequence of the insolent attitude of the Pasha of Baghdad. It is the only place of any interest on the Arabian coast-line between Katif and Fao.

How far inland, beyond the actual shores of the great bay to which it gives its name, the territory of Koweit extends, it is impossible to ascertain with anything approaching exactitude. Not unnaturally, perhaps, the size of his dominions loses nothing in the telling of Sheikh Mubarak. He claims Safwan to the north, and Hafr to the west, though he has never received tribute or revenue from either of these places. On the other hand, he asserts that the exaction of tribute has never been a custom of his tribesmen. Probably he considers his territory to extend as far as he has ever made his power felt, or as far as he deems it possible to do so. It is perhaps enough, for present purposes, to consider Koweit territory as extending over a strip of country round the bay, of undefined width, but within which no hostile tribe or power could be tolerated by the ruler of Koweit.†

* The name "Koweit" is an Arab diminutive of the Persian "Kote," and means a little fort; no doubt a suitable name for the first settlement of an Arab tribe, driven to find a new home in an unknown country. Another name, "Grane," which still appears in certain atlases and maps, applies, properly speaking, to the whole coast line of the bay, and is derived from its supposed resemblance to the curve formed by a pair of horns,— "Keor" or "Ghern" meaning horn.

† It is interesting to note that the map published by Macmillan & Co., in 1865, in illustration of Palgrave's travels, shows Koweit territory as extending some 20 miles south of the southern shore of the bay, 20 miles west of its western extremity, from whence the boundary runs nearly due north to a point 8 or 10 miles north of the 30th degree of northern latitude, and thence nearly due east to the Shatt-el-Arab, striking the latter some 40 miles below Basrah. Colonel Pelly, in his "Report of a journey to the Wahabi Capital Riadh" (dated 1866), says "the tract around (the bay) for a radius of about 8 or 10 miles is considered to belong to Koweit." Elsewhere in the same report he places the land frontier at "a fort named Malah, 5 hours distant from Koweit," in a south-south-east direction (i.e., 13 to 15 miles from Koweit).

Harbour.

A remarkably fine bay some twenty miles long and ten miles wide, stretching approximately east and west, forms an excellent and flourishing harbour. The surrounding country to the southward is low-lying, level, and of the ordinary desert type, stretching away as far as the eye can see. The "Hill Fort," shown on the charts, some seven and a half miles south-east of the town of Koweit, stands 180 feet above sea level, and is a conspicuous object, when entering the bay from the sea. It is a well-built square erection, with towers at the corners. There is a small village to the south-east of this fort, on the coast nestling among palms and other trees.

With the exception of some sand-hills immediately to the south of the town, which are referred to in greater detail further on, the general character of the country, along the southern shore of the bay, is the same, *i.e.*, an unbroken level plain of fairly firm, whitish sand stretching away to the south and south-west.

The approach to the entrance to the bay, though it lies through shoals and low-lying sand banks, is not difficult. At present there are neither buoys nor lights, but with a lighthouse on Raz-al-Arz the harbour could be entered, at night, with ease.

After reaching its most westerly point, in Dubat Kathama, near the head of which lies the village Jehara, of which more anon, the coast-line makes an abrupt turn to the north-east. Along this northern side of the bay, about two miles from the water's edge, there runs a line of heights, steep and cliff-like on their sea face, having an elevation of about 200 feet. These give valuable shelter from the prevailing and most important wind, the "Shamal," which blows from the north-west. Owing to this shelter, no sea, at all distressing to big ships, is raised in the bay, even by a strong north-west gale. The general direction of the coast-line then trends eastwards until it reaches the creek which separates the swampy island of Bubiyan from the mainland.

Along this shore a mud flat extends some distance from the beach, and increases in width to the eastward until it is nearly five miles in breadth opposite to Ras-al-Arz.

The island Bubiyan which lies off the north-eastern entrance to the Bay of Koweit, is a large low-lying island, about 25 miles in length by 12 miles in width. It is quite barren and is partially overflowed at high water. It is separated from the mainland by Khor Subiya which, with a creek which leads out of it, is navigated as far as a place called Duweira, the port for Zobeir, a large town ten or twelve miles south-west of Basrah.

Failaka island at the entrance to the Bay is about seven miles long by three miles wide at its western end. It is all very low lying, its highest point being only thirty feet above sea level. On its western side is a small village with date groves and about 250 inhabitants. The island is unhealthy and the water indifferent.

The whole bay affords a good anchorage for big ships, with excellent holding ground. Soundings are:—14 fathoms off Raz-al-Arz, 6 to 10 fathoms off Raz-al-Ajuza, shoaling to 6 and 7 fathoms at the entrance of Duhat Kathama. Anchorage.

Starting from Raz-al-Arz the coast-line forms a bay, with shallow water, as far as Raz-al-Ajuza, a low point six miles to the north-westward. Native boats anchor two miles to the south-east of this point, in shelter from the "shamal." (a) South-east of Raz-al-Ajuza.

The anchorage for large ships off the town of Koweit lies $1\frac{1}{4}$ or $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles off the north end of the town, and west-north-west of it, in from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 fathoms. (b) Off the town of Koweit.

From Raz-al-Ajuza the coast runs nine miles south-west by west to the bottom of a shallow bay called Duhat Abu Tala. At the entrance of this small bay, there is a little barren islet, Jezirat Kurein, about half a mile from the shore; south-east of this is a small basin, with two fathoms of water, in which the smaller native boats lie, quite sheltered from all winds. (c) South-east of the small island Kurein.

Duhat Kathama is the name of the bay west of Ras Asheirij. It shoals gradually from 7 fathoms at the entrance, which is four miles wide. (This part of Koweit Bay, until recently, was very imperfectly surveyed, especially with respect to Ras Kathama. I am indebted for the corrected chart of this part, to the Navigating Officer of H.M.S. *Pomone*.) (d) Kathama Bay.

Ras Kathama is a low swampy point only just above high water running out some three furlongs from the northern shore of the bay. It is partially protected by a bank of sand, naturally formed, along high water line. About half a mile inland from the point, as also all along this coast-line, the shore is sandy and covered with tussocks of coarse grass, gradually rising to the foot of the hills called "Al Aghthi," which are about 200 feet high. There is good holding ground everywhere in Koweit bay, but the best anchorage is undoubtedly in Kathama bay, because it is the most sheltered. There appears no reason to doubt that this anchorage could easily be converted into an excellent harbour for sea-going ships, by a certain amount of dredging, and the construction of jetties and moles.

It is believed that the Germans wished to acquire a plot of land here, about twenty square miles in extent, having Kathama on the west, the second range of hills (seen from the top of the coast range "Al Aghthi" about 4 or 5 miles inland, to the northward) on the north, and Chawaichib* on the north-east.

HISTORY.

The family or tribe of the present Sheikh of Koweit originally dwelt in a small fort, called Mumgaser, at the head of the Khor Abdullah near Bander Zobeir. Their vocation in life was

* Chawaichib is said to be about 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-east of Kathama Point.

piracy, which they practised on the lower reaches of the Shatt-el-Arab, and in the northern end of the Persian Gulf. In the 17th Century, the authorities at Basrah expelled them from their stronghold, and the tribe moved down the Bubiyan Creek, to the great bay, now known as that of Koweit. Crossing to the southern shore, the Sheikh erected a fort or "Khote," and hence the present name; (which is pronounced Quoit or Quait).

It was about 1716 that three clans of the Al Uttub tribe, the Beni Subah, the Al Yalahimeh, and the Al Khalifeh, entered into a mutual compact or alliance, and still further strengthened their position, where Koweit now stands, by inter-marriage with other clans, with a view to being able to resist the attacks of their powerful neighbours, the Beni Khalid Arabs.* They intended to follow the occupation of agriculturists and merchants, and to share the profits equally. The Beni Subah were to exercise the functions of Government; the Yalahimeh carried on the maritime, while the Khalifeh managed the mercantile branch of their small commonwealth.

In the course of fifty years, the new settlement had attained a very high degree of prosperity. The accumulation of wealth seems to have led the mercantile branch of the league to wish to secede from the original compact, in order that they might enjoy, and add to, their acquired riches without sharing them.

Accordingly, Khalifeh bin Mahommed, Sheikh of the Al Khalifeh, represented to the other two tribes the openings for trade and the advantages generally of forming a settlement on some spot in that part of the Persian Gulf which is close to the most productive pearl fisheries.

The Sheikh was permitted to leave Koweit with part of his tribe, and settled at Zobara, on the Bahrein coast. Here he was gradually joined by the rest of his tribe and at length he completely severed his connection with the other two tribes at Koweit, and established the independence of his new colony at Zobara.

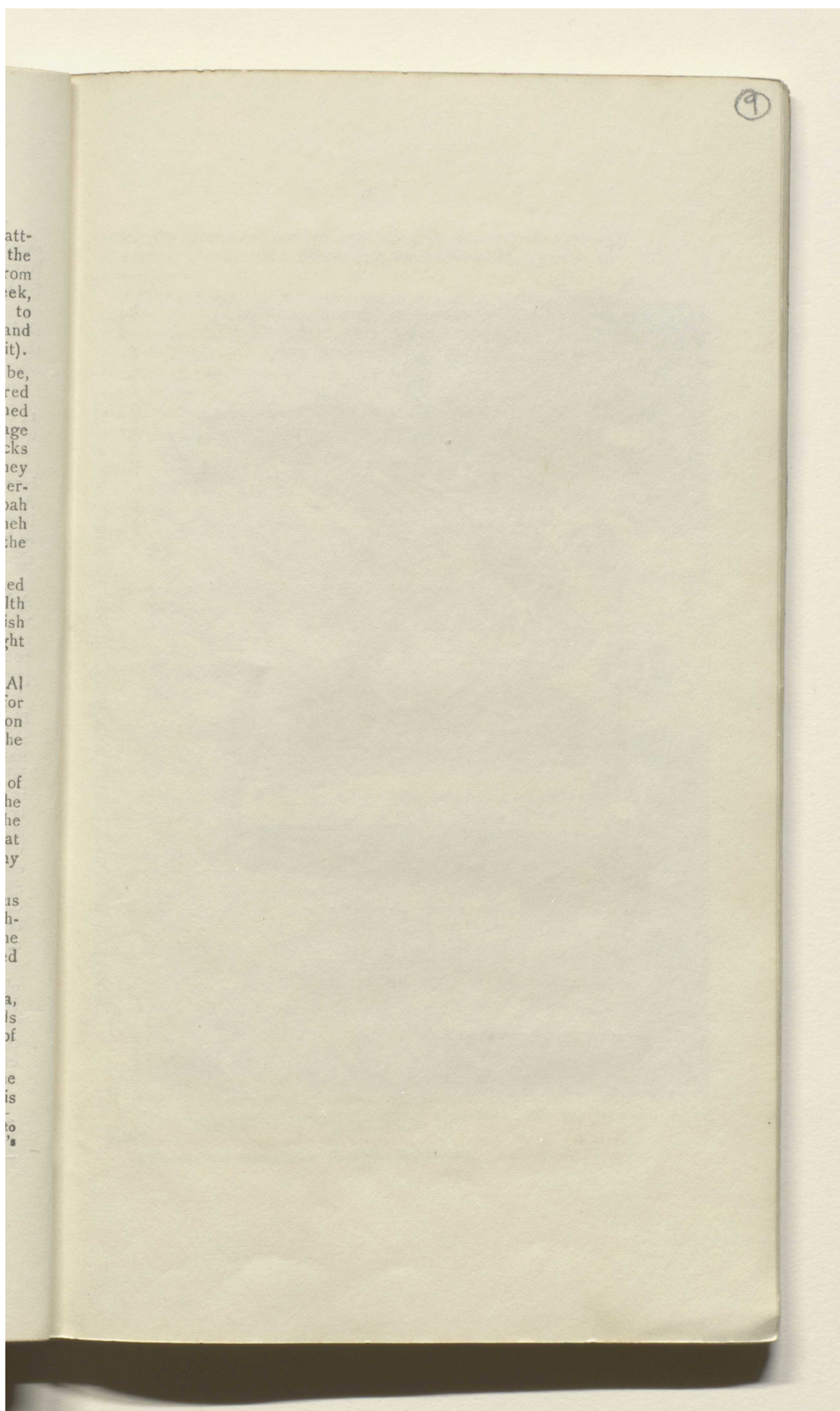
The Al Subah, the more powerful of the two clans thus left at Koweit, soon felt the absence of their commercial brethren, in a deficiency in their finances, and after first refusing the Al Yalahimeh their share of the revenue, ultimately expelled them from the port and town of Koweit.

The expelled tribe settled close to their brethren of Zobara, and devoted themselves to piracy, but were shortly afterwards annihilated by the Al Khalifeh tribe, the influence and power of which rapidly increased.

Friendly relations appear to have continued between the two remaining clans, once associated at Koweit; for mention is

* The whole of the coast districts, Adan, El Hasa, and Katr belonged to these Beni Khalid, some of whom occupied points on the coast only one day's march from Koweit.

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Photogravure.



MOBARREK-BIN-SUBAH, SHEIKH OF KOWEIT, AND HIS YOUNGEST SON NASER.

Survey of India Office, Calcutta, August 1903.

made of a fleet from Koweit, appearing at Bahrein (in 1782-83) in support of their old confederates, the Al Khalifeh, against the Persians.

It is difficult to trace the varying policy of the different tribes, during a period so unsettled as was the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th Century, when almost every tribe's hand was against his neighbour. While the Al Uttubis of the Bahrein neighbourhood are constantly in evidence, in the Government Records, in connection with the Persians, Muscat, the Wahabis, Joasmis, and the piracy question generally, Koweit seems to have pursued the even tenor of its way, and the Al-Subah tribe to have continued to prosper and to increase their power and possessions.

In 1813-14, Koweit and Bahrein were the only exceptions to the general subjection of the whole of the Arabian coast to the Wahabi Amir, Saood.

A barren shore with brackish water,* backgrounded by desert, inhabited only by wandering Bedouin tribes, was hardly a promising site, and a settlement thus made by ex-pirates was scarcely a more promising beginning, and yet on this spot there has sprung up a clean well-built and active town, to which Persian and Arab merchants have been attracted by equity of rule and freedom of trade.

The present Sheikh, Mubarak, is the sixth of his line, and is now about 59 years of age. A fine tall, dignified man, almost a typical Patriarch, good-looking too, in spite of being marked by small-pox; while his keen black eyes show marked intelligence, as well as a considerable amount of astuteness.

The fourth Sheikh, Subah by name, had five sons,—Muhammad, Jarrah, Mubarak, Ahmad, and Jabr. On his father's death, the eldest son, Muhammad, succeeded to the Sheikh-dom. He seems, however, to have been on bad terms with all his brothers, with the exception of Jarrah, who was a son of the same mother. At all events, Mubarak and Jabr conspired against the two elder brothers and—a not altogether uncommon occurrence in the family history of Arab tribes—assassinated them in May 1896, and Mubarak reigned in his eldest brother's stead.

The latter had two sons† who fled and placed themselves under the protection of Mohammed-Ibn-Rashid, who had wrested Nejd from the descendants of the Wahabi chief, Feysul-bin-Turki.

Such frequent mention will have to be made of Ibn Rashid whose position and influence is so closely connected and, in a sense, derived from the Wahabi power of Nejd, that it is neces-

* The town now draws its supply of drinking water from wells, two miles inland.

† Khalid-ibn-Mohammed and Saood-ibn-Mohammed.

sary, in order to understand the connection of events, to sketch, as briefly as may be, the rise and development of that strange phenomenon the Wahabi movement and power.

It was about 1740-50 that Sheikh Mohammed, son of Abdul Wahab of Basrah, disgusted with the laxity and corruption of Turkish Islam, first started the puritanical movement which has ever since borne his father's name. The Wahabis carried their victorious propaganda far and wide. They first came into contact with the British Government as the custodian of the peace of the Persian Gulf. From their stronghold in the Nejd, 250 miles inland from El Katr, and from their capitals Dereiyah and Riyadh, on that mountainous plateau, they soon made their influence felt along the maritime littoral and, at different times in the 19th Century, subjugated or extorted tribute from almost every Arab tribe from El Katif to Cape Mussandim, and from Cape Mussandim to Ras al Hadd.

It was in 1787 that the first mention of the Wahabis is found in the Bombay Records. The British Government was careful not to involve itself in hostile proceedings against the Wahabi Amir. By 1818 Ibrahim Pasha, marching from Egypt, had captured the Wahabi capital and razed it to the ground, had sent the Wahabi Amir in chains to Constantinople, where he was decapitated, and had apparently stamped out the heretical and schismatic authority. Within a few years, however, Turki, son of the deceased Amir, had expelled the Egyptian Governor, was proclaimed Sultan of Nejd, and by a judicious payment of a small tribute to Egypt, retained the throne, till murdered in 1831.

His son and successor, Feysul, was at first rash enough to repudiate the Egyptian Suzerainty; whereupon Nejd was again invaded, El Hasa and Katif temporarily occupied by Egyptian troops, and himself banished to Egypt. In 1843 he managed to return, and from then till his death in 1865 continued to rule in Nejd, and to push his sovereignty far and wide among the surrounding tribes.

Four times in this period, the vigorous remonstrances of Great Britain, and the apparition of a naval force off the threatened ports, whether of Bahrein or Muscat, were required to compel the retirement of the aggressive Sultan.

His son, Abdullah bin Feysul, succeeded him in 1865, and entered into an agreement with Great Britain not to molest the Arab tribes under British protection, particularly those of Muscat. A prolonged struggle ensued between Abdullah and his brother Saood, in which the latter was at first successful, but Abdullah, flying to Turkey, invoked that expedition from Baghdad which ended in the formal and permanent occupation of El Hasa by Turkey.

The conflict being renewed upon Saood's death in 1874, Abdullah ultimately regained the throne, and held it until 1886, when events occurred which heralded the rise of another power in Nejd.

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North-west of Nejd lies the mountainous district of Jebel Shammer, residence of the Arab tribe of that name, forming part of the Wahabi dominion.

It was in 1835 that one Abdullah ibn Rashid, with the aid of the Amir Feysul bin Turki, became Sheikh of the Shammer tribe, with his capital at the town of Hayil, and was appointed Muhafidh, or frontier governor, in dependence upon the central authority at Nejd. He died in 1846, but not before he had, by his great ability, laid the foundations of a power which has since swollen to such imposing dimensions in the hands of his even abler son.

Tilal, the eldest of the family, at first succeeded his father as Sheikh of Jebel Shammer, and gradually, but surely, established his independence of the Riadh ruler. Tormented, however, by an internal malady, he shot himself in 1867. His younger brother, Mutaab ibn Abdullah, who succeeded him, enjoyed but a brief rule, being murdered by his nephews, the sons of Tilal, in the following year. One of these, Bander by name, then assumed the Government.

Meanwhile, the third and youngest son of the old Abdullah, namely, Mohammed ibn Rashid, who had been residing at Riadh as a fugitive, and had been kindly treated there by the Amir Abdullah ibn Feysul, was permitted to return to Hayil. Commencing by stabbing to death his nephew Bander with his own hand, he then killed the five remaining children of his brother Tilal, and became undisputed Amir and Muhafidh in Hayil in 1868. During the next eighteen years he consolidated his authority; acquiring more and more of the real power, he even engaged in intermittent acts of hostility against the Amir of Nejd, to whom, however, he never actually renounced his allegiance.

At last the chance, for which he had waited so long, presented itself. In 1886 the Amir Abdullah bin Feysul was seized and imprisoned by two of his nephews, one of whom usurped the throne. Mohammed ibn Rashid, still wearing the mask of the loyal subject, marched from Hayil against Riadh, deposed the pretender, and reinstated Abdullah, although his next proceeding was to carry the Amir away with him to Hayil, leaving a younger brother as deputy governor of Nejd under an agent appointed by himself.

The three rebellious nephews of Abdullah were put to death, and the fourth was detained at Hayil, by Ibn Rashid, along with his uncle, the old Amir, to whom the successful pretender diplomatically conceded the spiritual title of Imam of Nejd.

Mohammed ibn Rashid was, however, the *de facto* ruler, not only of Nejd and Jebel Shammer, but of the whole of the Arabian desert from the confines of Syria to the Nefud, and from the borders of Koweit to Mecca. Though he waded to his position through the blood of his own kin, Mohammed ibn

Rashid's Government is understood to have been both popular and just; while he showed great diplomatic ability in the manner in which he humoured the vanity of Turkey by professing himself the vassal of the Porte. By this purely nominal act of obeisance he secured immunity from interference from El Hasa. He presented one of the most striking personalities of the east. In spite of futile efforts on the part of the old reigning family to throw off the yoke of Ibn Rashid, he continued to rule in Nejd with practically undisputed authority, until his death in 1897.

He was succeeded by his nephew, Abdul Aziz ibn Rashid.

To resume the thread of events immediately connected with Koweit, an appeal had also been made by the sons of the murdered Sheikh of Koweit to a maternal uncle, one Sheikh Yusuf bin Ibrahim* of Dura on the Shatt-el-Arab, as well as to the ruler of Nejd. Towards the end of 1897, Yusuf made preparations to attack Koweit in alliance with Sheikh Jasim bin Thani,† of El Katr. At the same time (*i.e.*, in December 1897) a Turkish force was reported as concentrating in the neighbourhood of Basrah, and the Turkish corvette *Zohaf* proceeded to El Katr, with the Nakib of Basrah on board. Whether this official exerted his influence with Sheikh Jasim, to dissuade him from taking serious action or not, is not very clear, but nothing of importance appears to have occurred.

Meanwhile, in July 1897, Sa'ood, second son of the late Sheikh of Koweit, appealed to the British Consul at Basrah for British protection. The Foreign Office at home, however, did not consider any interference on our part to be desirable unless British interests, or the peace of the Gulf, were endangered. In November 1897, H.M.S. *Pigeon* visited Koweit and reported that Mubarak was most friendly and was desirous of British protection. Both factions thus showed themselves anxious for our protection, and both cordially hated the Turk.

* Mubarak's brother married Yusuf's sister, but owing to family quarrels Yusuf had been ejected from Koweit, and was not permitted to trade there.

† Curzon describes Jasim bin Thani as "a mischievous and disorderly character; by the British Government he is regarded as one of the independent maritime chieftains pledged to preserve the maritime peace of the Gulf, and possessing a claim upon our support if he does so, and upon our retribution if he does not—a view which rests upon a definite agreement not to commit any breach of the maritime peace, which was signed by his predecessor, independently of the six Trucial Chiefs, in 1868. In 1871, however, thinking to escape this obligation, Sheikh Jasim placed himself under Turkish protection and adopted the Turkish flag. The Ottoman Government gladly appointed him Kaimakam, or Deputy Governor, and placed a Turkish guard of 250 regulars, a coal depôt and a steam launch at El Bida, the principal port of the Katr coast. Turkish claims of sovereignty over the El Katr Cape are not admitted by the British Government. Sheikh Jasim is quite ready to coquet with any power that will forward his ambitions. His son having been killed in one of his encounters with the tribe of Abu Dhabi, he appealed for aid to the Turks—when he met with no response from his patrons, he invoked the assistance of Ibn Rashid, of Nejd, an alliance for which, had it been granted, he would have had to pay the price of a future tributary."

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The new Amir of Nejd, Abdul Aziz ibn Rashid, lost no time in commencing operations against Mubarak, ostensibly in the interests of the dispossessed son of the late Sheikh of Koweit, but chiefly, no doubt, with a view to his own aggrandisement.

In January 1898, he advanced to within three marches of Koweit, but disturbances among Bedouin tribes in his rear caused him to retire hastily to Nejd. From that time to this, however, there appears to have existed a standing quarrel, and a chronic state of war between Mubarak and Ibn Rashid; it may be useful, therefore, to follow the course of events, as closely as may be, though the labour of doing so is considerable, and the difficulty of ascertaining the truth is extreme. The accounts of fights known to have taken place are usually in direct contradiction, both factions claiming an overwhelming victory, and ascribing a correspondingly crushing defeat to their adversaries.

Probably the interval between Ibn Rashid's retirement to his own country, and his next advance against Koweit, was occupied in consolidating his power in his own dominions. In the autumn of 1900, he once more advanced against Koweit, but first turned his attack against the Muntafik tribe (near Zobeir and north of Basrah), old allies of Mubarak's. In a fight which took place near Zobeir, in October, he was at first partially successful, but in a counter-attack he was severely enough handled to make him apply for Turkish support and reinforcement as being a vassal of the Porte.

The Turkish authorities are believed to have ordered him to desist from military operations; but Mubarak, soon after, heard that he was advancing on Koweit with a force estimated at 20,000 men, of whom, however, some 1,000 men only had modern rifles.

That same month, October 1900, Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman bin Feysul, a descendant of the old reigning family of Nejd, is said to have engaged Ibn Rashid, presumably after the latter had withdrawn into the interior from his operations against the Muntafik tribe, which have just been mentioned.

Abdul Aziz bin Feysul called upon Mubarak for his support and co-operation, a request which Mubarak, probably nothing loth, complied with, by despatching a force of 10,000 men, believed to have been mostly armed with Martinis, under two of his sons, of which he took command himself a little later. In the early part of 1901, he seems to have had a series of successes, driving the forces of Ibn Rashid west and south-west until, by the middle of February, he occupied the capital, Hayil. It is said that the Arab forces of Ibn Rashid were badly armed and could make no effective stand against the better armed men of Koweit, and their rifle fire.

Mubarak installed Abdul Aziz bin Feysul as Amir of Nejd, to which the latter has some hereditary right, being descended from the Wahabi chiefs who ruled over Central Arabia, with Nejd as their head-quarters, until they were ousted by the uncle of the present Ibn Rashid.

Mubarak, it seems, while on the march back to Koweit, his troops short of ammunition after some months of campaigning in the interior, was ambuscaded not far from Hayil and his force was undoubtedly somewhat severely handled. The accounts of this reverse, however, appear to have been much exaggerated. Mubarak himself arrived back at Koweit on March 31st, 1901. The defeat was partly due to treachery; a tribe which formed part of his force, going over to Ibn Rashid's side, during the fight.

The young Wahabi, newly installed Amir, hearing of this reverse fortified himself in his new capital, while Sheikh Sadun, chief of the Muntafik tribe, raided in rapid succession several large caravans of Ibn Rashid's on the main routes between Hayil and the Euphrates, in retaliation for the repulse of his friend and ally, Mubarak.

During the remainder of the year, 1901, the following events took place, which owing to their recent date, and varied character, may perhaps be more properly considered as political, rather than historical, and as such must form the subject matter for a separate chapter.

POLITICAL.

In August 1901, a Turkish gunboat arrived in Koweit Bay; it does not appear very clearly with what precise object, but her movements appeared suspicious, and it seemed evident, that some action (it may have been merely the landing of stores with perhaps a few men as guards) was contemplated by the Turkish authorities which might have been referred to later, as constituting protection and as being inconsistent with Mubarak's claim of independence.

The British Government does not admit the claim of the Turks to sovereignty over Koweit. Mubarak asserts that no ruler of Koweit has ever shown fealty,* in any way, to the Sultan of Turkey. His dealings with Great Britain have been direct, and those of an independent ruler. Accordingly, the commander of H.M.S. *Perseus* informed the commander of the Turkish ship that he could not be

* Palgrave distinctly says that the Sheikh of Koweit, at the time he was writing (1863), had refused the demands of tribute and submission, made by the Turkish authorities of Basrah and Baghdad. "Thus escaping the decline and dissolution almost inevitable for all seaports under Ottoman administration."

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permitted to land any men, and that in the event of his attempting to do so, such attempt would, if necessary, be prevented by force. The Turkish gunboat, on this, withdrew from Koweit, and returned whence she came, to Basrah.

The inference that this action on the part of the Turks was intended to disturb the *status quo* of Koweit as an independent state, or was even planned in conjunction with Ibn Rashid, with a view to Mubarak's undoing, is somewhat strengthened by the fact that, scarcely a month later, Ibn Rashid himself advanced to within a short distance of the town of Koweit, raided some camels and even looted certain outlying houses. He then moved to Safwan, the next stage on the direct road to Basrah, about 16 hours' journey from Koweit; there was considerable alarm in Koweit and Sheikh Mubarak asked for the presence of additional British ships in Koweit Bay—a request which was complied with.

It was within a few weeks of this incident that the Nakib of Basrah visited Koweit and handed to Mubarak a telegram purporting to have emanated from Constantinople, to the effect that Mubarak's assertion of his independence was disapproved by the Sultan, and that punishment must ensue, unless he made his submission to the Turkish Government.

To this communication, Mubarak, after consultation with the Senior Naval Officer, replied to the effect that his relations with the Turkish Government were the same as they had always been. Later, on a representation being made by our Ambassador at Constantinople, this telegram and the action of the Nakib of Basrah were disavowed by the Porte.

Early in December, however, the same Nakib again appeared on the scene, in the Turkish gunboat *Zohaf*, with a telegram demanding that Sheikh Mubarak should at once embark on board the *Zohaf*, and repair to Constantinople, as a member of the Council of State, and threatening his forcible removal from Koweit, in case of non-compliance with this order.

Mubarak obtained three days' grace in which to consider his reply, and H.M.S. *Sphinx* was despatched to Bushire, to report this latest development, by telegram, to the Foreign Office. No sooner had the *Sphinx* left Koweit Bay, however, than the three days' grace was withdrawn and Mubarak was peremptorily pressed for an immediate answer. The Sheikh, under such pressure as this, represented to the Senior Naval Officer that he felt that he had no option but to comply with the Turkish demands unless he was assured of British support. The Senior Naval Officer formally forbade his taking action, or replying thus under compulsion, until an answer could be received to the communication sent to Bushire. In order to strengthen the Sheikh's hands, and to support him in his refusal to give the immediate answer demanded, a some-

what thinly veiled threat of bombardment in case of non-compliance with the advice given was hinted at. Mubarak accordingly declined to comply with the demand for an immediate answer, until the three days' grace originally agreed upon had elapsed, and the Turkish officials left Koweit in their gunboat.

The reply received from the Foreign Office a few days later was to the effect that though it had previously been agreed that the *status quo* should be maintained, it now appeared that Mubarak was being subjected to threats. In these circumstances Sheikh Mubarak was to be informed that he would be supported, and that the British Government would not tolerate any attack being made on him, by land or sea. The Senior Naval Officer also received instructions to defend Koweit, by force, if necessary; landing, however, was deprecated, except under circumstances of the greatest gravity.

The situation during the last days of 1901 was, therefore, somewhat critical. Ibn Rashid's presence, with a considerable force, at Safwan (the nearest wells to Koweit on the main road to Basrah) was serious enough; still Mubarak professed to be quite able to cope with Ibn Rashid alone. He more than once, rather quaintly, remarked in my hearing that he could "drink the Beni Rashid as he would drink water." But the manifest hostility of the Turks, their anxiety to assume or assert authority over Koweit, as well as their apparent *mala fides*, all led to the inference that they might support Ibn Rashid in any further operations he might undertake against Mubarak.

If, as appeared probable, Ibn Rashid was acting in collusion with the Turkish officials of Basrah, his presence at Safwan was a grave menace to the security of Koweit. At the same time, a considerable number of Turkish troops were known to be echeloned along the river between Baghdad and Basrah, though no reliable information could be obtained as to their numbers. Even should the Turks not openly support Ibn Rashid with regular troops, it seemed possible that they might do so by putting "irregulars" at his disposal, or by aiding him with supplies, ammunition and the sinews of war generally.

Meanwhile, Mubarak with his forces, was encamped at Jehara near the western extremity of Koweit Bay. The Sheikh attaches great importance to this place, which lies some fifteen miles nearer Basrah than the town of Koweit itself, and is therefore more open to a sudden attack, or raid, from that direction. Moreover, owing to the flat shelving shore, Jehara could not be so effectively supported by naval fire. Mubarak, therefore, had some cause for anxiety, especially for Jehara.

He repeatedly asked that British troops might be sent for his protection, and at times expressed himself as sceptical as to whether the presence of British ships alone* could secure the defence of his territory. In short, the situation at the end of 1901 was one which could not be tolerated, or permitted to continue.

On the 4th January 1902, a wire from the Foreign Office stated that the Porte disavowed the measures taken by the officials at Basrah, and that the British Ambassador at Constantinople had informed the Porte that if the Turkish Government could not control their own officials, the British Government might find it impossible to acquiesce in the continuance of the agreement as to the maintenance of the *status quo*.

The further course of events during 1902, as far as may be gathered from the fragmentary accounts which filter through from the wilds of Arabia to the outer world, appear to have been as follows.

In the early weeks of the new year, the legitimist pretender, so to call him, Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman bin Feysul al Saood, recovered Riyadh, the capital of his forefathers, from Ibn Rashid, who, it will be remembered, is the nephew of the usurper. The latter is said to have collected a large force and to have moved against Riyadh in the autumn; accounts of the result of this campaign are contradictory, as usual, but the most recent reports from reliable sources point to the fact that Ibn Rashid was defeated with heavy loss.

Whether Mubarak actively took part in these operations, and if so to what extent, does not appear altogether clear; but in any case, if it be the fact that his old enemy, Ibn Rashid, has sustained another reverse, it cannot but have a satisfactory influence with regard to the stability of Koweit.

It would seem from information received during the course of 1903 that the Turks, foiled in their attempt to obtain a footing in Koweit, at the expense of Koweit's independence, have been taking action at various points, apparently with a view to extending their *de facto* claims over neighbouring districts. Rumour says that Turkish troops have occupied Safwan, Mungassir, and the island of Bubiyan.†

* The following of His Majesty's ships were in Koweit Bay at the time:—*Pemone, Sphinx, and Redbreast*.

† It is believed that the Turkish garrisons at these places are 25, and 20 men infantry, at Safwan and Mungassir, respectively, and a few Engineers at Bubiyan.

A rather remarkable story appeared in the *Novoe Vremya* of 19th February 1903, to the effect that a scheme of defence for the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab and Koweit Bay had been drawn up by a German officer and approved by the Sultan. This scheme includes, it is said, the erection of forts on Bubiyan Island on the mainland at the entrance to Khor Subiya, and on the promontories Ras al Arz and Ras Asheirij. The cost of the armaments of these fortifications is, it is said, to be borne by Germany.

It is also said that Turkish artillery formed part of Ibn Rashid's force during recent operations against Riadh, already mentioned. This report, however, requires confirmation.

An incident, disturbing to the peace of Koweit, occurred as recently as September 1902, in which the full share of responsibility of local Turkish officials has yet to be determined. It appears that Yusuf-bin-Ibrahim, of Dura,* already mentioned as being on bad terms with Mubarak, organised a surprise attack on Koweit. Two dhows, containing 150 men all armed with rifles, set out from Dura to act in conjunction, it is believed, with another party moving by land. H.M.S. *Lapwing*, on hearing of this project, proceeded at once to Koweit, and found the whole town in arms to repel the anticipated attack, which, however, was not made; probably because Koweit was known to be prepared. Next day H. M. S. *Lapwing* gave chase to two dhows which, in the opinion of the commander, were undoubtedly those in question; the armed crews, however, after opening fire on the ship's boats, made good their escape by running their dhows ashore and abandoning them.

Foreign Relations.

Other powers have evinced, within the last few years, an interest in Koweit, and its territory.

† Russia.

In August 1900, Mr. S. N. Siromyatnikoff, a Russian journalist of some repute, paid a visit to Koweit of which he subsequently published an account in the *Novoe Vremya*. He appears to have stayed at Koweit several days and to have had more than one interview with the Sheikh. During the last days of December 1901, a letter from Mubarak addressed to M. Siromyatnikoff in Moscow, is known to have passed through the post.

In December 1901, the Russian cruiser *Variag* paid a visit to Koweit. The Russian Consul at Bushire was on board who, according to Mubarak's account, informed him that Russia and Great Britain were entirely in accord as to maintaining the independence of Koweit, and that if Mubarak wished for help he had only to apply to the Russian Consul at Bushire. A suggestion was also made that he should write, personally, to the Tzar. Mubarak's attitude during this interview, according to his own account, was most correct; he declined the invitation to write to the Tzar, and replied that he was in no need of assistance as he already had a friendship with the British. It may be noted that in order to obtain this interview, the Consul, with

* Dura, a village on the right or Turkish bank of the Shatt-el-Arab, in the Villayat of Basrah, about ten miles from the mouth of the river above Fao.

Recent information tends to show that Yusuf-bin-Ibrahim has withdrawn from Dura, to the Jebel Shammar country.

† Towards the end of 1897, the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia reported the existence of rumours to the effect that Russia was seeking to acquire a coaling station at Koweit.

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six officers of the *Variag*, rode out from Koweit to Jehara (18 miles), where they spent the night as Mubarak's guests, and left some presents behind them on their departure.

The Russian Consuls at Baghdad and Bushire have visited Koweit during the course of the year, 1902. They both showed themselves anxious to impress upon Mubarak the advantages of Russian friendship and protection. The Russian cruiser *Askold* and the Russian cruiser *Bovarin* in company with the French ship *Infernet* went there still more recently.

In January 1900, a German mission, composed of the German Consul General at Constantinople, the Chief Engineer of the Baghdad Railway (with certain technical assistants), visited Koweit in connection with the proposed selection of Kathama as the terminus of that railway. Mubarak declared himself unable to grant a concession of any part of his territory for this purpose.

Germany.

A word must be said as to the relationship of Koweit with Turkey. Mubarak asserts his entire independence, and the British Government have on many occasions insisted on the unsubstantial character of the Sultan's authority and have claimed for the Sheikh a large measure of practical independence. Still the fact remains that there have been relations between the two states, which, however, on the whole do not seem to be entirely inconsistent with the present claim to independence. Going back some thirty years, Mubarak's account is as follows :—

Turkey.

Feysul, ruler of Nejd, Bahrein, El Hasa, Katr, and Katif, had four sons—Abdullah, Muhammed, Saood and Abdur Rahman. After Feysul's death, Abdullah succeeded, but Saood possessed himself of El Katr, and Katif, and made war against Abdullah. The latter appealed to the Wali of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha, for assistance in 1871. At the same time, Saood had seized certain Koweit ships at El Hasa, and had returned an evasive answer to the remonstrances of the then Sheikh of Koweit, Muhammed.

At this juncture, the Wali of Baghdad offered Turkish troops to operate against El Hasa and Katif. After taking counsel, it was decided that Koweit would co-operate with Abdullah and the Turks against Saood. The Sheikh of Koweit provided 300 ships for transport, and put himself at the head of 7,000 mounted men and 12,000 camels. In six days, he defeated Saood, and occupied the capital of El Hasa, with the support of the Turkish troops. Sheikh Muhammed remained in El Hasa eleven months, pacifying the country; after which he returned to Koweit. Midhat Pasha, pleased with the way things had gone, obtained for Sheikh Muhammed a yearly grant of 150 tons of dates (=perhaps £600), which was paid regularly until 1898, since when the payment has not been made.*

*M. Siromyatnikoff says that he was shown a copy of the "firman" under which this grant was made, in which the Sheikh was described as "Sheikh of Koweit."

Koweit flies the Turkish flag, and has done so for a number of years. Sheikh Mubarak explains this circumstance by claiming that the flag he flies, though similar in design to that of Turkey, is his own and that its similarity to the Turkish flag is fortuitous; or, at the most, that while other Arab tribes have flags of their own design, his tribe adopted the crescent on the red ground as a religious emblem only. He positively asserts that he flies the flag of his fathers, and has never received one from the Turkish Government, and has never regarded the use of his own flag as a sign of fealty to the Turk. Perhaps a more probable explanation would be that the use of the Turkish flag was adopted, years ago, for convenience by Koweit's shipping, especially in their trade with the Turkish ports in the Persian Gulf.

The present position of Koweit with regard to Great Britain may be said to have been defined by the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour, in his declaration in the House of Commons, on 21st April 1903, on the subject of the Baghdad railway. Mr. Balfour, on that occasion referred to Koweit as "within the territories of a Sheikh whom we have under our special protection, and with whom we have special treaties," and compared it with other parts of the Persian Gulf where we have no such 'preferential advantages.'

MILITARY FORCES OF KOWEIT.

Sheikh Mubarak estimates the strength of his available fighting force to be—

	Men.
(a) Fighting men in Koweit ...	19,000
(b) " " within 12 miles of Koweit ...	12,000
Total ...	31,000

It is to be feared, however, that these figures are scarcely to be relied on. Another estimate, which gives 6,080 men as available in the town of Koweit itself, appears to be more likely to be accurate. It is even possible that Sheikh Mubarak himself has no very reliable data on which to base any close estimate of his armed following. With the exception of the inhabitants of Koweit and Jehara, and perhaps the tribesmen within a comparatively few miles of the Sheikh's capital, the adhesion of the wandering Bedouin tribes must be a variable, as well as an important, factor. Hence the importance of Jehara to Koweit, as a favourite grazing ground, and as such attracting Bedouins to allegiance to Koweit.

In the winter of 1901-02, a portion of the army was encamped just outside Jehara, where I had an opportunity of seeing them. The tents were neatly pitched, and the camp was clean and orderly. The tents were grouped round standards planted in the ground, with some appearance of organization.

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There were five or six such banners, or contingents, in camp, and the total numbers present were said to be 1,800 men. The force was turned out for inspection, when some 1,100 or 1,200 men, only, put in an appearance; but it is only fair, perhaps, to add that this parade was ordered at short notice, and there may therefore have been an abnormal number of absentees.

The men are fine, well set up, and mostly tall. They were all armed with Martini-Henry rifles, or carbines, and carried well-filled cartridge belts. The uniformity of their dress and equipment was very striking, and compared most favourably with the retainers (one can hardly dignify them with any more military designation) of the Sultan of Muscat. But fine men as they are, it is hard to believe that, as an armed force, they would do any good against any organized or disciplined troops, without European leading and training.

On the occasion of the review referred to, the troops paraded by contingents, of about 200 men each. There was much singing and barbaric "music" with tom-tom accompaniment, while the leaders danced a slow rhythmic waltz, in front of their respective companies. It is hard to take a force which is encouraged by a simulated epileptic fit, after aimless pirouetting, altogether very seriously, except when pitted against others like themselves.

From descriptions of some of the fights which have taken place between Mubarak's and Ibn Rashid's forces, it seems that their tactics, like everything else, are those of their forefathers. Palgrave describes the tactics of an Arab battle as being simple but not wholly devoid of skill. The cavalry come to the front and provoke the engagement, some one way and some another, but never straight for their opponents; a pretty display of horsemanship follows, with a dropping fire of matchlocks. Meanwhile the camels and their riders, who form the main body, remain behind in reserve. When the action has once become serious, which is the case so soon as blood has been shed on either side, the camels are made to kneel down, each becoming a kind of field work for two musketeers under his cover; the cavalry open out, and firing begins in good earnest, till flank attacks or an excess of confidence on one side or the other, bring on a general assault. Some fight on foot, some mounted, and the mêlé continues till one side gives way. The people of Nejd distinguish themselves from the rest of their Arab countrymen by preferring slaughter to booty; elsewhere two killed and three wounded is generally the outside.

Tactics.

TOWNS, &c.

The town of Koweit lies on a small projection, or tongue of land, (which terminates in Ras-al-Ajuza), on the southern shore of the great bay to which it gives its name. The town extends about a mile along the beach; it is provided with numerous substantial stone breakwaters, which form tidal harbours for native craft. The beach dries out to a considerable

distance, and landing when the tide is out is by no means a pleasant operation; ponies are taken out and are mounted from the boat, or failing this it would be necessary to wade for a considerable distance. At high water, however, the sea washes up to the front row of houses, and landing from boats, or any of the sea-walls, is an easy matter. It is a remarkably clean, well-built and prosperous looking town, with many solid stone houses, others being built of sun-dried brick. The bazar is broad and open, clean and busy. The town is surrounded by a low wall with towers, which, however, are not in a good condition for defence.

Outside the main gate, on the southern, or land, face there is a large suburb of mud huts, which is the point of arrival and departure for the caravans trading between Koweit and the interior. Here may be seen strings of camels, waiting for their loads, or having just got rid of them. Here, too, the Bedouins most do congregate, as they are not allowed to enter the town itself, armed. Hither they flock for trade and barter, pitch their tents on the wide open plain, and transact their business outside the gate, in this open-air bazar, while the Sheikh sits near by and looks on, in patriarchal fashion, at the busy scene. The population is estimated at approximately 30,000 souls, of whom some fifty are said to be Jews from Bushire, who have a synagogue of their own.

The town is said to contain about 3,000 houses, 500 shops, 3 caravanserais, 6 coffee houses, 3 schools, and 4 mosques, as well as numerous ware-houses and stores. There are no statistics or definite data available, but the growth and prosperity of the place may, perhaps, be inferred from the fact that about 30 new houses are said to be built, and 40 new shops opened, every year.

The following detailed estimate of the population of Koweit territory was furnished by Mubarak in 1901 :—

Fighting men in Koweit	...	19,000	
Old men and children	...	13,000	
Women	...	22,000	
			54,000 souls.
Fighting men in the district—			
(Within 10 miles of Koweit)	...	12,000	
Old men and children	...	9,000	
Women	...	14,000	
			35,000 souls.
TOTAL	...		89,000 souls.

There are no means of checking these figures, least of all those referring to the district outside Koweit itself, which must include many wandering tribes of Bedouins, and as such must be subject to considerable fluctuations. It is possible that at the time this estimate was furnished, the numbers of persons in

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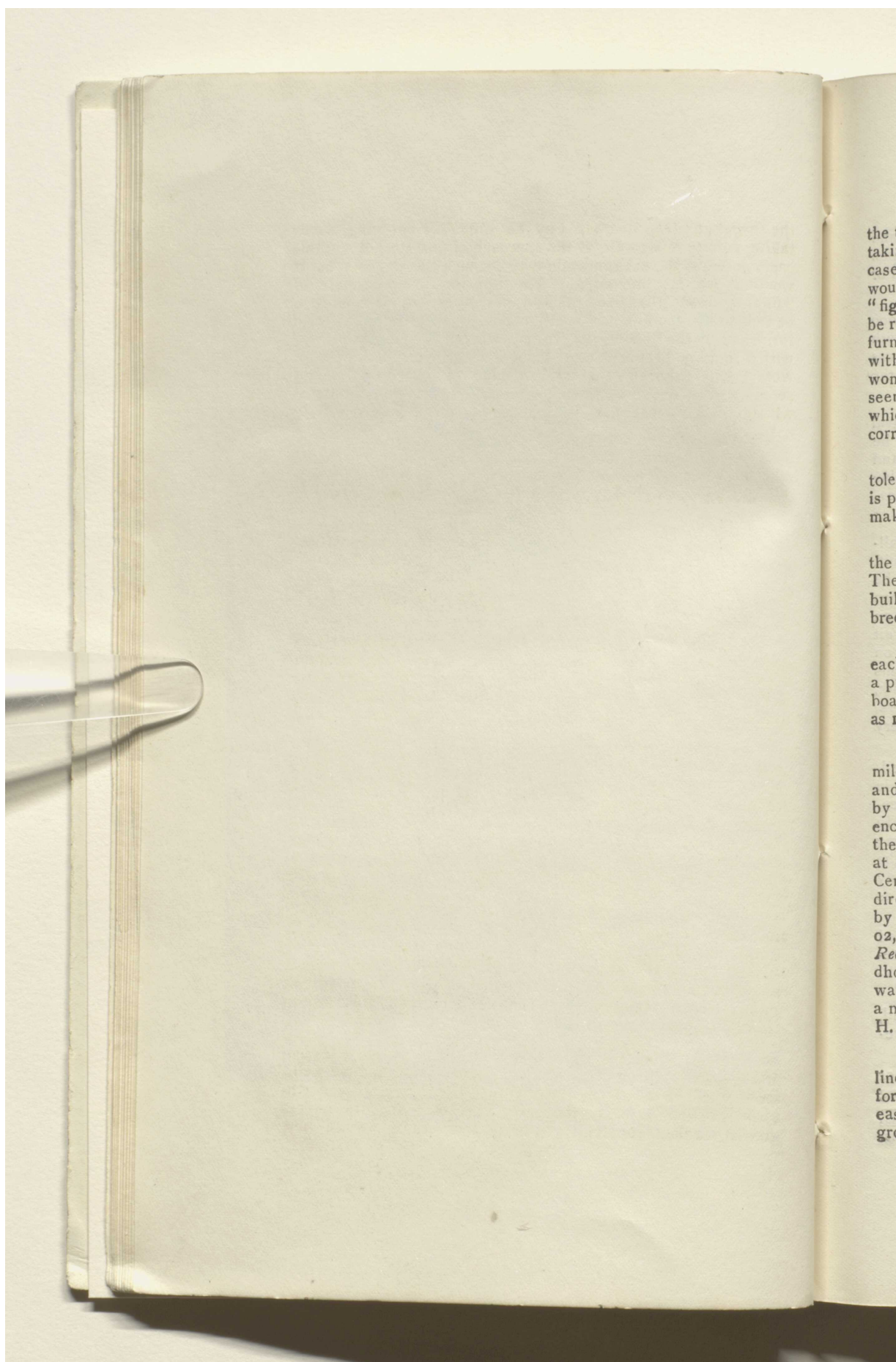


Survey of India Offices, Calcutta, August 1903.

RESIDENCE OF SHEIKH OF KOWEIT.

Photogravure.

'Koweit: A Report' [17v] (39/140)



the town had been increased by an influx of out-lying tribes taking refuge in Koweit, at the approach of Ibn Rashid; in this case, perhaps, the exaggeration may not be quite as great as it would appear at first sight. The apparent over-estimate of "fighting men" has been pointed out elsewhere; if this item be reduced to the numbers mentioned in another estimate, also furnished by the Sheikh, *viz.*, to between 6,000 and 7,000 men, with a roughly proportionate deduction from the numbers of women and children, the total number of inhabitants would seem to work out to between 30,000 and 40,000, the former of which is the number usually considered to be approximately correct.

The population is Mahommedan, Arab fashion, that is tolerant to others and not over rigid to themselves. Wahabi-ism is proscribed, and all the efforts of Nejd have never succeeded in making one single proselyte at Koweit.

Nothing grows near Koweit, save grass and camel-grazing; the agricultural resources may therefore be considered "*nil*". The wealth of the place proceeds from its trade, shipping, ship-building, fishing, pearl fishery, and to a small extent, cattle breeding.

Some 600 boats, with crews averaging from 15 to 40 men each, are engaged in pearl fishing. Each of these boats realises a profit of from Rs. 300 to Rs. 600 in a season. The size of these boats varies from 30 to 300 tons burden, while some of as much as 1,000 tons are engaged in trade with India and Mesopotamia.

A line of sand hills and somewhat broken ground, about a mile outside the town, affords a fairly satisfactory line of defence and might be made strong enough to resist any probable attack by suitable preparation. The line proposed extends in an arc, enclosing the town on the land side, with both flanks resting on the sea, and capable of being supported by naval fire, though at a somewhat long range, *i.e.*, up to 4,000 and 5,000 yards. Certain conspicuous points, shown on the chart, facilitate the direction and ranging of ship's fire from the stations indicated by the names of the ships told off to these positions in 1901-02, *viz.* :—H.M.S. *Sphinx*, H.M.S. *Pomone* and H.M.S. *Redbreast*. In addition to this strictly naval support, native dhows if armed with machine guns, would be useful in shoal water on either flank, and would be able to bring fire to bear at a much shorter range than those mentioned with reference to H. M.'s ships.

Defences.

Starting from the right, or western, flank of this defensive line, it runs (a) along certain existing excavations and old wells, for a distance of about 1,500 yards, (b) thence in a north-easterly direction along the outer edge of a strip of broken ground, broken apparently by what seem to be disused lime

pits*, offering cover, and capable of adaptation, and thence (c) trending more to the north, over level open ground, the line would have to be constructed, with a trench or otherwise, closing on the sea near Ras-al-Ajuza.

The extent of front thus taken up is, approximately, 6,000 yards and, as has been said, could be supported on both flanks by fire from ships, which would be able to bring a cross fire to bear, though at long range, in front of the centre of the position.

Such was the line of defence selected by the Senior Naval Officer in 1901, when it seemed possible that an attack might be imminent. It has therefore been described in some detail; and the following remarks occur, should it ever be deemed advisable to occupy it, for a deliberate defence of Koweit, against aggression.

(a) The line is a long one for the force likely to be available on any sudden emergency. The idea, when I was in Koweit, was that this line (approximately 6,000 yards long) should be occupied by 1,000 men extended at 6 yards interval, with 6,000 men in support and reserve. This was based, I believe, on an estimate that the number of men available in the town of Koweit itself amounted to 7,000 men; Sheikh Mubarak, however, later on modified his original estimate to 6,080 men only. This seems nearer the mark, and, even so, allowance must be made, I think, for exaggeration, or at all events for sick men, and skulkers, etc.; for even this smaller estimate must include practically every single man capable of bearing arms.

It seems to me, therefore, that the line is too extended, unless the force available be reinforced from outside. Except in the case of a mere raid, notice, long enough for such reinforcement to be carried out in time, is almost sure to be obtained. In the case of a sudden dash or raid, it would be preferable, in my opinion, to limit the defence to the immediate vicinity of the town, and utilize either the walls existing, or to throw up a hasty entrenchment to secure the 'suburb' already mentioned as lying immediately outside the main gate.

(b) The field of fire, and of view, from the line described is all that could be desired. The ground in front is absolutely open and devoid of all cover, every movement of an attacking force would be clearly visible to the defenders for miles.

(c) Similarly, owing to the almost dead level of the ground, there is a great lack of natural cover for the supports and reserves, especially in the centre of the position.

(d) It hardly seems in consonance with Arab traditions or tactics that they should be expected to be capable of fighting

* A report dated November 1839 states that "Stones, chunam, &c., for house building are plentiful; the latter in abundance, very cheap and of a superior kind." (Bombay Government Records, XXIV, page 5.)

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cooly and collectedly, or much extended. Excitement, noise and vociferation, and the immediate neighbourhood of their fellows seem essential to them. They have neither discipline, training nor organisation enough to warrant trusting them to hold a position of this nature alone.

Their national idea of a fortified position or post does not extend beyond a wall, or a succession of towers, inside which they can crowd and shout. In short, it seems impossible to take them, as a fighting force altogether very seriously. The problem of the defence of Koweit seems to divide itself into two distinct parts, *i.e.*—

(1) If it be desired to defend Koweit against attack by a force armed, equipped and organised as a modern army, the position of the town gives considerable facilities for doing so, even with a minimum defensive force. Works and barbed wire can do much especially with naval support on both flanks

Works constructed on the general line indicated could, in a comparatively short time, be developed into a strong line of defence, which even an Arab force, if of sufficient strength, might reasonably be expected to be able to hold. On the other hand, to advise their holding such a line, with a small force, or before the necessary works had reached a forward state, *unless they were supported by disciplined and reliable troops*, would, in my opinion, be dangerous and might lead to disaster.

(2) If, however, the defence be against an Arab force only which in all probability would be unprovided with artillery, it would be as well to interfere as little as possible with their traditional methods, and confine the defence to the immediate vicinity of the town walls.

**Jehara*.—A village which lies some 15 miles west of Koweit, at the western extremity of the bay, about 1,200 yards inland from high water mark. It is well-built of sun-dried bricks and has a circumference of about a mile and a half. There are outlying patches of cultivation round the walls and many enclosures, containing wheat, date trees, lucerne, tamarisk, etc., surrounded by high mud walls, from 2 to 3 feet thick, and 8 or 10 feet high; most of these contain their own wells, the water of which is, as a rule, good for irrigation purposes only. The population may be estimated at from 200 to 300 souls.

There is an old fort (in disrepair) on the western frontage of the village, as well as a new one, built by the present Sheikh, clear of the south-eastern end of the village.

* Said to be a very ancient site; bricks and other remains are still found in the adjacent soil.

The Sheikh considers Jehara as essential to Koweit, as being the only locality with any agricultural capabilities or resources. Besides being a valuable source of supply, of grain, forage, dates, etc., it is the favourite grazing ground,* in the winter months, of Bedouin tribes who acknowledge Mubarak's rule. Even a temporary evacuation of this place would entail a great loss of prestige, and apart from permanent damage which might be done to date trees, etc., the Bedouin tribes would certainly go over to any enemy of Mubarak's who occupied Jehara.

In short, the Sheikh is very far from regarding Jehara as a mere dependency of Koweit; and expressed the strongest aversion to evacuating it, in order to withdraw his troops in time for an effective defence of Koweit itself. He even maintained that if Jehara were evacuated, even temporarily, Koweit itself alone would be valueless to him. With some astuteness, he pointed out that if Jehara were abandoned, it would imply the occupation of Kathama also, *i.e.*, the point supposed to be selected for the terminus of the proposed German railway.

This attitude of the Sheikh, as to the extreme importance of Jehara, was first clearly indicated at an interview at which I was fortunate enough to be present. His view appears to be not altogether unreasonable, and is one of considerable importance in connection with the problem of the defence of Koweit territory, as a whole, and of the nature of the support necessary to maintain its integrity.

Unfortunately, for the Sheikh, Jehara would be untenable in the event of a deliberate attack being delivered, by a force in possession of artillery, unless its defence was undertaken on a larger scale than appears probable under present circumstances. No defence of the village could be satisfactory unless the Al-Aghthi line of hills to the north-west were occupied; as from these heights there is entire command over Jehara at a range of 4,000—5,000 yards. Owing to the shoal nature of this head of the bay, it would be impossible for any fleet to effectively aid the defence; the range would not be less than 5,000 yards. Even if the attack were made by Arabs unprovided with artillery, the effect of fire from ships could hardly be more than "moral," at most; and owing to the entirely open and level desert country, the attack might be made from any direction; if from the south-west, besides threatening the communications of Jehara with Koweit, the attacking force would avoid coming under naval fire at all.

On the other hand, Jehara is on the direct road, from Basrah to Koweit, and it might, in conceivable circumstances, be advisable to occupy and hold Jehara for a time. But in this case the danger would be that an untrained Arab garrison might probably

* Colonel Pelly (1866) alludes to the "fine pasturage grounds between Zobeir, Jehara, and the Shatt-el-Arah."

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hold on too long, or be deceived into believing that the attack had failed, while their flank was turned and an attacking force directed on Koweit itself. The absolute openness of the country to movements in all directions would in this respect undoubtedly increase the difficulty of defence, and might easily lead to disaster.

Should the consideration of Jehara's proximity to Kathama ever make it expedient to support Koweit's independence at this point, it seems to me that no effective support can be given, supposing diplomatic representations to have failed, short of landing troops.

ADMINISTRATION.

The government is patriarchal, even as the Sheikh himself is the living presentment of one's idea of the biblical patriarchs. A big dinner is prepared every day for any wanderers and strangers who may wish to share it; the one and only restriction is that arms must be left at the gate.

The Sheikh exercises political and the Kazi judicial functions. Punishment is rarely inflicted, and there seems to be but little governmental interference with the liberty of the subject, in any respect, and to be little need for it.

No tribute is, or ever has been, paid either to the Amir of Nejd, or to the Turkish Government. Nor is tribute exacted from other tribes. Save small "offerings" at the gate, or from merchants, there is no system of Customs, and trade is entirely free.

Thus under a succession of common sense rulers, with a policy wisely originated and systematically pursued, an Arab band of pirates now appear as the masters of a thriving free-trade port. One cannot avoid a feeling of astonishment at finding such a political and commercial structure in such a region, and the work of such hands.

The currency is cosmopolitan. As elsewhere in Arabia, the Maria Theresa dollar, "Real," (the value of which is about Rs. 1-8) may be considered the standard medium of exchange; while Persian Krans and Turkish copper coins are also met with. English sovereigns are occasionally to be found, and the Indian rupee is not despised. Bills can be obtained on Basrah, Bushire, and Bombay, and also, it is said, on the capital of Nejd.

Currency.

RESOURCES.

Agricultural resources there are none, except at Jehara, where a certain small amount of cereals and green fodder, as well as dates, are cultivated, and disposed of in Koweit. During the winter months, there is some sparse grazing, enough for the

needs of the Bedouins' herds of frugal goats, even on the apparently arid plain round the town of Koweit; but the best grazing grounds, much frequented by Bedouins, are those around Jehara, Kathama Bay, and thence along the northern shore, between the "Al-Aghati" heights and the water's edge. No sign of cultivation can be seen on the higher ground north and north-west of these heights.

The resources of Koweit are entirely commercial. Its geographical position as the only seaport for the Jebel Shammer district of Central Arabia, as well as its mercantile aspect, in this respect, has been compared with Trieste's somewhat similar position with regard to Austria.

Palgrave remarks on this similarity, and considered it to conduce to a continuance of the good relations existing in his day (1862-63) between the Sheikhs of Koweit and those of Hayil. This, however, has not been the case, since Sheikh Mubarak's accession. The loss of trade, due to the disturbed state of things which has obtained of late years, must have been considerable, and the anxiety of Ibn Rashid to possess himself of Koweit, or at the least to set up a Sheikh there friendly and subordinate to himself, is easily understood. The natural advantages of this seaport, for the import of rice, cloth, and other wares, necessities of life, even for the simple wants of the Arabs, as well as for the export of horses, sheep, wool, and the like products of the interior, are evident and lasting.

Bedouins bring horses, cattle, mutton, milk, butter, &c., which they barter for dates, clothes, arms, and other goods. Horse-dealers are said to prefer shipping from Koweit, to running the gauntlet of the river Customs houses, bad climate, and other inconveniences of Basrah. Horse forage is brought down the Bubiyan Creek from Bunder Zobeir.

Some 130 vessels, of from 20 to 300 tons, are engaged in the carrying trade between Basrah and India and throughout the Persian Gulf.

Fishing is evidently a considerable industry; the fish weirs on the flat beach between Koweit and the open sea are a very conspicuous object. Besides the fish most commonly met with in Eastern waters, excellent soles are to be had, which would be, no doubt, a feature in the "menu" of the hotels, should this harbour ever become the ocean terminus for any railway such as that now contemplated.

The absence of data, or figures of any kind, make it impossible to estimate the amount of trade passing through the port. In 1863, however, imports from India (long-cloths, rice, coffee,

planks, spices, etc.) were estimated at about two lakhs of rupees; while the exports were approximately as follows:—

			Rs.
Horses	...	...	2,40,000
Wool	...	...	40,000
Dates	...	...	60,000
Miscellaneous	...	...	40,000
TOTAL			3,80,000 or approximately four lakhs.

CLIMATE.

The climate is distinctly good, as compared with that of many ports in the Persian Gulf. At the time of my visit (December and January) it was perfection, and could only be compared with that of Egypt, fine and bracing in the mornings and evenings, and never unpleasantly hot. Even during the hot months of the year, the prevailing wind, from the north-west, which blows from the desert, is somewhat tempered by crossing ten miles of the waters of the bay, while, on the other hand, it has not absorbed enough moisture to have that muggy, steamy, and relaxing character with which it reaches Bushire. Though the drinking water is brackish, fever is practically unknown, and dysentery and ophthalmia are rare.

In short, as has been rather quaintly remarked, with reference to the phenomenal longevity of the Sheikhs of Koweit, "where men commence begetting new families at eighty and die at 120, the climate cannot be considered as prematurely exhausting."

COMMUNICATIONS.

The whole country is entirely open, and the information as to even the main routes is extremely meagre.

The most important, in view of the situation at the end of 1901, while I was at Koweit, were the communications in the direction of Basrah. These are two:—

(a) The direct, or inland, road which after leaving Jehara crosses the coast range "Al Aghthi" about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the north-west of that place, and thence trends northwards to Basrah. As far as can be seen from the coast range already mentioned, the character of the country remains the same as that around Jehara and Koweit, *vis.*, level and open, and a native informant told me that the road was of the same nature all the way. In this case it is suitable for the movement of troops of all arms, the only place where movement is restricted to the immediate track is at the Gap through which the road rises to the higher level of the country behind the coast range.

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(b) An alternative route between Jehara and Zobeir,* following approximately the general direction of the coast. It is somewhat longer than (a) and could not be used by a hostile force moving on Koweit, without coming under the fire of ships in Koweit Bay, during the last, or perhaps the last two, marches before reaching Jehara.

A road is seen branching off towards the west, at this Gap, leading, it is believed, to El Hafr in the Wadi Errumeh.

* ZOBEIR, a town ten miles south-west of Basrah, on the dry canal of the Sarra Zada. It was settled some ninety years ago by refugees from Nejd, on the ruins of old Basrah. The town contains 1,500 inhabitants, pure Arabs.

Five minutes walk south-east of the town there is a large spring of good water, sufficient to supply 10,000 men.

The caravan route to Nejd starts from Zobeir, the journey taking ten days on camels, at 10 or 12 hours per diem. There are only two watering places on the road.

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APPENDIX "A."

ROUTE No. I.

Koweit to Basrah (a) — (Authority. — Local enquiries.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles (approx.)	
1. Jehara	7	18	(Can be done in 4 hours by individual riders.)
2. Safwan	16	41	
3. Zobeir	5	29	
4. Basrah	2	10	
Total	30	98	

ROUTE No. II.

Koweit to Basrah (b) — (Authority. — Local enquiries.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles (approx.)	
1. Jehara (as before)	7	18	
2. Khutei, or Khater	6	15	
3. Madera	6	15	
4. Sabria, or Sabha	6	15	
5. Omenaga	6	15	
6. Zobeir	7	18	
7. Basrah (as before)	2	10	
Total	40	106	

NOTE.—The distances can only be taken as a rough approximation. Native information always computes the length of marches in hours. From my own experience of camel riding elsewhere in Arabia, I have computed the pace to be approximately, under normal conditions, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour. The mileage shewn in these routes (with the exception of No. 3) has been worked out on this basis.

ROUTE No. III.*

Koweit to Hayil—(*Authority*.—Doughty's "Travels in Arabia Deserta.")

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Stounds.	Miles (approx.)	
1. Jehara	9	18	
2. Arraki	30	60	There is a little water here.
3. El Hafr, in the Wadi Er Rummah	16	32	A well 35 fathoms deep.
4. El Wakba	24	48	
5. El Fasas um Arthema	24	48	Well 35 fathoms deep.
6. Khathera	28	56	
7. Bikas	18	36	
8. El Khasira	8	16	
9. Hayil	9	18	
Total	166	332	

ROUTE No. IV.

Koweit to Riyadh—(*Authority*.—A report by Colonel Pelly, 1866.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles (approx.)	
1. Malah	7½	19	Wells of brackish water.
2. Legeet	4½	12	Do. do. do.
3. Wafrah	8	20	Do. do. do.
4. Lehabah	18	45	Wells of fresh water.
5. Dayjani	24	60	Do. do. do.
6. Sedus	10	25	Do. do. do.
7. Esfarrat	4	10	Do. do. do.
8. Horaymelah	4	10	Do. do. do.
9. Ayenah	8	20	Do. do. do.
10. Malgah	3	7½	Do. do. do.
11. Riyadh	3	7½	Do. do. do.
Total	94	236	

* "Travels in Arabia Deserta" (Vol. II, p. 46). The unit of time ("Stound") appears to be rather less than an hour. The distance has been approximately computed at 2 miles=1 "Stound."

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ROUTE No. V.

Koweit to El Hasa—(*Authority*.—Colonel Pelly, 1866.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles.	
1. Fentass	4	10	
2. Abu Helayfah	8	20	
3. Meraghah	10	25	
4. Megata	5	12	
5. Hamadh	10	25	
6. Sudah	10	25	
7. El Habi	8	20	
8. El Jauf	12	30	
9. Ain Dar	12	30	
10. El Hasa	8	20	
Total	87	217	

ROUTE No. VI.

Koweit to Katif—(*Authority*.—Colonel Pelly, 1866.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles.	
1. Fentass	4	10	Same as in preceding route to El Hasa.
2. Abu Helayfah	8	20	
3. Meraghah	10	25	
4. Megata	5	12	
5. Hamadh	10	25	
6. Sudah	10	25	
7. Dobayb or Dobbayah	12	30	
8. As Sebakah	8	20	
9. El Katif	4	10	
Total	71	177	

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Statement of distances of the following places and districts from Koweit.
(Authority.—Colonel Pelly, 1866).

Koweit to Katif	...	...	...	8 days.
" El Hasa	...	...	...	10 "
" Okair	...	...	...	10 "
" Zolfi	...	...	...	10 "
" Kassim	...	...	...	12 "
" Jebel Shammer	...	...	...	16 "
" Hazm-er-Raji	...	...	...	18 "
" Mecca	...	...	...	26 "

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APPENDIX "B."

THE WAHABI FAMILY, OR OLD RULING FAMILY IN NEJD.

MOHAMMED BIN ABDUL WAHAB, the reformer who started the puritanical movement, about 1740-50, which has ever since borne his father's name.

TURKI, his son and successor till 1831.

FEYSUL BIN TURKI, succeeded and ruled till 1865.

He had four sons: Abdulla, Mahommed, Saood, and Abdul Rahman.

ABDULLAH BIN FEYSUL, succeeded his father in 1865, though his younger brother, Saood, disputed his succession, and authority, until his (Saood's) death in 1874. Abdullah was nominally supported by Mohammed ibn Rashid, Sheikh of Jebel Shammer, but in 1874 was taken by the latter to Hayil practically a prisoner; Ibn Rashid becoming *de facto* ruler of Nejd.

ABDUL AZIZ BIN ABDUL RAHMAN BIN FEYSUL, son of the youngest of Feysul's sons, and thus nephew of Abdullah, the last Amir, is now endeavouring, and according to the latest accounts with some success, to recover the power of his fathers in Nejd, from the present Ibn Rashid, nephew of the usurper.

APPENDIX "C."

THE IBN RASHID FAMILY.

ABDULLAH IBN RASHID became Sheikh of the Jebel Shammer tribe, with his capital at Hayil, in 1835, by the help of Amir Feysul bin Turki. He died in 1846.

TILAL, his eldest son, succeeded him and ruled till his death in 1867.

MUTAAB IBN ABDULLAH, Tilal's younger brother, succeeded but was murdered the following year by his nephews, the sons of Tilal.

BANDER, one of these nephews, assumed the Government.

MAHOMMED (IBN ABDULLAH) IBN RASHID, third and youngest son of the old Abdullah, killed his nephew, Bander, and the five remaining children of his brother Tilal, and became undisputed Amir in Hayil, in 1868. In 1886, while nominally supporting the Amir of Nejd, Abdullah bin Feysul, against a revolt, he carried Abdullah to Hayil practically a prisoner, and became the *de facto* ruler of Nejd. He died in 1897, and was succeeded by his nephew.

ABDUL AZIZ IBN RASHID, who is the present representative of his family, and who besides being in a chronic state of war with Koweit, owing to his having taken up the cause of the dispossessed son of the late Sheikh of that place, has also to deal with the legitimatist claimant to the Amir-dom of Nejd (Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman) which was usurped by his uncle.

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APPENDIX "D."

SHEIKHS OF KOWEIT.

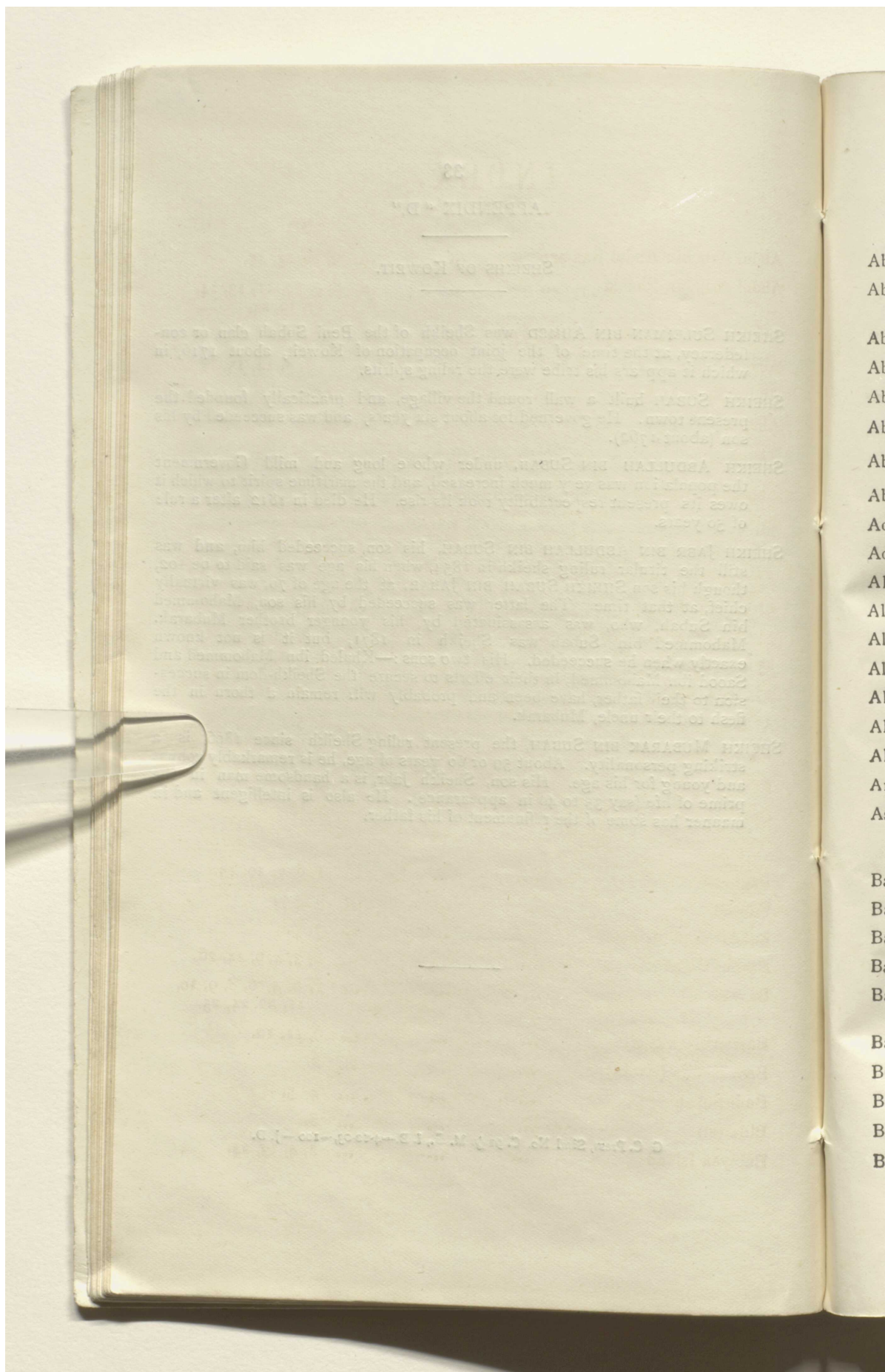
SHEIKH SULEIMAN BIN AHMED was Sheikh of the Beni Subah clan, or confederacy, at the time of the joint occupation of Koweit, about 1716, in which it appears his tribe were the ruling spirits.

SHEIKH SUBAH built a wall round the village, and practically founded the present town. He governed for about six years, and was succeeded by his son (about 1762).

SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN SUBAH, under whose long and mild Government the population was very much increased, and the maritime spirit to which it owes its present respectability took its rise. He died in 1812, after a rule of 50 years.

SHEIKH JABR BIN ABDULLAH BIN SUBAH, his son, succeeded him, and was still the titular ruling sheikh in 1854, when his age was said to be 102, though his son SHEIKH SUBAH BIN JABAR, at the age of 70, was virtually chief, at that time. The latter was succeeded by his son, Mahommed bin Subah, who, was assassinated by his younger brother Mubarak. Mahommed bin Subah was Sheikh in 1871, but it is not known exactly when he succeeded. His two sons:—Khaled ibn Mahommed and Saood ibn Mahommed, in their efforts to secure the Sheikh-dom in succession to their father, have been and probably will remain a thorn in the flesh to their uncle, Mubarak.

SHEIKH MUBARAK BIN SUBAH, the present ruling Sheikh since 1896, is a striking personality. About 59 or 60 years of age, he is remarkably robust and young for his age. His son, Sheikh Jabr, is a handsome man in the prime of life (say 35 to 40 in appearance). He also is intelligent and in manner has some of the refinement of his father.



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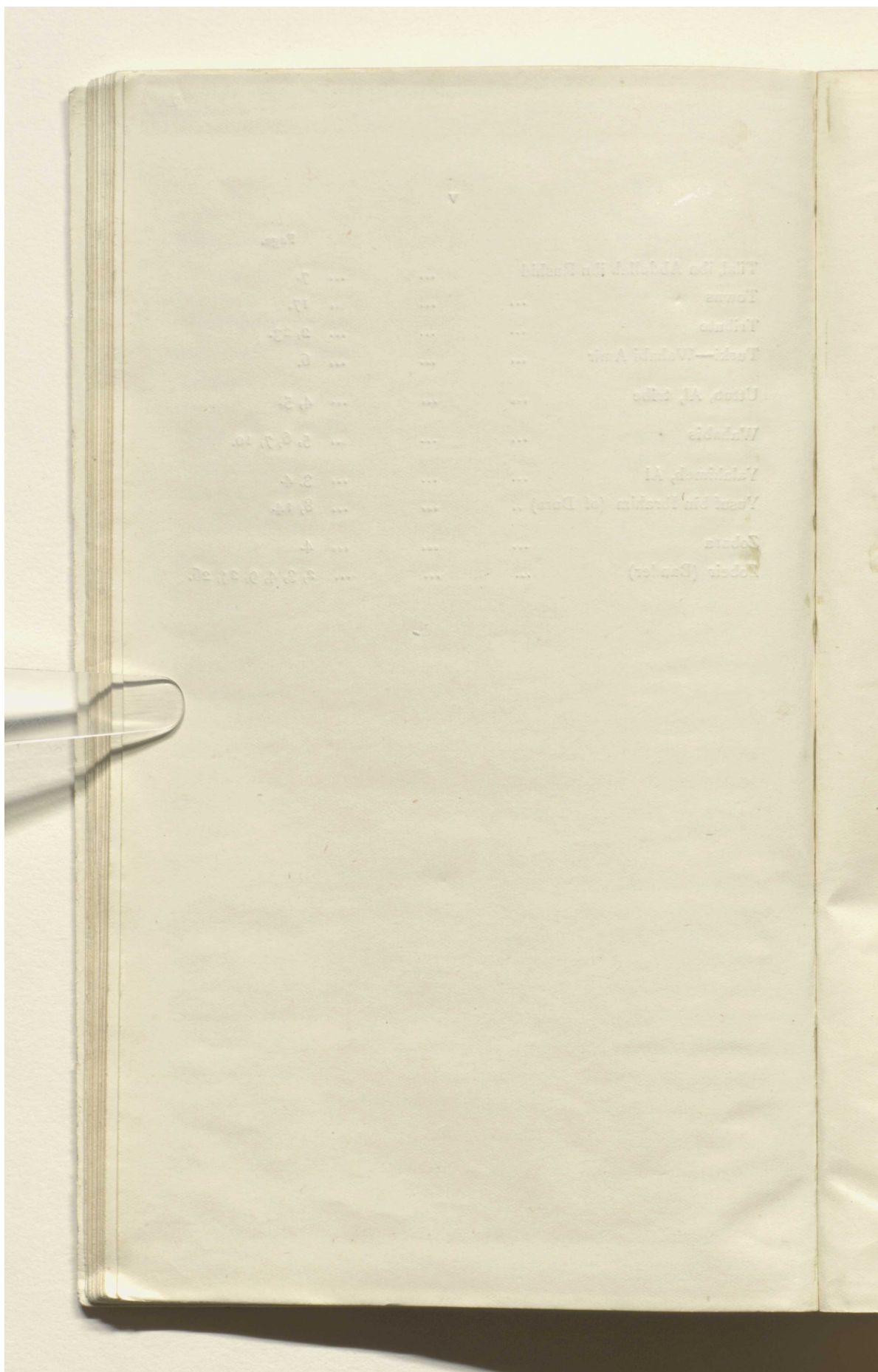
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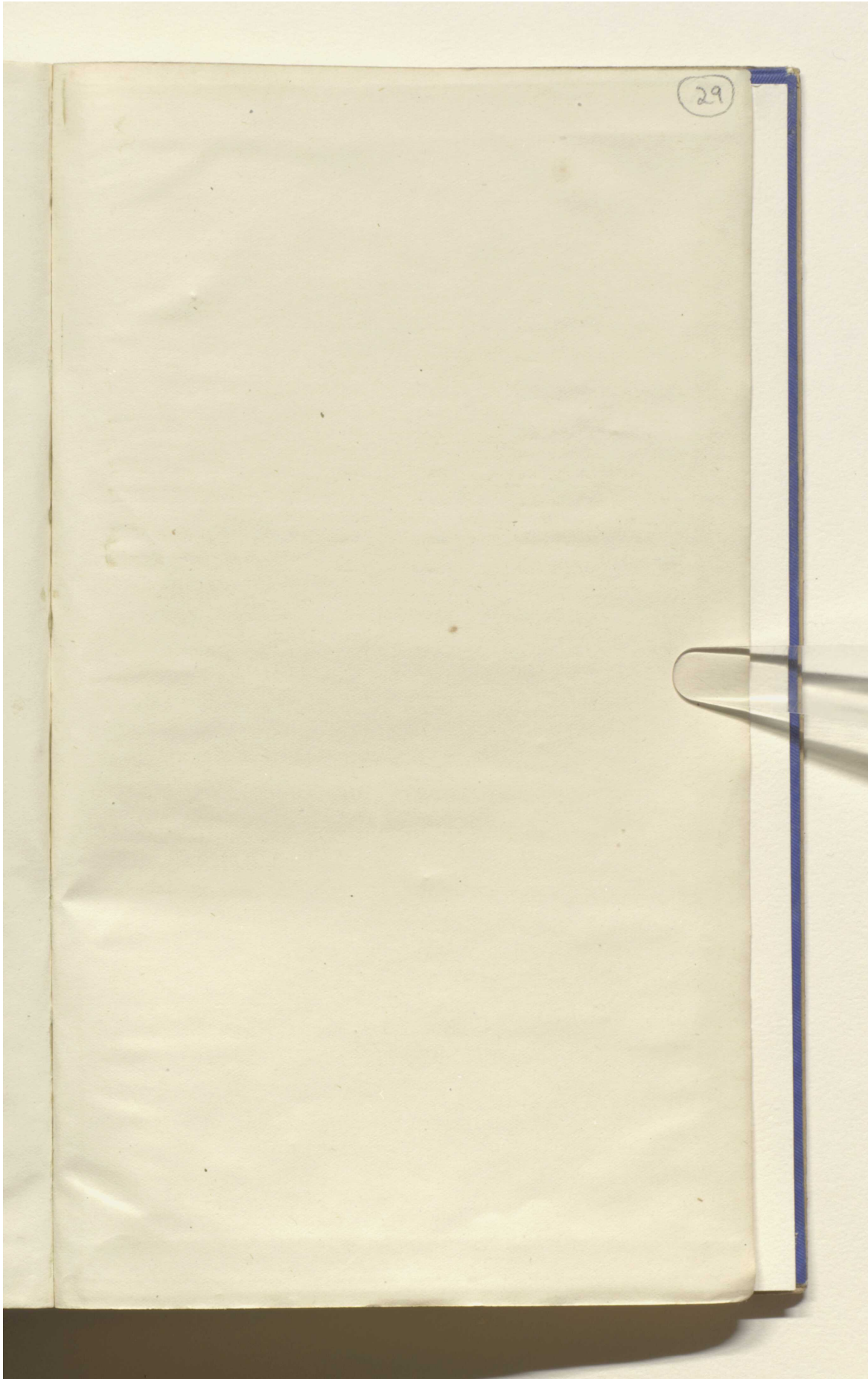
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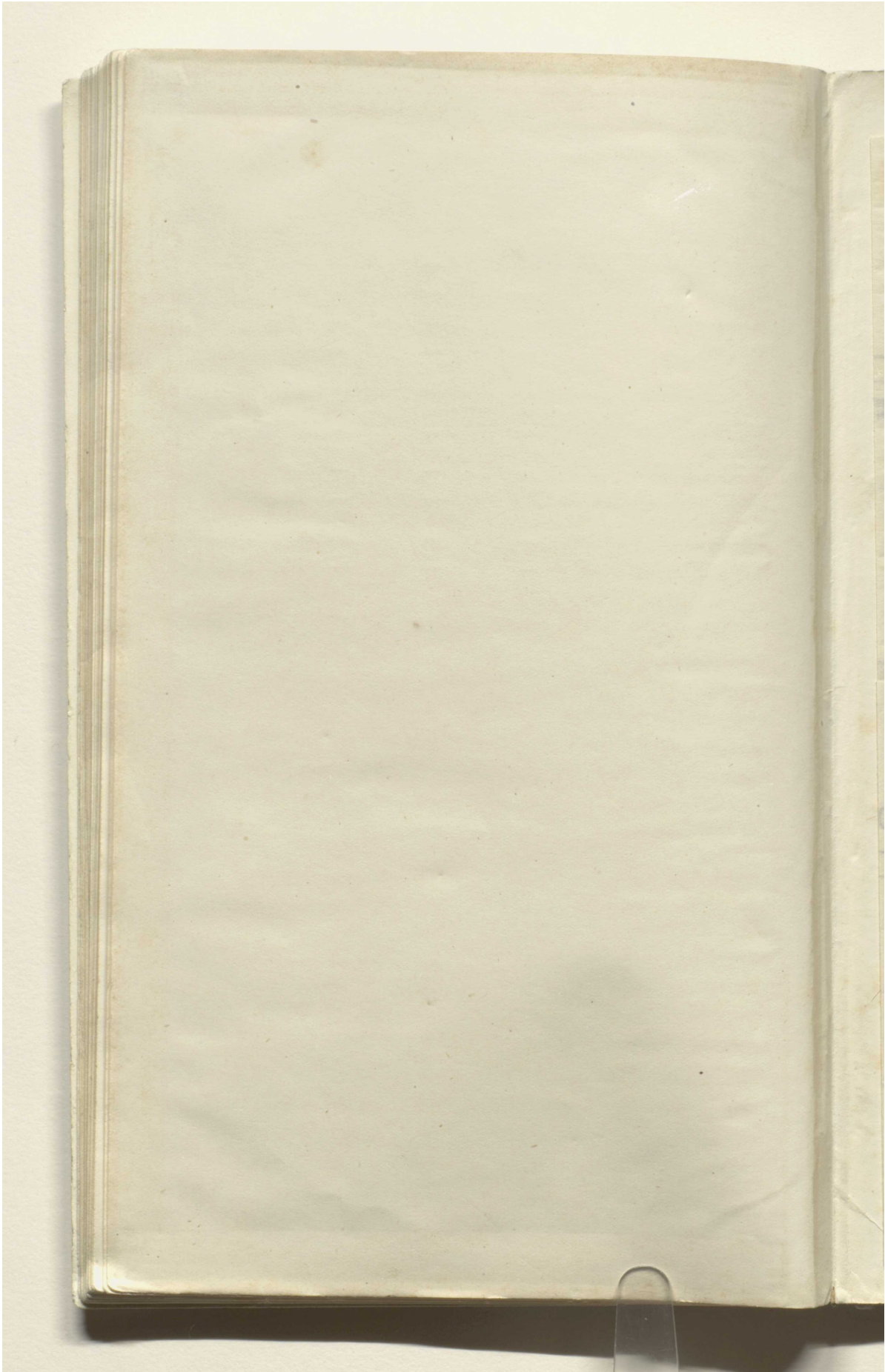
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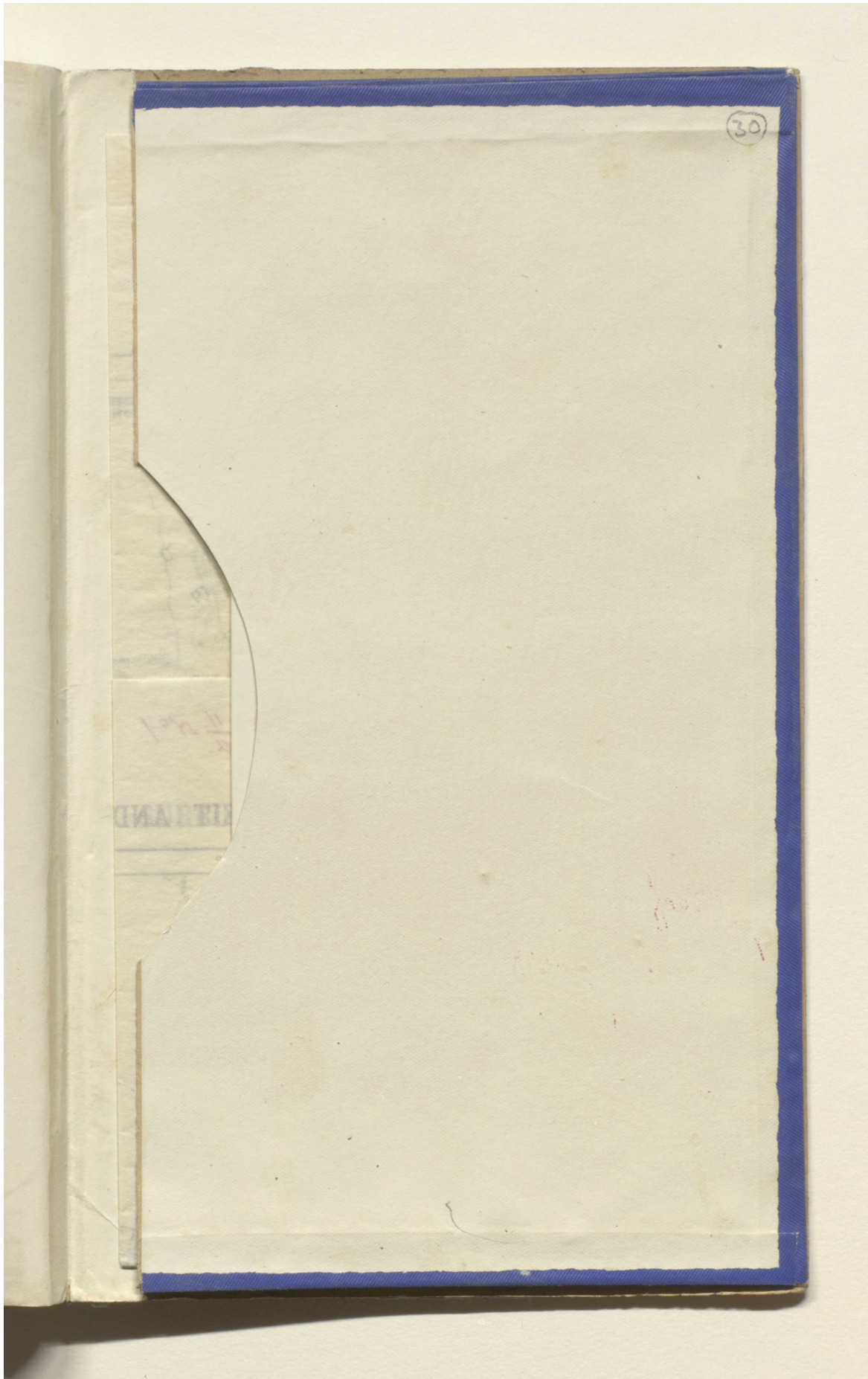
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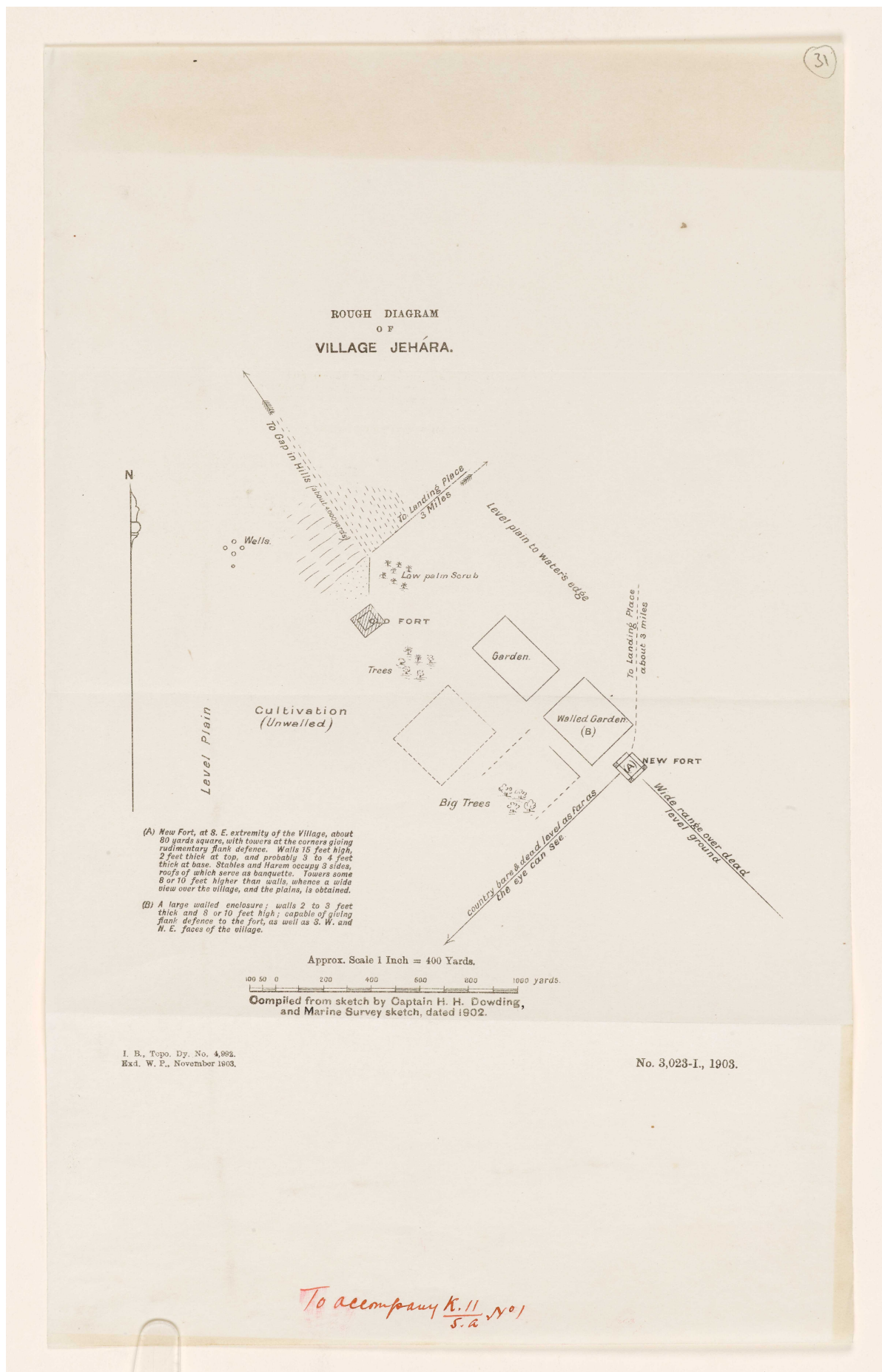
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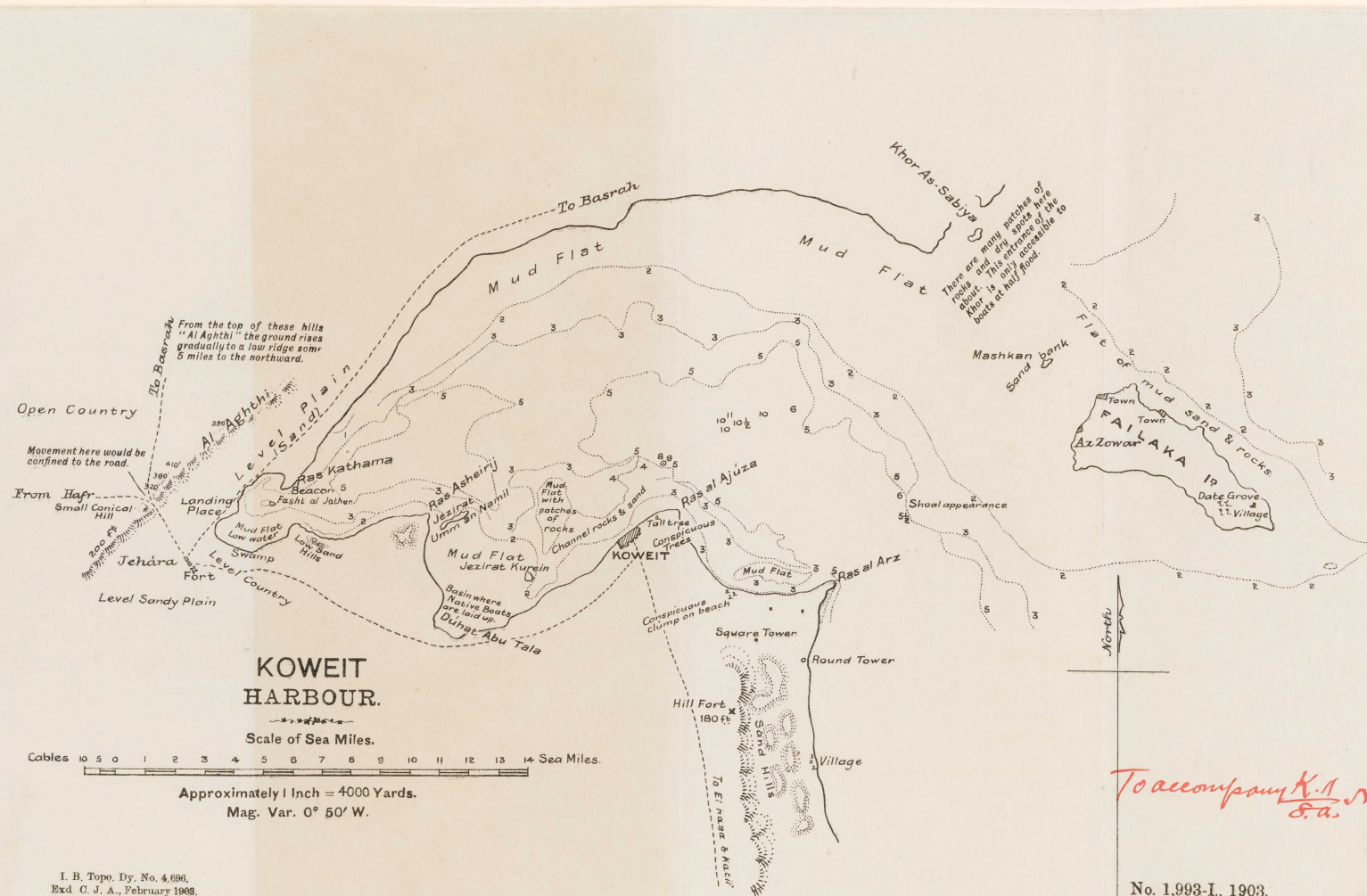
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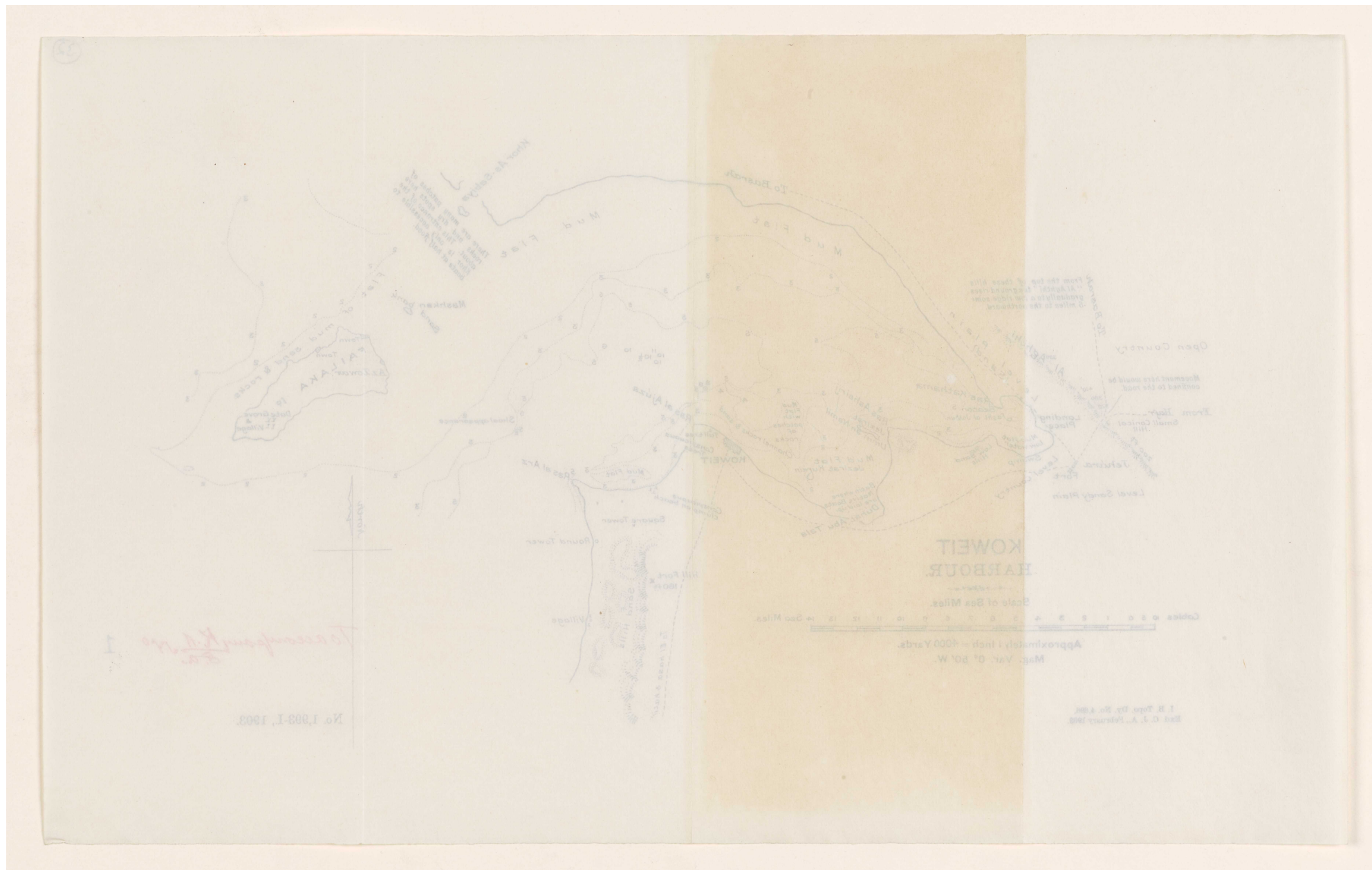
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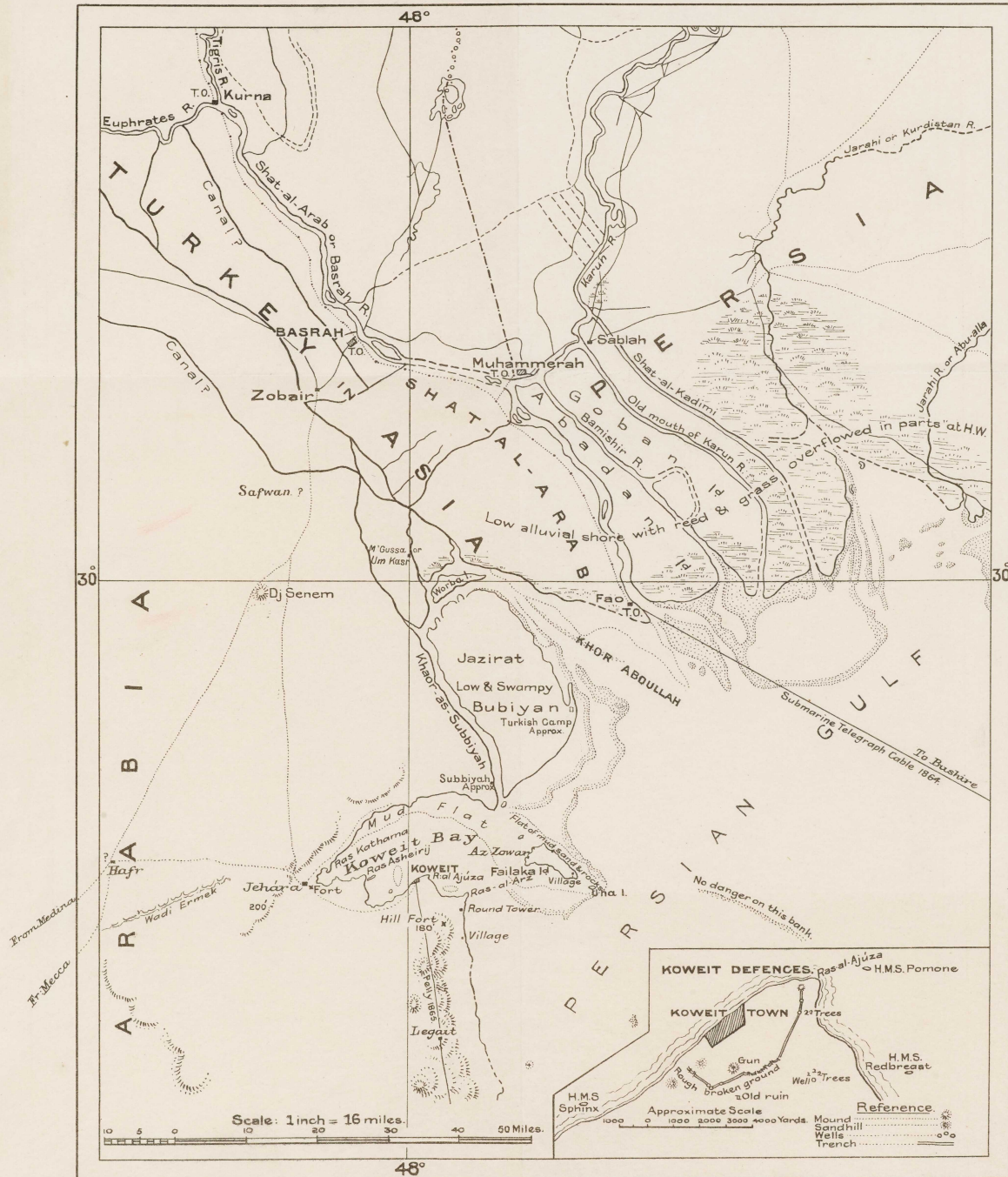


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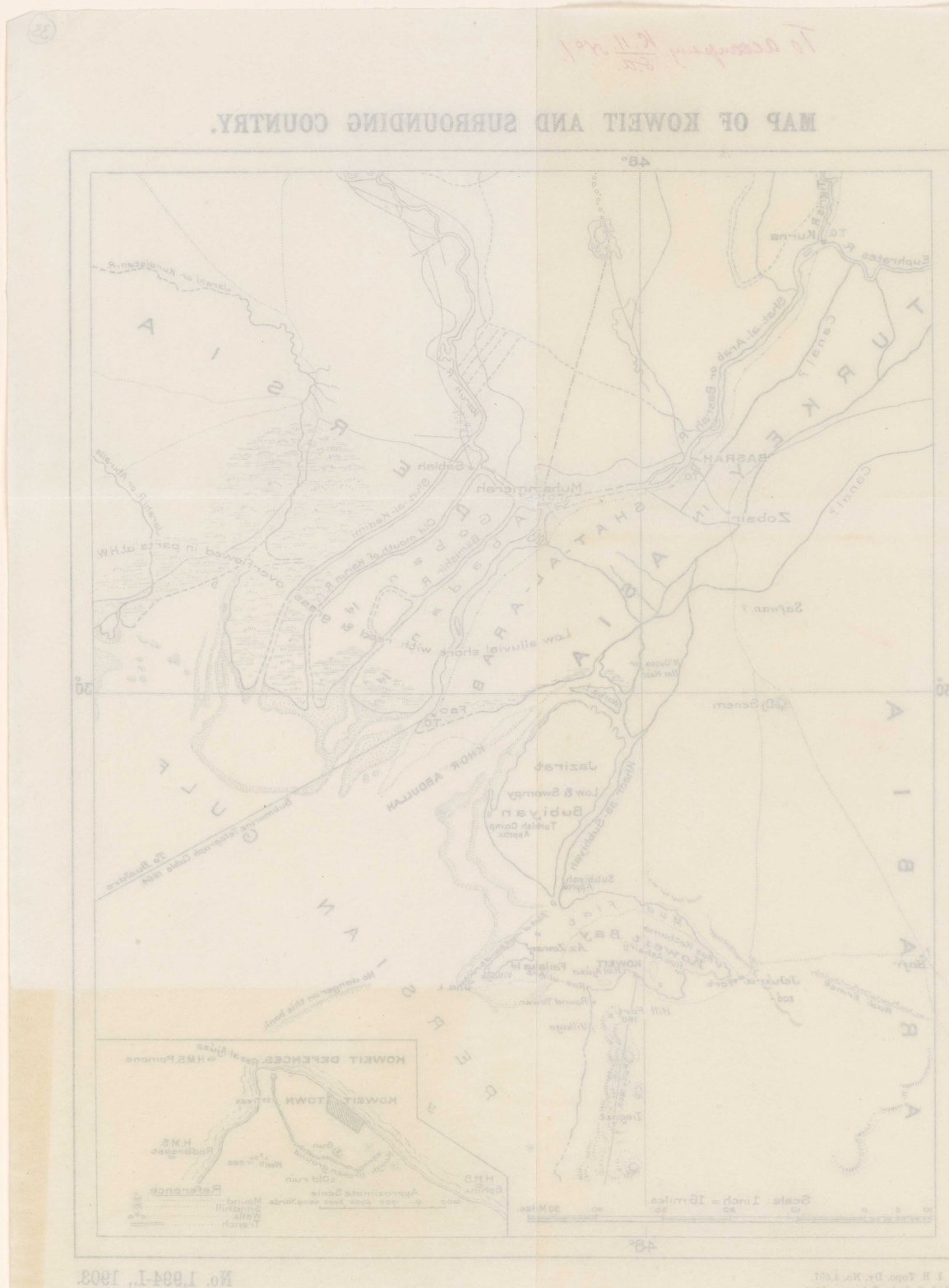
MAP OF KOWEIT AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY.



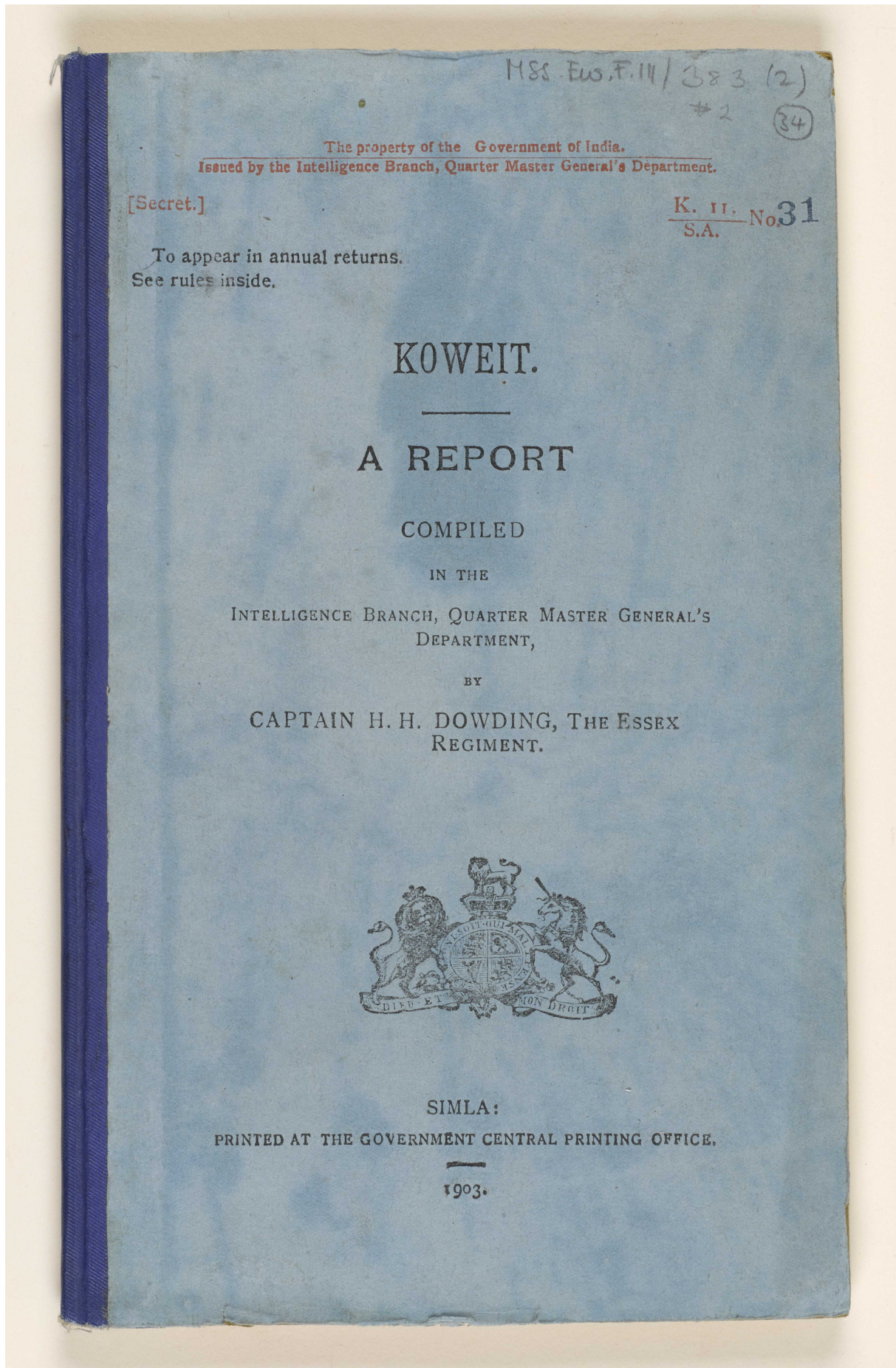
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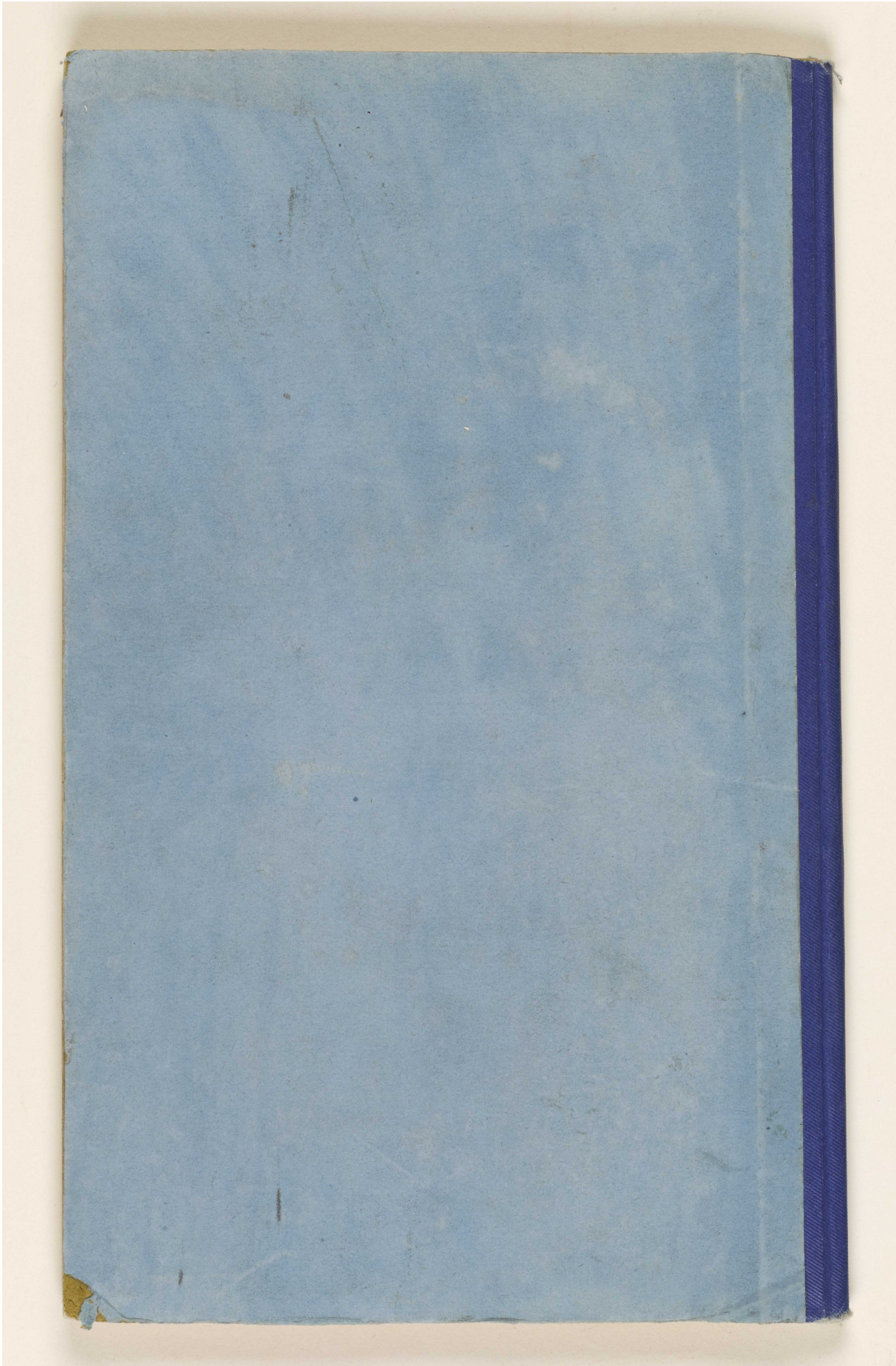
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'Koweit: A Report' [front-a] (71/140)



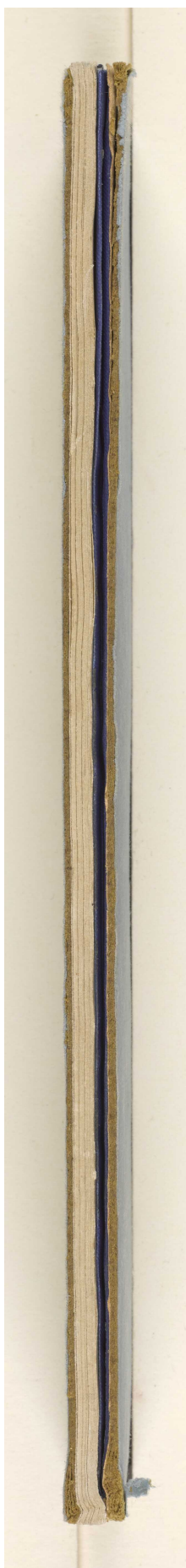
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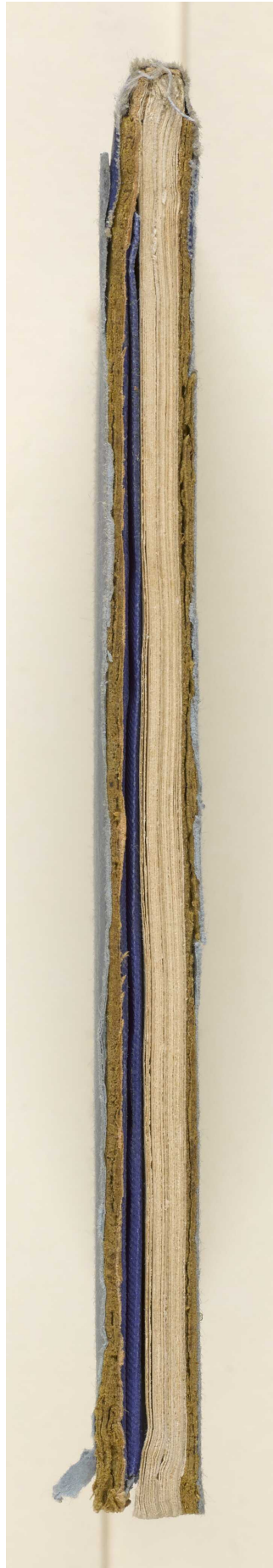
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'Koweit: A Report' [head-a] (75/140)



'Koweit: A Report' [tail-a] (76/140)



Issued by Intelligence Branch, Quarter Master General's Department in India.

*To the personal charge of The Private Secretary
to H.E. the Viceroy*

CUSTODY AND DISPOSAL OF SECRET DOCUMENTS.

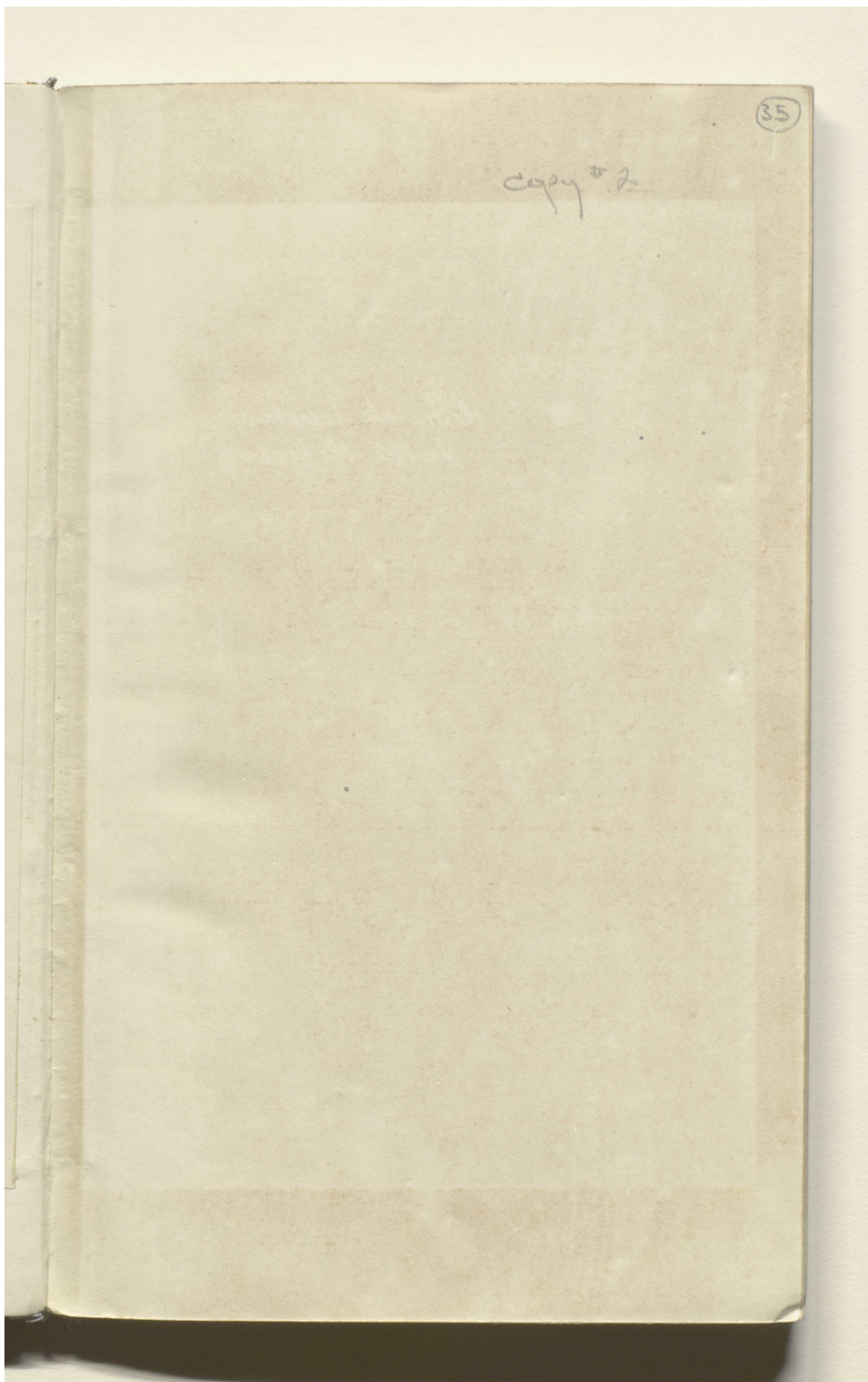
The Commander-in-Chief desires that, in future, the following regulations may be strictly adhered to :—

1. When an Officer, who has signed for the receipt of *secret* documents on Army Form A. 2006, either *resigns his command or vacates his appointment*, he will hand over all such documents to the Officer taking over his command, or replacing him in his appointment, either temporarily or permanently, receiving from him a receipt in duplicate for them on Army Form A. 2006. The Officer handing over the documents will send immediately through the proper channel one of the receipts thus obtained to the Intelligence Branch, Simla, from which the documents were issued, and will retain the other copy in his possession.
2. If the Officer in charge of secret documents quits his post on leave of absence, or on duty for a period of over two months, the same formalities will take place on his departure and on his return, as on a change of appointment.
3. Every Officer after having signed for the receipt of *secret* documents will be held *personally responsible* for them, even after he has left the station or the Service, unless he has handed over his charge in strict compliance with the above orders. In case of an Officer quitting his station for less than two months, it is optional for him to hand over the *secret* documents in his charge to another Officer with the above prescribed formalities, but if he does not do so, he is responsible for them during his absence as he is during his presence at his station.
4. The Officer to whom *secret* documents are issued will keep a list of the *secret* documents in his charge, which list will be compared when taking over the documents with the receipt form then signed. He will compare the documents personally with the list on the last of January in each year, and will furnish a report on Army Form A. 2007, certifying that he has done so.

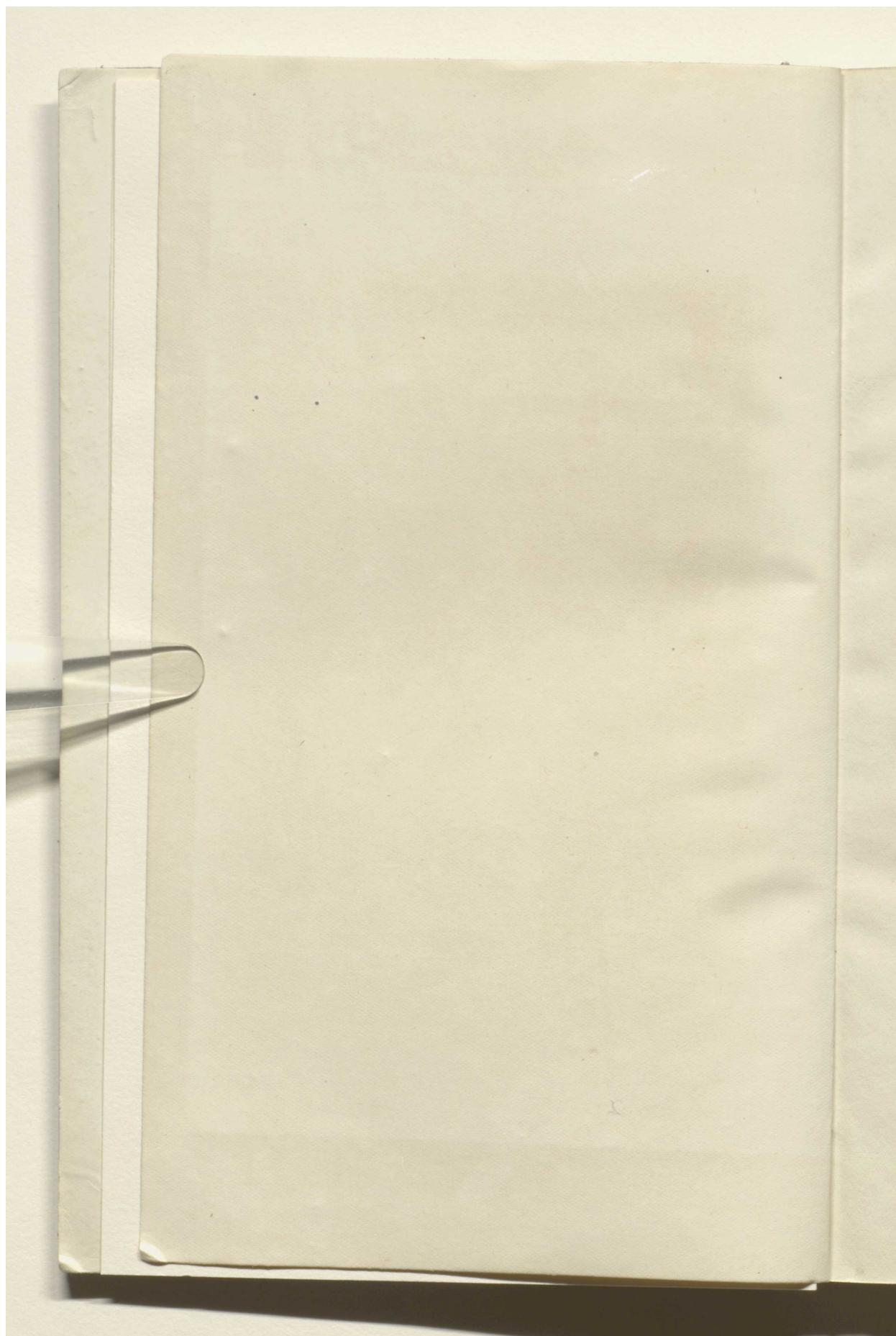
INTELLIGENCE BRANCH,
QUARTER MASTER GENERAL'S DEPT. IN INDIA;
Simla, 1st December 1899.

ALFRED GASELEE,
BRIGADIER-GENERAL,
Quarter Master General
in India.

'Koweit: A Report' [35r] (78/140)



'Koweit: A Report' [35v] (79/140)



'Koweit: A Report' [36r] (80/140)



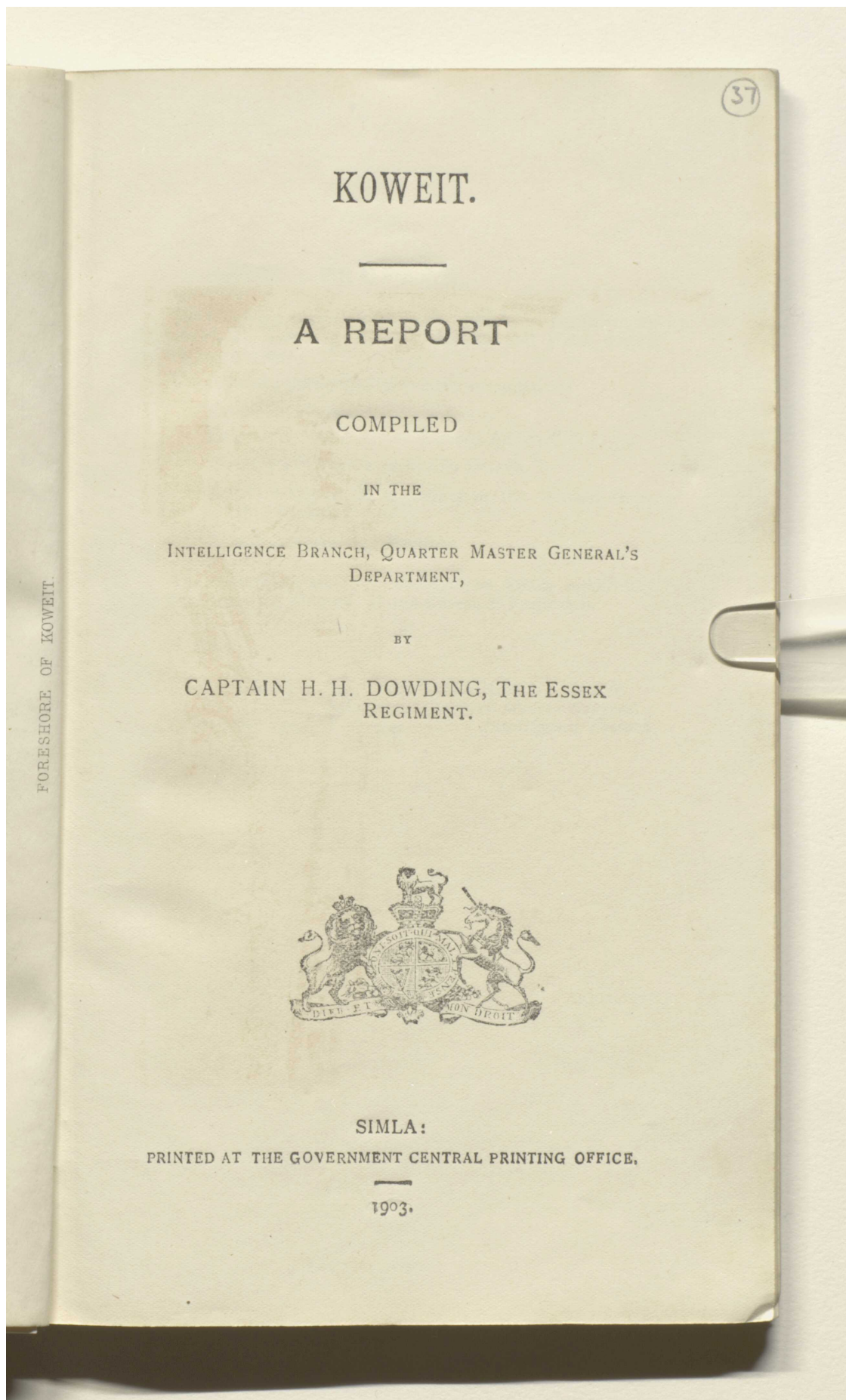
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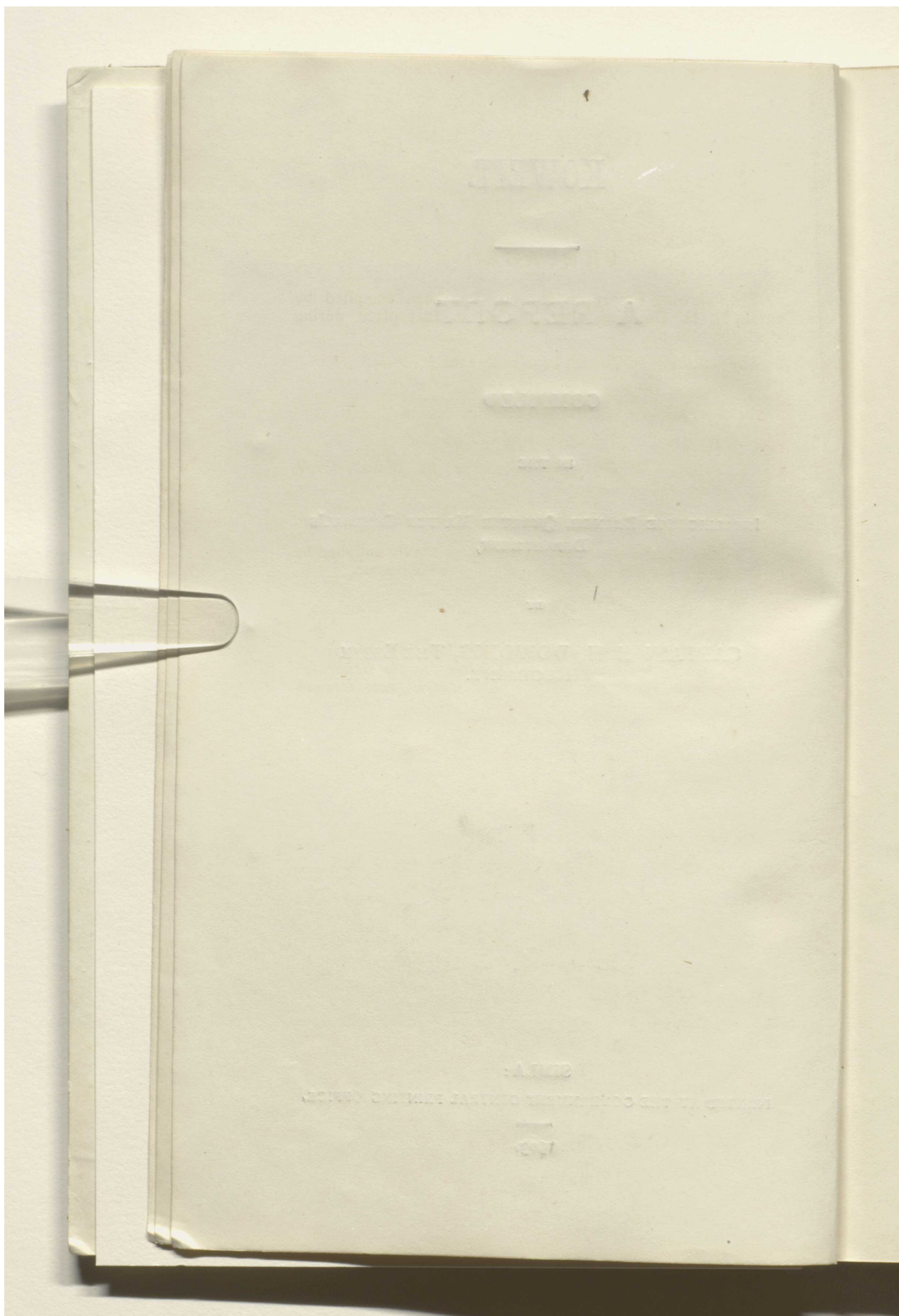
Photogravure.

Survey of India Offices, Calcutta, August 1903.

FORESHORE OF KOWEIT.



'Koweit: A Report' [37v] (83/140)



P R E F A C E .

The following report on Koweit, has been compiled by Captain H. H. Dowding after a visit to that place during the winter 1901-02.

The following authorities have been consulted :—

Curzon's " Persia. "

Palgrave's " Central and Eastern Arabia. "

Doughty's " Travels in Arabia Deserta. "

Pelly's " Report of a Journey to the Wahabi Capital of Riyadh. "

Bombay Government Records.

The illustrations are from photographs kindly supplied by His Excellency the Viceroy, Baron Curzon of Kedleston.

SIMLA ; } E. W. S. K. MACONCHY, Major,
November 1903. } Assistant Quarter Master General,
Intelligence Branch.

'Koweit: A Report' [38v] (85/140)



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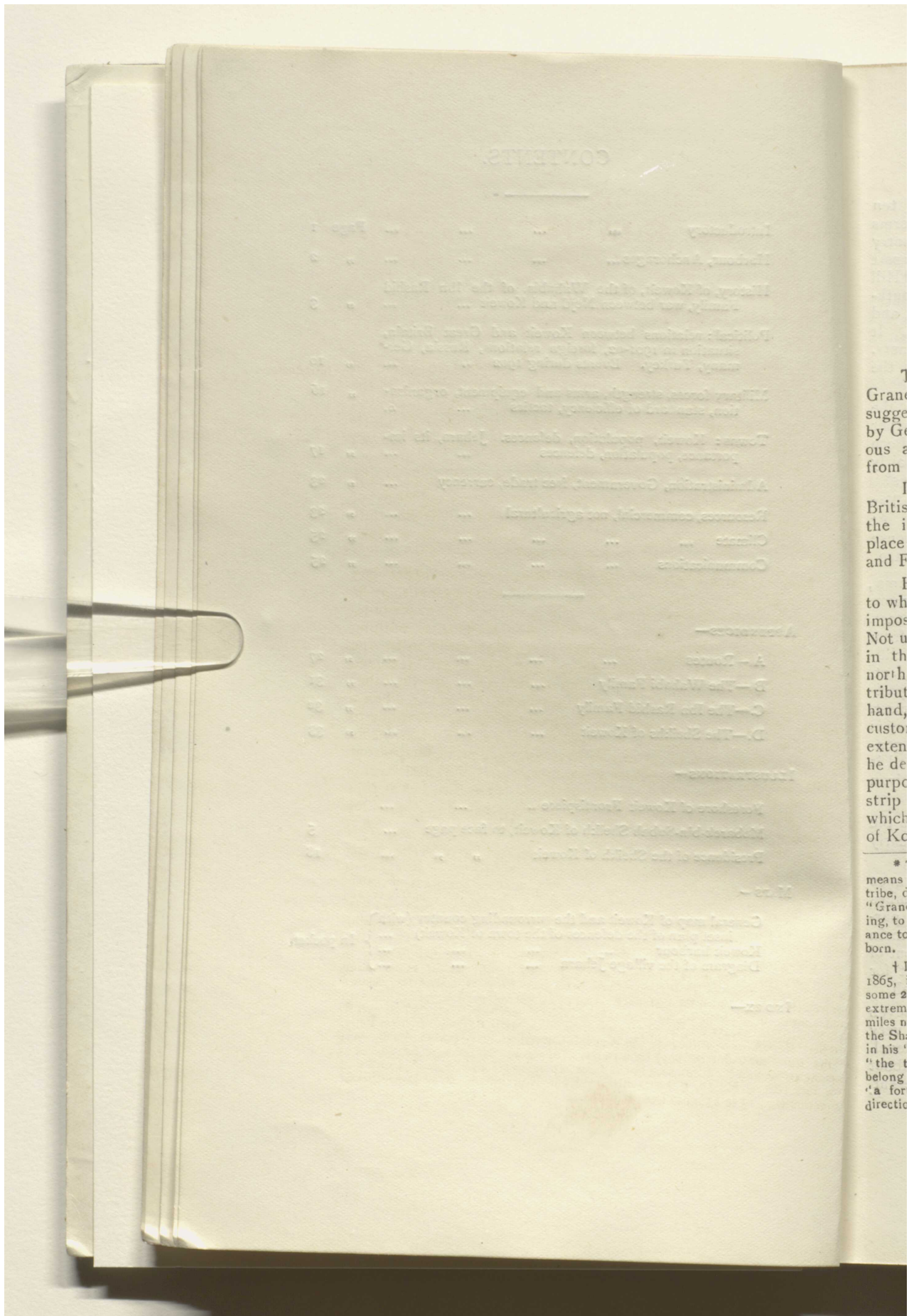
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KOWEIT.

The name of Koweit,* or rather the alternative name of Grane, first came into prominence, for English readers, as the suggested terminus for the Euphrates Valley railway, projected by General Chesney. More recently it has again become notorious as the coveted terminus of the proposed German railway from Constantinople to Baghdad.

Introductory.

In 1821-22, it was for a short time the head-quarters of the British Resident at Basrah, who moved there in consequence of the insolent attitude of the Pasha of Baghdad. It is the only place of any interest on the Arabian coast-line between Katif and Fao.

How far inland, beyond the actual shores of the great bay to which it gives its name, the territory of Koweit extends, it is impossible to ascertain with anything approaching exactitude. Not unnaturally, perhaps, the size of his dominions loses nothing in the telling of Sheikh Mubarak. He claims Safwan to the north, and Hafr to the west, though he has never received tribute or revenue from either of these places. On the other hand, he asserts that the exaction of tribute has never been a custom of his tribesmen. Probably he considers his territory to extend as far as he has ever made his power felt, or as far as he deems it possible to do so. It is perhaps enough, for present purposes, to consider Koweit territory as extending over a strip of country round the bay, of undefined width, but within which no hostile tribe or power could be tolerated by the ruler of Koweit.†

* The name "Koweit" is an Arab diminutive of the Persian "Kote," and means a little fort; no doubt a suitable name for the first settlement of an Arab tribe, driven to find a new home in an unknown country. Another name, "Grane," which still appears in certain atlases and maps, applies, properly speaking, to the whole coast line of the bay, and is derived from its supposed resemblance to the curve formed by a pair of horns,—"Keor" or "Ghern" meaning born.

† It is interesting to note that the map published by Macmillan & Co., in 1865, in illustration of Palgrave's travels, shows Koweit territory as extending some 20 miles south of the southern shore of the bay, 20 miles west of its western extremity, from whence the boundary runs nearly due north to a point 8 or 10 miles north of the 30th degree of northern latitude, and thence nearly due east to the Shatt-el-Arab, striking the latter some 40 miles below Basrah. Colonel Pelly, in his "Report of a journey to the Wahabi Capital Riyadh" (dated 1866), says "the tract around (the bay) for a radius of about 8 or 10 miles is considered to belong to Koweit." Elsewhere in the same report he places the land frontier at "a fort named Malah, 5 hours distant from Koweit," in a south-south-east direction (i.e., 13 to 15 miles from Koweit).

Harbour.

A remarkably fine bay some twenty miles long and ten miles wide, stretching approximately east and west, forms an excellent and flourishing harbour. The surrounding country to the southward is low-lying, level, and of the ordinary desert type, stretching away as far as the eye can see. The "Hill Fort," shown on the charts, some seven and a half miles south-east of the town of Koweit, stands 180 feet above sea level, and is a conspicuous object, when entering the bay from the sea. It is a well-built square erection, with towers at the corners. There is a small village to the south-east of this fort, on the coast nestling among palms and other trees.

With the exception of some sand-hills immediately to the south of the town, which are referred to in greater detail further on, the general character of the country, along the southern shore of the bay, is the same, *i.e.*, an unbroken level plain of fairly firm, whitish sand stretching away to the south and south-west.

The approach to the entrance to the bay, though it lies through shoals and low-lying sand banks, is not difficult. At present there are neither buoys nor lights, but with a lighthouse on Raz-al-Arz the harbour could be entered, at night, with ease.

After reaching its most westerly point, in Duhat Kathama, near the head of which lies the village Jehara, of which more anon, the coast-line makes an abrupt turn to the north-east. Along this northern side of the bay, about two miles from the water's edge, there runs a line of heights, steep and cliff-like on their sea face, having an elevation of about 200 feet. These give valuable shelter from the prevailing and most important wind, the "Shamal," which blows from the north-west. Owing to this shelter, no sea, at all distressing to big ships, is raised in the bay, even by a strong north-west gale. The general direction of the coast-line then trends eastwards until it reaches the creek which separates the swampy island of Bubiyan from the mainland.

Along this shore a mud flat extends some distance from the beach, and increases in width to the eastward until it is nearly five miles in breadth opposite to Ras-al-Arz.

The island Bubiyan which lies off the north-eastern entrance to the Bay of Koweit, is a large low-lying island, about 26 miles in length by 12 miles in width. It is quite barren and is partially overflowed at high water. It is separated from the mainland by Khor Subiya which, with a creek which leads out of it, is navigated as far as a place called Duweira, the port for Zobeir, a large town ten or twelve miles south-west of Basrah.

Failaka island at the entrance to the Bay is about seven miles long by three miles wide at its western end. It is all very low lying, its highest point being only thirty feet above sea level. On its western side is a small village with date groves and about 250 inhabitants. The island is unhealthy and the water indifferent.

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The whole bay affords a good anchorage for big ships, with excellent holding ground. Soundings are:—14 fathoms off Raz-al-Arz, 6 to 10 fathoms off Raz-al-Ajuza, shoaling to 6 and 7 fathoms at the entrance of Duhat Kathama.

Anchorage.

Starting from Raz-al-Arz the coast-line forms a bay, with shallow water, as far as Raz-al-Ajuza, a low point six miles to the north-westward. Native boats anchor two miles to the south-east of this point, in shelter from the "shamal."

(a) South-east of Raz-al-Ajuza.

The anchorage for large ships off the town of Koweit lies $1\frac{1}{4}$ or $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles off the north end of the town, and west-north-west of it, in from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 fathoms.

(b) Off the town of Koweit.

From Raz-al-Ajuza the coast runs nine miles south-west by west to the bottom of a shallow bay called Duhat Abu Tala. At the entrance of this small bay, there is a little barren islet, Jezirat Kurein, about half a mile from the shore; south-east of this is a small basin, with two fathoms of water, in which the smaller native boats lie, quite sheltered from all winds.

(c) South-east of the small island Kurein.

Duhat Kathama is the name of the bay west of Ras Asheirij. It shoals gradually from 7 fathoms at the entrance, which is four miles wide. (This part of Koweit Bay, until recently, was very imperfectly surveyed, especially with respect to Ras Kathama. I am indebted for the corrected chart of this part, to the Navigating Officer of H.M.S. *Pomone*.)

(d) Kathama Bay.

Ras Kathama is a low swampy point only just above high water running out some three furlongs from the northern shore of the bay. It is partially protected by a bank of sand, naturally formed, along high water line. About half a mile inland from the point, as also all along this coast-line, the shore is sandy and covered with tussocks of coarse grass, gradually rising to the foot of the hills called "Al Aghthi," which are about 200 feet high. There is good holding ground everywhere in Koweit bay, but the best anchorage is undoubtedly in Kathama bay, because it is the most sheltered. There appears no reason to doubt that this anchorage could easily be converted into an excellent harbour for sea-going ships, by a certain amount of dredging, and the construction of jetties and moles.

It is believed that the Germans wished to acquire a plot of land here, about twenty square miles in extent, having Kathama on the west, the second range of hills (seen from the top of the coast range "Al Aghthi" about 4 or 5 miles inland, to the northward) on the north, and Chawaichib* on the north-east.

HISTORY.

The family or tribe of the present Sheikh of Koweit originally dwelt in a small fort, called Mungaser, at the head of the Khor Abdullah near Bander Zobeir. Their vocation in life was

* Chawaichib is said to be about 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-east of Kathama Point.

piracy, which they practised on the lower reaches of the Shatt-el-Arab, and in the northern end of the Persian Gulf. In the 17th Century, the authorities at Basrah expelled them from their stronghold, and the tribe moved down the Bubiyan Creek, to the great bay, now known as that of Koweit. Crossing to the southern shore, the Sheikh erected a fort or "Khote," and hence the present name; (which is pronounced Quoit or Quait).

It was about 1716 that three clans of the Al Uttub tribe, the Beni Subah, the Al Yalahimeh, and the Al Khalifeh, entered into a mutual compact or alliance, and still further strengthened their position, where Koweit now stands, by inter-marriage with other clans, with a view to being able to resist the attacks of their powerful neighbours, the Beni Khalid Arabs.* They intended to follow the occupation of agriculturists and merchants, and to share the profits equally. The Beni Subah were to exercise the functions of Government; the Yalahimeh carried on the maritime, while the Khalifeh managed the mercantile branch of their small commonwealth.

In the course of fifty years, the new settlement had attained a very high degree of prosperity. The accumulation of wealth seems to have led the mercantile branch of the league to wish to secede from the original compact, in order that they might enjoy, and add to, their acquired riches without sharing them.

Accordingly, Khalifeh bin Mahommed, Sheikh of the Al Khalifeh, represented to the other two tribes the openings for trade and the advantages generally of forming a settlement on some spot in that part of the Persian Gulf which is close to the most productive pearl fisheries.

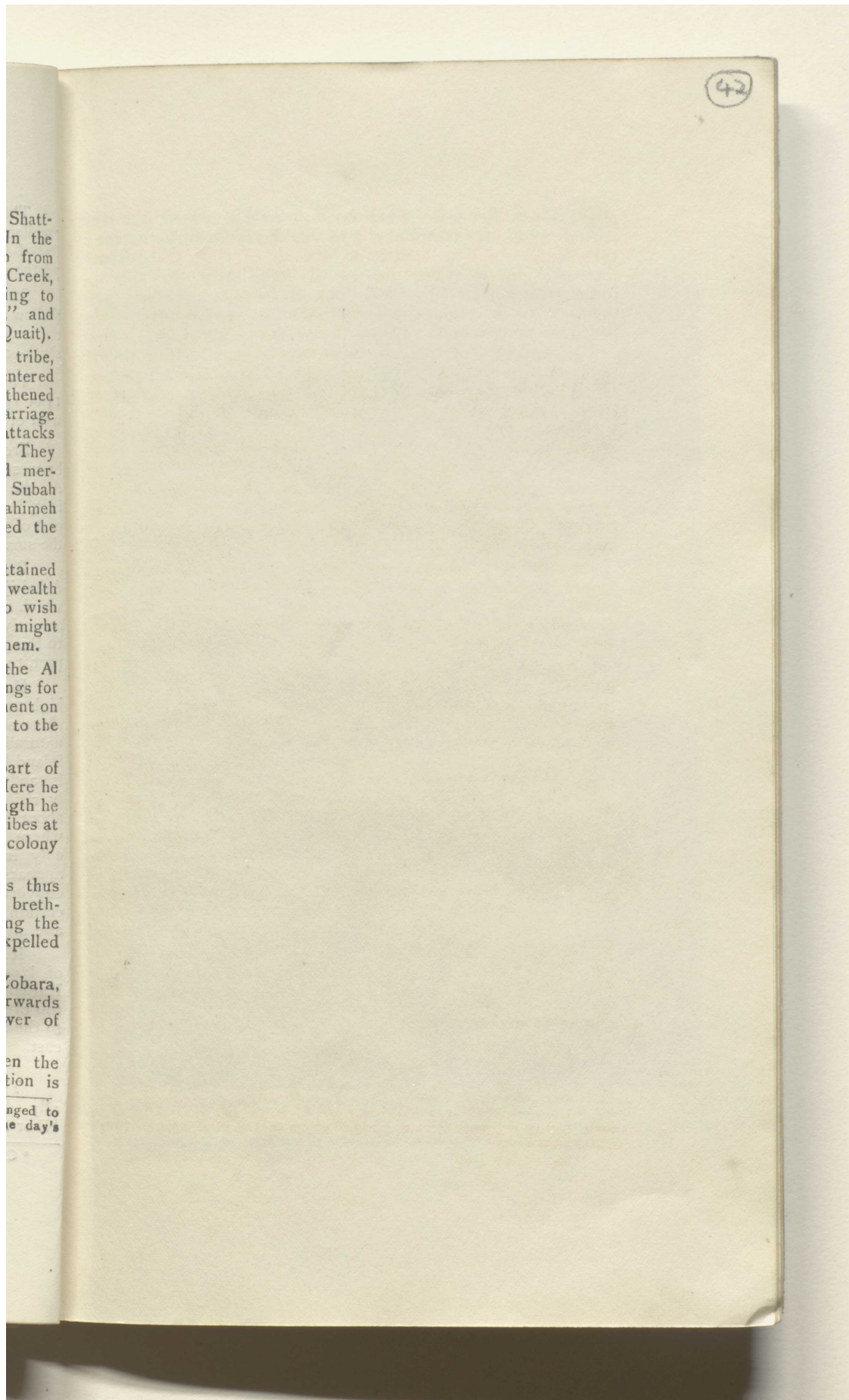
The Sheikh was permitted to leave Koweit with part of his tribe, and settled at Zobara, on the Bahrein coast. Here he was gradually joined by the rest of his tribe and at length he completely severed his connection with the other two tribes at Koweit, and established the independence of his new colony at Zobara.

The Al Subah, the more powerful of the two clans thus left at Koweit, soon felt the absence of their commercial brethren, in a deficiency in their finances, and after first refusing the Al Yalahimeh their share of the revenue, ultimately expelled them from the port and town of Koweit.

The expelled tribe settled close to their brethren of Zobara, and devoted themselves to piracy, but were shortly afterwards annihilated by the Al Khalifeh tribe, the influence and power of which rapidly increased.

Friendly relations appear to have continued between the two remaining clans, once associated at Koweit; for mention is

* The whole of the coast districts, Adan, El Hasa, and Katr belonged to these Beni Khalid, some of whom occupied points on the coast only one day's march from Koweit.



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'Koweit: A Report' [42v] (93/140)



Photogravure.

Survey of India Offices, Calcutta, August 1903.

MUHAMMAD BIN SAUD, SHEIKH OF KOWEIT, AND HIS YOUNGEST SON, NASER

made of a fleet from Koweit, appearing at Bahrein (in 1782-83) in support of their old confederates, the Al Khalifeh, against the Persians.

It is difficult to trace the varying policy of the different tribes, during a period so unsettled as was the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th Century, when almost every tribe's hand was against his neighbour. While the Al Uttubis of the Bahrein neighbourhood are constantly in evidence, in the Government Records, in connection with the Persians, Muscat, the Wahabis, Joasmis, and the piracy question generally, Koweit seems to have pursued the even tenor of its way, and the Al-Subah tribe to have continued to prosper and to increase their power and possessions.

In 1813-14, Koweit and Bahrein were the only exceptions to the general subjection of the whole of the Arabian coast to the Wahabi Amir, Saood.

A barren shore with brackish water,* backgrounded by desert, inhabited only by wandering Bedouin tribes, was hardly a promising site, and a settlement thus made by ex-pirates was scarcely a more promising beginning, and yet on this spot there has sprung up a clean well-built and active town, to which Persian and Arab merchants have been attracted by equity of rule and freedom of trade.

The present Sheikh, Mubarak, is the sixth of his line, and is now about 59 years of age. A fine tall, dignified man, almost a typical Patriarch, good-looking too, in spite of being marked by small-pox; while his keen black eyes show marked intelligence, as well as a considerable amount of astuteness.

The fourth Sheikh, Subah by name, had five sons,—Muhammad, Jarrah, Mubarak, Ahmad, and Jabr. On his father's death, the eldest son, Muhammad, succeeded to the Sheikh-dom. He seems, however, to have been on bad terms with all his brothers, with the exception of Jarrah, who was a son of the same mother. At all events, Mubarak and Jabr conspired against the two elder brothers and—a not altogether uncommon occurrence in the family history of Arab tribes—assassinated them in May 1896, and Mubarak reigned in his eldest brother's stead.

The latter had two sons† who fled and placed themselves under the protection of Mohammed-Ibn-Rashid, who had wrested Nejd from the descendants of the Wahabi chief, Feysul-bin-Turki.

Such frequent mention will have to be made of Ibn Rashid whose position and influence is so closely connected and, in a sense, derived from the Wahabi power of Nejd, that it is neces-

* The town now draws its supply of drinking water from wells, two miles inland.

† Khalid-ibn-Mohammed and Saood-ibn-Mohammed.

Survey of India Office, Calcutta, August 1903.

Photogravure.

sary, in order to understand the connection of events, to sketch, as briefly as may be, the rise and development of that strange phenomenon the Wahabi movement and power.

It was about 1740-50 that Sheikh Mohammed, son of Abdul Wahab of Basrah, disgusted with the laxity and corruption of Turkish Islam, first started the puritanical movement which has ever since borne his father's name. The Wahabis carried their victorious propaganda far and wide. They first came into contact with the British Government as the custodian of the peace of the Persian Gulf. From their stronghold in the Nejd, 250 miles inland from El Katr, and from their capitals Dereiyah and Riadh, on that mountainous plateau, they soon made their influence felt along the maritime littoral and, at different times in the 19th Century, subjugated or extorted tribute from almost every Arab tribe from El Katif to Cape Mussandim, and from Cape Mussandim to Ras al Hadd.

It was in 1787 that the first mention of the Wahabis is found in the Bombay Records. The British Government was careful not to involve itself in hostile proceedings against the Wahabi Amir. By 1818 Ibrahim Pasha, marching from Egypt, had captured the Wahabi capital and razed it to the ground, had sent the Wahabi Amir in chains to Constantinople, where he was decapitated, and had apparently stamped out the heretical and schismatic authority. Within a few years, however, Turki, son of the deceased Amir, had expelled the Egyptian Governor, was proclaimed Sultan of Nejd, and by a judicious payment of a small tribute to Egypt, retained the throne, till murdered in 1831.

His son and successor, Feysul, was at first rash enough to repudiate the Egyptian Suzerainty; whereupon Nejd was again invaded, El Hasa and Katif temporarily occupied by Egyptian troops, and himself banished to Egypt. In 1843 he managed to return, and from then till his death in 1865 continued to rule in Nejd, and to push his sovereignty far and wide among the surrounding tribes.

Four times in this period, the vigorous remonstrances of Great Britain, and the apparition of a naval force off the threatened ports, whether of Bahrein or Muscat, were required to compel the retirement of the aggressive Sultan.

His son, Abdullah bin Feysul, succeeded him in 1865, and entered into an agreement with Great Britain not to molest the Arab tribes under British protection, particularly those of Muscat. A prolonged struggle ensued between Abdullah and his brother Saood, in which the latter was at first successful, but Abdullah, flying to Turkey, invoked that expedition from Baghdad which ended in the formal and permanent occupation of El Hasa by Turkey.

The conflict being renewed upon Saood's death in 1874, Abdullah ultimately regained the throne, and held it until 1886, when events occurred which heralded the rise of another power in Nejd.

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North-west of Nejd lies the mountainous district of Jebel Shammer, residence of the Arab tribe of that name, forming part of the Wahabi dominion.

It was in 1835 that one Abdullah ibn Rashid, with the aid of the Amir Feysul bin Turki, became Sheikh of the Shammer tribe, with his capital at the town of Hayil, and was appointed Muhafidh, or frontier governor, in dependence upon the central authority at Nejd. He died in 1846, but not before he had, by his great ability, laid the foundations of a power which has since swollen to such imposing dimensions in the hands of his even abler son.

Tilal, the eldest of the family, at first succeeded his father as Sheikh of Jebel Shammer, and gradually, but surely, established his independence of the Riyadh ruler. Tormented, however, by an internal malady, he shot himself in 1867. His younger brother, Mutaab ibn Abdullah, who succeeded him, enjoyed but a brief rule, being murdered by his nephews, the sons of Tilal, in the following year. One of these, Bander by name, then assumed the Government.

Meanwhile, the third and youngest son of the old Abdullah, namely, Mohammed ibn Rashid, who had been residing at Riyadh as a fugitive, and had been kindly treated there by the Amir Abdullah ibn Feysul, was permitted to return to Hayil. Commencing by stabbing to death his nephew Bander with his own hand, he then killed the five remaining children of his brother Tilal, and became undisputed Amir and Muhafidh in Hayil in 1868. During the next eighteen years he consolidated his authority; acquiring more and more of the real power, he even engaged in intermittent acts of hostility against the Amir of Nejd, to whom, however, he never actually renounced his allegiance.

At last the chance, for which he had waited so long, presented itself. In 1886 the Amir Abdullah bin Feysul was seized and imprisoned by two of his nephews, one of whom usurped the throne. Mohammed ibn Rashid, still wearing the mask of the loyal subject, marched from Hayil against Riyadh, deposed the pretender, and reinstated Abdullah, although his next proceeding was to carry the Amir away with him to Hayil, leaving a younger brother as deputy governor of Nejd under an agent appointed by himself.

The three rebellious nephews of Abdullah were put to death, and the fourth was detained at Hayil, by Ibn Rashid, along with his uncle, the old Amir, to whom the successful pretender diplomatically conceded the spiritual title of Imam of Nejd.

Mohammed ibn Rashid was, however, the *de facto* ruler, not only of Nejd and Jebel Shammer, but of the whole of the Arabian desert from the confines of Syria to the Nefud, and from the borders of Koweit to Mecca. Though he waded to his position through the blood of his own kin, Mohammed ibn

Rashid's Government is understood to have been both popular and just; while he showed great diplomatic ability in the manner in which he humoured the vanity of Turkey by professing himself the vassal of the Porte. By this purely nominal act of obeisance he secured immunity from interference from El Hasa. He presented one of the most striking personalities of the east. In spite of futile efforts on the part of the old reigning family to throw off the yoke of Ibn Rashid, he continued to rule in Nejd with practically undisputed authority, until his death in 1897.

He was succeeded by his nephew, Abdul Aziz ibn Rashid.

To resume the thread of events immediately connected with Koweit, an appeal had also been made by the sons of the murdered Sheikh of Koweit to a maternal uncle, one Sheikh Yusuf bin Ibrahim* of Dura on the Shatt-el-Arab, as well as to the ruler of Nejd. Towards the end of 1897, Yusuf made preparations to attack Koweit in alliance with Sheikh Jasim bin Thani,† of El Katr. At the same time (*i.e.*, in December 1897) a Turkish force was reported as concentrating in the neighbourhood of Basrah, and the Turkish corvette *Zohar* proceeded to El Katr, with the Nakib of Basrah on board. Whether this official exerted his influence with Sheikh Jasim, to dissuade him from taking serious action or not, is not very clear but nothing of importance appears to have occurred.

Meanwhile, in July 1897, Saoud, second son of the late Sheikh of Koweit, appealed to the British Consul at Basrah for British protection. The Foreign Office at home, however, did not consider any interference on our part to be desirable unless British interests, or the peace of the Gulf, were endangered. In November 1897, H.M.S. *Pigeon* visited Koweit and reported that Mubarak was most friendly and was desirous of British protection. Both factions thus showed themselves anxious for our protection, and both cordially hated the Turk.

* Mubarak's brother married Yusuf's sister, but owing to family quarrel Yusuf had been ejected from Koweit, and was not permitted to trade there.

† Curzon describes Jasim bin Thani as "a mischievous and disorderly character; by the British Government he is regarded as one of the independent maritime chieftains pledged to preserve the maritime peace of the Gulf, and possessing a claim upon our support if he does so, and upon our retribution if he does not—a view which rests upon a definite agreement not to commit any breach of the maritime peace, which was signed by his predecessor, independently of the six Trucial Chiefs, in 1868. In 1871, however, thinking to escape this obligation Sheikh Jasim placed himself under Turkish protection and adopted the Turkish flag. The Ottoman Government gladly appointed him Kaimakam, or Deputy Governor, and placed a Turkish guard of 250 regulars, a coal depôt and a steam launch at El Bida, the principal port of the Katr coast. Turkish claims of sovereignty over the El Katr Cape are not admitted by the British Government. Sheikh Jasim is quite ready to coquet with any power that will forward his ambitions. His son having been killed in one of his encounters with the tribe of Abu Dhabi, he appealed for aid to the Turks—when he met with no response from his patrons, he invoked the assistance of Ibn Rashid, of Nejd, an alliance for which, had it been granted, he would have had to pay the price of a future tributary

The new Amir of Nejd, Abdul Aziz ibn Rashid, lost no time in commencing operations against Mubarak, ostensibly in the interests of the dispossessed son of the late Sheikh of Koweit, but chiefly, no doubt, with a view to his own aggrandisement.

In January 1898, he advanced to within three marches of Koweit, but disturbances among Bedouin tribes in his rear caused him to retire hastily to Nejd. From that time to this, however, there appears to have existed a standing quarrel, and a chronic state of war between Mubarak and Ibn Rashid; it may be useful, therefore, to follow the course of events, as closely as may be, though the labour of doing so is considerable, and the difficulty of ascertaining the truth is extreme. The accounts of fights known to have taken place are usually in direct contradiction, both factions claiming an overwhelming victory, and ascribing a correspondingly crushing defeat to their adversaries.

Probably the interval between Ibn Rashid's retirement to his own country, and his next advance against Koweit, was occupied in consolidating his power in his own dominions. In the autumn of 1900, he once more advanced against Koweit, but first turned his attack against the Muntafik tribe (near Zobeir and north of Basrah), old allies of Mubarak's. In a fight which took place near Zobeir, in October, he was at first partially successful, but in a counter-attack he was severely enough handled to make him apply for Turkish support and reinforcement as being a vassal of the Porte.

The Turkish authorities are believed to have ordered him to desist from military operations; but Mubarak, soon after, heard that he was advancing on Koweit with a force estimated at 20,000 men, of whom, however, some 1,000 men only had modern rifles.

That same month, October 1900, Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman bin Feysul, a descendant of the old reigning family of Nejd, is said to have engaged Ibn Rashid, presumably after the latter had withdrawn into the interior from his operations against the Muntafik tribe, which have just been mentioned.

Abdul Aziz bin Feysul called upon Mubarak for his support and co-operation, a request which Mubarak, probably nothing loth, complied with, by despatching a force of 10,000 men, believed to have been mostly armed with Martinis, under two of his sons, of which he took command himself a little later. In the early part of 1901, he seems to have had a series of successes, driving the forces of Ibn Rashid west and south-west until, by the middle of February, he occupied the capital, Hayil. It is said that the Arab forces of Ibn Rashid were badly armed and could make no effective stand against the better armed men of Koweit, and their rifle fire.

Mubarak installed Abdul Aziz bin Feysul as Amir of Nejd, to which the latter has some hereditary right, being descended from the Wahabi chiefs who ruled over Central Arabia, with Nejd as their head-quarters, until they were ousted by the uncle of the present Ibn Rashid.

Mubarak, it seems, while on the march back to Koweit, his troops short of ammunition after some months of campaigning in the interior, was ambuscaded not far from Hayil and his force was undoubtedly somewhat severely handled. The accounts of this reverse, however, appear to have been much exaggerated. Mubarak himself arrived back at Koweit on March 31st, 1901. The defeat was partly due to treachery; a tribe which formed part of his force, going over to Ibn Rashid's side, during the fight.

The young Wahabi, newly installed Amir, hearing of this reverse fortified himself in his new capital, while Sheikh Sadun, chief of the Muntafik tribe, raided in rapid succession several large caravans of Ibn Rashid's on the main routes between Hayil and the Euphrates, in retaliation for the repulse of his friend and ally, Mubarak.

During the remainder of the year, 1901, the following events took place, which owing to their recent date, and varied character, may perhaps be more properly considered as political, rather than historical, and as such must form the subject matter for a separate chapter.

POLITICAL.

In August 1901, a Turkish gunboat arrived in Koweit Bay; it does not appear very clearly with what precise object, but her movements appeared suspicious, and it seemed evident, that some action (it may have been merely the landing of stores with perhaps a few men as guards) was contemplated by the Turkish authorities which might have been referred to later, as constituting protection and as being inconsistent with Mubarak's claim of independence.

The British Government does not admit the claim of the Turks to sovereignty over Koweit. Mubarak asserts that no ruler of Koweit has ever shown fealty,* in any way, to the Sultan of Turkey. His dealings with Great Britain have been direct, and those of an independent ruler. Accordingly, the commander of H.M.S. *Perseus* informed the commander of the Turkish ship that he could not be

* Palgrave distinctly says that the Sheikh of Koweit, at the time he was writing (1863), had refused the demands of tribute and submission, made by the Turkish authorities of Basrah and Baghdad. "Thus escaping the decline and dissolution almost inevitable for all seaports under Ottoman administration."

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permitted to land any men, and that in the event of his attempting to do so, such attempt would, if necessary, be prevented by force. The Turkish gunboat, on this, withdrew from Koweit, and returned whence she came, to Basrah.

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The inference that this action on the part of the Turks was intended to disturb the *status quo* of Koweit as an independent state, or was even planned in conjunction with Ibn Rashid, with a view to Mubarak's undoing, is somewhat strengthened by the fact that, scarcely a month later, Ibn Rashid himself advanced to within a short distance of the town of Koweit, raided some camels and even looted certain outlying houses. He then moved to Safwan, the next stage on the direct road to Basrah, about 16 hours' journey from Koweit; there was considerable alarm in Koweit and Sheikh Mubarak asked for the presence of additional British ships in Koweit Bay—a request which was complied with.

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It was within a few weeks of this incident that the Nakib of Basrah visited Koweit and handed to Mubarak a telegram purporting to have emanated from Constantinople, to the effect that Mubarak's assertion of his independence was disapproved by the Sultan, and that punishment must ensue, unless he made his submission to the Turkish Government.

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To this communication, Mubarak, after consultation with the Senior Naval Officer, replied to the effect that his relations with the Turkish Government were the same as they had always been. Later, on a representation being made by our Ambassador at Constantinople, this telegram and the action of the Nakib of Basrah were disavowed by the Porte.

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Early in December, however, the same Nakib again appeared on the scene, in the Turkish gunboat *Zohaf*, with a telegram demanding that Sheikh Mubarak should at once embark on board the *Zohaf*, and repair to Constantinople, as a member of the Council of State, and threatening his forcible removal from Koweit, in case of non-compliance with this order.

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Mubarak obtained three days' grace in which to consider his reply, and H.M.S. *Sphinx* was despatched to Bushire, to report this latest development, by telegram, to the Foreign Office. No sooner had the *Sphinx* left Koweit Bay, however, than the three days' grace was withdrawn and Mubarak was peremptorily pressed for an immediate answer. The Sheikh, under such pressure as this, represented to the Senior Naval Officer that he felt that he had no option but to comply with the Turkish demands unless he was assured of British support. The Senior Naval Officer formally forbade his taking action, or replying thus under compulsion, until an answer could be received to the communication sent to Bushire. In order to strengthen the Sheikh's hands, and to support him in his refusal to give the immediate answer demanded, a some-

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what thinly veiled threat of bombardment in case of non-compliance with the advice given was hinted at. Mubarak accordingly declined to comply with the demand for an immediate answer, until the three days' grace originally agreed upon had elapsed, and the Turkish officials left Koweit in their gunboat.

The reply received from the Foreign Office a few days later was to the effect that though it had previously been agreed that the *status quo* should be maintained, it now appeared that Mubarak was being subjected to threats. In these circumstances Sheikh Mubarak was to be informed that he would be supported, and that the British Government would not tolerate any attack being made on him, by land or sea. The Senior Naval Officer also received instructions to defend Koweit, by force, if necessary; landing, however, was deprecated, except under circumstances of the greatest gravity.

The situation during the last days of 1901 was, therefore, somewhat critical. Ibn Rashid's presence, with a considerable force, at Safwan (the nearest wells to Koweit on the main road to Basrah) was serious enough; still Mubarak professed to be quite able to cope with Ibn Rashid alone. He more than once, rather quaintly, remarked in my hearing that he could "drink the Beni Rashid as he would drink water." But the manifest hostility of the Turks, their anxiety to assume or assert authority over Koweit, as well as their apparent *mala fides*, all led to the inference that they might support Ibn Rashid in any further operations he might undertake against Mubarak.

If, as appeared probable, Ibn Rashid was acting in collusion with the Turkish officials of Basrah, his presence at Safwan was a grave menace to the security of Koweit. At the same time, a considerable number of Turkish troops were known to be echeloned along the river between Baghdad and Basrah, though no reliable information could be obtained as to their numbers. Even should the Turks not openly support Ibn Rashid with regular troops, it seemed possible that they might do so by putting "irregulars" at his disposal, or by aiding him with supplies, ammunition and the sinews of war generally.

Meanwhile, Mubarak with his forces, was encamped at Jehara near the western extremity of Koweit Bay. The Sheikh attaches great importance to this place, which lies some fifteen miles nearer Basrah than the town of Koweit itself, and is therefore more open to a sudden attack, or raid, from that direction. Moreover, owing to the flat shelving shore, Jehara could not be so effectively supported by naval fire. Mubarak, therefore, had some cause for anxiety, especially for Jehara.

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He repeatedly asked that British troops might be sent for his protection, and at times expressed himself as sceptical as to whether the presence of British ships alone* could secure the defence of his territory. In short, the situation at the end of 1901 was one which could not be tolerated, or permitted to continue.

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On the 4th January 1902, a wire from the Foreign Office stated that the Porte disavowed the measures taken by the officials at Basrah, and that the British Ambassador at Constantinople had informed the Porte that if the Turkish Government could not control their own officials, the British Government might find it impossible to acquiesce in the continuance of the agreement as to the maintenance of the *status quo*.

The further course of events during 1902, as far as may be gathered from the fragmentary accounts which filter through from the wilds of Arabia to the outer world, appear to have been as follows.

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In the early weeks of the new year, the legitimist pretender, so to call him, Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman bin Feysul al Saood, recovered Riyadh, the capital of his forefathers, from Ibn Rashid, who, it will be remembered, is the nephew of the usurper. The latter is said to have collected a large force and to have moved against Riyadh in the autumn; accounts of the result of this campaign are contradictory, as usual, but the most recent reports from reliable sources point to the fact that Ibn Rashid was defeated with heavy loss.

Whether Mubarak actively took part in these operations, and if so to what extent, does not appear altogether clear; but in any case, if it be the fact that his old enemy, Ibn Rashid, has sustained another reverse, it cannot but have a satisfactory influence with regard to the stability of Koweit.

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It would seem from information received during the course of 1903 that the Turks, foiled in their attempt to obtain a footing in Koweit, at the expense of Koweit's independence, have been taking action at various points, apparently with a view to extending their *de facto* claims over neighbouring districts. Rumour says that Turkish troops have occupied Safwan, Mungassir, and the island of Bubiyan.†

* The following of His Majesty's ships were in Koweit Bay at the time:—
Pomone, Sphinx, and Redbreast.

† It is believed that the Turkish garrisons at these places are 25, and 20 men infantry, at Safwan and Mungassir, respectively, and a few Engineers at Bubiyan.

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A rather remarkable story appeared in the *Novoe Vremya* of 19th February 1903, to the effect that a scheme of defence for the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab and Koweit Bay had been drawn up by a German officer and approved by the Sultan. This scheme includes, it is said, the erection of forts on Bubiyan Island on the mainland at the entrance to Khor Subiya, and on the promontories Ras al Arz and Ras Asheirij. The cost of the armaments of these fortifications is, it is said, to be borne by Germany.

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It is also said that Turkish artillery formed part of Ibn Rashid's force during recent operations against Riyadh, already mentioned. This report, however, requires confirmation.

An incident, disturbing to the peace of Koweit, occurred as recently as September 1902, in which the full share of responsibility of local Turkish officials has yet to be determined. It appears that Yusuf-bin-Ibrahim, of Dura,* already mentioned as being on bad terms with Mubarak, organised a surprise attack on Koweit. Two dhows, containing 150 men all armed with rifles, set out from Dura to act in conjunction, it is believed, with another party moving by land. H.M.S. *Lapwing*, on hearing of this project, proceeded at once to Koweit, and found the whole town in arms to repel the anticipated attack, which, however, was not made; probably because Koweit was known to be prepared. Next day H. M. S. *Lapwing* gave chase to two dhows which, in the opinion of the commander, were undoubtedly those in question; the armed crews, however, after opening fire on the ship's boats, made good their escape by running their dhows ashore and abandoning them.

Foreign Relations.

Other powers have evinced, within the last few years, an interest in Koweit, and its territory.

† Russia.

In August 1900, Mr. S. N. Siromyatnikoff, a Russian journalist of some repute, paid a visit to Koweit of which he subsequently published an account in the *Novoe Vremya*. He appears to have stayed at Koweit several days and to have had more than one interview with the Sheikh. During the last days of December 1901, a letter from Mubarak addressed to Mr. Siromyatnikoff in Moscow, is known to have passed through the post.

In December 1901, the Russian cruiser *Variag* paid a visit to Koweit. The Russian Consul at Bushire was on board who, according to Mubarak's account, informed him that Russia and Great Britain were entirely in accord as to maintaining the independence of Koweit, and that if Mubarak wished for help he had only to apply to the Russian Consul at Bushire. A suggestion was also made that he should write, personally, to the Tzar. Mubarak's attitude during this interview, according to his own account, was most correct; he declined the invitation to write to the Tzar, and replied that he was in no need of assistance as he already had a friendship with the British. It may be noted that in order to obtain this interview, the Consul, with

* Dura, a village on the right or Turkish bank of the Shatt-el-Arab, in the Villayat of Basrah, about ten miles from the mouth of the river above Fao.

Recent information tends to show that Yusuf-bin-Ibrahim has withdrawn from Dura, to the Jebel Shammar country.

† Towards the end of 1897, the Political Resident in Turkish Arabia reported the existence of rumours to the effect that Russia was seeking to acquire a coal station at Koweit.

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six officers of the *Variag*, rode out from Koweit to Jehara (18 miles), where they spent the night as Mubarak's guests, and left some presents behind them on their departure.

The Russian Consuls at Baghdad and Bushire have visited Koweit during the course of the year, 1902. They both showed themselves anxious to impress upon Mubarak the advantages of Russian friendship and protection. The Russian cruiser *Askold* and the Russian cruiser *Boyarin* in company with the French ship *Infernet* went there still more recently.

In January 1900, a German mission, composed of the German Consul General at Constantinople, the Chief Engineer of the Baghdad Railway (with certain technical assistants), visited Koweit in connection with the proposed selection of Kathama as the terminus of that railway. Mubarak declared himself unable to grant a concession of any part of his territory for this purpose.

Germany.

A word must be said as to the relationship of Koweit with Turkey. Mubarak asserts his entire independence, and the British Government have on many occasions insisted on the unsubstantial character of the Sultan's authority and have claimed for the Sheikh a large measure of practical independence. Still the fact remains that there have been relations between the two states, which, however, on the whole do not seem to be entirely inconsistent with the present claim to independence. Going back some thirty years, Mubarak's account is as follows :—

Turkey.

Feysul, ruler of Nejd, Bahrein, El Hasa, Katr, and Katif, had four sons—Abdullah, Muhammed, Saood and Abdur Rahman. After Feysul's death, Abdullah succeeded, but Saood possessed himself of El Katr, and Katif, and made war against Abdullah. The latter appealed to the Wali of Baghdad, Midhat Pasha, for assistance in 1871. At the same time, Saood had seized certain Koweit ships at El Hasa, and had returned an evasive answer to the remonstrances of the then Sheikh of Koweit, Muhammed.

At this juncture, the Wali of Baghdad offered Turkish troops to operate against El Hasa and Katif. After taking counsel, it was decided that Koweit would co-operate with Abdullah and the Turks against Saood. The Sheikh of Koweit provided 300 ships for transport, and put himself at the head of 7,000 mounted men and 12,000 camels. In six days, he defeated Saood, and occupied the capital of El Hasa, with the support of the Turkish troops. Sheikh Muhammed remained in El Hasa eleven months, pacifying the country; after which he returned to Koweit. Midhat Pasha, pleased with the way things had gone, obtained for Sheikh Muhammed a yearly grant of 150 tons of dates (=perhaps £600), which was paid regularly until 1898, since when the payment has not been made.*

*M. Siromyatnikoff says that he was shown a copy of the "firman" under which this grant was made, in which the Sheikh was described as "Sheikh of Koweit."

Koweit flies the Turkish flag, and has done so for a number of years. Sheikh Mubarak explains this circumstance by claiming that the flag he flies, though similar in design to that of Turkey, is his own and that its similarity to the Turkish flag is fortuitous; or, at the most, that while other Arab tribes have flags of their own design, his tribe adopted the crescent on the red ground as a religious emblem only. He positively asserts that he flies the flag of his fathers, and has never received one from the Turkish Government, and has never regarded the use of his own flag as a sign of fealty to the Turk. Perhaps a more probable explanation would be that the use of the Turkish flag was adopted, years ago, for convenience by Koweit's shipping, especially in their trade with the Turkish ports in the Persian Gulf.

The present position of Koweit with regard to Great Britain may be said to have been defined by the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour, in his declaration in the House of Commons, on 21st April 1903, on the subject of the Baghdad railway. Mr. Balfour, on that occasion referred to Koweit as "within the territories of a Sheikh whom we have under our special protection, and with whom we have special treaties," and compared it with other parts of the Persian Gulf where we have no such "preferential advantages."

MILITARY FORCES OF KOWEIT.

Sheikh Mubarak estimates the strength of his available fighting force to be—

	Men.
(a) Fighting men in Koweit ...	19,000
(b) " " within 12 miles of Koweit ...	12,000
Total ...	31,000

It is to be feared, however, that these figures are scarcely to be relied on. Another estimate, which gives 6,080 men available in the town of Koweit itself, appears to be more likely to be accurate. It is even possible that Sheikh Mubarak himself has no very reliable data on which to base any close estimate of his armed following. With the exception of the inhabitants of Koweit and Jehara, and perhaps the tribesmen within a comparatively few miles of the Sheikh's capital, the adhesion of the wandering Bedouin tribes must be a variable as well as an important factor. Hence the importance of Jehara to Koweit, as a favourite grazing ground, and as such attracting Bedouins to allegiance to Koweit.

In the winter of 1901-02, a portion of the army was encamped just outside Jehara, where I had an opportunity of seeing them. The tents were neatly pitched, and the camp was clean and orderly. The tents were grouped round standards planted in the ground, with some appearance of organization.

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There were five or six such banners, or contingents, in camp, and the total numbers present were said to be 1,800 men. The force was turned out for inspection, when some 1,100 or 1,200 men, only, put in an appearance; but it is only fair, perhaps, to add that this parade was ordered at short notice, and there may therefore have been an abnormal number of absentees.

The men are fine, well set up, and mostly tall. They were all armed with Martini-Henry rifles, or carbines, and carried well-filled cartridge belts. The uniformity of their dress and equipment was very striking, and compared most favourably with the retainers (one can hardly dignify them with any more military designation) of the Sultan of Muscat. But fine men as they are, it is hard to believe that, as an armed force, they would do any good against any organized or disciplined troops, without European leading and training.

On the occasion of the review referred to, the troops paraded by contingents, of about 200 men each. There was much singing and barbaric "music" with tom-tom accompaniment, while the leaders danced a slow rhythmic waltz, in front of their respective companies. It is hard to take a force which is encouraged by a simulated epileptic fit, after aimless pirouetting, altogether very seriously, except when pitted against others like themselves.

From descriptions of some of the fights which have taken place between Mubarak's and Ibn Rashid's forces, it seems that their tactics, like everything else, are those of their forefathers. Palgrave describes the tactics of an Arab battle as being simple but not wholly devoid of skill. The cavalry come to the front and provoke the engagement, some one way and some another, but never straight for their opponents; a pretty display of horsemanship follows, with a dropping fire of matchlocks. Meanwhile the camels and their riders, who form the main body, remain behind in reserve. When the action has once become serious, which is the case so soon as blood has been shed on either side, the camels are made to kneel down, each becoming a kind of field work for two musketeers under his cover; the cavalry open out, and firing begins in good earnest, till flank attacks or an excess of confidence on one side or the other, bring on a general assault. Some fight on foot, some mounted, and the mêlé continues till one side gives way. The people of Nejd distinguish themselves from the rest of their Arab countrymen by preferring slaughter to booty; elsewhere two killed and three wounded is generally the outside.

Tactics.

TOWNS, &C.

The town of Koweit lies on a small projection, or tongue of land, (which terminates in Ras-al-Ajuza), on the southern shore of the great bay to which it gives its name. The town extends about a mile along the beach; it is provided with numerous substantial stone breakwaters, which form tidal harbours for native craft. The beach dries out to a considerable

distance, and landing when the tide is out is by no means a pleasant operation; ponies are taken out and are mounted from the boat, or failing this it would be necessary to wade for a considerable distance. At high water, however, the sea washes up to the front row of houses, and landing from boats, or any of the sea-walls, is an easy matter. It is a remarkably clean, well-built and prosperous looking town, with many solid stone houses, others being built of sun-dried brick. The bazar is broad and open, clean and busy. The town is surrounded by a low wall with towers, which, however, are not in a good condition for defence.

Outside the main gate, on the southern, or land, face there is a large suburb of mud huts, which is the point of arrival and departure for the caravans trading between Koweit and the interior. Here may be seen strings of camels, waiting for their loads, or having just got rid of them. Here, too, the Bedouins most do congregate, as they are not allowed to enter the town itself, armed. Hither they flock for trade and barter, pitch their tents on the wide open plain, and transact their business outside the gate, in this open-air bazar, while the Sheikh sits near by and looks on, in patriarchal fashion, at the busy scene. The population is estimated at approximately 30,000 souls, of whom some fifty are said to be Jews from Bushire, who have a synagogue of their own.

The town is said to contain about 3,000 houses, 500 shops, 3 caravanserais, 6 coffee houses, 3 schools, and 4 mosques, as well as numerous ware-houses and stores. There are no statistics or definite data available, but the growth and prosperity of the place may, perhaps, be inferred from the fact that about 30 new houses are said to be built, and 40 new shops opened, every year.

The following detailed estimate of the population of Koweit territory was furnished by Mubarak in 1901 :—

Fighting men in Koweit	...	19,000	
Old men and children	...	13,000	
Women	...	22,000	
			54,000 souls.
Fighting men in the district— (Within 10 miles of Koweit)	...	12,000	
Old men and children	...	9,000	
Women	...	14,000	
			35,000 souls.
TOTAL	...		89,000 souls.

There are no means of checking these figures, least of all those referring to the district outside Koweit itself, which must include many wandering tribes of Bedouins, and as such must be subject to considerable fluctuations. It is possible that at the time this estimate was furnished, the numbers of persons in

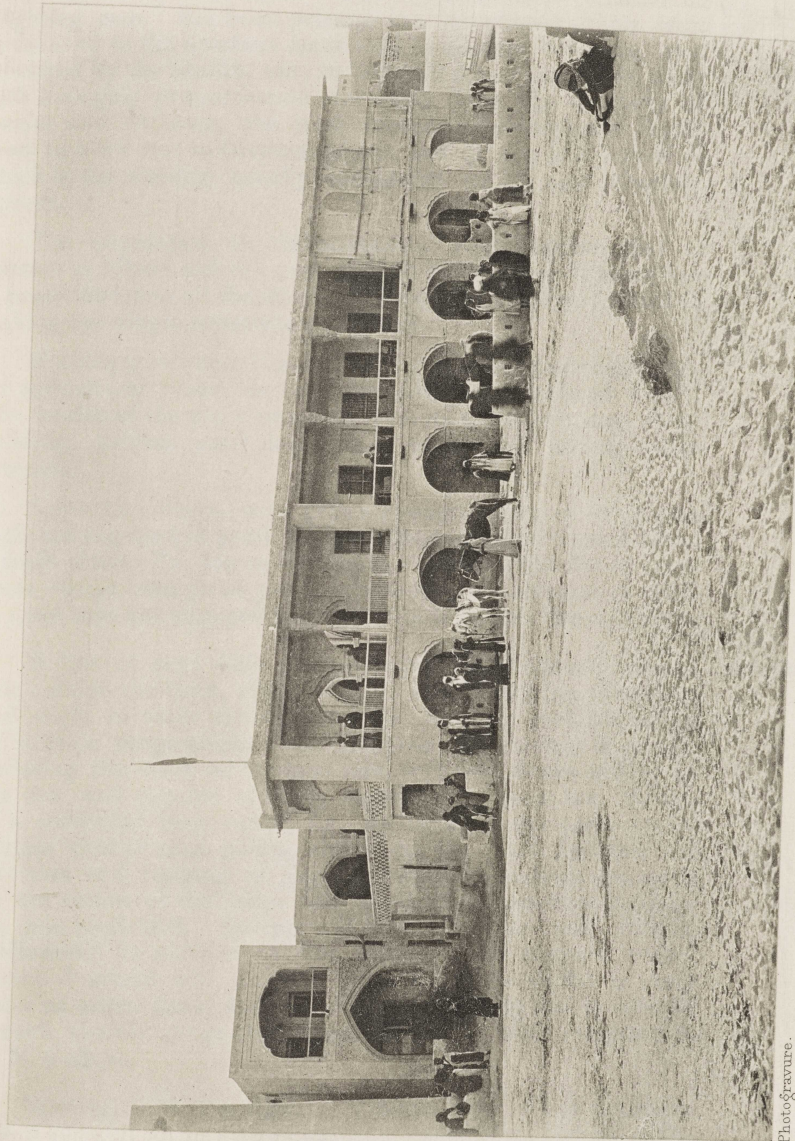
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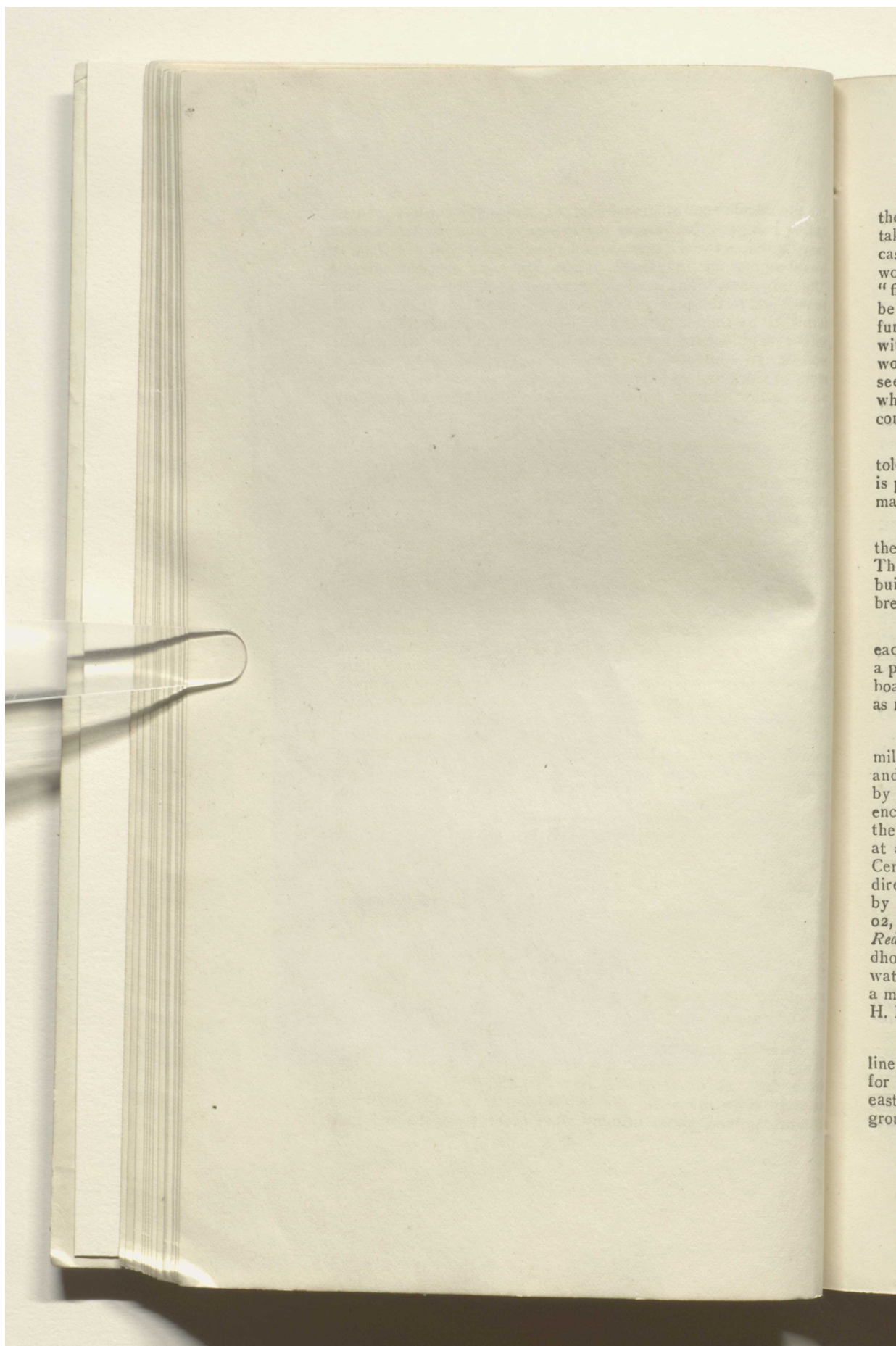


Photogravure.

Survey of India Offices, Calcutta, August 1903.

RESIDENCE OF SHEIKH OF KUWAIT.

'Koweit: A Report' [50v] (109/140)



the town had been increased by an influx of out-lying tribes taking refuge in Koweit, at the approach of Ibn Rashid; in this case, perhaps, the exaggeration may not be quite as great as it would appear at first sight. The apparent over-estimate of "fighting men" has been pointed out elsewhere; if this item be reduced to the numbers mentioned in another estimate, also furnished by the Sheikh, *viz.*, to between 6,000 and 7,000 men, with a roughly proportionate deduction from the numbers of women and children, the total number of inhabitants would seem to work out to between 30,000 and 40,000, the former of which is the number usually considered to be approximately correct.

The population is Mahommedan, Arab fashion, that is tolerant to others and not over rigid to themselves. Wahabi-ism is proscribed, and all the efforts of Nejd have never succeeded in making one single proselyte at Koweit.

Nothing grows near Koweit, save grass and camel-grazing; the agricultural resources may therefore be considered "*nil*". The wealth of the place proceeds from its trade, shipping, ship-building, fishing, pearl fishery, and to a small extent, cattle breeding.

Some 600 boats, with crews averaging from 15 to 40 men each, are engaged in pearl fishing. Each of these boats realises a profit of from Rs. 300 to Rs. 600 in a season. The size of these boats varies from 30 to 300 tons burden, while some of as much as 1,000 tons are engaged in trade with India and Mesopotamia.

A line of sand hills and somewhat broken ground, about a mile outside the town, affords a fairly satisfactory line of defence and might be made strong enough to resist any probable attack by suitable preparation. The line proposed extends in an arc, enclosing the town on the land side, with both flanks resting on the sea, and capable of being supported by naval fire, though at a somewhat long range, *i.e.*, up to 4,000 and 5,000 yards. Certain conspicuous points, shown on the chart, facilitate the direction and ranging of ship's fire from the stations indicated by the names of the ships told off to these positions in 1901-02, *viz.*:—H.M.S. *Sphinx*, H.M.S. *Pomone* and H.M.S. *Redbreast*. In addition to this strictly naval support, native dhows if armed with machine guns, would be useful in shoal water on either flank, and would be able to bring fire to bear at a much shorter range than those mentioned with reference to H. M.'s ships.

Defences.

Starting from the right, or western, flank of this defensive line, it runs (a) along certain existing excavations and old wells, for a distance of about 1,500 yards, (b) thence in a north-easterly direction along the outer edge of a strip of broken ground, broken apparently by what seem to be disused lime

pits*, offering cover, and capable of adaptation, and thence (c) trending more to the north, over level open ground, the line would have to be constructed, with a trench or otherwise, closing on the sea near Ras-al-Ajuza.

The extent of front thus taken up is, approximately, 6,000 yards and, as has been said, could be supported on both flanks by fire from ships, which would be able to bring a cross fire to bear, though at long range, in front of the centre of the position.

Such was the line of defence selected by the Senior Naval Officer in 1901, when it seemed possible that an attack might be imminent. It has therefore been described in some detail; and the following remarks occur, should it ever be deemed advisable to occupy it, for a deliberate defence of Koweit, against aggression.

(a) The line is a long one for the force likely to be available on any sudden emergency. The idea, when I was in Koweit, was that this line (approximately 6,000 yards long) should be occupied by 1,000 men extended at 6 yards interval, with 6,000 men in support and reserve. This was based, I believe, on an estimate that the number of men available in the town of Koweit itself amounted to 7,000 men; Sheikh Mubarak, however, later on modified his original estimate to 6,080 men only. This seems nearer the mark, and, even so, allowance must be made, I think, for exaggeration, or at all events for sick men, and skulkers, etc.; for even this smaller estimate must include practically every single man capable of bearing arms.

It seems to me, therefore, that the line is too extended, unless the force available be reinforced from outside. Except in the case of a mere raid, notice, long enough for such reinforcement to be carried out in time, is almost sure to be obtained. In the case of a sudden dash or raid, it would be preferable, in my opinion, to limit the defence to the immediate vicinity of the town, and utilize either the walls existing, or to throw up a hasty entrenchment to secure the 'suburb' already mentioned as lying immediately outside the main gate.

(b) The field of fire, and of view, from the line described is all that could be desired. The ground in front is absolutely open and devoid of all cover, every movement of an attacking force would be clearly visible to the defenders for miles.

(c) Similarly, owing to the almost dead level of the ground, there is a great lack of natural cover for the supports and reserves, especially in the centre of the position.

(d) It hardly seems in consonance with Arab traditions or tactics that they should be expected to be capable of fighting

* A report dated November 1839 states that "Stones, chunam, &c., for house building are plentiful; the latter in abundance, very cheap and of a superior kind." (Bombay Government Records, XXIV, page 5.)

cooly and collectedly, or much extended. Excitement, noise and vociferation, and the immediate neighbourhood of their fellows seem essential to them. They have neither discipline, training nor organisation enough to warrant trusting them to hold a position of this nature alone.

Their national idea of a fortified position or post does not extend beyond a wall, or a succession of towers, inside which they can crowd and shout. In short, it seems impossible to take them, as a fighting force altogether very seriously. The problem of the defence of Koweit seems to divide itself into two distinct parts, *i.e.*—

(1) If it be desired to defend Koweit against attack by a force armed, equipped and organised as a modern army, the position of the town gives considerable facilities for doing so, even with a minimum defensive force. Works and barbed wire can do much especially with naval support on both flanks

Works constructed on the general line indicated could, in a comparatively short time, be developed into a strong line of defence, which even an Arab force, if of sufficient strength, might reasonably be expected to be able to hold. On the other hand, to advise their holding such a line, with a small force, or before the necessary works had reached a forward state, *unless they were supported by disciplined and reliable troops*, would, in my opinion, be dangerous and might lead to disaster.

(2) If, however, the defence be against an Arab force only which in all probability would be unprovided with artillery, it would be as well to interfere as little as possible with their traditional methods, and confine the defence to the immediate vicinity of the town walls.

**Jehara*.—A village which lies some 15 miles west of Koweit, at the western extremity of the bay, about 1,200 yards inland from high water mark. It is well-built of sun-dried bricks and has a circumference of about a mile and a half. There are outlying patches of cultivation round the walls and many enclosures, containing wheat, date trees, lucerne, tamarisk, etc., surrounded by high mud walls, from 2 to 3 feet thick, and 8 or 10 feet high; most of these contain their own wells, the water of which is, as a rule, good for irrigation purposes only. The population may be estimated at from 200 to 300 souls.

There is an old fort (in disrepair) on the western frontage of the village, as well as a new one, built by the present Sheikh, clear of the south-eastern end of the village.

* Said to be a very ancient site; bricks and other remains are still found in the adjacent soil.

The Sheikh considers Jehara as essential to Koweit, as being the only locality with any agricultural capabilities or resources. Besides being a valuable source of supply, of grain, forage, dates, etc., it is the favourite grazing ground,* in the winter months, of Bedouin tribes who acknowledge Mubarak's rule. Even a temporary evacuation of this place would entail a great loss of prestige, and apart from permanent damage which might be done to date trees, etc., the Bedouin tribes would certainly go over to any enemy of Mubarak's who occupied Jehara.

In short, the Sheikh is very far from regarding Jehara as a mere dependency of Koweit; and expressed the strongest aversion to evacuating it, in order to withdraw his troops in time for an effective defence of Koweit itself. He even maintained that if Jehara were evacuated, even temporarily, Koweit itself alone would be valueless to him. With some astuteness, he pointed out that if Jehara were abandoned, it would imply the occupation of Kathama also, *i.e.*, the point supposed to be selected for the terminus of the proposed German railway.

This attitude of the Sheikh, as to the extreme importance of Jehara, was first clearly indicated at an interview at which I was fortunate enough to be present. His view appears to be not altogether unreasonable, and is one of considerable importance in connection with the problem of the defence of Koweit territory, as a whole, and of the nature of the support necessary to maintain its integrity.

Unfortunately, for the Sheikh, Jehara would be untenable in the event of a deliberate attack being delivered, by a force in possession of artillery, unless its defence was undertaken on a larger scale than appears probable under present circumstances. No defence of the village could be satisfactory unless the Al-Aghthi line of hills to the north-west were occupied; as from these heights there is entire command over Jehara at a range of 4,000—5,000 yards. Owing to the shoal nature of this head of the bay, it would be impossible for any fleet to effectively aid the defence; the range would not be less than 5,000 yards. Even if the attack were made by Arabs unprovided with artillery, the effect of fire from ships could hardly be more than "moral," at most; and owing to the entirely open and level desert country, the attack might be made from any direction; if from the south-west, besides threatening the communications of Jehara with Koweit, the attacking force would avoid coming under naval fire at all.

On the other hand, Jehara is on the direct road, from Basrah to Koweit, and it might, in conceivable circumstances, be advisable to occupy and hold Jehara for a time. But in this case the danger would be that an untrained Arab garrison might probably

* Colonel Pelly (1866) alludes to the "fine pasturage grounds between Zobeir, Jehara, and the Shatt-el-Arah."

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hold on too long, or be deceived into believing that the attack had failed, while their flank was turned and an attacking force directed on Koweit itself. The absolute openness of the country to movements in all directions would in this respect undoubtedly increase the difficulty of defence, and might easily lead to disaster.

Should the consideration of Jehara's proximity to Kathama ever make it expedient to support Koweit's independence at this point, it seems to me that no effective support can be given, supposing diplomatic representations to have failed, short of landing troops.

ADMINISTRATION.

The government is patriarchal, even as the Sheikh himself is the living presentment of one's idea of the biblical patriarchs. A big dinner is prepared every day for any wanderers and strangers who may wish to share it; the one and only restriction is that arms must be left at the gate.

The Sheikh exercises political and the Kazi judicial functions. Punishment is rarely inflicted, and there seems to be but little governmental interference with the liberty of the subject, in any respect, and to be little need for it.

No tribute is, or ever has been, paid either to the Amir of Nejd, or to the Turkish Government. Nor is tribute exacted from other tribes. Save small "offerings" at the gate, or from merchants, there is no system of Customs, and trade is entirely free.

Thus under a succession of common sense rulers, with a policy wisely originated and systematically pursued, an Arab band of pirates now appear as the masters of a thriving free-trade port. One cannot avoid a feeling of astonishment at finding such a political and commercial structure in such a region, and the work of such hands.

The currency is cosmopolitan. As elsewhere in Arabia, the Maria Theresa dollar, "Real," (the value of which is about Rs. 1-8) may be considered the standard medium of exchange; while Persian Krans and Turkish copper coins are also met with. English sovereigns are occasionally to be found, and the Indian rupee is not despised. Bills can be obtained on Basrah, Bushire, and Bombay, and also, it is said, on the capital of Nejd.

Currency.

RESOURCES.

Agricultural resources there are none, except at Jehara, where a certain small amount of cereals and green fodder, as well as dates, are cultivated, and disposed of in Koweit. During the winter months, there is some sparse grazing, enough for the

needs of the Bedouins' herds of frugal goats, even on the apparently arid plain round the town of Koweit; but the best grazing grounds, much frequented by Bedouins, are those around Jehara, Kathama Bay, and thence along the northern shore, between the "Al-Aghati" heights and the water's edge. No sign of cultivation can be seen on the higher ground north and north-west of these heights.

The resources of Koweit are entirely commercial. Its geographical position as the only seaport for the Jebel Shammer district of Central Arabia, as well as its mercantile aspect, in this respect, has been compared with Trieste's somewhat similar position with regard to Austria.

Palgrave remarks on this similarity, and considered it to conduce to a continuance of the good relations existing in his day (1862-63) between the Sheikhs of Koweit and those of Hayil. This, however, has not been the case, since Sheikh Mubarak's accession. The loss of trade, due to the disturbed state of things which has obtained of late years, must have been considerable, and the anxiety of Ibn Rashid to possess himself of Koweit, or at the least to set up a Sheikh there friendly and subordinate to himself, is easily understood. The natural advantages of this seaport, for the import of rice, cloth, and other wares, necessities of life, even for the simple wants of the Arabs, as well as for the export of horses, sheep, wool, and the like products of the interior, are evident and lasting.

Bedouins bring horses, cattle, mutton, milk, butter, &c., which they barter for dates, clothes, arms, and other goods. Horse-dealers are said to prefer shipping from Koweit, to running the gauntlet of the river Customs houses, bad climate, and other inconveniences of Basrah. Horse forage is brought down the Bubiyan Creek from Bunder Zobeir.

Some 130 vessels, of from 20 to 300 tons, are engaged in the carrying trade between Basrah and India and throughout the Persian Gulf.

Fishing is evidently a considerable industry; the fish weirs on the flat beach between Koweit and the open sea are a very conspicuous object. Besides the fish most commonly met with in Eastern waters, excellent soles are to be had, which would be, no doubt, a feature in the "menu" of the hotels, should this harbour ever become the ocean terminus for any railway such as that now contemplated.

The absence of data, or figures of any kind, make it impossible to estimate the amount of trade passing through the port. In 1863, however, imports from India (long-cloths, rice, coffee,

planks, spices, etc.) were estimated at about two lakhs of rupees; while the exports were approximately as follows:—

			Rs.
Horses	...	...	2,40,000
Wool	...	...	40,000
Dates	...	...	60,000
Miscellaneous	...	...	40,000
TOTAL	...	...	3,80,000 or approximately four lakhs.

CLIMATE.

The climate is distinctly good, as compared with that of many ports in the Persian Gulf. At the time of my visit (December and January) it was perfection, and could only be compared with that of Egypt, fine and bracing in the mornings and evenings, and never unpleasantly hot. Even during the hot months of the year, the prevailing wind, from the north-west, which blows from the desert, is somewhat tempered by crossing ten miles of the waters of the bay, while, on the other hand, it has not absorbed enough moisture to have that muggy, steamy, and relaxing character with which it reaches Bushire. Though the drinking water is brackish, fever is practically unknown, and dysentery and ophthalmia are rare.

In short, as has been rather quaintly remarked, with reference to the phenomenal longevity of the Sheikhs of Koweit, "where men commence begetting new families at eighty and die at 120, the climate cannot be considered as prematurely exhausting."

COMMUNICATIONS.

The whole country is entirely open, and the information as to even the main routes is extremely meagre.

The most important, in view of the situation at the end of 1901, while I was at Koweit, were the communications in the direction of Basrah. These are two:—

(a) The direct, or inland, road which after leaving Jehara crosses the coast range "Al Aghthi" about 3½ miles to the north-west of that place, and thence trends northwards to Basrah. As far as can be seen from the coast range already mentioned, the character of the country remains the same as that around Jehara and Koweit, *viz.*, level and open, and a native informant told me that the road was of the same nature all the way. In this case it is suitable for the movement of troops of all arms, the only place where movement is restricted to the immediate track is at the Gap through which the road rises to the higher level of the country behind the coast range.

(b) An alternative route between Jehara and Zobeir,* following approximately the general direction of the coast. It is somewhat longer than (a) and could not be used by a hostile force moving on Koweit, without coming under the fire of ships in Koweit Bay, during the last, or perhaps the last two, marches before reaching Jehara.

A road is seen branching off towards the west, at this Gap, leading, it is believed, to El Hafr in the Wadi Errumeh.

* ZOBELR, a town ten miles south-west of Basrah, on the dry canal of the Sarra Zada. It was settled some ninety years ago by refugees from Nejd, on the ruins of old Basrah. The town contains 1,500 inhabitants, pure Arabs.

Five minutes walk south-east of the town there is a large spring of good water, sufficient to supply 10,000 men.

The caravan route to Nejd starts from Zobeir, the journey taking ten days on camels, at 10 or 12 hours per diem. There are only two watering places on the road.

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APPENDIX "A."

ROUTE No. I.

Koweit to Basrah (a)—(Authority.—Local enquiries.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles (approx.)	
1. Jehara ...	7	18	(Can be done in 4 hours by individual riders.)
2. Safwan ...	16	41	
3. Zobeir ...	5	29	
4. Basrah ...	2	10	
Total	30	98	

ROUTE No. II.

Koweit to Basrah (b)—(Authority.—Local enquiries.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles (approx.)	
1. Jehara (as before) ...	7	18	
2. Khutei, or Khater ...	6	15	
3. Madera ...	6	15	
4. Sabria, or Sabha ...	6	15	
5. Omenaga ...	6	15	
6. Zobeir ...	7	18	
7. Basrah (as before) ...	2	10	
Total	40	106	

NOTE.—The distances can only be taken as a rough approximation. Native information always computes the length of marches in hours. From my own experience of camel riding elsewhere in Arabia, I have computed the pace to be approximately, under normal conditions, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour. The mileage shewn in these routes (with the exception of No. 3) has been worked out on this basis.

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ROUTE No. III.*

Koweit to Hayil—(*Authority.*—Doughty's "Travels in Arabia Deserta.")

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Stounds.	Miles (approx.)	
1. Jehara	9	18	
2. Arraki	30	60	There is a little water here.
3. El Hafr, in the Wadi Er Rummah ...	16	32	A well 35 fathoms deep.
4. El Wakba	24	48	
5. El Fasad um Arthema	24	48	Well 35 fathoms deep.
6. Khathera	28	56	
7. Bikas	18	35	
8. El Khasira	8	16	
9. Hayil	9	18	
Total	166	332	

ROUTE No. IV.

Koweit to Riadh—(*Authority.*—A report by Colonel Pelly, 1866.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles (approx.)	
1. Malah	7½	19	Wells of brackish water.
2. Legeet	4½	12	Do. do. do.
3. Wafrah	8	20	Do. do. do.
4. Lehabah	18	45	Wells of fresh water.
5. Dayjani	24	60	Do. do. do.
6. Sedus	10	25	Do. do. do.
7. Esfarrat	4	10	Do. do. do.
8. Horaymelah	4	10	Do. do. do.
9. Ayenah	8	20	Do. do. do.
10. Malgah	3	7½	Do. do. do.
11. Riadh	3	7½	Do. do. do.
Total	94	235	

* "Travels in Arabia Deserta" (Vol. II, p. 46). The unit of time ("Stound") appears to be rather less than an hour. The distance has been approximately computed at 2 miles=1 "Stound."

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ROUTE No. V.

Koweit to El Hasa—(*Authority.*—Colonel Pelly, 1866.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles.	
1. Fentass	4	10	
2. Abu Helayfah	8	20	
3. Meraghah	10	25	
4. Megata	5	12	
5. Hamadh	10	25	
6. Sudah	10	25	
7. El Habi	8	20	
8. El Jauf	12	30	
9. Ain Dar	12	30	
10. El Hasa	8	20	
Total	87	217	

ROUTE No. VI.

Koweit to Katif—(*Authority.*—Colonel Pelly, 1866.)

Stages.	DISTANCES.		REMARKS.
	Hours.	Miles.	
1. Fentass	4	10	Same as in preceding route to El Hasa.
2. Abu Helayfah	8	20	
3. Meraghah	10	25	
4. Megata	5	12	
5. Hamadh	10	25	
6. Sudah	10	25	
7. Dobayb or Dobbayah	12	30	
8. As Sebakah	8	20	
9. El Katif	4	10	
Total	71	177	

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Statement of distances of the following places and districts from Koweit.
(Authority.—Colonel Pelly, 1866).

Koweit to Katif	...	...	...	8 days.
" El Hasa	...	...	...	10 "
" Okair	...	...	...	10 "
" Zolfi	...	...	...	10 "
" Kassim	...	...	...	12 "
" Jebel Shammer	...	...	...	16 "
" Hazm-er-Raji	...	...	...	18 "
" Mecca	...	...	...	26 "

The rate of travelling
being 8 hours a day
on camel-back.

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APPENDIX "B."

THE WAHABI FAMILY, OR OLD RULING FAMILY IN NEJD.

MOHAMMED BIN ABDUL WAHAB, the reformer who started the puritanical movement, about 1740-50, which has ever since borne his father's name.

TURKI, his son and successor till 1831.

FEYSUL BIN TURKI, succeeded and ruled till 1865.

He had four sons: Abdulla, Mahommed, Saood, and Abdul Rahman.

ABDULLAH BIN FEYSUL, succeeded his father in 1865, though his younger brother, Saood, disputed his succession, and authority, until his (Saood's) death in 1874. Abdullah was nominally supported by Mohammed ibn Rashid, Sheikh of Jebel Shammer, but in 1874 was taken by the latter to Hayil practically a prisoner; Ibn Rashid becoming *de facto* ruler of Nejd.

ABDUL AZIZ BIN ABDUL RAHMAN BIN FEYSUL, son of the youngest of Feysul's sons, and thus nephew of Abdullah, the last Amir, is now endeavouring, and according to the latest accounts with some success, to recover the power of his fathers in Nejd, from the present Ibn Rashid, nephew of the usurper.

APPENDIX "C."

THE IBN RASHID FAMILY.

ABDULLAH IBN RASHID became Sheikh of the Jebel Shammer tribe, with his capital at Hayil, in 1835, by the help of Amir Feysul bin Turki. He died in 1846.

TILAL, his eldest son, succeeded him and ruled till his death in 1867.

MUTAAB IBN ABDULLAH, Tilal's younger brother, succeeded but was murdered the following year by his nephews, the sons of Tilal.

BANDER, one of these nephews, assumed the Government.

MAHOMMED (IBN ABDULLAH) IBN RASHID, third and youngest son of the old Abdullah, killed his nephew, Bander, and the five remaining children of his brother Tilal, and became undisputed Amir in Hayil, in 1868. In 1886, while nominally supporting the Amir of Nejd, Abdullah bin Feysul, against a revolt, he carried Abdullah to Hayil practically a prisoner, and became the *de facto* ruler of Nejd. He died in 1897, and was succeeded by his nephew.

ABDUL AZIZ IBN RASHID, who is the present representative of his family, and who besides being in a chronic state of war with Koweit, owing to his having taken up the cause of the dispossessed son of the late Sheikh of that place, has also to deal with the legitimatist claimant to the Amir-dom of Nejd (Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman) which was usurped by his uncle.

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APPENDIX "D."

SHEIKHS OF KOWEIT.

SHEIKH SULEIMAN BIN AHMED was Sheikh of the Beni Subah clan, or confederacy, at the time of the joint occupation of Koweit, about 1716, in which it appears his tribe were the ruling spirits.

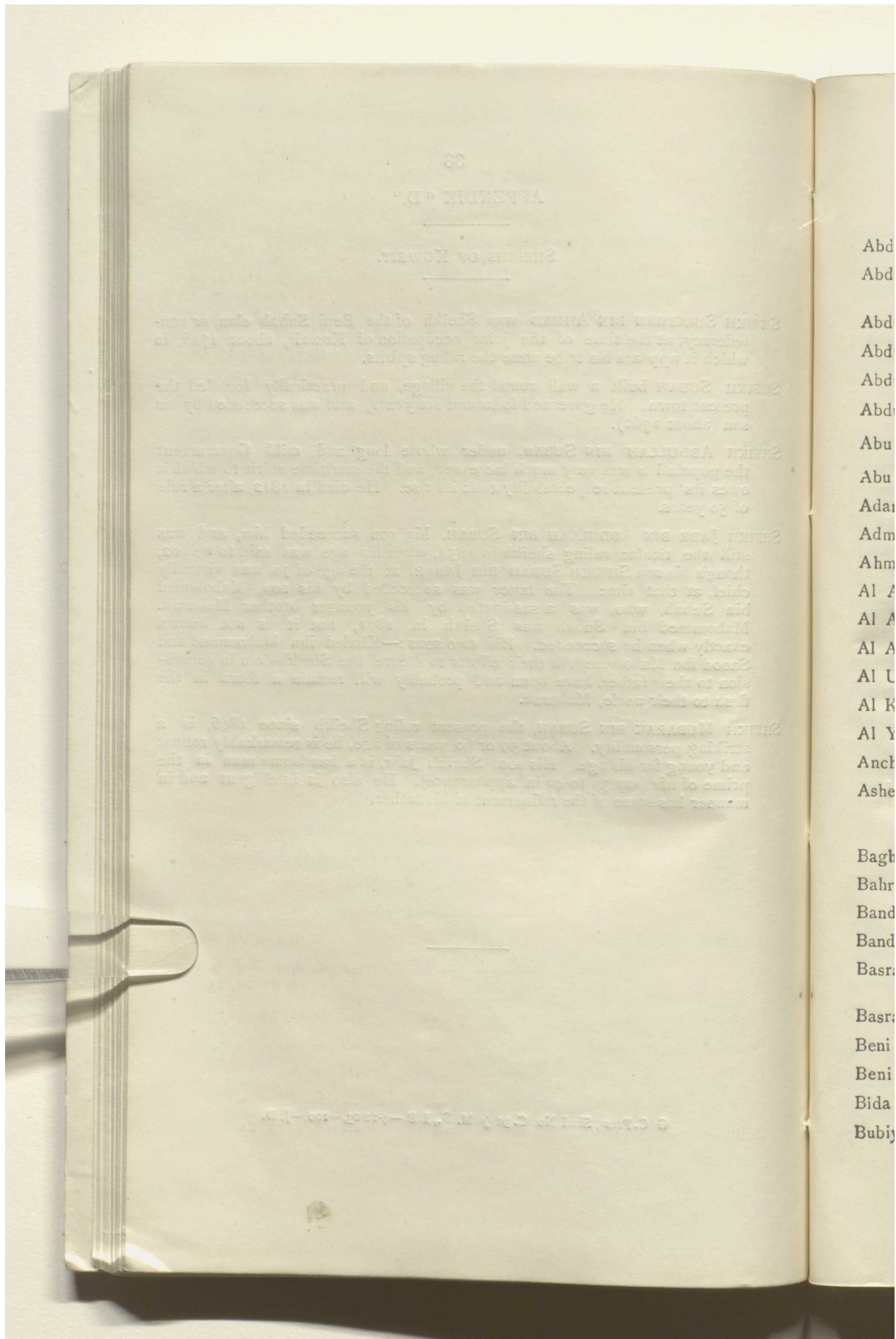
SHEIKH SUBAH built a wall round the village, and practically founded the present town. He governed for about six years, and was succeeded by his son (about 1762).

SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN SUBAH, under whose long and mild Government the population was very much increased, and the maritime spirit to which it owes its present respectability took its rise. He died in 1812, after a rule of 50 years.

SHEIKH JABR BIN ABDULLAH BIN SUBAH, his son, succeeded him, and was still the titular ruling sheikh in 1854, when his age was said to be 102, though his son SHEIKH SUBAH BIN JABAR, at the age of 70, was virtually chief, at that time. The latter was succeeded by his son, Mahommed bin Subah, who, was assassinated by his younger brother Mubarak. Mahommed bin Subah was Sheikh in 1871, but it is not known exactly when he succeeded. His two sons:—Khaled ibn Mahommed and Saood ibn Mahommed, in their efforts to secure the Sheikh-dom in succession to their father, have been and probably will remain a thorn in the flesh to their uncle, Mubarak.

SHEIKH MUBARAK BIN SUBAH, the present ruling Sheikh since 1896, is a striking personality. About 59 or 60 years of age, he is remarkably robust and young for his age. His son, Sheikh Jabr, is a handsome man in the prime of life (say 35 to 40 in appearance). He also is intelligent and in manner has some of the refinement of his father.

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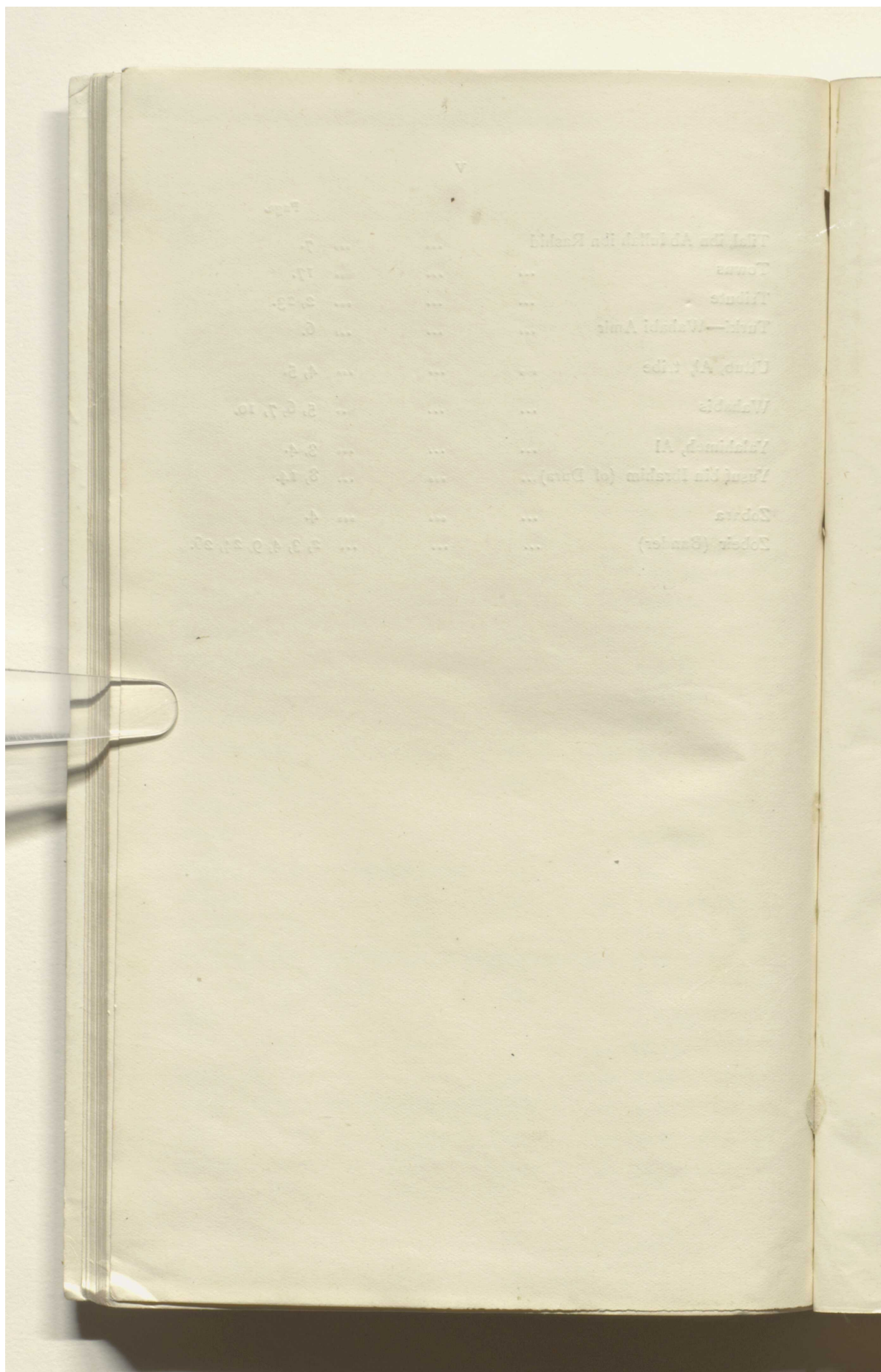
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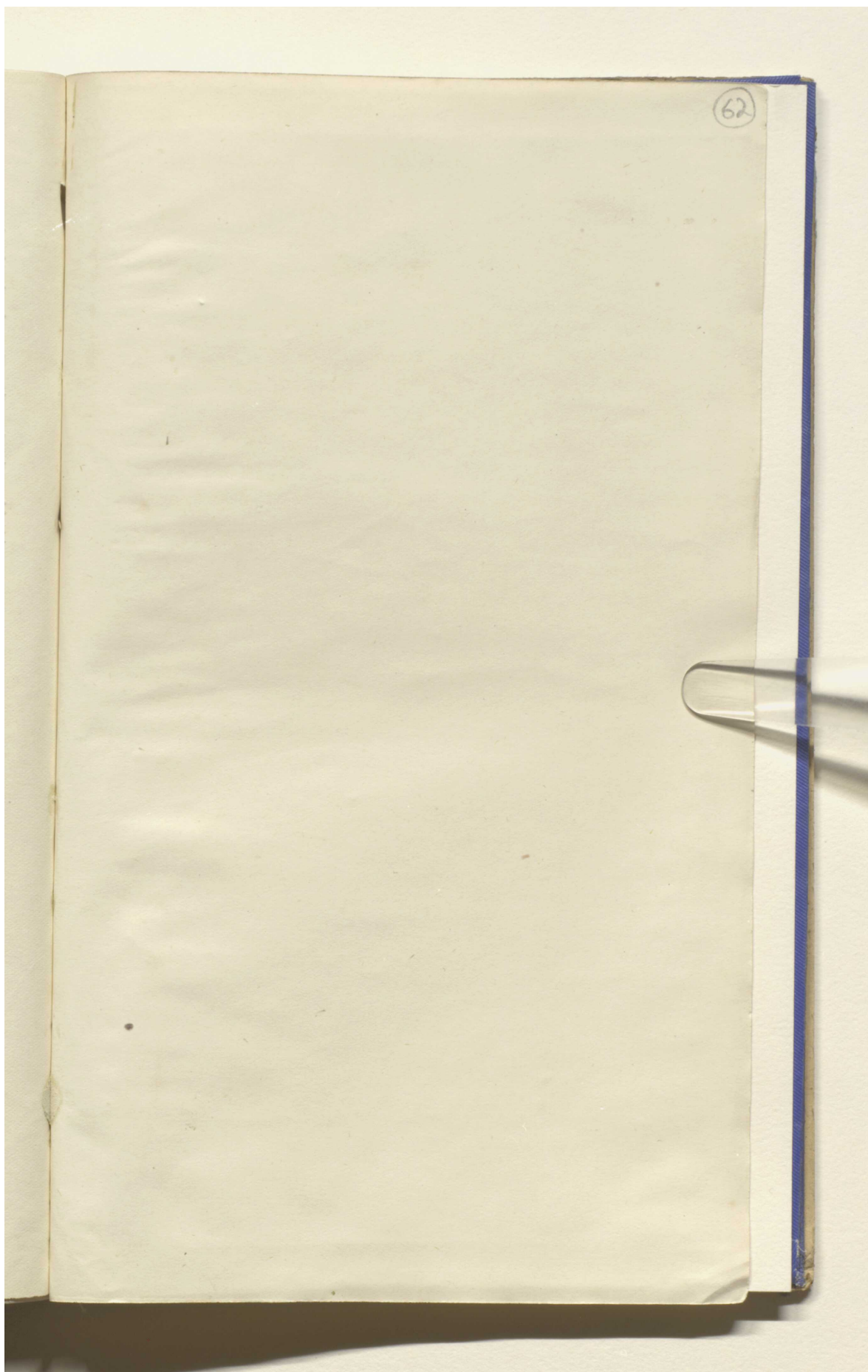
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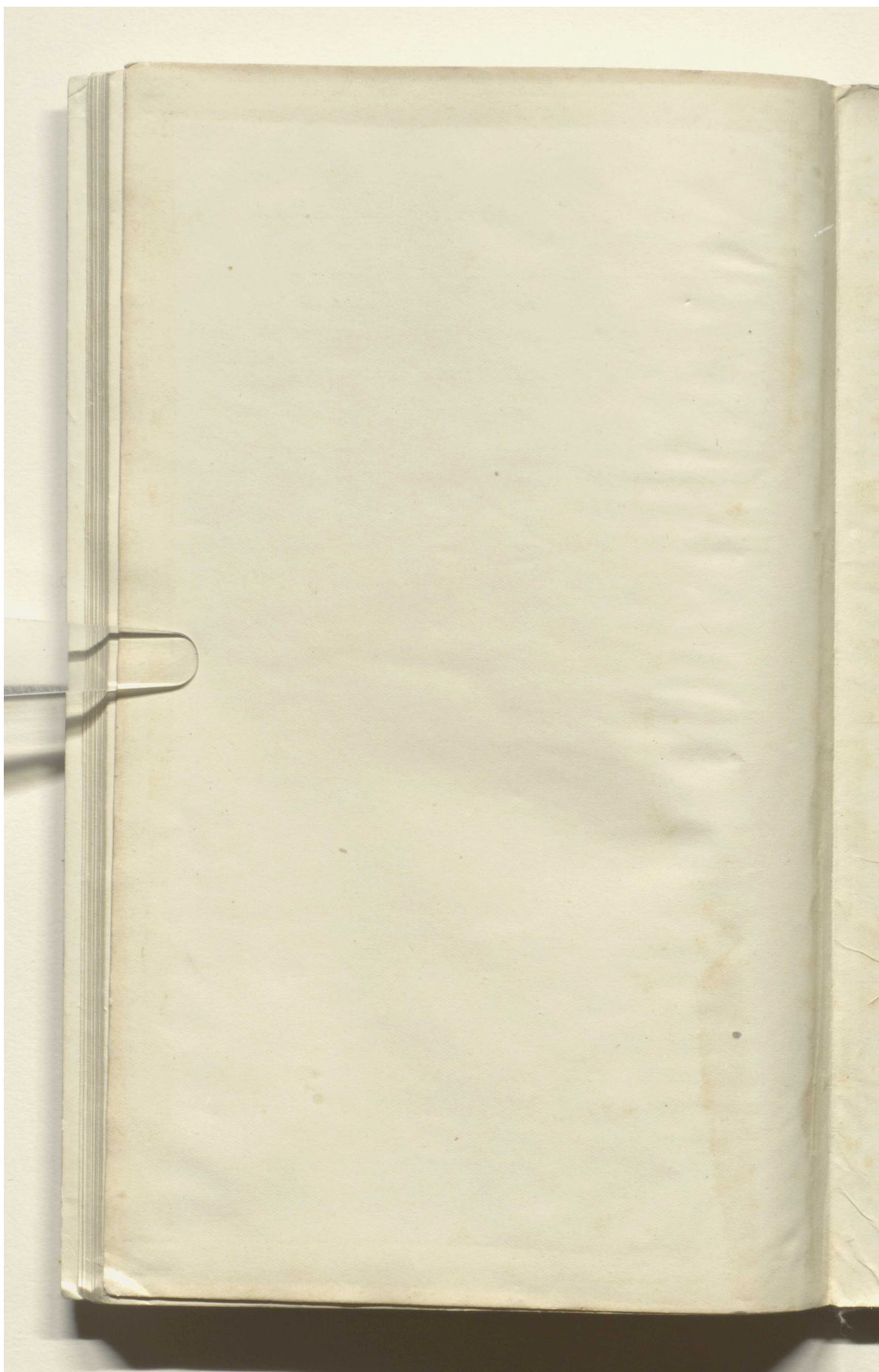
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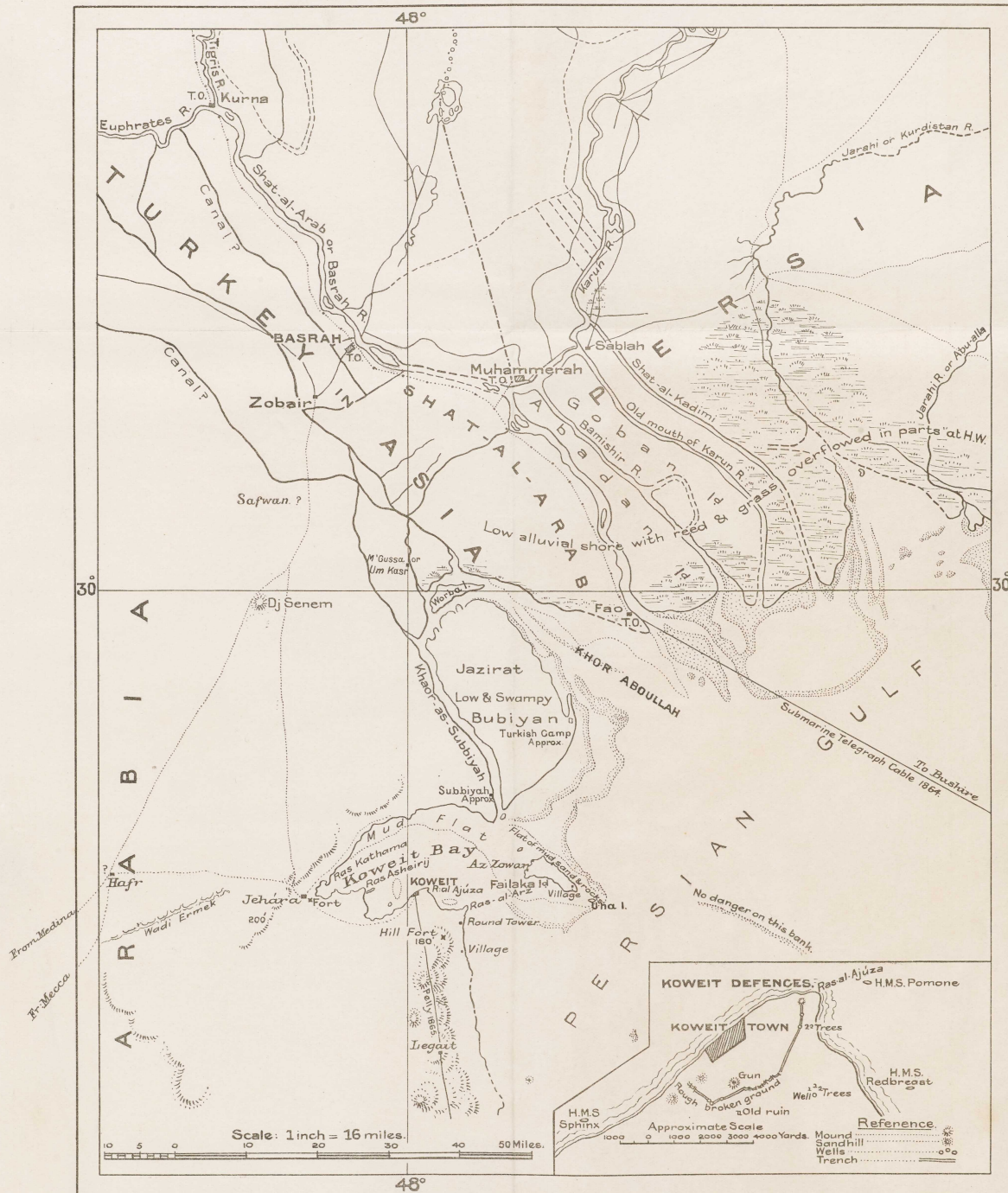
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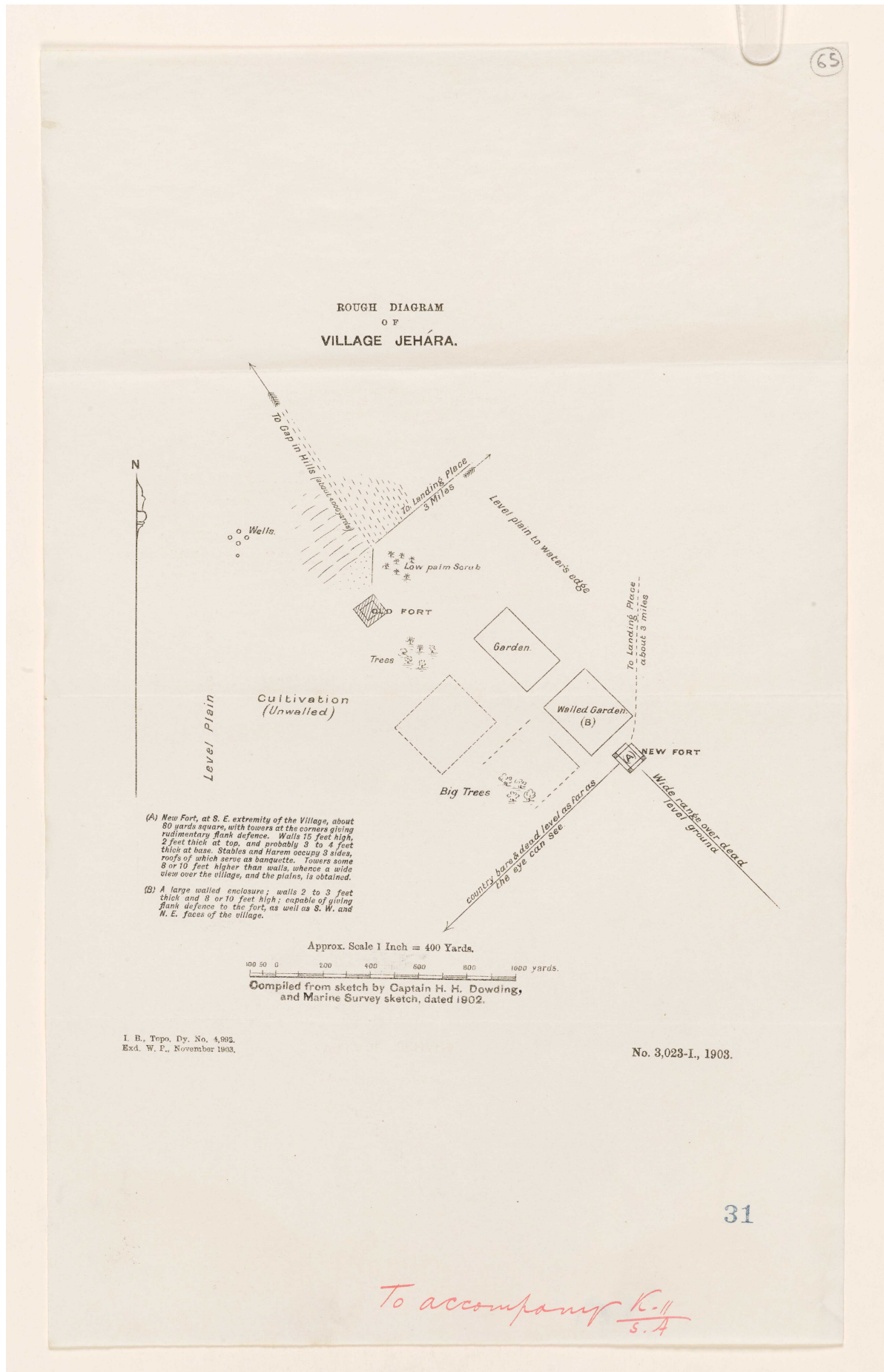
MAP OF KOWEIT AND SURROUNDING COUNTRY.



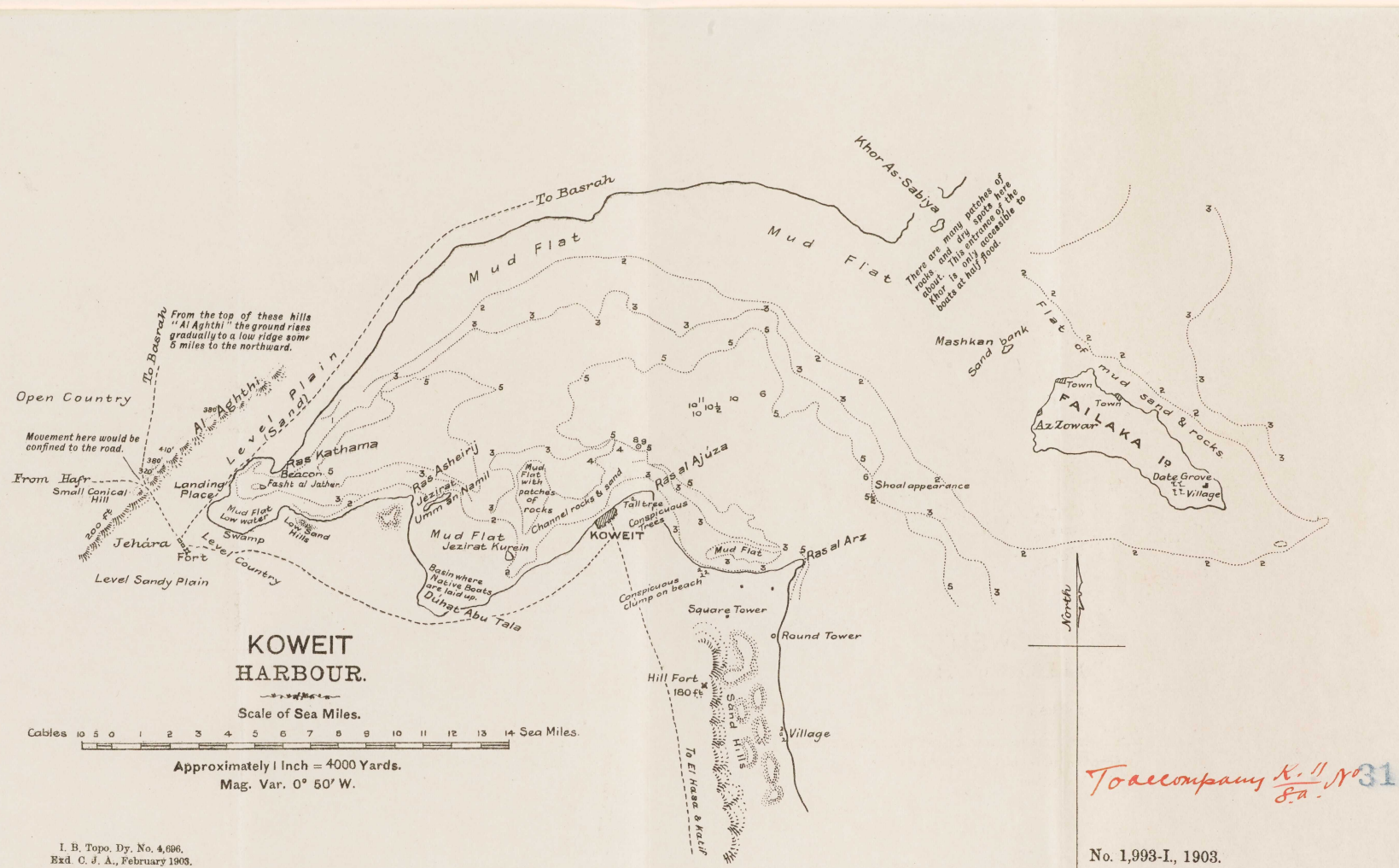
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